Cumbria County Council

County Council

Developing Speech and Language with children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)

# Contents

**This guidance should be used alongside the EAL /SEN filter questions and the Investigating concerns about children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) who may have Special Educational needs guidance. Both of these documents are on the Local Offer.**

The term English as an Additional Language (EAL) covers both children and young people who are new to English and those advanced learners who still need support developing academic language and grammar. Research shows that a child who is new to learning English will take approximately 2 years to become fluent in conversational English and a further 5-7 years to become competent in the full use of academic English. It is common for a child to go through a silent phase when starting to learn a new language. Research shows that children learn EAL best in the classroom, when grouped with articulate good models for language and learning and when planning includes a consideration of vocabulary development, language functions and language structures.

For new arrivals, it is important to find out as much as possible about a bilingual learner's home language/s such as word order in sentences etc. as children will transfer what they know about how home languages work to their acquisition of new languages. Further guidance on English as an Additional Language in EYFS, New arrivals at Key Stage 1 and 2, Key Stages 3 and 4 and Advanced Learners can be found on the Local Offer **https://localoffer.cumbria.gov.uk/kb5/cumbria/fsd/advice.page?id=Mq3v-a2bPYI**

It is also important to find out as much as possible about young children's development in their home languages as any delay in home language development will affect their progress in learning English as an Additional Language and could indicate an underlying speech language and communication difficulty. There is a parent questionnaire in various home languages on the local offer to assist school staff investigating early language development. **https://localoffer. cumbria.gov.uk/kb5/cumbria/fsd/advice.page?id=Mq3v-a2bPYI**

Staff should measure pupil progress using appropriate EAL assessment levels such as The Bell Foundation **https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/teaching-resources/eal-assessment-framework/** or the NASSEA EAL assessment **https://www.nassea.org.uk/product/nassea-eal-assessment-framework-tracker/**

If there are concerns regarding progress or potential Special Educational Needs, advice from the Specialist Advisory Teacher for English as an Additional Language and other professionals can be accessed through the Early Help form which can be found on the Cumbria Safeguarding Children website under the Professional Section.
**https://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/earlyhelp/earlyhelpassessmentsignsofwellbeingandsuccessdelivery.asp**

| Strategy | Examples and Further Information |
|---|---|
| **Collaborative learning** | Collaborative activities are any activities where learners are working co-operatively in pairs or groups which stimulate group discussion and language associated with the task. Activities include:<br><br>• Pair, talk trio and small group discussions<br>• Completing shared tasks in a pair or group, e.g., matching, sorting, ranking<br>• Activities or games with a competitive element, e.g., bingo, 4 in a row etc.<br>• Drama and role play<br>• Information exchange activities, including barrier games and jigsaw activities Free resources and activities can be found both on the collaborative learning website and The Bell Foundation website. Both websites also have an explanation of what collaborative learning is and why it is such a good strategy for learners of EAL and specific information on jigsaw activities and information gap activities.<br><br>**http://www.collaborativelearning.org/**<br>**https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/** |
| **Encourage parents to continue to use the home language/s** | Support parents in understanding the importance of continued use of home language/s for reading, discussing school curriculum learning English and becoming a balanced bilingual.<br>**https://wordsforlife.org.uk/search/?q=bilingualism**<br><br>Information on developing speech in children under 5 can be found on the Talk to your baby website<br>**https://literacytrust.org.uk/search/?query=bilingual**<br><br>Information on developing speech in children under 5 can be found on the Literacy Trust  website **https://literacytrust.org.uk/early-years/bilingual-quick-tips/**<br><br>**https://www.booktrst.org.uk/books-and-reading/tips-and-advice/reading-tips**<br>Information for parents on sharing books 0-12 months, 3-4 years and 4-6 years in a variety of home languages. Includes suggestions for asking who, what, why, question, what can you see on this page? How to do think the character feels? and retelling the story in their own words using the pictures. |

