



# **Profiling Writing Challenges in children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

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Literacy education includes both learning to read and write, and while considerable advances have been made in understanding the development of reading comprehension, our understanding of writing development is far less advanced. Many children struggle with the production of written text (Graham, 2008; Hooper, Swartz, Wakely, de Kruif, & Montgomery, 2002). Indeed, primary school children's writing performance is a national concern. In the 1990s, OfSTED identified writing as an area in need of improvement (Beard, 2000). Statutory Programmes of Study were established in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and in the National Curriculum and Assessment Guidelines in Scotland as a result. In 1997, a national expectation that 80 percent of 11 year olds in England would achieve level 4 by the year 2002 was established (DfEE, 1997) and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 1998) reported the need for action to be taken on a national scale if this target was to be met.

#### *Writing and EAL children.*

Despite this agreement that there is a need to do more to help children improve their writing skills there is still a marked contrast between the amount of research being carried out focused on children's reading relative to their writing skills. This contrast in research effort is particularly marked for children who are English as an Additional Language (EAL), who may be the most under-served group at present in schools (Andrews, 2009). In England, the term EAL is used to describe children who are being educated through the medium of English (the majority language of the country) but whose home language is other than English. 'EAL' is therefore a broad category which encompasses children with many different linguistic backgrounds, ranging from those who have had considerable exposure to English to those who have had very little exposure to English. EAL children constitute a considerable proportion of primary school children in England. The number of pupils in England's schools whose first language is one other than English has risen steadily during the last decade. According to the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) from the 2009 school census, EAL pupil numbers rose by approximately 25% between 2004 and 2009 to stand at 824,380 and currently (2013) approximately 18% of all primary school children are EAL.

Despite the fact that there is a growing proportion of EAL children in primary schools in England, and that there is a need for policy and practice to change regarding the provision afforded to EAL children, there is still very little research that has been carried out to identify the specific challenges faced by EAL children in the UK with regards to literacy. There are only a handful of published papers investigating EAL children's reading comprehension and word decoding skills (e.g., Beech & Keys, 1997; Rosowsky, 2001; Hutchison, Whitely, Smith & Connors, 2003; Burgoyne, Kelly, Whitely & Spooner 2009) and very few available studies internationally which have systematically investigated challenges faced by EAL children in writing with even fewer studies carried out within the UK educational context. We therefore know very little about the nature of EAL children's writing and the specific problems manifested in their written compositions. What we do know, however, is that since 2006 there has been a gradual decrease in writing performance on national tests between children whose first language was English and those with EAL, with a 6.3% gap in 2009 (DCSF, 2009). Clearly therefore, many children with EAL are lagging behind their native speaking peers on these indices of writing ability. We therefore urgently need research identifying the specific areas of weakness in EAL children's writing in order to better understand the nature of the writing challenges they face. The research reported here is an important first step in filling this gap.

The production of written text requires children to co-ordinate information at word, sentence, and text level and it is, therefore, also necessary to consider the relationships between these different levels of production (Berninger, Vaughan, Abbott, Begay, Byrd, Curtin, Minnich, &

Graham, 2002). There is some evidence that children with EAL experience problems with co-ordinating these different levels as evidenced by problems in accuracy, productivity and complexity in writing (Cameron & Besser, 2004). A few studies also indicate that certain genres, such as factual reports as opposed to narratives, pose more difficulty to children with EAL (Riches & Genesee, 2004). Yet, there is hardly any experimental research on the writing of children with EAL to examine the relationships across different levels and genres. To date, there has been no attempt to integrate the influence of these processes into a model of written text production for children with EAL (McCutchen, 2006).

There is now a heightened awareness of the language challenges faced by children with EAL (see Andrews, 2009), yet as indicated above, there is little substantive work on the writing difficulties of EAL children that both informs educational outcome and confirms theoretical assumptions. The research we report in this document is ground breaking in this regard. Understanding the nature of EAL children's writing, and importantly the specific challenges they face relative to native speaking children, would ensure that interventions are underpinned by understanding of developmental processes and that children with EAL do not leave school disadvantaged in writing.

### Methodology

The purpose of this study was to identify writing challenges in children with English as an additional language (EAL) relative to native English-speaking (NS) children. A second aim was to identify whether and to what extent writing develops across the period of one school year in children with EAL. Finally, comparisons were made between narrative and expository genres of writing at the end of the school year to identify whether the quality of written compositions (by both EAL and NS children) is influenced by the genre of the writing task.

#### *Participants*

To that end we recruited 100 Year 5 students (aged 9/10 years) from primary schools in Oxford and surrounding areas (48 EAL and 52 NS). All the children who participated in the study had been educated within the English primary school system since year 1 (age 5/6) and none of them had any Special Educational Needs (SEN). They came from a wide range of different L1 backgrounds.

#### *Materials*

A range of standardized language and literacy tests and writing assessments was administered at two time points: Phase 1 (Autumn 2011) and Phase 2 (Spring/Summer 2012). The baseline language, literacy and cognitive abilities assessments that we administered in Phase 1 included:

- the CELF (Clinical Evaluation of Linguistic Fundamentals) - an individually administered assessment which identifies linguistic skills on a range of both expressive and receptive dimensions.
- the BPVS (British Picture Vocabulary Test) - an individually administered test of receptive vocabulary for Standard English
- the BASII (British Ability Scales) - provides reliable measures of cognitive functioning across a range of measures. The sub-tests used in this study were those focusing on reading and spelling as the domain of this research is focused on children's writing (literacy).
- the WASI (Wechsler abbreviated Scale of Intelligence) – provides a reliable measure of non-verbal IQ suitable for children as young as 6. As it does not rely on linguistic ability (being a non-verbal test) it will be appropriate for use in matching the EAL and NS groups.
- the LBQ (Language Background Questionnaire) (adapted from Beech & Keys, 1997). The language background questionnaire used in this study provided a basic level of knowledge into the EAL children's language and literacy background, to enhance knowledge and understanding of the sample.

