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Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 4 and post-16

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Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 4 and post-16

1 Introduction

The Advanced Bilingual Learners' (ABL) Writing Project was commissioned as part of an Ofsted study of support for students in Key Stage 4 and post-16 using English as an additional language (EAL).

The research investigated the writing skills of those who, although at an advanced stage of formal education, may be under-achieving in English. Over three hundred pieces of writing, from English language and a range of other subject areas, were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively to produce profiles of achievement and needs, and suggestions for diagnosis and intervention by teachers.

1.1 English as an additional language

About 10% of the school population in England and Wales, or half a million children, use English as an additional language.[1] Most of these children belong to well-established ethnic minority communities, and have been born and educated in the UK. National policy for the development of skills and knowledge in EAL combines mainstreaming with specialist language support, i.e. bilingual pupils follow the national curriculum in mainstream classes, assisted by 'language support' or 'language development' teachers. Specialist EAL staff are now mainly employed by schools, rather than as previously by LEA-level services, and financed through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG).

EAL support is typically concentrated at Key Stages 1 and 2, under the assumption that bilingual pupils will catch up their monolingual peers and will then require similar teaching and learning experiences. For some time, though, questions have been raised about whether this assumption is correct,[2] or whether using English as an additional language may contribute to the documented underachievement of some ethnic minority pupils.[3] The project reported here researched one aspect of this issue by investigating the writing skills of bilingual learners at Key Stage 4 and post-16. All students whose writing was analysed had been in England for at least five years, a period of time which should have allowed for EAL development to reasonably high levels.[4]

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[1] Department for Education and Employment (1997).

[2] For example, Cameron (1996) and Cameron (2002) look at use of language in the secondary classroom and vocabulary size respectively, and find that there is a need for continuing support for language skills development at Key Stage 3 and 4.

[3] Gillborn and Mirza (2000).

[4] Research from North America, e.g. Collier (1987), suggests that it takes between five and seven years in education for bilingual pupils to catch up with their native-speaker peers.

1.2 Writing

Writing is a key skill for both formal education and for life beyond school, and without good levels of writing skills in English, bilingual learners are likely to be at a disadvantage. In social interaction, we use written English to explain to other people, often at a distance, what we have experienced, how we feel, what we know and what we think about what we know. In formal education, writing is the medium used to record what is learnt, to explore the meanings of ideas, and to display knowledge and thinking to examiners in order to be assessed.

While, at one level, successful writing requires knowledge and application of the conventions of written texts, it is also a complex skill in which thoughts and ideas become concrete written words, sentences and paragraphs, and are organised into a text that is accessible for the intended readers. Furthermore, a written text is not only an encoding on paper or screen, but also represents the writer to others as a socially, culturally and historically-situated person with his or her own experiences, affiliations and opinions. For students of 15 or 16 years of age, issues of identity and stance cannot be ignored.

1.3 Aims of the research project

The EAL Writing Project was commissioned to investigate the writing skills of advanced bilingual pupils, through analysis of written texts.[5] The findings are used to inform recommendations for teachers and to produce a set of guidelines for evaluating and supporting the development of EAL writing at this level.

> *The aim of the research project was to identify in detail the features of written English that bilingual students find difficult, and thus enable teachers to address them more systematically in their teaching.*

1.4 Use of earlier writing projects

Two earlier projects were drawn on in the research design and are used for comparison in reporting findings and developing recommendations for teaching. The Marking Guidelines for Writing produced as part of the National Literacy Strategy for Key Stage 2[6] were used as a starting point in devising marking guidelines for EAL writing at Key Stage 4 and post-16. The report of the Technical Accuracy (TA) Project[7] includes a list of features of writing which were used in their analysis of texts written by 16 year olds. Although the TA project did not separately investigate EAL pupils' writing, it does explicitly mention some features. The analysis of texts in the ABL project stayed close to the scheme used in the TA project, although a somewhat different approach and emphasis are taken in presenting findings.

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[5] This is a 'product' approach to investigating writing skills in that it uses texts as data. Some 'process' data is available in More Advanced Learners of English as an Additional Language in Secondary Schools and Colleges (Ofsted, 2003), the survey of practice with which this research study was linked.

[6] Department for Education and Employment (2001).

[7] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (1999).

2 Project details

2.1 The school pupils

A total of 139 Year 11 pupils from seven secondary schools, each in a different LEA, participated in the project by contributing samples of their writing. The participants were divided into 3 groups, the focus group of less successful EAL students, and two other comparison groups.

2.1.1 Focus group

The Focus group for the research were EAL pupils in Year 11 who were predicted a grade in GCSE English Language at the C/D borderline or lower. Full details of participants are given in Appendix 1, summarised here:

- The Focus group contained 102 pupils.
- Gender: half were boys and half girls.
- The average length of time in United Kingdom (UK) education was 10 years 4 months, with 75% having been educated completely in UK.
- Major first languages were Gujerati, Punjabi, Bengali, Urdu, with small numbers of a range of other languages.
- Self-assessment of reading and writing skills in first language averaged around 'basic'.

2.1.2 Comparison groups

Writing from two groups of students of the same age were used for comparison:

(i) students who use English as a mother tongue and were predicted a grade in GCSE English Language at the C/D borderline or lower (called hereafter 'EMT').

(ii) bilingual students who use English as an additional language and were predicted grade B or above in GCSE English (called hereafter 'High EAL').

Comparison of the writing features found problematic by the Focus and EMT groups yields information that is important for making teaching decisions. The same teaching strategies should not be assumed, without evidence, to work equally well with EAL and EMT pupils,[8] even when they display the same problems in language or literacy, because they are likely to be at quite different places in their English language development. Indeed, the paths of language development are likely to be quite different for EAL and EMT, and differences are likely to increase as we move through the school years. In addition, some groups of EAL pupils learn English mainly through school contexts, using it very little outside school, and this particular learning environment probably produces different patterns of development and outcomes in English from that which develop through participation in a broader range of school and non-school contexts. Successful intervention starts from where pupils are; if they are at different places, then they will need different strategies to reach the same target.

It is conventionally assumed that the target for EAL development is native speaker competence, with this assumption informing the national curriculum in the UK. If, as suggested above, the paths of language development are different for EMT and EAL pupils, then native speaker competence may be neither appropriate nor most helpful as a target 'end point' of development. Furthermore, native speaker competence should not be thought of as a single, unitary state, but rather as covering a wide spectrum of competence. We are a long way from

[8] Cameron (2002).

sufficiently understanding EAL development to engage in informed debate on this question, because EAL in the UK is hugely under-researched. However, comparison of the writing of High EAL pupils and the Focus group may help narrow down features of writing that need improvement to those that are also key to academic achievement.

The EMT group

- The EMT group contained 16 pupils.
- Gender: nine boys and seven girls.
- All had been educated only in the UK.
- English was their first language.

The High EAL group

- The High EAL group contained 20 pupils
- Gender: 11 boys and nine girls.
- The average length of time in UK education was 10 years 10 months, with all but one having been educated only in the UK.
- Major first languages were Gujerati, Bengali, Turkish, with small numbers of a range of other languages.
- Self-assessment of reading and writing skills in first language averaged between 'basic' and 'OK'.

2.2 College students

Scripts were used from 38 students from two colleges, 28 from a sixth form college and 10 from a general further education (FE) college. The college focus group contained 28 students who had already achieved grade C/D in English Language GCSE, or equivalent. There was only one college High EAL student and nine students in the college EMT group.

2.3 The writing dataset

Schools and colleges were asked to provide two samples of writing for each student: one from English Language and one from another subject area. As with any project in the real world, there was an element of unpredictability in the data collection, and this section describes the nature of the samples of writing that became the dataset for analysis.

2.3.1 Types of writing

Schools provided writing from mock GCSE examinations. From the English Language paper concerned, the samples were either:

English A: Writing to argue, persuade or instruct (advise)
(corresponding to GCSE English Language Paper 1, section B)

or English B: Writing to inform, explain or describe
(corresponding to GCSE English Language Paper 2, section B)

The examination papers ask pupils to write in specific genres, including:

- to argue: an article for a school magazine
- to persuade: a letter to your local paper
- to instruct: a set of instructions for pedestrians and road users.

Subject area writing came from one, or more, of:

- history
- geography
- religious education
- English literature.

These are grouped together in some parts of the analysis as 'humanities writing'. Three samples were provided for some pupils; where third samples were used, they were from English Literature or religious education (RE).

From each college student, we have one piece of writing, from a range of subject areas. These were grouped into:

- Subject writing: including English literature, business studies, geography and psychology
- Personal writing: generally biographical pieces

Because of the variable nature and small number of college scripts, these were analysed separately, and are reported on in a separate section.

2.3.2 Length

We aimed to work with 'extended texts' that were around two sides or 500 words long, in order to capture features at text level. In the event, only some of the High EAL writing in English Language was of this length. Writing in other subject areas appears very rarely to require texts longer than 200 words, and usually answers are much shorter.[9] The issue of writing at length is covered in the next section. Very short scripts, of less than 100 words, were excluded from analysis.

2.3.3 Numbers of scripts analysed

A full breakdown of the numbers of scripts is shown in Table 1 below.

Group	Secondary School					School total	College	Total:
	Eng A	Eng B	Lit	RE	Hist/Geog			
Focus	79	34	25	38	20	196	28	**224**
High EAL	17	6	6	12	6	47	1	**48**
EMT	13	3	4	0	8	28	9	**37**
Total	**109**	**43**	**35**	**50**	**34**	**271**	**38**	**309**

Table 1: Breakdown of scripts by subject and student group

[9] At least, this is the case for writing in examinations. Coursework may well require more extended texts.

3 Understanding EAL writing at secondary level

Before reporting findings, this section presents a perspective on writing that has emerged from the research and that may help understand the detail of EAL writing. This perspective will be used as a framework for presenting the findings of the research in sections that follow.

3.1 Writing is not a separate skill

Although the project investigated the writing skills of students, it was quickly apparent that writing cannot be considered in isolation, because it is inextricably linked with reading and thinking skills.

> *The scripts are not samples of performance in writing, but in reading, understanding, and making use of a range of types of source materials to produce a written text.*

Skilled writers combine imagination, knowledge and language resources in a mental process of 'constructing a reader', assembling ideas, and drawing on a range of resources to present these ideas to the reader. The reader must be constructed in the writer's imagination, and, further, the writer needs to imagine the reader making sense of the text so that s/he can write clearly, and persuade, inform, impress and so on. When we look at the scripts that are the products or outcomes of this process, we see the combined application of intellect, imagination, and language.

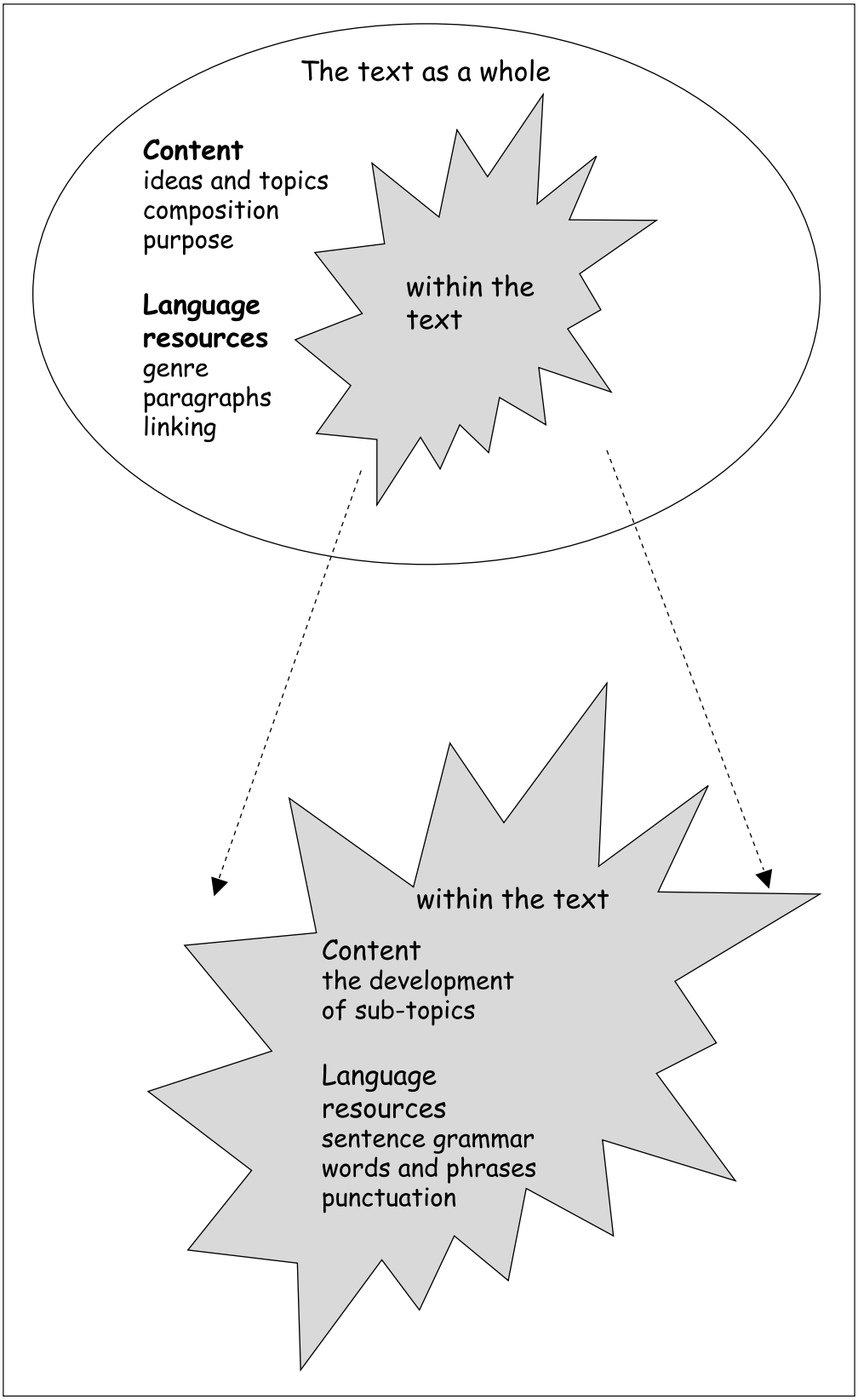
3.2 An integrated framework for analysing EAL writing

Working with scripts shows that it is helpful to think about the process and product of writing as the interplay of content and language resources, where **content** refers to the ideas and topics that are to be written about, and **language resources** to the range of ways that English can be deployed to express content in writing. The content of writing can then be analysed in terms of the amount, its relevance, and its adequacy for answering the question. Language resources can be analysed in terms of how far writers use the potential of English discourse, grammar and vocabulary in their writing, and the ways in which the writing matches or differs from accepted norms and conventions.

