# From Silence to Success: Inclusive Oracy Strategies for EAL Pupil

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# Outcomes

- To understand typical additional language development for EAL learners
- To understand the principes behind oracy development for EAL learners
- To learn about some practical “talk-rich” strategies
- To identify at least one change you will make in the next week

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**What EAL students do you have in school?**

Think of a pupil who understands more than they are able to say. What might be holding them back?

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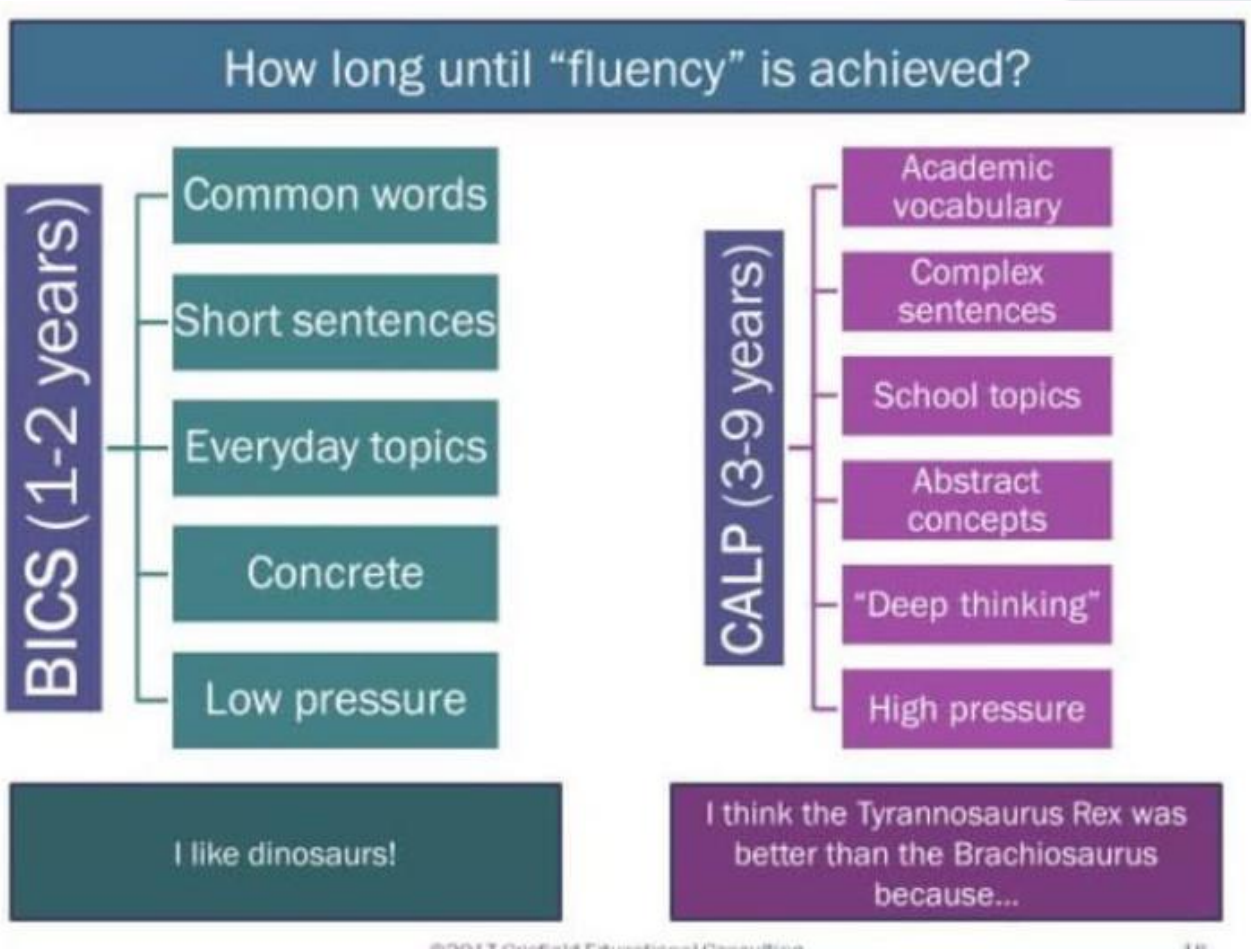
- It can have 5-7 years or longer for EAL pupils to fully develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. This is needed to be successful examinations.
- Most EAL students have developed Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency by KS4 (Wilson et al, 2005).
- **BICS vs. CALP Gap:** A student might chat fluently with peers in the corridor (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) long before they can comprehend a GCSE or secondary science textbook (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency).