| Strategy | Examples and Further Information |
|---|---|
| **Ensure consistency between home and school** | • Use photographs etc. to encourage children to talk about their school day using home language/s<br>• Visual timetable used in school shared with parents/carers so they can discuss and reinforce using the home language.<br>• For new arrivals share the "communication fans" or visual support used in school, so parents can reinforce and reassure the children that they are able to let the teacher know if they need the toilet or feel sick etc.<br>• Communicate using symbols, home - school diary et cetera with parents and carers<br>• Dual language information for parents on school expectations<br>• Find out parent/s carers preferred way of communicating with school. For parents/carers who are also developing their English language it can be helpful to text or email as they can use translation apps or ask friends and relatives.<br>• Ensure parents understand what homework needs to be done, how to sign the reading record etc. How to check for letters in the "book bag" A picture of a school bookbag with some bullet points in simple language is useful. |
| **Pair the child with study buddies** | It is helpful to pair new arrivals with a child who shares the same home language where possible. Consider introducing the Hampshire Young Interpreters Scheme in school<br>**https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/emtas/supportinglanguages/young-interpreters-guide** |
| **Multisensory learning and practical activities "hands-on" learning** | This is part of Quality First teaching and is particularly important for EAL learners. As they can be fully engaged in a task and the language is contextualised. Complex ideas can be introduced in concrete, visual and tactile ways and children have many opportunities for exploratory talk and consolidating their learning. |
| **Visual support to accompany speech. Visual timetables** | This can be real objects, pictures It can take up to 2 years for children to learn the basics in English and enough to get by in the playground. It can take them 5-7 years to develop the more complex language needed to complete GCSEs. Visual support is particularly important for pupils new to English and in the early stages of learning EAL and in group teaching sessions.<br><br>• Encourage children in the early stages of learning English when they may be silent and understand more than they can say to respond non-verbally. They can sequence pictures (with or without a sentence underneath), to retell a story to rearrange pictures for example to reproduce the life cycle of a frog to demonstrate their understanding.<br>• Use prompt cards with pictures to remind children what to do<br>• **Graphic organisers** are useful for learners at all stages of learning English as an Additional language. For learners new to English, graphic organisers can help make the lesson easy to understand and allow the children to build on their prior knowledge of the topic. For more advanced English learners, graphic organisers can help students to clarify or organise their thoughts on a topic before concentrating on the academic language they will need to speak or write about it.<br>• **https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/visuals/** |
| **Gesture and signing BSL Makaton et cetera** | Monitor the children's non-verbal communication and use extra gestures. Be aware that in some cultures it is not appropriate for children to look adults directly in the eye.<br><br>Signing can help new arrivals in EYFS join in with songs and rhymes |

| Strategy | Examples and Further Information |
|---|---|
| **Use symbols to support spoken language or text** | For example, **www.widgit.com**<br><br>Visual sequences |
| **Put keywords with pictures on the wall** | Key words in a sentence or with an explanation can also be sent home so parents can discuss in home languages.<br>Consider developing a personal dictionary with key vocabulary for topics and accompanied by pictures where possible. |
| **Start with concrete and build up to more abstract language** | Informal social language can be moved towards more formal academic curriculum language registers through modelling and scaffolding. Exploratory talk leads to presentational talk and the more formal language used for writing.<br><br>Use speaking frames to scaffold the language structures.<br><br>Scaffold the structures or ideas you are focusing on by practising with familiar contexts.<br><br>More information on scaffolding, speaking and writing frames and modelling can be found on the Bell Foundation website in the Great Ideas section here **https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/** |
| **Continued focus on vocabulary development** | "You cannot write it if you cannot say it; you cannot say it if you haven't heard it." Pie Corbett, 2005<br><br>• Vocabulary development is essential for reading comprehension, writing and verbal expression for all children but particularly EAL children.<br>• Acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to children's learning and progress across the whole curriculum. Teachers should therefore develop vocabulary actively, building systematically on pupils' current knowledge. They should increase pupils' store of words in general;<br>• In addition, it is vital for pupils' comprehension that they understand the meanings of words they meet in their reading across all subjects, and older pupils should be taught the meaning of instruction verbs that they may meet in examination questions. It is particularly important to induct pupils into the language which defines each subject in its own right, such as accurate mathematical and scientific terms.<br><br>Vocabulary is key to reading comprehension. Readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what most of the words mean. As children learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary. EAL children can become accurate decoders but may well not understand what they are reading<br><br>• Ask children to underline words they don't understand and look at their meaning in the dictionary with a friend.<br>• Adults identify new and difficult words and explain their meaning |

| Strategy | Examples and Further Information |
|---|---|
| | **Games to develop vocabulary**<br>• Hangman, bingo, cloze procedure, crosswords, barrier games, matching keywords to definitions chain games, dominoes with characters in a story/play and a description. Games where a structure or phrase is repeated rather than just a word are particularly beneficial. For example: I went to the supermarket, and I bought… where each player needs to remember all the previous items and add one of their own. This can be used across all subjects in the curriculum: I am a plant and I have a stem. I am a plant and I have a stem and roots; I am a plant and I have a stem, roots, and leaves etc.<br>• More information on introducing new vocabulary can be found on the Bell Foundation website under the Great Ideas section.<br>• **https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/ introducing-new-vocabulary/**<br>• **https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/ flashcards/**<br><br>**A whole school approach to developing vocabulary**<br>**EXPLICIT TEACHING of vocabulary**<br><br>• Continue to develop home language as first languages are the best resource for learning two languages effectively<br>• Plan for vocabulary development<br>• Identify which vocabulary to teach<br>• Develop effective instructional routines<br>• A schoolwide approach to vocabulary learning is vital. Some schools use existing programmes such as the Word Aware books published by Routledge **https://www.routledge.com/**<br>• This scheme is for children aged 3-11 and consists of 3 books plus You Tube video clips. Book 1 explains the whole school approach to vocabulary learning and has a wealth of strategies and activities. Book 2 applies the principles of the approach and applies them in the context of the Early Years Foundation Stage. (EYFS.) Book 3 applies the principles in book one and provides a curriculum linked intervention programme suitable for those children requiring more specific intervention to facilitate their vocabulary development. this could include children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for some children learning English as an Additional Language.<br>• Bedrock Learning. **https://bedrocklearning.org/** which is a digital online programme for vocabulary development and is suitable for both Primary and Secondary children. |
| **Talk pairs, talk trios and small group work** | Including these will create opportunities for children to feel secure enough to try out their new language skills and gain confidence for example in a small group before speaking in a large group. oral work should be included before completing a reading or writing task. Use mini whiteboards to make it 'safe' to try answers in your talk pair or talk trio before answering in front of the whole class. |

