RESEARCH ARTICLE

How Spanish is used in Head Start:
Observational Evidence from Four Classrooms

Elizabeth B. Miller

New York University

Developmental science recommends and national Head Start policy mandates incorporating Dual Language Learner (DLL) children's home language in classroom instruction. It is less clear, however, how this is implemented in the real-world context of early childhood classrooms. In four local Head Start centers in a predominantly Spanish-speaking DLL county, exploratory qualitative observations helped shed light on when the home language of Spanish was used in the classroom and how it may have contributed to DLL children's school readiness skills. Emergent patterns from the observations revealed that Spanish was used to promote certain academic as well as planning and recall skills; to provide emotional caregiving; and to communicate with parents as well as during daily health routines. Thus, in line with Head Start's "whole child" model, Spanish was used in the domains of academic, socio-emotional, and health development as well as to strengthen the home-school partnership. Implications for practice are discussed.

The population of Dual Language Learner (DLL) children in the U.S. – young children who are learning more than one language simultaneously, their home language and English (Espinosa, 2013) – is growing rapidly. From 1994-95 to 2009-10, the number of school-aged DLLs increased by nearly 65% from 3.2 million students to over 5.2 million students (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2011), representing the fastest growing student segment in U.S. public schools (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011). Among younger children in Head Start and Early Head Start, DLLs now represent close to 40% of all participants, over 80% of who come from Spanish-speaking homes (U.S. DHHS, 2014). In recent years, there has been a national push from developmental policy reports (e.g., Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2014; McCabe et al., 2013) and research articles (e.g., Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007; Páez, Tabors, & Lopez, 2007) to include and incorporate DLL children's home language as much as possible in early childhood education (ECE) settings. In line with this policy, national Head Start mandates pertaining to DLL children stipulate that programs must: 1) support children in the acquisition of their home language and English; 2) provide comprehensive Head Start services to families in culturally appropriate and respectful ways in line with Head Start's

"whole child" model of development; and 3) improve outreach and increase enrollment and quality of services to DLL children and their families (U.S. DHHS, 2008).

Despite these lofty and commendable goals, a number of practical challenges arise for ECE educators who work with DLLs, especially with regard to teaching and practice (U.S. DHHS, 2008). Chief among these concerns is how to best promote DLL children's language acquisition in their home language and English as well as the difficulty finding, attracting, and retaining bilingual staff qualified in ECE. Teacher preparation programs in particular suffer from a paucity of coursework and a lack of professional preparation to work effectively with DLL families (Zepeda, Castro, & Cronin, 2011), though professional accreditation organizations such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) are changing their standards to include more of a DLL focus.

Given these practical challenges, recent developmental research and policy reports on language acquisition aim to provide guidance on how to support children's home language in the classroom. In a recent joint statement on DLLs in ECE, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED) provide policy recommendations to states and ECE programs on concrete ways to help promote DLL children's development. In particular, the statement stresses that ECE educators must be competent about the cultures of the children they serve and should receive training on how to promote first and second language development (U.S. DHHS and ED, 2016). Little research to date, however, has been able to determine exactly how teachers and staff implement these guidelines and use children's home language in a real-world context. The purpose of the current study was thus to explore how Spanish is supported day-to-day in ECE classrooms. In particular, from qualitative observations in four purposely-sampled Head Start classrooms, I explored how Spanish was used in these Head Start settings, focusing on the ways the use of Spanish may contribute to DLL children's school readiness skills.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in bioecological theory, which posits that human development results from the interplay of enduring reciprocal and continuous interactions between an organism and their environment known as proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Through such interactions occurring on a regular basis over extended periods of time, children come to understand the world and their place in it. The effects of these proximal processes on developmental outcomes systematically vary based on the characteristics of the person and their environmental context. Consequently, children respond in varying ways to the environments they encounter. The current study considers the proximal processes of Spanish language interactions between teachers and DLL students in the context of Head Start classrooms over a period of a few months.

This study is guided by bioecological theory such that as part of these classroom language interactions, children continuously and reciprocally converse with adults, which extend over many turns and reference topics beyond just the immediate present. Consequently, children take part in the building of a complex linguistic structure where they ultimately learn to productively use language. From early naming exchanges with adults, children eventually become more adept at responding to listener's cues and creating sentences with new information

(Tabors, 2008). These continuous and reciprocal language interactions enable children to participate in increasingly complex ways of communicating. Therefore, early language interactions support and privilege later literacy experiences (Uccelli, Hemphill, Pan, & Snow, 1999), and can be used to explore how DLL children fare in an ecological context like a Head Start classroom where they may be encountering formal academic English for the first time.

Spanish-speaking DLL Children's English School Readiness Skills

As mentioned briefly above, this study uses the term "Dual Language Learner" (DLL) to describe young children who are learning more than one language simultaneously – their home language and English (Espinosa, 2013). This term encompasses the diversity of this population, which includes children from a wide variety of language backgrounds. Young DLLs may be of limited English proficiency, completely bilingual, or may not speak their home language fluently (August & Hakuta, 1997). Regardless of their home language experiences, DLLs have less English language exposure and practice than monolingual English-speaking children – children from homes where English is the only language – and do not perform on par with such children on various emergent English skills (August & Shanahan, 2006). Furthermore, the majority of DLLs in the U.S. come from Spanish-speaking homes (García, 2012), and although bilingualism per se is not a risk factor, the population of Latino children represents the largest group of children living in poverty in the U.S. (López & Velasco, 2011), which further places Spanish-speaking DLLs at particular risk for delayed English language development (Hoff, 2013; Kieffer, 2010; Mancilla-Martinez & Vagh, 2013).

Incorporating the Home Language of Spanish in the Classroom

Using DLL children's home language of Spanish in the classroom may be an important pathway through which DLL children can maximize their English language learning experiences in ECE, as it helps them make better connections to the material in English-dominant child care programs and promotes the linguistic context in which DLL children are served (Barnett et al., 2007; Espinosa, 2013). A sufficiently high quality match between the classroom language environment and children's language capabilities can help children successfully become bilingual (McCabe et al., 2013). This may be particularly true when accounting for DLL children's skills inclusive of their home language and English (Hoff, 2013; McCabe et al., 2013; Pearson, Fernández, & Oller, 1993). Furthermore, given the timing of sensitive periods for language development (Nelson & Sheridan, 2011), the preschool years may be an ideal time to learn two languages (Bialystok, 2001, 2011; Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2010; Kuhl, 2009; McCabe et al., 2013).