In looking at the end product of writing, and also in planning and teaching, it is helpful to consider content and language resources at two inter-connected levels: the text as a whole and within the text (Figure 1). At the level of **the text as a whole**, the content is the ideas that the writer presents to the reader. Key concerns include assembling ideas into an overall composition to achieve the particular purpose. The resources available to writers to do this include conventional genres, text structuring through paragraphs, and the use of words and phrases to link topics and ideas.

Within texts, key concerns are use of the resources of sentence grammar and vocabulary to develop each topic in detail, whilst remaining within the overall writer-reader relationship and purpose of the text. This conventionally happens within paragraphs, although very little use of paragraphs was found in the sample scripts. The lower levels of sentences and phrases are also dealt with as 'within the text'.

Figure 1: A framework for advanced writing



3.3 Method of analysis

Following the initial development of a scoring method, each script was analysed for the features of writing shown in Table 2 below.

Level	Features of writing
The text as a whole	**Content** The content of the writing **Language resources** The use, effectiveness, and control of genre The organisation of ideas, including paragraphing Vocabulary
Within the text	**Content** Development of sub-topics into detail and connections between ideas **Language resources**
sentence and clause level	Use of Subordination Use of clause slots
word level	Agreements Articles Verb use and endings Vocabulary: general to specific; prepositions; delexical verbs *(e.g. make, do, have)*; word class errors; lexical gaps; comparative forms Punctuation Spelling

Table 2: Features of writing scored for each script

This analysis produced both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative analysis involved calculating means for sentence-level, word-level and technical-accuracy measures for the types of writing and student groups. Where groups were large enough, means were compared using t-tests to find statistically significant differences. Where statistics could not be used, graphical display of mean scores of different groups on the various aspects of writing is used to help understand patterns of performance. The quantitative analysis was brought together with further qualitative and holistic analyses to understand how features of writing combine to produce whole texts, and to produce a picture of typical writing styles and writing problems across groups and types of writing.

3.4 Sample scripts

Four scripts have been chosen as representative of the Focus, EMT and High EAL school pupils' writing, and are included in Appendix 2. All are answers to the same English Language examinations question:

> *Write a letter to your local newspaper in which you try to* ***persuade*** *the reader that more bike-friendly measures should be introduced in your area.*

The samples will be used to exemplify points made throughout the report.

4 Overview of findings

The strongest differences between the less successful EAL writing (Focus group) and EMT writing emerged within texts at the level of words and phrases, particularly in the use of 'small' words such as prepositions, delexical verbs (e.g. *do, make, put*) and in aspects of word grammar such as agreements and endings.

At whole text level, the Focus and EMT groups shared a tendency to lack content in their writing, and not to use paragraphing to organise content. The Focus group had more difficulties in using source materials to generate ideas to write about, with the language of these causing additional problems. There was also a sub-group of Focus pupils who seemed to have ideas but did not express them clearly.

Within the text, content sub-topics were not developed very much and the writing of both Focus and EMT groups tended to lack both detail in developing content and complexity in the use of sentence and phrase grammar to express detail and connections. High EAL writing was characterised by having more content and by developing that content to a more detailed level, although there was room for more effective use of paragraphing and of source materials in English Language examinations. As well as being more accurate, High EAL writing made greater use of grammar resources, with a greater variety of clause and sentence types. A small number of within-text language features remained somewhat problematic in some High EAL writing; these included prepositions, articles and Subject-Verb agreements.

Table 3 summarises the findings of the research.

Table 3: Summary of findings

	Features of writing	*Difficulties of less successful EAL writing*	*Difficulties shared by*
	Content	• writing long enough texts	EMT peers
	Ideas and sub-topics	• generating enough ideas about which to write	EMT peers
The text as	Linking of content	• using source materials to generate ideas	*
a whole	**Language resources**	• keeping control of genre, especially constructing purpose for reader and writer-reader relationship	*
	The use, effectiveness and control of genre	• using the right style and level of formality	EMT peers
	The organisation of ideas, paragraphing	• using paragraphing to show development of ideas	EMT peers (some) High EAL
	Content		
Within the	Development of detail and connecting ideas	• developing sub-topics through exemplification, explanation, elaboration	EMT peers
text	**Language resources**		
	Vocabulary range	• using a wide range of vocabulary to move between general ideas and specific details	EMT peers
sentence and	Verbs	• consistency in use of modal verbs in conditional sentences	*
clause level		• composing sentences with a range of grammatical structures	EMT peers
	Sub-ordination	• using a range of sub-ordinators, including 'advanced' ones	EMT peers
		• using participial non-finite clauses	EMT peers
		• making good use of Adverbial clauses and phrases	all
	Phrases in clause slots	• using Subjects longer than a single word	EMT peers
		• varying length of Subject with type of writing	*
		• using more than bare phrases with single nouns	EMT peers
	Punctuation	• using commas, full stops and capitals to show clause and sentence structure	EMT peers
	Words	• overuse of delexical verbs e.g. *make, do, put*	EMT peers
word level		• finding vocabulary item: compensation strategies include blending, circumlocutions, creations	*
	Words in phrases	• choosing correct preposition in formulaic phrases e.g. *help with*	* some High EAL
		• choosing appropriate delexical verb	*
		• qualified comparatives e.g. *more easier*	*
	Agreements	• accuracy in Subject-Verb agreements	* some High EAL
		• accuracy in noun-pronoun agreements and plurals	*
	Articles	• choosing the right article	* some High EAL
	Verb endings	• using the correct endings for tense, person etc	*
	Spelling	• some pupils had many problems	EMT peers

5 Features of writing at text level

At the level of the text as a whole, the following features of writing emerged as important:

Content

- ☐ writing in order to answer the examination question
- ☐ assembling ideas: having enough ideas to write about, extracting ideas from source materials, organising ideas for a reader and giving reader a purpose and action
- ☐ overall composition to achieve purpose: genre and coherence
- ☐ understanding the writer(s) and reader(s), and their relationship.

Language resources

- ☐ genres and their structures
- ☐ paragraphing to separate and connect ideas and topics
- ☐ paragraph links and ways of referencing across the text (cohesion)
- ☐ vocabulary to develop topics across the text (coherence).

5.1 Overview of findings at whole text level

While there were some shared problem areas at whole-text level for the Focus and the EMT group, there were important differences in the nature of problems. Writing from both groups lacked content and showed weak organisation. However, the Focus group showed higher awareness of formulaic aspects of conventions of writing, such as how to open and close a letter. In terms of content, there was also some evidence that the Focus group includes a sub-group of pupils who have ideas that could make their writing rich but who do not develop these as sub-topics. Most of the EMT group did not show such evidence, and their writing was characterised by a limited range of ideas. It is difficult from this type of research study to ascertain reasons why some EAL pupils are not succeeding in developing their ideas more fully, but it is an important question. Meanwhile, an implication is that teachers should find ways to allow EAL pupils to show in writing what they are capable of in thinking.

5.2 Writing extended texts

Subject-area examinations appear to require students to write mostly short answers (less than 100 words). It was also noticeable that most scripts in English Language were shorter than the required two pages (500 words). In Focus and EMT groups, only one or two students were writing at this length.

The key difference between writing briefly and at length seems to lie in the developing and linking of ideas that are required to produce a coherent longer text; ideas have to be organised rather than listed. It is important to note that, for spoken English, there is evidence in first-language acquisition that conversation skills develop independently of skills in extended talk, and are linked to the amount of participation in such talk at home.[10] This independence of conversation skills and skills in the production of extended talk, and the relation of both to the amount of participation in such talk, is likely to occur in additional language development too. When we add to this the fact that skills in writing will build on skills in talking, we can see that

[10] Snow (1996).

learning to write extended texts will require practice in writing at length, and that English classes are the most obvious place for this to take place. Ideally, pupils would be developing extended writing skills through practice in writing at length from Key Stage 2 onwards, together with specific instruction on the structure of texts in different genres.

It is highly likely that writing fast and at length to produce 'extended texts' is a distinct skill that needs to be practised – i.e. it is not the same as writing several short texts.

5.2.1 Examination questions and writing extended texts

The finding that most EMT and Focus pupils were not writing to the required length led to the question of how far the writing tasks and genres required in the English Language examinations realistically require extended texts. The examination questions appear to be trying to create a degree of authenticity by using real source materials and by requiring students not just to write but to write in specific genres, including a letter to a local newspaper and a set of road safety instructions. However, in the real world, most letters to a newspaper would not be published if they were two sides in length, and sets of instructions need to be concise and to the point.

How far do the writing tasks and genres set in English Language examinations realistically require extended texts?

5.3 The content of writing: having ideas to write about

Good writing requires students to have ideas about the topic that they can write about, ideas that can be set out, developed and justified. We distinguish between having ideas and expressing ideas, since this may well be important for some EAL students, who may have ideas but not be able to express them in English. In this section, we deal with having ideas to write about.

Two sources of ideas are available to writers in any situation – their own knowledge and experience, and other people's ideas to which they have access. Across scripts there was wide variation in the range and richness of ideas available for use in writing. In the writing for examinations, other people's ideas are available to students in the 'source materials' that are provided. In English Language, two texts are given to students and are used in the reading part of the examination.[11] These texts are then available for students to draw on in their writing, but do not have to be used. In history and geography, the source materials provided must be used to answer the questions.

Figures 2 and 3 show the tendencies of the three groups to draw on their own ideas and on ideas from the source materials in the School English Language A writing.

[11] As far as we can ascertain, the English B scripts were produced without source materials in the mock examination. Hence we draw here only on English A.

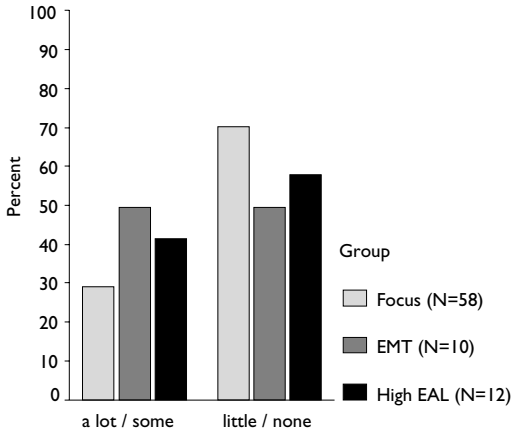


Figure 2: Use of ideas from source materials

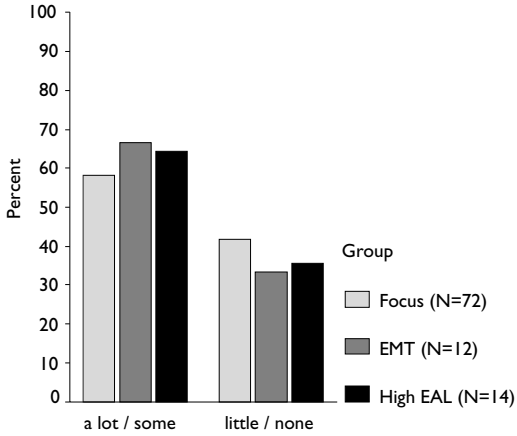


Figure 3: Use of own ideas

- All groups make more use of their own ideas than of ideas from source materials.
- The patterns across the groups in the two graphs are the same, and so we can conclude that source materials are not acting to compensate for lack of writers' own ideas (as is intended).
- The EMT group make most use of source materials and of their own ideas.
- The Focus group seem to be short of ideas on both fronts. They make little use of source materials (reading demands may affect this) and more than 40% make little or no use of their own ideas. We do not know whether that is because they lacked knowledge or experience of the topic (riding bicycles, road safety, holidays abroad) or because language problems prevented their ideas reaching the paper.

5.3.1 Using ideas from source materials

Source materials do not offer a neutral and easily accessible supply of ideas to write about; ideas about the topic must be extracted from quite complicated texts. For example, in the examination where pupils were required to write a letter to their local newspaper, to ask for more bike-friendly measures in their area, one of the source materials was an article from the Times newspaper, written to entertain rather than to report, and using many idiomatic phrases and assuming particular types of cultural knowledge:

> *that thug of the modern highway – white-van man*
>
> *In our neck of North London*
>
> *we rarely shake the cobwebs off them (bikes).*

The other source material was an information leaflet on the healthy outcomes of cycling, written in a genre we might describe as 'public health information'. This text addresses the reader directly, although using technical vocabulary:

> *Regular physical activity also facilitates other healthy behaviour and could help you reduce weight. It could even save you time!*

In Geography, pupils were presented with information in a graph to use in their writing, and in History, source materials included wood engravings and quotes from 16th century texts. The cultural and technical accessibility of ideas in source materials may be an issue, although it was not investigated here. When we looked at the use of ideas from source materials in writing, more successful writers could be seen to manipulate source texts in various ways:

- selecting key ideas
- changing the genre
- changing the form and wording to fit their own writing
- summarising points
- going beyond the literal to inferred or metaphorical meanings.

Less successful writers made little use of source materials or were confused by them. They sometimes took phrases or sentences straight from the source texts, without changing form or style. If changes were made, they might lead to inaccuracies, as when *150,000 (bikes)* in the original text becomes *so many over millions* (sample script 1, line 5).

Figure 4 shows the how effective the different groups were rated in changing the language of source materials in the English Language writing. Only around 40% or fewer of all groups managed to do this effectively:

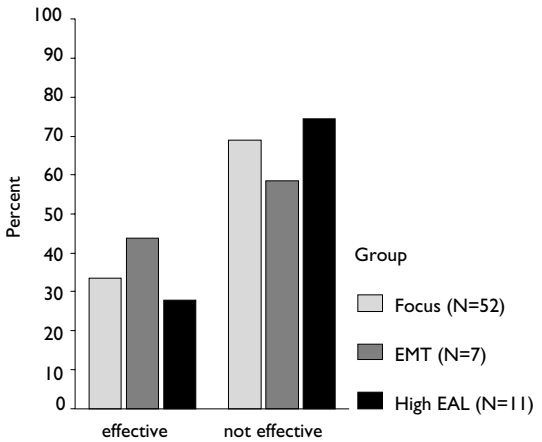


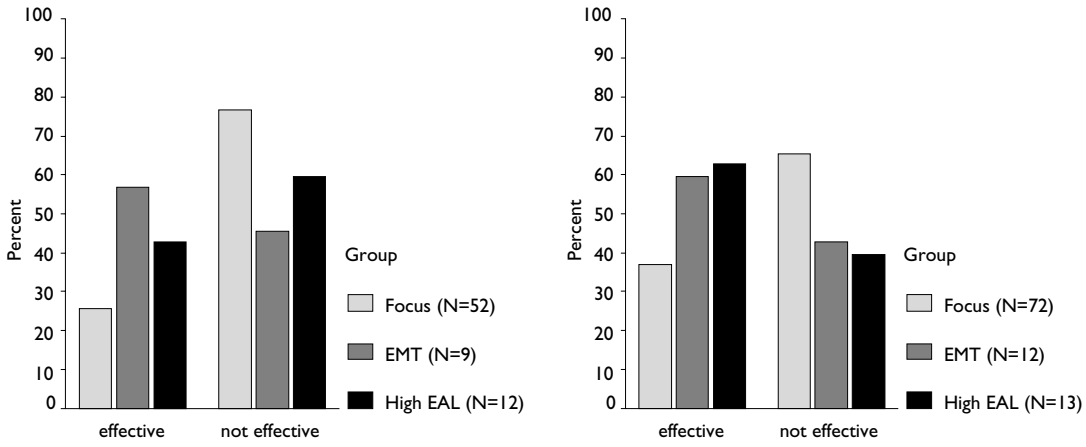
Figure 4: Changing the language of the source materials

- The High EAL group scored lowest on effectiveness of changing the language of the source material, and lower than the Focus group, but it is necessary to recall Figure 3 on the degree to which source materials were used for ideas. The two EAL groups are very similar when we construct a composite measure of 'how effectively the language of source materials was changed in the cases where source materials were used'.
- The EMT group is rated considerably higher than both, although they, too, may be considered to be under-using ideas from source materials.