| Strategy | Examples and Further Information |
|---|---|
| **Opportunities for children to retell stories with props and to use drama** | Storysacks and Talk for Writing will help children understand the story and aid vocabulary development. Retelling stories is an excellent way for children to learn the past tense. In EYFS and Key Stage One, story sacks can be used to stimulate language development and to support storytelling. Many books can be bought or borrowed from the school library service in bilingual editions so children can use their home languages to tell the story.<br>**https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/drama-and-role-play/** |
| **Awareness of language transfer errors and common grammatical errors made by children learning English as an Additional Language** | Language transfer errors are when grammatical structures and conventions of the home language are applied to the language being learned. (In this case, English.) For example, in German the verb comes at the end of the sentence so a child might say, "I am to school going." There are common aspects of English grammar which can cause difficulties for speakers of other languages, including use of articles/determiners a, an, and the, use of prepositions, use of pronouns etc. Examples of these common grammatical errors can be found in appendix 6. |
| **Consistency of gestures and symbols used by all the adults in the class or school** | This will aid the child's understanding of instructions such as listen, write, as well as for example time connectives, yesterday, tomorrow and in storytelling. |
| **Targeted differentiated questioning** | • Give children time to process after asking a question or giving them an instruction<br>• Use language suitable for the child's level of English<br>• If a child can't answer a question, the adult scaffolds and supports until the child can rather than answering the question or asking someone else to help<br>• Awareness of the BLANK 4 levels of questioning which move from simple, concrete questions to more difficult, abstract questions. Blank's questions encourage development of general language and vocabulary as well as skills in comprehension, reasoning, inferencing, predicting, and problem solving (Blank, 2000).<br>• In the Early Stages of learning English as an Additional Language, children will need questions based on naming objects for example to match their level of understanding of spoken English and their ability to express themselves. Don't ask long complex questions and expect children to be able to explain or make predictions until they have heard and used the appropriate language structures and tenses in context on multiple occasions.<br><br>**https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/blank_poster**<br>**Blanks Level Programme - Speech And Language Therapy London \| Birmingham \| Words First** |
| **Adults shorten their sentences and simplify vocabulary when giving instructions and ask the child to repeat the instructions** | Useful for the early stages of learning English as an Additional Language. Check for understanding and use sequencing strips, visuals, bullet points on the whiteboard so the new to English student is not overloaded with information. |

| Strategy | Examples and Further Information |
|---|---|
| **Opportunities for children to retell stories with props and use drama and role play** | In EYFS and Key Stage 1, Storysacks can be used for stimulating language development and supporting storytelling. Stories can be bought or borrowed from the school library service in bilingual editions so children can use their home language/s to tell the stories. Story telling is an excellent way to develop, descriptive and sequencing vocabulary and the use of past tense verbs. Many commonly used books are available in dual language, e books or sound enabled and can be read with a talking pen with downloaded sound files from Mantra Lingua **https://uk.mantralingua.com/**<br><br>Storysacks **https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/how-make-and-use-story-sack/**<br><br>Talk for Writing **https://www.talk4writing.com/**<br><br>**https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/drama-and-role-play/** |
| **Support for remembering language patterns e.g., hearing them again on an audio clip, or talking tin lid, dictaphone, recordable labels and PENpal talking pens etc** | Talk frames, Speaking and listening frames<br>Mantra lingua UK recordable labels etc. |
| **Provide forced alternatives so the child has a choice of two ideas, sentences, or answers and they repeat their choice** | This is used for beginner learners. For example, "Does this word mean "x" or "y"? "Would you measure the length of the school field in metres or millimetres?" |
| **Teacher and teaching assistant model the task and language before the children work independently**<br>**If child uses incorrect speak model back the correct and full sentence** | Great ideas modelling. Where possible children work orally with an adult first, then they could read the passage including the new vocabulary with a peer and discuss it. Then the pair/trio could<br>https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/modelling/<br><br>E.g., if a child tells you, "She falled down the stairs."  you could say, "Oh, she fell down stairs? I hope she didn't hurt herself when she fell!" |

| Strategy | Examples and Further Information |
|---|---|
| **Adults do not interrupt and give thinking time** | Give children thinking time to process the language after  asking a question or giving them an instruction. If you are asking for a response, consider asking a child a question then coming back for answer, or asking child after they have heard other children answering using the same language structure. |
| **Flexible grouping** | • Talk pairs or trios to give children confidence<br>• Provide good language role models when children are working independently<br>• Group children at the same language level the direct teaching |
| **Use of assessment data to pinpoint child's precise learning needs** | Use NASSEA or Bell Foundation Assessments and check samples of spoken language.<br><br>NASSEA **https://www.nassea.org.uk/eal-assessment-framework/**<br><br>Bell Foundation **https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/eal-assessment-framework/** |
| **Start new topics with a mind map of what children already know** | **https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/graphic-organisers/** |

