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Promoting writing skills at Universidade Metodista de Angola: foundation year students

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Many thanks to my Lord**,** my Redeemer for his permanent presence.

I dedicate this work to my late father.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own work. It has not been previously submitted by me for any degree, diploma or examination in any other educational institution.

I also declare that all the references used and made in this report have been duly cited and acknowledged. The research report is hereby submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English Language Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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Agostinho Filipe Neto 

15 day of February ,2010

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.	**AELS**	Applied English Language Studies
B.	**BC**	British Council
C.	**BICS**	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
D.	**BANA**	Britain, Australasia and North America
E.	**CALP**	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
F.	**DVD**	Digital Versatile Disk
G.	**DfID**	Department for International Development
H.	**EFL**	English as a Foreign Language
I.	**ELTP**	English Language Teaching Project
J.	**ELT**	English Language Teaching
K.	**ETETP**	English Teacher Education and Training Project
L.	**ILO**	Intended Learning Outcomes
M.	**ISCED**	Instituto Superior de Ciências da Educação
N.	**MA**	Masters of Arts
O.	**NCTE**	National Council of Teachers of English (USA)
P.	**NGOs**	Non Governmental Organizations
Q.	**ODA**	Overseas Development Administration
R.	**OHP**	Over- Head Projector
S.	**TTC**	Teacher Training College
T.	**UG**	Universal Grammar
U.	**UMA**	Universidade Metodista de Angola
V.	**VCR**	Video Cassette Recorder

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will briefly describe my motivation for carrying out this project. Then, I will develop the contextual background to the study. Having done that I will state the problem, identify the research site, followed by a short account of the importance of the English language in Angola.

1.1. Motivation for this Research

- Over the last ten years there has been a common perception in Luanda that state schools fail to equip the students with adequate writing abilities. Moreover, the situation seems to deteriorate increasingly in the final years of study. As a result, students entering university struggle to develop and produce a clear and comprehensive piece of writing in English in spite of receiving EFL instruction for about six years in the secondary and middle schools.

- Today, with the technological advances and the fast growth of the Angolan economy, the demand for English, especially writing, has been the *sine qua non* for getting a good job. Angolan job seekers wanting to get a well paid job in multinationals, NGOs or top Angolan companies have to be able to communicate in English to meet the demands of the workplace. Therefore, university students have a perception that English is a useful tool for developing their professional and personal lives.

- As an EFL teacher at Universidade Metodista de Angola, with more than twenty years of teaching in primary, secondary and middle schools in Luanda, I held several informal conversations with other experienced professionals (currently working for business companies) about the students inadequacies in writing in English. This intuition, supported by my observation on the Angolan education system, encouraged my interest in investigating the Foundation year students' writing in order to find ways of removing the hindrances so that their writing would improve.

1.2. The Context of the Study

After five centuries of colonial domination, Angola gained its independence from the colonial Portuguese Government in 1975, resulting in a mass exodus of thousands of Portuguese nationals and mixed ethnicity citizens from Angola to other countries. Among these emigrants there was a large number of qualified people. Shortly thereafter, the country faced economic, political and obvious educational problems.

The Government gave education top priority and the educational system was divided into four levels – primary (from Grade 1 to 4), secondary (from Grade 5 to 8), middle (from Grade 9 to 12), and tertiary level. But the shortage of qualified teachers made things very difficult. In spite the existence of a variety of indigenous languages in Angola, the Portuguese language was announced as the official language in Angola and the only medium of instruction at all educational levels. English and French were introduced as foreign elective languages from Grade 7 at the secondary level up to the second year at the tertiary level in some faculties.

In order to resolve the chronic shortage of teachers in Angola, particularly in Luanda, the government started importing teachers from Cuba, the ex-Soviet Union, Hungary and Bulgaria, to mention some countries. However, no English language teachers were available from these countries. Therefore, Luanda had to use the services of some resident Congolese and Zairian English teachers. However, later on, with the growing international and local demand for English language teaching and learning, the situation became complicated as the Provincial Education Department of Luanda could not meet the demands of the market.

Fortunately, in the mid-1980s there was a Technical Cooperation Programme between the British Government and the Ministry of Education of Angola. Therefore, under the aegis of the British Council and the British Overseas Development Administration – ODA, (now the Department for International Development - DfID), two projects: The English Teacher Education and Training Project (ETETP) and The English Language Teaching Project (ELTP), were set up in the Faculty of Education (ISCED) in the province of Huila and in the Teacher Training College (TTC) - Instituto Medio Garcia Neto in Luanda. Run by the British Council staff members, the projects were established at the request of the Angolan government to train English language teachers, provide advice, guidance and inspection, produce teaching materials, run workshops, seminars, in-service training, and organise the National and Provincial English Language Teaching Departments. It is worth mentioning that, in addition, English language teachers had been sent yearly to the United Kingdom and

Australian educational institutions either for methodology and language improvement courses or for Diploma and Master courses, at no cost for the Ministry of Education of Angola. In the late 1980s, things were working smoothly, learning and teaching were taking place, and teachers were motivated to work and develop their expertise with good training in many aspects.

In 1992, the first multi-party presidential elections were held in Angola, but the Angolan 'rebel' movement rejected the official election results under the pretext that they were rigged; consequently, the war against the government was resumed. Due to the unstable political and military situation in Angola, the British Council projects became temporary paralysed, because their personnel had left the country for security reasons. Activities were later resumed, but not to the same extent as before.

Unfortunately, as a result of the Angolan situation and also due to a financial scandal involving the ODA high ranking officers, in 1997 the British Council withdrew from the Republic of Angola and the Angolan authorities had to make new arrangements based on local resources. New personnel had been appointed to function at the National and Provincial English Language Teaching Departments, but some other trained personnel decided to leave and find more financially rewarding jobs either in Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), multinational or Angolan oil companies.

However, since the British Council withdrawal from Angola, many people would agree that things are not well organised. There has been a noticeable decline in the quality of English language teaching in Luanda. Middle school students are badly taught and come to universities with serious writing limitations. Dissatisfaction with students' achievement is high, and many English language teachers complain about the way the English Language Teaching Departments in the Ministry of Education operate.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

I have been teaching (primary school: general school subjects) since 1982, and later in 1985, I had the opportunity to take part in the British Council Project in Luanda, as a student, a teacher of English in secondary schools and then as a teacher-trainer in the Teacher Training College – "Garcia Neto" in Luanda before joining the United Nations for five years. Therefore, I have experienced first-hand the implementation of the British Council English language teaching projects in Angola.

From my extensive observations of the ELT practices in Luanda reinforced by a report (2005) that I wrote about the ELT management in schools in Luanda, in which the National and the Provincial ELT Managers were interviewed, it has emerged that state schools do not actually equip the students with adequate English language skills, especially writing. The reasons are:

1- The heavy emphasis on Grammar Translation methods is usual teaching practice.

2- Writing is not emphasised at all. Students are still given a topic and required to produce a piece of writing (a composition) in their tests.

3- The lack of ELT trained teachers. This is associated with frequent withdrawal of teachers from the teaching profession to commercial companies is commonplace.

4- Lack of stringent criteria for the selection of English language teachers is a factor.

5- Lack of motivation by the teachers due to several months' delays to get their "poor" salaries paid is problematic. Thus, teacher absenteeism is high. To illustrate this idea, Everard, B. & Morris, G. (1990:27) say that "Teachers, doctors and nurses are prepared to tolerate conditions of employment which would not be acceptable to someone with a boring job – though even they have their limits."

6- Many teachers have more than one job to augment their salaries or they are drawn to private schools that pay much better salaries.

7- Some teachers do not display sufficient competence and writing practices.

8- Large class sizes are the norm because education in state schools and universities is free to all. This means that they have to accommodate as many students as possible.

9- The lack of materials to promote effective teaching (e.g. textbooks on writing, workbooks, worksheets, photocopiers, OHP, etc.) also inhibits the teaching and learning environment in state schools.

10- The syllabuses used by the schools are not uniform across the education system. Teachers are left alone to get here and there bits and pieces of materials they consider convenient to teach the students. A unified syllabus has been not been provided by the authorities.

11- Since the British Council left the country the Ministry of Education of Angola has never supported the ELT system in terms of funding and in-service training. They do not know what goes on in schools.

Under these circumstances, it becomes clear that students are still leaving middle schools entering universities with serious problems with English, particularly with writing.

However, rather than discussing the acute English language teaching problems prevailing in the middle and secondary schools in Luanda, my investigation is limited to Universidade Metodista de Angola, Foundation year students.

1.4. Universidade Metodista de Angola

Universidade Metodista de Angola (UMA) is a private university that was established in 2006. It is administered jointly by the Portuguese and Angolans, and the Portuguese language is the only medium of education as in all schools and universities in Angola. Presently UMA functions in a recently erected eight-storey building (a sixteen storey building is in progress) located in the centre of Luanda city. The university offers the following courses:

Management & Business Administration; Environmental Management and Territory Administration; Architecture and Town Planning; Civil Engineering; Industrial Engineering & Electrical Systems; Computer Sciences; Portuguese and Communication; Law; Public Health & Clinical Analysis and Theology. English as a foreign language is taught in all these courses from Foundation year up to second year. The courses are all taught on a part-time basis through four, five or six academic years, depending on the course:

1- Year 0 (*Foundation year*); 2- First year; 3- Second year; 4- Third year; 5- Fourth year ; 6- Fifth year

In terms of facilities, there is a canteen, networked computer laboratories, laboratories for clinical analysis, an amphitheatre, a chapel, and interestingly enough, a spacious library without materials for English language, except some grammar books and bilingual dictionaries. Classrooms are each equipped with whiteboards, a television set, a VCR/DVD and a small tape recorder. However, large class-size (80-110 students), especially in the Foundation year, is common at UMA. One out of six teachers currently teaching English in the Foundation year is a career teacher with university English language education qualification. Other teachers are Methodist pastors who had been trained in Zimbabwe and others hold degrees in fields other than English language teaching.

1.4.1. Why Was UMA Chosen As The Site For The investigation?

I have been working at UMA since it was established in 2006. In spite of being a new university in Angola, it gained a good track record for its "excellent" staff (national and international), quality education and facilities. Therefore, it is committed to produce excellent graduates not only technically but also in terms of English language, nowadays required by

the Angolan society. As a UMA staff member, directly involved in the English language teaching and taking the opportunity of being an MA student at the University of the Witwatersrand involved in intensive reading and writing tasks, it gave me some inside knowledge of the growing concern about the writing problems with Foundation year students.

1.5. Importance of the English Language in Angola

Angola is one of the leading producers of diamonds in Africa, and the world's eighth oil producer. Angola needs to increase its potential in the world economy by establishing strong relationships with other countries; therefore good communication in English is crucial.

With the end of war the number of investors, NGOs, and other foreign companies operating in Angola, especially American and British have increased dramatically. For example, the following organisations operate in Angola: Chevron Texaco Corp., Exxon Mobil Corp, Total SA, British Petroleum, De Beers, Alrosa, Kerr-Gee Oil & Gas, United Nations, Save the Children, Statoil Hydro, etc. All these organisations and companies absorb a large number of Angolan human resources provided that the English language is spoken and written passably. The jobs offered by these organisations and companies are, in fact, appealing because they are very well paid jobs. Over the last 15 years the workforce of most of NGOs and foreign companies in Angola was constituted largely by expatriates, under the pretext that Angolan workers with knowledge of the English language was scarce. Today, with the new government policy of "angolanising" the foreign companies operating in Angola, especially in the oil and diamonds industries, foreign skilled labours and some white-collar jobs are being replaced by the Angolans. So, from this perspective, English is seen as an important tool for "angolanising" the foreign companies operating in Angola.

It is important to say of that some top Angolan companies have already been working in this manner. Whatever your academic qualifications are, to be offered a job one has to write and speak the English language at an acceptable level. So, as an international language, English in Angola is seen as a means for good employment and access to Anglo-American technology.

I believe that schools have a mission to equip Angolan youth with the necessary English skills so that they can be integrated into society and be in a position to use English in the workplace.

1.5.1. Private English Language Teaching Institutions in Luanda

The widely perceived need and interest in learning English, the International language, has increased in Angola, particularly in Luanda. However, English language teaching has also greatly attracted the private sector in Luanda. Hamp-Lyon & Hyland (2002:1) assert that "Programmes designed to prepare non-native users of English for English-medium academic settings have grown into a multi-million dollar enterprise around the world." There are many private English language teaching institutions in Luanda, where undergraduate or graduate students (only for those who can afford expensive fees) go to upgrade their English skills to get a good job or continue their studies in English speaking countries. Most of these institutions use various imported materials, including audio-visual materials from BANA[1] countries.

In the light of the preceding discussion it appears that the vicious cycle of the problems with writing that the typical freshman encounters at universities will continue. In this way, it is reasonable to explore the English Language Teaching situation at UMA, the site of my study.

Although some work on English language teaching has been done since the time of this study, I hope that this research will enable me to suggest ways in which the situation can be improved.

[1] BANA = Britain, Australasia and North America

CHAPTER TWO

AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RATIONALE

2.1. Aims

2.2. Research Questions

2.3. Rationale

2.1. Aims

The major goal of this research project is to explore the writing practices and to gain a deeper understanding of the problems with writing in English in the Foundation year at UMA. Thereafter, I will attempt to identify concrete pedagogical interventions and suggestions that could improve the situation. The aims of this research are expressed as follows:

1. To investigate the specific problems students encounter in writing.
2. To investigate and critique the current pedagogic practices employed in teaching.
3. To investigate how students themselves perceive their problems.
4. To investigate how the teachers perceive the problems regarding the writing skills of their students
5. To examine the teaching materials and the syllabuses.
6. To investigate how students are assessed and find out whether the courses are constructively aligned.
7. To investigate what approach(es) to writing would impact positively on the current writing practices.

My broad research questions that will guide the investigation are:

2.2. Research Questions

1. How is writing taught and learnt in the Foundation year at UMA?
2. What kinds of text-types (genres) are students expected to master?
3. In what way, if at all, is the Foundation year preparing the students for the two subsequent years (i.e. 1st & 2nd years) at UMA?
4. To what extent are teaching/learning, assessment and outcomes synchronised if at all?

2.3. Rationale

The comments in the previous chapter, section 1.3, pages 3- 5, suggest that state schools in Luanda fail to equip the students with adequate writing abilities and that consequently, they transfer this problem to university level where students are likely to be involved in more cognitively demanding tasks.

In our state schools there is a common perception that students are ill-prepared for university and those who are motivated to learn good English usually resort to attending private English language teaching institutions. Despite the fact that students are taught English in the secondary and middle schools for about six years they still cannot write clearly. The quotation below accords with the perception mentioned above – that state schools do not adequately prepare students:

> Many college and university students with four, five, even six or more years of study of another language behind them are still unable to express themselves in a clear, correct, and comprehensive manner in writing. We would do well to examine critically the role of writing in foreign-and second-language learning, to analyse what is involved in the process of writing another language, and to trace out the steps by which this skill can be progressively mastered. Rivers, W. (1981:291).

The situation of state school leavers now at UMA raises concern and demands an urgent look into the problem. These students demonstrate some competencies in reading comprehension, speaking and listening, but writing is their main stumbling block. Morrow (1992) and Gee (1989) as quoted by Starfield (1994:18) stressed that "Student success in an institution is contingent not solely on their being granted access to the institution but also to the knowledge and discourses that it controls." Likewise, Kroll, B., (1990:2) asserts that "For those engaged in teaching second language learners, what is needed is both a firm grounding in the theoretical issues of first and second language writing and an understanding of a broad range of pedagogical issues that shape classroom writing instruction." I would agree with Kroll, because I believe that knowing a broad range of theoretical issues pertaining to teaching enables teachers to assist their students developing language skills, including writing.

I hope that the investigation of current teaching practices at UMA will throw some light on the feasibility of introducing methods such as the "Process approach" or a combination of the "Process-Genre approach". This may include some positive aspects of the "Product-oriented" approach to writing. I hope that my findings will influence and be a starting point for the innovation and improvement of writing at UMA.

To Lea & Street (1998:157/8) however "there has been a move away from a skills-based, deficit model of student writing and to consider the complexity of writing practices that are taking place at degree level in universities." They argue that learning in higher education involves adapting to new ways of knowing: new ways of understanding, interpreting and organising knowledge. From this point of view, they introduced three models to New Literacy studies to understand educational research into students' writing and new understanding of what constitutes literacy:

1- Study skills; 2- Academic socialisation and 3- Academic literacies

In summary, by investigating the writing abilities of students at UMA I expand the range of my knowledge about teaching and learning of writing in Angola and I hope that in this way I can contribute to the improvement of the pedagogic practices at UMA, and also to the greater success of students, particularly in the sphere of writing.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction: This section reviews the literature that I found relevant to my research. It gives an overview of writing pedagogies and the relevance of these for the Angolan learners in our university. I will look at:

- Conceptions and the value of writing
- The three major paradigms to writing: Product, Process and Genre Approaches.
- BICS and CALP theory (Cummins, 1980)
- The Constructive Alignment Approach (Biggs, 1999)

3.1. Conceptions and the Value of Writing

There are various definitions regarding what constitutes 'writing'. I have adopted a more expanded definition made by Winch et al. (2001:158) in Harris, P. et al. (2003:12),

> Writing … is not merely a tool for learning. This view undervalues what writing is or does. Writing is (or can be) learning itself – it is the protracted synthesis or coming together of our human thinking and language competence, handling a range of problems that cannot be satisfactorily managed by mental reflection or talking.

Why do we write? Whether you are a native or a foreign English language student, you will be required to write an assignment or a composition in English. I believe that writing is a value-laden exercise in any language teaching-learning situation; it is seen as the most important tool for assessment and to demonstrate ones learning. For example, exam papers with various types of questions, even gap-filling exercises or re-ordering jumbled up sentences will require writing abilities. In addition, writing may also be an instructional tool. By being involved in writing the writers can get immediate feedback about their strengths and weaknesses. They learn how to think, how to develop ideas and how to make connections between various things around the world.

Protherough (1983:5) asserts that "Writing is important because it will gain you qualifications and enable you to obtain and succeed at a job at an appropriate level. Also, you have to write for an interview for a job when you leave school." In general terms, this picture is to be found in Luanda. In spite of having no experience or practice in the secondary and middle schools, students at university perceive the necessity to write well in English for their professional career.

Whilst talking about motivation in English language learning, Harmer (1983:3), refers to *short-term goals* and *long-term goals*. For Harmer *long-term-goals* might have something to do with students' need to get a job, and *short-term goals* have to do with things like the urge to pass an end of term, end-of-semester exam or complete a unit successfully. Harmer further asserts that "a teacher will find a strongly motivated student with a long-term goal easier to teach than a student who has to study the language because it is on the curriculum and who does not have such a goal." Considering the importance of the English language in Angola, I believe that UMA Foundation year students are strongly motivated to learn and are *long-term goal-oriented* students. Therefore, their goals have to be met.

Smith (1982:11) notes that "Writing has a utility to all individuals, that anyone who does not write, loses both power and potential, comparable to losing a limb or sight or hearing." I believe that students have to possess the necessary writing skills that lead them not only to academic success but also to be able to operate across a range of potential writing situations.

3.2. Approaches to Writing

The literature includes numerous approaches to language teaching and learning. Today, the dominance of one approach or another has led to various contrasting views about their applicability and suitability, as world wide one can observe a range of different contexts and cultures. As a result of all this and in order to meet the needs and respond positively to certain teaching situations, eclectic approaches need to be used as a way of meeting these conditions.

Teachers are frequently confronted with the dilemma of deciding on the right approach to use. This problem is exacerbated in foreign language teaching situations because apart from dealing with the complexities of the language itself, students have to face issues of language acquisition as well. The fact that most "approaches to language teaching" are imported from the Western countries to other countries around the world, some scholars in the field of English language education have questioned the suitability of these approaches in different language teaching situations. They argue that contextual and cultural awareness are needed before considering such approaches as being appropriate. For instance, Canagarajah (1999) has coined this transfer as "*linguistic and educational imperialism*". To him, these imported approaches fail to take full account of the social and/or educational needs of the users.

Alatis et al. (1981:3) say that "*Language teaching means different things to different people"* They suggest the following questions:

1. What method(s) work(s) best with specific types of learners in specific situations?
2. How can and should teaching be made most responsive to individual needs?
3. What factors influence language teaching?
4. What skills and competencies should second/foreign language teachers possess?
5. How can these skills and competencies be assessed in teacher candidates?

Many of these issues should be taken into account in the context of UMA. Notwithstanding the issues mentioned above, the three most influential paradigms of writing - the Product approach, the Process approach and the Genre-oriented approach will be discussed in the next section.

3.2.1. The Product Approach to Writing

The Product approach to writing was introduced in the mid-sixties. As the name implies, this approach focuses mainly on the final result of the act of writing. Exponents of this traditional paradigm are much more concerned to see if the finished products are readable, grammatically correct, logically structured and if the discourse conventions are related to the main points, supporting details are in place. Typically, learners in Product-oriented classes find themselves building their own texts, imitating model texts provided by the teachers and paying attention, for example, to punctuation, coherence, spelling, etc.

Pincas (1982a:22) in Badger, R. & White, G. (2000:153) argues that there are four stages in the Product approach: (1) 'familiarization' that aims to make the learners aware of certain features of a particular text; (2) 'controlled writing' and (3) 'guided writing' where the learners practise the skills with increasing freedom until they are ready for the (4) 'free writing'. For Pincas, learning is an "assisted imitation" where the learners respond to the stimulus provided by the teacher. This idea is in line with Behaviourist theories in which language learning is a process of mechanical habit formation. However, the Product approach has been strongly criticised by many theorists as it ignores the composing process.

This picture may be found in our middle schools English classrooms, and probably at UMA as well, because most teachers' competence in handling the teaching of writing more successfully is questionable. Middle school students come to universities with serious writing problems because they are inadequately prepared and lack practice in the composing process. In support of this idea Rivers, W. (1981: 297) points out:

> "Many writing weaknesses in advanced classes can be traced back to lack of systematic practices during the earlier stages of the language course. Often students in elementary classes are encouraged to try their hand at creative writing in the foreign language for fun, while the teacher turns a blind eye to the monstrosities they create."

The Product-oriented paradigm was very common during colonial times and still exists in many classrooms in Angola. Connor (1996:168) in Corbett (2003:87) observes that there has been "a paradigm shift in the teaching of second language writing over the last few decades: the emphasis is no longer on the product." Unfortunately, many teachers in Luanda were taught how to write the Portuguese language through the Product approach. Therefore, they are likely to take the same paradigm into their classrooms when teaching English.

3.2.2. The Process Approach to Writing

Zamel, V.(1982:196) asserts that "Recently, the focus of research on composition has shifted. Rather than investigating what students write, teachers and researchers are beginning to study the composing process itself. They are now working on the assumption that before we know how to teach writing, we must first understand how we write."

The concept of writing to learn is broadly recognized in the literature. Leibowitz (2000:22) refers to Emig (1983) as being one of the most significant proponents of writing as a mode for learning. According to Emig, "Within the context of writing as a process, the development of one's writing skills advances learning." Emig further argues that "writing provides physical or visual evidence of the *thinking* as it is documented, and that being slower than talking, writing provides *time* and space for *reflections*" This line of thought contrasts with the idea of writing as a Product, which ignores the practices involved in a student or writer arriving at a final product.

Connor (1996) believes that writing should be taught as a process, involving – prewriting; drafting; writing; rewriting; composing; revising; editing; etc., until the final product emerges. The writer goes on to say that "Writing is not considered as a solitary act; it involves teachers, peers, and other readers." Murray (1980: 4-5) in Zamel (1982:197) says that "All the stages of the Process approach to writing interact together and repeatedly in order to discover meaning." From this point of view, writing is a process of exploring one's thoughts and learning from the act of writing itself what these thoughts are. Zamel (1983a:195) in Kroll, B.(1993:15) asserts that, "The composing process was seen as a 'non-linear,' exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and formulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning."

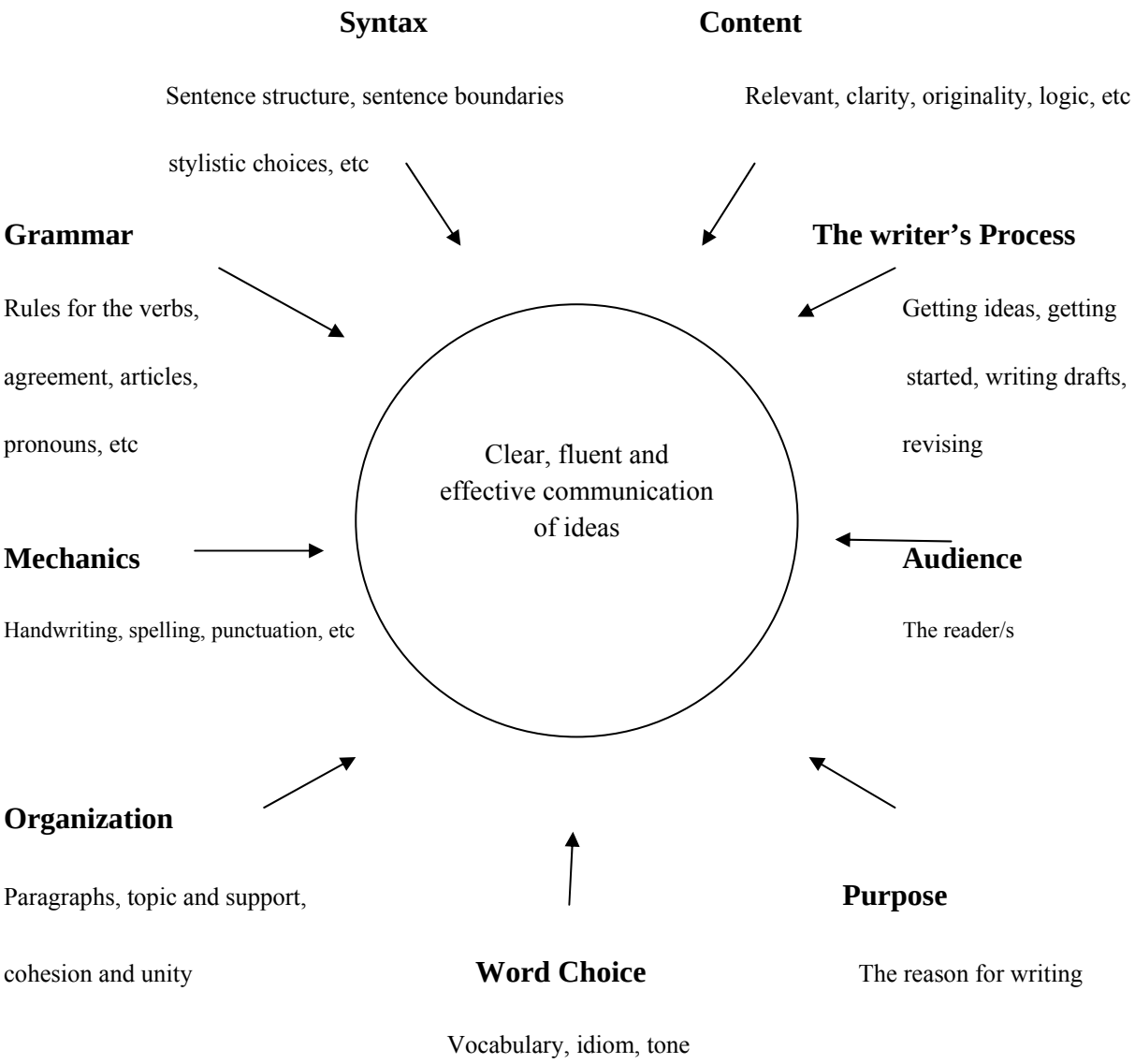
Nonetheless, the Process approach to writing was also considered to have some weaknesses. For example, according to Badger & White (2000: 154):

> Writing in process approaches is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure. .. In Process Approaches, the teacher primarily facilitates the learners' writing, and providing input or stimulus is considered to be less important. Like babies and young children who develop, rather than learn, their mother tongue, second language learners develop, rather than consciously learn, writing skills. Teachers draw out the learners' potential.

Broadly speaking, foreign English language learners often have only partial control over the target language, and usually seek for support to enhance their writing. I believe that the process approach to writing may be beneficial for our students at UMA. The small degree to which the process approach is used in Luanda gives an indication that it is not well known and needs to be introduced. By using the Process-based approach our students will perhaps be familiarized with the set of instructions and conventions which serve as guidelines as to how texts should be written. Additionally, they may have opportunities to manipulate their ideas throughout the process of interaction with their peers and teachers.

This following diagram adapted from Raimes (1983:6) illustrates the most relevant points that might be taken into consideration while producing a clear, correct and comprehensive piece of writing.

Figure 1: Producing a Piece of Writing



3.2.3. The Genre Approach to Writing

The Genre approach to writing was introduced in the field of language teaching in the mid-1980s. Led by Halliday (1985), Swales (1981, 1990) and Bhatia (1991, 1993), Genre theories are mainly based on the knowledge of language as social action and serves a particular purpose. In this way, it is suggested that writing takes place within social action situations, thus writing is developed through imitation, language analysis and attention to forms. Genre (or rather *text:* written or spoken) approach is sometimes confused with Product approach

because the linguistic components are also emphasised. Therefore, the weaknesses of the Product approach can also extend to the Genre approach.

The Genre approach emerged as a reaction to the perceived shortcomings of the Process approach. Proponents of the Genre approach to writing argued against the Process approach theorists as "messy" and "uneven". According to them the composing process was found to be in no way linear:

> [Writing] is messy, recursive, convoluted, and uneven. Writers write, plan, revise, anticipate, and review throughout the writing process, moving back and forth among the different operations involved in writing without any apparent plan. (Hairston 1982: 85) in Harwood (2005:5)

In spite of the weaknesses expressed above, this paradigm might also be incorporated into my study if its benefits are carefully taken into account.

Genre theories have informed my research about how to categorise different written text-types produced and used by UMA students - the text organization for each text-type, and more importantly the language features of each text.

The Genre approach to writing is underpinned by the "Functional approach to language"[2] that reveals how language is used and learnt in specific contexts.

The following grid is adapted from Derewianka (1990) shows some genres, text-types and text organisation that might be identified at UMA.

[2] The Functional approach looks at how language enables us to do things – to share information, to enquire, to express attitudes, to entertain, to argue, to get our needs met, to reflect, to construct ideas, to order our experience and to make sense of the world. It is concerned with providing information about the development of effective texts for particular purposes, and providing it at the point of need within the context of real, purposeful language use. Derewianka (1990: 3-5)

Table1: Genres, Text-types and Text Organisation

Genres	Types	Text Organisation
Recount (Is the reconstruction of past experience. It is the unfolding of a series of past events over time. Language is used to keep the past alive and to help to interpret experience.)	*Personal Recount* *Factual Recount* *Imaginative Recount*	The focus is on a sequence of events, all of which related to a particular occasion. Recounts generally begins with *an orientation* giving the reader a background information. Then unfolds with a *series of events* ordered in a chronological sequence. At various stages some *personal comments* are introduced.
Narratives (Event that that may seek to teach or inform, to embody the writer's reflections on experience, and perhaps most important – to nourish and extend the reader's imagination.)	There are many types of narratives. For example: *Imaginary, factual.* They can be *stories, mysteries, science fiction, romances*, etc	Narratives begin with *an orientation*, where the writer attempts to create the possible world of this particular story. The story is pushed along by a series of events, during which the readers usually expect some sort of *complication* or problem to arise. In a satisfying narrative, *a resolution* of this complication is usually brought about.
Arguments (The Genre argument is characterised by taking a position, making a claim, or supporting something with a specific evidence.)	Argument texts belong to a group called "*exposition*" which is concerned with *analysis, interpretation* and *evaluation* of the world around us.	The major focus of the text organization is on an issue and a logical sequence of argument related to this issue. The argument usually consists of: - *a statement of position*; the argument and finally, there is an attempt at *summing up the position.*
Information Reports (Documents, organise and store factual information on a topic)	*News report, weather report, course, evaluation report*, etc.	The major focus is on a "thing" (or, more accurately, a class of things) rather than a sequence. The topic of the report is usually introduced by: - *an opening general statement/general classification,* then *facts about various aspects of the subject.*

Conclusion

I have discussed the three most prevalent approaches to writing. From this discussion it appears reasonable to conclude that, although they are in opposition to each other, they all have advantages and disadvantages. The applicability of these three approaches depends on specific learner's needs and on the context. Harwood (2005:1) calls the integration of these three approaches a **"***Sample approach*." He asserts that they are not mutually exclusive. Neither is adhering to just one of any the three approaches always appropriate given a teacher's circumstances.

Taking into account all the benefits of the above mentioned approaches, an integration of the three may be helpful for the Angolan learners at UMA.

3.3. BICS and CALP

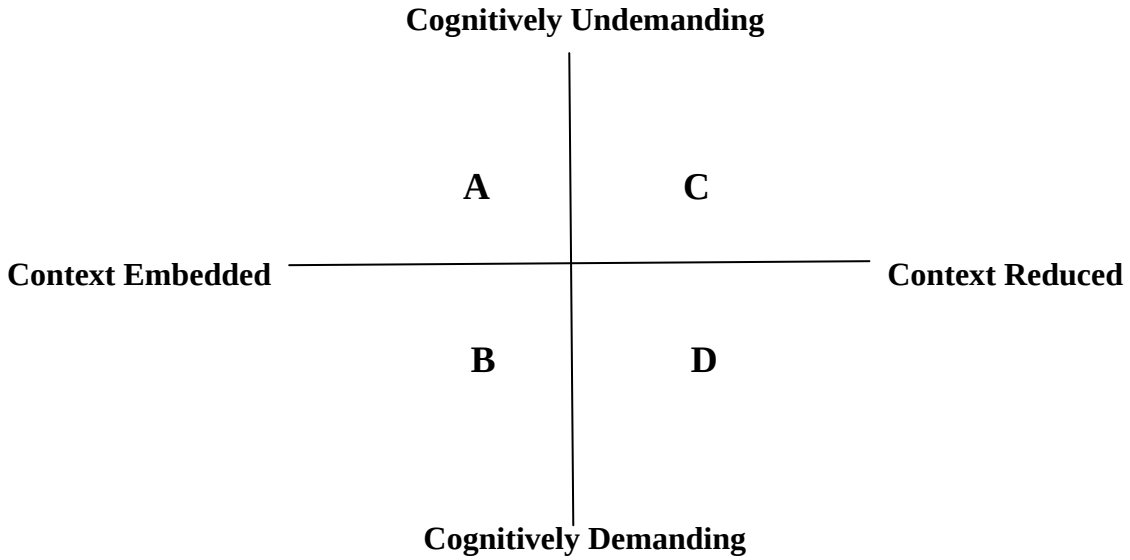
Apart from the three most influential paradigms of writing: Product, Process and Genre approaches, another theoretical concept that might exert a significant impact on my research, is the work developed by Cummins (1980).

Cummins (1980) distinguishes between two levels of language learning: BICS, Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills and CALP, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. In the first model, language is context embedded and used in social situations, thus it is not very demanding cognitively. In CALP, language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) is de-contextualized, cognitively demanding and refers to academic learning. This level of language is extremely important in Higher Education for students to succeed, because it involves comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, inferring and arguing. This concept may be useful for understanding the situation at UMA, because our middle school leavers arrive at UMA with low levels of writing in English. They can do some reading, establish basic communication and listen quite well, but their writing is generally inadequate.

As these students cannot be expelled from the university, they have to be supported to move away from the low levels of writing (BICS), and acquire the CALP to face the required demands of writing at UMA.

The following theoretical framework developed by Cummins (1996:57) helps the teachers to indicate the degree of context and cognitive demands provided by different tasks and activities.