If ideas are used from the source materials, they have to be found and understood, and then writers need to change both genre and register when incorporating them into their own texts. Students may need to be taught how to do this.

5.3.2 Effectiveness using ideas to achieve the purpose of writing

Scripts were rated for how well ideas were used in achieving the writers' purpose, e.g. to write a persuasive letter for newspaper readers. Figure 5 shows the results for ideas from source materials and writers' own ideas.



Use of source ideas to achieve purpose of writing.

Use of own ideas to achieve purpose of writing.

Figure 5: Effectiveness of use of ideas to achieve purpose of writing

- Focus group writers are least effective in using either type of ideas, and have slightly more problems using source material ideas than their own.
- The EMT group are much more effective than the Focus group with both types of ideas, although still only slightly more than half of the EMT writers make effective use of ideas.
- The High EAL group are more effective at using their own ideas, although a surprisingly high percentage have problems in effective use of ideas from source materials.

EAL writers under-use ideas from source materials. When they do use them, they have problems in changing the language to fit the genre and register of their writing, and in using ideas effectively to achieve the purpose of their writing.

5.4 The organisation of extended writing through paragraphing

Paragraphing was a major problem for all groups – the scripts predicted grade C/D or lower featured hardly any use of paragraphs to structure texts, by presenting and linking topics and ideas. Where paragraphs appeared, they were often single sentences (as in sample script 4). Even the high level scripts could have made more use of text organisation through paragraphing. We examined three aspects of paragraphing: whether paragraphs were explicitly used to build up the overall message of the text (Figure 6); explicit linking between paragraphs (Figure 7); and variety in the openings of paragraphs (Figure 8).

- The Focus group and EMT group show similar patterns:- very limited use of paragraphs and little or no linking between paragraphs.
- The High EAL group far out-performed the other groups in the use paragraphs. Nearly half could do more explicit signposting of how paragraphs develop the overall text and many could make more links between paragraphs.

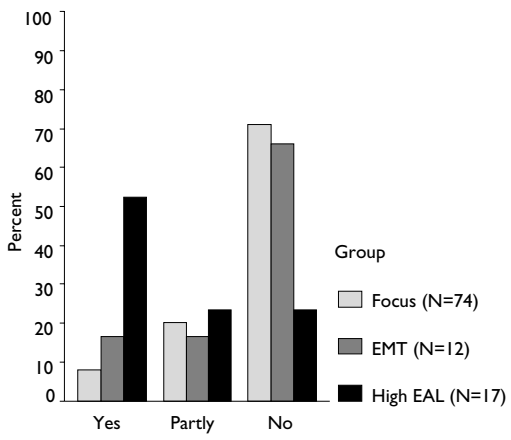


Figure 6: Is the relationship between paragraphs and text as whole signposted?

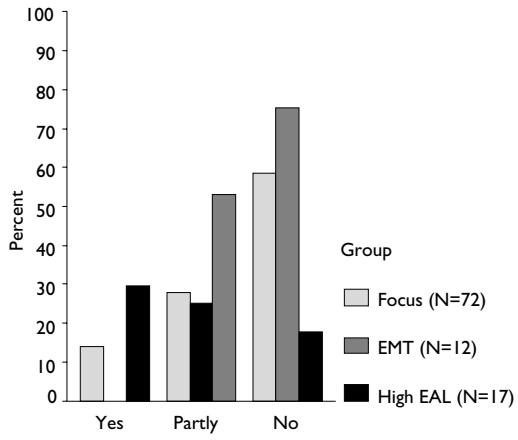


Figure 7: Are links made between paragraphs?

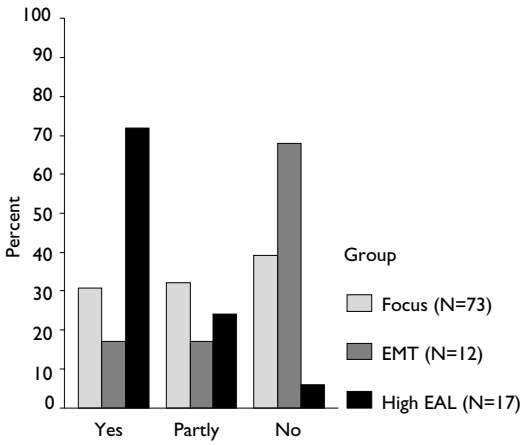


Figure 8: Is there variety in how paragraphs start?

5.5 Genre knowledge and control

Genres are socially conventionalised ways of writing for particular purposes and contexts. We found variation in students' confidence and ability to use a genre appropriate to the task but also great problems for all groups in writing consistently within a given genre. This was particularly so in English Language, and to a lesser extent in the other subject areas. Features of genre that emerged as important and are analysed here are:

- format
- style
- voice and purpose
- stance.

To understand the demands that writing in a specified genre creates for student writers, we analysed 109 English A scripts (to argue or persuade): 79 from the Focus group, 13 from EMT pupils and 17 from High EAL pupils. The particular task of writing a letter to the local paper was looked at in some detail.

5.5.1 Format

Students need to know the format of such letters in order to produce their own. It seems unlikely that many 16 year olds will have actually written such a letter, and it would be interesting to know how many students are exposed to genuine models of the genre by regularly reading

the letters page of their local paper. It is likely that the genre is largely encountered in school. The aspects of format which were analysed for the letter were the opening and closing formulae.[12] Writers were rated first for whether they used appropriate openings and closings; either *Dear Sir or Madam* or *Dear Mr / Mrs A..* were accepted as openings, and *Yours faithfully / Yours sincerely + signature* respectively as closings.[13] If scripts used appropriate formulae, they were further rated for accuracy, i.e. spelling and punctuation.

- The Focus group scored fairly well on these formulaic aspects of genre format, doing far better than the EMT pupils and reaching reasonable levels of accuracy. It seemed as if they had mastered the predictable formulae or rules that could be learnt.
- Closings were more difficult to get right than openings.

5.5.2 Style

Genres usually require a particular style or register of writing, although the reality of the examination situation may influence the strength of style a writer chooses - the bombastic and chauvinist tone of some letters in real local papers is unlikely to be approved of by teachers or examiners. Phrases that seemed inappropriate to the genre were counted, and then examined to see in what ways they were inappropriate. Clear differences emerged across the groups:

- The EMT group, on average, made more errors of appropriateness than the Focus group. Most involved the use of language more appropriate to spoken English:
  when we watch telly
  so ok; I mean when I was at school

- The High EAL group used quite a few inappropriate phrases, but this must be seen against their much greater facility with voice and genre, and greater range of vocabulary and styles. Sometimes they seemed to misjudge slightly and produce writing that was 'over the top', by being too poetic or too informal, as in these examples:
  the same long trail of death in their black chariot (= a traffic jam)
  well there you have it! of course not!

  These inappropriacies are examples of 'errors of ambition', where the more successful writers are being more adventurous and taking more risks.

Inappropriate phrases used by the Focus group were of several different types:

- use of language that was too informal (but still for written genres):
  Hope you are fine.
- use of language that was too formal:
  I thank you extremely for your patience and time
- use of language more appropriate to spoken English:
  I mean just look at
- expressing inappropriate relation between writer and reader:
  don't just sit there – get moving
- overly explicit and more appropriate for formal academic essay genre:
  I think I have given some good reasons as to why there should be a bike-friendly measure.

[12] Although we did not analyse the inclusion of addresses of sender and addressee, the sample scripts illustrate some of the problems that students had with this.

[13] Teachers' comments on scripts showed that they were divided as to which form was appropriate.

The different groups (and possibly students within groups) need different support to make their writing more appropriate to genre:

- *The Focus group need most support in developing awareness of degrees of formality, and the language typical of different written genres.*
- *The EMT group need more familiarity with written genres and their language.*
- *The High EAL group need more advanced awareness and skills in judging nuances of style.*

5.5.3 Voice and purpose

The English Language questions require the writer to adopt a voice that was often not their own, e.g. a local resident or road safety expert, in which to address an imagined reader (of local paper, of school magazine), while the real writer and reader remain student and examiner. The multiple voices and layers of writer-reader relationships add to the demands of the writing task.

Many students seemed to have problems in finding the appropriate voice and in 'keeping in character' all the way through their writing. There were certain key points where the relationships between writer(s) and reader(s) were revealed, particularly at the start of the letter and at its conclusion. The ability of writers to find and stay in voice was also revealed when they wrote about purpose: either when explaining why the letter was being written or when suggesting action that a reader might take.

Choice of addressee for the letter to the paper

In writing a letter, a first step in establishing a relationship between writer and reader was to decide on the addressee. In yet another layering of writers and readers, letters to the paper, which are to be read by the paper's readers, are usually addressed to the editor. The sample scripts show something of the variety in who was chosen as the addressee:

1. local newspaper writer
2. Sir / Madam
3. the Manager + Sir or Madam
4. Mr Striffe

The first is clearly inappropriate, while both addressees used in the third script are appropriate. The other two are also appropriate.

- Across all the letters to a local paper in English Language scripts, more than half chose inappropriate addressees, with the Focus group making fewest errors and the EMT group making most.

Giving an appropriate purpose for writing the letter

After the opening of the letter, the genre usually features a statement of writer's purpose (in the adopted voice). In sample script 1, we see a Focus group pupil stating an appropriate purpose:

> *I have written this letter to tell you my reasons to introduce bike-friendly measures*

- Only around half of all writers of letters included an appropriate statement of purpose, with the EMT group doing better than the EAL pupils.

Concluding a letter appropriately

When the letter was being concluded, a final statement might be expected to summarise and close. Sample script 3 has a nice closing sentence, but it fits a letter urging people to use their bikes, not one that aims to urge more bike-friendly measures

- All groups had major problems concluding their texts appropriately, with only around a quarter managing to do so.
- The EMT group were the least successful, with the two EAL groups performing similarly.
- It was particularly striking how many letter writers concluded by asking the reader to contact them and gave a phone number (sample scripts 1, 3 and 4 all do this), although they had not included any reason in the letter as to why contact should be made. It seemed as if this formula had been learnt by rote and applied regardless of whether the purpose of the letter was a job application or an expression of opinion.

Persuading the reader to act

Another indicator of how well students were managing in their role as (imagined) writer to construct purposes for (imagined) readers was found in sections of the letter where the writer was trying to persuade readers to take some action. If the action suggested was inappropriate for newspaper readers, then clearly the pupil was confused as to purpose and who was who:

If you don't cycle it will be a loss for you (sample script 1)
you can loose weight (sample script 3)

- Over 70% of the EAL pupils suggested action that was inappropriate for newspaper readers.
- EMT pupils did only slightly better, with more than half of the scripts showing this type of problem.

The problem of constructing a purpose for the imagined reader may have arisen as a direct result of the problems all groups had with changing the language of source material content (seen in an earlier section).

The requirement to write in very specific genres in the English Language tasks led to a need for pupils to adopt and use multiple layers of voices, which caused great confusion for all groups.

Apart from formulaic openings and closings that seemed to have been learnt by rote, pupils seemed unclear about their purpose in their role as writer, about who exactly was their audience, and how to address them.

It may be that pupils can be helped to think themselves into their roles on such tasks as part of the writing process, although a stronger view might urge that students be given less complex tasks that require more straightforward genres and that allow them to write as themselves.

5.5.4 Stance and writing in religious education

Stance is a further aspect of identity and its role in writing. Whereas voice concerns the writer as individual, 'stance' concerns the writer as a member of socio-cultural groups with their own attitudes and conventions. For example, in writing in the voice of 'someone concerned with cycling in the local community', most pupils wrote as young people for whom cycling was an acceptable and enjoyable form of exercise. One script stood out because the writer adopted the voice of a 93-year-old war veteran who still used his bike. The stance that came with this identity was of anger at young people who caused him danger and at the council for not providing better riding conditions. Unfortunately, the pupil went rather too far in conveying the

anger and resentment of this character, but the example shows how the notion of stance adds to our understanding of how a writer's identity (or adopted identity) might influence a text.

In subject area writing, pupils are expected to write as apprentices in the subject discipline. In this role they are expected to take an academic stance towards knowledge in that discipline. For example, in history they are expected to use source materials in particular ways and to explain how the materials support the answers they give to questions.

The issue of stance was particularly interesting in the religious education scripts, where pupils were required to write about both Christianity and Islam, and seemed to do this somewhat differently. We explored this in a total of 36 RE scripts, 22 answering questions on Islam and 14 on Christianity. Most (28 scripts) came from Focus students, with eight scripts from High EAL writers. 12 students provided scripts on both topics. The language background and names of pupils suggest that all were Muslims.[14]

Muslim students come to this writing as members of their religious community as well as pupils taking an RE examination. From their membership of the first group, they have a lot of knowledge that should help with answering questions, along with a stance towards that knowledge as a believer. To be used successfully in an examination, a different stance, that of the subject discipline, has to be taken towards the content. This 'western' academic stance includes trying to be 'objective' towards the content, and providing support and evidence for arguments. The examination answer genre requires a writer to 'display' knowledge and reasoning to the examiner, explaining many things that, in other contexts, might be taken as shared knowledge with a reader.