# Appendix 1

| Name<br>Date of birth<br>Home language/s | Comments/observations | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Appears to understand no English | | |
| Speaks no English | | |
| Uses gesture/facial expressions to communicate | | |
| Communicates in home language with staff/children/those sharing home language | | |
| Watches other children/adults closely | | |
| Makes eye contact with other children/staff (Be aware that in some cultures it can be rude for a child to give direct eye contact to adults and that gestures vary between cultures.) | | |
| Joins in non-verbally with action rhymes | | |
| Imitates non-verbal actions of other children | | |
| Joins in play without speaking | | |
| Responds to children with gestures | | |
| Responds to requests by staff | | |
| Responds with gesture to requests to join in | | |
| Requests help from staff/other children by gesture | | |
| Protests about actions of other children | | |
| Follows verbal instructions supported with gestures | | |
| Offers toys/objects to staff/other children | | |
| Joins in with actions to songs/rhymes/signing | | |

| Name<br>Date of birth<br>Home language/s | Comments/observations | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Indicates likes/dislikes | | |
| Whispers | | |
| Beginning to use single words/short phrases | | |
| Names objects using single words | | |
| Joins in stories with refrains | | |
| Joins in verbally with singing | | |
| Follows verbal instructions | | |
| May recite numbers | | |
| Listens to others in small group when the activity interests them | | |
| Relies on props and visual support to understand stories and teacher talk | | |
| Uses gestures and limited talk in a clear context | | |
| Growing vocabulary for naming | | |
| Beginning to add some detail of colour/size | | |
| Gaining confidence interacting verbally with children in English | | |
| Understanding more English than s/he is able to use | | |
| Beginning to combine phrases e.g., "Car. Red one.", "Boy drinking." | | |
| Beginning to use language to talk about what is happening and might happen next | | |
| Beginning to listen to stories with increasing concentration. Can recall an event in a story | | |

| Name<br>Date of birth<br>Home language/s | Comments/observations | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Using more complex sentences. EAL errors apparent. | | |
| Listening with confidence and able to understand whole class interactions | | |
| Responds appropriately to extended teacher talk | | |
| Asking appropriate why? What? Why? How? When? questions | | |
| Range of oral language skills necessary to participate fully. Achieving at a similar level to peers with similar ability. EAL errors less apparent. | | |

# Appendix 2

**For children learning English as an additional language, it is important to find out from families about how children use language in their mother tongue and how they communicate at home.**

| | Name of Language | Understanding | Yes | No | Speaking | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language/s spoken at home with parents/ carers | | Can understand | | | Can use 1 or 2 words | | |
| | | | | | Can use phrases | | |
| | | | | | Can speak confidently using full sentences | | |
| | | | | | Speech is clear and easy to understand | | |
| Language/s spoken at home with extended family | | Can understand | | | Can use 1 or 2 words | | |
| | | | | | Can use phrases | | |
| | | | | | Can speak confidently using full sentences | | |
| | | | | | Speech is clear and easy to understand | | |
| Language your child prefers | | Can understand | | | Can use 1 or 2 words | | |
| | | | | | Can use phrases | | |
| | | | | | Can speak confidently using full sentences | | |
| | | | | | Speech is clear and easy to understand | | |
| Language/s your child uses outside the home | | Can understand | | | Can use 1 or 2 words | | |
| | | | | | Can use phrases | | |
| | | | | | Can speak confidently using full sentences | | |
| | | | | | Speech is clear and easy to understand | | |

**Age child started speaking in home language/languages**

Language_____     Age child started speaking this language _____     Age child started learning English _____

Language_____     Age child started speaking this language _____

# Appendix 3

## Language map: home and family life

| | Parent/Carer 1 | Parent/Carer 2 | Grandparents | Brothers and sisters | Others (e.g., family friends, Mosque, Polish School.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language/s spoken | | | | | |
| Language/s used for writing | | | | | |
| How much time does the child spend with this person? | | | | | |
| If the person speaks more than 1 language when is each language spoken? | | | | | |

# Appendix 4

## Language map: child

| | |
|---|---|
| Name and date of birth | |
| Language/s spoken | |
| Languages written | |
| Does the child attend a community language school? | |
| What language/s is/are used for reading? | |
| What language/s is /are used for watching tv? | |
| What language/s is/are used on the computer/ iPad/online gaming? | |