The experimental measures used in this study included:

- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT II) - a standardized measure of reading, language and numerical attainment. Only the spelling and written expression sub-tests were administered in this project to assess word-level and sentence-level skills.
- Writing Ability Measure (WAM; Dunsmuir, Batuwitige, Hinson, Orr, O'Sullivan & Thomas, 2005) The WAM was used to assess children's text-level skills and provided a more detailed picture of children's writing.

The WAM requires students to write a composition in response to a prompt such as "*Imagine you could go anywhere you wanted on a school trip with your class and your teacher. Write about where you would go and what you would do*". The prompts therefore were not culturally specific and did not require the child to have specific topic knowledge. Please see Appendix A for an example of the different features analysed as part of the WAM and the scoring criteria.

#### *Procedure*

All children were tested individually in a quiet area in their school. Their verbal assent to participate was sought, while their parents or guardians provided their signed consent for their children to participate. In Phase 1, there were two testing sessions of approximately 30-40 minutes and the written task was conducted in a group (in class). In phase 2, the two writing tasks were administered as part of an in-class activity.

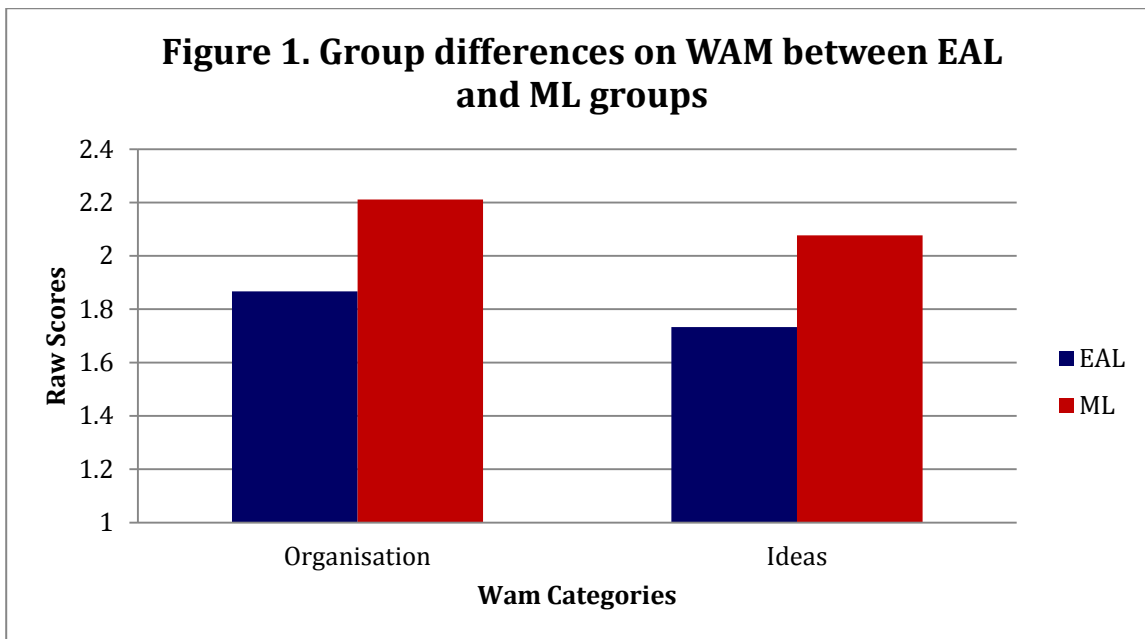
#### Results- Phase 1

The analyses for Phase 1 were broken down into two sets of analyses: a chronological age match (CA) where EAL and NS of the same age (9/10 years) were compared on the baseline assessments and writing tasks (described above). The second set of analyses were focused on a language age (LA) match where the same aged children were matched on their English language ability based on the CELF.

#### *Chronological Age Match results*

The children's scores on each of the baseline measures were analysed and compared (independent samples t-tests) on each of the different assessments. The results of these analyses indicated that for each of the different baseline tasks [Receptive language score on the CELF; Expressive language score on the CELF, Language Age on the CELF, Receptive vocabulary (BPVS), Single word reading and Reading Comprehension (WIAT)] the EAL children consistently scored significantly lower than the native-speaking (monolingual (ML) children. This finding is consistent with much past research indicating that children with EAL have lower vocabulary and literacy scores than age-matched native-speaking peers (e.g., Cameron, 2002).

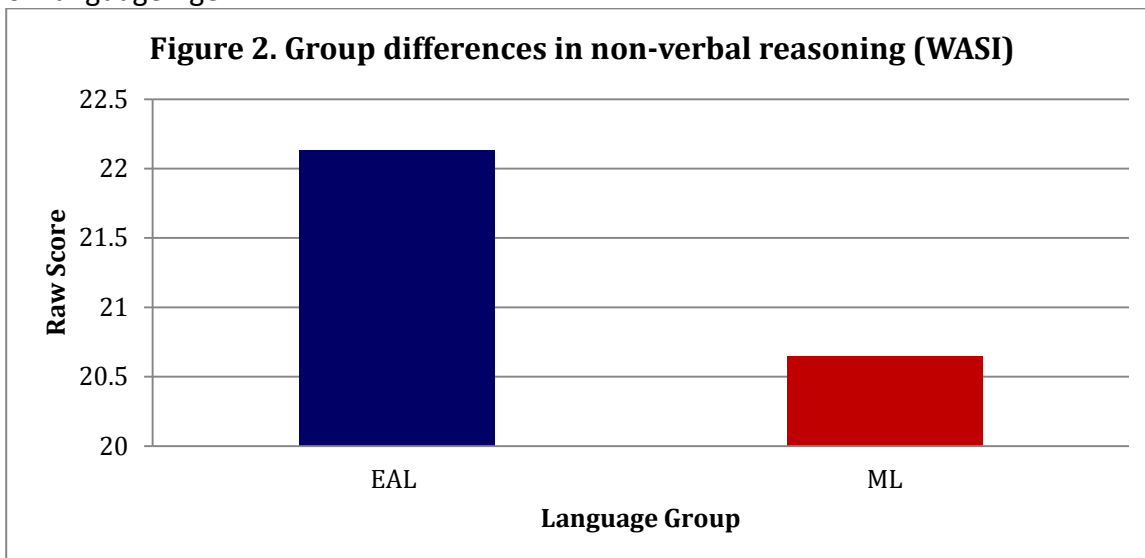
In analyzing the children's scores on the writing assessment measure (using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)), however, there were only significant differences between the groups on the more higher level features of 'organisation' and 'ideas' as illustrated in Figure 1.