Bilingual programs. Bilingual programs aim to provide adequate exposure and learning opportunities in English in addition to fostering the home language (Goldenberg, Nemeth, Hicks, Zepeda, & Cardona, 2013). Such programs include transitional models that initially help children achieve fluency in their home language and then gradually move to English instruction. Several empirical studies have found that preschool classroom use of both the home language and English may lead to improvement in Spanish language skills and at least equivalent English emergent literacy skills compared with Spanish-speaking DLL children in all-

English contexts (e.g., Barnett et al., 2007; Burchinal et al., 2016; Durán, Roseth, & Hoffman, 2010; Farver, Lonigan, & Eppe, 2009; Páez et al., 2007). Research on bilingual programs with older elementary-aged children suggests similar results for transitional models compared with English-only programs by fourth grade (e.g., August & Shanahan, 2006; Goldenberg, 2012; Slavin, Madden, Calderón, Chamberlain, & Hennessy, 2011; Valentino & Reardon, 2015).

While it appears, therefore, that bilingual education likely supports development of the home language and English, less clear are the specifics of how to really incorporate children's home language in the classroom. As possible pathways, the literature to date has focused mainly on English vocabulary building, emotional caregiving and other socio-emotional skills, as well as engaging family members and soliciting their participation in the classroom.

English vocabulary building.   Although continued rich language opportunities in children's home language may transfer and promote English language acquisition in important areas such as phonological awareness and emergent literacy (August & Shanahan, 2006; Castro, Páez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2011; Dickinson, McCabe, Clark-Chiarelli, & Wolf, 2004; Rinaldi & Páez, 2008), Spanish-speaking DLLs tend to lag behind monolingual-English speakers particularly in English oral language skills, and especially among low-income children (Hoff, 2013; McCabe et al., 2013; Páez et al., 2007). Spanish-speaking DLL four- and five-year olds perform one to two standard deviations below monolingual-English norms, on average, on measures of English expressive and receptive vocabulary (Hoff, 2013). While an initial language gap is understandable given the limited amount of home exposure to English, vocabulary gaps between Spanish-speaking DLLs and monolingual-English speakers are still significant at age 11 years (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011). Furthermore, similar to monolingual English-speakers, Spanish-speaking DLL children tend to exhibit better receptive than expressive vocabulary skills (Gibson, Oller, Jarmulowicz, & Ethington, 2012), though both have been shown to be predictive of future academic skills (Páez et al., 2007).

Best practice, therefore, for fostering Spanish-speaking DLL children's English oral language skills in the classroom recommends focusing especially on English vocabulary building, and in particular, elicitation of English vocabulary. This includes rich explanations from storybook reading, frequent reading at home and in ECE programs, and practicing target vocabulary words (Collins, 2010). Bridging explanations of key vocabulary with supplemental Spanish contextual expansions or embedding Spanish explanations of new words can also help facilitate English vocabulary building (Lugo-Neris, Jackson, & Goldstein, 2010). Other researchers recommend that target English words should be taught together with strategies for using information from context, from morphology, from knowledge about multiple meanings, and from cognates with the home language to infer word meaning (e.g., Carlo et al., 2004). Despite these recommendations, it is unclear how teachers actually implement these strategies of supporting home language and English elicitation day-to-day in Head Start classrooms.

Executive function skills.   A further area that previous literature has focused on as a way to incorporate the home language of Spanish in the classroom has been through goal-directed behavior skills such as executive function – a set of cognitive processes necessary for selecting and successfully monitoring behaviors that facilitate the attainment of chosen goals (Chan, Shum, Toulopoulou, & Chen, 2008). Recently, researchers have begun to focus on a possible advantage for bilingual children's executive function skills (Morales, Calvo, & Bialystok, 2013; Bialystok, 2015), and particularly in the areas of working memory, cognitive

flexibility, inhibitory control, and planning. This line of inquiry has mostly focused on balanced bilinguals – children who have balanced knowledge and facility of two languages equally (Genesee et al., 1978) – and less so on DLL children who may be dominant in one language. Newer work, however, on executive function skills specifically with DLLs has found that Spanish-speaking DLL children were better at planning and cognitive flexibility (Hutchison, Mead, & Winsler, 2015) and had greater inhibitory control (Malin, Aldoney, Taschman, & Cabrera, 2015) compared with monolingual English-speakers. Given that executive function is a major predictor of children's academic success (Best, Miller, & Naglieri, 2011; Bialystok, 2015), promoting this advantage in the classroom has the potential to help Spanish-speaking DLL children catch up to their monolingual peers in English academic skills.

Socio-emotional skills.   Another area where incorporating the home language may be particularly useful for DLL students is socio-emotional skills. Starting in the mid-1980s, research on linguistically isolated DLL children found they were at higher risk for social problems because they lacked the language skills necessary to communicate with their teacher and peers (Garnica, 1983). Tabors (1997) found that DLL children needed social interaction to acquire proficiency in English, but lacked the language skills to have these interactions. Studies on older DLL students found they had a more difficult time adjusting to school, scored lower on measures of self-concept, and were rated higher in shyness and anxiety and lower in peer social skills by teachers compared with monolingual English-speaking students (Spomer & Cowen, 2001), and further that DLL students may be overlooked for special education services because programs are unsure of their abilities due to language barriers (Morgan et al., 2015). Other work documents that preschool-aged DLLs in particular may exhibit signs of externalizing and internalizing behavior problems (Nemeth & Brillante, 2011).

Teachers' support of children's home language in the classroom, however, allowed for closer teacher-child relationships and better social skills for DLL children, perhaps because Spanish allowed the children to adjust to the social demands of the classroom (Chang et al., 2007). Moreover, increased use of Spanish by the teacher was associated with Spanish-speaking DLL children being less likely to be the victims of aggression, bullying, or teasing by their peers (Chang et al., 2007), as other work demonstrates that the relationship between DLLs and their teacher mirrors the relationship between DLLs and their monolingual-English peers (Gillanders, 2007). Further, the quality of this teacher-child relationship was predictive not only of behavior, but also the change in academic skills from preschool to first grade (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004).

Family engagement.   A final area that research has focused on as a mechanism for incorporating children's home language of Spanish in the classroom has been family engagement, defined as the shared educational responsibility between families and programs over a child's lifespan (Weiss, Bouffard, Bridglall, & Gordon, 2009). The home-school relationship is important to the academic success of all children and particularly for DLL children, where prior work has documented a mismatch between school participation expectations and DLL parents' beliefs about their children's education (Halgunseth, Jia, & Barbarin, 2013). Contrary to older research indicating that teachers believe DLL parents are not interested in their children's education (Lightfoot, 2004; López, 2001), newer work demonstrates that DLL parents often express great aspirations for their children's education (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007; Spera, Wentzel, & Matto, 2009).