# Stages of Learning English as an EAL pupil

| Stage | What Students Typically Do | Key Teaching Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Pre-Production (Silent Period) (0-6 months) | Minimal spoken English; relies on gestures, visuals, and observation | Visuals, TPR, translation tools, graphic organisers, non-verbal responses |
| 2. Early Production (6 months to 1 year) | Uses single words or short phrases; frequent errors | Sentence stems, fill-in activities, picture matching, choice questions |
| 3. Speech Emergence (1-3 years) | Speaks in simple sentences; asks basic questions | Dialogue frames, sentence starters, collaborative tasks, Venn diagrams |
| 4. Intermediate Fluency (3-5 years) | Uses more complex language; developing academic language | Subject vocabulary, text annotation, debates, writing frames |
| 5. Advanced Fluency (5-7 years+) | Near-native proficiency; manages complex academic tasks | High challenge, critical thinking, sophisticated writing and feedback |

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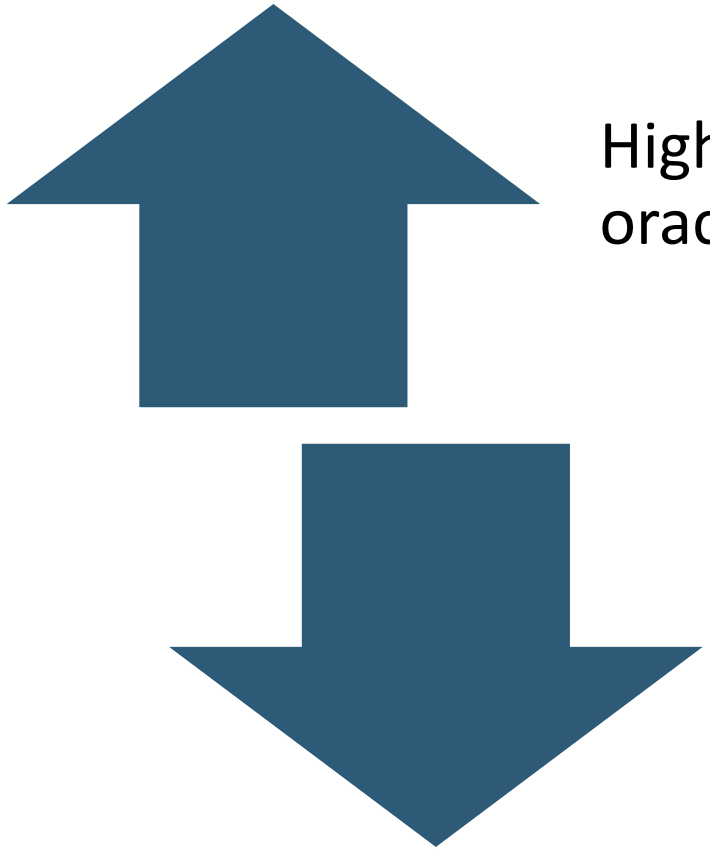
# How can this be faster or slower in secondary schools?



High level first language literacy and oracy

The "BICS" Traps &Stage 4 “Plateau”

Social Anxiety

Trauma or interrupted formal education

| Stage | What it Looks Like in High School | Classroom Strategy |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Pre-Production** | Student may understand the science or maths concept but cannot express it in English. | Avoid "babyish" primary school resources. Use translated high-school-level texts, dual-language glossaries, and visual flowcharts. |
| **2. Early Production** | Student gives one-word answers or fragments. Peers may dominate conversations. | Provide high-level sentence stems (e.g., *"The data shows that...", "I agree because..."*) so they can participate with dignity. |
| **3. Speech Emergence** | Student speaks in simple sentences but struggles to write an academic essay or lab report. | Use graphic organizers (like paragraph frames or T-charts) to break down text structures without lowering the intellectual demand. |
| **4. Intermediate Fluency** | Student sounds completely fluent in conversation but fails written assessments or misinterprets exam prompts. | Explicitly teach **Tier 2 vocabulary** (words like *analyze, contrast, evaluate, factor*) and highlight how exam questions are structured. |