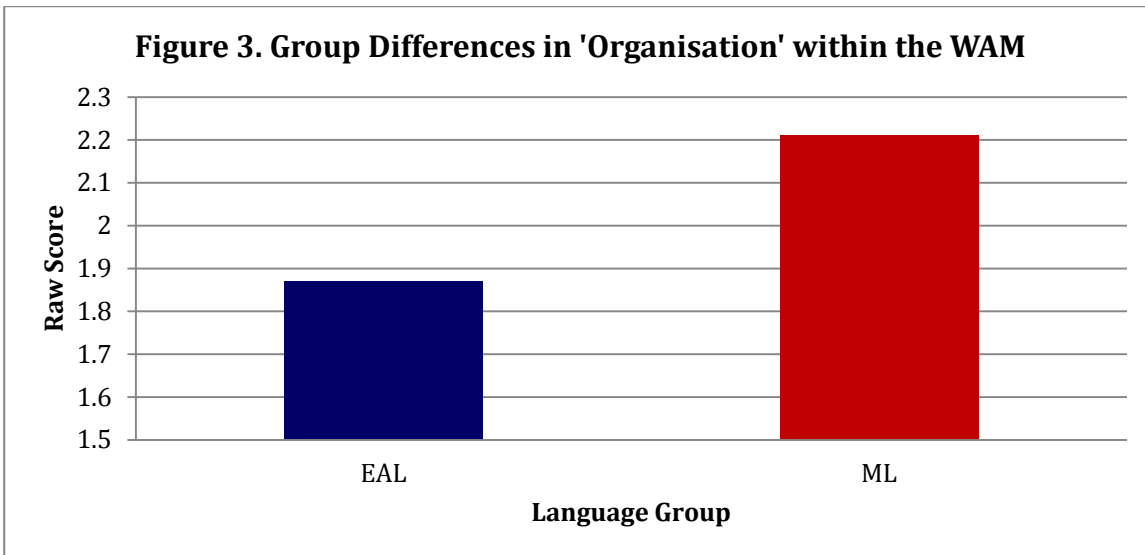
This finding indicates that despite the fact that the children with EAL had lower scores on their English language baseline assessments, they were not different from the native-speaking children on the linguistic features of the WAM (vocabulary and syntax) yet they had lower scores on those features of writing that involve organisation of paragraphs, writing cohesive text, extending themes, and being creative and imaginative with sufficiently developed ideas.

*Language Age Match*

A smaller number of children with EAL could be matched to the native-speaking children on the CELF Language Age score (26 children with EAL relative to 42 native-speaking children). Interestingly, the Language Age match groups were no longer matched on the nonverbal IQ measure (WASI) as indicated in Figure 2. This finding suggests that only the most cognitively able children with EAL are likely to be matched to monolingual (ML) native-speaking children in terms of Language Age.



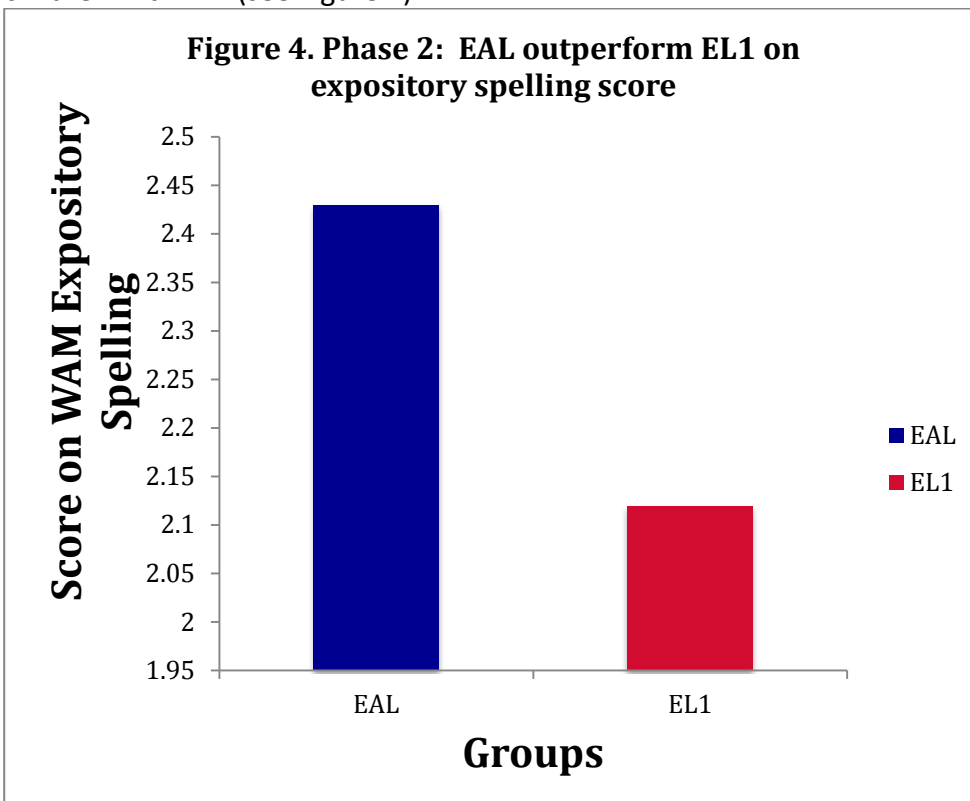
Nonetheless the native-speaking (ML) children still had higher scores on ‘organisation’ feature of the WAM - those aspects of writing that require greater cohesion of text, appropriate paragraphing and expanded themes. This difference is illustrated in Figure 3.