It appears therefore, that strong connections between DLL families and child care

providers can yield important benefits for children and can maximize their experiences in ECE programs (Halgunseth et al., 2013). Ensuring such connections necessitates providers who can speak the same language as parents in order to communicate about their children's progress in school and ways to support their children's learning and development at home. An essential component of Head Start programs therefore recognizes parents as the first and primary teachers of their children and the importance of soliciting their participation in the classroom (Zigler & Styfco, 2010). Similar to other areas, it is unclear how this is implemented day-to-day when parents do not speak English.

Present Study

Prior literature on including Spanish-speaking DLL children's home language in the classroom indicates that children can maintain their home language without compromising their English language acquisition, particularly when children feel emotionally supported, and teachers focus specifically on English vocabulary and enlist participation and support from parents (Carlo et al., 2004; Chang, et al., 2007; Collins, 2010; Halgunseth et al., 2013; Lugo-Neris, et al., 2010). However, no known research to date has been able to determine exactly how teachers and staff incorporate the home language in actual ECE classrooms. Analyses of large-scale data sets on Head Start such as the Head Start Impact Study (HSIS; U.S. DHHS, 2002-2006) and the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey, 2009 Cohort (FACES-2009; U.S. DHHS, 2009-2013) indicate that classroom use of Spanish impacts some developmental outcomes more than others (Miller, 2016), however these large datasets provide only a small set of dichotomized variables on classroom use of Spanish and lack detail on these language interactions.

The present study therefore attempted to shed light on the "black box" of what goes on inside classrooms by conducting exploratory observations in four local, purposely-sampled Head Start classrooms. I chose to observe the Head Start program in particular given its stated commitment to serving DLL children (U.S. DHHS, 2008). The focal phenomenon of these observations was classroom activities that teachers engaged in with their students promoting important school readiness skills around physical, cognitive, socio-emotional development necessary for children's success in school (U.S. DHHS, Head Start Approach to School Readiness, 2011). Further, the primary unit of analysis was the language interactions around these activities. Thus, the study's principal research question was: How is Spanish used in local Head Start classrooms, for what purposes, and how may the use of Spanish in the classroom possibly contribute to DLL children's school readiness skills?

Results from this study provide a detailed understanding of classroom Spanish use. It went beyond dichotomous variables about whether teachers reported using Spanish in the classroom and instead sought to identify the different patterns underlying classroom Spanish use and how they may relate to DLL children's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional school readiness. Importantly, the results initiate discussion within the research community about how to better conceptualize home language use for future studies and how to better capture the complex dynamics in the match between the classroom language environment and children's language abilities in a real-world context.

METHOD

Sites and Participants

This study was conducted with exploratory observations at four local, purposely-sampled Head Start sites. The local Head Start umbrella agency in this study was located in a large, urban county in the southwestern U.S. It currently serves nearly 4,000 children, about 85% of who are Latino. Given the high prevalence of Latino children, in conforming to national Head Start policy, all the local Head Start classrooms strived to have bilingual lead and assistant teachers (Executive Director, personal communication, October, 14, 2014). However, the extent of Spanish use in each individual classroom varied depending on the proportion of Spanish-speaking DLLs as well as the Spanish abilities of the teachers. Thus, while all classrooms were considered bilingual by the local Head Start agency, there was wide variation in the extent of classroom Spanish use (Executive Director, personal communication, October 14, 2014).

Based on this variability in classroom use of Spanish, the Executive Director and the Educational Director of the local Head Start agency recommended observing four specific sites throughout the county in order to observe a range of possible Spanish language classroom interactions between teachers and children over the course of a few weeks. The specific recommended sites each had a substantial population of enrolled Spanish-speaking DLL children, with their families having considerable variation in English language proficiency. Resultantly, teachers used Spanish in these classrooms to varying degrees (Educational Director, personal communication, October 14, 2014). For example, one of the sites served a newer Spanish-speaking immigrant community with little knowledge of English, whereas two other sites served more established second-generation communities with more English language skills though still not completely proficient, and the last site served a diversity of other language DLL families including a sizeable Spanish-speaking population. Therefore, these centers showcased that despite their common denominator of language, the extent of proficiency in English and the subsequent reliance on Spanish translations among enrolled families varied considerably. Further, these centers had a history of working with researchers from the local university and their directors were open to research-practice partnerships (Executive Director, personal communication, October 14, 2014). Finally, four sites were chosen as a number that would sufficiently enable the detailed level of observational field notes.

Prior to the start of the study observations, I held a meeting of all the teachers at each of the four sites where I explained the study purpose and obtained consent to observe their classrooms for a period of one week. Teachers were administered a short, seven-question survey in which there was a response rate of 100%. They were asked their name, if they taught the morning or afternoon Head Start session, and if they were a lead or assistant teacher. I specifically wanted to observe lead teachers' classrooms, as they were the primary classroom teachers. Further, teachers were also asked if they spoke Spanish and to estimate the percentage of the day they believed they used Spanish for instruction: 0-25%, 25-50%, 50-75%, and 75-100%. About 80% of all the teachers across the sites responded they were native Spanish speakers and estimated that they used Spanish in their classroom at least 25% of the time. Lastly, teachers were able to indicate if they did not wish to participate in the study.

In purposefully selecting lead teachers to observe, I aimed for one classroom in each of the Spanish percentage brackets across the four sites in order to maximize variation in classroom

use of Spanish. Thus, I selected one teacher who reported using Spanish for instruction 0-25% of the time at the first site (this was a Caucasian teacher because I did not have any Spanish-speaking teachers who reported using Spanish in this bracket), another teacher who reported 25-50% at the second site, a third who reported 50-75% at the third site, and a final teacher who reported 75-100% at the fourth site. The latter three teachers I observed were Latina and native Spanish speakers. Each of these four classrooms also had an assistant teacher, each of whom was Latina and a native Spanish-speaker who reported using Spanish at least 50% of the time for classroom instruction.

Importantly, though the Caucasian teacher responded that she did not speak fluent Spanish, on her survey form she wrote that she knew some choice phrases and words and otherwise relied on her Spanish-speaking assistant teacher to further assist with translation, particularly with the parents of the children in her class (Lead Teacher Site 4, personal communication, November 21, 2014). Table 1 lists information about the four lead and assistant teachers as well as the center directors, including their Spanish-speaking abilities and how much time they reported instructing children in Spanish. To thank them for their participation in the study, each teacher pair received a $50 Lakeshore gift card to use for their classroom.