Raters were asked to rate how far subject knowledge was explained or assumed, and how far an 'objective' stance to evidence was taken. These ratings confirmed initial judgements that writers took a different stance in writing about Islam to that taken in writing about Christianity. (Figures 9 and 10 below)

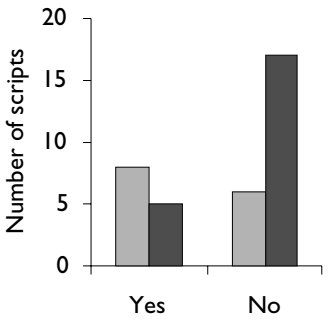


Figure 9: Is subject knowledge explained rather than assumed?

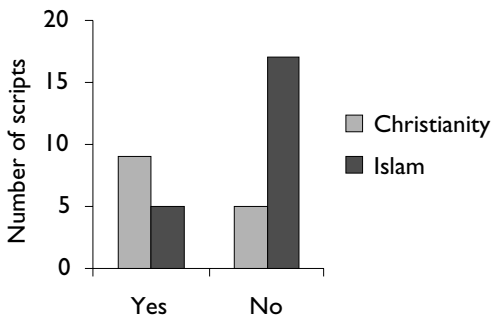


Figure 10: Is an 'objective' stance to cause / evidence taken?

[14] The first languages of writers were Bengali (24), Urdu (8), with one each of Turkish and Punjabi, and two unknown.

Qualitative analysis of the scripts found that stance shows itself in the following ways:

- ***Use of pronouns***

The examination question asks about the religions, using the third person to refer to Muslims and Christians. This works to distance writer and reader from the content:

> *Describe and explain why Muslims keep Ramadan.*
>
> *Explain how celebrating Eid ul Fitr might strengthen the Muslim community.*
>
> *Explain how any two places have become centres of Christian pilgrimage.*
>
> *How and why might the life of a Christian be affected by going on pilgrimage?*

Most pupils stayed with the third person, writing about Muslims as *they*, rather than *we*. A few moved into first person pronouns:

> *Muslims keep Ramadan beacause of <u>our</u> phrophet*
>
> *Muslims show to Allah that there are poor people suffering…so this is why <u>we</u> fast.*

It is much easier for Muslim pupils to write of Christians as *they* because, as non-members of that group, they already have a 'distanced' stance towards them.

- ***In the type of explanations given***

About a quarter of Islam scripts used explanations that would be appropriate from a 'believer' stance, but less appropriate from a subject discipline or 'pupil taking exam' stance. For example, reasons for keeping Ramadan were given as:

> *it Allah's duty*
>
> *because it is one of the 5 pillars of Islam*
>
> *because Prophet Muhammed said that all Muslim people should fast in 30 days*

A few writers used language more appropriate to the genre of religious texts:

> *we as muslims must follow his path of goodness, and be praise that Allah who created us to honour him and celebrate his festivals*

- ***In what was left unexplained***

There were many examples of features of Islam that were mentioned but not explained, including

> *5 pillars of Islam, Zakat, Hajj, 'night of power', read namaz.*[15]

> *Explicit discussion of the stance that a writer needs to take in different genres, and examples of how stance is shown in written language, might help Muslim pupils make more effective use of their knowledge of Islam in RE writing.*

[15] It is difficult to be precise about what needs to be explained, since aspects of Islam are increasingly familiar in the UK, and particularly in communities served by project schools. However, it will always be the case that more needs to be explained in examinations in order to display pupils' knowledge to examiners.

6 Features of writing within texts

At this more detailed level of content, we are concerned with how student writers use the resources of sentence grammar, and how they use words and phrases to build clauses and sentences to develop and communicate ideas. When analysing writing 'within the text', the following features of writing emerged as important:

Content

- ☐ The development of sub-topics or ideas to contribute to the overall content, and within the overall generic structure, writer-reader relationship and purpose of the text.
- ☐ Topic development can be done through exemplification (discussing concrete examples), elaboration (giving more specific information about how something works or what it looks like), and explanation of connections, e.g. reasons why an event happened, how parts of an object or event relate to each and combine into a whole, the relation in time of events.

Use of language resources

- ☐ The use of grammar to express detailed links between ideas, through clause structure and combinations of clauses and through the positioning of content in sentences, particularly by moving from given information to new information on a topic.
- ☐ Vocabulary resources to provide words and phrases to show meanings, connections, and different levels of detail.
- ☐ Various aspects of accuracy: choosing the right pronouns and word endings to maintain cohesion; technical accuracy in sentence construction (punctuation, word order); and working within language conventions regarding word choice and fixed forms in phrases.

6.1 Overview of findings at within-text level

The Focus group do much the same in their use of vocabulary and sentence grammar as the EMT group, but major differences show up in their accuracy within phrases used to build up clauses and sentences. The High EAL group make quite different use of sentence grammar and do so much more accurately. There are, however, a couple of areas in which errors still occur – these emerge as distinctively EAL – Subject-Verb agreements, preposition errors in formulaic phrases and putting apostrophes in the wrong place. The EMT group writing, while structurally similar to the Focus EAL pupils', differs in looking much more like spoken English written down.[16]

6.2 Vocabulary and the development of ideas

Quality of writing depends not only on the number of ideas but on how ideas are developed, and variation in vocabulary is a key resource for developing ideas. Scripts were not long enough to do any quantitative analysis, so what is reported here are tendencies that emerged in reading and rating scripts. The better scripts not only included more ideas, but also moved between the general and the specific in writing about an idea. To exemplify this, we can see how sample script 3 (High EAL) develops the topic of *keeping fit and healthy*. As well as repeating this phrase 3 times, the writer also uses more specific ways of talking about health and fitness. She introduces *riding a bike* as an example of *keeping fit* in line 21:

[16] But see discussion on pages 35–36.

An easy simple quick way of keeping fit is by just riding a bike for about an hour each week [17]

She goes into specific details of *heart problems* by giving the example of *heart attacks* (line 36). The topic *loose weight* is developed as *loose 3 stones in the last two months* (line 29). She takes from the source materials the detail *burning body fat and raising your metabolic rate* (line 33).[18]

In contrast, the vocabulary used in sample script 2 remains at a very general level. These superordinate terms are repeated several times but not developed with more specific words and phrases:

measures, area, environment, people, public.

The writer mentions three advantages for more bike-friendly measures at the end of the letter (line 19):

decrease the traffic, save our money, help public fittness.

However, these phrases too remain rather general. The quality of the writing could be improved by developing each of the ideas with specific details.

Script 1 differs from script 2 in using a greater range of vocabulary, with some specificity and detail. For example, *area* (line 3) is developed with

safe and crime free area (line 4)
pollution in the area, traffic problems (line 9)
pavements (line 11)
urban area (line 19)

Each of these, and the other ideas in the script, could be pushed into more specific detail. It also becomes clear when we look at the distribution of general and specific vocabulary that the topics could be better organised, with connected ideas grouped together.

The EMT writer of sample script 4 does something different with ideas and vocabulary. In this writing, there is little movement between general and specific and each idea remains rather specific. For example, there is mention of *children, kids, adults, parents, neighbours*, but no reference to *people* or *community*.

While not claiming that these four writers are representative, we can say that these ways of developing ideas are found across the groups.

Highlighting the general and specific vocabulary used in a text allows us to see how well the writer is developing ideas by moving between the general and the specific. Less successful writing is likely to remain at a general level, or at a specific level. Students can be helped to use a wider range of vocabulary in the development of ideas.

[17] Extracts from scripts are presented as written.

[18] Once these phrases are noticed, we can also see that the writer has a tendency to repeat each one at least twice. This student would be helped by being shown how to reduce repetition and develop other topics instead.

6.3 Explanation of grammatical analysis

This section explains the resources that English sentence grammar offers to writers, introduces key terms, and highlights what is known about how these features develop in talk and writing.

6.3.1 The basic structure of an English clause

The structure of a simple basic clause in English can be seen as four 'slots' to be filled by 'constituents': Subject, Verb, Object or Complement, and Adverbial.[19] The Verb is central in that every clause must have a verb in it, and, unless the clause is a command, the Verb has a Subject. The Object / Complement[20] usually follows the verb. Adverbials are the most flexible sentence constituent; there can be more than one and they can be placed in several different positions. The example clause below, from sample script 1, has been marked to show the four types of constituents:

{the government}	{should allow}	{more space}	{in trains}	{for bikes}
S	V	O	A	A

The basic order of an English clause is then S V O/C A (with the possibility of As being in several different places). A clause with a finite verb[21] is the simplest kind of sentence.

This clause structure is a resource for expressing ideas. At the simplest level, both developmentally and grammatically, the Subject will be the main protagonist or actor in the action expressed by the verb. The Object slot will include the 'acted-on' or what is affected by the verb, while the Adverbials allow detail of time, place, reason and so on to be added to the statement of action. This basic structure for expressing basic meanings is capable of extensive and delicate adaptations, some of which are now described.

Developmentally, young children learning English as a first language seem to make more use of slots at the end of clauses, particularly objects, and this is probably because of mental processing constraints. Traces of this preference for 'end-weighting' of ideas can be seen in children's writing well into secondary school.

6.3.2 Length of constituents

Each of the slots can be filled by single words, or, as in the example, by phrases containing more than one word. In the above example, the only noun that is pre-modified in any way is *space*; the other nouns *government, trains, bikes* are used alone, rather than with adjectives. In children's writing across the school years, using more words in a slot is an indication of progress and maturity in writing.[22] It is also the case that objects tend to be longer than subjects, and long subjects would be typical of more advanced writing. Research into the development of writing in English has shown that the length of the verb (rather than the number of verbs) is a key indicator of writing skills. Verb phrases are made longer and more complex by the addition of modal verbs, which indicate how probable or possible an action is. The modal verbs in English are *can, could, should, will, would, may, might, ought, used to* (and their negatives).

[19] Capital letters indicate that we are talking about sentence constituents, rather than 'parts of speech'.

[20] Complements refer to the same entity as the Subject, and occur mainly after the verb *to be* or similar verbs, e.g. *photographer* in the clause *She is a photographer*.

[21] For further explanations of grammatical terms, see a text such as Crystal (1998).

[22] Perera (1984).

6.3.3 Sub-ordination and co-ordination

Sentences, and the ideas they express, can be made more complicated by putting two or more clauses together with co-ordinators *and, but* or *so*, or by putting clauses in the Subject, Object / Complement or Adverbial slots. It is more difficult for a writer to embed clauses (sub-ordination) than to link them with co-ordinators. Children's writing is characterised by the use of co-ordination, rather than sub-ordination, and the Technical Accuracy project found this to be true at age 16, with all writers tending to string together many clauses in one sentence using *and* or *but*.

6.3.4 Types of subordination

Sub-ordination involves the use of clauses inside the Subject, Object / Complement, or Adverbial slots. This can be done in two ways: the Subject *etc.* can be a clause, or a clause can be embedded within the Subject *etc.*

First, consider when an entire slot is taken by a clause. If the Subject, Object or Complement is itself a clause, these are called Nominal clauses (because they take the place of a noun). Clauses in the Adverbial slot are called Adverbial clauses.

Nominal clause in Object slot:

{I} {think} {this is enough to get people cycling}
S V O

Nominal clauses used in the Object position have been found to be the most common type in children's writing,[23] especially, as above, after verbs like *say, think, know*. Subordinate Subject clauses are used less, and develop later than Object and Adverbial clauses.

Adverbial clauses can be of different sorts – pupils in other studies have been found to put clauses on to the ends of sentences before they use them in other positions; in the next example, an Adverbial clause of reason comes at the end of the main clause, and is linked to the main clause by the sub-ordinator *because*

{The government} {should give} {safe storage spaces} {for bikes} {because bikes get stolen}
S V O A A

In this example, the sub-ordinate Adverbial clause has the structure:
subordinator + Subject + Verb.

Adverbial clauses are a central resource for the development of ideas because they allow writers to show connections between people, objects, events *etc.* The connections that can be expressed are various, and have been shown by other studies to develop at different rates. Adverbial clauses that show simple time relations (clauses beginning *when*...), cause or reason (*because*...) and condition (*if*...) have been found, in previous studies, to be used in writing towards the end of primary school, along with clauses that explain the purpose of an action (*so that*...) or its results (*so*...). Clauses of place (*where*...), more advanced time connections (*before, after, until*), manner (*as if*...) and concession (*although..., unless*...) develop later.

[23] Perera (1984).

The second way of doing sub-ordination, embedding clauses within slots, makes use of Relative clauses. Relative clauses are used to include more information about a noun that is already mentioned, as in the example below from sample script 1, which has a simple S + V construction, with a relative clause (*who go walking*) inside the Subject:

{other people who go walking} {complain}
S V

Relative clauses appear in children's writing towards the end of primary school, first at the end of clauses, then in Subject slots. The most advanced relative clauses, which first-language studies have found to be still developing in both talk and writing at secondary level, are those introduced by *whose, which,* and prepositions + *which*. A feedback effect comes into play with this feature – because such clauses are mainly found in written discourse, children do not encounter many until literacy skills are quite well developed. This contributes to their late development, alongside the fact that they express more complicated ideas and connections.

6.3.5 Non-finite clauses

The clauses discussed so far all have finite verbs, i.e. one that contains information about the Subject and the action by being marked for person, tense or number. Non-finite clauses have a Verb, but it is not so marked. The Verb can be in the base form *to tell*, or in past or present participle form *having told, for / by / after telling*, as in the following examples:

Non-finite clause as Adverbial
{I} {have written} {this letter} {<u>to tell you my reasons</u> ...}
S V O A

Non-finite participial clause inside a Subject
{An easy simple way of <u>keeping fit</u>} {is}
S V

Non-finite participial clause as Adverbial
{By Burning body fat and raising your metabolic rate} {you} {can loose} {weight}
A S V O

The last two examples show the most complex type of non-finite clause, which uses a preposition followed by a participle verb form. Seen as a grammatical resource, these clauses are excellent for developing information already mentioned, while at the same time allowing explanation of reason, result, time etc. In the Technical Accuracy project, the use of participial non-finite clauses was a feature of A grade writing, adding variety to writing and offering an important way of linking sentences.

6.3.6 Analysis of scripts

Use of language resources

Students' writing was examined to see how they used clause structure as a resource by combining clauses and in the length of constituents. The greatest interest is in the number and type of clauses used by students, to see if EAL pupils followed the patterns established in other studies of EMT writers, and to find out where they might be helped to develop further.

Grammatical analysis was carried out on 100-word samples of texts, from the beginning of texts,[24] and across the full range of content areas. The 100-word blocks were analysed for sentence structure using a column format, which works from the basic clause structure described above and has two basic operating principles: (1) place words and phrases in their clause slot; (2) take a new line for each new verb.[25] The organised display of sentences that emerges is then easy to inspect visually to see where ideas are being placed in clauses, how many words are going in each slot, what types of clauses are being used, and what kinds of vocabulary are being used. The 'column analyses' of the sample scripts can be seen in Appendix 3. Column analyses were then used to rate scripts on each of the features of sentence grammar listed in Table 4 below.

