

Writing in English as an Additional Language at Key Stage 2

Cameron and Besser (2004)
DfES Research Report 586

264 Key Stage 2 writing SATs papers were selected from 13 schools in 8 Local Authorities. The papers were graded at National Curriculum Levels 3, 4 and 5. The two set tasks were to write a long story, prompted by a set of pictures, and a short radio advert for a new toy. Samples of writing from pupils speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL) and English as their Mother Tongue (EMT) were analysed for sentence, clause, phrase and word level use and control of genre.

Key Findings



Statistically significant differences

Prepositions

EAL writers omitted more prepositions or used them incorrectly, especially at Levels 3 and 4.

Short fixed phrases

EAL pupils had more difficulties composing these features.

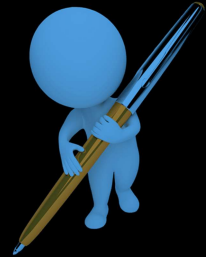
Best writers of English

EMT and EAL children able to manipulate language successfully:

- ✓ grammar
- ✓ vocabulary
- ✓ direct speech
- ✓ punctuation
- ✓ rhetorical features

And understand genre :

- ✓ strong characters
- ✓ strong plot
- ✓ persuasive writing



Use of Genres

EAL pupils handled the genres less confidently than EMT peers, especially amongst higher achieving EAL learners.



EAL writers use more **metaphors** and **similes** in their stories than EMT pupils. Most figurative language favoured animal subjects.

"The children ran into the entrance like a group of cheetahs."

Lower achieving EAL writers made **errors** with:

- > adverbials
- > modal verbs
- > subject-verb agreement
- > verb tenses and endings
- > subordinators linking clauses

Recommendations:

Amongst other suggestions, children need to be...

- Exposed to good writing across different genres and taught how stories are constructed.
- Taught to notice how prepositions work within phrases.
- Receive explicit teaching on certain forms of language like verb forms and punctuation.
- Have writing modelled for them and have time to orally rehearse ideas and receive feedback.