TABLE 1
Descriptive Characteristics of the Head Start Teachers and Directors

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4
Ethnicity				
Lead teacher	Latina	Latina	Latina	Caucasian
Assistant teacher	Latina	Latina	Latina	Latina
Center director	African-American	Latina	Caucasian	African-American
Native-Spanish speaker				
Lead teacher	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Assistant teacher	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Center director	No	Yes	No	No
% of day reported instructing in Spanish				
Lead teacher	75-100%	50-75%	25-50%	0-25%
Assistant teacher	75-100%	50-75%	50-75%	50-75%

Note. The lead teacher at Site 4 indicated she knew key words and phrases in Spanish and her assistant helped translate further for her with children and parents.

Data Collection

The observations I conducted were semi-structured and did not use an established protocol. This was partly because such an exploration has never been done so there was no suitable protocol to use, as well as because the open-ended nature of the study's research questions did not allow for a prescribed tool. Instead, the focal phenomenon of the observations was based on a recent review of quality ECE practices for young Spanish-speaking DLLs (Castro, Espinosa, & Páez, 2011), and the unit of analysis was each language-based interaction among teachers and students. Based on bioecological theory and the continuous and reciprocal language-based interactions that are the engines of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), the observations focused on when and how teachers used Spanish for whole class instruction, small group and one-on-one instruction, emotional caregiving, play, classroom directions, and interactions with parents, as well as how children responded to such use. The observations also took particular note of when Spanish use related to such school readiness domains as promoting children's engagement with the teacher and their peers; planning and recall of activities; addressing challenging behaviors that are common to DLLs such as difficulty expressing ideas and difficulty following directions (Nemeth & Brillante, 2011); and fostering time-on-task in explicit English language acquisition such as targeted vocabulary and letter-word instruction.

In particular, the observations focused on classroom use of Spanish in relation to the development of the English oral language skills of vocabulary and comprehension in a general context. That is, how did classroom use of Spanish generally help children communicate in English? Although there are many other fundamental aspects of language development such as syntax and decoding skills, phoneme knowledge, and phonological awareness, this exploratory study primarily focused on the English oral language skills of vocabulary and comprehension given that oral language is one of the key building blocks of academic competence and particularly for DLL children (Yesil-Dagli, 2011). Further, I was interested in exploring how DLL children's home language could be incorporated in the classroom to help them generally communicate in a second language as opposed to mastering all the detailed mechanical aspects of the second language.

As part of the classroom observations, I was particularly interested in teachers' interactions with parents, so I arrived at the centers prior to opening each morning and stayed until the end of the day in order to observe parent drop off and pick up for each child. Further, as an additional part of my observations, at the conclusion each site's visits I met informally with the center directors to learn more about the types of families enrolled at the center, the different ways they supported Spanish at the center, and any center-specific policies for incorporating the home language.

A total of 4-5 days (16-20 hours) was spent observing each classroom for a total of seventeen days observing across the four classrooms and seventy hours of detailed field notes. Field notes were initially written by hand as the most flexible way to record observations. Each evening, the field notes were transcribed on computer before beginning the next day's observations.

Data Analysis and Member Checks

The data analysis for these observations used an inductive approach (Hatch, 2002), in which the

field notes were used to uncover specific patterns leading to more general statements about the data. For each site, first cycle coding was done using descriptive codes, which summarized in a word or phrase the topic of a passage from the observation. The purpose of this coding method was to orient me to the data in order to analyze its general topic (Saldaña, 2013). The coding was completed for one site before beginning observations at the next site. Thus, the codes were refined using the constant comparative method (CCM; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), in which new data from other sites were compared to the initial codes and codes were subsequently refined in an iterative process. Examples from the final list of first cycle codes are displayed in Table 2 and included children's play, emotional caregiving by teachers, and reminders to parents.

Table 2
Abbreviated Coding Framework Example of Instances of
Classroom Use of Spanish, Site 2

Codes	Categories	Themes
Emotional caregiving		
Children's play	Non-academic interactions	
Greetings		
Classroom labels	Physical classroom space	Promoting national Head Start policies of DLL language acquisition
Reminders to parents	Interactions with parents	
Parent-child book sharing		
Mealtimes	Health and nutrition routines	
Brushing teeth		
Vocabulary instruction	Academic activities	

Furthermore, as part of the data collection and analysis, a follow-up phone conversation was conducted with each teacher regarding the observations. During these conversations, I described the types of classroom activities in which I observed them using Spanish and asked if this was typical and if they agreed with what I had seen. In all cases the teachers agreed and even elaborated on their reasoning for using Spanish in that situation. At the end of the conversations I asked the teachers to provide me with any more information they thought I should know on when and how they used Spanish in their classrooms. All the teachers provided some concluding thoughts, which helped me refine the first cycle codes (Lead Teachers Sites 1-4, personal communication, January-March, 2015).

Once the first cycle coding was completed, I then used pattern codes as a second cycle coding method, which was a more advanced way of analyzing the data to further develop a sense of overarching categories (Saldaña, 2013). Thus, the first cycle codes were reorganized to develop a smaller and more select list of broader categories with the goal of organizing the data into themes. Pattern coding in particular helped me develop "meta-codes" or categories that identified similarly coded data such as academic activities, health and nutrition routines, and interactions with parents. Moreover, after I had developed these "meta-codes" or categories, I again followed up with the teachers to discuss the emerging patterns from the data about when

Spanish was used in their classrooms. Many of these patterns related to how classroom use of Spanish supported English oral language skills. I asked the teachers if these were reasonable conclusions based on the Spanish use in their classroom. Again, the teachers agreed (Lead Teachers Sites 1-4, personal communication, January-March, 2015).

In particular, the lead teacher at Site 1 shared with me that she 'tried to include Spanish throughout all aspects of the formal Head Start curriculum.' That is, she tried to formally incorporate Spanish throughout the day within a larger framework of Head Start's "whole child" model (personal communication, January 23, 2015). This model was an interesting analytic lens that I had not previously considered, but that fit very well with the data and honored the teachers' classroom experiences. The "whole child" approach to school readiness aims to help children at risk in the targeted domains of cognitive development, socio-emotional development, health, and family functioning in order to adequately prepare children for kindergarten (Zigler & Styfco, 2010). Given Head Start's mission of supporting Spanish-speaking DLL children's school readiness, such preparedness necessitates a focus on each of these core developmental domains with particular regard to how they affect DLLs (U.S. DHHS, 2008). I then further refined my categories using this analytic lens in order to make a concluding key assertion about the study, which highlighted how classroom use of Spanish was used to promote school readiness skills across these multiple developmental domains. An abbreviated example of the final coding framework for one of the sites is displayed in Table 2 in which many codes lead to more select categories which lead to the overarching theme of supporting DLLs in accordance with national Head Start policy.