Feature of sentence grammar	*what was analysed*
Use of Subordination	
use of subordination	*the types used in the first 100 words*
non-finite clauses	*the number in the first 100 words*
Subject relative clauses	*the number in the first 100 words*
Adverbial clauses	*the number in the first 100 words*
Clauses in Obj / Comp position	*the number in the first 100 words*
Use of clause slots	
Objects / Complements	*the number in the first 100 words*
Modals	*the types used in the first 100 words*
Adverbial phrases	*the number in the first 100 words*
Length of Subjects	*number of single and multi-word Subjects*
Length of Objects / Comp phrases	*the average number of words per phrase*
Length of Adverbial phrases	*the average number of words per phrase*
Length of Clauses in Obj / Comp slot	*the average number of words per clause*
Length of Adverbial clauses	*the average number of words per clause*

Table 4: Features of sentence grammar analysed

The results for English Language and humanities (RE, history, geography, English literature) were examined both separately and together. Where samples were large enough, statistical tests were carried out on results to see if differences between the three student groups were statistically significant.

Analysis of accuracy

A range of features was analysed across all scripts, all being counted in the first 100 words. Raters also noted down errors in phrases, which were put together and analysed, and made general comments on scripts, which contributed to analysis. In addition, a random sample of 20 Focus group scripts were further examined for problems with verbs. Table 5 shows the complete list of features analysed for accuracy.

[24] Because letters often opened with a formulaic sentence which appeared to have been learnt by heart, raters were instructed to omit the first sentence and begin the 100 word block at the second.

[25] When writers use structures, such as questions or non-conventional forms, that do not fall into this structure, arrows or other devices are used to represent what was actually written. There are inevitably, some parts of students' writing that could not be fitted into the analysis, but it proved flexible enough for most, although it did require a high level of grammatical expertise on the part of analysts.

Accuracy features	*what was analysed*
Vocabulary	*collection of errors noted in scripts*
Prepositions in formulaic phrases / collocations	
Use of delexical verbs	
Word class errors	
Filling lexical gaps	
Comparative forms	
Verbs	
Use of modals	*random sample of 20 Focus group scripts*
Endings / tenses	*random sample of 20 Focus group scripts*
Subject-Verb agreements	*the number in the first 100 words*
Agreements	*the number in the first 100 words*
Noun-pronoun agreements	
Plural forms	
Articles	*the number in the first 100 words*
Articles used but wrongly	
Missing articles	
Spelling	*the number in the first 100 words*
Incorrect spellings	
Incorrect copying of words from source materials	
Punctuation	*the number in the first 100 words*
Commas used in wrong places	
Missing commas	
Apostrophes used in wrong places	
Missing apostrophes	

Table 5: Accuracy features counted in school scripts

6.4 Use of sentence grammar

This section reports findings about the use of grammar resources by the three groups. Appendix 4, Tables 14–17 show the overall means for each of the features of within text use of grammatical resources, with their significance values.

6.4.1 Overview of sentence grammar findings

Focus group and EMT group writing make very similar use of the sentence grammar possibilities of English, and differ strongly from the High EAL writing.

Difficulties in writing shared by Focus and EMT groups

- using Subjects longer than a single word
- composing sentences with a range of grammatical structures
- using a range of sub-ordinators
- using non-finite participial clauses
- using commas, full stops and capitals to show clause and sentence structure.

Difficulties shared by all writing

- using Subject relative clauses
- making use of Adverbial phrases and clauses.

Difficulties specific to Focus group writing

- varying the length of the Subject in different types of writing
- incorporating detail into phrases around nouns.

These findings are now explained in more detail.

6.4.2 Length of clause constituents

In the Subject slot

- In school scripts, across all subject areas, the Focus group use the shortest Subjects, with significantly fewer multi-word Subjects than the High EAL group. The ratio of single word Subjects to multi-word Subjects is more than two to one for the Focus group.
- The Focus group use slightly shorter Subjects than the EMT group, but the pattern of many single word Subjects is common to both groups, particularly in English Language scripts.
- The pattern of Subject phrases used by the Focus group does not vary with the type of writing, whereas the EMT and High EAL show an increased use of longer Subjects in Humanities.
- The difference in the length of Subjects across the groups is least marked in English Language scripts and most marked in humanities.

Short Subjects show up quite clearly in the sample column analyses (Appendix 3). They are often pronouns, and, in many of the persuasive texts, are first person pronouns *I* (see sample script 4). This way of starting sentences also puts most information at the ends of sentences, and contributes to 'end-weighting'.

Objects and Adverbials

- Objects, Complements and Adverbials were between two and three words in length when they were phrases, and between five and seven words long when clauses were used. These mean lengths were very similar across groups and types of writing.

Given that the minimum length of a clause is around three words, we can see that there is an overall tendency to use 'bare' noun phrases. This tendency can be seen in the column analyses (Appendix 3). Numerical measures tell us nothing about the types of words used in phrases or clauses, but analysis of vocabulary (section 6.2) showed that the Focus and EMT groups tended also to use simpler and less varied vocabulary. Typical phrases are:

the school (script 4)
the adults (script 4)
a good idea (script 2)

Longer phrases include:

bike-friendly measures (which was in the question)
an easy quick simple way
a larger number of young people (both script 3).

Longer noun phrases could be generated by pre-modifying nouns with adjectives or by using the *of* structure above, and by making links between ideas through alternative ways of referring across sentences, e.g. *a further idea that involves children rather than adults*.

All writers, but particularly Focus and EMT groups, could be helped to write longer noun phrases, by pre-modifying nouns with adjectives or by extending in other ways.

6.4.3 Adverbials

Adverbials add information about Subjects, Verbs or Objects, and are thus a valuable resource for developing ideas through adding detail. With a mean number of only around 8 phrases per 100 words, less than one per sentence, this resource is being under-used.

Writers could be encouraged to use more Adverbial phrases to add detail about when, where, why and how to their topics.

6.4.4 Sub-ordination

- Important differences emerged between the High EAL group and the other two in the use of sub-ordination to construct sentence types. The Focus and the EMT group performed in similar ways.

Amount of sub-ordination

Looking first at the number of sub-ordinators used, it was found that:

- There was a consistent pattern, across all types of writing, in which the High EAL group used fewest sub-ordinators, with significant and highly significant differences between their means and those of the EMT and the Focus group.
- The EMT group used most sub-ordinators, but there was no significant difference with the Focus group.
- RE writing produced the most sub-ordination, significantly higher than English A, and English writing produced the least sub-ordination.

Comparing the amounts of sub-ordination in different slots in clauses, it was found that:

- There was very little use of Subject relative clauses in any of the writing.
- The numbers of Adverbial clauses used was between two and three per 100 words, compared with 7–9 phrases in the same slot and performing the same function.

A fairly simple way of increasing the complexity of writing would be to encourage writers to expand phrases into clauses. This would also push towards being more specific about ideas. For example:

I had a little discussion <u>with the local neighbours</u>

could become

I had a little discussion <u>with the neighbours who live in my street</u>

- Object clauses in English A were very often of the simple type that follows verbs *think* or *know*:

  I think <u>that bike friendly measures should be introduced</u>

It should be noted that more sub-ordination does not imply higher quality writing. In fact, the Technical Accuracy project found the reverse to be true. Similarly, in the EAL project more successful writers used less sub-ordination because they had a wider range of ways of combining clauses and making interesting sentences.

Types of sub-ordination

Looking at which subordinators were used (see the left hand column of analyses in Appendix 3), there is evidence that

- the High EAL group are using more of the more cognitively complex subordinators than either of the other groups.

The nine most frequent sub-ordinators used by each group are given in Table 6.[26] *although* can be seen to occur in the top 9 for the High EAL group, but not for the others. The High EAL group also make much greater use of *which*, either alone or combined with a preposition.

	Focus	EMT	High EAL
1	that	that	that
2	because	because	as
3	if	if	because
4	as	when	which
5	when	as / so	when
6	so		so
7	which	how	if
8	who	who	where
9	where	what	although

Table 6: Most frequent sub-ordinators

The use of sub-ordinators by EAL writers seems to follow the pattern for first-language writers identified by Perera (1984) and the differences between high and low graded scripts found in the Technical Accuracy project. Sub-ordinators used in scripts can be divided into two groups:

Basic sub-ordinators: *that, because, if, so, as, when, who*

Advanced sub-ordinators: *which, where, although, after, until, unless* etc.

Inspection of sub-ordinators in the 100-word samples used for column analysis showed that

- About one third of Focus and EMT script samples made use of one or more of the more advanced sub-ordinators; two thirds, or twice as many, High EAL scripts used these.

As pointed out above, sub-ordination is a rich resource for making connections between ideas at sentence level. Using more advanced sub-ordinators requires specific conceptual knowledge that enables connections to be brought to mind, as well as the language skills to write them. Focusing on the language alone is unlikely to lead to improvements.

> *Focus and EMT students might benefit from detailed attention to the meaning and use of more advanced sub–ordinators and the connections between ideas that they can be used to make.*

[26] Below the 9th position, ranking ceases to be useful because of the small numbers of scripts then involved – two EMT or four High EAL scripts.

6.4.5 Non-finite clauses

- Only 2 or 3 non-finite clauses were used per 100 words, and many of these were of the very simple sort within a verb phrase.
- In writing across all subjects, except Literature, the High EAL group used significantly more than the other two groups, who showed similar means.
- However, very few of the more advanced types – Adverbial participial non-finite clauses introduced by prepositions – were found in the writing. The High EAL writers used slightly more than the other groups.

Again this clause type is an important resource for making connections at sentence level between ideas and parts of topics.

> *All writers could be helped to make more use of non-finite clauses of the sort that begin with a preposition and show a link between ideas:*
>
> *after listing the reasons, ...*
>
> *in agreeing to this, ...*
>
> *by joining in sport ...*

6.4.6 Accuracy in sub-ordination

- Sub-ordinators were sometimes used wrongly, suggesting a logical connection that was not intended. An example occurs in sample script 1, where *because* is used where so *that* is needed:

  The government should allow more space in trains for bikes.. this is <u>because</u> if anyone wants to take their bike with them they can.
- Both EMT and Focus group writing had many problems with the construction and demarcation of sentences using conventions of punctuation (see later). There were many examples of clauses strung together with *and*, of commas used instead of full stops (comma splicing), and of complete absence or apparently random use of capital letters and full stops.

> *Punctuation should be taught alongside how to use sub-ordination. For example, non-finite clauses are usually separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma; use of the comma would be part of learning about non-finite clauses.*

6.5 Use of within-text resources: vocabulary, verbs, agreements, punctuation and spelling

6.5.1 Overview of findings at phrase and word level

It is at this level that major differences emerge between the Focus group and the EMT group, with a set of accuracy features in the use of words and phrases found problematic only by the Focus EAL writers. There are also a couple of features that are still problematic for the High EAL group, suggesting that these are strong EAL features. Furthermore, the differences between the Focus and EMT groups lie in the use of vocabulary and word grammar, and not in the more technical features of punctuation and spelling, where similar profiles are seen.

Difficulties specific to the Focus group

- choosing the correct preposition in fixed phrases
- choosing the appropriate delexical verb
- finding the accepted vocabulary item: compensation strategies included blended phrases, circumlocutions and creative alternatives, using delexical verb instead of one with more lexical content.
- consistency in use of modals to express conditionality or hypothetical statements
- getting the right endings on verbs and nouns
- qualified comparatives
- noun-pronoun agreements
- plurals
- using the right article.

Difficulties shared by Focus and EMT groups

- a small number of pupils had major spelling problems
- putting full stops, commas, and apostrophes where they are needed
- using delexical verbs rather than verbs with more lexical content.

Difficulties shared to some degree by Focus and High EAL groups

- choosing the correct prepositions in fixed phrases
- agreement between Subject and Verb
- using the right article.

These features are now reported in more detail. Where features were counted across all scripts, the frequency data are given in Appendix 4, Table 17.

6.5.2 Focus group use of words

A range of features of written words and phrases that seemed to give problems differentially to the Focus group are discussed in this section. The first five features relate mainly to vocabulary and the other five to grammar, although there is, of course, overlap.

Prepositions in formulaic phrases and collocations

Formulaic phrases are those with restricted choice of words in particular slots. For example, in the phrase *a couple of weeks ago* there is no choice about *of*; it is the only preposition that can be used. Errors involved the use of the wrong preposition, the omission of a required preposition, or an additional preposition. For example:

can help <u>on</u> pollution	(with)
regret <u>of</u> what they did	(no preposition needed)
time to research <u>about</u> it	(into, or none needed)

- Prepositional errors were by far the most common error in Focus group writing, accounting for more than half of all errors that were noted in phrases.
- Prepositional errors are particularly persistent, in that they also feature in the writing of the High EAL group, where they account for about two-thirds of their (smaller number of) errors.

Delexical verbs

A delexical verb is one that is so frequently used and in so many different contexts that the link between the verb and its meaning becomes quite weak. The following verbs in the students' writing fell into this group:

put, do, have, make, go

Errors in the use of delexical verbs fell into two types

(1) One delexical verb is used instead of another:

make a stop to this (put)
they will do more fun (have)

(2) A delexical verb used instead of one with more lexical content:

schools don't give (show) enough interest
bike friendly measures should be taken (introduced)

- Problems with delexical verbs were the next most common accuracy features in Focus group writing, accounting for about 16% of errors noted in phrases. There were some similar errors in EMT writing but usually of the second type.

EAL errors in the use of prepositions and delexical verbs are interesting because they suggest something about additional language development. We can first note that the majority of EMT errors at within-text level seemed to arise from a lack of familiarity with phrases characteristic of written language. Instead, the use of spoken English features in their writing:

has (as) *it could improve*
in which (which) *we would like to do*
this has sured (ensured) *a rapid decrease*

It may be speculated that Focus pupils too might be relying on their spoken English as they write. Potentially, Focus group pupils as bilinguals have their first language as well as English as a resource to draw on for writing. In cases where students have developed their literacy skills in their first language, we might expect to find evidence of translation. However, the self-assessment of first language literacy skills (Tables 11 and 12) suggests that only a few of the Focus group have transferable literacy skills in their first language. Both Focus and EMT groups thus seem likely to have their spoken languages as the major source of language resources to be drawn on in writing.