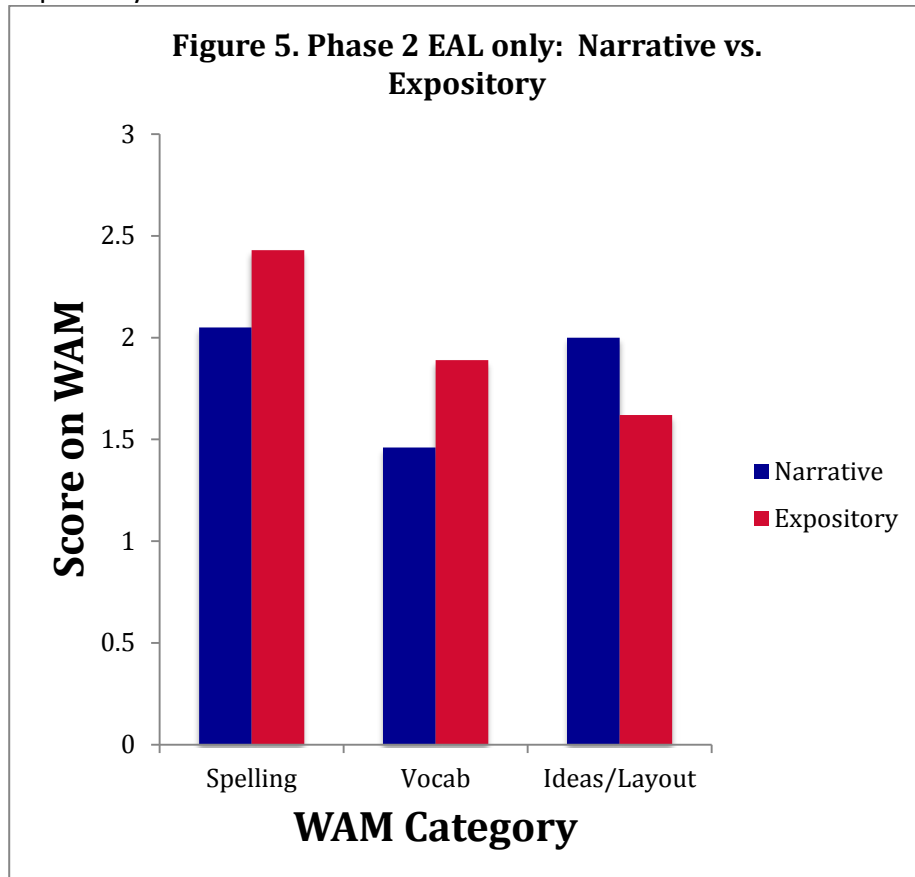
In summary, the Phase 1 analysis revealed that in terms of baseline language ability, the children with EAL had lower scores than the native-speaking monolingual (ML) children. However, in the chronological age match analysis, they only differed on the writing assessment measure (WAM) on the more higher level features of writing (organisation and ideas). Fewer children with EAL were matched with the native-speaking children on Language Age, and these children had higher nonverbal IQ scores than the native speaking children. Nonetheless, the EAL children still had lower scores on organisational features of writing.

Results- Phase 2

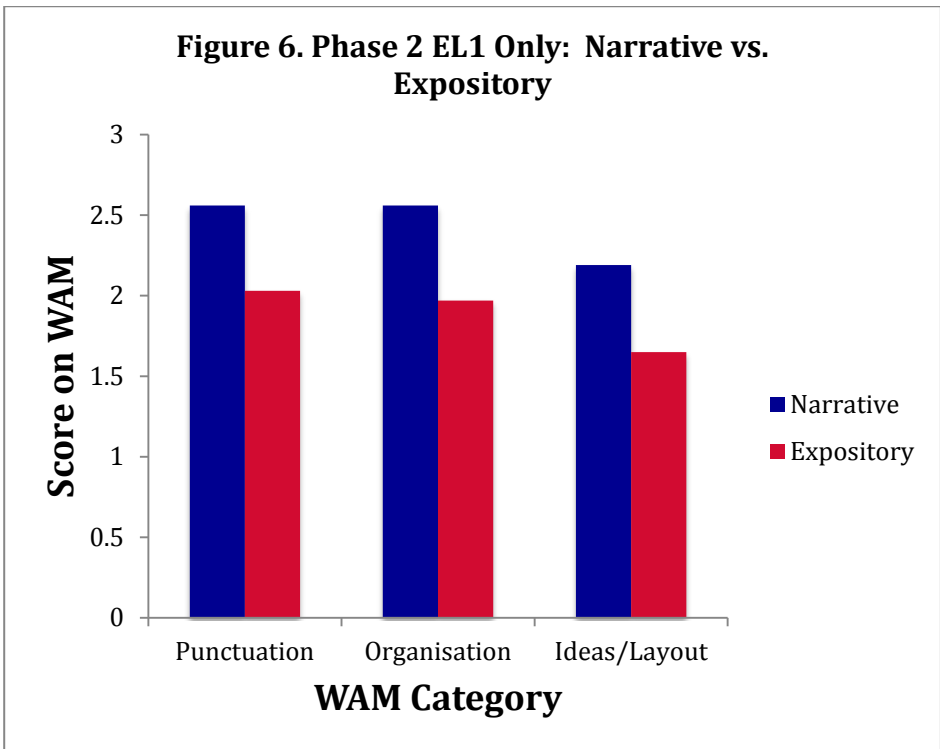
In phase 2, the children were given another narrative writing task and an expository task to enable a comparison across genres. The available children to test in the study in phase 2 were matched on Language Age. Again, being matched on Language Age meant that the children with EAL had higher scores on the nonverbal IQ measure in phase 2. The only statistically significant group difference on the WAM was on the 'spelling' feature of the expository genre in favour of the children with EAL (see Figure 4).