Finally, I met with the center directors one last time to discuss these findings. The directors agreed that it was the goal of each center to try and include DLL children's home language throughout the day in ways that were formally and informally integrated with Head Start's curriculum (Executive Directors Sites 1-4, personal communication, January-March, 2015).

RESULTS

Despite initial reported differences in percentage of Spanish instruction by the teachers, in actuality, I observed no meaningful differences across the four Head Start centers in how much or how often Spanish was used. Rather at each site I observed Spanish being used daily in the classroom and regularly throughout the day for many different activities by teachers and children. I observed frequent Spanish use by teachers during formal instruction such as academic activities, mealtimes, and other health routines, as well as during other, more informal interactions such as when teachers provided to emotional caregiving to children, when they communicated daily with parents during pick-up and drop-off, and as part of the daily classroom routine. Spanish was almost always coupled with English in order to assist with both direct translation and more informal conveying of context.

Head Start's "Whole Child" Model of Development

From the observed daily use of Spanish coupled with discussions with the teachers and center directors, one clear, overarching theme emerged from the data pertaining to classroom use of

Spanish in these local Head Start programs: Spanish was used to help promote the English oral language skills of vocabulary and comprehension throughout the school readiness domains central to Head Start's "whole child" model of development. That is, the data demonstrated that at each of the four sites, Spanish was used explicitly to help promote English oral language skills within the school readiness domains of cognitive development, socio-emotional development, health, and family functioning. At times, Spanish was used to directly translate from English both key, established vocabulary and when introducing new target vocabulary. For example, as part of formal classroom instruction, teachers said vocabulary words in one language and then explicitly translated into the other. In other instances, Spanish was used for loose, contextual translations that conveyed general meaning and seemed to model for children how to switch back and forth between languages. Therefore, embedded throughout each of the school readiness domains described below which are central to the "whole child" model was this focus on incorporating Spanish to help promote English vocabulary and comprehension.

Cognitive Development

Academic language and literacy activities.   Although there were Spanish literacy experiences to be had in the classrooms – each classroom had story books in Spanish and all the labels in the physical classroom spaces were in both languages – all of the large group language and literacy activities like story time and songs were exclusively in English. Direct translation into Spanish was especially prevalent when the teacher conducted these academic activities with the class, and in particular during formal instruction, as the following examples demonstrate. In one instance, I observed one of the teachers reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to the class. On the last day, when the caterpillar eats through several different types of food, she asked the children 'who knows what sausage is?' When no one answered among a sea of blank faces, the teacher elaborated, 'Sausage is *chorizo*.' Immediately, the realization of what sausage is registered in the faces of the children and they responded, 'ooooh!' In another instance, I observed one of the teachers played a CD of the *Music Man* song. As the singer named all of the instruments – piano, flute, tuba – and played a few notes on each, the teacher called out translations into Spanish: '*el piano, la flauta, la tuba*!' so that the children could imitate playing the instruments.

As another example, I observed the teacher reading *Caps for Sale* to the whole class. 'Why does the man have so many caps?' the teacher asked the class about the title page. Again, blanks stares from the children. 'Ok, why does the man have so many *gorras*?' After hearing this translation, the children were able to attempt an answer to the teacher's question. Thus, it was clear the children did not understand the initial question as they did not know what a cap was in English. In order for them to answer, the teacher needed to translate cap, and some other subsequent words, into Spanish in order for the children to comprehend the story.

In each classroom I observed, such explicit translation provided Spanish-speaking DLL children with more opportunities to make connections to the learning material by helping them to overcome limits with the English vocabulary (Lead Teacher Site 1, personal communication, January 23, 2015). As the above examples demonstrate, the translations of *chorizo*, *gorras* and the different instruments helped facilitate more in-depth thinking about the content that these vocabulary limits might have impeded as well as helped increase DLL children's overall conceptual understanding of the material independent of the language in which in occurred.

Other academic skills.   Interestingly, the explicit use of Spanish during academic activities was unique to activities emphasizing oral language skills such as vocabulary during story time. During instruction in other academic domains, I observed teachers and children using English almost exclusively at each of the four sites, even in the classrooms that reported instructing children more than half the time in Spanish. This was particularly the case whenever I observed instruction related to letter names and sounds. As an especially illustrative example, I observed one of the teachers during literacy time in which this entire dialogue with the children took place in English. In fact, this interaction took place in the classroom in which the teacher reported instructing in Spanish 75-100% of the time on my initial survey:

> *Teacher (T)*: 'Today we're going to do alliterations. These are things that start with the same letter. Remember we learned "J" is for Jorge, Jonathan, Julio, Jayson, and Jillian. Let's do another letter. What letter is this?' holding up a big card with the letter "S."
>
> *Class (C)*: 'It's an "S"!' shouted several children.
> *T*: 'Great! What words start with "S"?'
> *C*: 'A snake!' answered one little girl. 'Sister' answered another girl.
> *T*: 'Great. What about sugar? What starts with "A"?'
>
> *C*: '"A" is for Adam, Alejandra, and my Aunt Abby' answered one child.
> *T*: 'Yes, what else starts with "A"? A-a-a-Apple! Ok, now let's do "L" for my friend Luke or like l-l-lion!'
>
> *C*: 'L is for Luca' said another little girl.

Thus, instruction in other academic domains such as the above example of letter names and sounds took place daily almost exclusively in English – the teachers asked questions and prompted the children in English, and the children responded in English. This finding was even more interesting given that certain letters in Spanish and English make very different sounds such as the letter "J." Yet in the example above, the teacher did not focus on the difference in sound between Jorge and Julio on the one hand and Jonathan, Jayson, and Jillian on the other. Instead she instructed the children in English based solely on the letter recognition, which phonemically might be confusing for children, and yet highlights how committed teachers were to using English in these other academic domains.