Taking the argument a step further, if Focus group writing reflects their use of their spoken English, then we might hypothesise that the inaccuracies found in written English reflect features of their spoken English. Further research would be needed to investigate this hypothesis but it does not seem improbable. The nature of the errors seems to support this possibility, since the features which cause problems for EAL students, word endings, prepositions and delexical verbs, are all single sounds and often unstressed in talk, and so would not be noticed very much in spoken English. In talk these features also do not greatly affect the communication of meaning, which is carried mostly by words with lexical content (mainly nouns and lexical verbs) and context.

It may be that unimportant inaccuracies in the spoken English of EAL pupils become more noticeable and problematic in writing, and that these types of lexical errors reflect the process of learning English through mainstream participation, where meaning can be understood without noticing small details at word level. It may also be that some strategies used by teachers to support the meaning of EAL in subject classes, such as highlighting key words, may contribute to this phenomenon.

Learning to write offers opportunities to notice these small features of English that might pass unnoticed in talk. Encouragement of accuracy and corrective feedback on these features in formal spoken language tasks and in writing from key stage 1 onwards may be helpful.

Word class errors

In these errors, a word of one word class (or 'part of speech') was used instead of a related word of another word class. For example, a noun was used in a verb slot, or a verb instead of adjective:

I wanted to <u>explorer</u>
rowing <u>machining</u> (machine).

- This type of error was largely found in Focus group scripts where it accounted for about 10% of errors noted in phrases.

These errors are probably due to over-generalisation of patterns of word meaning and form connections in English. Many words follow regular patterns in which nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs with linked meanings have linked forms e.g. *cook – cooker – cooking*. The form-meaning links, however, are not always predictable e.g. a person who *works* is a *worker*, but a *cooker* is not a person who *cooks*. They may also reflect the 'blurred capture' of words learnt principally from exposure to teacher talk in subject classrooms discussed in the previous section.

Qualified comparative forms

Focus group students had problems with comparisons, particularly when these used qualifying adverbs like much, more, very. Typical errors are:

very less
more oftenly
much more less
more bigger.

- Errors in comparative forms were mostly found in Focus group scripts, and much less frequently in EMT or High EAL scripts.

These errors are also probably due to over-generalisation of patterns.

Blended phrases

A small number of Focus group errors arose when parts of two phrases seemed to be combined to produce one:

take <u>place</u> (part) *in a sport activity*
large <u>amount</u> (number) *of periods.*

Circumlocutions and creative alternatives

Two lexical strategies were found in some Focus group writing to compensate for a word that was not available:

(1) Circumlocutions, where a phrase describing the word is used:

celebrating day (festival)

the mirror that looks behind (rear view mirror)

(2) Creative alternatives, where a word is constructed or transferred from another context:

first aid proof (certificate)

the frontscreen (windscreen)

Errors resulting from over-generalisation are 'positive errors' in that they show pupils' internal grammar development. Explicit feedback on errors on an individual basis may be helpful in highlighting exceptions to rules and over-generalisations. Group or class language awareness work that explicitly elicits, displays and discusses patterns, such as word class and meaning links, could be done when writing errors suggest it is appropriate.

6.5.3 Verbs

In the overall comments that raters were asked to give on their scripts, problems with verbs were mentioned for about 10% of Focus group scripts.[27] Analysis of the sample of Focus group scripts showed that

- 20% of the students made 80% of the errors. Although nearly half had at least one verb error, most of the errors were made by a limited group of students.

Other findings are now described.

Modal verbs and conditional sentences

All groups use the full range of modals but with different frequencies. It is interesting to look at the seven most frequently used modals in English A, where writing aims to persuade, argue or inform (Table 7).

	Focus	EMT	High EAL
1	should	can	would
2	will	would	can
3	can	could	should
4	would	should	will
5	could	will	may
6	might	may	could
7	must	might	couldn't

Table 7: The most frequently used modal verbs in English Language writing

The preference of the Focus group for *should* is interesting, since it is the strongest and most definite of the modals and perhaps not the most appropriate for the purposes of persuasion.

[27] This figure should be compared with comments on spelling problems which were made on 25% of Focus scripts.

The most common verb error in using modal verbs was in the expression of conditional or hypothetical meanings. The major way of doing this in English is through the use of the sub-ordinator *if*. The verbs used in different parts of an *if* sentence may need to be in different tenses to work together to construct a consistent meaning. In the first example from Focus group writing, the student begins with *would* and, with the sub-ordinator *if*, sets the action in an imagined world. This requires the second verb to be *made* and the third one *paid*:

> *It would be a great idea if you all make some kind of meeting at your local community centre, and should pay £1 for an instructer.*

In the next example, the first *if you can't* creates a scenario which might be true for some, and thus needs *should* and *might* to continue the conditionality:

> *if you can't ride a bike you can* (should) *not go to main Roads because you can* (might) *have an accident.*

If a sentence discusses something that is not the case but could be, we are working with hypothesis. This can be signalled by if, but does not have to be. The actions in the hypothetical world need to be could or would:

> *many people can* (could) *go to work by cycling but they don't*
>
> *it would be interesting to see what will* (would) *happen.*

> *Individual, explicit corrective feedback on the use of modals to express conditionality or hypothesis may be appropriate at Key Stage 2 onwards, in response to errors in writing.*

Verb tenses and endings

There was a range of verb ending errors:

Past participle endings:	*I've never took* (taken)
Mixed tenses in one sentence:	*when I use* (used) *to go to lunch I always ran ..so that I don't* (didn't) *have to wait*
Linking two verbs:	*should persuade us doing* (to do) *more exercise.*

6.5.4 Agreements

Subject-Verb agreement

These errors were counted in the 100-word column analyses of all scripts. They occur when a singular Subject is followed by a plural Verb or vice versa:

there are (is) *so much traffic.*

- The Focus group made most errors of this type.
- The EMT group made very few errors of this type.
- The High EAL made some errors in Subject-Verb agreement, but significantly fewer than the Focus group.
- The mean number of errors made by the EMT group shows a very highly significant difference with the Focus group mean, and a significant difference with the High EAL group mean.

Noun–pronoun agreements

An example of an error in noun-pronoun agreements occurs in sample script 2, line 11, where the plural noun measures is later referred back to as it:

I think bike-friendly measures should be introduced in my area. Because it will do ...

These agreements need to be maintained across sentences and sometimes paragraphs in writing. Errors were usually of number, i.e. a plural noun and singular pronoun, or vice versa, but some were of gender.

- The Focus group made many more errors than the other groups, with the EMT group making slightly fewer than the High EAL.
- There were high and very high levels of significance in the differences between the means of the Focus group and those of the High EAL and EMT groups respectively.

Plural noun forms

We checked the numbers of plural nouns that showed errors in the 100 word samples of scripts. For example, in script 2, line 19, the plural form *advantages* is needed to fit with the rest of the sentence, but a singular form is used.

- Again, Focus group students made by far the most errors here, with very highly significant differences between their scores and those of the High EAL and EMT groups.

6.5.5 Articles

We examined articles used wrongly and omitted in 100 word samples of all scripts.

- Focus group students made the most errors in the use of articles.
- The EMT group made very few errors in the use of articles.
- The average number of articles used wrongly by the Focus group was significantly higher than the EMT group.
- The omission of articles by the Focus group was highly significant in comparison with the High EAL group.
- The High EAL group was much more accurate than the Focus group in the use of articles, although sometimes the wrong article was used e.g. *a* when *the* was needed.

Errors in articles, agreements and endings may sometimes benefit from explicit group or class teaching, but are more likely to respond to corrective feedback on an individual basis so that pupils can see how the correct form is needed to express their meaning precisely.

6.5.6 Punctuation and spelling

Commas

We examined commas used in the wrong places and omitted in the 100 word samples of all scripts.

- The Focus and EMT groups omit significantly more commas than the High EAL group.
- There are no significant differences between the groups in the numbers of commas used in the wrong place.
- The High EAL group make most errors in putting commas in the wrong places, but this probably results from making more adventurous use of sentence structure and clauses that require commas.

Apostrophes

We examined apostrophes used in the wrong places and missing apostrophes in the 100-word samples of all scripts.

- As with commas, the High EAL group were more accurate in not omitting apostrophes (highly significant differences), but made more errors than the EMT group in positioning them (not significant).
- The Focus group made most errors in positioning apostrophes but were better than the EMT group at not omitting them (differences not significant).

Full stops

We noted, but did not count, problems with full stops and capital letters. These may arise from difficulties with sentence construction, rather than being simply errors of punctuation. Very many scripts from Focus and EMT groups displayed problems with the use and marking of sentences.

> *Pupils should understand punctuation as a tool to help clear expression of a writer's meaning, and punctuation should be taught alongside clause and sentence structure. A combination of explicit class input on the use of punctuation features with long-term individual corrective feedback is likely to be most effective.*

Spelling

- The Focus group and EMT group made similar numbers of spelling errors, about twice as many as the High EAL group (highly significant differences).
- In both Focus and EMT groups, a limited number of pupils accounted for a majority of spelling errors.
- The EMT group made most errors in copying words from sources, although differences were not significant.

6.6 Conclusion: The complexity of problematic features of writing

The features identified in the previous section as causing particular problems for EAL pupils come in combinations, as the sample scripts illustrate. Furthermore, combinations of problematic features interact to affect writing at word, phrase and clause level. The 'within text' problematic features are also closely inter-related with 'whole text' issues, such as generating and developing ideas about which to write.

There seems to be an effect of direct teaching, in that punctuation and spelling, which are probably taught explicitly to all pupils, show similar patterns of accuracy in use. Conversely, the specific EAL difficulties with 'small' words, such as prepositions and delexical verbs, would seem to arise from learning that is implicit and depends on exposure to spoken English. Addressing EAL writing needs requires a broad approach that works with the complex interactions of writing skills and language resources. The final section of the report makes some suggestions as to how this might be done.

7 College writing – findings

7.1 Types of writing

The 38 college scripts included many more types of writing than the school scripts, making comparative analysis difficult. A rough separation was made between 'personal writing', which included several types of autobiographical writing, and 'subject writing' which related to a range of curriculum areas. Half of the subject writing was word-processed and half was hand-written. Because the word-processed work was probably written under different conditions, e.g. over a longer period of time, using computer-based sources and spell checkers,[28] it could not be put together with the hand-written work for analysis. As a result of this heterogeneity, the samples in the dataset became too small (between one and 12) for either any statistical analysis or to draw any conclusions about content and genre. What is reported here, therefore, are whether trends in the college writing at within-text level follow the school trends, on those features for which data is available.

7.2 Summary of findings

7.2.1 Length of texts

Personal writing appeared to share the school writing problem of producing enough ideas to write about. In subject writing, this was less of a problem.

7.2.2 Paragraphing

Personal writing appeared to make little use of paragraphs.

7.2.3 Use of sentence grammar

Trends here closely followed the patterns of school writing both in use of grammar and in the similarities between Focus and EMT groups.

The college Focus group were more accurate than the school Focus group on

- using commas and apostrophes when they were needed
- getting apostrophes in the right place
- spelling
- Noun-pronoun agreements
- Plural endings
- using the right article.

They had the same number of problems in Subject – Verb agreements and missing articles, but used more commas in wrong places.

The college EMT group made more errors than the school EMT group in spelling, plural endings, and noun-pronoun agreements.

The college Focus group had more problems than the college EMT group with:

- use of commas
- use of apostrophes
- Subject-Verb agreements
- use of articles.

They had fewer problems than the EMT group with spelling, making only one third of the number of errors of the EMT group, and noun-pronoun agreements.

[28] The number of spelling errors in word-processed writing was one tenth of that in hand-written scripts.

8 Implications for teaching

8.1 Writing as a cross-curricular issue

The scripts show that problematic features of writing occur in all subject areas. While English Language requires the longest texts, the problems of generating and organising content are not restricted to English. For example, pupils who cannot develop topics into detail and use sentence grammar to explain the connections are likely to under-achieve in geography and history, as well as in English. Similarly, the use of modal verbs to show hypothetical or conditional meanings is central to writing and thinking in science, as well as in the humanities.

Improving writing would have an impact across the curriculum. English departments could take the lead in schemes to improve writing but ideas would need to be accepted and adopted consistently in all subject areas. Furthermore, the close relationship of writing with thinking and with reading suggests that all three need to be addressed in an integrated way in any scheme for improvement.

8.2 Summary of detailed suggestions for teaching

This section brings together the recommendations made in the body of the report:

Extended texts
It is highly likely that writing fast and at length to produce 'extended texts' is a distinct skill that needs to be practised, i.e. it is not the same as writing several short texts.

There is a question about how far the writing tasks and genres set in English Language examinations realistically require extended texts.

Ideas from source materials
If ideas are used from source materials, they have to be found and understood, and then writers need to change both genre and register when incorporating them into their own texts. Students may need to be taught how to do this.

EAL writers under-use ideas from source materials, and when they do use them have problems in changing the language to fit the genre and register of their writing, and in using ideas effectively to achieve the purpose of their writing.

Developing ideas
Highlighting the general and specific vocabulary used in a text allows us to see how well the writer is developing ideas by moving between the general and the specific. Less successful writing is likely to remain at a general level, or at a specific level. Students can be helped to use a wider range of vocabulary in the development of ideas.

The use of paragraphs
The use of paragraphs links to the writing of extended texts. The organisation of texts through indicating main and supplementary topics or ideas, and use of paragraphs to display this organisation, is clearly one where teachers could help students. However, writers need to have ideas to organise and different levels of ideas to link.

Use of Genres

The different groups (and possibly students within groups) need different support to make their writing more appropriate to genre:

- The Focus group need most support in developing awareness of degrees of formality, and the language typical of different written genres.
- The EMT group need more familiarity with written genres and their language.
- The High EAL group need more advanced awareness and skills in judging nuances of style.

The requirement to write in very specific genres in the English Language tasks led to a need for pupils to adopt and use multiple layers of voices, which caused great confusion for all groups. Apart from formulaic openings and closings that seemed to have been learnt by rote, pupils seemed unclear about their purpose in their role as writer, about who exactly was their audience, and how to address them.

It may be that pupils can be helped to think themselves into their roles on such tasks as part of the writing process, although a stronger view might urge that students be given less complex tasks that require more straightforward genres and that allow them to write as themselves.

Stance

Explicit discussion of the stance that a writer needs to take in different genres, and examples of how stance is shown in written language, might help pupils make more effective use of their knowledge of Islam in RE writing.

Sentence grammar

All writers, but particularly Focus and EMT groups, could be helped to write longer noun phrases, by pre-modifying nouns with adjectives or by extending in other ways.

Writers could be encouraged to use more Adverbial phrases to add detail about *when, where, why* and *how* to their topics.

A fairly simple way of increasing the complexity of writing would be to encourage writers to expand phrases into clauses. This would also push towards being more specific about ideas. For example:

I had a little discussion <u>with the local neighbours</u>

could become

I had a little discussion <u>with the neighbours who live in my street</u>.