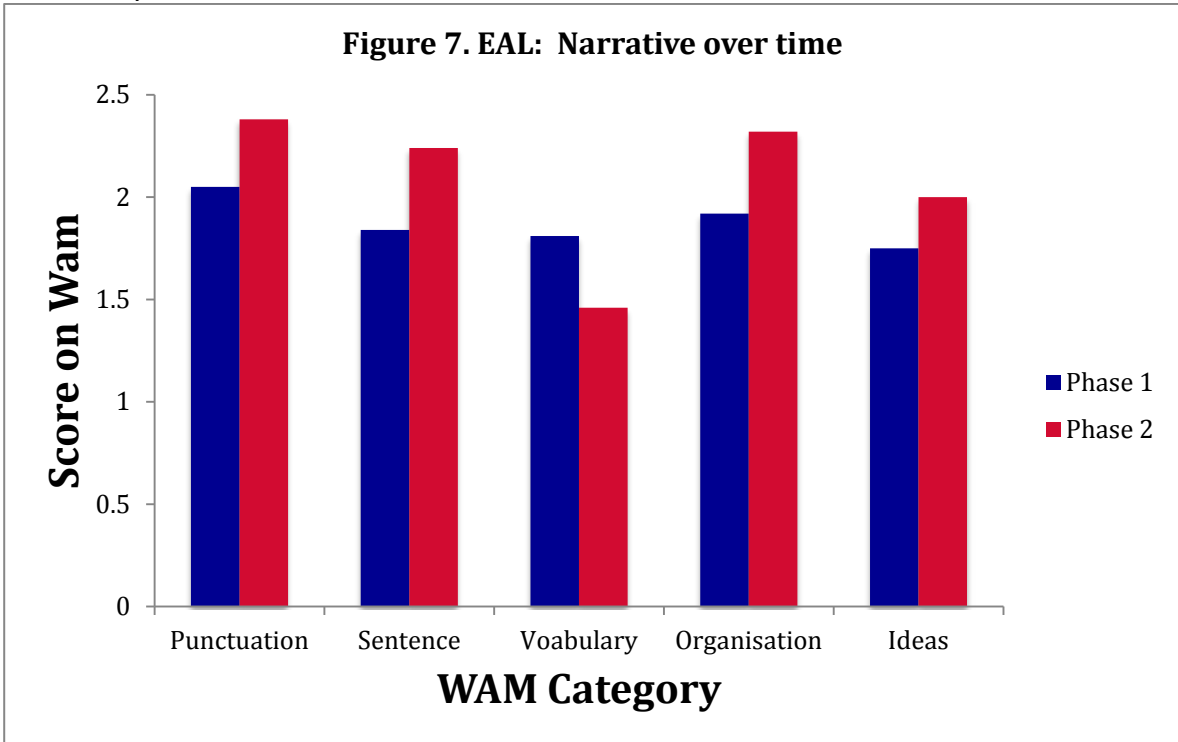
We then carried out comparisons between the two writing genres (narrative vs. expository) by language group. Figure 5 illustrates the results of our analyses for the children with EAL where the only significant differences between the two genres are on the 'Spelling', 'Vocabulary' and 'Ideas/Layout' features of the WAM ( $p < .05$  for all comparisons). Figure 5 indicates that the children with EAL have higher scores on Spelling and Vocabulary for the expository genre than the narrative. However they had higher 'ideas/layout' scores for the narrative genre than the expository.



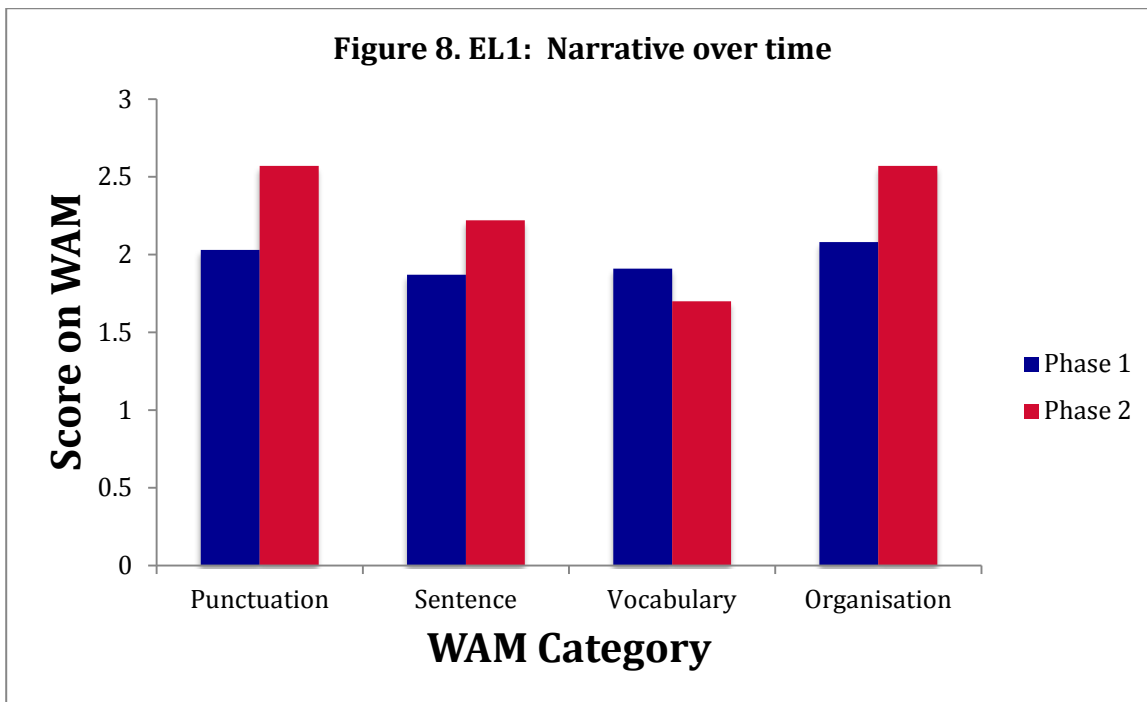
The same analyses were carried out with the native-speaking children and are presented in Figure 6. These comparisons showed a slightly different pattern than for the children with EAL where the differences across genre were found on 'Punctuation', 'Organisation' and 'Ideas/Layout'.