Figure 2: BICS and CALP Conceptual Framework



As can be seen, the above framework consists of two intersecting continua, which move from cognitively undemanding to cognitively demanding, on the vertical line; and from context embedded to context reduced, on the horizontal line. The intersecting continua form four quadrants: A, C, B and D. As far as the Foundation year is concerned, students are still operating in the upper quadrants (A and C), especially quadrant A, in which the tasks are highly contextualized, familiar, easy and cognitively undemanding. Whereas they were supposed to move along quadrant B, where the mediation starts, and the tasks are more challenging.

3.4. Constructive Alignment

Prior to the expansion of tertiary education, teachers used to expound their knowledge to students in the form of lectures. Students were passive and the only mode of assessment was through exam papers. To date the literature emphasises that there has been a paradigm shift towards student-centred, outcomes-based approach. Educational institutions are seen as student-centred institutions. This approach, i.e. constructive alignment was introduced and coined by Biggs (1999).

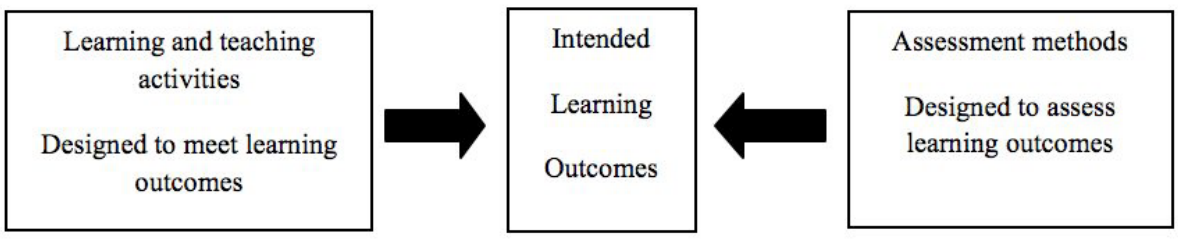
According to Biggs (2003:27),

> When there is alignment between what we want, how we want to teach and assess...students are entrapped in this web of consistency, optimizing the likelihood that they will engage the appropriate learning activities, but paradoxically leaving them free to construct their knowledge their way.

Alignment in the sense used by Biggs (2003) refers to the need to ensure that the teaching methods and the learning activities, the assessment tasks and the intended outcomes are all well synchronised. In other words, whenever we design and teach a new unit subject or course, we should therefore: (1) Think about what we believe students will be able to do by the end of a course or module of study, i.e., **I**ntended **L**earning **O**utcomes (**ILO**). (2) Think about how we might assess those outcomes, i.e., assessment tasks, marking criteria. (3) Look at what students need to know and understand so as to achieve those outcomes, i.e., concepts, practical skills, content. (4) Design the teaching and the learning activities that will help the students develop their understanding and skills they need in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes. (5) Make the links between the learning outcomes, assessment, and learning activities clear to the students.

The following figure adapted from Biggs (1999:27) shows how the teaching and learning activities, the assessment methods and the intended learning outcomes should be aligned.

Figure 3: Constructive Alignment



The Constructive Alignment approach is believed to be important by its proponents, because it optimizes quality learning, encourages clarity and promotes deep learning.

As mentioned before, in the context of UMA, there is a need to investigate whether the three elements illustrated in the figure above are constructively aligned to support high-level learning. Another reason for such investigation can be described as follows:

When UMA started operating in 2006, the designed English language programme for the Foundation year students was the 'Intermediate level of English.[3]' But as soon as the academic services were informed about the problems regarding the weaknesses of the typical freshman, it was decided to shift to Elementary level, which appears to be too basic for their academic level. Four years after the university opened its doors, unsurprisingly, there seem to be no improvements. The Foundation year students are still working at the BICS level with the *New Headway Elementary Course-book*, by Liz and John Soars (2006). Moreover, the *New Headway Elementary Course-book* appears not to emphasise writing which involves cognitively oriented academic skills. Students are expected to produce texts in their exams, but unsatisfactory results have emerged.

Lea & Street (op. cit.) have demonstrated in their research (*Student writing in Higher Education*) that rather than purely locating "problems" with individual students, other aspects involving the teaching process should also be investigated. In other words, we need to go beyond the individual and examine the whole system. So, apart from finding out specific problems in the students written work, other issues that contribute to these problems will also be considered.

[3] According to UK classification the level of English as a foreign language are: Beginner; Elementary; Pre intermediate, Intermediate, Upper intermediate; and Advanced.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I give a brief outline of the research methodology employed in this project. I will describe the following issues:

4.1. The Research Site; 4.2. The Research Participants; 4.3. The Ethical considerations and

4.4. The Research Design.

4.1. The Research Site

This research was carried out in the Republic of Angola, at Universidade Metodista de Angola (UMA), in Luanda, where English is taught as a foreign language and Portuguese is used as medium of instruction.

4.2. The Research Participants

The research participants were:

- In total all of Foundation year teachers, which consisted of six teachers were invited to take part in the study.
- A group of nine male and female Foundation year students. As there is no age limit on pursuing any undergraduate course at UMA or at any other university in Angola, these students are young adults and adults that combine their studies with work.

4.3. Ethical Considerations

Prior to undertaking the research, permission was obtained from the relevant university authorities in Angola. Through the process of informed consent addressed to all the potential participants, it was explained that participation in the study was at all times voluntary and that they could be discontinued at any time, if desired, without being disadvantaged in any way.

Confidentiality of all participants was ensured by avoiding information that could indentify them. The audio recorded-related materials are kept safe in a place at the University of the Witwatersrand and then would be destroyed 5 years afterwards. For reference and anonymity subjects were given a code.

4.4. Research Design

The methodology used in this study was based on a qualitative design. Being a qualitative study, the present work is grounded in the case study approach. Dyson & Genishi (2005:1-2) refer to (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) & (Erickson, 1986) and emphasise that,

> Within qualitative or interpretive traditions, any objective situation – a lesson, an elementary classroom, a day-care center, a community writing program or theater project – presents a plethora of potential "cases."

According to Stake (1995:xi), "A case study is a study of a particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances."

As far as UMA is concerned, I intended to explore the writing practices in order to formulate suitable alternatives and recommendations towards helping the students to improve their writing.

My research study utilized the following sources of data: **Interviews** with teachers and students, **Course Documents** (i.e. the students' course-book, the teachers' book, the students' workbook) and the **Samples of Students' Writing** (i.e. five entrance examination papers, five take-home assignments and five exam equivalent tests)

4.4.1. Interviews with teachers

All six EFL teachers presently teaching Foundation year at UMA were formally interviewed. The interviewees were informed verbally and in writing about the purpose of my study and how the interview process would operate. Detailed information about the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation and information was also provided as in Appendices A & B. (see pages 117 & 119). It is important to note that the interviews were all held at UMA.

In order to allow the teachers to express themselves fully, I decided to conduct the interviews in Portuguese. The following questions comprised the interview schedule:

Interview schedule: Teachers

1. In your opinion, how well did the middle schools prepare the students in terms of writing? Please, give reasons.

2. What are the specific problems that students have with writing in English?

3. What do you do to compensate for any inadequacies? Do you use any specific strategies to improve your students' writing abilities?

4. How do you go about teaching writing? What steps do you usually follow to teach writing to your students?

5. Among the four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) which ones do you find most difficult to teach? Why?

6. What difficulties do you have when teaching writing? What do you stress most when teaching writing?

7. Knowing that English is taught twice a week – overall 3 hours, and you have four skills to deal with, how much time do you allocate to the teaching of writing? Why?

8. What do your students write? List the writing activities.

9. What topics do they write about?

10. What types of texts and genres do you require your students to write?

11. Do you set any take home writing task? Homework…?

12. How do you assess your students' English writing? Give a mark and return the work to them? Do they have to give it back to you?

13. Do you think that the syllabuses you are currently using satisfy your students' writing needs and expectations? Give reasons.

14. What expectations do you have regarding what outcomes the students will achieve at the end of this academic year?

15. Could you please indicate any positive aspects about the English writing at UMA that you have noticed so far?

16. Can you suggest ideas for a teaching programme that will help students to perform satisfactorily at the end of the academic year?

17. What other comments would you like to make regarding the learning and teaching of writing to Foundation year students?

The interviews were conducted in order to:

- Find out about the current teaching and learning practices of writing at UMA: foundation year students.
- Understand the English language teachers' perceptions of the writing problems at UMA: Foundation year students.
- Find out how students are assessed.

4.4.2. Interviews with students

Nine (9) Foundation year students were chosen randomly. Each student was interviewed individually about what they perceived as being their problems with writing. The interviews were conducted at UMA.

In order to help students' understanding of the questions, the interviews were held in Portuguese and all the information audio-recorded. The interviewees were also informed about the confidentiality and anonymity of their information.

The interviews were conducted in order to:

- Find out what the students themselves perceived to be their specific problems with writing;
- Find out if they are adequately being helped to improve their writing abilities;
- Find out if writing is emphasised during the English language sessions;
- Investigate what students do to overcome their writing problems.

It should be noted that a pilot trial of the interview schedule was done with Portuguese speakers with assistance from colleagues at Wits. From this pilot study I was able to iron out some difficulties and rearranged some questions. The following questions comprised the interview schedule:

Interview Schedule: Students

1. Do you like writing in English? Why or why not?

2. When you write in English, do you feel that you are expressing yourself clearly? Why or why not?

3. In retrospect, in middle school, were you adequately prepared to write English clearly? Why or Why not?

4. What specific problems do you have with writing in English?

5. What do you do to overcome your writing problems?

6. When do you write English? What do you write? Can you indicate the writing activities you are required to perform during classes?

7. What do you think about your English writing classes at UMA?

8. Are the writing classes at UMA being helpful to improve your writing?

9. Do you feel that you are really being taught how to write English? Why or why not?

10. Are you happy with the way the teaching of writing is approached at UMA?

11. What do you think about the programme/course-book being used currently?

12. Please could you mention any positive aspects about writing at UMA?

13. Can you suggest ideas that would help students to perform satisfactorily at the end of the academic year?

14. What other comments would you like to make regarding the learning and teaching of writing in your Foundation year?

4.4.3. Collection of Course Documents

Having conducted the interviews with all the teachers and the randomly selected students following a series of open-ended questions, I collected the course documents for analysis.

The New Headway Elementary Students' Course-book

The Students' Workbook

The Teachers' Book

4.4.4. Samples of Students' Writing

Samples of students' writing include **5 Entrance Examination Papers**, **5 Take-home Assignments** done by the students over the course, and **5 Exam Equivalent Tests**. Efforts to get other ancillary materials like the syllabuses and in-class writing assignments were made, but nothing was collected.

All the samples of students' writing were used to identify specific problems that students encounter with writing (e.g. 'word order'; 'agreement'; 'choice of words'); how they are assessed; what topics they are given to write about; what kind of text features (i.e. genre) they are required to write.

It is important to note that the data from different sources were compared to enhance the validity of my findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1. Analysis of Audio Recorded Interviews

5.1.1. Analysis of Teachers' Audio Recorded Interviews

5.1.2. Analysis of Students' Audio Recorded Interviews

5.2. Analysis of Course Documents

5.2.1. Analysis of the New Headway Elementary Students' Course-book

5.2.2. Analysis of the Students' Workbook

5.2.3. Analysis of the Teachers' Book

5.3. Analysis of Samples of Students' Writing

5.3.1. The Entrance Examination Papers

5.3.2. The Students' Assignments

5.3.3. The Exam Equivalent Tests

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology employed to gather the necessary information for this study. This chapter describes and analyses the data collected in response to the research questions:

1. How is writing taught and learnt in the Foundation year at UMA?
2. What kinds of text-types (genres) are students expected to master?
3. In what way, if at all, is the Foundation year preparing the students for the two subsequent years (i.e. 1st & 2nd years) at UMA?
4. To what extent are teaching/learning, assessment and outcomes synchronised if at all?

As in 4.4, page 24, the qualitative data described and discussed in this chapter was obtained from the following sources:

(1) Individual Interviews with all the six Foundation year teachers at UMA. **(2)** Individual Interviews with nine Foundation year students at UMA, **(3)** Course Documents, namely, *The New Headway Elementary Students' Course-book* (3rd Ed. by Liz and John Soars); *The New Headway Students' Workbook; The New Headway Teachers' Book* and **(4)** Samples of Students' Writing - *five Entrance Examination Papers*, *five Assignments* and *five Exam Equivalent Tests.*

These multiple sources of data were combined for a broad comparative analysis to enrich my understanding of the writing practices of the Foundation year at UMA. Trumbull, M. (2005) in Taylor (2005:118) reinforces this line of thought: "…these data sources enable the researcher to collect information in an orderly and systematic way, as well as to cross-validate information."

5.1. ANALYSIS OF AUDIO-RECORDED INTERVIEWS

This section reports the factual information obtained from two sets of individual interviews (teachers and students). I decided to establish the two separate one-to-one interviews as a way of response triangulation and maintaining an amicable relationship with my interviewees. As a result, my interviewees gave me extra information about their teaching and learning of writing without any prompting from me.

All the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and translated from Portuguese into English by the researcher. The reason for this is that I felt that translators are inclined to distort the original message either due to cultural meanings which language carries or other translation technicalities. Temple and Young (2004:167) assert:

> If the researchers see themselves as active in the research process then they have the responsibility for the way that they represent others and their languages…if researchers see themselves as neutral and objective transmitters of messages…it does not matter if they carry out the translation or if someone else does it. The result will be the same.

For the purpose of anonymity each participant was given a code to serve as a reference as follows:

T1F = teacher one female	St1M = Student one male	St7F = Student seven female
T2M = teacher two male	St2M = Student two male	St8F = Student eight male
T3M = teacher three male	St3F = Student three male	St9F = Student nine female
T4M = teacher four male	St4F = Student four female	
T5M = teacher five male	St5M = Student five female	
T6M = teacher six male	St6F = Student six male	

5.1.1. Analysis of teachers' audio-recorded interviews

The interview was used to obtain the teachers' perceptions about the difficulties concerning students' writing in English in the Foundation year and to understand the learning and teaching practices at UMA.

Overall, the interview schedule comprised 17 open-ended questions as described on pages 24/25. The questions were presented in the same order with each participant to ensure consistency. Unexpectedly, as the interviews developed I had to skip some questions and ask additional ones for further clarification or to collect more information from the interviewees.

5.1.1.1. Failure of Middle Schools

As time constraints were always a factor throughout the process of data collection, all the 6 interviews began immediately with the first question: **1- In your opinion, how well did the middle schools prepare the students in terms of writing? Please give reasons**. The responses are below:

> **T1F:** No!! No!! They were not well prepared in middle schools. There are not enough writing exercises…
>
> **T3M:** In my opinion middle schools did not prepare the students well. It's not only middle schools. Students are not well prepared in terms of writing from the secondary schools. They have great problems!!! One of the causes of these inadequacies has to do with the recent past in our country. Ummmm, we didn't have sufficient qualified human resources [teachers], I mean, people pedagogically… qualified to teach…. People with different qualifications, without basic principles of teaching ended up teaching…
>
> **T5M:** In my opinion, there is a big gap in terms of teaching writing in middle schools. To the best of my knowledge, there aren't any syllabuses that give emphasis to the teaching English writing. I think students learn how to write [the teacher moved his index fingers to show that the word 'write' is in inverted commas] arbitrarily, isn't it?...they learn bits and pieces here and there…

All the teachers expressed concerns about the way state middle schools prepare the students in terms of writing. The respondents' views suggest that students were ill-prepared in terms of writing in English, not only in middle schools, but also in secondary schools where they start learning English as a foreign language in Grades 7 and 8.

All (100%) of the respondents reasons converged along the following lines:

(1) The teaching of writing is not emphasised at all; (2) Lack of qualified teachers in English language teaching; (3) The syllabuses do not emphasise the teaching of writing; (4) Scarce ELT literature; (5) Students financial problems preventing them from obtaining the required materials.

These data suggest that students' school experiences of writing do not prepare them adequately for university. Unlike speaking and listening, "Writing ability is not acquired naturally…it is a technology that involves training, instruction, practice, experience, and purpose", Grabe & Kaplan (1996:6). Writing ability must be taught. Therefore, teachers have to be able to identify within a range of current effective methods available the ones that are likely to resolve their students' problems.

5.1.1.2. Writing: Specific Problems

The teachers were then asked to indicate the problems that students have with writing in English at Universidade Metodista de Angola. So, the question was: **2- What are the specific problems that students have with writing in English?** The information from this answer reveals that Foundation year students face great challenges with writing. Some excerpts of the interviews are shown here:

> **T1 F:** ….students don't know many words. When you don't know many words in a given language you're not able to write anything…
>
> **T2M:** I think that the biggest problem with writing in English is the fact that students have very limited vocabulary, because they were not given the opportunity to expand their vocabulary…..so due to this great problem students are unsuccessful in English writing…
>
> **T6 M:** …grammar, word order, because there is a tendency to arrange the sentences [in English] as they arrange in Portuguese. As a result, there is a clash, because both languages are different…

T4M, who has had more than 20 years work experience as a teacher and holds an Advanced Diploma in EFL and an MA in English Language Education enlarged upon the same question and commented:

> …according to my experience as a teacher and English language student as well, because it is impossible to talk about these issues without referring to what you have experienced first hand as a student of English. There is no teaching of writing at all, there is no teaching of writing at all…. It is a barely visible problem day by day…If you read a student's notebook, you will spot errors from sentence structure, agreement, subject, predicate… you notice these generic errors with students' writing. The thing is…if students were encouraged to read, this ability could've been acquired. This ability together with vocabulary and grammar could be acquired through reading. However, having neither incentive to reading nor attention to writing students will hardly acquire the writing ability.

With some more prompting from my side, T4M reiterated that there is no teaching of writing across the whole country.

> Q: **…are you sticking to the same idea that there is no great attention to the teaching of writing in Angola? Not to mention at UMA!**
>
> T4M : From experience, yes!! And this ummm, it's not only with the teaching of foreign languages, but also with the teaching of Portuguese, which is the official language. Comparing to old times [Portuguese colonial time], I really can't see any special attention being given to the teaching of writing.

What became clear after analysing the teachers' responses is that students face immeasurable problems with writing in English. According to teachers' views the problems range between very **limited vocabulary**; **sentences structure**; **word order**; **spelling**; **subject/verb agreement**; **predicate**; **Portuguese language interference** and **lack of reading culture**. All the teachers reported that these insurmountable problems prevent the students from producing a coherent piece of writing. In summary, shortage of vocabulary, grammar and lack of reading were cited as being highly critical.

Discussion

Acquisition of vocabulary is an important ingredient for any language learner. Singleton (1994:4) in Sanchez & Manchon (2007:vii) asserts that:

> … the major challenge of learning and using a language – whether as L1 or as L2- lies not in the area of broad syntactic principles but in the 'nitty-gritty' of the lexicon.

So far, the information obtained from the teachers indicates that EFL learners learning the language out of the target language community with very limited exposure to English should be guided and equipped with useful strategies that lead them to a large recognition and acquisition of vocabulary on a regular basis.

T4M commented that "*Since Angola independence the teaching of writing and the reading culture has disappeared in Angola"*. These comments suggest that the vicious cycle starts in the state primary schools and continues in middle schools. Kroll (1990:1) says that:

> Becoming a writer is a complex and ongoing process, and becoming a writing teacher is no less complex. A teacher's journey towards understanding the complexity of both writing and teaching often begins with a look to the past, for scholarship originates from the ability to synthesize past insights…

Eisterhold in Kroll (1990:88) provides a discussion on a useful connection between reading and writing. According to her, teachers wrongly "wrestle with the usefulness of classroom work focusing on, for example, transition words, sentence structure, paragraph development, or rhetorical patterns" She emphasises that the right answer is 'reading'.

> Reading in the writing classroom is understood as the appropriate input for acquisition of writing skills because it is generally assumed that reading passages will somehow function as primary models from which writing skills can be learned.

Likewise, Krashen (1984) in Kroll (1990:88) reiterates:

> It is reading that gives the writer the 'feel' for the look and texture of reader-based prose.

T4M's pertinent comments and the above assertions throw some light on the feasibility of reading- to-writing approach to deal with the current situation at UMA.

In the next section I will present the data regarding the teachers' strategies to compensate for their students writing inadequacies, thus how the teachers go about teaching writing.

5.1.1.3. Faulty Approaches: teachers' own competence

In order to obtain the data regarding the teaching approaches, a couple of questions were posed:

3- What do you do to compensate for any inadequacies? Do you use any specific strategies to improve your students' writing abilities?

From the information provided by the respondents the following stood out:

> T2M: The efforts we have been making here at UMA is going back to English basic knowledge, like teaching the English alphabet, writing some words, teaching some phonetic sounds… and in my sessions especially, I require my students to rewrite some words several times, what we call in Portuguese 'copia', dictation, etc. By rewriting the words several times he or she is going to memorise and consequently improve their writing in future.
>
> T4M: …advise them to read, set a lot of homework and teach them how to write. But this work should be done by all the teachers.
>
> T6M: Well, we've been using the New Headway [elementary course-book] and some supplementary materials, namely, grammar books. We teach them the English alphabet, rewriting words and how to structure some isolated sentences.
>
> **Do you use any specific strategies?**
> Ermm, not necessarily, not necessarily. We follow the guidelines provided by the material [The Headway elementary course-book], which is based on various exercises to force the students to write something.

Essentially, teachers advocated teaching grammar to their students and relying heavily on the Headway course-book with basic exercises as being the norm for instruction.

Knowing about their students' specific problems with writing in English, 5 out of 6 respondents, who are not qualified in ELT demonstrated that they are doing very little, or nothing at all to improve the current situation at UMA. However, from the above comments they appeared to be at a loss when questioned about the strategies they use to compensate for any inadequacies. The data suggests that teachers resort to outdated methods alone (i.e. re-writing texts repeatedly, words, short sentences, doing grammar exercises and dictation).

In a positive light, 1 out of 6 teachers claimed to advise the students to read, helping them to organise their ideas, setting homework and giving feedback provided that he has time. The reading to writing appears to be an effective approach because it helps to enlarge the amount of vocabulary, enhance students' ability to structure sentences and paragraphs. In short, this approach may provide the students with an effective writing model.

After some consideration of the data, my interpretation is that 5 out of 6 teachers are deeply entrenched in outdated methods because they are themselves products of these methods and also due to lack of in-service training. Only 1 teacher (T4M), who holds a Masters degree in

ELT seems to have a greater awareness about improving students' writing. Silva in Kroll (1990:11) argues that:

> To be effective teachers of writing, English as a second language… [EFL] composition professionals need an understanding of what is involved in the second language…[EFL] writing. They need coherent perspective, principles, models – tools for thinking about second language [foreign language] writing in general and ESL [EFL] in particular, and for analysing and evaluating competing views.

Following this line of argument, it seems that teachers' ineptitude and lack of experience for teaching writing exacerbate Foundation year students' difficulties.

5.1.1.3.1 The Writing Classes at UMA

This section gives an overview of the writing classes at UMA. A series of about 9 questions were asked to all respondents in an attempt to delve more deeply into the writing practices and into all the complexities surrounding its issues. For the purposes of clarity all the questions have been numbered and darkened.

4 - How do you go about teaching writing? What steps do you usually follow to teach writing to your students?

T3M: [The teacher frowned as I posed the question, as if puzzled] Ummmh it's complex!!! We are limited in terms of teaching methodology books. But primarily I give dictation to my students. I try as much as I can to send the students to the board to write simple sentences so that they learn how to articulate…I mean….how to speak, how to write and how to pronounce.

T6M: Since the students still have, still think in Portuguese. I give them some ideas of ummmmm what they should do and then ask them to translate….and in this way, we give the right steps. Up to now this is the only strategy we've [I've] been using.

These two assertions suggest that most teachers need some kind of pedagogic in-service training in terms of teaching writing. Going back to the introductory chapter and recalling the British Council Projects in Angola in the mid-1980s that were aimed to train and update teachers in terms of teaching methodologies on a regular basis, this suggests that the local educational authorities were unable to sustain the Projects initiated by the British Council.

One cannot teach successfully when his/her own competence to deal with the current teaching methodologies at a higher level is questionable. With the rapid expansion of universities and students demands in this 21st century teachers need to absorb new principles to do things differently and avoid using outdated and ineffective methods. Rivers (1981:193) points out that:

> Traditionally, writing activities in language classes have taken the form of writing out paradigms and grammatical exercises, dictation, translation from native language to target language and form target language to native language…This has had an unfortunate consequence of reducing the amount of time spent on other activities more generally useful…This attitude hinders the forging of direct links between meaning and foreign language expression, a process which is essential for rapid comprehension of oral and written communication…

The next question addressed to teachers was:

5-What difficulties do you have when teaching writing? What do you stress most when teaching writing?

For reasons that were unclear, 4 out 6 teachers deliberately skipped over the question (**What difficulties do you have when teaching writing?**). T2M commented:

> One of the greatest difficulties that we, teachers have in terms of teaching writing is lack of specific training to teach such ability in English. I personally as a teacher at this institution never had a specific training to teach writing skills. I teach writing according to my general knowledge…

T4M stated that he encounters huge difficulties while planning his lessons and predicting students' problems. According to him, time has always been a problem to handle the unpredictable problems in the classroom.

These comments and the teachers attitudes towards the questions posed to them suggest once again that writing has received insufficient attention at UMA to the point that teachers seem not to be sufficiently aware of the current teaching methodologies and problems pertaining to the teaching of writing. Leki in Kral (1994:171) advises:

> "…attitudes have changed about the role of writing in teaching a second [foreign] language. Instead of being the last skill taught and instead of being of servant to grammar, writing has now become much more important in the second language curriculum…Writing is the natural outlet of the students' reflections on their speaking, listening, and reading experiences in their second language.

In order to get more substantial information I asked the teachers again, "but **What component do you stress most when teaching writing?**"

T1F: **…** Well, I stress a lot the grammatical structure. Because we may be able write, but if it is not synchronized with the grammar, people won't be able to understand what we are trying to say. I emphasize a great deal the correct use of verbs.

Up to now ermm, we, for example, and I have just started working at this university now [this academic year], last semester, the whole semester we only talked about the present simple. Only!! Now, we will start, next week, talking about the simple past. So, we, I stress the grammatical points a lot.

T5M: **…**the[text] structure and vocabulary…starting from an introduction, the main body and conclusion…sometimes instead of starting with an introduction they start developing the main body…

T6M: **…**yes, above all grammar. Because I believe that there's no way to teach the students to say 'how are you', without telling them what this 'how are you' is grammatically…

5.1.1.3.2. Grammar

All the teachers except one indicated that grammar is the most stressed component when teaching writing to their students. T4M stated that he tries to emphasise the text structure and the use of vocabulary.

These data suggest that Grammar-based teaching is central at UMA. It implies that the vast majority of EFL teachers at UMA are 'slaves' to the old teaching principles and hold to the theory that students should absorb an amount of grammar rules before starting producing comprehensible passages. Under these conditions, the probability for promoting writing seems to be seriously undermined. Leki in Kral (1994:172) emphasises that:

> "…teaching writing no longer means simply having students do grammatical exercises in writing…"

Likewise, Freedman et al. (1983:179) comment:

> "…many teachers of writing have long been dissatisfied with the tattered remnants of the current-traditional paradigm and its implications for classroom practice… the new emphasis on the analysis of the writing process, the intensive and comprehensive studies of the development of writing abilities, the slow growing interest in discourse text in relation to written production – all this point to the need for an equally new pedagogy of writing."

The data and the comments by Freedman et al. suggest that students have to be encouraged to initiate writing without having to worry about grammar so that they can get their ideas down on paper. In this respect, an informed and adequate response seems to be provided by the **Process-oriented pedagogy** to writing, where the students are taken through a serious of stages while writing, i.e. prewriting, drafting, discussing/revising, counselling, rewriting and editing the final product.

6- Knowing that English is taught twice a week – overall 3 hours, and you have four skills to deal with, how much time do you allocate to the teaching of writing? Why?

5.1.1.3.3. Unplanned Writing Classes

T1 F: [Coughs] Excuse me! I do not have [allocate] a specific time. We have an hour and a half, a 90 minute-class, yah. I observe how they are performing during the session and spend some time here and some time there. I prefer not to allocate, for example, as people do in a lesson plan, 5 minutes for warming up, 10 minutes for that and so forth. I see where the difficulties exist. Usually, I don't have a specific time just to teach writing. Otherwise, our course is not just about writing. We have other abilities to teach.

T4 M: Umhmmm in short the program is the course-book. The Headway is the one that sets the rules most of the times. Well, the course-book incorporates the four abilities, and of course, when the writing tasks appear the teacher will pay attention to this ability…

T5 M: To be honest, I have never thought about planning, or rather, allocating a time to teach writing. I've been doing, ermm, I mean, I don't give particular attention to writing. I mean, I teach writing the same way as I teach other skills, namely, reading, listening…

These comments reveal that no specific time is allocated to the teaching of writing at UMA. Teachers appear to deal with writing inconsistently, or rather, when it comes up eventually in the course-book. In other words, teachers do not plan their writing lessons as they rely heavily on the course-book.

Planning is an important tool for any teaching situation. Harmer (1983:218) asserts that "*The best teachers are those who think carefully about what they are going to do in their classes and who plan how they are going to organise the teaching and learning.*" This could include stages of the lesson, the activities, classroom management, timing and the skills to be taught. The comments from T1F, T4M and T5M suggest that writing is either a subsidiary to other skills or there is an exaggerated reliance on the Headway course-book series. Due to the fact that T4M has a high ELT training, his comments about over-reliance on the course-book from 'A' to 'Z' are pertinent. Since we do not share the same assumptions about the things we do under different conditions, it might suggest the T4M considers that course-book is a valuable instructional material or he is somewhat influenced by the environment at UMA.

Having captured the data related to time allocated to the teaching of writing, more questions were addressed to all interviewees.

5.1.1.3.4. The Writing Tasks, The Topics and Text Types

7: What do your students write? List the writing activities.
8: What topics do they write about?
9: What types of texts and genres do you require your students to write?

Q: **What do your students write? List the writing activities.**

T1F**:** …usually during the lesson they write in accordance with a specific Unit [of the course-book]. For example, if the Unit talks about pieces of furniture, home furniture, students write about it, isn't it?

T1F: **What topics do they write about?**

Yes, yes. I made myself clear…they write about their weekend, what they did. I require them to write about themselves, about their families. That's what they write about.

Q: **What types of texts and genres do you require your students to write?**

T1F**:** Ummmmmm, what do you mean?

Q: **There are various types of texts, for example, narrative ummm, and so forth. So**, **what types of texts or genres do you require your students to write?**

T1F: Oh! Mostly narrative, isn't it? Because they write about a situation and things like that. It's mostly the narrative type.

Q: **What do your students write? List the writing activities.**

T6M: …As I have already mentioned, we use the Headway course-book that contains various examples [exercises]. They are required to do all the exercises in the course-book.

Q: **Do they write compositions?**
T6M: Yes, they do.

Q: **What topics do they write about?**

T6M: Due to their low level of English, they write about themselves. Ok! Introducing themselves, talking about their families, members of the families…

The information displayed on the following table (with three columns labelled **writing activities**, **topics** and **text types**) provides a summary of the teachers' responses.

Table 2: Foundation year writing activities, topics and text-types

Writing activities	Topics	Text types
1. Exercises in the course-book: gap filling, rearranging sentences, phonetic transcriptions, matching words 2. Words; sentences; translations; grammar rules; indentifying grammatically wrong or correct sentences -Occasionally: very short compositions	Personal life, family, furniture, daily routine, daily life, holiday, school	Short narrative, description of social situation.

Discussion

The data displayed above reveals that Foundation year students are still operating at an extremely low level. They only perform mechanical writing exercises, deal with everyday life topics and easy text-types, that is, simple descriptions of common events. Furthermore, the last remarks made by T6M (re-quoted below) seem to prove that things are made simpler and easier intentionally to accommodate their students' weaknesses.

T6M: Due to their low level of English, they write about themselves. Ok! Introducing themselves, talking about their families, members of the families…

TM6's remarks link well with what Cummins (1996:73) says:

> "…some teachers who are unfamiliar with instructional strategies for second language learners have tended to 'dumb down' the task (i.e. revert to quadrant A and C). This permits students to work within their level of English and academic competence but never pushes them to go beyond that level, which they must do if they are to catch up academically…"

Cummins' (1996:57) concept discussed in the literature review, pages 19 and 20 is very useful in helping to understand Foundation year students' situation. Referring again to Cummins' theoretical framework, the BICS and CALP distinction and the four quadrants

formed by the two vertical and horizontal lines (A, B, C and D). The tasks, the topics and the text-types such as the ones described in the table on previous page, can be placed in quadrant (A and C), especially in quadrant A. This implies that the students are still operating with contextualized and cognitively undemanding tasks and activities (BICS).

Although English is a foreign language in Angola, students at University, still, after six years of EFL instruction and with quite good knowledge of Portuguese are supposed to perform in quadrant D, where the tasks and activities should be cognitively more demanding, actively engaging, and context reduced. Widdowson in Freedman et al. (1983:45) asserts that:

> If the foreign language learners have already learned how to write in their own language, then they will have to acquire the essential interactive ability underlying discourse enactment and the ability to record it in text...It is important to note that adult learners, foreign learners of English come to the classroom with a great deal of experience of how language in general is used in communication. If we deny them access to that experience by presenting them with a model of language [writing tasks, topics and text types] which is not congruent with it, then we impose learning problems upon them of our own devising.

Widdowson says that "*Their problem is how to textualize discourse in a different language*". This assertion suggests that teachers play a key role on students' need to deal with cognitively demanding tasks at university level. They need to be knowledgeable about setting tasks, topics and text-types that are required at university level in order to promote learning. On the whole, this data suggests that instead of concentrating on the basics, teachers should explore students' L1[4] experiences and immerse them in the writing with emphasis on a series of drafts until gradually they discover and acquire the skills of the new discourse.

In the next section I examine how and to what extent is the students' English writing assessed.

10. Do you set any take-home writing task? Homework…?

11. How do you assess your students' English writing? Give a mark and return the work to them? Do they have to give it back to you?

5.1.1.3.5. Feedback to Students' Written Work

> T1F: …with the homework I take as many notes as I possibly can. Unfortunately, I have not been able to correct all the students' work… due to lack of time. If we correct every single work they might come to you and say, I didn't understand here, I didn't understand there, and we waste a lot of time. What I usually do is advising them to do their work… I wish had smaller classes so that I could be able to correct all the students' single work, but in our case I can't

[4] L1 = First language; Native language

Q: **Do you set any take home writing task? Homework…?**

T4M: Definitely! The problem is that our students are very lazy [laughs]. They are a little bit lazy and we don't always have ways and means to push them. But, yes, I always set homework. Most of the times, I get deeply disappointed because the vast majority of the students don't do their homework…

Q: **How do you assess your students' English writing? Give a mark and return the work to them? Do they have to give it back to you?**

T4M: This is a great problem!!! When we set a homework we are supposed to correct it…classrooms are overcrowded. There are classes with 100 or 80 students, and if you have 5 or 6 of this large classes, it becomes very difficult to correct… you spend all your life correcting, marking...[long laughs]

T6M**:** Generally, I ask them to write in a separate piece of paper. I give a glance over their work and consequently give them some marks [teacher's facial expression and right hand movement illustrated lack of value on student's work]… Otherwise, I just write good, very good…

The extracts from the audio tape-scripts above suggest that students written work are hardly assessed by the teachers. Teachers seem to confirm that they hardly find time for feedback to students' work due to problems of large class and the number of periods they have to teach regularly.

Muncie (2000:52) says that "Feedback is vital to writing and in helping learners to improve their writing skills, and whatever form it takes, it can have the positive effect of producing in the learner a sense of reader awareness and of giving him or her an outside view of the text." Feedback on students writing constitutes the bedrock of progress because it reinforces learning; and its failure implies product style approach to writing. Learners, like Foundation year students at UMA who are still operating at the BICS level, quadrant A and C, need to be pushed to the CALP level to be able to produce substantial written work. In this respect, they need to be provided with constructive advice, several corrections and guidance on their writing.