# Appendix 5

## Triggers for Concern

| | |
|---|---|
| **Low levels in first language** | • Any delay or difficulty in developing the home language/s will influence a child's development of English.<br>• On enrolment, it is very important to find out as much as you can about the child's use of home language/s<br>• Use parental questionnaire in appendix 1<br>• Use bilingual staff if available or parent/carer to get the child to retell a story and describe a picture in their home language and compare this to their use of English |
| **Parental concerns over development of a child's home language/s** | • It is very important to get information about a child's use and understanding of language and whether a child uses single words, short phrases or sentences in the home language/s<br>• Use parental questionnaire in appendix 1<br>• Is the child's speech clear and easy to understand?<br>• Is a referral to Speech and Language Therapy appropriate? |
| **Limited non-verbal communication** | • Observe the child's non-verbal communication and check using the communication checklist in appendix 2 and NASSEA/Bell Foundation assessments |
| **Remaining silent longer than expected when beginning to learn English** | • Monitor using NASSEA Assessment framework of the Bell Foundation EAL assessment Framework<br>• Is the child naturally quiet and shy?<br>• Check with parents if the child is chatty using his/her home language/s in social situations? |
| **Difficulties with English language development.**<br><br>**Poor verbal comprehension and expression and limited vocabulary, despite the classroom being a language rich environment and extra support for language development provided.** | • Pre tutoring<br>• Sending vocabulary for new topics home<br>• Use the strategies under the Great Ideas section on the Bell Foundation Website<br>• Consider using an intervention programme such as Talking Boxes for EYFS **https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-l-4422-talking-box-information-sheet**<br>• Free Talking Boxes resources on Cambridgeshire NHS website **https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/what-we-do/children-young-people-health-services-cambridgeshire/specialist-services/childrens-speech-and-language-therapy/activities-ideas-and-info/pre-school/talking-boxes**<br>• Talk Boost available from I CAN, the children's communication charity. This is used in several schools and is delivered by trained members of staff. It is suitable for children aged 4 to 7 including children in Reception class.<br>• Time to Talk or whatever speech and language small group interventions you use in school.<br>• Evaluate the success of this intervention. |

| Language acquisition at a slower rate compared to EAL peers sharing the same language or slower language rate than the pupil's siblings | •   Is progress continuing but at a slower rate?<br>•   Is all learning at a slower rate or just speech and language?<br>•   Is the gap widening? The NASSEA EAL assessment Framework has age related cut off points at which a new to English EAL pupil will be working at an age-appropriate level<br><br>The Levels are as follows EYFS NASSEA STEP 3<br>Key Stage 1 NASSEA STEP 6<br>Lower Key Stage 2 STEP 7<br>Upper Key Stage 2 STEP 7 |
|---|---|

# Appendix 6

## Common features of grammar with which EAL learners have difficulty

### Grammatical features presenting particular challenges for pupils learning EAL

(From the Primary National Strategy EAL materials Excellence and Enjoyment: Learning and Teaching for Bilingual children in the Primary Years (2006)

### Verbs

**Subject verb agreement**
Lynne Cameron's research found that some EAL learners who achieved level 3 at the end of Key Stage 2 still experience difficulty with subject verb agreement.

Omitting the final s in the 3rd person singular form of the simple present tense (verb stem + s) is a very common error for children learning EAL. This tense is used to describe routines (Every morning I arrive at school at 8.40. My friend arrives at 8.30) and habits (All lions eat meat. Simba the lion eats meat). It is a feature of the report text type.

**Verb endings**
There were errors with verb endings in the scripts of EAL children achieving level 3 at the end of Key Stage 2.

The ending is easier to hear in some words than in others. It is clear in, for example, visited and planted but in other cases 'ed' endings are hard to hear e.g., closed, watered. Children may miss off the 'ed' in cases like this, writing for example, close instead. Sometimes the 'ed' ending sounds like 't' as in helped, switched, and pricked. Children may misspell past tense verbs like these e.g. helpt.

Use of Irregular past tenses is subject to significant errors by children learning EAL, and when the past tense is irregular the past participle will be too.
e.g., write, wrote and written; go, went, gone.

**Advanced verb forms**
Lynne Cameron's research identifies significant errors in the use of advanced verb forms.

Inability to use the past perfect tense meant some children were unable to convey an accurate sense of timing in their narrative writing.
Higher achieving EAL learners need support to learn to use advanced tenses to show the relative timing of events.

Even those EAL learners who achieved level 5 (Lynne Cameron's research) had difficulty using the appropriate verb form to reach further back into the past in their narrative writing e.g. She had been writing to her aunt when the doorbell rang, or she had written to her aunt once before.

## Use of modal verbs

The following, together with their negative forms, are the modal verbs:

**may, might, can, could, will, would, shall, should, must and ought***

They are all used with the infinitive form of the verb but ought needs to in front of the main verb e.g. might go, could help. * ought to help.
Modal verbs allow children to express degrees of probability, possibility, certainty, necessity, obligation, and willingness.
They enable children to predict, speculate and make deductions.

The auxiliary verb have to is used to talk about necessity in the past or the future I had to …, I have (got) to.