Executive function skills.   An important component of the curriculum at the local Head Start umbrella agency is the promotion of goal-directed behavior such as the executive function skills of planning and recall. Before center time – a free-choice activity at all the sites – teachers asked each child where they planned to work that day. Similarly, when center time was over, teachers asked each child to recall where they worked, what they did and with whom. These planning and recall activities were the only activities across the sites during which I observed noticeable differences in how much Spanish teachers used.
At two of the sites, I observed teachers using Spanish for these planning and recall activities often with direct translation. In these observations, teachers asked children in one language where they planned to work during center time and then translated into the other. Most children answered in English, but a few children who felt more comfortable using Spanish

answered in Spanish or in a mixture of both languages. For example, I observed one teacher asking the children in her class, 'Where are you going to work today?' and then immediately, '*Dónde van a trabajar hoy*?' One child who particularly lacked proficiency in English answered, 'I work in' and then '*casita.*' The teacher then asked her how to say *casita* in English. When she did not respond, the teacher translated for her 'house area. You want to work in the house area today.'

Similarly, when center time was over, teachers conducted recall activities in both languages. I observed teachers asking each child, 'Where did you work and with whom?' and then immediately '*Dónde trabajaste y con quién*?' Some children responded in English such as one little girl: 'I played with the *Magna Tiles* with Arely' while others responded in Spanish like one boy: '*Trabajé en el área de bloques con Ricardo*,' or in a mix of both languages like the child above.

At the other two sites, I observed planning and recall occurring only in English. The sites in which teachers reported instructing in Spanish the most on my initial survey (50-75% of the time and 75-100% of the time), were the same sites at which I observed teachers incorporated Spanish during planning and recall time. At the sites in which teachers reported instructing in Spanish less, the teachers did not use Spanish during these interactions. Thus, at half of the sites when promoting goal-directed behavior such as planning and recall, I observed teachers using Spanish to promote the English oral language skills of vocabulary and comprehension when instructing Spanish-speaking DLLs, particularly if they reported conducting a higher percentage of their instruction overall in Spanish. These differences, however, were only observed during planning and recall time specifically. At no other time and for no other activities did I observe differences across the sites in how much Spanish was used during the day.

Daily Routines

The focus on the English oral language skills of vocabulary and comprehension was not just limited to academic activities, as Spanish was also used regularly throughout the daily routine. For example, I often heard several of the teachers asking, 'who has to go to the bathroom? *Baño* anyone? *Baño*?' Spanish in the daily routine especially occurred throughout the day to help the class transition: 'Five more minutes. *Cinco minutos más*.'

Spanish was also used daily in all the classrooms to help support the home language during the morning routine on the carpet. During this time the teacher sang a good morning song in both English and Spanish and provided an overview of the day, including reviewing the calendar. In one typical instance I observed the teacher asking the class, 'Ok, let's talk about the calendar. Luke, do you know what month it is?' Luke answered, 'January.' 'Very good. Today is January 14, 2015,' the teacher responded and then repeated, '*14 de Enero*.' In another observation, the teacher asked, 'What day is today?' Several children shouted 'Monday!' 'That's right. Today is Monday. *Hoy es Lunes*,' answered the teacher. I even observed the teacher who was not a native Spanish speaker translating the months and days of the week into Spanish as part of the words and phrases she knew how to say. These translations ensured that all the children understood the key aspects of the calendar (Lead Teacher Site 4, personal communication, March 6, 2015).

Socio-emotional Development

Another integral part of Head Start's "whole child model" emphasizes socio-emotional skills. Here as well, Spanish was embedded throughout the language interactions within this domain in order to promote English vocabulary and comprehension, though it was used in a less formal manner than during instructional time where there was often direct translation between English and Spanish. The language interactions emphasizing socio-emotional skills, such as when teachers provided children with emotional caregiving, were often more casual in nature as they were not part of formal classroom activities. Thus, there were fewer direct translations from one language to another and more a conveyance of general meaning as the following examples indicate. Further, these interactions modeled for the children how to switch back and forth between languages while helping to build English vocabulary (Lead Teacher Site 2, personal communication, February 6, 2015).

Emotional caregiving.   When teachers provided emotional caregiving to the Spanish-speaking DLL children in their class, which was a common daily activity at each of the four sites, I observed that they did so first in Spanish and then loosely translated into or continued speaking in English. This included addressing a child as *mija* or *mijo*, a slang term of endearment in Spanish, used in such instances as when teachers said, '*Siéntate mija.* Sit down sweetie.' Or '*Qué pasó mijo*? What's wrong sweetie?'

In other instances, teachers used Spanish and then continued loosely in English to compliment children in a similar manner: '*Me gusta la trenza en tu pelo.* Your braid is so pretty.' And '*Míra. Tienes Frozen en tu camisa. Qué linda*! I like your *Frozen* shirt.' Likewise, when children felt ill, I observed that teachers tended to use a combination of both languages to help convey general meaning and build vocabulary: '*Qué te duele*? Tell me what hurts.' Or '*Sé que no te sientes bien.* Your mommy is coming to pick you up so you can feel better.' Lastly, teachers used Spanish to help navigate conflict between children: '*Diana, agarraste la muñeca de Patricia*. You need to apologize to her. You can't just grab things from other people.' Again, these examples illustrate that when providing informal emotional caregiving, teachers used Spanish to help convey meaning in a general context rather than as direct translations from English.

Health Routines

Another important part of the Head Start curriculum focuses on health routines, as good physical health, including nutrition, is imperative to children's success in school (Zigler & Styfco, 2010). Thus, mealtimes of breakfast and lunch were an essential part of the children's day as was time to brush their teeth after eating in the morning. During both of these types of routines, teachers actively participated with the children, sitting with them at the table and eating the same foods as well as helping them to brush their teeth afterwards. Health routines were therefore considered formal classroom learning opportunities. An extraordinary amount of language interactions occurred during these routines and, at each site, I observed the teachers incorporating Spanish in a way that seemed to promote English vocabulary and comprehension.