11- Do you think that the syllabuses you are currently using satisfy your students' writing needs and expectations? Give reasons

5.1.1.3.6. The syllabuses/The Course-book

T1F: No. I don't think so. Because ummmm, as I 'm teaching Foundation year students, I have been talking to my colleagues about the syllabuses issues, and I told them that the syllabuses is quite heavy for Foundation year students. I understand some students came ummm, we have some good students who can write… but the vast majority are not able to do so. Therefore, that's not the syllabuses we would like to have. We are supposed to have a specific material [syllabuses] for each level…..

T2M**:** …but this is the programme that was provided to us!! ...If teachers had the opportunity to have a meeting to discuss the students' needs in each academic year, we could've reached a common understanding and design a specific programme for Foundation year students at this university.

T3M: No, they don't satisfy, because our students come from secondary and middle schools with many problems. This implies that there is a need to revise the current syllabuses, although some teachers think that this is the right material for this level, it is acceptable.

T4M: Ummm I think that the chosen course-book goes along with the programme suggested by the university. In this respect, the intended objectives are achieved. Considering that students are taught English in middle schools for about 4 years, perhaps the programme should've been much more demanding. Students are supposed to arrive at university exhibiting a higher level of English, and I'm talking about an intermediate or pre-intermediate level. However, it seems to me that the present course-book is lowering the level of the expected competencies in accordance with our educational system.

Interestingly, T1F, T2M, T3M, T4M, and T5M reported that the present course-book does not satisfy their students' writing needs and expectations. They have expressed different reasons for their answers. For example, T1F advocated that although she has got some excellent students the course-book is too tough for the vast majority of her students. T2M and T5M maintained that writing is not emphasised and therefore teachers have to meet and think about designing a specific syllabus for Foundation year.

Ultimately, T4M (see extract above) stated that this is the course-book offered by the institution. T4M went on to say that, "*Considering, the EFL teaching in our educational system, by using the present course-book we are lowering the expected competence at university level.*" From the 6 teachers only T6M felt that the programme, the course-book is satisfactory because it provides good exercises.

A factor that emerged from this data worth mentioning here is that there is no syllabus available at UMA. It appeared to me that teachers tend to confuse the Headway course-book series for their official syllabuses.

I also learned from the information received that the course-book plays a 'central role' in UMA EFL classes meaning that teachers automatically follow the sequence of the course-book. This may suggest that the main concern is to finish the programme imposed by the Headway series, without many opportunities to bring in ancillary materials.

In the context under investigation the course-book should ideally not be used systematically and sequentially. A range of supplementary material and exercises designed by the teachers should also be introduced to satisfy diverse students' needs and language competences.

Harmer (1983: 235) argues that:

> "…an over-reliance on textbooks and the syllabus may well cause the teacher to de-motivate his [her] students and anyway may not teach them in the most efficient way."

These comments called my attention to the need for a thorough analysis of the course-book in the subsequent sections of this paper in order to confirm this evidence.

12. Can you please indicate any positive aspects about the English writing at UMA that you have noticed so far?

T1F: I wouldn't say about UMA as a whole, isn't it? I would speak for my classes [laughs] … ummm, some ummmm positive aspects, about the English writing!!!!? I don't know, it's a bit difficult. Well, ummmmm, up to now I could notice that my students write slightly better…

T2M: I think we have very few positive aspects at UMA, very few ummmm positive aspects at UMA ummm perhaps the use the course-book which is uniform across all the teachers and students…because if we compare with other institutions here in Luanda you will find out that each teacher uses his or her own course-book. Here [at UMA] we have a standard course-book for teachers and students…

T3M: Students have been trying to do their best because English – speaking and writing is sine qua non of getting a job in most the institutions recruiting new employers. We hope to get positive results by the end of their qualification.

Although it was difficult for the interviewees to indicate a few positive aspects regarding the teaching of writing at UMA, T3M appeared to be somewhat optimistic in getting a positive long-term result. The hedged remarks made by T1F revealed that the ELT situation at UMA needs improving.

T2M's comments show consistently the over-reliance on the course-book. This suggests that there is a discordance note with the information obtained from the previous question that "*the course-book does not satisfy the students' writing needs and expectations"*. It appears that teachers have two contradictory thoughts. On the one hand, the course-book is considered to be inadequate. On the other hand, they over-rely on the course-book and use it step-by-step. However, based on these findings one may conclude that there is a gap between the teachers' beliefs and their practices.

Findings also revealed that most teachers recognised the importance of English writing instruction and therefore believed that efforts have been invested to improve the situation. The comments above made by T3M seem to illustrate how English writing is important for students' professional lives. This idea was reinforced by T2M when a follow up question was posed to him:

Q: **Considering our market demands, don't you think that writing is a very important component?**

T2M: …yes, definitely. Today, our country is really engaged in developing its economy by seeking out partnership with various countries. However, we have a common language in this market, which is English. So, nowadays if you're looking for a job the first question they will be asking to offer you the job is if you know English…with this [knowledge] they [employers] are much more concerned with speaking and writing.

These remarks highlight the importance of equipping the EFL teachers with adequate strategies and pedagogic competences in order for them to handle the teaching of writing to empower Angolan youth with the running of the Angolan economy.

13. What expectations do you have regarding what outcomes the students will achieve at the end of this academic year?

5.1.1.3.7. Expectations

T1F: Fortunately, I have good expectations, because we have always been advising them to practise their writing….In general terms expectations are [0.2], the picture is not that dark as it seems be. We have very good students, very dedicated…

T2M: In my opinion, I do not expect great results from my students. I you just look at the 1st semester results, there were great difficulties!! Very low marks. Therefore by the end of the academic year I do not expect many things [good results] from the students.

T4M: Ok umm [0.2] students are evaluated within a framework that they are not supposed to write a lot. An English test is essentially a set of questions, where the student has to answer some isolated questions, do some gap filling exercises and produce some sentences. In the writing section, however, they don't have to write a long composition. Therefore, writing ability is not a pre-requisite for a student to pass….some other aspects of language are also tested in this evaluation process

As for the outcomes that students are likely to achieve at the end of the academic year, the data suggests that expectations are not very high. Results reveal that teachers' inexperience in handling the teaching of writing, coupled with their failure to get the students engaged with higher-level activities during classes influence the **I**ntended **L**earning **O**utcomes. In other words, "good expectations, good end results"

However, T4M's comments quoted above seem to be pertinent. All the tasks reported by T4M indicate that the **assessment** criteria are designed to address very low level curricula.

Discussion

Kift (2007:310) asserts that "*There is an argument that all too often in ...higher education we assess the things which are easy to assess, which tend to be basic factual knowledge and comprehension rather than the higher order objectives of analysis, synthesis and evaluation."* Kift's assertion seems to accord with UMA's assessment practices reported by T4M, where the students are simply required to produce isolated sentences, do gap filling exercises and write short composition on familiar topics. An effective assessment practice requires a clear synchronisation with the **I**ntended **L**earning **O**utcomes, because one of the key roles of assessment is to measure learning and what is to be done for further improvements based on the results provided by the assessment. Biggs (2003) as quoted by Van den Bergh (2006: 346/7) stated that "It is therefore very important to make the assessment congruent with the instruction and make the assessment suitable to what students should be learning". Following this line of thought, the theory of **Constructive Alignment** developed by Biggs (1999) is of

great significance in helping to understand and to provide a response to the problems suggested by the data. According to Biggs (2003) in Campbell et al. (2007:445):

> One of the most important of the assessment principles for enhancing learning is the concept of alignment. That is, the alignment of objectives, teaching practices, learning activities and assessment.

Brabrand (2008:3) refers to Biggs' three prototypical models of teachers known as "*The levels of thinking about teaching*". According to Biggs' three prototypical models, teachers are characterised as follows:

> **The level 1 teacher:** is concerned with what students are. He operates with a binary perspective; a student is either (inherently) good or bad. The exam is a diagnostic means to "sort the good students from the bad" after teaching. This perspective is essentially deferring the responsibility for lack of learning; in particular, the teacher can no longer do anything about it: "it's just the way students are; either good or bad" (i.e., independent of the teaching).
>
> **The level 2 teacher:** is concerned with what the teacher does. A teacher at the second level is preoccupied with acquiring an armoury of techniques, "tips' and 'tricks" along with visual and technological aides, in order to enhance his performance.
>
> **The level 3 teacher:** is concerned with what a student *does* (before, during, and after teaching). He is adopting a *student-learning focus* and will judge all pedagogic dispositions according to how they affect student learning.

Following these three models, the data suggests that teachers at UMA are identified with level 1. Teachers' discourse appear to be continuously circumscribed by students' poor performance, very low marks, ill-preparedness, whereas little seems to be done to improve their students' performance. In addition, as suggested by the data obtained so far, students are treated as passive individuals, who are 'invited' to adopt surface learning. The following two assertions made by Von Bartallanffy (1968) and Frederiksen & Collins (1989) as quoted by Biggs (1996:350) are relevant and sum up this discussion:

> In a system, the components interact with each other, working towards a stable equilibrium (Von Bartallanffy, 1968). Thus, if the set of assessment tasks address lower cognitive level activities than those nominated in the curriculum objectives, equilibrium will be achieved at a lower level; the system will be driven by backwash from testing, not by the curriculum (Frederiksen & Collins, 1989).

Generally, these data indicate that teachers at UMA need to be aware of the *backwash effect* of assessment and the role of effective assessment in improving students' learning.

These concepts of Constructive Alignment theory in relation to assessment will be further discussed in point 5.3.3., while analysing the 5 Exam Equivalent Tests written by the students.

Reflections: Teachers' Interviews

1. The teaching of writing poses great pedagogical challenges to most Foundation year teachers at UMA as they appeared to be ill-informed about the current approaches to writing. As a consequence, students are denied access to deal with cognitively demanding tasks. Thus, the assessment that is supposed to enhance learning is not in line with the principles of alignment advocated by Biggs (1999).

2. I learned that writing is partially excluded from the 'curricula'. It is not seen as a learning outcome, but merely as a means to teach grammar points, some vocabulary, producing some isolated sentences, drilling some sentences, words, etc. In other words, writing as a communicative task is non-existent.

3. To my surprise, results show that the typical situation in middle schools that I referred to earlier on this paper is also prevalent at UMA. What is more, the same programme/course-book[5] is being used in some middle schools in Luanda.

4. A final point that should be noted is that although the teaching of writing plays a negligible role at UMA, findings from the interviews demonstrate that writing in English is crucial in Angola, especially for job seekers.

5.1.2. Analysis of students' audio-recorded interviews

The students' interview schedule consisted of 14 open-ended questions (see Appendix F on page 124). Although all the interviewees were asked the same questions, I had also to improvise additional questions and skip others as the interviews developed either for further elaboration on vague answers or for extra ideas from the students. Overall, my line of inquiry was to explore students' perception of their own writing difficulties, their beliefs, needs and to what extent they are being helped to improve their writing.

In order to tune the interviewees in and build up a healthy environment conducive to obtaining substantial information, the following question was posed:

[5] This information was obtained informally from St2M over the tea break time conversation in the university canteen. He spared a copy of his grade 11(middle school) Progress Test one day after the interview (see Appendix G on page 124). Sections A and B of this middle school Progress Test contain a text and tasks of Unit 4, page 29 and Unit 5 pages 36 and 37 of the course-book being used by the Foundation year at UMA.

1-Do you like writing in English? Why?

The following excerpts from illustrate:

> St3M: Yes, I do in spite of not being that skilful.
>
> St4F: Yes, I do. It's an important language to get a good job.
>
> St5F: Yes, I do. I think we should know English. Nowadays, in our job market, in the newspaper advertisement… they only require people with good knowledge of Portuguese and primarily English language…
>
> St6M: …well, we speak Portuguese in Angola, but we have many foreigners that need to communicate. We may end up working in an office where English is the language of business; we'll need a translator to do the job!!! Writing is important.
>
> St8M: Yes, I do. I like writing in English in my spare time. English is essential for worldwide communication.

All the students (9) were unanimous in expressing their interest and the necessity in writing in English, in spite of their difficulties. They consider that English is an important language for worldwide communication and to obtain a good job in Angola. This general consensus seems to suggest that students are well aware that writing in English is extremely important for their personal and professional purposes. Additionally**,** this awareness gives an indication that UMA as a higher education institution should make an indispensable contribution towards equipping the students with the required English language skills. Pierson's (1972:16) idea is in line with the above arguments. He comments:

> "A primary aim of schooling is to prepare young people for gainful employment in the nation's economic process. Many jobs require writing competencies and will demand even more in the predictable future."

As already emphasised in the introductory chapter, Angola has the potential to be a wealthy country due to its natural resources and the end of the 35 years of civil war. Its fast growing economy encourages the youth across the country to learn the language of business, the language of technological, academic and scientific information.

Next, students were asked if they feel that they express themselves clearly when writing in English.

5.1.2.1 Writing Difficulties: Students' General Impression

2 - When you write in English, do you feel that you are expressing yourself clearly? Why/not?

> St1M: ….when I write English I always try to express ermmm the idea that I have to the people [reader], but sometimes I can't express clearly the idea that I want to… I have some difficulties…with words mmm always we end up finding words that are not appropriate in the context that we want to use…

St2M: No, I don't. I do not express myself clearly, because we start learning English too late and it makes writing very difficult. Not only writing but pronunciation as well. That's why I'm not efficient in terms of writing.

St4F: No! English is very difficult.

St5F: No, I don't express myself clearly, because I know better Portuguese language. When I write in Portuguese I don't look up the words in the dictionary all the time. Conversely, In English I have to search for the words because I don't know some verbs, some adverbs, articles, where I have to use them or not…

St6: Not really!! Because English is ermmm what can I say, is a second language [foreign language] for me. Portuguese is my official language and apart from that we have other mother languages [Angolan indigenous languages].

St9: Eeeh!! If writing in Portuguese is difficult, now imagine writing in English!!

NB. **Eeeh: In Angola, this expression is a strong informal interjection used to express surprise, a negative attitude and feelings.**

Responses to question 2 were all negative. The respondents' reasons for not expressing themselves clearly when writing in English converged along the following lines:

(1) English is a foreign language; (2) Limited vocabulary in English; (3) Wrong choice of words; (4) Difficulties in putting their ideas on the paper; (5) Difficulties in applying the grammar rules; (6) English is taught in a late stage on their schooling: last two years of secondary school; (7) Writing in English is extremely difficult;

Indeed, learning how to write coherently and effectively is not easy. It is a long and difficult process, especially in a foreign language where the occasions to write are rarely found. The students' overly negative perception about writing leads to the impression that the situation at UMA is dismal. They appear to be frustrated regarding their proficiency in English after years of EFL instruction.

Generally, comments made by the students (i.e. struggling to find the right word, looking up the word in the dictionary, battling to pass the message across to the reader, difficulties in applying the grammar rules while writing, difficulties in recognising adverbs, articles, etc.) suggest that they have never had a chance to practice writing as a **process.** In other words, their written work was perhaps treated or judged as a bad or good **product.**

St2M's remark that "he does not express himself clearly because he started learning English too late" is really pertinent. Mackey in Fasold & Connor-Linton (2006:433) pointed out:

> For those of us who started learning a language after childhood – for example, by enrolling in a foreign language course or moving to a new country – the process of learning a non-native language is far more difficult and much less likely to end in a complete mastery/fluency.

Further, Mackey refers to Chomsky's (1959, 1965) theories of Second Language Acquisition known as 'nativism" and emphasises "once the learner has passed a critical period (or

sensitive) period for language acquisition (typically placed around the age of puberty), the language acquisition device 'atrophies' and the knowledge it contains (i.e. UG[6]) is no longer directly available to help guide the second language learning process." So, early instruction of foreign language learning is highly beneficial as it leads to better chance to achieve good proficiency of the language.

5.1.2.2. Failure of Middle Schools

In this section I found out from the students to what extent they regarded themselves as well prepared to write in English clearly, while they were in middle school.

3 - In retrospect, in middle school, were you adequately prepared to write in English? Why or why not?

St1M**:** No!! There is not enough and good writing practices… I think teachers' oversight…

St7F: I don't think I was well prepared. The reason I'm saying that is because, I think, the teaching of English should be implemented from the primary school level. Now, when see English for the first time in secondary school you have problems, problems that, I believe, should've been dealt with in primary school, grade 1. So, I was not well prepared to write texts in English

St6M: No. Ermm no because ummm. I was not well prepared in middle school. We are ill-prepared. Here, in Angola we start learning English only in grade 7. So, it's difficult. In addition, we have only 2 English classes per week [45 minutes each], lack of teachers... In middle schools we face the same problems. We are not well taught, there is no good grammar explanation…As we don't have the English grounding, once at university things become really complicated. It's really very complicated. We need the grounding, and the grounding should be acquired from grade 7 [secondary school] and in middle schools so that one can go to university [without difficulties].

St8M: Ciyaah!! [long laughs] We face this problem across the country. For example, in middle school, I studied French and presently I'm doing English. It proves as being problematic!! So, I have to battle to improve this side [the English subject] because nowadays French is being phased out…

NB. **Ciyaah - Sudden interjection meaning "never" in Umbundu (Angola indigenous language)**

Eight (8) former state middle school students, out of nine (9) students reported to have been ill-prepared in middle school to write in English. Only 1 student (a former private middle school student) admitted to have been 'somewhat well taught' in middle school. Nevertheless, he felt that some writing problems were still prevalent due to the fact that his teacher in secondary school did not teach him very well.

All the respondents appeared to express strong dissatisfaction about the way the teaching of English is approached in middle and secondary schools. Among other reasons they referred to insufficient writing practice; little oversight of writing ability; a lack of commitment from the teachers; lack of trained teachers; limited time allocated to the EFL teaching i.e. two 45-minute English sessions per week; disorganised and speedy sessions. With a great sense of humour two interviewees commented:

[6] UG = Universal Grammar

St3M: …I had many problems; with those dead sessions, those rain but does wet sessions… [The sessions were muddled up]

St5F: …in secondary school I was not taught very well. Yet in middle school teachers were always rushing into teaching, it was like one verb, one example and that's all [long laughs]. We didn't have enough practice like having a dialogue in front of the class. It was more Portuguese and less English.

The comments above connect with my initial statements that state schools do not adequately prepare the students. Among many reasons stated on page 4 are:

- Teachers have more than one job to augment their salaries. Teachers are drawn to private schools that pay much better salaries.
- Some teachers do not themselves display sufficient competence and writing practices.
- Since the British Council left the country the Ministry of Education of Angola has never supported the ELT system in terms of funding and in-service training. They do not know what goes on in schools. In other words, there is no accountability.

In the light of the above perceptions, it appears that the university has to be able to find new mechanisms in order to bridge the gaps between state middle schools and UMA.

One important factor that is worth highlighting is the common concerns repeatedly expressed by most of the students to introduce the teaching of English in primary school to help the situation at university level. Under the present circumstances, UMA is unlikely to prepare their prospective lawyers, engineers, managers, etc., with adequate English writing skills. Van den Bergh's (2006:345/6) assertion highlights the importance of the English language for university students in Angola:

> In line with the rapid evolution towards a global knowledge society, our contemporary job market is making new demands on graduates…Therefore, graduates students need to acquire not only a sound base of knowledge and higher order skills specific to their domain, but also a number of higher order skills and attitudes.

In the Angolan context, one of the higher order skills apart from the one related to students' specific domain is writing in English.

5.1.2.3. Writing: Specific Problems

In order to probe into students' specific problems regarding writing in English, question **4 - What specific difficulties do you have with writing in English?** and some other follow-up questions were posed.

St2M: I can produce sentences, but some words are not easy. I always make mistakes when writing sentences. Writing and pronouncing some words is really a problem.

St3M: I have grammar problems. There are words that I can pronounce well and I can't write. I have serious problems in this area.

St5F: I have grammar problems, where to place a verb, I don't know if the grammar rules are the same as in Portuguese…when I'm writing I don't know whether to apply the Portuguese grammar rules or not…

St7F: My problems start from the English alphabet. We have to know the verbs, the subject, grammar and things like that. In English if you don't structure the sentence well it becomes meaningless, you get it wrong.

In the light of students' responses it would appear that writing instruction in schools in Luanda has received little or no attention at all, leaving the students with what I would call *writing paralysis.* The problems seem so great that the vast majority of the students were unable to specify most of them quickly and unexpectedly. The following responses illustrate my perception:

St9F: I have many, many, many problems.… Sometimes when writing in English I even mix it with Portuguese [laughs], … [Due to lack of vocabulary, sometimes I use Portuguese words when writing in English].

Generally, students' responses fell into the following categories: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, word order, sentence structure and Portuguese language interference.

In spite of the fact that most respondents (including teachers) commented that grammar was being over-emphasised, all the students reported that they still have problems with grammar.

From the above data one may infer that Foundation year students at UMA are far from producing and developing a comprehensive piece of writing. They are still having difficulties with the basics (words, verb forms, word order, spelling, sentence structure…) very much needed while dealing with more cognitively demanding writing tasks i.e. tasks involving critical thinking, arguments, cohesion, coherence, etc.

5.1.2.4. The Writing Classes at UMA

My next aim was to find out students' opinion about their English writing classes.

5- What do you think about your English writing classes?

St2M**:** Ummm, I've never attended any English writing classes. Perhaps I've missed it. But I've never attended. It would be a good idea to implement the teaching of writing….

St3M: I've never had any English writing classes

St4F: It needs reinforcing [improving]

St7F**:** …being a university institution it would be important to encourage the teaching and learning of English writing. Prepare well the students…

St8M: They are good. I am learning a lot. We go to the board and the teacher insists on following the grammar rules…

Results reveal that the teaching of writing is still almost excluded from EFL UMA programme. It is not seen as an aim, but as a means of teaching grammar rules and other

language items. The gist of this perception can be read from the comments made by St8M quoted above.

As the focus of explicit grammar instruction seems to remain the norm at UMA, barring the students from writing development, there is an urgent need to raise an awareness exercise about the importance of writing, and subsequently introduce the most influential approaches to promote this ability. The data suggests that students are aware that their inability to write in English is caused by the insufficient attention received in middle school and at UMA. This seems to justify their full comments that writing at UMA needs improving.

6- Are the writing classes being helpful to improve your writing?

St1M: Honestly, no!! [The student's facial expression showed discontentment]

Q: Why is that?

St1M: What we've been talking about all this semester long, this year at UMA, are things that we've been repeating during years and years in middle schools. Things are all the same… adjectives, verbs ermmm very basic things…

St2M: Not really! I think that writing deserves more attention. I feel that sometimes I can talk even with difficulties, but writing is needed to complement…

St4F: Yaaah, a little bit. [a noticeable lack of enthusiasm here].

St7F: Well, a little bit. At least I'm learning things that I didn't learn in middle school…

As for the usefulness of the writing classes at UMA, 88,8% (8 students) admitted that the 'writing classes' are somewhat helpful. They reported that something that was not learned in middle schools was being learned at UMA. St1M from a private middle school stated that the 'English writing classes at UMA' were not helpful at all. On the one hand, findings reveal that the *less-skilled* students' progress at UMA is insignificant, and on the other hand findings reveal that *more competent* students feel themselves abandoned for the 'writing classes' are not congruent with their English proficiency. St1M's comments seem to be crucial to give an informed response to the situation prevalent at UMA. His reflections appear to show some insight into need to encourage the students to move beyond the basics (BICS) towards the CALP, where the tasks are more cognitively demanding.

7- When do you write English? What do you write? Can you indicate the writing activities you are required to perform during classes?

St1M: I write mainly during the English sessions. Dictation…
Q: **Do you write compositions during the English sessions?**
St1M**:** Yes, we don't write compositions. We don't write compositions [During the sessions].
Q: **But, you are required to write compositions or to produce texts in your tests and during the sessions you do not do this exercise?**
St1M: Yes,…many people don't even write these compositions.

Q: **When do you write English? What do you write? Can you indicate the writing activities you are required to perform during classes?**

St3M: Primarily when the teacher writes something on the board to be copied into notebooks… we write questions, answers and things like that.
Do you write compositions?
Since the beginning of the academic year up to the present time we have only written 1 composition.

St4F: …we rewrite texts, we've doing some translation of texts, yes, and we copy things that the teacher writes on the board. Sometimes he asks us to take dictation…

St6M: …at school during the classes …. During the sessions we translate sentences or verbs ummm we write the names of objects and sometimes we write compositions.

Broadly speaking, results indicate that Foundation year students have no opportunities to express themselves in writing, lacking therefore training in the **process of writing**. Interestingly, this data concurs with my findings described on page 47 "that students' written word was perhaps treated or judged as a good/bad **Product**".

According to students' remarks above, teachers devote most of their time dealing with mechanical exercises such as rewriting texts, producing short and isolated sentences, copying things from the board. Once again, this data accords exactly with the findings from the teachers' interviews discussed in full detail with BICS and CALP theory on pages 38 and 39.

Looking at the degree of demand posed by the tasks reported by the students, it appears that all the tasks are very thin and, therefore, placed in quadrant A (BICS). By performing such tasks students seem to be falling behind instead of catching up.

8- What do you do to overcome your writing problems?

The following quotes describe students' personal strategies for their writing improvement:

St1M: I have trying to practise with some friends of mine…

St2M: Ermm .. I find someone who knows better to help me.

St4F: On a personal level I'm doing an extra English course to improve my English knowledge…
Don't you think that the sessions at UMA are sufficient?
No, they are not sufficient. I have to undertake an extra English course.

St8M: I've been studying a bit more. Studying…If I have doubts while writing in English I try to organise my thoughts in Portuguese and then turn them into English.

St9F: … getting words from the dictionary and copy them into my notebook.
Does it solve your problem?
No! [laughs] I think to get this problem solved I have to do a beginner English course. Because our classroom is overcrowded with students and the teacher has no time to move to every single desk and explain….It would take him ages. I think one has to do a beginner course to learn a bit more.

Overall, the results appear to indicate that all respondents recognised that their English writing weaknesses emanated from the previous schooling. In spite of 'efforts' made by some teachers to remedy the situation, it appears that students are pessimistic about getting their English writing improved at UMA. Therefore, they reported to find their own ways and

means out of UMA environment to overcome their writing problems. Their strategies can be summarised as follows: practice with friends, asking for help, studying hard, using Portuguese as a reference and doing extra courses in private English language teaching institutions.

As the students resort to creating their own writing practices opportunities, findings suggest that they are worried about their future professional lives by the end of their qualification at UMA. Likewise, these data seem to formulate a response to the third research question of this project**:**

In what way, if at all, is the Foundation year preparing the students for the two subsequent years (i.e. 1st & 2nd years) at UMA?

Students should not be left 'alone' in the process of learning, because their needs are supposed to be met within the university. UMA should not abandon a leadership role for universities have a significant part to play in re-shaping the future of their students. Universities should take the leading role of setting good expectations, forging academic and professional grounds so that students are well integrated into the new society.

9-What do you think about the programme/course-book being used currently?

St1M: I think that the books are somewhat good. Yes, are good.

Q: **Are good?**

St1M: Yes, they are good for those who are starting learning the English language…they are not appropriate for ummmh those at university level. We should've used books ermmm more advanced level. But it's not the teachers' fault, because they are trying to follow the rhythm of the students with many problems with English. So, for these students it's [the programme/course-book] good. Unfortunately those who are good, who are able to speak have to follow the pace of the entire group.

St4F: The teacher tries as hard as he can to make us writing. He follows his programme. I don't think there is a lot about writing in his programme…

Are you trying to say that your teacher's programme does not emphasize writing sufficiently?
It doesn't, I think. It needs more emphasis. We need a more serious programme.

St5F: …the course-book is very important for us....the programme is important because it is used by many people who are not yet able to speak English. It contains helpful exercises about forms of verbs, present, past. The vast majority of students learning English here have this kind of problem, how to conjugate verbs, tenses…

Students' comments indicate that the Headway series is very popular in Luanda and is used in any language teaching situation giving the impression that there is no other alternative solution.

Considering their weaknesses in English, all the respondents expressed the view that the course-book is 'somewhat helpful' as it provides basic exercises. Nonetheless, St4F revealed that the course-book lacks emphasis on writing and suggested a more 'serious' programme.

What stands out are the comments made by St1M, a student from a private middle school. His cautious and somewhat puzzling remarks *"the books are good…and not appropriate..."* deserve attention. It suggests that there are two different groups of students at UMA exhibiting different needs and different levels of language proficiency. St1M's reflections also suggest that by using the present course-book the university is being unfair, because the university system is simply accommodating the less-skilled students and not accommodating students who have satisfactory level of English.

Finally, the following questions were asked to get further comments from the students:

10 - Can you suggest ideas that would help students to perform satisfactorily at the end of the academic year?

11-What other comments would you like to make regarding the learning and teaching of writing in your Foundation year?

St1M: I think we should only speak English during the classes and nothing else. Teachers should only talk to us in English even with students' complaints. We have to make some more efforts to improve; write more compositions and do research work in English.

St2M: In my point of view, we have to have more writing classes.

St4F: I think the teaching of writing needs reinforcing.

St6M: I suggest that Foundation year students work harder, read more, buy books and use only materials in English.

St7F: …teachers should pay more attention to their students' problems instead of ignoring….

Interestingly, students' suggestions seem to trace the roots of the problems. In one full comment they expressed the need for a theoretically sound writing programme, in which their immersion in writing impacts positively on their performance. According to the data, the following are the most pertinent ideas that reflect the gaps within the current situation: "write more composition", "more writing classes", "research work in English", "reading", "materials", "more attention to students' writing problems".

Reflections: Students' Interviews

The findings from the students' interviews provided invaluable information concerning how the teachers and the students themselves view English writing at UMA.

1. Responses from the interviews demonstrate that all the students are aware of the importance of the writing in English for their personal and professional lives. Students appeared to be pessimistic and frustrated about getting their English improved at UMA. As a result, they no longer trust the institution, the teachers and they need to move beyond the confines of UMA classroom to upgrade their English.

2. Teachers at UMA do not seem to have the training to understand their students' performance and to tackle the writing problems successfully. Thus little attention is given to writing and students appear to operate with cognitively undemanding tasks.

3. The programme/course-book remains inadequate, and students with a satisfactory level of language proficiency felt that they are being treated unfairly by the university.

So far, the data presented seems to suggest that the situation needs to be re-considered towards designing a new programme and implementing new teaching approaches to develop writing.

5.2. ANALYSIS OF COURSE DOCUMENTS

For the purposes of validity, reliability and authenticity of data, in this section I analysed the following documents: (1) **The New Headway Elementary Students' Course-book**; (2) **The Students' Workbook**; (3) **The Teachers' Book** and (4) **The Sample of Students' Writing.** "Researchers use them because they give information about situations which cannot be investigated by direct observation or questioning" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) in Holloway (1997:50).

5.2.1. Analysis of the New Headway Elementary Students' Course-book

By Liz and John Soars. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006

In this section I examined the New Headway elementary students' course-book in order to find out how it is appropriate for the Foundation year at UMA. I looked at the organisational structure and at the pedagogical factors suggested by Chambers (1997:29), which include: suitability, methodology employed, skills and type of exercises.

5.2.1.1. Organisational Structure

The present table gives an overview of the organisational structure of the course-book and the contents of unit 14. Appendix H, on page 127 provides a fuller picture.

Table 3: The Students' Course-book/Contents Page: Language Input and Skills Development

CONTENTS	LANGUAGE INPUT			SKILLS DEVELOPMENT			
UNIT	**Grammar**	**Vocabulary**	**Every day English**	**Reading**	**Speaking**	**Listening**	**Writing**
14 **Have you ever?** p.106	**Present Perfect** **ever and ever** Have you ever been to Barcelona? She's been to Paris p.106 **Yet and just** We haven't been there yet They've just had a boat ride. P.108 **Past Perfect and Past Simple** Maria's been to Berlin. She went there two years ago. P.107	Past participles eaten made cooked p.107 At the airport departure lounge, check in p.113	At the airport check in your luggage go to gate 4 p.113	We've never learnt to drive! P.110	Cities you have been to p.107 Things you have done p.108	What has Ryan done? P.108 A honeyman in Venice p.108 (sic) A song – All around the world p.112	**Writing an email** Saying thank you p125

The course-book comprises 14 distinct units and each unit is organised under a content topic as illustrated on the table above *(Unit 14 - **Have you ever?).*** The sub-sections in each unit are separated under specific headings to indicate their objectives. The headings are as follows: *Starter, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Practice, Reading, Listening, Speaking, Grammar spot, Everyday English* and *Check it.*

After the 14 units the course-book includes 12 small units designed particularly for the writing skills (the *writing section)*. These are followed by the *Tape-scripts*, the *Grammar Reference section*, the *Pair work activities section*, a small section containing a *Word list* phonetically transcribed. Finally, there are two pages containing a list of the most common *Irregular verbs*, the *Verb patterns* and the *International Phonetic Symbols*.

5.2.1.2 Pedagogical Factors

In this section I will look at the methods and activities employed in the students' course-book.

5.2.1.2.1. Grammar in the Students' Course-book

What emerged in the course of my analysis is that grammar practice appears to figure heavily in the whole course-book. This aspect seems to be visible in all the units of the course-book insofar as the grammar column in the table above (see Appendix H, on page 127) appears to be printed out densely. The grammar topics are colourfully highlighted together with the topic contents on the top of the pages. For example,

Unit 9, page 66



Unit 10, page 74



Unit 12, page 90



As can be seen above, the data suggests that grammar is introduced in a linear manner in every single unit, and that students are required to manipulate various grammar items

throughout the course-book. This implies that the Headway course-book philosophy is based on traditional grammar instruction rather than grammar in context.

The following extract shows Unit 12 and part of Unit 13 of the "Grammar Reference" section found on pages 137-147 of the course-book.

Figure 4: Grammar Reference/Units 12 & 13

UNIT 12

12.1 *going to*

1 *Going to* expresses a person's plans and intentions.
She's **going to** be a ballet dancer when she grows up.
We're **going to** stay in a villa in France this summer.

2 Often there is no difference between *going to* and the Present Continuous to refer to a future intention.
I'm seeing Peter tonight.
I'm going to see Peter tonight.

3 We also use *going to* when we can see now that something is sure to happen in the future.
Careful! That glass is **going to** fall!

Positive and negative

I	am	(not) going to	have a break. stay at home.
He/She/It	is		
We/You/They	are		

Questions

When	am	I	going to	have a break? stay at home?
	is	he/she/it		
	are	we/you/they		

With the verbs *to go* and *to come*, we usually use the Present Continuous for future plans.
We**'re going** to Paris next week.
Joe and Tim **are coming** for lunch tomorrow.

12.2 Infinitive of purpose

The infinitive can express why a person does something.
I'm saving my money **to buy** a CD player.
(= I want to buy a CD player)
We're going to Paris **to have** a holiday.
(= we want to have a holiday)
NOT
I'm saving my money ~~for to buy~~ a CD player.
I'm saving my money ~~for buy~~ a CD player.

12.3 Prepositions

What did he do **as** a child?
He grew up **in** the city.
I'm going **to** Florida **in** a year's time.

What's **on** TV tonight?
What's **on at** the cinema?

EXERCISES

1 Complete the sentences. Use *going to* (+, –, or ?).
1 (+) Look! It _____ be a lovely day!
2 (?) _____ Bill _____ see Dan tonight?
3 (–) I _____ study this weekend.
4 (+) Be careful! You _____ fall.
5 (–) We _____ play football today.
6 (?) _____ you _____ cook dinner tonight?
7 (+) He _____ pass the exam.
8 (–) I _____ work tomorrow.
9 (?) _____ they _____ stay with us?