Our final set of analyses in Phase 2 were focused on comparing narrative over time – in other words, did the children improve in their narrative writing from phase 1 to phase 2. Figures 7 and 8 present these comparisons by language group, and illustrate that for both groups of children there were significant improvements on many of the WAM features – with the important exception of vocabulary.







In summary, the Phase 2 analyses indicate that the EAL and native-speaking children are more similar in that they were matched on Language Age and that overall there was only one significant difference on the overall WAM features (expository spelling). However, in analyzing the groups separately we find slightly different patterns in relation to differences between narrative and expository genres for both groups. Vocabulary seems to be a bigger challenge for the children with EAL in that the children with EAL had lower vocabulary scores on the narrative genre relative to the expository composition, whereas the native-speaking children showed no such difference. For the children with EAL there were more language-related differences on the narrative and expository relative to the native-speaking children.

Our final analyses involved carrying out some multiple linear regression analyses to identify which of the baseline predictors in phase 1 best predicted the writing scores on the narrative task in Phase 1, the narrative task in phase 2 and the expository task in phase 2.

Predictors of phase 1 Narrative task

Table 1 indicates that the WIAT 2 reading comprehension measure served as the best predictor of the narrative writing task at phase 1 for the native-speaking children relative to the other baselines assessments. The six predictor model accounted for 18% of the variance in the total scores of narrative writing at time 1.

Table 1. Native-speaking children only – predictors of narrative task in phase 1.

EL1 Students: Narrative Writing Scores Related to Baseline Test Scores (n = 51)

Variable	Zero-Order <i>r</i>							<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
	NWS1	CELF1	CELF2	IQ	BPVS	WIAT1	WIAT2			
CELF1	.30*	1						-.02	-.06	.00
CELF2	.25	.69**	1					-.03	-.14	.01
IQ	.24	.33*	.48**	1				.02	.04	.00
BPVS	.26	.51**	.41**	.33*	1			.02	.05	.00
WIAT 1	.43**	.52**	.55**	.29*	.48**	1		.08	.24	.03
WIAT 2	.48**	.68**	.62**	.47**	.39**	.60**	1	.13	.43*	.07
								Intercept = -4.26		
Mean	14.96	87.59	87.59	51.96	95.86	101.22	102.47	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .28		
<i>SD</i>	3.09	11.22	11.22	7.93	11.04	9.63	10.28	Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .18		
								<i>R</i> = .53*		

For the children with EAL, Table 2 indicates that the receptive language score from the CELF was the best predictor of the narrative writing task in phase 1 compared to the other predictors. The six predictor model accounted for 40% of the variance in the total scores of narrative writing in phase 1.

**Table 2. Children with EAL – predictors of narrative task in phase 1**

EAL Students: Narrative Writing Scores Related to Baseline Test Scores (n = 44)

Variable	Zero-Order <i>r</i>							<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
	NWS1	CELF1	CELF2	IQ	BPVS	WIAT1	WIAT2			
CELF1	.62**	1						.11	.39*	.07
CELF2	.41**	.59**	1					-.38	-.13	.01
IQ	.46**	.54**	.64**	1				.04	.12	.01
BPVS	.26	.37*	.44**	.30*	1			-.03	-.15	.01
WIAT 1	.60**	.65**	.64**	.56**	.63**	1		.14	.44	.04
WIAT 2	.56**	.63**	.59**	.61**	.39**	.78**	1	.01	.03	.00
								Intercept = -3.03		
Mean	13.8	78.73	83.48	54.41	88.07	95.68	95.82	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .49		
<i>SD</i>	3.41	12.56	15.59	9.9	15.31	13.04	15.22	Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .40		
								<i>R</i> = .70***		

**Predictors of phase 2 narrative task**

Table 3 illustrates that the receptive vocabulary measure (BPVS) served as the best predictor of the second narrative task in phase 2 for the native-speaking children. The six predictor model accounted for 10% of the variance in the total scores of narrative writing in phase 2.

**Table 3. Native-speaking children: Predictors of narrative writing in Phase 2**

ML Students: Narrative Writing Scores (time 2) Related to Baseline Test Scores (n = 51)

Variable	Zero-Order <i>r</i>							<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
	NWS2	CELF1	CELF2	IQ	BPVS	WIAT1	WIAT2			
CELF1	-.18	1						-.20	-.27	.03
CELF2	-.003	.69**	1					.01	.02	.00
IQ	.21	.33*	.48**	1				.34	.32	.07
BPVS	-.24	.51**	.41**	.33*	1			-.25	-.34*	.07
WIAT 1	.06	.52**	.55**	.29*	.48**	1		.20	.23	.03
WIAT 2	.02	.68**	.62**	.47**	.39**	.60**	1	.03	.03	.00
								Intercept = 12.16		
Mean	11.88	87.59	87.59	51.96	95.86	101.22	102.47	R <sup>2</sup> = .21		
SD	8.31	11.22	11.22	7.93	11.04	9.63	10.28	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .10		
								R = .46		

Table 4 shows that the pattern is different for the children with EAL where the best predictor of narrative writing in phase 2 was the nonverbal IQ score and where the six predictor model accounted for 19% of the variance in the total scores of narrative writing in phase 2.