Mealtimes.   The menu for Head Start changed daily in order to provide the children

with access to varied, healthy foods. At each site, the children sat at two long tables. One teacher sat with the children at the first table while the other teacher sat with the children at a second table. Given the many different types of food that the children encountered and Head Start's specific curricular focus on healthy foods, several of the language interactions that occurred during mealtimes had to do with the food itself and directly translating key vocabulary from one language to another. For example, I observed one teacher asking her table: 'What food is this?' 'Carrots!' responded several children. 'Yes, carrots. *Zanahorias.*' In another instance the teacher said: 'We are going to pass around the salad. What color is the salad?' 'Green!' answered the children. 'That's right. The salad is green. *Verde*. That means it's healthy for our heart.' Another time I observed the teacher ask: 'What fruit is this?' 'It's a tangerine' responded the children. 'Yes, a tangerine. Do you know what fruit it is related to?' When none of the children answered, she continued, 'It's similar to an orange. *Una naranja.*'

Yet, other times during the meals, the language interactions consisted more of casual small talk, and were similar in scope to when teachers provided emotional caregiving to children. In these cases the teacher said something in Spanish and then loosely translated into or continued speaking in English to convey general meaning. For example, I observed one teacher asking: '*Qué hiciste el fin de semana pasado*? Did it rain on Saturday or Sunday?' In another instance I observed one little girl tell the teacher, '*Tengo una mascota en mi casa*.' 'Oh yeah? What kind of pet?' the teacher asked. It was clear the little girl did not understand the teacher because the teacher quickly said, '*Qué tipo de mascota tienes*?' '*Un perro*' answered the little girl. 'Patricia has a dog,' the teacher told the rest of her table. Thus, whether formally discussing the actual food itself or during other casual, peripheral conversation, mealtimes offered rich opportunities to use Spanish to promote English oral language skills of vocabulary and comprehension. At times these interactions consisted of direct translation between languages, particularly when discussing the foods served as a formal part of Head Start's curriculum. And in other instances the language interactions were more casual and provided meaning in a more general context while seeming to model for children how to switch back and forth between languages.

Teeth brushing.   Another important health routine in Head Start is teeth brushing. Each child had their own toothbrush at the center that they used daily to brush their teeth after breakfast. During this time at each site, I observed that the teachers often used Spanish when they began the activity with the class to help explain the routine: 'We brush our teeth all over. Inside, outside, top, bottom, and tongue,' which was immediately followed by, '*Dentro, afuera, arriba, abajo, y la lengua,*' while imitating the act of teeth brushing. Similarly, I often heard teachers say, '*Nos cepillamos los dientes para tener dientes y encías saludables*. We brush our teeth so we can have healthy teeth and gums.'

Once the introduction to the brushing routine was over, because teachers assisted children with teeth brushing one-on-one instead of in a group, I observed the teachers go back and forth between languages depending on the child they were assisting. Teeth brushing was therefore one of the rare activities in the classroom that teachers could specifically tailor their language choice with a child at the individual level. They spoke in English to children who were able to understand: 'Arely, come brush your teeth,' and 'Run your toothbrush under the water when you are finished brushing,' and they spoke in Spanish to children who lacked proficiency with English and then directly translated for them: '*No necesitas tanta pasta*. You don't need so much toothpaste.' Thus, teeth brushing was a unique opportunity to expose children English vocabulary and comprehension in a much more individualized manner because teachers assisted

them one-on-one.

Family Functioning

A final primary component of Head Start's "whole child" model is family engagement. Head Start recognizes parents as the first and primary teachers of their children and the importance of soliciting their participation in the classroom (Zigler & Styfco, 2010). The centers I observed therefore made a special effort to engage parents. At each site, all communications and reminders to parents as well as classroom bulletin boards were in both English and Spanish, and teachers reported on children's progress in both languages. The bilingualism promoted by these local Head Start centers helped foster a close parent-caregiver connection regarding the child, particularly because many of the parents did not speak English proficiently (Center Director Site 3, personal communication, February 20, 2015).

During my time in the classrooms, I purposely arrived at the centers before they opened and stayed until all the children left in order to observe teachers greeting each child and their parent in the morning and afternoon. They always did so both in English and Spanish: 'Good morning. *Buenos días.*' 'Good bye. See you tomorrow. *Adios. Hasta mañana.*' Other classroom reminders usually followed these salutations with teachers directly translating for parents from one language to another: '*Head Start estará cerrado el próximo Lunes por el día de Martin Luther King.* Next Monday the center will be closed for MLK Day.' 'Today there is a mandatory lice check. *Necesitamos chequear las cabezas de los niños para piojos.*' 'Remember, we have a parent-teacher conference this afternoon at 1:30. *Tenemos una reunión de padres a la 1:30.*'

Teachers also often reported on children's progress to their parents in both English and Spanish: 'Luke did not wear his glasses today. *Luke no usó sus gafas hoy.*' '*Jonathan no comía hoy.* Jonathan did not eat his lunch today.' 'Oliver played very nicely with the other children today. *Oliver jugó muy bien con los otros niños hoy.*' At the site in which the teacher did not speak Spanish, she primarily spoke to parents in English with some key words in Spanish: 'Good morning. *Buenos dias.* I will see you this afternoon for our conference,' and then the assistant teacher directly translated the rest for her in Spanish.

Because the majority of the parents served by the local Head Start umbrella agency spoke only cursory English, they relied on the Spanish translations from the teachers for the bulk of their understanding. These translations not only helped teachers and parents communicate effectively, but they also simultaneously helped the parents learn key English vocabulary words (Center Director Site 3, personal communication, February 20, 2015). It is possible that with these few key English words, parents could communicate better with their children who often switched back and forth between languages.

Thus, within each of Head Start's "whole child" school readiness domains – cognitive development, socio-emotional development, health, and family functioning – Spanish was used to promote English vocabulary and comprehension. Spanish was often included as part of formal classroom instruction when teachers introduced vocabulary words in one language and then directly translated into the other. In other instances, Spanish was used for loose, contextual translations that conveyed general meaning and seemed to model for children how to switch back and forth between languages. Figure 1 visually displays how Spanish was incorporated throughout each of these school readiness domains.
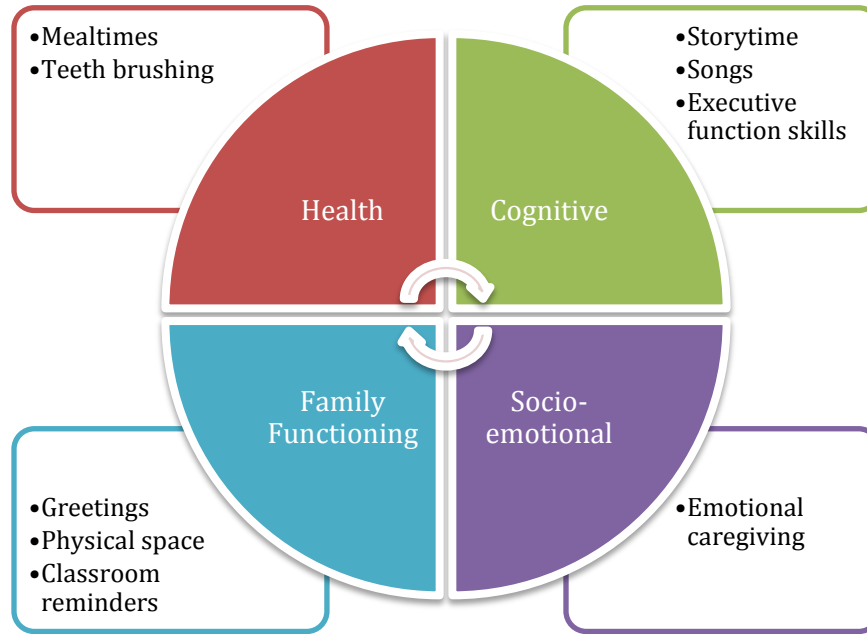
- Mealtimes
- Teeth brushing