2 Rewrite the sentences. Use an infinitive of purpose.
1 I'm going out because I want to walk the dog.
_____
2 They're saving money because they want to buy a flat.
_____
3 She's going to the bank because she wants to get some cash.
_____
4 Nick is running because he wants to get fit.
_____
5 You are studying because you want to learn English.
_____
6 I'm going to the chemist's because I want to buy aspirin.
_____

UNIT 13

13.1 Question forms

When did Shakespeare live?
Where did Hans Christian Andersen come from?
Who did she marry?
Who created Mickey Mouse?
How do you get to school?
What do you have for breakfast?
What happens at the end of the story?
Why do you want to learn English?
How many people are there in the class?
How much does she earn?
How far is it to the centre?
What sort of car do you have?
Which newspaper do you read?

13.2 Adjectives and adverbs

Adjectives describe nouns.
a **big** dog a **careful** driver
Adverbs describe verbs.
She ran **quickly**. He drives too **fast**.

To form regular adverbs, add *-ly* to the adjective.
Words ending in *-y* change to *-ily*.

Adjective	Adverb
quick	quickly
bad	badly
careful	carefully
immediate	immediately
easy	easily

Some adverbs are irregular.

Adjective	Adverb
good	well
hard	hard
early	early
fast	fast

13.3 Prepositions

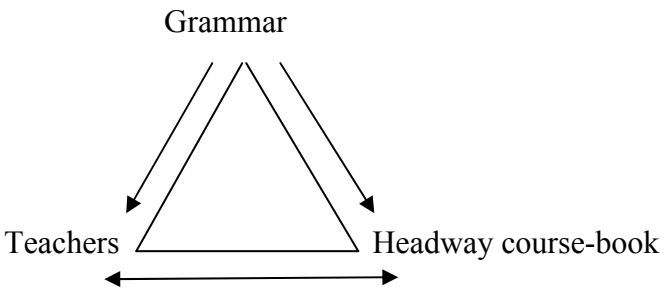
What's the story **about**?
What happens **at** the end of the story?

146 Grammar Reference 12.1 – 13.3

The "Grammar Reference" section printed at the end of the course-book appears to illuminate further the strong focus on grammar. This section includes 14 units, which seem to have many exercises and detailed grammar rules. This data suggests that after extensive grammar practice in the course-book students are required to revise what they have learned in the course-book. Interestingly enough, these findings concur with the findings from the teachers' interviews (see pages 35, 36) that grammar is the most emphasized component at UMA.

As the teachers gave me to understand that they rely too much on the course-book, the data also suggests that the "strong alliance" between the teachers and the course-book results in what I would call "*unbreakable triangular communication*." This can be represented as follows:

Figure 5: Unbreakable Triangular Communication

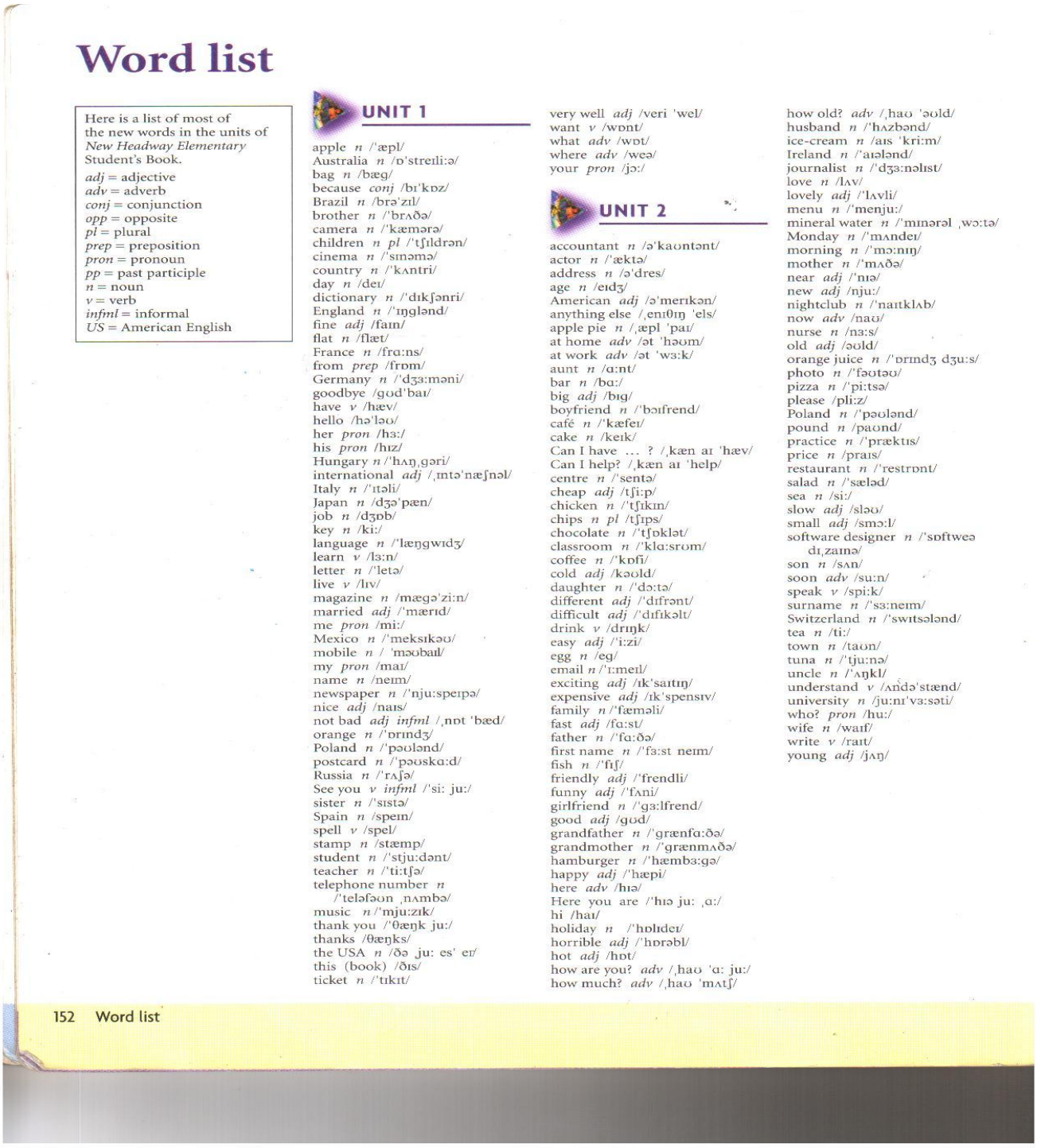


5.2.1.2.2. Vocabulary in the Students' Course-book

The purpose of this next section, therefore, is to examine the vocabulary provided in the course-book

As referred to earlier, the course-book includes a six page section entitled *Word list.* This section integrates a list of about 1219 words (counted by the researcher). The extract below shows the list for units 1 and 2.

Figure 6: Word List in the Course-book/Units 1 & 2



Word list

Here is a list of most of the new words in the units of *New Headway Elementary* Student's Book.

adj = adjective
adv = adverb
conj = conjunction
opp = opposite
pl = plural
prep = preposition
pron = pronoun
pp = past participle
n = noun
v = verb
infml = informal
US = American English

UNIT 1

apple *n* /'æpl/
Australia *n* /ɒ'streɪliːə/
bag *n* /bæg/
because *conj* /bɪ'kɒz/
Brazil *n* /brə'zɪl/
brother *n* /'brʌðə/
camera *n* /'kæmərə/
children *n pl* /'tʃɪldrən/
cinema *n* /'sɪnəmə/
country *n* /'kʌntrɪ/
day *n* /deɪ/
dictionary *n* /'dɪkʃənrɪ/
England *n* /'ɪŋglənd/
fine *adj* /faɪn/
flat *n* /flæt/
France *n* /frɑːns/
from *prep* /frɒm/
Germany *n* /'dʒɜːmənɪ/
goodbye /gʊd'baɪ/
have *v* /hæv/
hello /hə'ləʊ/
her *pron* /hɜː/
his *pron* /hɪz/
Hungary *n* /'hʌŋgərɪ/
international *adj* /ˌɪntə'næʃnəl/
Italy *n* /'ɪtəlɪ/
Japan *n* /dʒə'pæn/
job *n* /dʒɒb/
key *n* /kiː/
language *n* /'læŋgwɪdʒ/
learn *v* /lɜːn/
letter *n* /'letə/
live *v* /lɪv/
magazine *n* /mægə'ziːn/
married *adj* /'mærɪd/
me *pron* /miː/
Mexico *n* /'meksɪkəʊ/
mobile *n* / 'məʊbaɪl/
my *pron* /maɪ/
name *n* /neɪm/
newspaper *n* /'njuːspeɪpə/
nice *adj* /naɪs/
not bad *adj infml* /ˌnɒt 'bæd/
orange *n* /'ɒrɪndʒ/
Poland *n* /'pəʊlənd/
postcard *n* /'pəʊskɑːd/
Russia *n* /'rʌʃə/
See you *v infml* /'siː juː/
sister *n* /'sɪstə/
Spain *n* /speɪn/
spell *v* /spel/
stamp *n* /stæmp/
student *n* /'stjuːdənt/
teacher *n* /'tiːtʃə/
telephone number *n* /'teləfəʊn ˌnʌmbə/
music *n* /'mjuːzɪk/
thank you /'θæŋk juː/
thanks /θæŋks/
the USA *n* /ðə ˌjuː es' eɪ/
this (book) /ðɪs/
ticket *n* /'tɪkɪt/
very well *adj* /veri 'wel/
want *v* /wɒnt/
what *adv* /wɒt/
where *adv* /weə/
your *pron* /jɔː/

UNIT 2

accountant *n* /ə'kaʊntənt/
actor *n* /'æktə/
address *n* /ə'dres/
age *n* /eɪdʒ/
American *adj* /ə'merɪkən/
anything else /ˌenɪθɪŋ 'els/
apple pie *n* /ˌæpl 'paɪ/
at home *adv* /ət 'həʊm/
at work *adv* /ət 'wɜːk/
aunt *n* /ɑːnt/
bar *n* /bɑː/
big *adj* /bɪg/
boyfriend *n* /'bɔɪfrend/
café *n* /'kæfeɪ/
cake *n* /keɪk/
Can I have ... ? /ˌkæn aɪ 'hæv/
Can I help? /ˌkæn aɪ 'help/
centre *n* /'sentə/
cheap *adj* /tʃiːp/
chicken *n* /'tʃɪkɪn/
chips *n pl* /tʃɪps/
chocolate *n* /'tʃɒklət/
classroom *n* /'klɑːsrʊm/
coffee *n* /'kɒfɪ/
cold *adj* /kəʊld/
daughter *n* /'dɔːtə/
different *adj* /'dɪfrənt/
difficult *adj* /'dɪfɪkəlt/
drink *v* /drɪŋk/
easy *adj* /'iːzɪ/
egg *n* /eg/
email *n* /'iːmeɪl/
exciting *adj* /ɪk'saɪtɪŋ/
expensive *adj* /ɪk'spensɪv/
family *n* /'fæməlɪ/
fast *adj* /fɑːst/
father *n* /'fɑːðə/
first name *n* /'fɜːst neɪm/
fish *n* /'fɪʃ/
friendly *adj* /'frendlɪ/
funny *adj* /'fʌnɪ/
girlfriend *n* /'gɜːlfrend/
good *adj* /gʊd/
grandfather *n* /'grænfɑːðə/
grandmother *n* /'grænmʌðə/
hamburger *n* /'hæmbɜːgə/
happy *adj* /'hæpɪ/
here *adv* /hɪə/
Here you are /'hɪə juː ˌɑː/
hi /haɪ/
holiday *n* /'hɒlɪdeɪ/
horrible *adj* /'hɒrəbl/
hot *adj* /hɒt/
how are you? *adv* /ˌhaʊ 'ɑː juː/
how much? *adv* /ˌhaʊ 'mʌtʃ/
how old? *adv* /ˌhaʊ 'əʊld/
husband *n* /'hʌzbənd/
ice-cream *n* /ˌaɪs 'kriːm/
Ireland *n* /'aɪələnd/
journalist *n* /'dʒɜːnəlɪst/
love *n* /lʌv/
lovely *adj* /'lʌvlɪ/
menu *n* /'menjuː/
mineral water *n* /'mɪnərəl ˌwɔːtə/
Monday *n* /'mʌndeɪ/
morning *n* /'mɔːnɪŋ/
mother *n* /'mʌðə/
near *adj* /'nɪə/
new *adj* /njuː/
nightclub *n* /'naɪtklʌb/
now *adv* /naʊ/
nurse *n* /nɜːs/
old *adj* /əʊld/
orange juice *n* /'ɒrɪndʒ dʒuːs/
photo *n* /'fəʊtəʊ/
pizza *n* /'piːtsə/
please /pliːz/
Poland *n* /'pəʊlənd/
pound *n* /paʊnd/
practice *n* /'præktɪs/
price *n* /praɪs/
restaurant *n* /'restrɒnt/
salad *n* /'sælәd/
sea *n* /siː/
slow *adj* /sləʊ/
small *adj* /smɔːl/
software designer *n* /'sɒftweə dɪˌzaɪnə/
son *n* /sʌn/
soon *adv* /suːn/
speak *v* /spiːk/
surname *n* /'sɜːneɪm/
Switzerland *n* /'swɪtsələnd/
tea *n* /tiː/
town *n* /taʊn/
tuna *n* /'tjuːnə/
uncle *n* /'ʌŋkl/
understand *v* /ˌʌndə'stænd/
university *n* /juːnɪ'vɜːsətɪ/
who? *pron* /huː/
wife *n* /waɪf/
write *v* /raɪt/
young *adj* /jʌŋ/

Generally, the stock of vocabulary offered on the list does not seem to be well adjusted to the required proficiency level of English. A substantial number of words displayed on the list appear to be too basic and already familiar to the university students (e.g. *orange*, *book*, *dog*, *bank*, *pizza*, *goodbye*, *camera*, *email*, *egg*, *brother*, *fine*, *mother*, *cinema*), but they are introduced as new words.

Nonetheless, the words are phonetically transcribed and categorized as follows: adj; adv; conj; opp; pl; prep; pron; pp; n; v; infml and US for American English, which is, in fact, helpful for UMA students. Another aspect that seems to be positive and worth mentioning here, is that the word list is introduced progressively as the most difficult words are displayed towards the end of the course-book within the most challenging texts. For example,

> Page 104
>
> ***un***happ**iness** – (**un**) prefix used to add the meaning of '*not*', '*lacking*' or '*the opposite of*' before the adjective, adverbs, verbs, nouns.
>
> (**ness**) – suffix added to adjectives that form nouns which refer to a quality or a condition. (*Y– i*) rule for adjectives ending in *Y*.

Discussion

There is a common perception among the English language learners in Luanda that English has a vast and complex vocabulary. Therefore, acquisition of vocabulary occupies a pivotal position when it comes to writing the language.

Broadly speaking, students at university will hardly be able to write comprehensibly in an academic context until they possess a reasonable number of relevant words. Nagy & Herman (1997) suggest that "*second language [EFL] students must add 3,000 new words each year to their lexicon."* Although, it may depend significantly on the circumstances under which the learners study, they have to be equipped with appropriate strategies to acquire new words on a regular basis. Additionally, the words put at their disposal should be substantial so that they can operate successfully in a more cognitively demanding environment.

Nagy and Herman's (1987) in Ellis (1999:38) talk about a **quantitative** and **qualitative dimension** to vocabulary acquisition. According to the authors, on the one hand: "How many words do learners know?" while on the other hand we can enquire: "What do the learners know about the words they know?". Curtis (1997) coined this distinction as the "breadth" and "depth" of a person's lexicon. Looking at the vocabulary list provided on the course-book, and relating it to UMA Foundation year students' context, one can easily infer that considerable attention was paid to the "breadth" or in Nagy and Herman's words to the "quantitative dimension to vocabulary acquisition." Many words appear to be inadequate for the students' required proficiency level. For example:

1. *Ice-cream, ambulance, boat, telephone, cooker, pen, knife, fridge, fork, cup.*

The above words do not seem to be productive for Foundation year students' writing. Thus they may be recognised by the learners easily. Ellis and Beaton (1993a) in Ellis (1999:45) call these kinds of words "Image-able words". They might be learned incidentally because they are concrete words that "arouse mental images".

2. Stop, email, DVD, check in, Ok.

These words have long been adapted and incorporated into the Portuguese language. Therefore, they are unnecessary for the 'word list'.

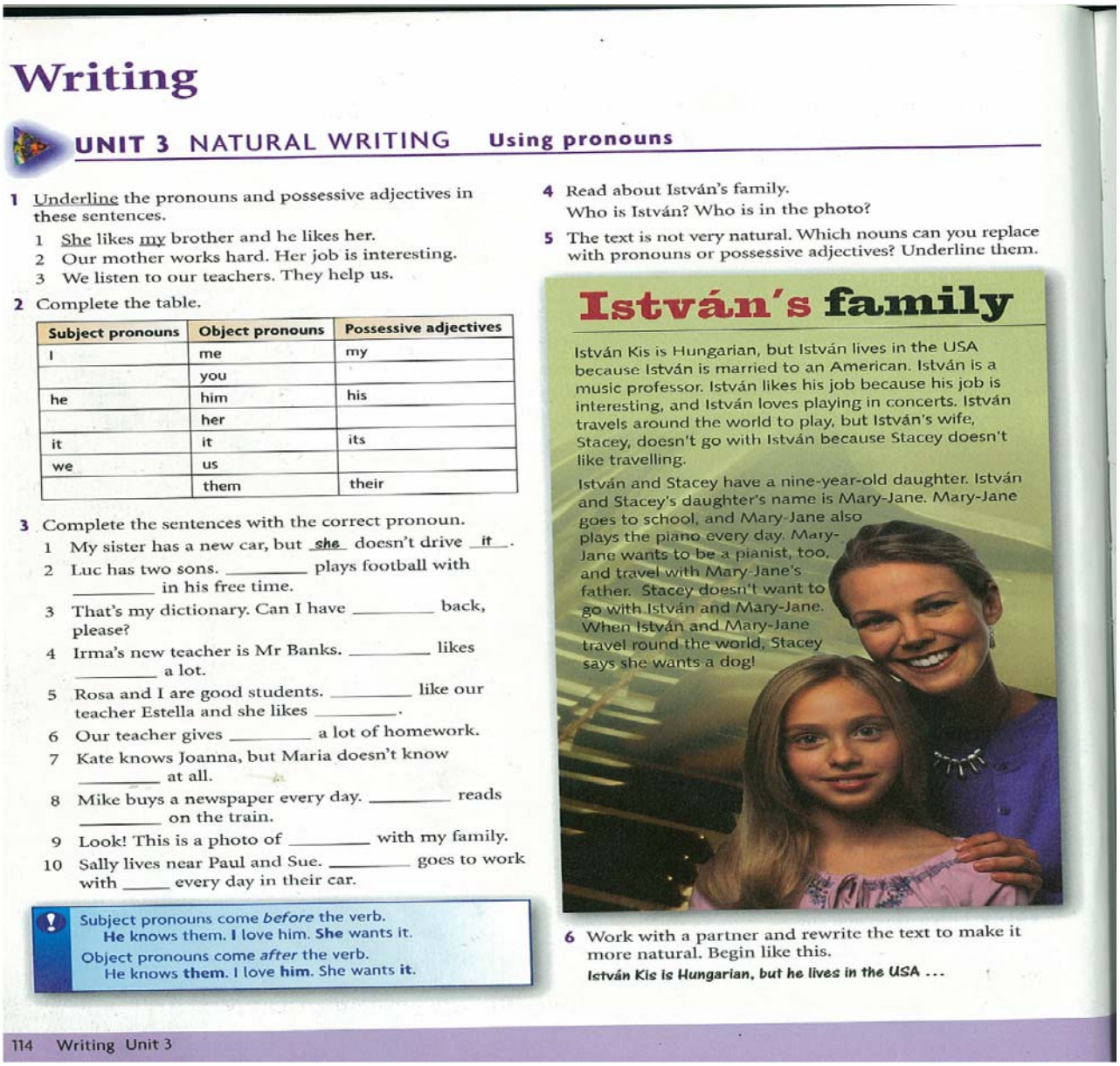
In order for students to move from BICS to CALP, the context under investigation suggests that both "breadth" and especially "depth" dimensions to vocabulary acquisition must be cultivated.

5.2.1.2.3. Writing in the Students' Course-book

In this section I briefly analysed the writing skills employed in the course-book. I focussed on the usefulness of the writing tasks and the extent to which the four skills are evenly distributed along the course-book.

As earlier mentioned, the course-book includes 12 small units designed particularly for the writing skills. These units are allocated at the tail end of the course-book. The following extract from the course-book illustrates the first page of the writing section:

Figure 7: The Writing Section/Unit 3



Writing

UNIT 3 NATURAL WRITING Using pronouns

1 Underline the pronouns and possessive adjectives in these sentences.

1 She likes my brother and he likes her.
2 Our mother works hard. Her job is interesting.
3 We listen to our teachers. They help us.

2 Complete the table.

Subject pronouns	Object pronouns	Possessive adjectives
I	me	my
	you	
he	him	his
	her	
it	it	its
we	us	
	them	their

3 Complete the sentences with the correct pronoun.

1 My sister has a new car, but *she* doesn't drive *it*.
2 Luc has two sons. _____ plays football with _____ in his free time.
3 That's my dictionary. Can I have _____ back, please?
4 Irma's new teacher is Mr Banks. _____ likes _____ a lot.
5 Rosa and I are good students. _____ like our teacher Estella and she likes _____.
6 Our teacher gives _____ a lot of homework.
7 Kate knows Joanna, but Maria doesn't know _____ at all.
8 Mike buys a newspaper every day. _____ reads _____ on the train.
9 Look! This is a photo of _____ with my family.
10 Sally lives near Paul and Sue. _____ goes to work with _____ every day in their car.

Subject pronouns come *before* the verb.
He knows them. **I** love him. **She** wants it.
Object pronouns come *after* the verb.
He knows **them**. I love **him**. She wants **it**.

4 Read about István's family.
Who is István? Who is in the photo?

5 The text is not very natural. Which nouns can you replace with pronouns or possessive adjectives? Underline them.

István's family

István Kis is Hungarian, but István lives in the USA because István is married to an American. István is a music professor. István likes his job because his job is interesting, and István loves playing in concerts. István travels around the world to play, but István's wife, Stacey, doesn't go with István because Stacey doesn't like travelling.

István and Stacey have a nine-year-old daughter. István and Stacey's daughter's name is Mary-Jane. Mary-Jane goes to school, and Mary-Jane also plays the piano every day. Mary-Jane wants to be a pianist, too, and travel with Mary-Jane's father. Stacey doesn't want to go with István and Mary-Jane. When István and Mary-Jane travel round the world, Stacey says she wants a dog!

6 Work with a partner and rewrite the text to make it more natural. Begin like this.
István Kis is Hungarian, but he lives in the USA ...

114 Writing Unit 3

As can be seen on the first page of the 'writing section' above, in Task 1 the students are required to identify *pronouns* and *possessive adjectives*. In Task 2 they are required to complete the table with subject *pronouns*, *object pronouns* and *possessive adjectives*. Similarly, in Task 3 the students are required to fill in the gaps with the correct *pronoun*. The small box at the bottom left-hand corner of the page contains *grammar explanations.* In Task 4 there is a reading comprehension task within a brief text. In Task 5, the students are again required to indentify *pronouns* and *adjectives*. Finally, in Task 6 they are supposed to reproduce in a more 'natural way' the text about Istvan's family.

While one expects to identify more writing tasks, the subsequent eleven units of the 'writing section' appear to proceed in the same way, with a strong focus on grammar: some gap filling

exercises; matching sentences; reading some grammar rules; reading brief texts; some oral tasks; and producing a few short and controlled compositions. The following excerpts from the 'writing section' illustrate these aspects:

References	Instructions
Unit 5, task 3, page 116	Complete the sentences with ***and***, ***so***, ***but***, or ***because.***
Unit 7, task 2, page 118	Ask and answer questions about Robert with a partner.
Unit 7, task 4, page 118	Read about Daniella's holiday. Put the verbs in the Past Simple.
Unit 8, task 3, page 119	Read the text about 'My oldest friend'. Complete the text with words from the box.
Unit 10, task 1, page 121	Join the sentences with ***which*** or ***where.***

Further excerpts from the writing section are indicated below:

References	Topics/Instructions
Task 6, page 16.	Write an email about your class.
Task 6, page 116	Write a description of your home.
Task 5, page 118.	Describe your holiday.
Task 4, page 122.	Write about two people in your family and compare them.

The above writing tasks appear to be very low-level tasks and tend to concentrate on very familiar issues. Responding to these writing tasks students are not likely to engage with the content, critical analysis, planning, manipulation of new ideas, concepts, etc. What they are required to do within these tasks (e.g. Describe your holiday) is just reproducing exactly a series of events that they have experienced.

Marton (1975) introduced a relevant concept that might be related to the above discussion. In his empirical research with samples of students' writing he found out that students adopted two distinct strategies to learning, which he termed "deep" and "surface" approaches. According to Marton in Brockbank & McGill (1998:36):

- **Deep Approach** - concentrates on what the discourse is about and is associated with an active approach to learning, and a desire to get a grasp of the main point, make connections and draw conclusions.

- **Surface Approach** - concentrates on the discourse itself, relying on memory and is associated with a passive approach to learning, and a stance which minimises the task as 'just remembering'.

As far as the writing tasks on the course-book are concerned, they seem only to activate rote learning through minor reproduction or descriptions of a series of events – features of the surface approach to learning.

In the Foundation year context, most topics suggested in the course-book do not seem to be appropriate. Adults may not feel that comfortable exhibiting their personal information 'publically. In this respect, Maley (2003) in Tomlinson (2003:192) argues that:

> in choosing themes…we can go well beyond the conventional and familiar. There is nothing wrong with such uncontentious themes as sport, hobbies, shopping…But if our objective is to include increasing social and intercultural awareness, and critical thinking skills, we need to cast the net more widely.

Students have to be introduced and exposed to more unfamiliar and demanding topics; topics that promote creativity, critical analysis, synthesis, deep thinking and text organization.

I also investigated the extent to which the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) are evenly distributed along the course-book.

The figures displayed on the table below show the distribution of tasks according to each skill. All the tasks were counted by the researcher.

Table 4: The Students' Course-book: Distribution of Tasks According to Four Basic Language Skills

Skills →	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Number of Tasks →	149	236	117	111

From this table it can be seen that listening and speaking are signalled as the main focus of attention in the course-book. Reading and particularly writing are given less attention.

On the whole, the findings reveal that the present course-book marginalizes the writing ability of Foundation year students. The writing tasks appear to be tightly controlled and there is no room for extended writing. The following quote (from the course-book, page 121, task 4) seems to confirm this perception:

4. Write four paragraphs about your capital city. Begin each paragraph with the same words as in the text about London (it, where, which). Write 100- 150 words

Paragraph 1:	How big is it? Where is it?	**Paragraph 2:**	What is it famous for?
Paragraph 3:	Does it have any problems?	**Paragraph 4**:	What do you like best about it?

Ur (1996:162) distinguishes two types of writing tasks: '*writing as a means'* and '*writing as an end'*. According to her, in *writing as a means* students engage with aspects of language other than the writing itself, e.g. noting down new words; copying grammar rules;... doing written tests. Writing is simply used as a means of getting the students to attend to or as convenient method of testing it.

As regards *writing as an end*, Ur says that "writing itself is seen as a main objective. At the 'micro' level they [students] practice a specific written form (spelling, punctuation). At the 'macro' level the emphasis is on content and organization: tasks invite learners to express themselves using their own words, stating the purpose for writing..."

Following Ur's distinction between *writing as a means* and *as an end* my analysis of the course-book leads to the impression that *writing as an end* is non-existent. The writing tasks offered in the Headway course-book appear to be designed to practice certain target structures without any sense of audience and authenticity. Additionally, the set of instructions provided to the students suggest that they are spoon-fed with ideas rather than being asked to create their own.

Discussion

All in all, it is assumed by the authors that the course-book deals with the four basic skills in an integrative way (the back cover highlights: "*An integrated syllabus, motivating topics, and clearly focused tasks combine with a real understanding of what works in the classroom. It all makes for effective teaching and effective learning. Tried and tested all over the world…*"). In contrast, my findings reveal there is an uneven distribution of the four skills. In addition, the topics seem inappropriate and the tasks appear to be un-stimulating.

Although the course-book attempts to deal with grammar aspects implicitly with its topics contents highlighted in each unit (see example on p. 57), the data obtained so far suggests that in the UMA context, with problems of large class size and untrained teachers, grammar

lessons are hardly communicatively based. Therefore, teachers are tempted to have a single focus on grammar. Stern (1993:454) asserts that:

> The grammatical features that are focused upon in the course-book[s] and by the teacher[s] in his [their] lesson[s] are not disguised or hidden…The learner is expected to study and memorise a particular rule and examples, for instance, a verb paradigm or a list of preposition.

William (1995) in Fotos (1998:301) argues that "The inability of communicative ESL/[EFL] teaching alone to provide high levels of accuracy in learners is now clear". However, Fotos advises that: "there is a growing concern that the return to grammar instruction should not lead to revival of the 'old ways' of language teaching." However, findings from the course-book analysis reveal that the Headway philosophy is based on old pedagogies.

Weaver (1996:7) refers to several studies done over the centuries by grammar proponents in which the following reasons to teach formal grammar are maintained:

- The study of grammar is important simply because language is a supreme human achievement that deserves to be studied as such.
- The study of grammar will help form the mind by promoting "mental discipline".
- The study of grammar will help people master another language more readily.
- The study of grammar will help people become better users of the language, that is, more effective as listeners and speakers, and especially as readers and writers…

In fact, grammar reveals how languages operate. It is a tool for producing accurate structures based on standard or conventional paradigms. Grammar cannot be ignored, but when one of the primary options of a course is the centrality of grammar it can be boring and results in downgrading other essential skills. The following re-quoted remarks made by St1M illustrate the point:

> Q: **Are the writing classes being helpful to improve your writing?**
>
> St1M: Honestly, no!! [The student's facial expression showed discontentment]
>
> Q: **Why is that?**
>
> St1M: What we've been talking about all this semester long, this year at UMA, are things that we've been repeating during years and years in middle schools. Things are all the same… adjectives, verbs ermmm, very basic things…

Course-books play a very important role in many EFL sessions. However, they cannot just be rated by any individual as being appropriate. A number of factors such as the methodology employed, skills, the context, type of tasks, etc., must be taken into consideration while selecting. Otherwise things might be made extremely difficult or simpler. For example, if

things are made simpler the course-book will not provide the appropriate academic discourse and if things are made extremely difficult learning will not take place. The following excerpt from remarks by T4M (a highly trained teacher, who has studied in Universities outside Angola) indicate that the present course-book is inadequate because it was not selected with general participation and consensus.

> Q: **Do you think that the syllabuses you are currently using satisfy your students' writing needs and expectations? Give reasons.**
>
> T4M: Ummm I think that the chosen course-book goes along with the programme suggested by the university. In this respect, the intended objectives are achieved. Considering that students are taught English in middle schools for about 4 years, perhaps the programme should've been much more demanding. Students are supposed to arrive at university exhibiting a higher level of English, and I'm talking about an intermediate or pre-intermediate level. However, it seems to me that the present course-book is lowering the level of the expected competencies in accordance with our educational system.

However, Davies & Pearse's (2000:150) assertion serves as a pertinent guiding principle to bear in mind:

> Most teachers use course-books chosen by other people, for example, the co-ordinator or principal of the school where they work. However, it is important to understand what is involved in choosing a course-book so that you can analyse and evaluate your particular book and see its strengths and weaknesses.

Following from the above arguments, the results demonstrate that the course-book has been imposed by some 'persuasive individuals'. Its continual use without any adaptation in the UMA context, the situation of the Foundation year is likely to remain virtually identical.

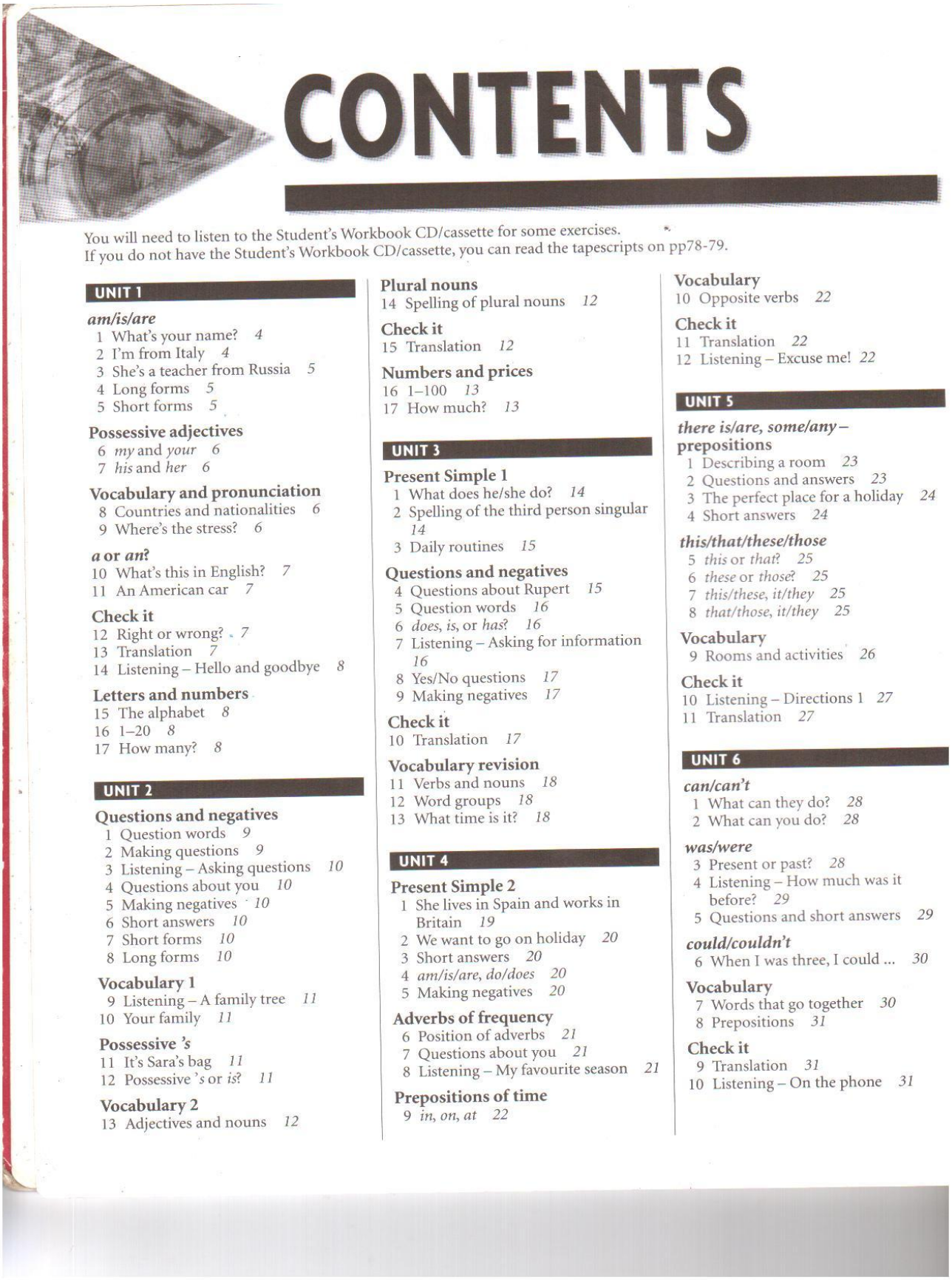
5.2.2. Analysis of the Students' Workbook

In this section I analysed the students' workbook to discuss its suitability for Foundation year students at UMA.