**Table 4. EAL children – Predictors of narrative writing in Phase 2**

EAL Students: Narrative Writing Scores (time 2) Related to Baseline Test Scores (n = 44)

Variable	Zero-Order <i>r</i>							<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
	NWS2	CELF1	CELF2	IQ	BPVS	WIAT1	WIAT2			
CELF1	.45**	1						.18	.35	.06
CELF2	.25	.59**	1					-.11	-.26	.03
IQ	.45**	.54**	.64**	1				.26	.40*	.08
BPVS	.18	.37*	.44**	.30*	1			-.01	-.03	.00
WIAT 1	.37*	.65**	.64**	.56**	.63**	1		.10	.19	.01
WIAT 2	.34*	.63**	.59**	.61**	.39**	.78**	1	-.05	-.12	.00
								Intercept = -10.21		
Mean	12.64	78.73	83.48	54.41	88.07	95.68	95.82	R <sup>2</sup> = .30		
SD	6.48	12.56	15.59	9.9	15.31	13.04	15.22	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .19		
								R = .55*		

\*\*\* *p* < .001, \*\* *p* < .01, \* *p* < .05

#### Predictors of Phase 2 Expository Task

Finally, we carried out analyses to identify which were the best predictors of the expository task in Phase 2. Table 5 illustrates the results for the native-speaking children, where both the receptive vocabulary (BPVS) and reading comprehension (WIATII) scores were significant predictors. The six predictor model accounted for 39% of the variance in total scores on the expository task for native-speaking children.

**Table 5. Native-speaking children – Predictors of expository writing in Phase 2**

EL1 Students: Expository Writing Scores Related to Baseline Test Scores (n = 51)

Variable	Zero-Order <i>r</i>							<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
	EWS2	CELF1	CELF2	IQ	BPVS	WIAT1	WIAT2			
CELF1	.31*	1						.04	.12	.01
CELF2	.15	.69**	1					-.09	-.33	.05
IQ	.10	.33*	.48**	1				-.04	-.08	.00
BPVS	-.02	.51**	.41**	.33*	1			-.11	-.30*	.06
WIAT 1	.34*	.52**	.55**	.29*	.48**	1		.08	.19	.02
WIAT 2	.56*	.68**	.62**	.47**	.39**	.60**	1	.29	.73***	.21
								Intercept = - 5.88		
Mean	14.92	87.59	87.59	51.96	95.86	101.22	102.47	R <sup>2</sup> = .46		
SD	4.04	11.22	11.22	7.93	11.04	9.63	10.28	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .39		
								R = .68		

\*\*\* *p* < .001, \*\* *p* < .01, \* *p* < .05

Table 6 illustrates that for the children with EAL two predictors emerged as being significant – the receptive and expressive language scores on the CELF. The six predictor model accounted for 41% of the variance in total scores on the expository writing task in Phase 2 for the children with EAL.

**Table 6. EAL children – Predictors of expository writing in Phase 2**

EAL Students: Expository Writing Scores Related to Baseline Test Scores (n = 44)

Variable	Zero-Order <i>r</i>							<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
	EWS2	CELF1	CELF2	IQ	BPVS	WIAT1	WIAT2			
CELF1	.59**	1						.26	.72***	.26
CELF2	.09	.59**	1					-.14	-.48**	.10
IQ	.24	.54**	.64**	1				.03	.07	.00
BPVS	.10	.37*	.44**	.30*	1			-.06	-.19	.02
WIAT 1	.39**	.65**	.64**	.56**	.63**	1		.15	.43	.04
WIAT 2	.32*	.63**	.59**	.61**	.39**	.78**	1	-.05	-.16	.01
								Intercept = -.49		
Mean	14.91	78.73	83.48	54.41	88.07	95.68	95.82	R <sup>2</sup> = .49		
SD	4.52	12.56	15.59	9.9	15.31	13.04	15.22	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .41		
								R = .70***		

\*\*\* *p* < .001, \*\* *p* < .01, \* *p* < .05

In summary, the results of these preliminary regression analyses indicate that the variables that emerge as significant predictors for the native-speaking children are different than those for children with EAL. In particular, expressive language seems to be a much more powerful predictor of EAL children’s writing than for native-speaking children. This finding is consistent with comparable research on reading comprehension.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

To the best of our knowledge, the research we have summarized here represents the first systematic attempt to compare writing skills in children with EAL against native-speaking children. While this study is only descriptive, we can see that there are clear differences that emerge between EAL and native-speaking children in their writing. When native-speaking and EAL children are compared on narrative writing based only on a chronological age match, our results indicate that the children with EAL have lower scores on the higher level features of writing; ‘organisation’ and ‘ideas’ where organisation here refers to proper use of paragraphing, cohesion in the text and ‘ideas’ refer to imaginative and creative ideas and how they are expressed (see Appendix A). When the children are matched on Language Age, the children with EAL have higher nonverbal IQ scores, are matched on language features, yet still have lower scores on the ‘ideas’ feature of the WAM. At the end of the academic year, there are still different patterns in the

native-speaking and EAL children's writing on both narrative and expository tasks. Children with EAL seem to have more challenges related to vocabulary than the native-speaking children. This pattern is particularly evident in examining the results of the regression analyses where the receptive and expressive language score emerged as a repeated significant predictor of EAL children's writing skill.

It is important to recognize that based on this design we are unable to demonstrate a causal relationship between different linguistic features and children's writing performance. However, given that the children with EAL (overall) had lower scores on the English language baseline tasks, and that the language scores on the CELF consistently emerged as reliable predictors of children's writing, we believe that a more concerted focus on English language development in children with EAL would be beneficial in their writing. This conclusion is particularly reinforced by the fact that the same general pattern has been identified in research on EAL children's reading comprehension – where vocabulary knowledge, and expressive vocabulary in particular, is a powerful discriminator between native-speaking and EAL children (Hutchinson et al, 2003; Murphy, 2014).