# Being silent

Refer to the pupil by name to get their attention.
Speak normally using simple sentences.
Don’t speak too much.
Use gesture/ facial expression/visuals.
Sit the pupil where they can see you.
Talk about an activity while it’s happening.
Don’t insist the pupil speaks.
Lots of repetition.



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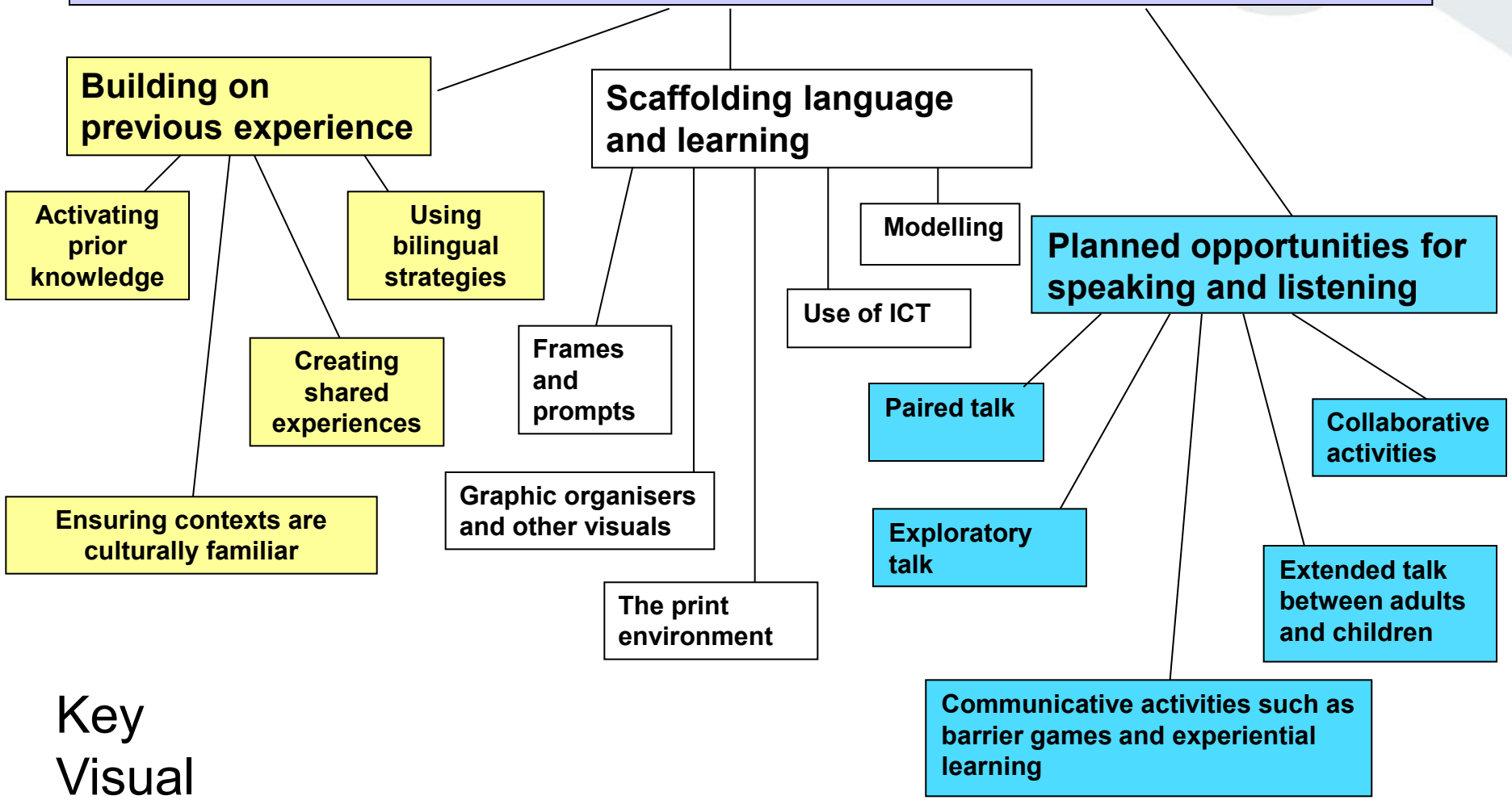
# Access to the curriculum: making contexts supportive for children learning EAL