5. 2.2.1. Organisational Structure

The students' workbook is made up of 14 Units plus three additional sections: (1) *Revision section* with exercises on verb to be, present simple, present perfect, past simple, present continuous, there is/are, can/can't, like/would like, going to, infinitive of purpose, word order; (2) *Tape-scripts* for listening tasks; and (3) *The Workbook key* containing answers to the exercises. The extracts from the contents on the next pages give an overview of what is expected to be found in the workbook.

Figure 8: The Students' Workbook/Contents page Units 1 - 6



CONTENTS

You will need to listen to the Student's Workbook CD/cassette for some exercises.
If you do not have the Student's Workbook CD/cassette, you can read the tapescripts on pp78-79.

UNIT 1

am/is/are
1 What's your name? *4*
2 I'm from Italy *4*
3 She's a teacher from Russia *5*
4 Long forms *5*
5 Short forms *5*

Possessive adjectives
6 *my* and *your* *6*
7 *his* and *her* *6*

Vocabulary and pronunciation
8 Countries and nationalities *6*
9 Where's the stress? *6*

***a* or *an*?**
10 What's this in English? *7*
11 An American car *7*

Check it
12 Right or wrong? *7*
13 Translation *7*
14 Listening – Hello and goodbye *8*

Letters and numbers
15 The alphabet *8*
16 1–20 *8*
17 How many? *8*

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2 Making questions *9*
3 Listening – Asking questions *10*
4 Questions about you *10*
5 Making negatives *10*
6 Short answers *10*
7 Short forms *10*
8 Long forms *10*

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10 Your family *11*

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12 Possessive *'s* or *is*? *11*

Vocabulary 2
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1 What does he/she do? *14*
2 Spelling of the third person singular *14*
3 Daily routines *15*

Questions and negatives
4 Questions about Rupert *15*
5 Question words *16*
6 *does, is,* or *has*? *16*
7 Listening – Asking for information *16*
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9 Making negatives *17*

Check it
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7 *this/these, it/they* *25*
8 *that/those, it/they* *25*

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10 Listening – Directions 1 *27*
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2 What can you do? *28*

was/were
3 Present or past? *28*
4 Listening – How much was it before? *29*
5 Questions and short answers *29*

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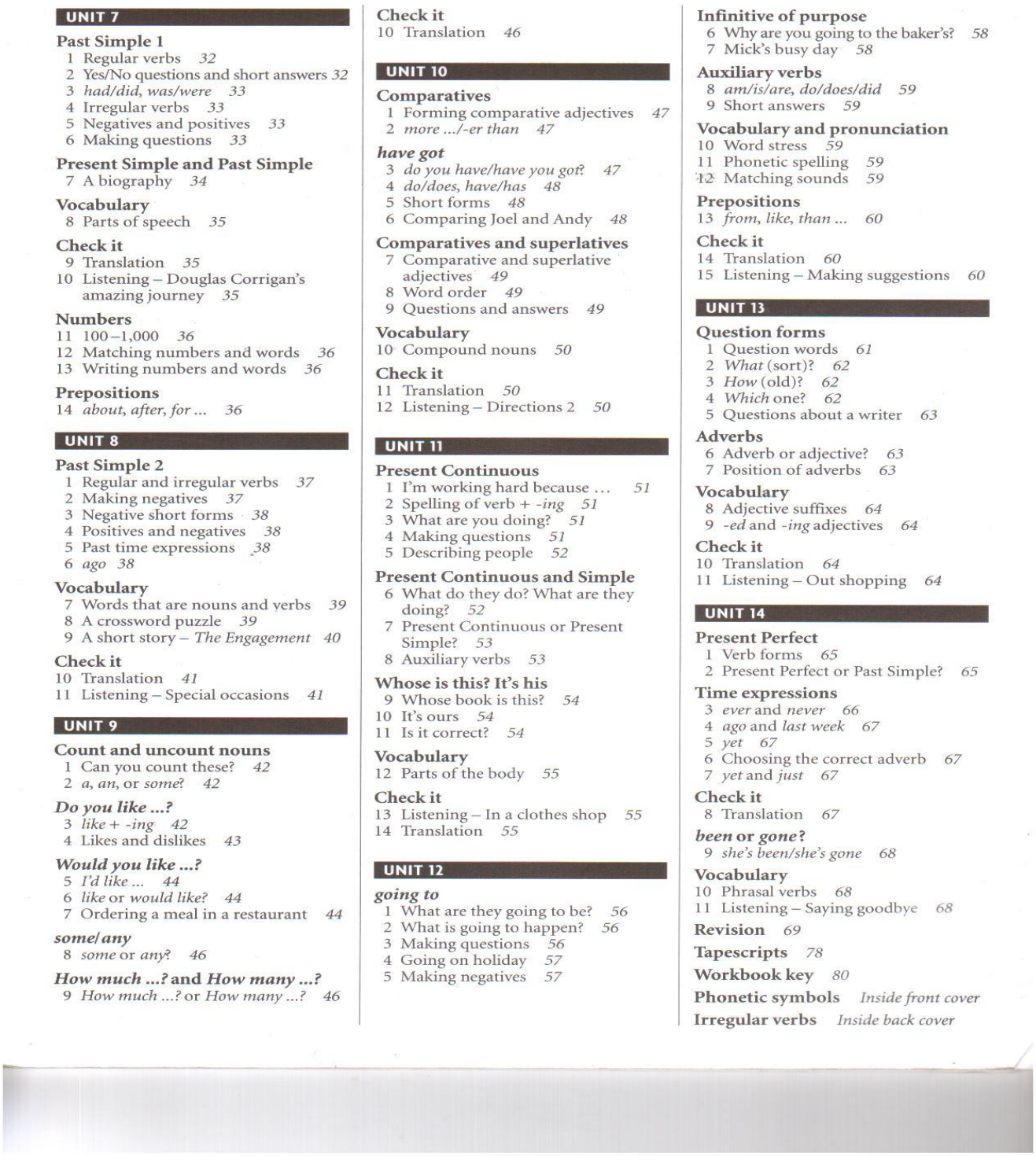
6 When I was three, I could ... *30*

Vocabulary
7 Words that go together *30*
8 Prepositions *31*

Check it
9 Translation *31*
10 Listening – On the phone *31*

Figure 8A: The Students' Workbook/Contents page Units 7 - 14



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Workbook key 80

Phonetic symbols *Inside front cover*

Irregular verbs *Inside back cover*

While a great deal of attention appears to be paid to listening, filling the gaps, labelling and to translation-related tasks, the workbook, which is a segment of the course-book, still appears to have paid scant attention to writing. After closer examination of the tasks offered in the students' workbook, the data suggests that low level tasks (BICS) such as: production of

short and isolated sentences that stress the need to use "the form" are recurrent as in the students' course-book. A few examples are given below**:**

Unit 3, page 14

2. Spelling of the third person singular

Complete the sentences with a verb from the box

start	have	go	study	live	fly	play	**speak**

1.He speaks four languages.

2.Bernadette_____in Paris.

3.She's a pilot. She_____all over the world.

4.Peter_____two children.

5.In winter Alice_____skiing and in summer She_____tennis.

6.My daughter_____Japanese at university.

7.John_____work at six o'clock every day.

Unit 4, page 21

Adverbs of frequency

6.Position of adverbs

Put the adverbs in the correct order to make sentences.

1.always/France/to/we/spring/in

_____

2. stay/hotel/a/usually/we/in

_____

3. plane/sometimes/by/go/we

Unit 5, page 27

11. TRANSLATION

Translate these sentences

1. There's a telephone next to the lamp

_____

2.**A**: Is there a television on the table?

B: No, there isn't.

_____

3.A are there any flowers in the living room?

B. Yes, there are.

_____

4.There are some glasses in the cupboard

_____

5.How many rooms are there in your house?

_____

6. Excuse me, is there a chemist near here?

B: Yes, there is.

_____

_____

5.2.2.2. Grammar in the Students' Workbook

Although the workbook offers some useful phonetic tasks, (for example, Task 11 page 59: *The words in phonetics spelling have two syllables. Write the words and mark the correct stress:*

1./ˈtrævl/_____2./ˈweðə/_____3./fəˈget/,_____4./ˈfri:dəm/,_____5./□speʃəl/,_____

6./ˈlɪsən/ _____7./ˈi:vnɪŋ/,_____8./rɪˈlæks/_____), the contents map of the workbook and nearly all the tasks in the workbook show that grammar is the dominant component.

5.2.2.3. Translation in the Students' Workbook

The translation method in the workbook seems to be another example of "traditional ways" of teaching. All the units are replete with translation exercises (see all the **check it** sections in the contents page pasted on the previous pages). Furthermore, one does not know into which language the words and the sentences are likely to be translated since there are more than 10

indigenous languages in Angola. These exercises were identified as follows: page 7, task 13; page 12, task15; page 17, task 10; page 22, task 11; page 27, task 11; page 31, task 9; page 35, task 9; page 41, task 10; page 46 task 10; page 50, task 11; page 55, task 14; page 60, task 14 and page 67, task 8.

Discussion

"There is evidence that the teaching of grammar and translation has occurred in language instruction through the ages" (Escher 1928; Kelly 1969) in Stern (1983:453). However, "Grammar-Translation was attacked as a cold and lifeless approach to language teaching, and it was blamed for the failure of foreign language teaching." Stern (1983:454).

Richards & Rodgers (2001:5) report that "…Grammar-Translation method is a way of studying a language [foreign] that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into the target language." These remarks from the teachers and students' interviews show that translation is common practice at UMA.

Q: **What do your students write? List the writing activities**.

T5M: During the sessions they write grammatical aspects. They structure and answer questions related to a given text. They do some translation from English into Portuguese and from Portuguese into English…

Q: **When do you write English? What do you write? Can you indicate the writing activities you are required to perform during classes?**

St4F: …we rewrite texts, we've been doing some translation of texts, yes, and we copy things that the teacher writes on the board.

Some students have reported that they feel much more comfortable writing in Portuguese first and then in English when required to write a composition in their tests. Translation exercises for EFL learners lacking basic grounding in writing can exacerbate discourse errors and generate L1 interferences. According to Stern (1983:455), by carrying out translation tasks "The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language [foreign language]", which may be misleading.

5.2.3. Analysis of the Teachers' Book

In this section I investigated the Headway teachers' book used by the Foundation year teachers at UMA. I looked at the instructional input offered in the book and discuss its impact on teachers' regular practices in the classroom.

5.2.3.1. Organisational Structure

After the contents page, there is an introductory unit. The main objective of this is to provide an overview of the organisational structure of and what is to be found in the teachers' book. The following is a copy of the contents page:

Figure 9: The Teachers' Book/Contents page

Contents

New Headway Elementary – the THIRD edition

Introduction

Unit 1	*am/is/are* – *my/your/his/her* – Countries – Everyday objects – Numbers – Hello and goodbye	6
Unit 2	*am/is/are* – questions and negatives – Possessive *'s* – Family – Opposites – In a café	11
Unit 3	Present Simple 1 – *he/she/it* – Questions and negatives – Jobs – What time is it?	19
Unit 4	Present Simple 2 – *I/you/we/they* – Leisure activities – Social expressions	28
	Stop and check 1 154	
Unit 5	*There is/are* – Prepositions – *some/any* – *this/that/these/those* – Furniture – Directions 1	37
	Progress test 1 162	
Unit 6	*can/can't/could/couldn't* – *was/were* – Words that sound the same – On the phone	46
Unit 7	Past Simple 1: regular verbs – Irregular verbs – Words that go together – What's the date?	56
Unit 8	Past Simple 2: negatives – *ago* – Spelling and silent letters – Special occasions	66
	Stop and check 2 156	
Unit 9	Count and uncount nouns – *I like/I'd like* – *some/any* – *much/many* – Food – Polite requests	75
Unit 10	Comparatives and superlatives – *have got* – City and country – Directions 2	85
	Progress test 2 165	
Unit 11	Present Continuous – *Whose?* – Clothes – Words that rhyme – In a clothes shop	96
Unit 12	*going to* future – Infinitive of purpose – The weather – Making suggestions	106
	Stop and check 3 158	
Unit 13	Question forms – Adjectives and adverbs – Describing feelings – At the chemist's	116
Unit 14	Present Perfect + *ever*, *never*, *yet*, and *just* – At the airport	125
	Stop and check 4 160	
	Progress test 3 168	

PHOTOCOPIABLE MATERIALS

Units 1–4	135	Stop and checks	154
Units 5–8	140	Progress tests	162
Units 9–12	145	Answer keys	171
Units 13–14	150		

As can be seen, the book is made up of 14 units followed by a 36 page section containing "Photocopiable material". The "*Photocopiable material*" section contains a set of materials for further practice and consolidation of grammar, vocabulary expansion and exercises for other skills highlighted in the students' course-book.

Ideas on how to teach the songs for Units 1 - 4, 5 - 8, 9 - 12, and 13 – 14 are also provided on the "Photocopiable material" section. After that, there are four *stop and check* revision tests, one for Units 1 - 4, one for Units 5 - 8, one for 9 – 12 and one for Units 13 – 14. Lastly, three grammar-based *progress tests* covering Units 1 – 5, 6 – 10 and 11 – 14 end the "Photocopiable Material" section. The extract that follows is a copy of **"Stop and Check 1**" revision test for units 1 to 4. A copy of the **Progress test 1** is to be found attached in Appendix I, page 130.

Figure 10: Stop and Check 1/ Page 1

Stop and check 1

UNITS 1–4

Correct the mistakes

Each sentence has a mistake. Find it and correct it.

1 Paola is ~~Italiana~~. *Paola is Italian.*
2 New York is a city very big.
3 My mother works in a restaurant. Is a chef.
4 My father watch football on TV.
5 He's like playing tennis.
6 On Sundays we go the cinema.
7 Mark is pilot.
8 You family is very nice.
9 I like go to the gym.
10 Our school have a lot of students.
11 The childrens go to school near here.
12 We go to the bed at 11.00.
13 Spring and summer are my favourites seasons.
14 My sister no have a car.
15 Do you want a ice-cream?
16 Is near here, my school.

15

Word order

Put the words in the correct order.

1 Bristol Daniel from comes
Daniel comes from Bristol.
2 journalist from is Peter a New York
3 married brother is your ?
4 mountains sister skiing goes the in my
5 isn't big my very town
6 your what name teacher's is ?
7 surname how speli do your you ?
8 often weekends go I at sailing

7

Choose the correct sentence

One sentence is correct. Which one?

1 Where she from? ✗
Where does she from? ✗
Where is she from? ✓
2 a Diane is a nice girl, and I like.
b Diane is a nice girl, and I like her.
c Diane is a nice girl, and I like him.
3 a He has 19 years old.
b He's 19 years.
c He's 19.
4 a Pietro works with his father.
b Pietro works with he's father.
c Pietro works with him father.
5 a Ana and Juan live in Madrid. They're flat is lovely.
b Ana and Juan live in Madrid. Their flat is lovely.
c Ana and Juan live in Madrid. There flat is lovely.
6 a She lives in a house or a flat?
b Does she lives in a house or a flat?
c Does she live in a house or a flat?
7 a I don't like going running.
b I don't like go running.
c I no like going running.
8 a How many languages you speak?
b How many languages do you speak?
c How many languages does you speak?
9 a My brother work in a hospital.
b My brother he works in a hospital.
c My brother works in a hospital.

8

Questions

1 Match a line in **A** with a line in **B** to make questions.

A	B
Where	do you do at weekends?
What	do you go to bed?
Who	do you usually sit next to?
What time	is a cup of coffee and a sandwich?
How much	languages do you speak?
How many	do you go on holiday?

5

154 Units 1–4 · Stop and check 1 © Oxford University Press Photocopiable

Figure 10A: Stop and Check 1/Page 2

2 Here are the answers to some questions. Write the questions. Use the words in brackets.

1 **What do you do?**
(you/do) I'm an architect.
2 _____ ?
(Helen/start work) At 8.00.
3 _____ ?
(Nicole and Jean/come) From France.
4 _____ ?
(your wife's) Sally.
5 _____ ?
(you/have) Three. Two boys and a girl.
6 _____ ?
(you/like/taking photographs)
Yes, I do. I have a very good camera.

5

Prepositions

Complete the text with the prepositions from the box.

at	in	about	after	for	with	by	to	on

Linda lives (1) ___in___ a small flat (2)_____ Oxford. She lives (3)_____ two other girls who are students (4)_____ Oxford University. They work hard during the week, but (5)_____ weekends they invite a lot of friends to their house. They cook a meal (6)_____ their friends, and then they go out (7)_____ the pub (8)_____ a drink, or they stay (9)_____ home and listen (10)_____ music.
Linda has two jobs. (11)_____ Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays she works (12)_____ a hospital, where she helps to look (13)_____ children who are ill. She goes to the hospital (14)_____ bus. She starts (15)_____ ten o'clock and works until quarter (16)_____ five. On Thursdays and Fridays she works (17)_____ home. She has a computer (18)_____ her bedroom and she writes stories. (19)_____ the evening, one of the girls cooks a meal. (20)_____ dinner they look in the newspaper to see what's on TV, or they talk (21)_____ their day. They usually go to bed at about midnight.

20

Vocabulary

Put the words in the correct column.

egg menu nurse lovely tuna model collect
sailing cake sunbathing want deliver dictionary
fast expensive chicken journalist postcard
sell friendly lawyer magazine chips running
cooking actor dancing newspaper young listen

Things to read	Jobs	Things to eat	Activities	Verbs	Adjectives

30

am/ is/ do/ does (not)

Complete the sentences with the verbs in the box.

am/'m not	is/isn't	are/aren't	does/doesn't	do/don't

1 I ___'m not___ English.
2 Where _____ you from?
3 What time _____ the shop open?
4 My sister _____ eat meat because she _____ a vegetarian.
5 I _____ hungry. How much _____ a chicken salad?
6 Where _____ you usually go on holiday?
7 Daddy, we _____ want to go to bed. We _____ tired.
8 Learning English _____ boring! It's interesting!

10

TOTAL 100

TRANSLATE

Translate the sentences. Translate the *ideas*, not word by word.

1 I am a student.
_____
2 My sister is a lawyer.
_____
3 She isn't at home. She's at work.
_____
4 I live in a flat.
_____
5 My mother works in a school.
_____
6 I don't smoke.
_____
7 My father doesn't like watching TV.
_____
8 What do you do at weekends?
_____

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The *Answer keys* section at the end of the book provides answers to all the exercises, including to the "Progress tests" and to "Grammar Reference" exercises in the student's course-book, so that the teacher can assess the answers given by the students.

5.2.3.2. Guidance in the Teachers' Book

The teacher's book appears to be designed to guide inexperienced and non-qualified teachers. It contains detailed instructions and orientation on how to handle every single lesson. Teachers are addressed in such a way that they are left without any authority, removing any kind of initiative. For instance, on page 35 teachers are provided with the following guidance:

Writing

4. This part of the activity is designed to revise the third person singular again alongside the other persons. (could be set for homework or done orally.)

Focus attention on the examples in the Student's Book and highlight the use of the auxiliary 'does' to avoid repeating the verb. Point out that we don't say: **I don't go to bed early on weekdays, but Sofia goes, or…Sofia yes**. Ask students to use the information they have collected to write and compare themselves with another student. Then ask one or two students to read what they have written aloud for other to comment on.

By following the teachers' book step-by-step, teachers are tempted to concentrate their attention to grammar component as they are repeatedly advised about the importance of "grammar" exercises displayed in the Headway series. The following extracts illustrate some of the authors' words addressed to teachers (Page 5/Headway Teacher's Book).

"The Workbook is an important component of the course as it revises the grammatical input of the Student's Book…"

Discussion

Considering that most of the Foundation year teachers are not ELT professionals, the Headway teachers' book seem to be helpful to them. The explicit guidance provided in the book might help those teachers with some pedagogic principles and ideas on how to handle their classes more professionally. However, one should bear in mind that pedagogic principles and ideas are not fully applicable in every context as each specific context has each own problems and difficulties.

The whole "instructional guidance" to the teachers prior to and during the class is basically grammar related. For example, on page 106, Unit 12, right under the heading "*Language aims"*, the following written text can be read:

Grammar – going to The ***going to*** future is made easier by the fact that students already know the present forms of the verb ***to be***, both on its own and part of the **Present Continuous**, which they met in Unit 11. These are, of course, intrinsic parts of this structure.

This data suggests that the authors failed to take into account the learners and the teachers' competences, and assume that all the (previous) grammar points in the course-book were already learned by the students.

In this regard Nunan (1998:101) points out:

> "From a grammatical perspective, many foreign language programmes and teaching materials are based on a linear model of language acquisition…. This model operates on the premise that learners acquire one target language item at a time, in a sequential, step-by–step fashion…and they should demonstrate their mastery of one thing before they move to the next. However such model is inconsistent…Metaphorically learning another language by this method is like constructing a wall… if the bricks are not in the correct order, the wall will collapse under its own ungrammaticality."

5.3 ANALYSIS OF SAMPLES OF STUDENTS' WRITING

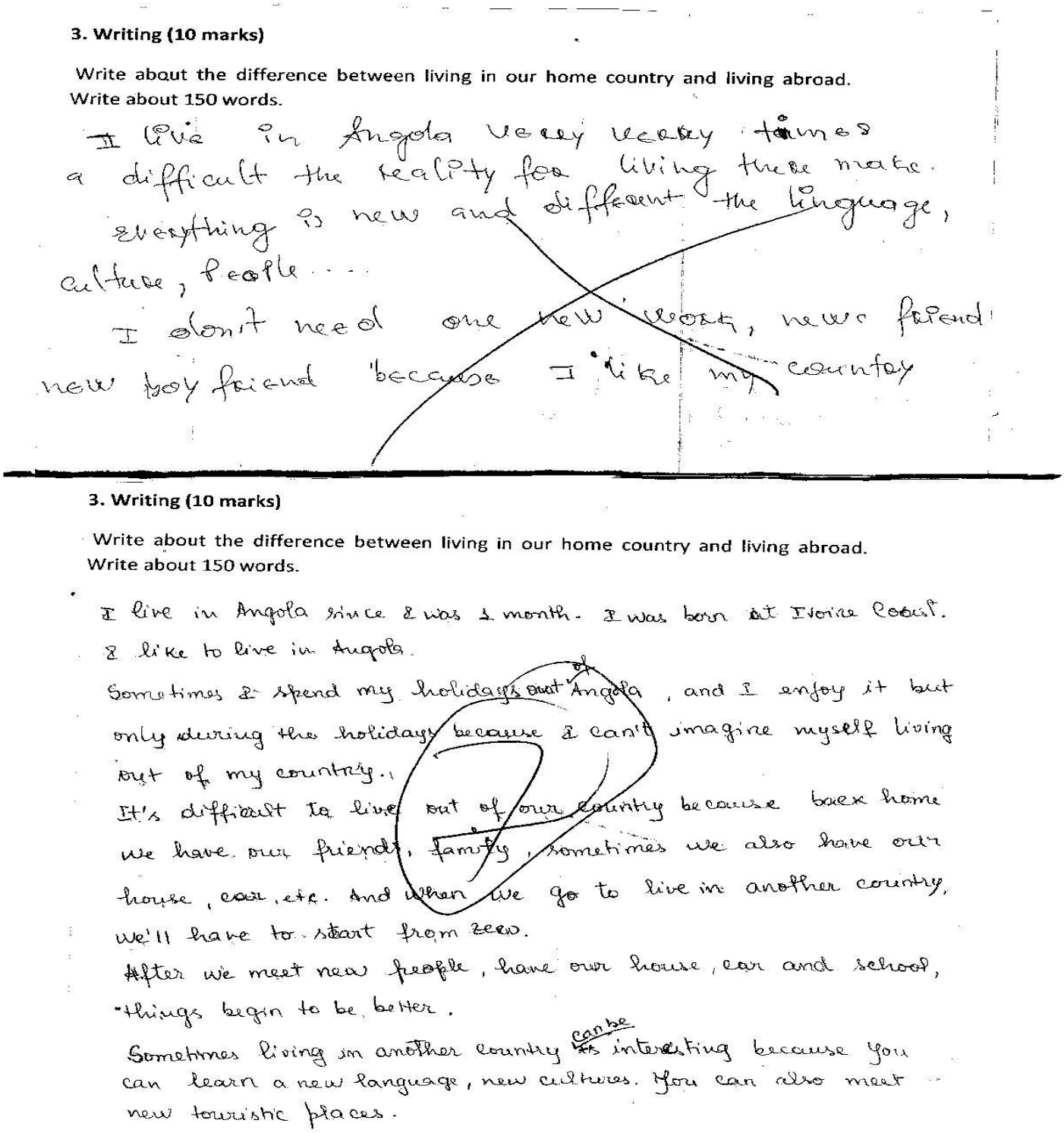
In order to help the students to write clearly and comprehensively, identification of their writing problems is of paramount importance. Therefore, in this section, I seek to identify the nature of Foundation year students' difficulty with writing in English. The data was collected from three sets of sources, namely, a corpus of *5 entrance examination papers*, *5 assignments* and *5 exam equivalent tests*.

5.3.1. The Entrance Examination Papers

In this section I examined *5 entrance examination papers* in order to identify the middle school leavers' specific problems with writing in English and determine their writing competencies as EFL learners. In addition, these writing samples gave me a deeper understanding of the information collected from the interviews.

The entrance examination paper under investigation is a three page test paper divided into three sections as follows: Section 1, *Reading Comprehension – 5 marks*; Section 2, *Grammar – 5 marks* and Section 3, *Writing – 10 marks*. One sample is attached as Appendix J, on page 134. The following extracts illustrate how two students performed in the writing section.

Figure 11: Compositions /Entrance Examination papers: writing samples



3. Writing (10 marks)

Write about the difference between living in our home country and living abroad.
Write about 150 words.

I live in Angola veeey veeery times
a difficult the reality for living there make.
Everything is new and different the language,
culture, people ....
I don't need one new work, newe friend
new boy friend because I like my country

3. Writing (10 marks)

Write about the difference between living in our home country and living abroad.
Write about 150 words.

I live in Angola since I was 1 month. I was born at Ivoire Coast.
I like to live in Angola.
Sometimes I spend my holidays out of Angola, and I enjoy it but
only during the holidays because I can't imagine myself living
out of my country.
It's difficult to live out of our country because back home
we have our friends, family, sometimes we also have our
house, car, etc. And when we go to live in another country,
we'll have to start from zero.
After we meet new people, have our house, car and school,
things begin to be better.
Sometimes living in another country can be interesting because you
can learn a new language, new cultures. You can also meet
new touristic places.

Extract 1: General comments

In Extract 1 the candidate made spelling mistakes, exhibited problems of punctuation, unnecessarily capitalised the word 'people', and seems to have difficulties in expressing and organising the ideas. Furthermore, the candidate appears unable to combine the words to

structure the sentences in a meaningful way. However, the candidate tends to have the text organised in paragraphs in spite of an apparent shortage of words. This idea appears to be expressed with the four dots after the word "*People*" and on the 39 words written instead of about 150 words required. According to the test marker the candidate scored 0 out of 10.

Extract 2: General comments

In spite of a few problems of coherence, cohesion and preposition, the candidate has created a more elaborated piece of writing. There are no spelling (Ivoire = French) mistakes, only minimal grammatical errors. The candidate is able to get the message across in an orderly way, from general to specific. Positively, the candidate tries to reason and support the ideas. The use of linking words and adverbs of frequency seems to be evident. Interestingly, the candidate has a good sense of self-correction and of the audience. According to the test marker the candidate scored 7 out of 10.

Discussion

Generally, the two extracts demonstrate that the students (especially the writer of Extract1) require considerable support to enhance their writing. By comparing the global results that the five students scored in their entrance examination papers and also by looking closely at the written work, that is, section 3 (writing), it suggests that UMA does not only receive ill-prepared students. Two groups of students with different histories of language learning and backgrounds are admitted at UMA. I decided to categorise the two different groups of students as: *low-proficiency* students constituted by the vast majority and *relatively high-proficiency*, the minority. To use Biggs' (2003:2) words:

> "… the expansion, restructuring and financing of tertiary sector that began in 1990s has meant that classes are not only larger but quite diversified in terms of students' ability, motivation and cultural background."

It is important to note that it is not my intention to compare the two groups of students entering the university, but it is to help me to have a general view of the situation and suggest better pedagogic interventions to the writing problems at large. Nonetheless, to be able to determine the students' specific problems with writing in English, I decided to count the errors made by the two groups of students in the five entrance examination papers.

According to Corder (1967) in Dodigovic (2005:179):

> "Error analysis has twofold purpose. Firstly, it is **diagnostic**, as it tells us the state of our students' inter-language, and secondly, it is **prognostic** because it can predict future language problems, thus being of high value to us educators…",

Having counted the errors, the most conspicuous errors were:

Verb tenses 10 errors (e.g. *When did you arrived*); **Articles** 7 (e.g. *It's a island*); **Prepositions** 5 (e..g *I was born at Ivoire Coast*); **Sentence structure** 5 (e.g. a *difficult reality for living there make*) **Pronoun** 4 (e.g. *I always say to everyone that doesn't know Angola*); **Plural/singular** 5 (e.g. *a place where we can see animal*); **Spelling** 13 (e.g. *ofer*) **Word choices 7** (e.g. *You can also meet new 'touristic?' places*); **L1 interference** 6 (e.g. *Provinces with falls of waters*); **Word order** 5 (e.g. *We can go also to Mussulo*); **Punctuation** 11 (e.g. *It's a beautiful country and, we have a lot to ofer.*)

The results suggest that globally the most commonly made error types are on the grammar and on the lexical levels. Interestingly, the least made errors are on the general organisation of the text. Nevertheless, it indicates that there is no production of extended writing.

This evidence of the students' written work appears to be substantially in line with the findings from the teachers and students' interview "*that the vast majority of students are ill-prepared in middle schools in terms of writing in English and come to university with very low English proficiency"*. Considering the importance of good writing in English either for personal or professional reasons, this poses a great challenge to UMA to develop strategic pedagogical mechanisms so as to meet the students' needs.

Although Cummins' (1980) BICS and CALP theory does not refer to learners learning a foreign language in their home country, where the oral and written exposure is limited to the classroom setting, his model appears to provide possible solutions to the Foundation year problems at UMA. Collier (1987:634) refers to two studies carried out by (Cummins 1981a; Snow & Haefnagle Hohle, 1978) that revealed that 'adults or older' learners who are more cognitively mature and with their L1 sufficiently developed will gain their CALP quicker.

As writing development involves more than strict adherence to grammar rules, production of short sentences, and re-writing texts repeatedly, this data suggests that teachers at UMA need to adopt effective approaches and practices to promote their students' CALP.

5.3.2. The Students' Assignments

In this section I looked at **5** take-home writing assignments done by the students during the academic year. The assignments are as follows:

Assignment 1

- *Translation* from English into Portuguese of the text ***The Emperor's New Clothes*** found on page 124 of the students' course-book.

Assignment 2

- *Translation* from English into Portuguese of a text from a magazine entitled "***Joshua's Bright Future".*** (see Appendix K, on page 138)

Assignment 3 (group work – four students)

- Production of a 16 page *grammar booklet* on the verb "to be", present simple, past simple, present continuous, adverbs of frequency, reflexive, possessive, personal pronouns, prepositions, some and any, demonstrative pronouns, modal verbs, possessive case, articles, the use of 'While' and 'During'.

Assignment 4 (group work- six students)

- Production of a 12 page *grammar booklet* on countable and uncountable nouns; some and any; much and many; comparative and superlative adjectives. (see Appendix L, on page 142)

Assignment 5

- Writing of a *composition* entitled "*How did you meet your girlfriend/boyfriend*?"

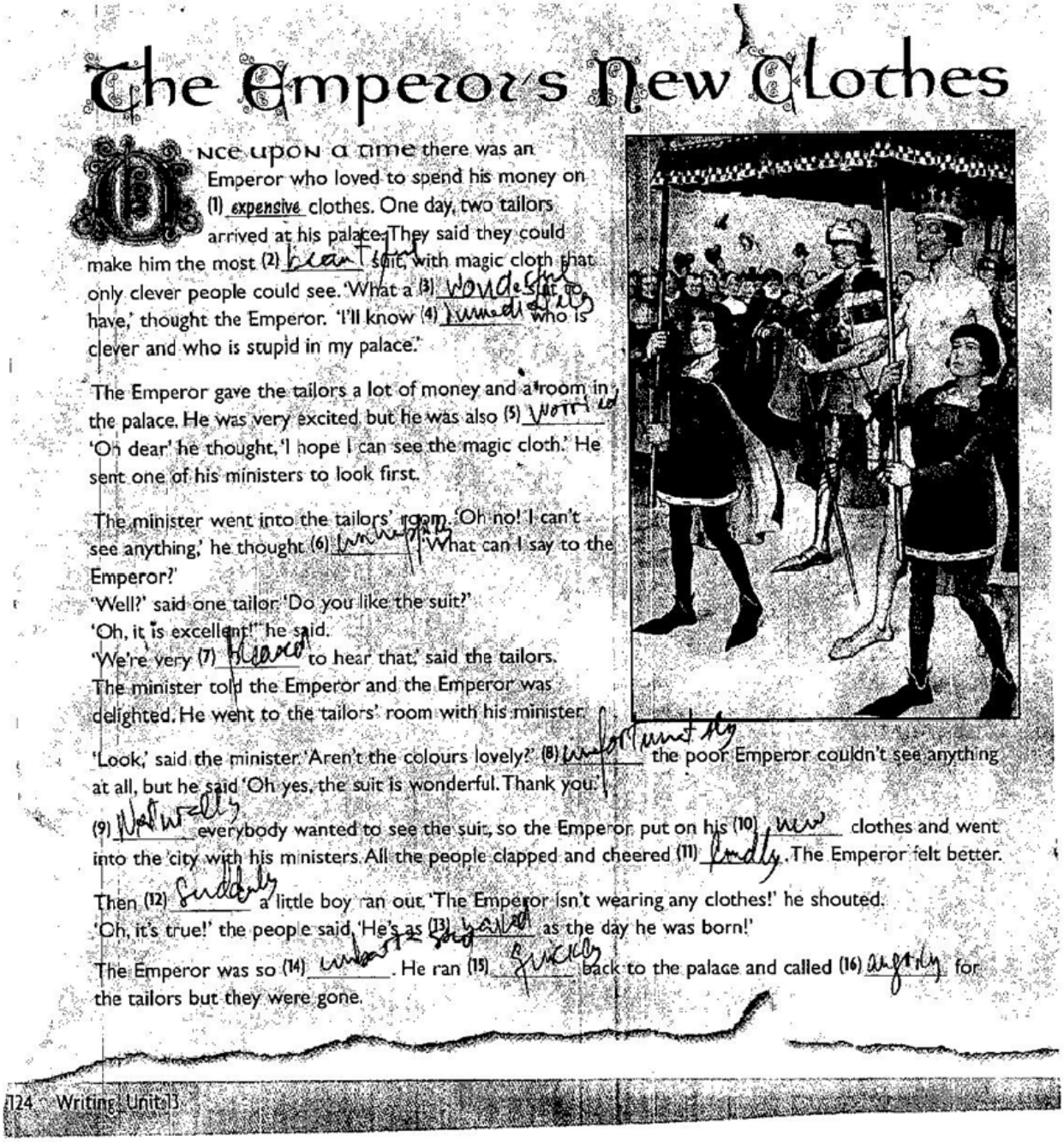
Interestingly, these assignments were never marked and given back to the students. They were made available to me by the teachers themselves for the purposes of analysis of students' progress with writing. These findings coincide with the information obtained from the teachers' interviews discussed on pages 39 & 40. As a matter of fact, the feedback on students' written assignments is an important component to assist them in improving their writing skills. It is through feedback that the students are helped to identify their strengths and weaknesses. In this respect, an informed and adequate response is provided by the process-oriented approaches, where the students are taken through a series of drafts followed by feedback until the final product emerges.