From a research perspective, it appears more work is yet to be done to best support children's writing, and EAL children's writing in particular. As the research described in this report is largely descriptive, we believe it is important to examine the more causal relationships between different linguistic knowledge and writing in more experimental and quasi-experimental intervention and longitudinal designs. In our view, an appropriate next step would be to develop a series of intervention studies designed to improve children's vocabulary knowledge (both breadth and depth) as other research has consistently shown an advantage for instructional paradigms that promote vocabulary in literacy development (see Murphy, 2014 for a discussion). One area that we believe would be useful to explore in greater detail is the relationship between vocabulary depth and literacy. Much of the previous work examining these issues has focused primarily on identifying differences in EAL children's breadth of vocabulary knowledge relative to native-speaking children (Bialystok, Luk, Peets & Yang, 2010). However, recent research has identified that children with EAL differ on specific types of multiword vocabulary which also seems to impact on their reading comprehension (Smith & Murphy, under review; McKendry, 2013). Future work should examine the relationship between these different types of figurative vocabulary knowledge and writing as well – particularly as the areas in which the children with EAL consistently differed from native-speaking children was on the organisation and ideas components of their writing skill. The 'ideas' feature in particular is related to imaginative and creative writing with appropriate descriptive detail. If children with EAL have lower levels of figurative vocabulary then it would be reasonable to assume that boosting this knowledge would have beneficial impacts of their reading and writing performance.

From a policy and practice perspective, this research has identified that current provision for children with EAL does not seem to be particularly effective. Indeed, Andrews (2009) noted a number of areas in which there were significant problems associated with the provision for children with EAL including; lack of specialized staff, lack of provision for more advanced children with EAL (i.e., those with more well developed English skills relative to new arrivals to the UK), too much crossover with Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, more sensitivity to cultural than linguistic diversity, and perhaps most worryingly, a strikingly absent EAL pedagogy. This is perhaps not surprising given that it is EAL specialist pedagogy at primary level in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes is no longer widely available. This is ever more important, however, since researchers are consistently demonstrating a lag between children with EAL and native-speaking in terms of vocabulary, reading comprehension, and now in this project we have evidence that children with EAL have different profiles than native-speaking children in terms of their writing skills as well. Consequently, there is a significant need to enhance the provision

available to children with EAL to help them boost their language and literacy skills, which in turn will enable them to take greater advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. One way in which to do this is to actively teach vocabulary to enable all students to build their vocabulary knowledge, not just in terms of breadth, but also in terms of depth of knowledge which includes academic vocabulary, multiword vocabulary and figurative lexical items. All teachers are language teachers, perhaps most especially at primary level, since all children need to develop richer vocabulary and enhanced linguistic skills throughout these fundamental years. Understanding this important role of language in education, and developing appropriate pedagogical strategies for enhancing linguistic knowledge and skills in children continues to be an area requiring greater integrated attention from researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

### *About the Nuffield Foundation*

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## Appendix A

### *Writing Assessment Measure (WAM) Scoring Criteria (Adapted From Dunsmuir et al., 2005)*

Elements and Criteria	Score
<p><b>Punctuation</b> Uses a range of punctuation to clarify structure and create effect (e.g. speech marks, dashes, brackets, apostrophes, commas to demarcate sentences). Secure use of full stops and capital letters. Uses punctuation in addition to capital letters and full stops, the majority are used correctly (e.g. question marks, exclamations marks, commas in lists). Evidence of accurate use of capital letters and full stops, however few there are. (e.g. Sentence finishes with a full stop and next sentence begins with a capital letter) Shows awareness of how full stops are used in writing.</p>	<p>4 3 2 1</p>
<p><b>Sentence Structure and Grammar</b> Secure control of complex sentences. Understands how clauses can be manipulated for effect. Able to use conditional and passive voice (e.g. having watched him eat a dog biscuit, she felt sick) Beginning to write extended sentences including subordinators (e.g. if, so, while, when, after). The basic grammatical structure of sentences usually correct (e.g. usually consistent and correct use of tenses and nouns and verbs agree). Beginning to use other conjunctions to create compound sentences (e.g. because, but, so, then) and may be using multiple clauses (still mixing up tenses). Writes simple sentences which include the conjunction 'and'.</p>	<p>4 3 2 1</p>
<p><b>Vocabulary</b> Demonstrates use of well-chosen vivid &amp; powerful vocabulary to create effect (e.g. verbs, adjectives, adverbs) Varied use of adjectives, verbs and specific nouns (e.g. delicious for nice/sauntered for went/poodle for dog) Some selection of interesting and varied verbs e.g. jumped, compare, guess Uses simple vocabulary, appropriate to content. Writing is composed of simple nouns and verbs e.g. look, went, go, play, see</p>	<p>4 3 2 1</p>
<p><b>Organisation and Overall Structure</b> Paragraphs are well organised, based on themes and provides a cohesive text for the reader (e.g. paragraphs, subheadings, logically organised events). Uses paragraphs to organise writing, showing an identifiable structure. May be short sections. Themes are expanded upon and linked together in a series of sentences. Communicates meaning but may 'flit' from idea to idea and any themes that are expanded are done so in one sentence.</p>	<p>4 3 2 1</p>
<p><b>Ideas</b> Ideas are creative and interesting in a way that engages the reader. Uses a range of strategies and techniques such as asides, comment, observation, anticipation, suspense, tension. Ideas are imaginative and varied evidence of descriptive detail about characters, settings, feelings, emotions &amp; actions. Ideas are developed to by adding detail (e.g. is beginning to provide additional information or description beyond a simple list). Produces short sections of ideas which may be repetitive and limited in nature.</p>	<p>4 3 2 1</p>

**Total score:**