Modal verbs can be placed on a continuum according to whether they express high or low levels of modality. Should, must and have to express high levels whilst may and might express low levels. High level modal verbs are common in persuasive texts.

Modals are also used:

- In conditional sentences: I'd visit my aunt if I could, I wish that I could visit my aunt.
- With auxiliary verbs (to be or to have + the main verb);
    She could be on her way to visit her aunt now,
    She could have visited her aunt last week.
- To form future tenses e.g. I will go to visit my aunt; I will be visiting her soon.
- To talk about ability: wind can shape the land.
- For possibilities: strong wind may damage the roof.
- For permission: may I borrow your pencil?


Modals go before the subject in questions:

**could this go here? does this have to go here?**

In spoken language they are also used in question tags:

**we could put it here, couldn't we?**

They have not or n't after them in negative forms and will becomes won't.

## Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs can present difficulties for children learning EAL. These may be verbs with prepositions (I agree with you. She asked for a pencil), verbs with adverbs (The car broke down. When he grew up…), or verbs with adverbs and prepositions (I won't put up with bad behaviour).
These verbs are used more often in spoken language than they are in written language where they can often be replaced by more formal or academic verbs; put up with can be replaced by tolerate; put in by insert and so on.

Sometimes the meaning can be guessed from the meaning of the parts but often this is impossible and, in the case of verbs with an object, the adverbs can be found before or after the object, (Clean up this mess, Clean this mess up).

## Prepositions

In her research Lynne Cameron found evidence of EAL learners, working at level 3 and level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2, omitting prepositions and using them incorrectly. They were more likely still to be using them incorrectly by the time they had attained level 4 than were their monolingual peers.

Prepositions are used in different positions in languages where words order is different from English. In the South Asian languages spoken by the many minority communities in this country the word order is subject –object- verb rather than subject- verb-object. Prepositions in these languages are really 'post' positions; book table on is. They may be used differently, or in some cases, not used at all in the bilingual child's first language.

Prepositions signal an extremely wide range of meanings, and the same preposition can be used in many different ways including figurative ways e.g. ,she was in tears, and mathematical ways e.g. divide by.

They can consist of one, two or three words. (e.g., at, ahead of, in front of).

Functions include showing:

- Relationships, usually in space or time (the temple on the hill…, the programme starts at seven o'clock)
- Causes and reasons: out of kindness, he was punished for it.
- Manner: I went by train; addition: with; similarity: like etc.

Prepositions for time are metaphors for space. When we say in June, on Friday or at midnight we are conceptualising June as a container, Friday a shelf, and midnight a position on a line.

Prepositions are often used in headlines and titles for brevity e.g., Babes in the wood, Hospitals in super bug scandal

When active sentences are made passive, and the object becomes the subject the normal subject becomes a prepositional phrase e.g. The carvings are bought by rich tourists (See Passive voice below)

Prepositions can complement a verb: sit on this stool, or an adjective: I'll be kind to her.

They are often found at the beginning of phrases. Prepositional phrases found after nouns as part of noun phrases have an adjectival function: the things inside the shop, the man in the park.

Often, they have an adverbial function in a sentence e.g. (go) in the park/ after school/by bus/to find her friend, (answered) with a broad grin/as soon as possible etc.

## Adverbials

Adverbials add detail about place (where?), time and frequency (when, how long, how often?), manner (how? like what? with whom?) and cause or reason (why?) Time connectives in chronological texts are adverbs.

Sometimes they provide clues about the author's viewpoint e.g., she couldn't really expect it.

They may be single words, phrases or clauses.

They can be found:

- At the beginning of sentences: With a heavy heart, Samira turned around and headed for home
- In the middle: Feroz reluctantly decided to leave
- At the end of sentences:
     - she headed for home sadly (adverb)
     - she headed for home with a heavy heart (adverbial phrase)
     - she headed for home as soon as she heard the news (adverbial clause)
- As part of the noun phrase: The highly praised new film
- Inside the verb: She had often wondered who lived there.

There are different rules for different kinds of adverbs.

Lynne Cameron found that EAL learners tended to use adverbials more often at the end of sentences, and EAL learners attaining levels 3 or 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 were providing less information through adverbials than their monolingual peers working at the same level.

## Determiners

Determiners include many of the most frequent English words e.g., a or an, the, this, that, some. When used as determiners these words are followed by a noun though not necessarily immediately:  a big, red, shiny, new car. Their purpose is to limit or determine the reference of the noun in some way. Many determiners can also be pronouns in which case they stand in place of the noun: I've got some.

Most bilingual pupils in schools in this country speak a first language which does not use articles as determiners in the way that English does. However, if practitioners are careful to introduce the indefinite article when labelling objects right from the early stages this does not present a difficulty for long.

Use of the for the particular e.g. the red one and for plurals e.g. the cars is also easily learned. This or those and possessive pronouns such as your and my also show that one particular one of its kind is being referred to.