Assignments 1 and 2: Translation as a writing task

In this section I examined and discussed the two take-home writing assignments done by the students, which include translation of two texts from English into Portuguese.

The following extracts show the English text taken from the students' course-book and the Portuguese version produced by one of the students when required to do Assignment 1.

Figure 12: The Emperor's New Clothes



The Emperor's New Clothes

Once upon a time there was an Emperor who loved to spend his money on (1) *expensive* clothes. One day, two tailors arrived at his palace. They said they could make him the most (2) *[illegible]* suit, with magic cloth that only clever people could see. 'What a (3) *[illegible]* to have,' thought the Emperor. 'I'll know (4) *[illegible]* who is clever and who is stupid in my palace.'

The Emperor gave the tailors a lot of money and a room in the palace. He was very excited but he was also (5) *[illegible]*. 'Oh dear' he thought, 'I hope I can see the magic cloth.' He sent one of his ministers to look first.

The minister went into the tailors' room. 'Oh no! I can't see anything,' he thought (6) *[illegible]*. 'What can I say to the Emperor?'

'Well?' said one tailor. 'Do you like the suit?'

'Oh, it is excellent!' he said.

'We're very (7) *[illegible]* to hear that,' said the tailors.

The minister told the Emperor and the Emperor was delighted. He went to the tailors' room with his minister.

'Look,' said the minister. 'Aren't the colours lovely?' (8) *[illegible]* the poor Emperor couldn't see anything at all, but he said 'Oh yes, the suit is wonderful. Thank you.'

(9) *[illegible]* everybody wanted to see the suit, so the Emperor put on his (10) *new* clothes and went into the city with his ministers. All the people clapped and cheered (11) *[illegible]*. The Emperor felt better.

Then (12) *[illegible]* a little boy ran out. 'The Emperor isn't wearing any clothes!' he shouted.

'Oh, it's true!' the people said. 'He's as (13) *[illegible]* as the day he was born!'

The Emperor was so (14) *[illegible]*. He ran (15) *[illegible]* back to the palace and called (16) *angrily* for the tailors but they were gone.

Translation into Portuguese:

"A nova roupa do Imperador."

Era uma vez havia um Imperador que adorava gastar o seu dinheiro em roupas caras (1). Um dia, dois alfaiates aparaeceram no seu palacio. Eles disseram que eles podiam o fazer o mais (2) maravilhoso fato. Com um (3) maravilhoso fato a ter; disse o Imperador. Eu saberei (4) imidiatamente(sic) quem é inteligente e quem é estupido (sic) no meu palácio.

O Imperador deu aos alfaites muito dinheiro e um quarto no seu palácio. Ele estava muito emocionado mas ele também. estava (5) preocupado. "Oh Deus" ele disse, "Eu espero que possa ver a roupa magica (sic)". Ele mandou um dos seus ministros para ver primeiro.

O Ministro foi até ao quarto dos alfaites. "Oh não! Eu não consigo ver nada", disse (6) descontente. O que vou dizer ao imperador?

Bem !!! Disse um dos alfaiates. Tu gostas de fato? " Oh é excelente" disse ele " Nós estamos muito (7) gratos por ouvir isto" disseram os alfaiates. O ministro disse ao imperador e o Imperador estava curioso. Ele foi aos quartos dos alfaiates com o Ministro.

"Olha" disse o ministro. Não são cores amaveis(sic)? (8) desmotivado o pobre Imperador não conseguia ver nada mas disse " Oh sim o fato é maravilhoso. Obrigado.

O tempo passou (9) todo o mundo queria ver o fato, então no seu (10) ___?___roupas, e saio pela cidade com os seus ministro. Todos aplaudiram com muito carinho (11) confiante o Imperado sentiu-se melhor.

The(sic) (12) mais tarde um pequeno rapaz correu para o fora o imperador não veste nenhuma roupa! Ele gritou "Oh, isto é verdade!! As pessoas diziam.

*Ele estava (13) Nú como no dia em que nasceu! O Imperador estava t*ão *(14) embaraçado. Ele correu (15) rápido por traz do palácio e chamou (16) furiosamente os alfaiates mas eles já tinha ido.*

The data from the interviews, from the students and the teachers' book along with these two assignments reveal that translation-related tasks are part of the programme at UMA. This suggests that this 'teaching technique' is used as a means of checking understanding or urging on the students to write. The main focus of this method seems be vocabulary and the message that is learned through the mother tongue.

Morgan (1917:235-6), one of the exponents of the translation theories in language classroom, predicted the total abandonment of translation practices in classrooms. This was when the Direct Method was replacing the Grammar-Translation method, and he asserted:

> There is, however, an element of danger in so rapid an advance. Our Direct-Method enthusiasts must naturally feel that they have received a popular mandate to pursue their reform to the fullest consumption; …it appears that the very idea of the Direct-Method is hostile to the survival of translation, and there can be no doubt that we shall hear voices calling not merely, as now, for "reduction of translation to a minimum" but for the total abandonment of every form of translation in the class-room"

The following statements were made by Morgan to support his ideas of translation exercises in classroom:

- …translation is our supreme disciplinary exercise. It is both exact and exacting, and one might call it the mathematics of language study.
- …translation is our supreme cultural or aesthetic exercise. If by our education we aim at something more than the storing of the mind with the useful knowledge; if we also desire to develop the highest mental powers and capabilities of our students; then surely translation may claim a honourable place in our curriculum [Translation] requires judgment, taste, and skill, rapidity of thought and the most concentration of the attention.
- Translation is almost the only exercise open to an elementary class.

- Translation is the principal contribution we can make to students' knowledge and command in English.
- Translation is the quickest, and frequently the only way of determining the accuracy of a student's preparation.

As can be read above, translation in language classrooms has a long tradition as a language teaching method. Teachers ought to understand that 'Translation Studies' and 'English as a Foreign Language Teaching' are two separate fields of studies. 'Translations studies' is a complex field, which revolves around many issues such as cultural knowledge, art, expertise, experience, etc. It can be a difficult language teaching technique especially when teaching EFL learners who have insufficient grounding in English, as is the case of UMA Foundation year students.

There is no guarantee that translation exercises will lead UMA students to improving their writing abilities. By contrast, it may impact negatively on the English language, and the reasons are manifold:

- It may exacerbate the students' problems of Portuguese interference.
- Since the students will have to deal with Portuguese or any other mother tongue as a reference, it reduces the amount of time allotted to English language. In other words, exposure to the target language reduces drastically.
- As the students have to have cultural, linguistic knowledge, art, etc. of the target language (e.g. idioms, function) it can be a potential source of errors.
- Translation does not encourage original writing.

Referring again to Assignment 1, the Portuguese text produced by a student (see pages 82 & 83) contains unrelated stretches of language, thus wrong choices of words and other serious mistakes that seem to be related to English interference. Briefly, although the writer of the Portuguese version appears to be fluent and was able to get the gist of the passage correct, some parts of the text are distorted. This leads to believe that translation exercises in the context under investigation have a negative impact even on the Portuguese language. The followi ng stretches of language show some inadequacies on the Portuguese version:

- The title of the text in English : ***The Emperor's New Clothes***

  Translation in Portuguese: ***A nova roupa do Imperador*** instead of *A**s** Novas Roupa**s** do Imperador*"

"Nova" or "nova**s**" means "new" in English. Adjectives in English do not have any inflectional endings, such as for the plural form. In Portuguese most adjectives change to plural if the nouns are plural. In the sentence ***The Emperor's New Clothes*** the noun "clothes" (roupas in Portuguese) is written in plural. Here, I infer that the student was confused whether to make the adjective or the noun plural since **new** is written in singular. Her final resort was making all the words singular.

- English Version: They said they could make him the most beautiful suit, with magic cloth that only clever people could see. 'What a wonderful suit to have', thought the Emperor. 'I'll know immediately who is clever and who is stupid in my palace'.

  Portuguese version: ***Eles*** disseram que ***eles*** podiam o fazer o mais maravilhoso fato. Com um maravilhoso fato a ter; disse o Imperador. Eu saberei imidiatamente quem é inteligente e quem é estupido no meu palácio.

1. The highlighted and italicized third person singular (***Eles*** the Portuguese for ***they***) indicate an unnecessary and irrational anaphora.

2. The student wrote "im**i**diatamente" instead of "im**e**diatamente". It suggests that the English sound /ɪ 'mi: …/ in the word "immediately" led her to spell the word incorrectly.

Otherwise, some sentences are missing and the text is wrongly punctuated, therefore, distorting the meaning of the original text.

An improved Portuguese version could be as follows: Eles disseram que o podiam fazer o mais belo fato com tecido mágico, mas só apenas as pessoas inteligentes poderiam vê-lo. 'Que maravilhoso fato a ter'- pensou o Imperador. 'Eu saberei imediatamente quem é inteligente e quem é estúpido no meu palácio.

Generally, the findings described above contrast with Morgan's views, re-quoted below:

> "…translation is our supreme disciplinary exercise. It is both exact and exacting, and one might call it the mathematics of language study…Translation is the principal contribution we can make to students' knowledge and command in English"

These findings reveal that overuse of translation-related tasks can be a great source of language problems either in the L1 or in the target language. The following remarks made by the respondents suggest that translation is a matter of routine in UMA EFL classes.

Q: **How do you go about teaching writing? What steps do you usually follow to teach writing to your students?**

T6M: Since the students still have, still think in Portuguese. I give them some ideas of ummmmm what they should do and then ask them to translate….and in this way, we give the right steps. Up to now this is the only strategy we've [I've] been using.

Q: **What do your students write? List the writing activities**.

T5M**:** During the sessions they write grammatical aspects. ... They do some translation from English into Portuguese and from Portuguese into English…

Q: **When do you write English? What do you write? Can you indicate the writing activities you are required to perform during classes?**

St4F: …we rewrite texts, we've been doing some translation of texts, yes, and we copy things that the teacher writes on the board…

According to McGuire-Bassnett (1991:2):

> What is generally understood as translation involves the rendering of a source language (SL) 'text 2' into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar (2) the structure of SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted…

Assignments 3 and 4: Production of Grammar Booklets

Having analysed the translation assignments, in this section I examined two more take- home writing assignments. These consist of two grammar booklets of 16 and 12 pages respectively. As referred to earlier, Assignment 3 was produced by a group of four students and covered the following grammar items: *verb "to be", present simple, past simple, present continuous, adverbs of frequency, reflexive, possessive* and *personal pronouns, prepositions, some* and *any, demonstrative pronouns, modal verbs, possessive case, articles, the use of 'While' and 'During'*. Assignment 4 was produced by a group of six students and the main focus was on: *countable and uncountable nouns; some* and *any; much* and *many; comparative* and *superlative adjectives.*

The excerpt below represents page 6 of the Grammar booklet (Assignment 4). The complete Grammar booklet can be seen in Appendix L, page 142.

DEVELOPMENT

COUNT AND UNCOUT (sic)

A special case of uncount nouns in a count sense has to do with classification. Sometimes a usually uncount noun can be understood as one item separate and distintform(sic) *other items of the same category.*

> *The nouns that function in this way often denote foods and beverages: food(s), wine(s), bread(s), coffee(s), fruit(s), and so on. Examples:*

- *There are several French wines to choose from. (=kinds of wine)*
- *I prefer Sumatran coffees to Colombian. (=kinds of coffee)*

- *We use a variety of different batters in our bakery. (= kinds of batter)*

A recent entry into this class is homework, which at last among some students has the count plural homework's in addition to its uncount use. (For example, "You're missing three of the homework's from the first part of the course.") Because this usage is not firmly established and is likely to be considered non-standard, you should check with your instructor before using it in writing.

These exceptions require that the rule for pluralizing be revised: count nouns and nouns used in a count sense pluralize; uncount nouns and nouns used in a uncount sense do not.

The two possibilities in each half of the rule require different choices. If you know that a particular noun must be either count or uncount and cannot be both; you need to decide only if it is possible to pluralize the noun. On the other hand, if you know that a particular noun may be used in either a count or uncount sense, then you need to decide whether it is appropriate to pluralize.

As could be seen above, production of the two laborious grammar booklets reveals that students are routinely required to build on detailed grammar rules to improve their writing. This strategy accords with what could be observed in the Students' Course-book, Students' Workbook and in the Teachers' Book, where heavy emphasis on grammar seems to emerge and re-emerge regularly.

By producing these grammar booklets students are involved in an extensive and diligent study of rules, whereby grammatical constructions and manipulation of de-contextualized sentences are most evident.

The grammar explanations in the excerpt are confusing and difficult to follow. This reveals that attempts to educate the students through detailed grammar rules are not fulfilled. Students tried to summarise the rules found in various grammar books, resulting in incomprehensible passages due to their writing weaknesses, or perhaps, due to some complexity of grammar rules expounded in some grammar books.

Discussion

These assignments (production of grammar booklets) appear to be challenging as the students have to deal with grammar rules explicitly. However, a positive aspect of these assignments is that they were set as a group work outside the classroom setting. This suggests that there may have been some benefits with these much more challenging assignments.

One of the ways to help students to learn better and to meet the challenges is to require them to work as a team, through interaction and collaboration. Nevertheless, the data suggests that these assignments are not very efficient. Students waste valuable time "summarizing" grammar rules into their 'grammar booklet' without any creativity, giving the impression that

numerous passages and examples sentences have been plagiarized. For example, on page 7 of the Grammar booklet (see Appendix L, on page 142) the following sentence can be read:

Plays/Shakespeare/write. *How many plays did Shakespeare write?*

This sentence is commonly found in imported grammar books from BANA[7] countries.

Weaver's (1996:10) studies with a group of 248 New Zealand students in the early twentieth century are relevant to understand the picture at UMA. She asserts that:

> These strong indictments from the late 1950s and early 1960s clearly echo the NCTE's[8] (1936) summary statement in its resolution against the teaching of grammar: every scientific attempt to prove that knowledge of grammar is useful has failed.

Weaver's assertion accords with my respondents' views, that in spite of receiving EFL instructions with emphasis on grammar at schools and at UMA 'students still cannot use grammar effectively in writing. Recurrent errors such as verb tense, verb form, word order, subject/verb agreement, plural/singular, article, auxiliary verbs, preposition, etc., never seem to disappear.' Students still have problems in applying the grammar rules that they diligently studied

Weaver p. 23 summarises her findings with the following arguments:

> In short, these three studies as well as numerous others during the twentieth century indicate that there is little pragmatic justification for systematically teaching a descriptive and explanatory grammar of the language, whether that grammar be traditional, structural, transformational, or any other kind.

Today, the literature provides a range of teaching approaches that might promote the basic language skills, including writing. Furthermore, to make things more flexible, teachers have various options to combine one approach with another. But, if teachers hold on to outdated theories and beliefs, the whole teaching and learning process will not succeed. Hillocks and Smith (1991:600) in Wyse (2001:416) interrogate those who are reluctant to change

> Why does grammar retain such glamour when research over the past 90 years reveals not only that students do not learn it and are hostile toward it, but the study of grammar has no impact on writing?....Until we have such knowledge, the grammar section of a textbook should be treated as a reference tool that might provide insight into the convention of the mechanics and usage. It should not be treated as a course of study to improve the quality of writing.

[7] Britain, Australasia and North America
[8] National Council of Teachers of English (USA)

So, considering the importance of good writing in English, teachers at UMA should:

- Be aware of the impact of explicit grammar teaching on writing;
- Expand their views on current approaches to teaching writing and consequently change their practices and beliefs.

Macswan & Rolstad in Paulston & Tucker (2003:334) refer to Cummins' conception of language proficiency and assert:

> We are led inescapably to the conclusion that societies which do not use writing systems have relatively low 'language proficiency', restricted only to BICS, in contrast to the 'highly' proficiency language abilities represented in the academic in literate societies.

Composition: Assignment 5

In this section I aimed to analyse the last assignment, a single piece of writing produced by the students. This will be followed by a brief discussion with reference to the literature to help answering one of the research questions: **2 - What kinds of text-types (genres) are students expected to master?** Results of this analysis will also help to cast some light on what approach(es) to writing would impact positively on students' writing. At this point, it would be important to return to one of the aims of my research study: **7 - To investigate what approach(es) to writing would impact positively in the current practices.**

The topic of the composition assigned to the students is "*How did you meet your girlfriend/boyfriend?*". This topic was originated in unit 8 of the students' course-book, as can be seen on page 63:

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

How did you two meet?

Look at these questions. Tell a partner about you and your family.

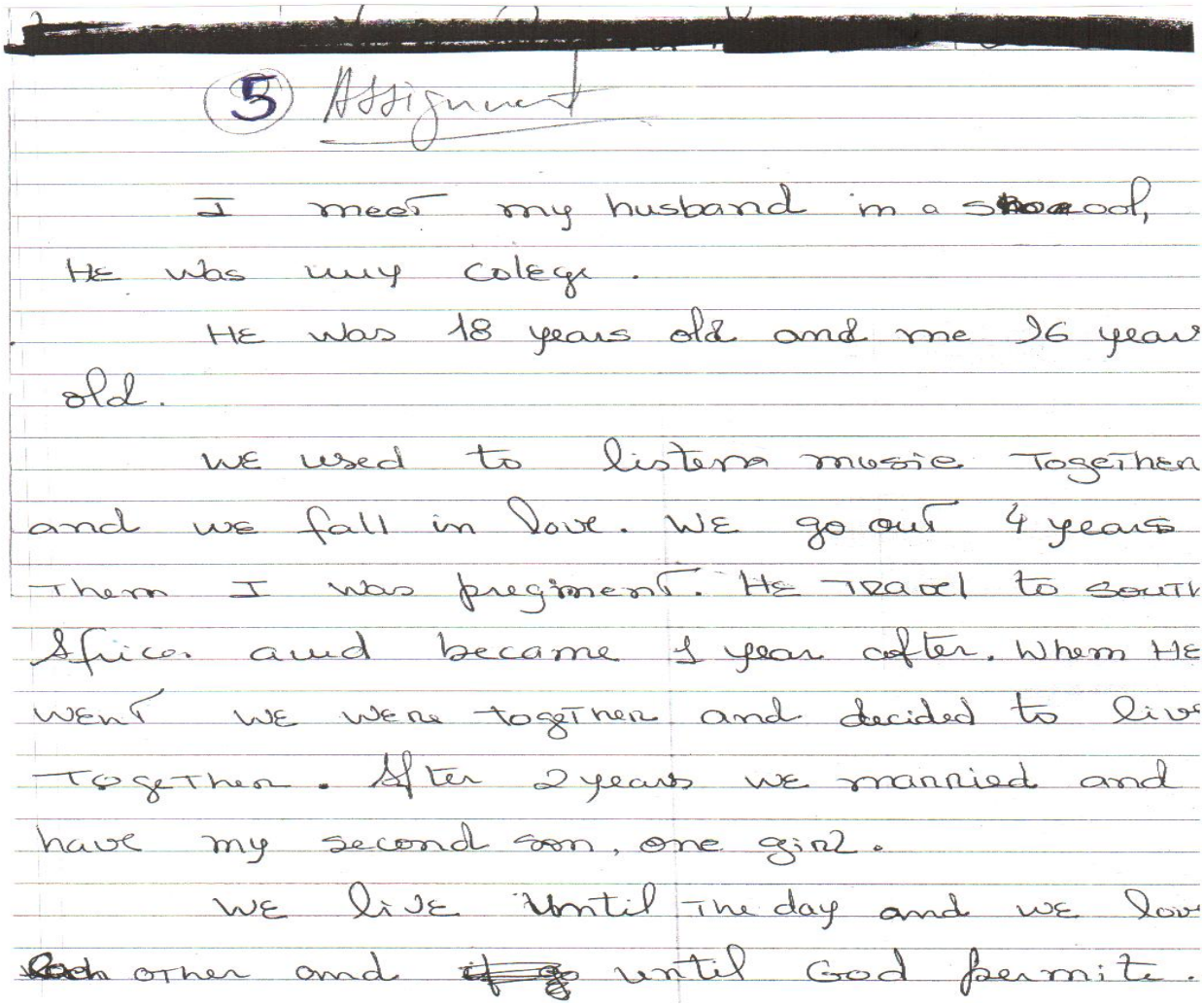
1. Are you married or do you have a girlfriend/boyfriend? How did you meet?

2. When did your parents or grandparents meet? Where? How?

My very first love.

In response to this assigned writing task, the following is what one of the students produced:

Figure 13: Assignment 5 – Composition/writing Sample



5 Assignment

I meet my husband in a school, He was my colege.

He was 18 years old and me 16 years old.

We used to listen music Together and we fall in love. We go out 4 years Them I was pregnent. He Travel to South Africa and became 1 year after. When He went we were together and decided to live Together. After 2 years we married and have my second son, one girl.

We live until the day and we love other and until God permite.

Of the five assignments collected from the teachers (2 translation tasks, 2 grammar booklets and **1 composition**) only one assignment required "original" writing. This demonstrates that students' opportunities to practice and develop their writing are very scarce. In other words, the time allotted to the teaching and practice of writing is scant. This parallels with what all the teachers reported during the interviews – "*that teachers do not allot any specific time to the teaching of writing; it happens when the task occurs in the course-book*."

The composition shown above reveals that students' common errors still recur throughout their writing. The basic errors follow under the following categories:

1. **Verb tense** (e.g. "meet" instead of "met");
2. **Verb form** (e.g. "permite" instead of "permits");
3. **L1 interference** (e.g. "permite", which is the Portuguese orthography instead of permit);
4. **Spelling** (e.g. "colege" for "colleague");
5. **Preposition** (e.g. "listen music" instead of "listen to music");

6. **Word choice** (e.g. "son" instead of "child");

7. **Limited vocabulary** – very brief text; cohesion, coherence, etc.

From this student's writing, one can infer that she belongs to the relatively high-proficiency group of students enrolled at UMA, because she tried to make a specific point and there is a sense of communication in spite of her inaccuracies. However, this information indicates that no substantial progress has been made with students' writing throughout the course. The few writing tasks that students are required to perform show low proficiency levels. Students seem to operate primarily with simple narrative text features that focus on their personal experiences.

However, the above sample of the student's writing suggests that Foundation year students are in a need of help to improve their writing and move from BICS to CALP. Otherwise, they will never reach the writing outcomes expected at university level.

Johns in Kral (1990:24) quotes Zebroski (1986:57): "If we write and teach writing, we have a theory of writing by definition" Johns commented that 'as teachers, we will benefit from becoming aware of the theories and assumptions related to teaching writing.' This leads to the conclusion that awareness of teaching methodologies and principles relevant to a given situation is the key toward successful learning.

Discussion

According to Derewianka (1990) narrative types of texts are identified by the following language features:

> (1) Specific, often individual participants with defined identities. (2) Mainly action verbs [*material processes*], but also many verbs which refer to what human participants said, or felt, or thought [*verbal and mental processes*]. (3) Normally past tense. (4) Many linking words to do with time. (5) Descriptive language. (6) Can be written in the first person (*I, we*) or third person (*he, she, they*).

The composition illustrated on the previous page shows the language features identified by Derewianka. Under these circumstances, UMA students have to engage with more challenging and cognitively demanding text types. Derewianka also identified arguments type with the following text features:

> **Purpose**: To take a position. **Type**: belongs to a genre called *exposition*, concerned with analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the world around us. The emphasis is on persuading someone to your point of view, arguing, convincing, summing up a position. **Language feature:** Generalised participants – sometimes human but often abstract (issues, ideas, opinions, etc.) – unless the issue centres on a particular event or incident.

Narrative text types with personal connotation might be useful for students in the initial phase of writing development, because it can help them to move towards producing a more demanding type of writing. However, at university, as is the case of Foundation year students, personal narratives appear to reduce the level of thinking skills and opportunities for students to raise their voices.

The data suggests that the Foundation year teachers would benefit from greater awareness about the new theories and principles to help students produce pieces of writing with a more abstract and analytical perspective. In this way, implementation of the Process-Genre approach to writing seems to be feasible to address the concerns at UMA.

5.3.3. Exam Equivalent Tests

In this section I analysed the last sample of students' writing, which is a set of 5 exam equivalent tests. Results from this analysis helped to determine Foundation year students' writing exit-level competencies after the whole academic year. In addition, the results indicated whether or not the Foundation year English course is constructively aligned. To help guide the discussion it would be pertinent to return to the two research questions that this project seeks to answer:

> **3 – In what way, if at all, is the Foundation year preparing the students for the two subsequent years (i.e. 1st and 2nd years) at UMA?**
>
> **4 – To what extent are teaching/learning, assessment and outcomes synchronised, if at all**?

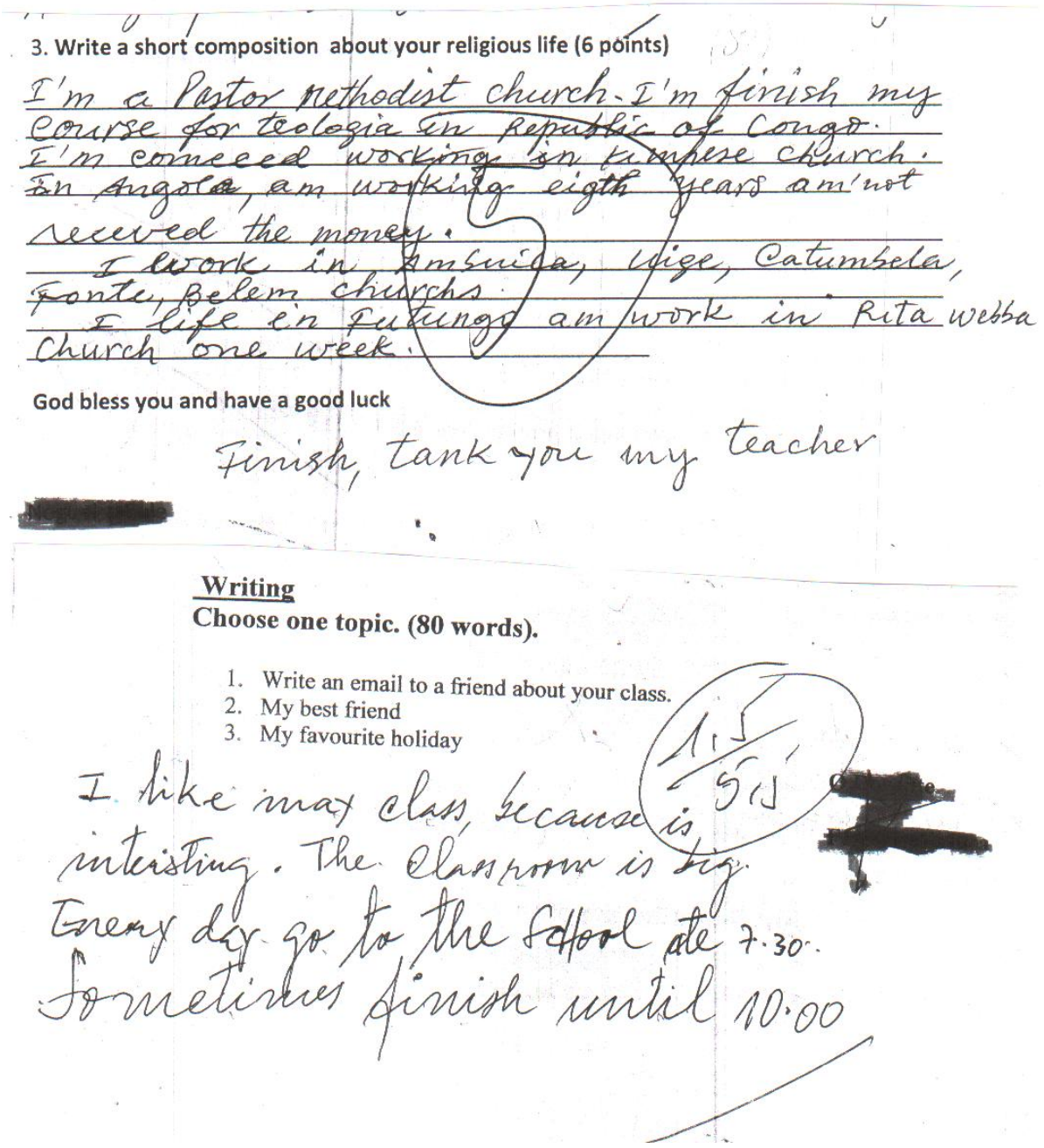
The exam equivalent tests are designed in two different versions: **Test A** and **Test B**. (see Appendices M and N, on pages 155 and 157) Overall the tests contain three sections: reading, grammar and writing. In these exam equivalent tests students are required to:

- Decide whether some statements are true or false in accordance with the texts provided;
- Produce questions that correspond to some provided isolated answers;
- Put some sentences into negative or interrogative forms;
- Choose the grammatically correct and incorrect sentences within a pair of short sentences (multiple choice)

- Write a 80 word composition: *An email to a friend*; *My best friend* or *My favourite holiday* in (**Test A**) and about *Students' religious life* in (**Test B**)

The following extracts illustrate two compositions produced by the students.

Figure 14: Compositions/ Exam Equivalent Tests : writing samples



3. Write a short composition about your religious life (6 points)

I'm a Pastor methodist church. I'm finish my course for teologia in Republic of Congo. I'm comeeed working in kimpese church. In Angola, am working eigth years am'not receved the money.
I work in Ambuila, Uige, Catumbela, Fonte, Belem churchs.
I life in Futungo am work in Rita webba Church one week.

God bless you and have a good luck

Finish, tank you my teacher

[redacted]

Writing

Choose one topic. (80 words).

1. Write an email to a friend about your class.
2. My best friend
3. My favourite holiday

1,5 / 5,5

[redacted]

I like max class, because is interisting. The Classroom is big. Every day go to the School ate 7.30. Sometimes finish until 10.00

The assessment tasks bulleted above (see Appendix M & N) appear to be superficial and favour low level cognitive tasks. For example, in the first task (true/false statements), although students have to read and comprehend the texts they do not necessarily have to reflect deeply. It is possible for students to answer this section correctly without reading the text. The next two tasks required production of short sentences out of context and checking

the correct use of pre-determined grammar structures. The multiple choice tasks are also undemanding to the students, easier and quicker for teachers to mark. This is beneficial when dealing with large classes as at UMA. In this regard, Biggs (1996:357) says:

> Short answer examinations, allowing only brief sentences or phrases are even less likely to elicit high level of engagement than the essay. An assumed advantage of the short answer, and multiple choice test, is that coverage can be extended over more of the unit content…

However, Gardner (1993:24) quoted by Biggs (1996) contradicts the above 'assumed advantage' and maintained:

> The greatest enemy of understanding is **coverage** – I can't repeat that often enough…Obviously, if people took this aphorism seriously, there would be a total revolution in education, and 95 per cent of what educators do everyday would have to be changed.

Kerry (2002:44) reports to have carried out an extensive research to find out the nature of tasks set by the teachers. He classifies these tasks in distinct categories: **Low order tasks** and **higher order tasks**. According to Kerry, these labels have to do with the amount of thinking, or cognitive demands, required by the tasks. Following this line of argument and looking closely at the types of tasks offered on these exam equivalents, it seems that **low order tasks** are the norm at UMA. This corroborates most of my interviewees' remarks:

Q: **What expectations do you have regarding what outcomes the students will achieve at the end of this academic year?**

T4M: Ok umm [0.2] students are evaluated within a framework that they are not supposed to write a lot. An English test is essentially a set of questions, where the student has to answer some isolated questions, do some gap filling exercises and produce some sentences. In the writing section, however, they don't have to write a long composition. Therefore, writing ability is not a pre-requisite for a student to pass….some other aspects of language are also tested in this evaluation process.

As can be seen from the comments above and from the exam equivalents, the tasks are simply addressed to promote surface results. Findings strongly reveal that Foundation year students are required to deal with **Low order tasks** not only during their tests and also during their classes. The following extracts support this interpretation:

Q: **When do you write English? What do you write? Can you indicate the writing activities you are required to perform during classes?**

St3M: mainly when the teacher writes something on the board to be copied into notebooks… we write questions, answers and things like that.

Q: **What do you do to compensate for any inadequacies? Do you use any specific strategies to improve your students' writing abilities?**

T6M: Well, we've been using the New Headway [elementary course-book] and some supplementary materials, namely, grammar books. We teach them the English alphabet, rewriting words and how to structure some isolated sentences.

According to Biggs (1996:356),

> In deciding the assessment tasks, it is necessary to judge the extent to which they embody the target performances of understanding, and how well they lend themselves to evaluating individual student performances. Again, it would be useful to reverse to the question and ask what level of understanding typical assessment tasks are likely to call out.

Likewise, Kerry (2002:44) comments that:

> If learning is fundamentally about quality of thinking and understanding which students engage in, then the tasks teachers set should reflect that cognitive demand.

Students' inability to deal with the required English language level at UMA and teachers' own competences to set tasks that help activate learning and understanding should not influence the intended learning outcomes.

Finally, in an attempt to find out to what extent the students' writing has improved by the end of the Foundation year course at UMA, the researcher counted the errors made in the five cognitively undemanding exam papers. The following number of errors was found:

Verb tense = **7** (e.g. *I'm finish my course*); Verb form = **7** (e.g. *she come from Japan*); auxiliary verb = **13** (e.g. *Joseph is not pretend*); Possessive case = **4** (e.g. *Peter's the son of my sister*); Article = **6** (e.g. *I'm a Pastor Methodist church*); Plural = **1** (e.g. *churchs*); Preposition = **5** (e.g. *I'm a Pastor Methodist church*); Pronoun = **2** (e.g. *What's he's address?*); Spelling = **17** (e.g. *I like may class.*); Word choice = **5** (e.g. *mi Religious is Metodist Unid*); L1 interference = **7** (e.g. *I have twenty nine years old*); Word order = **4 (**e.g. *What he do likes?*) ; Sentence structure = **14** (e.g. *Now Joseph was not sees his brother coming.*); Punctuation = **5** (e.g. *My best friend for mi. My mather. Because I lake very campany,*)

Discussion and General Comments

The data from the exam equivalents suggests that very little progress by the students has been made throughout the academic year. Problems shown during the entrance examination tests seem to recur in the final exam. Students still appear to be unable to express themselves clearly in English with many grammar mistakes in spite of high volume of grammar input. This demonstrates their inability to apply the grammar rules while writing. For instance, students hardly use the **auxiliary verb** 'do' and repeatedly fail to apply the inflectional

endings (s or es) to the verbs when referring to the present simple tense, especially the third person singular.

The next problematic aspect is the **verb tense** and **form**. Most students demonstrate a lack of understanding of how to adhere to verb tenses. Usually they tend to stick to the present tense whilst dealing with other tenses. The data also shows that the students struggle to outline their ideas on the paper as they are not used to writing in English. Another commonly made grammar error is the use of **articles** and **prepositions**. Evidence shows that students find it extremely confusing whether to use 'a', 'an', 'the'; 'in' or 'at'.

The lack of lexical knowledge and very limited vocabulary still remain stumbling blocks regarding writing in English. Spelling and Portuguese interference errors are also in the spotlight. Students resort to using Portuguese to compensate for their limitation in English as both languages have the same etymology. e.g., a student wrote the Portuguese word *teologia* instead of *theology* in English.

Problems of L1 interference are mostly evident when students try to produce much longer sentences, resulting in jumbled up sentences and impaired punctuation. This information suggests that all these problems prevail because students lack writing and composing practices. They were not introduced to the Process-oriented writing instruction, where they could have improved their writing through multiple drafts and through intervention of their peers and teachers before editing the final version. In this regard, Ericsson, et al. (1993) in Kellogg (2008:17) argued that "A central factor in the development of expert performance across a wide range of both physical and cognitive task domains is the use of deliberate practice." Frequent practice, sufficient feedback, higher order tasks set to the students, effective teaching methods and assessment seem to be the key to improved performance and consequently achieve the desired end results at UMA. However, a fairly compelling answer to UMA situation is provided by Biggs' (1999) theory of Constructive Alignment.