Key Visual

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# Why Oracy Matters for EAL Learners

**Speaking develops language.**

EAL pupils need opportunities to:

- Rehearse language before writing.
- Hear academic vocabulary used correctly.
- Practise sentence structures.
- Clarify understanding with peers.
- Develop confidence.

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# The Talk-Rich Teaching Toolkit

**Practical, research-informed guidance for teachers, school leaders and support staff who want to promote oracy, belonging and learning with multilingual learners.**

University of Reading

In collaboration with

Hampshire County Council

Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service

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# 5 Principles of Toolkit

School Belonging

Talk-rich

Inquiry-led

Collaborative

Small group

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# The benefits of being bilingual…



# A talk-rich classroom:

- ✅ Gives pupils time to think
- ✅ Values exploratory talk
- ✅ Encourages collaboration
- ✅ Makes language visible
- ✅ Focuses on listening as well as speaking

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# Planning Structured and Scaffolded Oracy Activities

*Information gap task*

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# Substitution Tables

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is<br>Are | Italy | black? | Yes it is<br>No it isn't<br>Yes they are<br>No they aren't |
| | Poland | yellow? | |
| | France | blue? | |
| | Germany | green? | |
| | the UK | pink? | |
| | the Netherlands | red? | |
| | Austria | white? | |
| | Belgium | purple? | |

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# Substitution frames / phrase banks

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Wolverine<br>He | seems<br>looks<br>appears to be | aggressive.<br>angry.<br>violent.<br>animal-like.<br>like an animal. |
| He does not | seem like<br>look like | a hero.<br>a villain.<br>a good and honest person. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The poet | builds<br>constructs<br>creates<br>composes<br>paints<br>conjures up<br>uses | vibrant images<br>vivid images<br>images of wild and mysterious places<br>unusual images |

to

| | |
|---|---|
| convey feelings of<br>embody the sense of<br>suggest | loss and grief<br>power and energy<br>force and violence<br>excitement and joy |

# Suggestion: lead with speaking activities

**Idea 10:** Commenting on the views of others

**Bob:** I'd hate to live in the countryside. Life in rural areas would just be so dull!

**Brenda:** I think it would be amazing! Living in big cities feels exhausting - the pace of life, the cost, the crowded public transport. Plus, most urban areas in my country are really polluted.

Who do you most agree with and why?
What would you say next if you were Bob?
Which synonyms of 'countryside' and 'big cities' did you notice in the dialogue?

How could we scaffold this activity?

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# Building Vocabulary Through Talk

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# Suggestion: lead with speaking activities

**Idea 2:** Think of three…

Tweak for your past topics

Teams of three.

Choose a scribe. The scribe cannot add their own ideas down when scribing - the ideas must come from other team members.

Change scribes every minute

| 5 minute challenge! | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name 3 parts of the alimentary canal | | | |
| Name 3 words related to nerve cells | | | |
| 3 parts of a leaf cell | | | |
| 3 parts of an animal cell | | | |
| 3 parts of the heart | | | |
| 3 enzymes associated with the digestive system | | | |
| 3 parts of the respiratory | | | |

Teams only get points if their answers are different to other teams' answers

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# Suggestion: lead with speaking activities

**Idea 6a:** Review tasks involving active listening

-




DO NOW

Student A: You have 1 minute. Describe the pH scale to your partner in as much detail as possible.

Student B: Listen to Student A describe the pH scale. Tick any of the following words or phrases they use:

- ☐ ranges from ___ to ___
- ☐ greater than
- ☐ less than
- ☐ indicates (that)
- ☐ acid / alkali
- ☐ mild / strong

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# Suggestion: lead with speaking activities

**Idea 6:** Spoken review tasks

- Allow 3 minutes so both partners can practice

- Prime the learners for speaking in front of the class during feedback: ‘Amber, I’m going to ask you to complete *this* sentence, okay? Have a practice.’