Focus and EMT students might benefit from detailed attention to the meaning and use of more advanced sub-ordinators and the connections between ideas that they can be used to make.

All writers could be helped to make more use of non-finite clauses of the sort that begin with a preposition and show a link between ideas:

after listing the reasons, ...

in agreeing to this, ...

by joining in sport ...

Punctuation should be taught alongside how to use sub-ordination. For example, non-finite clauses are usually separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma; use of the comma would be part of learning about non-finite clauses.

Individual, explicit corrective feedback on the use of modals to express conditionality or hypothesis may be appropriate at Key Stage 2 onwards, as suggested by errors in writing.

Errors in articles, agreements and endings may sometimes benefit from explicit group or class teaching, but are more likely to respond to corrective feedback on an individual basis so that pupils can see how the correct form is needed to express their meaning precisely.

Vocabulary

Errors resulting from over-generalisation are 'positive errors' in that they show pupils' internal grammar development. Explicit feedback on errors on an individual basis may be helpful in highlighting exceptions to rules and over-generalisations. Group or class language awareness work that explicitly elicits, displays and discusses patterns, such as word class and meaning links, could be done when writing errors suggest it is appropriate.

Speaking and writing

It may be that unimportant inaccuracies in spoken English of EAL pupils become more noticeable and problematic in writing, and that these types of lexical errors reflect the process of learning English through participation in class, where meaning can be understood without noticing small details at word level.

Learning to write offers opportunities to notice these small features of English that might pass unnoticed in talk. Corrective feedback of these features in formal spoken language and writing from Key Stage 1 onwards may be appropriate.

Punctuation

Punctuation should be linked to the clear expression of a writer's meaning and taught alongside clause and sentence structure. A combination of explicit class input on the use of punctuation features with long-term individual corrective feedback is likely to be most effective.

8.3 Guidelines for evaluating EAL writing at secondary level

Producing a written text requires students to draw on a range of skills and language resources to communicate their ideas in conventionally accepted forms. All writers will make errors, and these can be seen developmentally, allowing teachers to know which types of support will be most helpful – where a student's 'growth points' might be. The guidelines for evaluating writing that follow have been compiled on the basis of the research.

Aims

These guidelines and proformas aim to help teachers evaluate the writing of EAL pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4. A series of evaluations over a school year or longer should also help show progress in writing.

How it works

- The guidelines and proformas are designed to be used with extended texts i.e. more than 200 words or 1 side in length. The second stage could also be used with shorter texts.

- There are two stages in the evaluation; the first stage works with the text as a whole and the second stage looks more closely at language use within the text. Each stage includes 4 areas of writing to evaluate as listed overleaf:

1 Evaluation of the text as a whole

1.1 Content

How well does the writer find ideas to write about?

1.2 Linking of content – ideas

How well does the writer move from one idea to the next to develop the overall content?

1.3 Linking of content – language

Are paragraphs used effectively to organise ideas?

1.4 Genre

Does the writer consistently and effectively use the format, style and voice required?

2 Evaluation of language use within the text

2.1 Vocabulary and the development of ideas

How well are the sub-topics developed through attention to detail?

2.2 Sentence level language

What use is made of the possibilities of English clause and sentence grammar?

2.3 Words and Phrases

What use is made of the possibilities of phrases inside sentences?

2.4 Accuracy

How accurate is the use of English?

- In the proformas, each area has a shaded box which suggests what to look for in the text.

- We then give a list of questions to answer about the writing. You should answer the question by marking a place on the line that goes from YES to NO. For example, in 2.2.1, having looked at connecting words in the text, you are asked whether the writer uses the basic sub-ordinators *that, because* etc.

	Y	N
If a pupil uses most of these, place a mark towards the YES side:	—O————————	
If a pupil uses hardly any, the mark would be towards the NO side:	———————O—	
A pupil who uses some, would get a mark in the middle:	————O————	

- A department or group of teachers working with the guidelines would want to moderate their evaluations, by independently evaluating the same texts and then comparing where on the lines marks were placed. The lines could be split into 3 or more sections.

- At the end of each page, you can write a few sentences to summarise the evaluation, identifying strong and weak points, and areas where teaching or support would help improve writing. The two summaries, of the text as a whole and language use within the text, combine to give an overall evaluation of the pupil's writing.

- Caution: pupils' writing will vary with the task they are given, the subject they are writing about, what they know about the topic and how they feel on the particular day. A fair evaluation of writing skills would need to cover writing on a range of topics and tasks.

1 Evaluation of the text as a whole

1.1 Content

- How well does the writer find ideas to write about?

Work through the text, highlighting each sub-topic / idea as it is introduced

		Y	N
1.1.1	Does the text include lots of sub-topics / ideas related to the topic?		
1.1.2	Are the sub-topics / ideas wide-ranging rather than limited?		
1.1.3	Are the ideas interesting or original rather than predictable?		

1.2 Linking of content – ideas

- How well does the writer move from one idea to the next to develop the overall text?

Look at the sequence of ideas highlighted in the first colour

1.2.1	Are ideas or sub-topics grouped together logically in the text?	
1.2.2	Are the ideas or sub-topics sequenced logically?	

1.3 Linking of content – language

- Are paragraphs used effectively to organise content?

Look at the first few sentences, the division of texts into paragraphs, the beginnings and ends of paragraphs

1.3.1	Does the introduction give an overview of content and order?	
1.3.2	Is the text divided into paragraphs?	
1.3.3	Is a new paragraph used for each key idea or sub-topic?	
1.3.4	Is there variety in how paragraphs start?	
1.3.5	Are explicit links made between paragraphs?	

1.4 Genre

- Does the writer use the format, style and voice required, consistently and effectively?

Look at opening and closing of text; at types of phrases used; at pronouns used to refer to the writer and reader; at what the reader is asked to do; at choice of words

1.4.1	Are opening and closing formulae used (if needed)?	
1.4.2	Is an appropriate level of formality in tone maintained?	
1.4.3	Is an appropriate purpose given to the reader?	
1.4.4	Is an appropriate concluding statement given?	
1.4.5	Does the writer maintain control of the genre throughout?	
1.4.6	Are explicit links made between paragraphs?	

2 Evaluation of language use within the text

2.1 Vocabulary and the development of ideas

- How well are the sub-topics developed through attention to detail?

Highlight the content words linked to each sub-topic / idea.

		Y	N
2.1.1	Is there a lot of development of each sub-topic or idea?		
2.1.2	Are sub-topics developed by giving examples? e.g. *people* ➔ *Nelson Mandela, my brother*		
2.1.3	Are they developed by giving more specific details? e.g. *people* ➔ *children, elderly people*		

2.2 Sentence level language

- What use is made of the possibilities of English clause and sentence grammar?

Choose a chunk of text to work on and look for connecting words (sub-ordinators)

2.2.1	Are basic sub-ordinators used? *that, because, as, when, so, if*	
2.2.2	Are advanced sub-ordinators used? e.g. *which, where, although, until, before, unless.*	
2.2.3	Are non-finite clauses with *–ing* participle used? e.g. *Before working, I went to school*	
2.2.4	Are full stops and capitals used to demarcate sentences?	

2.3 Words and Phrases

- What use is made of the possibilities of phrases inside sentences?

Select some nouns across the text and look at the words that come after them and in front of them.

2.3.1	Are adjectives often used in front of nouns? e.g. *a huge number of talented young men*	
2.3.2	Are there often phrases or clauses after nouns? e.g. *a girl who became a photographer*	
2.3.3	Are the correct prepositions used before nouns in phrases? e.g. *can help with pollution (correct); can help on pollution (error)*	

2.4 Accuracy

- How accurate is the use of English?

Underline words or phrases that don't 'sound right' in all or part of the text.

2.4.1	Accurate comparative forms? e.g. *more better, less easier*	
2.4.2	Accurate plural forms? e.g. *children* not *childs*	
2.4.3	Accurate use of articles? *a, an, the*	
2.4.4	All necessary articles included?	
2.4.5	Accurate / appropriate use of modal verbs? e.g. *should, could, will, would, might*	
2.4.6	Accurate use of verb endings / tenses?	
2.4.7	Accuracy in Subject-Verb agreements? e.g. *they work (correct); they works (errors)*	
2.4.8	Accurate use of commas?	
2.4.9	All necessary commas included?	
2.4.10	Accurate use of apostrophes?	
2.4.11	All necessary apostrophes included?	
2.4.12	Accurate spelling?	

3	Overall evaluation of writing
Pupil details:	
Task details:	
The text as a whole	Use of language within the text

8.4 Evaluating the process of writing

The research study and the above evaluation guidelines are concerned with product i.e. with the scripts produced by writers. Knowledge about the process of writing will also be helpful for teachers to find out such things as:

- how are ideas brought to mind?
- how are ideas organised on paper?
- is a plan written / used?
- does the writer think him / herself into the role required by genre?
- do pupils have the relevant knowledge and experience to write a full answer?
- how do pupils decide on what to put in a sentence?
- do they check their writing for errors?

Process evaluation could be done through a questionnaire on writing processes, discussion, conferencing or observation.

8.5 Improving writing skills

Evaluating writing difficulties and growth points will help decide on how best to support development. The type of help given to pupils will depend on: whether the problems are individual or shared by a group or class; whether they are likely to respond to direct teaching and explanation or not; how much time is available.

8.5.1 Long-term writing skills development

Some of the problems identified in this report may respond to direct instruction, for example, comparative forms and how to qualify them, and expressing conditionality. Others aspects of writing would seem to need long-term development, i.e. from Key Stage 1 or 2 onwards:

- writing regularly at length, with support, e.g. guided writing
- extensive reading to become familiar with styles and genres
- noticing how writers use subordination and other resources to present ideas
- encouragement and support to try more ambitious phrases, sentences and texts
- development of signposting phrases and linking terms e.g. *another point; While some people think x, others disagree*
- drawing attention to correct use of prepositions and delexical verbs.

8.5.2 Strategy training for short-term improvement

In the short term, students already at Key Stage 3 or 4 might benefit from training in strategies to use when faced with writing tasks in examinations or class work.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary strategies already used, such as circumlocutions, could be encouraged, together with the use of phrases that 'hedge' and that are found in native speaker writing, such as *a sort of, a kind of*. The use of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, and computer resources should be encouraged to explore words and meanings, and to increase accuracy.

Generating content

Pupils should be taught techniques to expand and develop the content of their writing, taking what comes to mind and making it more useful for writing at length, particularly in English Language. Useful work would help students with strategies to generate ideas for given topics and to access ideas from source materials, for example:

- brainstorming and mind-mapping around key words
- using personal experience to add to content
- developing topics by making links, breaking down topics to more specific sub-topics
- extracting key words from sources, and using them to generate content, even if some of the text is inaccessible
- organising ideas into a logical linear sequence.

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Appendix 1: Details of school participants

Gender	Focus	EMT	high EAL	Total
male	50	9	11	70
female	51	7	9	67
unknown	1	0	0	1
Total	102	16	20	138

Table 8: Gender of pupils by groups

Born in UK	Focus	EMT	high EAL	Total
yes	59	4	11	74
no	3	0	0	3
unknown	40	12	9	61
Total	102	16	20	138

Table 9: Numbers born in UK

Years in UK Education	Focus	EMT	high EAL	Total
5.0	4			4
6.0	2			2
7.0	2			2
8.0	2			2
9.0	4		1	5
9.6	1			1
10.0	3			3
10.3	1			1
10.5	2			2
10.6	2			2
10.9	1			1
11.0	71	16	18	105
unknown	7		1	8
Total	102	16	20	138

Table 10: Time in UK education

L1	Focus	EMT	high EAL	Total
Unknown	1			1
Albanian	1			1
Arabic	1			1
Bengali	28		7	35
Cantonese	1		1	2
Chinese	1			1
English		16		16
Farsi	2		1	3
French	1			1
Greek	4		2	6
Gujerati	17		5	22
Hindi	2		1	3
Kutchi	2			2
Portuguese	1			1
Punjabi	21		1	22
Serbo-croat	1			1
Somali	2			2
Turkish	6		1	7
Urdu	10		1	11
Total	102	16	20	138

Table 11: First language background of school pupils

Self-assessment	Focus	EMT	high EAL	Total
none	26		1	27
basic	22		6	28
ok	17		4	21
good	18	10	5	33
missing data	19	6	4	29
Total	102	16	20	138

Table 12: Self-assessment of first language reading skills by school pupils

Self-assessment	Focus	EMT	high EAL	Total
none	29		1	30
basic	20		7	27
ok	13		4	17
good	21	10	4	35
missing data	19	6	4	29
Total	102	16	20	138

Table 13: Self-assessment of first language writing skills by school pupils

Appendix 2: Sample scripts[29]

English A Writing to argue, persuade or instruct

Write a letter to your local newspaper in which you try to **persuade** the reader that more bike-friendly measures should be introduced in your area.

Script 1 Focus group (EAL)

Dear local newspaper writer,

I have written this letter to tell you my reasons to introduce bike-friendly measures. This should be introduced in our area because this can help our area to become a safe and crime free area.

It should be introduced because there are so many over millions of bikes stolen in Britain and we should make a stop to this. The government should give safe storage spaces for bikes because bikes get stolen and then sold for money. the money is then spent on drugs etc.

It also can help on pollution in the area. The government should make everyone cycle to school and to work. If they do this there won't be any traffic problems and without traffic problems no pollution. People can also save money on petrol for there cars.

People should be told off it they cycle on pavements because other people who go walking complain. If you cycle to school or to work you wont have to worry about the way you look. You will be healthier cycling then going to work or school in a car. All the exercise you will need will be happening. There will be less diseases if you cycle.

The government should allow more space in trains for bikes and also in ferries. this is because if anyone wants to take their bike with them they can. The government should introduce safety instructions for the people who want to take part in the bike-friendly measures. they should make everyone wear helmits and bright clothes for the other drivers to help them see in the dark.

The government should also give an urban area for people who cant cycle and some teaching assistants to teach people.

I think this is enough for people to get involve in cycling. If you don't cycle it will be a loss for you. If I was you I would join up this group. Think of the things you can get if you cycle. If you have any problem you can contact me on this number: 010039876.

your faitfully

[29] Names, addresses and any other personal information have been changed. Spelling, punctuation and other features have been reproduced as in the original scripts.

Script 2 Focus group (EAL)

X School
Y Avenue
Town

HERALD & POST

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to say, As being part of the public I have seen a 'Bike friendly' measures telling me the advantages of getting a bike what a help it will do to everyone. In my opinion I think Bike friendly measures should be introduced in m y area. Because it will do a really good help in different ways to us and the environment The more the people see and read through them and it will help then the public will spread the word out.