According to Biggs (1999:11) as quoted by Rust (2002:148),

> The fundamental principle of constructive alignment is that a good teaching system aligns teaching method and assessment to the learning activities stated in the objectives so that all aspects of the system are in accord in supporting appropriate students learning.

Rust further pointed out that Biggs' theory of Constructive Alignment requires a shift in thinking about the process of course design, to the following three stage model:

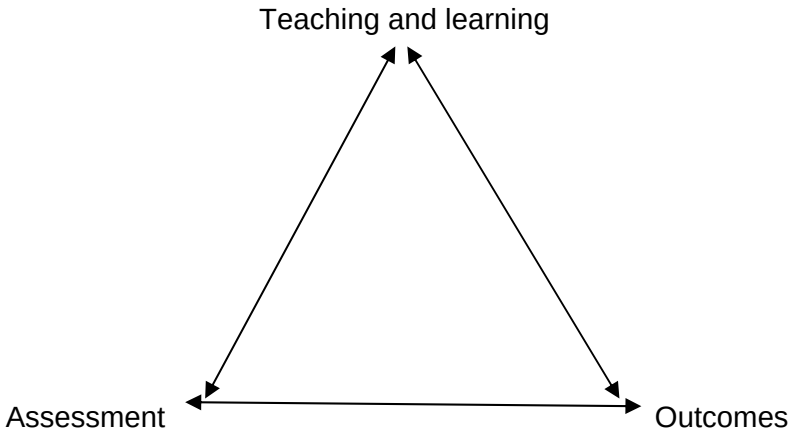
(1) Identify clear learning outcomes.

(2) Design appropriate assessment tasks that will directly assess whether each of the learning outcomes has been met.

(3) Design appropriate learning opportunities for the students to get them to a point where they can successfully undertake the assessment tasks.

Through the use of Constructive Alignment, teaching becomes a process that transforms knowledge. Therefore, the teachers' role is to stimulate, facilitate and activate competence using a learner-centred approach. This paradigm is in opposition to outdated philosophy of teaching, where knowledge was just poured in to the students. Instead, students are allowed to construct knowledge which is supported by their teachers. The following figure, illustrated by Dillon et al. (2007:283) shows how the three components in the teaching process should be synchronized to promote learning:

Figure 15: Quality Enhancement: The Learning and Teaching Triad



Looking at the above triad and linking it to the current UMA situation (i.e. the teaching and learning activities, the modes of assessment and the "outcomes") I would argue that the situation at UMA needs re-thinking. As mentioned before, there is no English language syllabus available at UMA. The Headway course-book series discussed earlier is imported material and is used as the syllabus that is used to dictate the rules, as T4M and T2M commented:

Q: **Knowing that English is taught twice a week – overall 3 hours, and you have four skills to deal with, how much time do you allocate to the teaching of writing? Why?**

T4M Umhmmm in short the program is the course-book. The Headway is the one that sets the rules most of the times. Well, the course-book incorporates the four abilities, and of course, when the writing tasks appear the teacher will pay attention to this ability. But in general terms the four abilities are more or less evenly distributed throughout the course-book…as I told you before, there is no special attention just to writing…

Q: **Do you think that the syllabuses you are currently using satisfy you students' writing needs and expectations?**

T2M: …but this is the programme that was provided to us!! ...If teachers had the opportunity to have a meeting to discuss the students' needs in each academic year, we could've reached a common understanding and design a specific programme for Foundation year students at this university…

Cope and Kalantzis' (1993:4) assertion serves as a guideline for UMA:

> The most effective learning, it was assumed, would take place when it was relevant to the individual rather than institutionally imposed…Textbooks which, in their nature, seemed to dictate content, were definitely out.

These reflections indicate that UMA has to reconsider the present course-book.

Data Analysis Final Remarks

The present chapter has presented and discussed the data needed for this project. Findings reveal that a range of complex issues pertaining to writing at UMA are still to be tackled with care. Among these issues are:

1. The gap between teachers' beliefs and their practices, with only one teacher being somewhat aware of the problems and the rest are still remaining oblivious to the impact of using outmoded teaching methodologies.

2. The Headway series is also responsible for transferring features of grammar-translation methods into UMA EFL classrooms. It remains inadequate because the tasks address low cognitive proficiency level only.

3. Foundation year students' initial problems with writing are still recurring by the end of the course as they are not immersed in the actual writing practice through effective teaching methodologies.

4. The modes of assessment, the teaching, learning activities and the expected outcomes appear to be out of synchrony.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION: In this chapter I will present conclusions and provide recommendations based upon the findings of my research.

The general aim of this study was to carry out an in-depth analysis regarding the writing practices in the Foundation year at UMA. The study was carried out because there has been a concern that Foundation year students are not enabled to write adequately in English despite the fact of being taught English for about 6 years. In order to help the students to improve their writing and the teachers to adopt new instructional practices, the following questions guided the research:

1. How is writing taught and learnt in the Foundation year at UMA?
2. What kinds of text-types (genres) are students expected to master?
3. In what way, if at all, is the Foundation year preparing the students for the two subsequent years (i.e. 1st & 2nd years) at UMA?
4. To what extent are teaching/learning, assessment and outcomes synchronised if at all?

The research was carried out by means of individual interviews (with 6 teachers and 9 randomly selected students), course documents and samples of students' writing.

6.2. CONCLUSIONS

In this section I will summarize the major findings from the interviews, from the course documents and from the samples of students' writing.

Summary of the Major Findings

6.2.1. Students' English Writing Proficiency

Responses from the teachers and students' interviews, and results from entrance examination papers gave a clear indication that most students' writing is inadequate, in the light of the demands of the Angolan economy. These data accord with the assertion from (Bereiter & Scardamalia in Freedman et al. 1983:32):

> Most students - it is just a guess, but we would say over 90 per cent - are on the low road to writing competence.

Results of this study strongly suggest that students arrive at UMA exhibiting low levels of writing. The students' difficulties include problems regarding vocabulary, verb tenses, verb

forms, spelling, agreement between subject and verbs, punctuation, word order, word choices, sentence and paragraph structure, Portuguese interference.

The data indicated that UMA admits two groups of students with different histories of language learning and backgrounds: i.e. *low-proficiency* students constituted by the vast majority and *relatively high-proficiency* students, the minority. This was confirmed in the interviews and in the entrance exam, where the latter performed far better than their counterparts. It is therefore concluded that students' school experiences of writing do not prepare them adequately for writing at university level.

6.2.2. Teachers' in-Service Training

As demonstrated on page 33, point 5.1.1.3 (*Faulty Approaches: teachers' own competence*), findings clearly revealed that 5 out of 6 teachers teaching Foundation year require in-service training courses in English language teaching. Teachers' difficulties in handling the writing problems exhibited by the students suggest that effective solutions will not be achieved unless they are updated with modern approaches to teaching. During the process of data analysis, I found out that teachers did not have a clear idea of their teaching procedures and philosophies. This was also shown by the teachers' own estimation.

> **Q:** **What difficulties do you have when teaching writing?**
>
> **T2M:** One of the greatest difficulties that we, teachers have in terms of teaching writing is lack of specific training to teach such ability in English. Personally as a teacher I at this institution never had a specific training to teach writing skills. I teach writing according to my general knowledge…

Essentially, EFL teachers have to have a broad understanding of the pedagogies underlying English language teaching by having frequent opportunities for further training. Referring back to the British Council Projects in Angola, in the mid-1980s aimed to train and update English teachers this research concludes that the local education authorities were unable to sustain the projects initiated by the British Council. This has had a negative impact on teachers' performance.

Teachers need support from the authorities and need to undergo professional development to be able to carry out their activities successfully. Alternatively, they resort to their own ways and means of teaching writing. Gerald in Kral (1994:7) asserts that "*Awareness of teaching is empowering. The more interest teachers have in gaining awareness of how they teach, the more freedom they will have to direct their teaching toward successful student learning*".

6.2.2.1. Lesson Planning

Lesson planning is needed, especially for inexperienced teachers and those lacking pedagogic qualifications. This study found out that most teachers at UMA do not plan their lessons. It is clear that designing a good lesson plan requires special skills, but even without special skills teachers should be able to design simple lesson plans by stating the objectives, the skills to be employed and possible steps of the lesson.

My interviewees' comments indicate that they simply follow the notes in the teachers' book. The course-book is used step-by-step without any creativity and nor introduction of supplementary materials. This data also suggests that in-service training about designing and the importance of lesson planning is needed. Among the various comments made by the teachers the following contradictory comments from T1F stood out:

> **Q:** **Knowing that English is taught twice a week – overall 3 hours, and you have four skills to deal with, how much time do you allocate to the teaching of writing? Why?**
>
> **T1 F:** [Coughs] Excuse me! I do not have [allocate] a specific time. We have an hour and a half, a 90 minute-class, yah. I observe how they are performing during the session and spend some time here and some time there. I prefer not to allocate, for example, as people do in a lesson plan, 5 minutes for warming up, 10 minutes for that and so forth. I see where the difficulties exist. Usually, I don't have a specific time just to teach writing. Otherwise, our course is not just about writing. We have other abilities to teach.

On the one hand T1F's comments indicate that she has got some insights about lesson planning, and on the other hand she does not plan at all, thus teaches intuitively. The teacher appeared to resist the teaching of writing. In the light of these findings my study concluded that awareness raising exercises might also be important. According to Doff (1988:93), teachers need to know four main things before going into the class to teach the lesson. These include:

- The aim of the lesson (i.e. the topic, a particular structure, the skills)
- What new language the lesson contains.
- The main stages of the lesson (i.e. how it divides into different activities).
- What to do at each stage.

6.2.3. Grammar and Translation Regarded as Central

This research shows that grammar and translation based teaching are widely used in the Foundation year at UMA. All the teachers except one (T4M) share the common belief that teaching grammar structures and rules at the sentence level is the key to improving students'

writing. For example, when the question - **What component do you stress most when teaching writing**? was asked to T6M, he replied:

> "…Yes, above all grammar. Because I believe that there's no way to teach the students to say 'how are you', without telling them what this 'how are you' is grammatically…".

According to Weaver (1996:2),

> Most teachers conceptualize grammar as descriptions of the structure of a language, prescriptions of its use, perhaps as a sense or style, and as the kind of books designed for teaching all these. However, relatively few teachers have realized that underlying these four senses of grammar is more fundamental one: the unconscious command of syntax that enables us to understand and speak the language. Even toddlers use grammatical constructions that are reductions and precursors of the mature syntax they will gradually acquire.

Grammar is an important component of the language. It may provide a solid foundation in terms of good writing. However, in a context such as UMA, where the students have long been exposed to an intensive teaching of grammar, it appeared that other skills like writing are seriously undermined. Findings of my study demonstrate that attempts to get the students involved in constant study of grammar rules is another source of problem.(i.e. plagiarism, confusing and unintelligible grammar rules, etc.). This was clearly shown in the *grammar booklet* produced by a group of six students (see Appendix L, page 142). Many grammar rules summarized in the booklet are unintelligible.

This research also reveals that translation-related tasks are part of the programme. These data were obtained from the three sources of data:

- It was frequently reported by the teachers and by the students;
- It was indicated in the students' workbook, where the researcher indentified about 13 tasks. For example: page 7, task 13; page 12, task 15; page 17, task 10.
- 2 out 5 assignments received from the teachers involved translation of 2 texts.

Analysis of all the data pertaining to this method strongly suggested that it is also a source of language problems both in the Portuguese and in the English Language. The Portuguese text produced by a reasonably fluent student in response to assignment 1 contains stretches of language with Portuguese errors related to English interference (see data and full discussion on pages 81-86 of this paper). Serious Portuguese errors are also found in Assignment 2 attached as Appendix K, on page 138.

As the interviewed teachers focussed heavily on grammar and translation-related tasks to improve the writing skills, this study concluded that most Foundation year teachers are unaware of the current debates about modern approaches to improve writing rather than intensive focus on grammar and translation.

6.2.4. Process Approach

This report reveals that Foundation year students have long been taught through a product-based approach to writing, with strong focus on grammar without any interconnection with writing. Teachers at UMA hold the theory that students should absorb an amount of grammar rules, deal with short grammatical sentences before they can produce comprehensible writing. This study also concluded that the typical situation in middle schools in Luanda is also prevalent at UMA. Raimes (1983:11) says that:

> Writing means a connected text and not just single sentences, that writers write for a purpose and a reader, and that the process of writing is a valuable tool.

Findings of my study reveal that constant attention to grammar rules and grammatical constructions at the sentence level does not encourage students to write because students concentrate wholly on grammar. It would seem that students need to be exposed to new practices. Findings suggest that a **Process approach** to writing may well be a solution to this long standing issue. Susser (1994:37) and many writing theorists have advocated the Process approach in response to the weaknesses of the Product approach. For example, Mckay (1982) focused on prewriting strategies, Spack (1984) argued for invention techniques, such as brainstorming, clustering, free writing, etc. Krashen (1984) stressed that ***"****Feedback is useful when it is done during the writing process, i.e. between drafts, not at the end (p.11).* In the Process approach students are taken through various stages of the process starting from generating ideas up to the final product.

6.2.5. Genre Approach

Bhalia (1991, 1993), Swales (1981) and Harris et al. (2003:29), advocated the need to introduce the Genre approach. This improves the quality, the effectiveness and appropriateness of children's writing. After an investigation of children's writing, Harris et al. (2003) concluded that *"Students' writing was becoming too personal; and that there was a need for students to be taught through the genre approach*." They emphasised that this led to a closer examination of what children were expected to write at school, across the curriculum. Not only in terms of content, but with the types of texts – or text genres.

Although Foundation year students at UMA are adults and young adults, Harris et al.'s findings accord with the findings from my research. The data obtained from the interviewees and the samples of students' writing demonstrate that students' writing consists simply of personal events and experiences. The data suggested emphasis on expository arguments. The texts shown on pages 90 and 93 of this report demonstrate this. Cope and Kalantzis' (1993:1) assertion that: **"**Genre is used to connect the different forms texts take with variations in social purposes" also suggests that the Genre approach may help with Foundation year writing problems. Students have not been introduced to the importance of the social purposes involved in writing.

6.2.6. The New Headway Course-book: Elementary Level

As far as the whole course-book series (elementary level) is concerned, my research identified that it is inadequate for Foundation year students at UMA. Its philosophy of teaching is mainly based on the Grammar-Translation method. Furthermore, this study shows that there is an uneven distribution of the four language skills in the course-book, where writing is regarded as less important. Interestingly, this finding contrasts with the authors' claim that it is an *authoritative integrated syllabus.*

Another factor that emerged is that teachers use the Headway course-book sequentially step-by-step, which further reduces students' opportunities to engage in writing. Other inadequacies of the course-book are outlined below:

- The stock of vocabulary offered in the course-book remains inadequate. To use Nagy and Herman's (1997) words, they do not reflect the "*qualitative dimension*" to vocabulary acquisition, which is crucial in helping the students to write in a more advanced level.

- The reading texts are too brief, based on personal narratives, and do not promote extensive reading. The few 'writing' tasks (i.e. gap filling, production of short sentence, matching exercises, labelling, phonetic transcriptions, etc) and the topics offered in the course-book led this research to conclude that Foundation year students are operating at an extremely low level. These findings were repeatedly revealed throughout the process of data analysis.

As discussed on page 66, Ur (1996) refers to two types of writing tasks: *writing as a means* and *writing as an end*. With this concept in mind, the results from the course-book analysis demonstrated that most of the tasks offered in the course-book consist only of *writing as a*

means. Writing is seen as a means for students to engage with grammatical aspects other than writing itself.

The compositions that the students are required to write are highly controlled which does not allow students to engage with extended, creative and argumentative writing. For example, on page 121 of the course-book the students are required to perform the following task:

4. Write four paragraphs about your capital city. Begin each paragraph with the same words as in the text about London (it, where, which). Write 100 - 150 words

Paragraph 1:	How big is it? Where is it?	**Paragraph 2:**	What is it famous for?
Paragraph 3:	Does it have any problems?	**Paragraph 4**:	What do you like best about it?

6.2.7. BICS and CALP

Referring back to Cummins' (1980) theoretical concept of BICS and CALP, discussed on pages 19 & 20, this study found out that throughout the academic year Foundation year students operate in the upper quadrants (especially in the A), in which the tasks are highly contextualised, familiar, easy and cognitively undemanding. Tasks described on page 38, such as re-arranging jumbled up sentences, gap filling, phonetic transcriptions, reading grammar rules, identifying grammatically wrong and correct sentences, production of highly controlled composition, etc. were found in the course-book, and in the samples of students' writing. What is more, findings revealed that the text-types are not cognitively demanding as well. Students are required to produce short texts describing personal events rather than expository arguments. Interestingly, the data from the course-book and from the samples of students' writing was in harmony with the data from the teachers' interview. For example, the quote from T6M below is pertinent:

> Q: **What do your students write? What topics do they write about?**
> T6M: Due to their low level of English, they write about themselves. Ok! Introducing themselves, talking about families, members of the families…

The data suggested that the teachers themselves encourage low levels of engagement. Cummins' (1996:73) assertion below helped to formulate a response raised in this section:

> "…some teachers who are unfamiliar with instructional strategies for second language learners have tended to 'dumb down' the task (i.e. revert to quadrant A and C). This permits students to work within their level of English and academic competence but never pushes them to go beyond that level, which they must do if they are to catch up academically…"

Finally, these findings strongly suggest that there is an immediate need to help the students to move from the BICS to the CALP level.

6.2.8. The Reading Culture

T4M commented that the reading culture has disappeared in Angola since independence from the Portuguese government in 1975. St6M's remarks on page 54 (*I suggest that Foundation year students work harder, read more, buy books and use only materials in English)* clearly express the view that reading has disappeared.

The literature emphasises that there is an inter connectivity between reading and writing. Eisterhold in Krol (1990:88) referring to Stotsky's (1983) study have found the following correlations:

1. Better writers tend to be better readers. 2. Better writers read more than poorer writers. 3. Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer reader.

Although Stotsky's findings do not refer to foreign language reading, it appears that his findings are applicable to foreign language situations. Alderson & Urquhart (1984: xv) assert that:

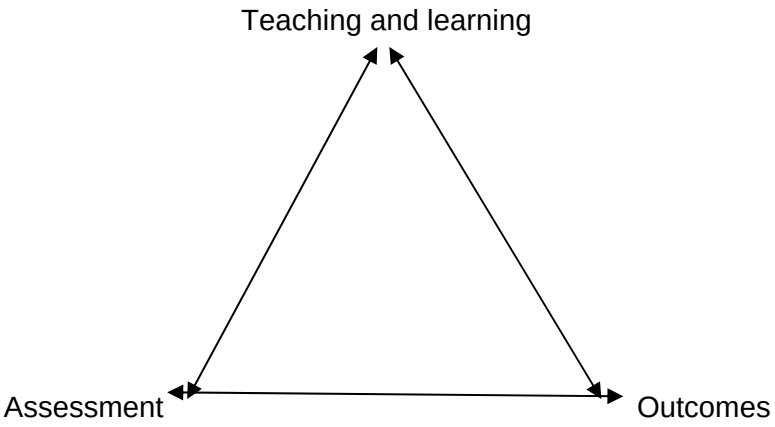
> We do not, and indeed find it difficult to draw a clear distinction between first language and foreign language reading – in fact, it is not clear to what extent reading in a foreign language is different from reading in first language.

Reading either in a second, foreign or first language is always an effective way to promote vocabulary acquisition and to acquire models of text structure. It provides writers with all the technical tools and information regarding good writing. However, in a context like UMA with problems at the lexical level, grammar, text structure, cohesion, coherence, L1 interference, these findings indicate the need to promote intensive reading of various text-types.

6.2.9. Constructive Alignment and Assessment

Following Biggs' (1999) theory of Constructive Alignment already discussed on pages 96 & 97, and in the literature review, my study suggests that the Foundation year course is not aligned at all. There is a mismatch and gaps between teaching and learning, assessment and the intended learning outcomes. The triad below, illustrated by Dillon et al. (2007:283) demonstrated how the three components in the teaching process could be synchronized to promote learning at UMA.

Figure 15A: Quality Enhancement: The Learning and Teaching Triad



The data obtained throughout the process of analysis led this study to conclude that there is no official syllabus available at UMA. In other words, goals and objectives, assessment criteria, learning tasks and activities and the intended learning outcomes are not articulated. Teachers are unclear about what outcomes they expect from their students by the end of the course.

In addition, this research found that students' assignments throughout the academic year are not assessed by the teachers. Thus there is no formative assessment. Assessment is seen only as a tool to indicate 'fail' or 'pass'. The assessment tasks do not elicit high levels of engagement. According to Kerry (2002:24), they are *low order tasks*. For example, the assessment tasks in the exam equivalent tests (shown partially on page 93, and fully on pages 154 – 157, Appendices M and N) demonstrate these findings. The tasks are superficial and address low levels of engagement. They were indentified as follows: true/false statements; production of short sentences and checking the correct use of pre-determined grammar structures; multiple choice tasks, etc.

I am suggesting that the Biggs' (1999) model of Constructive Alignment could provide a model for course construction at UMA:

(1) Identify clear learning outcomes. (2) Design appropriate assessment tasks that will directly assess whether each of the learning outcomes has been met. (3) Design appropriate learning opportunities for the students to get them to a point where they can successfully undertake the assessment tasks**.**

6.2.10. Students' Low Expectations

Overall, this research showed that students have a clear understanding of the reasons of their inability to write effectively. Considering that English is an important tool in their future professional career, this study discovered that students are pessimistic about getting their English improved at UMA because they are not provided with adequate support. Evidence shows that they no longer trust the institution and resort to making every effort to improve their English proficiency beyond the confines of UMA classrooms. The following remarks made by the students show their deep pessimism:

Q:	**What do you do to overcome you writing problems?**
St2M:	Erm..I find someone who knows better to help me.
St4F:	on a personal level, I'm doing an extra English course to improve my English knowledge…
Q:	**Don't you think that the sessions at UMA are sufficient?**
	No, they are not sufficient. I have to undertake an extra English course….
St9F:	…Getting words from the dictionary and copy into my notebook.
Q:	**Does it solve your problem?**
St9F:	No! [laughs] I think to get this problem solved I have to do a beginner English course. Because our classroom is overcrowded with students and the teacher has no time to move to every single desk and explain..I think one has to do a beginner course to learn a bit more

With the new demands for English skills on the job market in Angola, this study suggests that UMA needs to help students to embark on a successful working life after graduation.

6.2.11. Students Progress By The End Of The Foundation Year

Finally, it would seem that very little progress has been made with students' writing by the end of the academic year. Problems shown during the entry examination tests recur in the final exam. Students still appear to be unable to write clearly in English. These problems include many grammar mistakes despite excessive grammar input, limited vocabulary, difficulties to outline ideas on the paper and to construct meaningful sentences.

In the light of the above, this research concludes that the UMA course does not adequately bridge the gap between teaching English in state schools in Luanda and UMA. More significantly, findings of this research do not support the idea that the heavy focus on grammar and translation related tasks is an effective pedagogy for teaching English at UMA.

6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having identified the problems, in this section I present some recommendations which might be useful in order to address the issues raised in this research report.

- Writing should be seen as a continuous and shared composing process that is taught in context with focus on purpose and audience. Therefore, one of major recommendations of this study is the introduction of a combination of the **Process-Genre approach** to writing.

- Due to the relationship between reading and writing advocated by Stotsky (1983) on page 106 of this paper, this research recommends the incorporation of a **reading-to-writing approach**. This should help to improve the students' ability to write in English.

- A **Full Syllabus** describing all the aspects of the language should be designed. For example: objectives, items to be taught and learned, tasks, materials, criteria for assessment, student support, defined learning outcomes.

  UMA needs to reconsider the present course-book and introduce another one at upper intermediate level. This should be preceded with a rigorous evaluation of its strengths, weaknesses and possible ancillary materials to compensate for any inadequacies (e.g. graded readers, magazines, newspapers in English, journals, etc.)

- An on-going **in-service teacher training** programme should be put in place so that teachers are updated in terms of specific EFL teaching theories and consequently be able to deal with the complexities of teaching and learning problems more effectively.

  Potential Problems*:* Large class sizes and time constraints may impose threats to the implementation of the Process-Genre approach because more time to be spent on writing will be needed. Therefore, it is recommended that principles of time management and simplified ways of providing feedback be introduced in the proposed "In-Service Training Programme" to avoid the resistance to change. For example, the use of correction symbols to spot the errors, implementation of team work and formative feedback from peers, increasing the number of teaching schedule on the timetable.

- **Constructive Alignment.** It is highly recommended that the teaching, learning and the assessment tasks concentrate on achieving the learning outcomes. These should be clearly articulated for the students. As assessment is the key to align the whole system, it is also recommended that the assessment tasks should be designed to address higher-order thinking. Additionally, clear and effective assessment criteria must be officially articulated.

- **CALP** Considering that Foundation year students are still operating in quadrant A of Cummins' (1980) theoretical framework. This research recommends that there is a need to provide support to them to move from purely surface levels of engagement (BICS) to the CALP - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. However, context reduced and more cognitively demanding tasks, where the students would be required to apply deep thinking, have to be provided.

- **Word processing through the university computer lab.** The computer is an important tool to assist EFL learners with writing. It helps to revise, shape and edit the students' work. By using the word processor students can for example, check their spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, find the missing word, organise paragraphs, know the number of words in the text, etc. However, instead submitting their handwritten work as could be seen in the previous chapters of this project, the introduction of word processing could also help the situation in the Foundation year at UMA.

6.3.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Considering the importance of the English language in Angola, especially regarding students' future personal and professional lives, this research suggests that English for Specific Purposes should continue into third, fourth and fifth years of university. The courses outlined below currently offered at UMA may need to consider looking at the possibility of introducing more discipline specific courses, so that students learn to control the genres needed in their future careers.

> Management & Business Administration; Environmental Management and Territory Administration; Architecture and Town Planning; Civil Engineering; Industrial Engineering & Electrical Systems; Computer Sciences; Portuguese and Communication; Law; Public Health & Clinical Analysis and Theology.

6.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study carried out has explored the writing practices amongst Foundation year students at Universidade Metodista de Angola in Luanda. This study was carried out because there has been a common perception that middle school leavers enter universities, particularly UMA, with serious writing problems.

To be able to carry out an in-depth investigation and formulate alternative solutions to improve the critical situation, a combination of authentic course documents, sample of students' writing, interviews with nine randomly selected students and six teachers were pivotal to gather the required data.

The results of this research demonstrate that:

1- Teachers are not pedagogically prepared to carry out their tasks successfully. They resort intuitively to outdated teaching methods and rely heavily on the course-book, which remains inadequate for the Angolan context.

2- In the light of the level required in the academy, CALP and the demands of the Angolan economy/workplace, most students' writing is still inadequate, BICS (Cummins, 1980).

3- As far as teaching and learning activities are concerned, there is an urgent need to focus on the "learning outcomes and assessment" issues (Biggs, 2006).

Though several studies have been done on writing practices, this study has proved to be invaluable to the researcher who will urge his colleagues, the relevant authorities at UMA and probably other universities in Angola about the need to implement innovation in the ELT.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Subject Information Sheet/Teachers

Subject Information Sheet/Teachers

Letter to the teachers

Dear Teacher,

My name is Agostinho Filipe Neto, and I am a student at the University Of The Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. I am required to conduct research and write a research report as part of the requirement for the purposes of obtaining the Masters degree in English Language Education. The proposed topic of my research is "*Promoting Writing Skills at Universidade Metodista de Angola: Foundation Year Students."* Throughout my research I am going to explore the problems that bar foundation year students from writing in order to suggest some interventions that would possibly promote writing skills and thus improve students' abilities.

My research questions are as follows:

1. How is writing taught and learnt in the Foundation year at UMA?

2. What kinds of text-types (genres) are students expected to master?

3. In what way, if at all, is the Foundation year preparing the students for the two subsequent years (i.e. 1st & 2nd years) at UMA?

4. To what extent are teaching/ learning, assessment and outcomes synchronised if at all?

The aims of this research are:

1.To investigate the specific problems students encounter in writing.

2.To investigate and critique the current pedagogic practices employed in teaching.

3. To investigate how students themselves perceive their problems.

4.To investigate how the teachers perceive the problems regarding the writing skills of their students

5.To examine the teaching materials and the syllabus.

6.To investigate how students are assessed and find out whether the courses are constructively aligned.

7.To investigate what approach(es) to writing would impact positively on the current writing practices.

Being an important task for my academic achievements, I would like to have a 30-minute audio-recorded interview with all the teachers teaching Foundation year at UMA. I would also like to examine some samples of students' writing and the course materials. Participation is voluntary, and no teachers will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not in this study. Please note that your information will remain completely confidential. The samples of your students' writing will also be kept in a strict confidence. They will not be seen by any individuals.

Your contribution to this study will be invaluable for my research report.

Please complete the enclosed consent form.

Yours faithfully

_____ Date:_____

Agostinho Filipe NETO

APPENDIX B: Teachers' Consent Form

TEACHERS' CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned consent to being interviewed and audio recorded by Mr. Agostinho Filipe NETO for his research on *Promoting Writing Skills at Universidade Metodista de Angola: Foundation Year Students*. I also consent to have the samples of my students' writing and the course materials used by Mr. NETO. I understand that:

- Mr. NETO will investigate the problems that Foundation year students have with writing in English at Universidade Metodista de Angola in order to suggest solutions.

- Participation in this research is voluntary.

- I may withdraw from the study at any time.

- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses and the samples of my students' writing will be kept strictly confidential.

- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or on the research report.

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.

- All tape recordings will be kept by the University of the Witwatersrand for a period of five years and then destroyed.

Signed _____ Date:_____

APPENDIX C: Subject Information Sheet/Students

Subject Information Sheet/Students

Letter to the students

Dear Student,

My name is Agostinho Filipe Neto, and I am a student at the University Of The Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. I am required to conduct research and write a research report as part of the requirement for the purposes of obtaining the Masters degree in English Language Education. The proposed topic of my research is "*Promoting Writing Skills at Universidade Metodista de Angola: Foundation Year Students."* Throughout my research I am going to explore the problems that bar foundation year students from writing in or order to suggest some interventions that would possibly promote writing skills and thus improve students' abilities.

My research questions are as follows:

1. How is writing taught and learnt in the Foundation year at UMA?

2. What kinds of text-types (genres) are students expected to master?

3. In what way, if at all, is the Foundation year preparing the students for the two subsequent years (i.e. 1st & 2nd years) at UMA?

4. To what extent are teaching/ learning, assessment and outcomes synchronised if at all?

The aims of this research are:

1. To investigate the specific problems students encounter in writing.
2. To investigate and critique the current pedagogic practices employed in teaching.
3. To investigate how students themselves perceive their problems.
4. To investigate how the teachers perceive the problems regarding the writing skills of their students
5. To examine the teaching materials and the syllabus.
6. To investigate how students are assessed and find out whether the courses are constructively aligned.

7. To investigate what approach(es) to writing would impact positively on the current writing practices.

Being an important task for my academic achievements, I would like to have a 30-minute audio-recorded interview with some students, at a time convenient for you at Universidade Metodista de Angola.

Having obtained your permission, the interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you will be included in the research report. The interview related-material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person. During the interview you may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

Dear student, if you are willing to help, please complete the attached consent form. I can be contacted telephonically at 923 62 70 31/923 85 00 31 or via e-mail: agostinhofilipe.neto@gmail.com

Your contribution to this study would be invaluable for my research report.

Yours faithfully

_____ Date:_____

Agostinho Filipe NETO

APPENDIX D: Students' Consent Form

STUDENTS'CONSENT FORM

Students' Audio–Recorded Interview

I, the undersigned consent to being interviewed and audio recorded by Mr. Agostinho Filipe NETO for his research on *Promoting Writing Skills at Universidade Metodista de Angola: Foundation Year Students*. I understand that:

- Mr. NETO will investigate the problems that foundation year students have with writing in English at Universidade Metodista de Angola in order to suggest solutions.

- Participation in this research is voluntary.

- I may refuse to answer any questions I would not prefer to.

- I may withdraw from the study at any time.

- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain strictly confidential.

- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or on the research report.

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.

- All tape recordings will be kept by the University of the Witwatersrand for a period of five years and then destroyed.

Signed _____Date:_____

APPENDIX E: Interview Schedule: Teachers

1. In your opinion, how well did the middle schools prepare the students in terms of writing? Please, give reasons.

2. What are the specific problems that students have with writing in English?

3. What do you do to compensate for any inadequacies? Do you use any specific strategies to improve your students' writing abilities?

4. How do you go about teaching writing? What steps do you usually follow to teach writing to your students?

5. Among the four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) which ones do you find most difficult to teach? Why?

6. What difficulties do you have when teaching writing? What do you stress most when teaching writing?

7. Knowing that English is taught twice a week – overall 3 hours, and you have four skills to deal with, how much time do you allocate to the teaching of writing? Why?

8. What do your students write? List the writing activities.

9. What topics do they write about?

10. What types of texts and genres do you require your students to write?

11. Do you set any take home writing task? Homework…?

12. How do you assess your students' English writing? Give a mark and return the work to them? Do they have to give it back to you or what?

13. Do you think that the syllabuses you are currently using satisfy your students' writing needs and expectations? Give reasons.

14. What expectations do you have regarding what outcomes the students will achieve at the end of this academic year?

15. Could you please indicate any positive aspects about the English writing at UMA that you have noticed so far?

16. Can you suggest ideas for a teaching programme that will help students to perform satisfactorily at the end of the academic year?

17. What other comments would you like to make regarding the learning and teaching of writing to Foundation year students?

Thank you for participating in this research.

APPENDIX F: Interview Schedule: Students

1. Do you like writing in English? Why or why not?

2. When you write English, do you feel that you are expressing yourself clearly? Why or why not?

3. In retrospect, in middle school, were you adequately prepared to write English clearly? Why or Why not?

4. What specific problems do you have with writing in English?

5. What do you do to overcome your writing problems?

6. When do you write English? What do you write? Can you indicate the writing activities you are required to perform during classes?

7. What do you think about your English writing classes at UMA?

8. Are the writing classes at UMA being helpful to improve your writing?

9. Do you feel that you are really being taught how to write English? Why or why not?

10. Are you happy with the way the teaching of writing is approached at UMA?

11. What do you think about the programme/course-book being used currently?

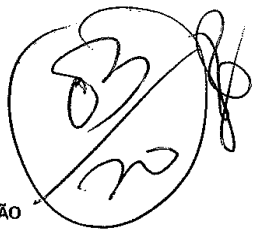
12. Please, could you mention any positive aspects about writing at UMA?

13. Can you suggest ideas that would help students to perform satisfactorily at the end of the academic year?

14. What other comments would you like to make regarding the learning and teaching of writing in your Foundation year?

Thank you for participating in this research.

APPENDIX G: Sample of Grade 11 (Middle School) Progress Test.



REPÚBLICA DE ANGOLA
MINISTERIO DAS TELECOMUNICAÇÕES E TECNOLOGIAS DE INFORMAÇÃO
INSTITUTO DE TELECOMUNICAÇÕES
ITEL

VARIANTE A

ENGLISH TEST GRADE 11TH [redacted]

NAME: [redacted] Nº [redacted] CLASS: 11ª

TIME: 90 MIN

A Reading: complete the text with the correct form of the verb.

Like, love x2, get up, go running, go x2, train, relax, visit, cook, go out, play, want, live, watch.

I love my job as a family lawyer, because I watch helping people. But I Like playing rugby, too, so my life is very busy! Every lunchtime I visit in the park near my office. On Monday and Thursday evenings I want to the swimming pool with my boyfriend. on Tuesday evenings and Friday mornings I live at 5.30 and relax to the gym before work. And. On Wednesday evenings I go running with my team at the club. On Friday evenings I just love x2 because I'm usually very tired! I sometimes go out my suster. She lives in the centre of Cardiff too. Or I cook a nice dinner at home with Alex. We love x2 cooking. After dinner we often watch a DVD. We never get up on Saturday evenings, because I always _____ in a match on Sundays: I _____ our team to win the next world cup!.