DO NOW

How would you complete these sentences?

The pH scale shows …
The pH scale ranges…
A value less than…
A value greater than…
A value of 7…

Share your ideas with a partner.

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# Dictionaries and Glossaries

- Bilingual dictionaries
- Develop own word banks or glossaries
- Highlight key words in speaking or writing
- EAL subject specific vocabulary packs




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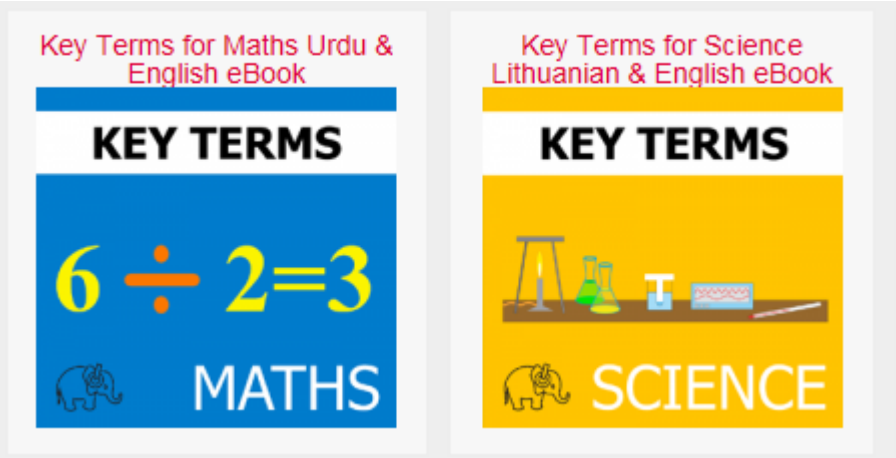
# Translation

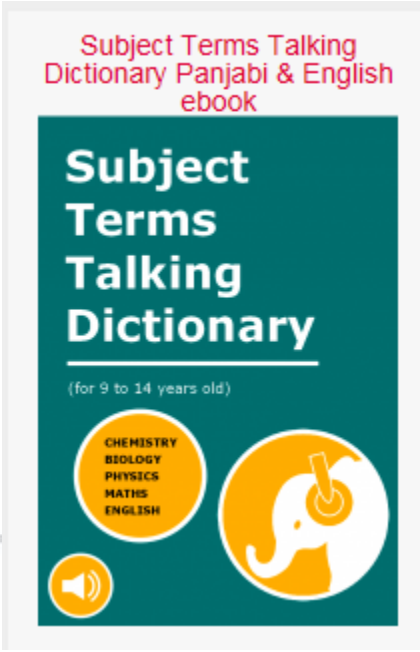
Google translate – Input - typing, speaking and camera
Output – written and audio and camera

| ENGLISH | ROMANIAN |
| --- | --- |
| TWINS | GEMENII |

Ah, there's two!

Mantra Lingua – Talking pens or e-dictionaries

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# Collocation Examples

The lion roars.
The lion bellows.

The volcano erupts violently.
The volcano erupts strongly.

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# Collocate



Strong tea/coffee
Tall tree
Heavy rain
Rich taste
Big mistake
Great fun

# Don't Collocate



Powerful tea/coffee
High tree
Weighty rain
Deep taste
Large mistake
Big fun

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**One thing I will stop doing...**
**One thing I will start doing...**
**One strategy I will use next week...**

Extra challenge -Observe your next lesson and estimate:

- Teacher talk = _____ %
- Pupil talk = _____ %

Then ask:
"Whose voice is doing most of the learning?"

"Oracy is not an extra. For EAL learners it is often the bridge between understanding and achievement."

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# Further support

Access and Engagement in ..... Teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language

English, Maths, Science, ICT, MFL, RE, History, Geography, D&T, Art, Music

The Talk-Rich Teaching Toolkit - Talk Rich Teaching

https://ealresources.bell-foundation.org.uk/

http://www.collaborativelearning.org/

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