Errors may occur where nouns are uncountable: the air, some butter, the evidence etc. These nouns are called mass nouns in NLS Grammar for Writing.

Some nouns are countable in some contexts and uncountable in others e.g., hair and hairs. Uncountable nouns which are countable in the bilingual child's first language can lead to errors such as He is wearing a blue trouser.

Errors often occur in the spoken and written language of children learning EAL where countable nouns do not need an article in a particular context such as church/ mosque, or town in going to mosque, church or town. Whilst other similar seeming nouns do e.g., library or village

Children also need to learn that the definite article is used with proper nouns such as Indian Ocean and usually with ocean and sea unless we are talking about one of many oceans or seas without naming it.
Sometimes articles are omitted in the interests of brevity, from titles, headlines, slogans, bullets, notes and jottings e.g., dangerous dog bites toddler etc.

Many abstract nominalisations (nouns formed from other parts of speech) are uncountable e.g., happiness, decay, information (See Passive voice below).

Errors become more likely the more abstract and academic the language becomes, and this is borne out by Lynne Cameron's research. She found more errors with articles in the level 5 scripts of EAL learners than in the level 3 scripts and more errors with articles in the writing of high achieving EAL learners at Key Stage 4.

## Pronouns

Pronouns stand in place of nouns or noun phrases. In the early stages children learning EAL may not always use pronouns to refer back as confidently as their peers. They may make this kind of mistake in their writing: Elephants are huge. It has a trunk.

In the South Asian languages spoken by the majority of bilingual pupils in our schools the first language uses pronouns which demonstrate whether a person or thing is present or absent (this, that,) in the positions where we use personal pronouns which show gender (he, she, her, him). Verb endings show whether the thing being referred to is masculine or feminine. In these languages all nouns have gender. Possessive pronouns all show gender, but they agree in gender with the noun which is the object of the sentence.

Most bilingual children learn to use English personal and possessive pronouns confidently and appropriately. Sometimes, however, the object of a sentence in English is a noun which clearly has gender such as girl, boy, sister, husband etc. In cases like this an error such as the following may occur: Adam and her sister went to the park.

Pronouns such as each, every, either, each other, one another, the other and both which are used to show distribution, reciprocity or quantity, are another aspect generally handled less confidently by children learning English as an additional language.

The pronouns who, whose, that and which are important as they enable children to use relative clauses to vary their writing. Being able to talk about them as a group (relative pronouns) is useful in learning how writing can be made more fluent by omitting them from relative clauses: the man who was cleaning his car….; the man cleaning his car….

## Formulaic phrases

Lynne Cameron uses this term to mean any group of words that must be or tend to be found together. She includes phrasal verbs such as come up with and fed up with and idiomatic expressions such as in fear and trembling or search high and low which are tightly bound together. The meaning of the phrase may be accessible from the component words but often the individual words in these phrases have a different meaning in the unit than they do when used individually. They may be adverbs such as at least or in actual fact. Often metaphors are embedded in formulaic phrases e.g., turn over a new leaf, for a long time, face the music.

They may also be collocations which are less tightly bound together, and culturally more familiar to some children than others, e.g., bread and butter or toast and marmalade which sound odd when the components are reversed.

Errors in use of formulaic phrases include inaccurate prepositions (lots of people at the front of him), choice of words (very amazed) or word order
For children learning an additional language it is important that these are learning in meaningful contexts and as whole phrases. Although errors can occur due to their unpredictable construction learning to use them will increase fluency.

## Subjects and object phrases, clauses

Lynne Cameron found that, at level 4, Children learning EAL used more single word subjects than children who spoke English as a first language but more and longer complements. The end weighting of clauses resembled the clause chains of spoken language.

Children learning English as an additional language need to recognise the differences between spoken and written language at different levels of formality.

They need to learn about the ways in which:

• Writing can be adapted for different audiences and purposes
• Word order in sentences can be changed and the impact of those changes on meaning
• Writing can be made to sound more fluent
• Writing can be made more 'academic'.

This will include:

• Exploring the way in which texts can be made less like spoken language by expanding the subjects of sentences with:
    -adjectives: the tall, dark-haired girl
    -adjectival phrases: the tall girl with the long dark hair
    -relative clauses (finite): the tall girl who had long dark hair
    -non-finite clauses the tall girl walking along the road
• Using non-finite clauses as subjects:
    Making a pilgrimage to Makkah is a duty for Muslims
• Learning about the mobility of adverbial clauses and their effect in different positions.
• Learning how to combine subordinate clauses and embed them to create complex sentences.
• Making writing less personal by using the passive voice (see below)

## Passive voice

Children learning EAL benefit particularly from explicit teaching of the ways in which writers create the impersonality characteristic of academic texts. Using passive rather than active verbs is one of the key ways, and understanding how the use of passive voice can conceal the agent in a sentence is crucial for the development of academic writing.