B. Complete the sentences Sunnybank Farm with **some, any, a, or an**

1. Is there any bathroom?
2. There are any beautiful views.
3. The farmhouse has one digital TV and a digital music system, too.
4. Does the kitchen have any dishwasher?
5. There's some open fire in the living room.
6. Are there any comfortable armchairs in the living room?
7. There are any trees in the garden.
8. On the lake there's a small boat.
9. Are there any good pubs near the farmhouse?
10. There's some phone number and a email address, too.

C. Complete the table with the verbs in the box. Write the past simple and past participle.

Buy, start, earn, write, leave, sleep, bring, do, see, enjoy, think, take, cook, have, drive, speak, travel, take, stay, and wear.

PAST SIMPLE		PAST PARTICIPLE	
take	taked	bri	enjoy
leaved	leave	enjoying	starting
see	seed	start	thinking
think	thinked	think	
cooked	cook		
have	haved		

D. Turn the page and write about your childhood

2 [redacted]

D. COMPOSITION

Iam nury Liliono Baa have 18 old . have one sister I live my fathers .

My childhood was very good becouse

APPENDIX H: The Students' Course-book/Contents Page: Language Input and Skills Development.

CONTENTS — LANGUAGE INPUT

UNIT	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	EVERYDAY ENGLISH
1 Hello everybody! p6	**Verb *to be*** *am/is/are* *I'm from London.* p6 *He's a student.* p9 **Possessive adjectives** *my, your, his, her* p6, p8	Countries *Mexico, Japan* p8 Using a bilingual dictionary p10 Everyday objects *a key, a newspaper* p10 Plural nouns *bags, apples* p10	Hello and goodbye *Telephone numbers* p11 *How are you?* *See you later!* p11
2 Meeting people p12	**Verb *to be*** *Questions and negatives* *What's her first name?* p12 *She isn't married.* p13 **Negatives and short answers** *No, she isn't.* p13 **Possessive *'s*** *Patrick's daughter* p14	The family *mother, uncle* p14 Opposite adjectives *old – young* p16 Food and drink *hamburger and chips* *tea, coffee* p18	In a café Prices p18 *Can I have ... ?* *How much is ... ?* p19
3 The world of work p20	**Present Simple 1** *he/she/it* p20 *She works 16 hours a day.* p21 **Questions and negatives** *Does he speak Spanish? He doesn't speak Spanish or French.* p22	Verbs *help, make, serve* p24 Jobs *A pilot flies planes.* p26	What time is it? *It's quarter past five.* *It's just after six o'clock.* p27
4 Take it easy! p28	**Present Simple 2** *I/you/we/they* *I go to the gym.* *We don't go out on Fridays.* *Why do you like your job?* p29	Verbs *relax, go out, play* p29 Leisure activities *dancing, skiing* p30	Social expressions *I'm sorry.* *Excuse me?* *Pardon?* p35
Stop and check 1 Teacher's Book p154			
5 Where do you live? p36	***There is/are*** *There's a television.* p36 ***How many ... ?*** *How many books are there?* p36 **Prepositions of place** *in front of the sofa* p37 ***some* and *any*** *There are some cups.* *There aren't any plates.* p38 ***this, that, these, those*** *This is the kitchen.* *What's in these cupboards?* p38	Rooms *living room, kitchen* p36 Things in the house *armchair, lamp, cupboard, washing machine* p36 What's in your bag? *bus ticket, mobile, keys* p39 Places *cinema, pub* p43	Directions 1 *Is there a post office near here?* *Yes, it's over there.* p43
6 Can you speak English? p44	***can/can't*** *She can walk now.* *We can't write.* p44 ***was/were*** *Where were you yesterday?* p46 ***could*** *I could swim when I was five.* p46 ***was born*** *She was born in England.* p47	Countries and languages *France, French* p44 Verbs *translate, check, laugh* p45 Words that sound the same *I, eye; no, know* p50	On the phone Directory Enquiries p50 *Can I speak to Jo, please?* *I'll just get her.* p51
7 Then and now p52	**Past Simple 1** **Regular verbs** *She worked in over 50 films.* p52 **Irregular verbs** *His father got a job in London.* p54 **Time expressions** *last night* *yesterday morning* p55	Verbs *earn, act, study* p53 Verbs *get, leave, become* p54 Words that go together *drive a car, railway station* p58	What's the date? *the first of April* p59

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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LANGUAGE INPUT

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Stop and check 2 Teacher's Book p156			
9 Food you like! p66	**Count and uncount nouns** *apples, apple juice* p66 ***I like ... ? I'd like ... ?*** *Do you like tea? Would you like some tea?* p67 ***a* and *some*** *a cake, some cake* p68 ***much* and *many*** *There isn't much milk.* *There aren't many eggs.* p68	Food and drink *chocolate, chips, beer, apple juice* p66 *chopsticks, noodles, sardines* p71	Polite offers and requests *Could you pass the salt, please?* *Could I have a glass of water, please?* *Can you give me the recipe?* *Can I see the menu?* p73
10 Bigger and better! p74	**Comparatives and superlatives** *The country is cheaper than the city.* p74 *Bati Island is the most expensive resort.* p76 ***have got*** *I've got a dog.* *They haven't got a flat.* p75	City and country adjectives *dirty, noisy* *exciting, safe* p74 City and country words *wood, museum* p80	Directions 2 *round the corner* *over the bridge* p81
11 Looking good! p82	**Present Continuous** *I'm wearing blue jeans.* *Who is smiling?* p82 **Whose is it?** *Whose is the baby?* p84 **Possessive pronouns** *mine, yours, hers* p84	Clothes *hat, coat, shirt* p82 Describing people *fair hair, blue eyes* p82 Words that rhyme *red, said; eyes, size* p88 Phonetic symbols vowels and diphthongs p88 Tongue twisters p88	In a clothes shop *What colour are you looking for?* *Can I try it on?* p89
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14 Have you ever? p106	**Present Perfect** ***ever* and *never*** *Have you ever been to Barcelona?* *She's never been to Paris.* p106 ***yet* and *just*** *We haven't been there yet.* *They've just had a boat ride.* p108 **Present Perfect and Past Simple** *Maria's been to Berlin.* *She went there two years ago.* p107	Past participles *eaten, made, cooked* p107 At the airport *departure lounge, check in* p113	At the airport *check in your luggage* *go to gate 4* p113
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SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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APPENDIX I: Progress Test 1 in the Teachers' Book

Progress test 1

UNITS 1–5

Exercise 1 Asking about people

Surname	Clarke
First name	Karen
Country	Britain
Age	28
Address	33 East St, Brighton
Job	Teacher
Place of work	Language school in Brighton
Married	No
Free time	Sailing

Read about Karen Clarke. Write the questions.

1 *What's her first name?*
Her first name's Karen.

2 _____
Her surname is Clarke.

3 _____
She's from Britain.

4 _____
She's 28.

5 _____
33 East St, Brighton.

6 _____
She's a teacher.

7 _____
In a language school in Brighton.

8 _____
No, she isn't. She's single.

9 _____
She goes sailing.

8

Exercise 2 Word order

Put the words in the correct order.

1 you from are Where ?
Where are you from?

2 do at What weekends you do ?

3 work she does Where ?

4 a shelf There photo is the on

5 near there bank a Is here ?

6 coffee please I a Can have ?

7 children How they do have many ?

8 English in Emily Brazil teaches

9 any Is milk the there fridge in ?

10 not work Rosy go by does to car

11 Sue going Dave and the cinema like to

10

Exercise 3 Questions

Match a line in A with a line in B to make a question. Then find an answer in C.

A	B	C
Who	do you do on Sundays?	At seven o'clock.
How much	do you meet on Saturday evenings?	To the theatre.
What	do you go on Friday evenings?	My friends, Dave and Paul.
Where	do you get up?	I play tennis.
How	is a ham sandwich?	By bus.
What time	do you travel to work?	£2.50.

5

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Exercise 4 *some, any, a,* and *an*

Complete the sentences with *some, any, a,* or *an.*

1 There are ___some___ flowers in the garden.
2 There are _____ magazines on the coffee table.
3 Can I have _____ ice-cream, please?
4 Are there _____ photos in the living room?
5 There aren't _____ good restaurants in our town.
6 There's _____ newsagent's opposite the post office.
7 John has _____ computer games in his living room.
8 Are there _____ Japanese students in your class?
9 There's _____ armchair in front of the window.
10 There aren't _____ photographs on the wall.
11 There are _____ plates next to the cooker.

10

Exercise 5 Present Simple

Complete the text with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

I (1)_____ (have) two brothers, Mark and Nick. They (2)_____ (live) in London. Mark (3)_____ (be) a pilot and Nick (4)_____ (work) in a garage. Mark (5)_____ (like) flying, but Nick (6)_____ _____ (not like) mending cars. At weekends I (7)_____ (go) to London and I (8)_____ (stay) with them. We (9)_____ (go) to the theatre or to the cinema on Saturday evening, and on Sunday we (10)_____ (walk) in Hyde Park.

10

Exercise 6 *be* and *do*

Complete the sentences with a verb from the box.

am / am not	does / doesn't	is / isn't
do / don't	are / aren't	

1 Peter ___is___ a teacher.
2 I _____ hungry. Can I have a sandwich?
3 Rome _____ in Spain. It _____ in Italy.
4 Mary and Sarah _____ like fast food.
5 _____ James have two jobs?
6 Ben _____ like travelling by bus.
7 We aren't from Spain – we _____ from Portugal.
8 '_____ you like coffee?' 'No, I _____.'

9

Exercise 7 Plural forms

Write these sentences in the plural.

1 She's a doctor.
They ___'re doctors.___
2 I go swimming on Saturdays.
_____
3 He watches TV every day.
_____
4 The dictionary is over there.
_____
5 This watch is expensive.
_____
6 Look at that lovely flower.
_____
7 Do you have a stamp?
_____
8 She's our child.
_____
9 He's an interesting person.
_____
10 That man is American.
_____
11 The school doesn't have a computer.
_____

10

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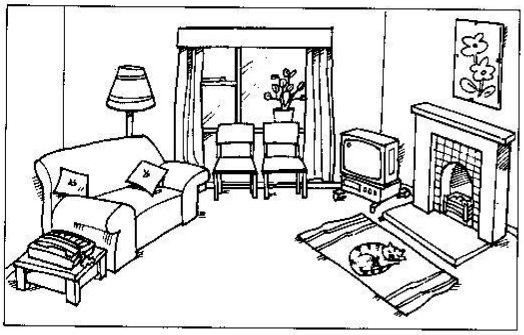
Exercise 8 Prepositions

Complete the sentences with the correct preposition. Write one word on each line.



1 There are two chairs _____ the living room.
2 The sofa is _____ _____ the table.
3 There's a lamp _____ the sofa.
4 There's a picture _____ the wall.
5 The chairs are _____ the television.
6 There's a cat on the rug _____ _____ _____ the fireplace.
7 The telephone is _____ the table.

7

Exercise 9 Choose the correct sentence

Tick (✓) the correct sentence.

1 a Let's go to home.
  b Let's go home. ✓
2 a Jo and Liz are students in Oxford University.
  b Jo and Liz are students at Oxford University.
3 a Let's go out to the pub!
  b Let's go out at the pub!
4 a On Thursdays I get home at six o'clock.
  b In Thursdays I get home at six o'clock.
5 a Richard lives at London.
  b Richard lives in London.
6 a To weekends I go swimming.
  b At weekends I go swimming.

5

Exercise 10 Which one is different?

Underline the different word.

1	Cambridge	London	Oxford	Rome
2	magazine	pen	newspaper	book
3	milk	apple	ice-cream	ham
4	cup	spoon	cupboard	knife
5	actor	model	architect	teach
6	boring	interesting	like	funny
7	father	sister	mother	man
8	house	bathroom	kitchen	living room
9	often	near	next to	opposite
10	France	England	American	Japan
11	my	we	his	your

10

Exercise 11 Adjectives

Match the opposites.

small	cheap
difficult	horrible
expensive	right
hot	big
lovely	easy
wrong	left
old	young
new	cold
right	old

8

Exercise 12 Words that go together

Match a verb in A with a line in B.

A	B
drive	football
play	a plane
go	tea
speak	television
drink	a car
travel	to music
fly	running
listen	by bus
watch	Italian

8

TOTAL 10

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APPENDIX J: The Entrance Examination Paper

República de Angola

Universidade Metodista de Angola

UNIVERSIDADE METODISTA DE ANGOLA PLACEMENT TEST (Noite A)

CURSO DE LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA E COMUNICAÇÃO

FULname---[redacted]----------

INSCRIPTION NUMBER---[redacted]----------

Dear student, we welcome you to our UNIVERSITY.

UMA English Placement Tests (UEPTs) provide teachers with a reliable and efficient means of placing students at the start of a course. The test has been calibrated against the level system used in the English training centres in Angola. Now concentrate because the test will begin!

1. Reading (5 MARKS)

Read the article. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)? Write (?) if the answer is not in the text.

Most visitors to Rajasthan fly into the Indian capital, Delhi. During the busy winter months it might be difficult to find a hotel when you arrive so you can book at least one night in advance. Hotels can suddenly change from wonderful to awful so it´s a good idea to ask a recent visitor to recommend somewhere.

In Rajasthan you will find hotels and guest houses to suit all pockets- some are as cheap as $5 a night while others are as luxurious as any hotels you can imagine. For the adventurous traveller there is the option of staying in a traditional mud hut, tree houses or if you go on camel safari in the desert you can sleep out under the stars. For the travellers who like luxury, the old fort or palace hotels give an idea of what life was like for the Rajasthan before modern life forced them to open their doors to the travelling public.

If you are going to do a lot during your visit, bear in mind that things are more slowly in India. There is no point in becoming impatient, just change your way of thinking. Checking out of a hotel can take an extraordinary amount of time so, if you want to leave at a particular time in the morning ask reception to prepare your bill the night

before. Also room service can be spectacularly slow, when you place your order, ask when it will be delivered and be ready for a long wait.

a. Are the sentences true or false? (2.5).

1 false There are always lots of empty hotels rooms in Delhi.

2 True People always visit the area when the weather is cool.

3 false All the hotels in Rajasthan are cheap.

4 True Visitors can sleep i n some unusual places.

5 false The Maharajas wanted to make their places into hotels.

b. Match the phrases from the text in A with the words and phrases in B (2.5).

A		B
1	e suit all pockets	(a.) Before you go
2.	d open their doors	(b.) it doesn´t help
3.	a book in advance	(c.) remember
4.	B bear in mind	(d.) allow people in their home
5.	c no point in	(e.) From cheap to expensive

2. Grammar (5 marks)

Choose the correct answer:

1. Not everything is going well. We didn't have Some problems so far.
   a. didn´t have b. Don´t have c. Haven´t had. e. Have had

2. You look tired. Are you Running?
   a. Are you running b. Have you run c. Have you been running

2. We don´t understand that sentence. What does mean this word?

a. does mean this word b. Does this word mean. c. Means this word

3. Alice Usually goes away two or three times a year.

a. is going usually b. Is usually going c. Usually goes d. Goes usually

4. Moko is taller than Leko

a. is taller b. Are more tall c. Are taller

5. When did you arrived ?

a. did you arrived b. was you arrive c. Did you arrive

6. I have not watched the novel but your mother does.

a. does b. is c. Has watched d. Has. E. Has not

7. I would like to go to Australia So do I

a. so do I b. So am I c. so would I d. neither do I e. So I would

8. He is Cold .Would you open the window, please?

a. he cold b. he is cold c. I have cold d. It has cold

2

9. Mom, are you at home ? No, we are out.

a. are at home you b. does you at home c. is you at home d. are you at home

10. Vasco is on vacation. He has gone to Portugal.

a. is gone b. Has gone c. Has been

3. Writing (10 marks) ?

Write about the touristic places in your country. Write about 150 words.

5

Hi there

In my Country, we have many places touristics to visit.

We have many provinces, with a lot of beaches with a lot of animals ~~to visit~~.

In Luanda we can go to Quissama Park, is a place where we can see animal from diverse especies, we can go also to Mussulo it is a beach so beautiful, it's a Island

→ Continue

in the middle of the sea, We also like to travel by Car and see mountains and animal, all the way.

We Have provinces with falls of Wather, with River, My Country is beautiful.

I always say to everyone that doesn't know Angola, to visit it; because it's a beautiful country and, we have a lot to offer.

APPENDIX K: Translation English/Portuguese: Assignment 2

"Joshua's Bright Future"

Assignment (2)

REPÚBLICA DE ANGOLA
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO
UNIVERSIDADE METODISTA

TRABALHO DE INGLÊS

NOME: [redacted]

NOME: [redacted]

Turno: Noturno
Sala: Laboratório 3

Pressas fora tocar há pouco iguais outras crianças para futebol. Os pais dele encorajam o futebol. Mas cuidadosamente controla quanto TELEVISÃO que ele assiste.

Joshua não só faísca luminosa na família. Monja Princess (3) também pode ler e pode escrever e pode saber as tábuas de multiplicar dela.
Inteligência parece estar na família. O pai de Joshua estudou química na Universidade de Lagos na Nigéria e o doutor mais jovem de Joshua à idade de. Sade de mãe tem um de de história
Os cinco - siting ano-velho ao compute ris a delícia de um professor - ou pesadelo, dependendo de nowyou o vêem.

Jshua Bright é uns cinco - ano o gênio de criança velho que leamed para multiplicar quando ele tinha dois anos e está aprendendo álgebra e geometria agora. Ele não começou escola primária contudo mas ele já é completado a metade de um curso de matemáticas de scool alto projetado para crianças envelheceu 14 a 16.

Se ele passa o Certificado Geral de escola de Educação Secundária que deixa curso que ninguém duvida - ele será assim na Inglaterra, um país com uma população de 60 milhões.

Ele aprende depressa é um prazer para o ensinar. Mas o outro lado de Joshua é que ele é muito exigindo porque ele tem uma necessidade constante a leam. Se você não o mantém interessado que ele é provável a provedifficult, o relatório escolar dele diz.

Oshua de J vem de uma família de britsh de achievers perto que originalmente é da Nigéria. O pai Gbola dele (40) é um professor de ciência que corre um vookshop Cristão no subúrbio de Londres de Hackney, e mãe Sade é um wilth de escritório de Pessoal o municipatily local.

É modesto sobre as realizações do filho deles/delas e não pensa ele é excepcional.
"Toda criança tem um presente, e está até os pais e professores identificar o presente e encorajar isto", diz Gbola que "eu gostaria de levar o crédito para o talento de meu filho, mas Iknow é um presente de Deus.

"Ele está contendendo realmente bem com o programa de matemáticas. Algumas pessoas poderiam pensar que nós estamos pondo presseure nele mas mim que di não vêem isto gostar isso. Você tem um presente você tem que trazer isto fora no aberto."

Não há nenhum ponto o segurando, diz Sade (32).
"Nós estamos muito orgulhosos dele e nós sabemos com o conhecimento dele ele irá muito distante."

Gbola descobriu o gênio do filho dele por casualidade para matemáticas quando ele olayed ele fitas de tábuas de multiplicar que ele usa para ensinar os meninos mais velhos. À delícia de Gbola o Joshua começou a recitar as mesas.



Mas as habilidades dele vão além de matemáticas. Ele poderia ler e weite pela idade de theree e já fala dois idiomas estrangeiros.
O Joshua e o pai dele se despertam às 7 é cada e diz togethes de preces matinais. "Ouro está em controle - ele deu para hin o presente. Nós Lhe pedimos a ajuda dele, "diz Gbola.

Eles estudam matemáticas de escola secundária durante uma hora antes do café da manhã, então o Joshua vai embora para a escola maternal de igreja à que ele se juntou a idade três. Os professores dizem lá que eles o puseram int uma classe normal mas eles estão atentos das necessidades especiais dele.

Depois que escola que ele estuda para outra hora e um meio com o pai dele, enquanto fazendo álgebra simples, geometria e squere arraiga em matemáticas. Nos tempo livre jogos computador jogos dele como um a favor de-mas ele assiste a TELEVISÃO de childrem e gree, um mestrado em administração de pessoal estuda lei em uma universidade de Londres - enquanto fazendo o trabalho de pessoal de tempo integral dela e cuidando o Joshua, Princesa e bebê monja Akisola (4 meses).

Gbola diz que os pais têm que fazer um papel no educação do childrem deles/delas. "Professores são dedicados mas você hipocrisia espere muito os" forme. Ele diz.
" Apoio de pais preocupação essencial para as crianças que não têm isso."

[redacted] — Engenharia Informática



Joshua - a genius at five.

He's still in nursery school but he studies high school maths in his spare time . . .

Joshua's Bright future

THE five-year-old boy sitting at the computer is a teacher's delight – or nightmare, depending on how you see him.

Joshua Bright is a five-year-old child genius who learned to multiply when he was two and is now learning algebra and geometry. He hasn't started primary school yet but he's already completed half of a high school maths course designed for children aged 14 to 16.

If he passes the General Certificate of Secondary Education school-leaving course – which no one doubts – he'll be the youngest person ever to do so in England, a country with a population of 60 million.

He learns so quickly it's a pleasure to teach him. But the other side of Joshua is that he's very demanding because he has a constant need to learn. If you don't keep him interested he's likely to prove difficult, his school report says.

Joshua comes from a British family of high achievers who originally are from Nigeria. His dad Gbola (40) is a science teacher who runs a Christian bookshop in the London suburb of Hackney, and mom Sade is a personnel officer with the local municipality. Both are modest about their son's achievements and don't think he's exceptional.

"Every child has a gift, and it's up to the parents and teachers to identify the gift and encourage it," says Gbola. "I'd like to take the credit for my son's talent, but I know it's a gift from God.

"He's coping really well with the maths syllabus. Some people might think we're putting pressure on him but I don't see it like that. If you have a gift you must bring it out into the open."

"There's no point in holding him back," says Sade (32). "We're very proud of him and we know with his knowledge he'll go very far."

Gbola discovered his son's genius for maths by chance when he played him tapes of multiplication tables which he uses to teach older boys. To Gbola's delight Joshua began reciting the tables.

But his abilities go beyond maths. He could read and write by the age of three and already speaks two foreign languages.

Joshua and his dad wake at 7 am each day and say morning prayers together. "God is in control – He has given him the gift. We ask Him for His help," says Gbola.

They study high school maths for an hour before breakfast, then Joshua goes off to the church nursery school he joined at age three. Teachers there say they've put him into a normal class but they're aware of his special needs.

After school he studies for another hour and a half with his dad, doing simple algebra, geometry and square roots in maths.

In his spare time he plays computer games like a pro – but he watches children's TV and rushes out to play soccer just like other kids. His parents encourage the soccer, but carefully control how much TV he watches.

Joshua's not the only bright spark in the family. Sister Princess (3) can also read and write and knows her multiplication tables.

Cleverness seems to run in the family. Joshua's dad studied chemistry at the University of Lagos in Nigeria and Joshua's uncle Akinyemi became Nigeria's youngest doctor at the age of 20.

Mom Sade has a history degree, a master's degree in personnel management and studies law at a London university – while doing her full-time personnel job and looking after Joshua, Princess and baby sister Akisola (4 months).

Gbola says parents have to play a part in their children's education. "Teachers are dedicated but you can't expect too much from them," he says.

"Support from parents is essential. I worry for the children who don't have that."

Five-year-old who studies schoolwork meant for kids 10 years older

APPENDIX L: Grammar Booklet – Assignment 4

Assignment 4

METHODIST UNIVERSITY OF ANGOLA
COURSE CLINICAL ANALYSIS AND
PUBLIC HEALTH
GRAMMAR BOOKLET



[redacted]

PRODUCE BY:

Names	Numbers
[redacted]	
[redacted]	
[redacted]	25
[redacted]	
[redacted]	
[redacted]	

Page 1

INDEX

COUNT AND UNCOUNT

SOME AND ANY

MUCH AND MANY

COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

Page 2

INTRODUTION

COUNT AND UNCOUT

COUNT: are words like chair, car. They are the names of things that we can count: we can say one car, two chairs and so ane they can be singular (a cat, one book) or plural (two chairs, loits of books).
COUNT: nouns refer to things that exist as separate and distinct individual units. They usually refer to what can be perceived by the senses.
COUNT: we can say nice but not two nices.

Eg: Singular countable
Bind flower

Eg: countable
Photos hates
Houses cars

UNCOUNT: nouns refer to things that can't be counted because they are thought of as wholes that can't be cut into parts. They often refer to abstraction and occasionally have a collective meaning (for example, furniture).
UNCOUNT nouns are words like nice, sugar, petrol and water these are things that we can't.
UNCOUNT nouns are only singular, and we cannot use a /an with them to say what something is made of.
The following words are uncount in English (but countable in some other languages). They are normal only singular, and we cannot use a / an with them. Not travel furniture.
Advice baggage bread furniture hair information know uge luck, luggage news spaghetti and macaroni et travel work.

Revision underline the **uncount** nouns.

Eup dog flower guitar love meat music eat

Sat snow sugar women wool oil photo

Page 3

SOME AND ANY

FORM

Some + Affirmative + Plural.

We use some un affirmative sentences, un questions which expect the answer and without nouns if the meaning is clear or when we want to encourage people to say "**yes**".

Eg: I'd like some water.
I need some sugar.

FORM

Question / Negative + Plural nouns.

We use **any** in negative sentences and questions but are not negative.
We can use **any** to mean one or anther it's not important with this meaning any is common in affirmative sentences and we can use any to talk about limited number or quantities.

Eg: Is there any water in the fridge?
Are there any restaurant?

Page 4.

MUCH AND MANY

We use **much** with singular (uncountable) nouns, and many with plural.

It is the some what how much with singular and how many. With plural.

How much milk? How languages. We use much with singular (uncount) nouns, and many with plural.

Do you eastern to much music?
Do you go to many concerts?

REGULAR COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

Comparatives and superlatives are forms special forms of adjectives. They are used to compare to or more things. Generally, comparatives are formed using **-er** and superlatives are formed using **–est**.

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DEVELOPMENT

COUNT AND UNCOUT

A special case of uncount nouns in a count sense has to do with classification. Sometimes a usually uncount noun can be understood as one item separate and distintfrom other items of the same category.

The nouns that function in this way often denote foods and beverages: food(s), wine(s), bread(s), coffee(s), fruit(s), and so on. Examples:

- There are several French wines to choose from. (=kinds of wine)
- I prefer Sumatran coffees to Colombian. (=kinds of coffee)
- We use a variety of different batters in our bakery. (=kinds of batter)

A recent entry into this class is homework, which at least among some students has the count plural homework's in addition to its uncount use. (For example, "You're missing three of the homework's from the first part of the course.") Because this usage is not firmly established and is likely to be considered non-standard, you should check with your instructor before using it in writing.

These exceptions require that the rule for pluralizing be revised: count nouns and nouns used in a count sense pluralize; uncount nouns and nouns used in a uncount sense do not.

The two possibilities in each half of the rule require different choices. If you know that a particular noun must be either count or uncount and cannot be both; you need to decide only if it is possible to pluralize the noun. On the other hand, if you know that a particular noun may be used in either a count or uncount sense, then you need to decide whether it is appropriate to pluralize.

Page 6

MUCH AND MANY

Much and many are used mostly in questions and negatives. They are unusual in affirmative +sentence in an informal stile; we prefer expressions like a lot of.

Do you get much snow in winter not much but we get a lot of rain not (we get much rain have you got many English friends? No I haven't got many English friends. But live got a lot of American friends.
We use how much with singular (uncount) nouns, and how many with plural.
How much milk do you want?
She doesn't speak much English.
She doesn't buy many cloths.
Plays / Shakespeare / write. How many plays did Shakespeare write?

Page 7

COMPARATIVE OR SUPERLATIVE

We use comparatives to compare people and things with other people and things.
A is bigger than B.
John is a more careful driver than Robin.

Comparative + **er**

Green - greener
Safe – safer
Rich – richer
Small – smaller

Superlative + **est**

Green – greenest
Safe – safest
Rich – richest
Small - smallest

We use superlatives (usually with the) to compare people and things with all of the group that thy are in.

a- Is the biggest of the there letters.
b- **A, B** and **C**. John is the most careful driver in the family.

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CONCLUSION

COUNT AND UNCOUNT

We use how many with plural count nouns: how many newspapers do you read every day?

How many euros you got?

We use much with uncount nouns: how much paper is the printer?

How much Money have you got?

Count plural: can I have some chips?

She has a lot of books, and many are autographed I have fewer pencils than you.

Uncount: can I have some water?

She has a lot of strength, and much is due to her upbringing.

Page 9

SOME AND ANY

I'd like some water, I have got any Money, have you got any sugar?

Here are some flowers for you.

There aren't any trains today do you speak any anther languages?

I'd like some / any help.

There aren't some / any litters for you.

Have you got some /any brothers your sisters?

We need some / any more milk.

She's got some / any interesting friends.

We use some in questions which expect the answer for example appears or requests.

Would you like some more coffee?

Could I have some head?

We use any witch words like never, without or hard witch have negative meanings.

They never girl me any help.

You made hardly any mistakes.

I got, there without any difficulty.

We can some and any without nouns if the meaning is clear.

Can you lend me some money? Sorry I haven't got any I need some envelopes I bring you some.

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Forming regular comparatives and superlatives

How these forms are created depends on how many syllables these are there are in adjective.

Syllables are like sound beats. For instance sing contains one syllable, but singing contains two sing and in. Here are rules:

ADJECTIVE FORM COMPARATIVE SUPERLATIVE

Only one syllable ending in examples, wide fine, cute.

Only one syllable, with one vowel and one consonant at the and examples: Hog, Bing, and Fat.

Only one syllable, with more than one vowel or that one consonant at the and example: Light, neat, fast.

Two syllables, ending in Y. example: Happy, Silly, and Lonely.

Two syllables or more.

Add **–R:** wider, finer cuter.

Double the consonant, and add **–ER:** hotter, bigger, and fatter.

Add **–ST** widest, finest, cutest. Double the consonant adds **–EST:** hottest, biggest, fattest.

Add **–EST** lightest, neatest, fastest, change Y to I then add – **EST:** happiest, silliest loneliest. Use most before.

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EXAMPLES

What is the superlative of small?
Smaller, smelliest, smallest.

What is the superlative of unpleasant?
Unpleasant, most unpleasant, more unpleasant, unpleasanttest.

What is the superlative of soft?
Softest, softies, most soft.

What is the comparative of heat?
Heater, heartier, hatter, none of these.

APPENDIX M: Exam Equivalent Test – Version A

[redacted]

UNIVERSIDADE METODISTA DE ANGOLA (UMA)

PROVA DE FREQUÊNCIA DE LÍNGUA INGLESA

[redacted]

Cursos: - Língua Portuguesa e Comunicação **Prova A**
- Análises Clínicas e Saúde Pública – Turmas: A e B

1. Reading

Philippa Robbins is a scientist. She lives in a flat in oxford, and she study biology at the university. Every day she gets up at 6.30 and has three cups of coffee. She does not eat anything for breakfast. She starts work in her laboratory at 7.00, and she works until lunchtime. Then she goes for a short walk in the park. She usually finishes work at 6.00, but sometimes she does not finish until 10.00. In the evening she often eats in a restaurant, because she does not like cooking. Every winter she and her husband fly to America, where they visit American laboratory. They stay in a friend's house for two weeks. They never want to go back to Oxford, because they love hot weather.

In Soars, Liz. (2006:70). *New Headway Elementary –workbook –The Third edition.* OUP

1. True or False. Correct the false sentences

1. Philippa lives in London. F
2. She is a doctor F
3. She works in an office. F
4. She starts work at 7.30 F
5. She often eats in a restaurant. V
6. She doesn't like cooking. V

2. Write the questions for the following answers

1. Where they do from ?
   They're from Namibia.
2. Where's old ?
   She's 28.
3. Is he a doctor ?
   No, he isn't. She's a nurse.
4. Where do you live?
   I live in Kuando – Kubango
5. Are you a Student ?
   I'm a student. I study at Methodist University in Luanda.

1

7. Where she do You live ?
She lives in a flat in the centre of town.

9. who's She? Philippa ?
He's Pedro's wife.

6. Does he likes ?
He likes cooking and reading.

8. Where is She ?
She's my sister.

10. Are You fine ?
I'm fine thank you.

3. Choose the correct sentence.

4/6,5

1. I'm a doctor. V
I'm doctor. F

2. I have twenty – nine years old. V
I am twenty – nine years. F

3. I no married F
I'm not married. V

4. My sister's name is Marta. F
My sisters name is Marta V

5. She married. F
She's married. V

6. I'm an uncle. F
I'm a uncle V

7. I have three brother. F
I have three brothers. V

8. Peter's the son of my sister. F
Peter's my sister's son. V

9. She comes from Japan. V
She come from Japan F

10. What he do in his free time? F
What does he do in his free time? V

11. Does she has two sons? V
Does she have two sons? F

12. What's he's address? F
What's his address? V

13. He isn't married F
He doesn't married V

Writing
Choose one topic. (80 words).

1. Write an email to a friend about your class.
2. My best friend
3. My favourite holiday

1,5/5,5

[redacted]

I like max class, because is interesting. The Classroom is big. Every day go to the School ate 7.30. Sometimes finish until 10.00

2

APPENDIX N: Exam Equivalent Test – Version B

República de Angola

Universidade Metodista de Angola

U.M.A. Caminho de Sucesso

PROVA B

English Frequency Test

[redacted]

Name---[redacted]

Number---[redacted] Course---Teologia

Read the small Text carefully and answer the questions

Joseph wants to test his brothers

Joseph wants to know if his 10 older brothers are still mean and unkind. So he says: you are spies. You came to find where our country is weak. No, we are not, they say. We are honest men. We are all brothers. We were 12. But one brother is no more, and the youngest is at home with our father.

Joseph pretends not to believe them. He keeps the brother named Simeon in prison and lets the others take food and go home. But he tells them: when you come back, you must bring your youngest brother with you.

When they return home to Canaan, the brothers tell their father Jacob everything that happened. Jacob is very sad. Joseph is no more, he cries, and now Simeon is no more. I will not let you take my youngest son Benjamin. But when their food begins to run out (finish), Jacob has to let them take Benjamin to Egypt so they can get more food.

1. **True or false questions (4 points)**

a. Joseph does not want to know anything about his brothers---False

b. He says: you are spies---False

c. They were more than 12 brothers---True

d. Jacob was very happy about the news---True

e. Jacob let take his youngest brother Benjamin---True

2. Put the following sentences into the negative form then and into the interrogative form.
(10 points)

a. Joseph pretends to believe them.

Negative form

Joseph is not prentends to believe them.

Interrogative form Joseph is he pretends to believe them?

b. He keeps the brother named Simeon in prison.

Negative form

He isn't keeps the brother named Simeon in prison.

Interrogative form Is he keeps the brother named Simeon in Prison?

c. We are honest men

We aren't honest men.

Negative form

Are we honest men?

Interrogative form

~~Now Joseph she isn't sees his brothers Coming~~ are not

d. Now Joseph sees his brothers coming

Negative form

Now Joseph isn't she sees his brothers Coming.

Interrogative form

Now Joseph is she sees his brothers coming?

3. **Write a short composition about your religious life (6 points)**

I'm a Pastor methodist church. I'm finish my course for teologia in Republic of Congo. I'm comeeed working in kimpese church. In Angola, am working eigth years am'not received the money.

I work in Ambuila, Uige, Catumbela, Fonte, Belem churchs.

I life in Futungo am work in Rita webba Church one week.

God bless you and have a good luck

Finish, tank you my teacher

[redacted]