In my opinion I think it will be a good Idea to do this please can you understand what I'm trying to say and how I'm trying to help the environment to change. By introducing the measures in my area, as it so big the word will spread and the public will know how important this is to them. Also if you take this serious the public will take it serious too. By doing this it will help us in many different ways.

The advantage are it will decrease the traffic save our money in different ways. Help the public fittness,

Please take this serious and spread the measures out.

Your faithfully

Script 3 High EAL

1	Mrs Kennedy	Rukhsana Ahmed
2	Manager	25 Acacia Avenue
3	Healrd & Post	LUTON
4	3 George Street	BEDS
5	LUTON	LU7 9 AS
6	BEDS	
7	LU3 1HE	15-01-2002
8	Dear Mrs Kennedy	
9	I am Rukhsana Ahmed and I am a student at Lavender High School. I am	
10	writing this letter to you to publish the following letter on Sunday's News paper. It is	
11	about my thoughts on bikes. I would be really greatful if you could do this for me	
12	Thank you.	
13	Rukhsana Ahmed	
14	Dear Sir or Madam	
15	I am Rukhsana Ahmed and I am still studing. As you may already know	
16	that there are a larger number of young people in this area are wanting to ride bikes	
17	but unfortunately there are not many bike-friendly measures.	
18	Riding Bikes is a good exercise for life. It is a way of keeping fit and healthy as	
19	some of you may dream. we all look at others and think, why couldn't we be like them.	
20	An easly simple quick way if keeping fit is by just riding the bike for about an hour each	
21	week, and you can see the difference aswell as feeling it.	
22	As I myself have managed to keep my self fit by riding a bike an hour each week, I believe	
23	you can do that too. But you can only keep yourself fit if we had more bike-friendly	
24	measures.	
25	Riding bikes doesn't only helps you to keep fit but also makes sure that you have	
26	a lower risk of getting a heart problem. This means you can live for longer.	
27	Riding bikes was the most easiest thing I found to loose weight. Nothing else	
28	but riding a bike helped me loose 3 stones in the last two months. I took me just two	
29	months to loose weight and you can also loose weight if you really wanted to.	
30	There are a number of safe places in our area where we can ride bikes but it	
31	isn't enough, we need more safer places.	
32	By Burning body fat and raising your metabolic rate you can loose weight and	
33	believe me you won't only feel good but also look good. It is easy and safe for any one	
34	and everyone.	
35	If you feel the same way as I did about my body that made me want to loose	
36	weight, keep fit, and healthy with out having any heart problems such as heart attacks	
37	then you should join me to persuade people that more bike-friendly measures should	
38	be introduced in our area.	
39	My contact number is 012234455 if you would like to speak to me then feel free	
40	to call and ask me anything you may wish to know.	
41	And Remember nothing can be more simple than riding bikes in order to stay fit and	
42	healthy.	
43	Yours faithfully	
44	Rukhsana Ahmed	
45	RUKHSANA AHMED	

Script 4 EMT

1		123 Bay Street
2		SW4 3RT
3		London
4	21 Times Sq	Tooting
5	SE4 6HA	9th / 01/01
6	Charlton Acreswood	
7		
8	Dear Mr Striffe	
9	I believe that over 70 per cent of Amerca's children rode	
10	to school, and I believe we should not just the kids but the Adults aswell.	
11		
12	I thought "if they can do it why not use" How do you feel about it? I had a little	
13	discussion with the local neighbours and they 100 per cent aggre.	
14		
15	I believe everyone should do it not just people over weight we might even get	
16	something back in return for this who knows?	
17		
18	I also handed out a 4A sheet for the parents at the school and would you beleive it,	
19	over 86 per cent said lets ride our bikes.	
20		
21	If this works out as planned the roads will be less polluted with cars, the environment	
22	shall become more green and safer for our children especially when playing sports.	
23		
24	If this did happen we would also need another favour this woudl be to crack down on	
25	theft over 700,000 are stollen a year and this would prove a very difficult problem for	
26	future preferences.	
27		
28	Thank you for taking the time for reading this, please Reply on the address above or	
29	any other person who has Queries about this bike situation call this number 01233456	
30	Yours sincerly	
31	John Smith	
32		
33	P.S. Happy Riding.	

Appendix 3: Sentence grammar of sample scripts

Notes:

1. Some questions are placed in a line of their own, since splitting into constituents would be too messy.
2. ←→ indicates that Subject and Verb are inverted, as in a question.
3. A word or phrase in brackets in the Verb column is an Adverbial used in the middle of a verb phrase.

Sample script 1

(first 100 words, after first sentence)

sub-ordinator	*co-ordinator*	*Adverbial*	*Subject Noun Phrase*	*Verb phrase*	*Object Noun Phrase / Complement*	*Adverbial (s)*
			This	should be introduced		in our area
because			this	can help	our area	
				to become	a safe and crime free area.	
			It	should be introduced		
because			there	are	so many over millions of bikes	
				stolen		in Britain
	and		we	should put	a stop	to this.
			The government	should give	safe storage space	for bikes
because			bikes	get stolen		
	and	then		sold		for money.
			The money	is (then) spent		on drugs etc.
			It	(also) can help		on pollution in the area.
			The government	should make	everyone	
				cycle		to school and to work.
If			they	do	this	
			there	won't be	any traffic (100 words)	

Diagnosis

Looking closely at the grammatical analysis in columns, we can note:

Sub-ordination (column 1) is done with the basic sub-ordinators *if* and *because*.

Adverbial phrases: Comparing columns 3 and 7 shows that most Adverbials occur at the end of clauses, rather than near the beginning. There are two Adverbials in the middle of verb phrases (shown in brackets). Each Adverbial phrase is very simple, with usually just a preposition and noun *in Britain*.

Subjects are mostly pronouns *this, it, they* with 3 simple phrases like *The money*.

Verbs: note the 4 uses of *should*; use of delexical verbs *make, give, get, do*.

Objects / Complements: this column has the most complex phrases and choice of vocabulary, but it is still quite simple. Note repetition of *area, bikes, pollution*.

Planning for development

This student seems to have mastered basic clause structure and simple sub-ordination. Writing development needs to include more advanced sub-ordinators, using adjectives in front of nouns to make phrases more interesting and varied, using different types of Subjects which would also require passive verbs. S/he could be encouraged to use more Adverbials in the beginnings of clauses, and to make them longer and more interesting.

Sample script 2

sub-ordinator	*co-ordinator*	*Adverbial*	*Subject Noun Phrase*	*Verb phrase*	*Object Noun Phrase / Complement*	*Adverbial (s)*
		In my opinion	I	think		
			Bike friendly measures	should be introduced		in my area.
Because			it	will do	a really good help	in different ways to us and the environment.
		The more	the people	see		
	and			read		through them
	and		it	will help		
		then	the public	will spread	the word	out.
		In my opinion	I	think		
			it	will be	a good idea	
				to do	this	
		please	you ←→	can understand		
what			I	'm trying to say		
	and					
how			I	'm trying to help	the environment	
				to change.		
By				introducing	the measures	in my area,
as			it		so big	
			the word (100 words)	will spread		

Diagnosis	***Planning for development***
There is some variety in clause structure, with an introductory participial **non-finite** clause *By introducing*. The punctuation to go with the structure is not used. Very few **Adverbial phrases** and very little detail in the phrases. **Subjects** are very short phrases or pronouns. There is repetition of phrases, but also of meaning – as with *In my opinion* and *I think*	Build on phrases like *By introducing; in my opinion* by showing similar forms and phrases to increase variety. Encourage more use of Adverbial phrases to add detail about time, place, manner, etc.

Sample script 3

sub-ordinator	*co-ordinator*	*Adverbial*	*Subject Noun Phrase*	*Verb phrase*	*Object Noun Phrase / Complement*	*Adverbial (s)*
As			you	may (already) know		
that			there	are	a larger number of young people	in this area
				are wanting to ride	bikes	
	but	unfortunately	there	are not	many bike-friendly measures.	
				Riding	bikes	
				is	a good exercise	for life.
			It	is	a way of keeping fit and healthy	
as			some of you	may dream.		
			we all	look		at others
	and			think,		
why			we ←→	couldn't be	like them.	
			An easly simple quick way of keeping fit	is		
by		just		riding	the bike	for about an hour each week,
	and		you	can see	the difference	
aswell as				feeling	it.	
As			I (100 words) myself	have managed		

Diagnosis	*Planning for development*
Sub-ordinators A range of different sub-ordinators are used, including by + **non-finite** clause. Some errors in sub-ordinate clauses and errors in punctuation. Some **Subjects** are multi-word. Good range of verbs used. Not many **Adverbial phrases** or much detail in the ones used.	Explain how to be more accurate in the detail of clauses and phrases used, and how punctuation marks off sub-ordinate clauses. Encourage more and longer Adverbial phrases.

Sample script 4

sub-ordinator	*co-ordinator*	*Adverbial*	*Subject Noun Phrase*	*Verb phrase*	*Object Noun Phrase / Complement*	*Adverbial (s)*
			I	thought		
"if			they	can do	it	
	why not use"					
How			you ←→	do — feel		about it?
			I	had	a little discussion	with the local neighbours
	and		they	(100 per cent) aggre.		
			I	believe		
			everyone	should do	it	not just people over weight
			we	might (even) get	something	back in return for this
			who	knows?		
			I	(also) handed out	a 4A sheet	for the parents at the school
	and		you ←→	believe	it,	
			over 86 per cent said	let	s	
				ride	our bikes	
If			this	works out		
as				planned		
			the roads	will be	less polluted	with cars,
			the environment			

Diagnosis	***Planning for development***
Most **Subjects** are pronouns, as are more than half of the **Objects**. Very few **Adverbial phrases** and without modification. Little **sub-ordination**. No use of *but, because, when* and advanced sub-ordinators.	Encourage fuller Subjects and Objects. Link grammar to development of ideas in more detail. Add Adverbial phrases and clauses to express reason, time, place etc.

Appendix 4: Data from within-text analyses

Writing in all subjects

	Focus (N=196)	EMT (N=28)	high EAL (N=47)
Subordination *(mean number per 100 words)*	4.99	5.75	3.94 **
Non-finite Clauses *(mean number per 100 words)*	2.61	2.35	3.28*
One-word Subjects *(mean number per 100 words)*	8.16	7.43	6.26**
Multi-word Subjects *(mean number per 100 words)*	3.39	4.00	4.09*
Object / Comp Phrases *(mean number per 100 words)*	9.92	9.29	9.36
Length of Obj / Comp phrases *(mean number of words)*	2.63	2.71	2.73
Object / Comp Clauses *(mean number per 100 words)*	2.91	2.39	2.85
Length of Obj / Comp clauses *(mean number of words)*	5.86	6.22	5.79
Lexical verbs *(mean number per 100 words)*	8.16	9.75	7.62
Adverbial Phrases *(mean number per 100 words)*	8.39	8.39	8.91
Length of Adverbial phrases *(mean number of words)*	2.72	2.70	2.68
Adverbial Clauses *(mean number per 100 words)*	2.67	3.07	2.36
Length of Adverbial clauses *(mean number of words)*	6.74	6.55	7.17

Table 14: Use of sentence grammar across all subjects

Writing in English Language

	Focus (N=113)	EMT (N=16)	high EAL (N=23)
Subordination *(mean number per 100 words)*	4.50	5.63	3.39*
Non-finite Clauses *(mean number per 100 words)*	2.77	2.71	3.78**
One-word Subjects *(mean number per 100 words)*	8.60	8.31	7.65
Multi-word Subjects *(mean number per 100 words)*	2.81	2.56	2.96
Object/Comp Phrases *(mean number per 100 words)*	10.19	8.75*	8.70*
Length of Obj / Comp phrases *(mean number of words)*	2.61	2.83	2.73
Object/ Comp Clauses *(mean number per 100 words)*	2.51	2.00	2.48
Length of Obj / Comp clauses *(mean number of words)*	5.62	6.57	5.46
Lexical verbs *(mean number per 100 words)*	9.09	9.94	9.83
Adverbial Phrases *(mean number per 100 words)*	8.71	9.19	8.74
Length of Adverbial phrases *(mean number of words)*	2.72	2.63	2.68
Adverbial Clauses *(mean number per 100 words)*	2.42	2.75	1.96
Length of Adverbial clauses *(mean number of words)*	6.71	6.91	7.14

Table 15: Use of sentence grammar in English Language scripts

Writing in Humanities

	Focus (N=83)	EMT (N=12)	high EAL (N=24)
Subordination *(mean number per 100 words)*	5.60	5.92	4.46**
Non-finite Clauses *(mean number per 100 words)*	2.40	1.92	2.79
One-word Subjects *(mean number per 100 words)*	7.57	6.25	4.92**
Multi-word Subjects *(mean number per 100 words)*	4.19	5.92*	5.17*
Object/Comp Phrases *(mean number per 100 words)*	9.57	10.00	10.00
Length of Obj / Comp phrases *(mean number of words)*	2.65	2.57	2.73
Object/Comp Clauses *(mean number per 100 words)*	3.46	2.92	3.21
Length of Obj / Comp clauses *(mean number of words)*	6.13	5.75	6.07
Lexical verbs *(mean number per 100 words)*	6.90	9.50	5.50
Adverbial Phrases *(mean number per 100 words)*	7.95	7.33	9.08
Length of Adverbial phrases *(mean number of words)*	2.72	2.81	2.68
Adverbial Clauses *(mean number per 100 words)*	2.98	3.50	2.75
Length of Adverbial clauses *(mean number of words)*	6.78	6.08	7.20

Table 16: Use of sentence grammar in Humanities writing

Writing in all subjects (all figures are means per 100 word block of writing)

	Focus (N=193)	EMT (N=28)	high EAL (N=47)
Commas used in wrong places	0.55	0.41	0.66
Missing commas	2.13	2.14	1.49*
Apostrophes used in wrong places	0.32	0.15	0.17
Missing apostrophes	0.34	0.64	0.13**
Incorrect spellings	2.01	1.96	0.93**
Incorrect copying of words from source materials	0.19	0.24	0.10
Subject-verb agreements	0.41	0.07**	0.19*
Noun-pronoun agreements	0.18	0.04**	0.06*
Plural forms	0.44	0.11**	0.06**
Articles used but wrongly	0.14	0.04*	0.11
Missing articles	0.18	0.08	0.00**

Table 17: Accuracy in use of punctuation, spelling, articles, agreements

Notes

(1) Significance: Asterisks indicate the significance of difference in means in comparison with Focus group means, measured using t-tests.
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

(2) In Table 17, significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between EMT and High EAL means also occurred for:
Missing apostrophes
Number of spelling errors
Number of errors in Subject-Verb agreements.

paragraph

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

verbs

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