Use of nominalisations (nouns made from verbs and other parts of speech e.g. information, population hunger, etc.) is another important characteristic of academic texts. Using nominalisations allows writers to focus on abstract concepts and ideas. In the following passive sentence, where the nominalisation is the agent: deep valleys have been created by soil erosion; the reader's attention is drawn to the outcome, the deep valley. The sentence soil erosion is caused by heavy rainfall focuses attention on the soil erosion.

Passive sentences such as: laws were passed, where there is no agent at all, focus attention on a process.

Sentences where nominalisations are the subject also focus attention on abstract ideas rather than agents e.g., unemployment rose that year.
Texts across the whole curriculum provide opportunities for children to be taught and understand the ways in which writers vary their sentences in order to influence their readers to attend to particular aspects rather than others.

## References:

Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 2,
Cameron L. (2004) DfES (Research report 586)

Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 4 and post-16,
Cameron, L. (2003) OFSTED (HMI 1094)

The National Literacy Strategy: Developing Early Writing (DfEE 0055/2001)

The National Literacy Strategy: Grammar for Writing (DfEE 0107/2002)

The National Literacy Strategy Framework for teaching DfES

Speaking, listening, learning: working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2 (DfES 0627-2003)

# Further Reading: Useful websites and sources of further information

| | |
|---|---|
| ICAN **https://ican.org.uk/** | I CAN's Talking Point gives parents/carers and practitioners, information to help children develop their speaking and understanding skills. |
| **https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/tips-and-advice/reading-tips/** | The Book trust website has information on reading books with your child in a variety of community languages. Children 0-12 months, 3-4 years old and 4-6 years. |
| Literacy Trust **https://literacytrust.org.uk/** | **https://wordsforlife.org.uk/activities/speak-your-child-your-own-language/** Explanation why it is important to speak to your child in the home language. Information for parents. |
| Northern Association of Support Services for Equality and Achievement NASSEA **http://www.nassea. org.uk/** | NASSEA assessment Frameworks for children learning English as an Additional Language. Separate ones for EYFS, Key Stage 1, lower Key Stage 2, Upper Key Stage 2 and Key Stages 3 and 4 plus guidance on suitable strategies to use at each step of development. |
| British Council Learn English Kids **https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/** | Free on-line games, songs, activities, and stories for Children under 12 to hear and use English. There is also information for parents. |
| British Council Learn English Teens **https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/** | For students aged 12 and over, this website has reading, writing and listening practice as well as tips for exams, grammar and vocabulary practice, games and videos. |
| The Bell Foundation **https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/** | The Bell Foundation offers training, webinars, free resources to download and information to develop whole school EAL. Resources are tailored to the learner's stage of English development and there is also information for parents.<br><br>Bell Foundation assessments for EYFS, Primary and Secondary. The assessments have accompanying information on strategies to use at each stage of English development. The Great Ideas section has detailed information about suitable strategies to use. |

# Useful websites and further reading

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|---|---|
| Learning to Learn in a Second Language Pauline Gibbons | Children are learning a new language and learning the curriculum through the new language |
| Speaking Frames: How to Teach Talk for Writing: Ages 8-10 Sue Palmer<br>Published David Fulton 2010 ISBN9780415579827 | • Ideas, information, and support notes on how to teach speaking and listening.<br>• This book contains a range of speaking frames and photocopiable sheets for children to use to develop their language patterns and creativity. This will help children gain confidence using talk for learning and talk for writing.<br>• There is material for individual, paired and group presentations links to cross-curricular 'Skeletons'<br>• support notes for teachers and assessment guidance as well as suggestions for developing an individual's spoken language skills.<br><br>Also Speaking Frames books for different age groups Year 3 to Year 6 |
| Bringing words to life. Robust Vocabulary instruction.<br>Isobel L. Beck, Linda Kucan, Margaret G. McKeown<br>Published 2013 | • The Second edition contains suggestions for vocabulary development including how to select which vocabulary to teach, the importance of oral vocabulary for reading and understanding, how to create a language rich classroom environment and how to introduce the meanings of new words and create learning opportunities to develop vocabulary and reading comprehension.<br>• There is information on how to adapt teaching for less able readers and those learning English as an Additional Language as well as a useful appendix with teaching ideas. |
| Closing The Vocabulary Gap<br>Alex Quigley pub Routledge 1138080683 | • An excellent book which provides an overview of current research on vocabulary development. It gives practical advice on applying this in the classroom to develop reading comprehension and academic vocabulary with s easy to ideas which are easy to use in the classroom.<br>• Alex Quigley also has a website The Confident Teacher **https://www.theconfidentteacher. com/category/closing-the-gap/** |
| Time To Talk | • Suitable for all age ranges, |
| Implementing Outstanding Practice in Speech, Language and Communication<br>Jean Gross<br>ISBN13: 9781138280540<br>Published Date: 11 January 2018 | • Examples of good practice<br>• Good practice in working with parents<br>• Whole class strategies and focussed work and "catch-up "strategies<br>• Useful outline of strategies which are suitable for EAL children, children with Speech language and Communication Difficulties and children who are learning EAL and who also have Speech Language and Communication Difficulties. |