- Storytime
- Songs
- Executive function skills

Health

Cognitive

Family Functioning

Socio-emotional

- Greetings
- Physical space
- Classroom reminders

- Emotional caregiving

Figure 1. The promotion of English oral language skills in accordance with Head Start's "whole child" model of development.

DISCUSSION

This study conducted exploratory observations at four local Head Start sites to ascertain how Spanish was supported day-to-day in ECE classrooms. In particular, through analysis of detailed field notes, I examined how Spanish was used in local Head Start settings, for what purposes, and how the use of Spanish may possibly contribute to DLL children's school readiness skills. Results from two cycles of coding, inductive analysis, and extensive member checks revealed that Spanish was used to help promote English oral language skills of vocabulary and comprehension in accordance with Head Start's "whole child" model of development in the school readiness domains of cognitive, socio-emotional and health development, as well as family functioning. This was true at all the sites I observed despite initial self-reported differences by the teachers in percentage of daily Spanish instruction.

This finding is consistent with bioecological theory and the proximal processes that are the engines of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) as it detailed the reciprocal and continuous classroom language interactions in Head Start occurring between teachers and children. The constant incorporation of Spanish at each site across developmental domains seemed to help solidify DLL children's understanding of English. The key assertion constructed from this study, therefore, is that classroom use of Spanish was quite deliberate in many Head Start activities, and it was tailored in ways that may promote important school readiness skills across multiple developmental domains for Spanish-speaking DLL children. Through the explicit focus on building English vocabulary and comprehension skills, it is possible the children at this local Head Start agency will be better prepared for kindergarten as oral language is one of the key building blocks of academic competence and particularly for DLL children (Yesil-Dagli,

2011). This key assertion also converges with previous literature on incorporating the home language in the classroom necessitating a special focus on English vocabulary for Spanish-speaking DLL children (Carlo et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2007; Collins, 2010; Lugo-Neris et al., 2010).

Teachers explained their reasoning for using Spanish in the classroom as follows: 'As the year goes on, I try to identify who needs more English or who needs more Spanish. Now almost all children made progress using English, though I'm still using both languages with the class to help those who need a little more in Spanish' (Lead Teacher Site 2, personal communication, February 6, 2015) Similarly, 'I follow the lead of the child. If I speak to them in English and they answer in Spanish, I know they feel more comfortable with the latter and will switch to Spanish myself' (Lead Teacher Site 1, personal communication, January 23, 2015). Thus, at each of the four sites I observed, teachers were purposeful in their use of Spanish and for particular children. Such classroom use of Spanish helped children maintain connections with their home language in way that furthered their English language acquisition (Center Director Site 3, personal communication, February 20, 2015). This may have been particularly the case when children felt emotionally supported, and teachers focused specifically on English vocabulary and enlisted participation and support from parents, as prior research suggests these to be important elements for preschoolers to maintain their home language while learning a new one (Carlo et al., 2004; Chang, et al., 2007; Collins, 2010; Halgunseth et al., 2013; Lugo-Neris, et al., 2010).

Although teachers used Spanish often to help promote English oral language skills of vocabulary and comprehension during activities such as story time and singing songs, they used English almost exclusively during instruction in other academic domains. This was especially true for instruction related to letter names and sounds. It may be that the DLL children already had sufficient exposure to English letter names and sounds from sources like television and media even if they used Spanish exclusively in the home, so there was no added benefit for the teacher instructing the children in Spanish for these domains. On the other hand, perhaps the children were answering based on rote memorization, which was possible in the format of the lessons on letter names and sounds, and they really would have benefitted from instruction in Spanish in this domain.

Further, although a central component of oral language also includes expressive vocabulary, the Spanish language interactions I observed between teachers and children were largely limited to receptive vocabulary. It may be that even though teachers were able to include children's home language in the classroom, the curriculum they used was very didactic and teacher-centered. Perhaps more child-centered instruction would have allowed for more elicitation of English vocabulary. Nonetheless the lack of English expressive vocabulary in the classroom seemed like a missed learning opportunity for children to develop this critical academic skill, though both receptive and expressive vocabulary have been found to be predictive of future academic success for DLLs (Páez et al., 2007).

Despite the heavy use of Spanish in the classroom, English played a prominent role in many academic activities for Spanish-speaking DLL children: 'at the end of the year I hope all the children will understand English because they are going to kindergarten all in English.' Since most of the kindergartens that these Head Start children will attend predominantly use only English, teachers felt responsible for ensuring that the children were ready for such instruction (Lead Teacher Site 2, personal communication, February 6, 2015). Thus, the teachers seemed to incorporate a great deal of English in their classrooms in order to conform to these educational expectations of DLL children. Future research can further explore why teachers of Spanish-

speaking DLL children use Spanish in some academic domains more than others, why Spanish tends to be used for activities that promote receptive but not expressive vocabulary, and importantly, how to ease the disconnect between best practice on language development necessitating using the home language on the one hand and the focus on English for academic activities to prepare DLL children for kindergarten on the other.

The use of English for the majority of classroom academic activities highlights the effortful balance between providing adequate exposure and learning opportunities in English and fostering Spanish-speaking DLL children's home language. The difficulty ensuring this balance was expressed by many Head Start teachers nationwide as they reported struggling how to best promote DLL children's language acquisition, as well as how to best to support their transition out of the Head Start program (U.S. DHHS, 2008; Zepeda et al., 2011). Results from this study indicated that the teachers I observed navigated these same difficulties arguably with some success. Teachers used Spanish to promote English oral language across multiple developmental domains in accordance with Head Start's "whole child" model and to help nurture the home-school partnership, but they also used a great deal of English to adequately support children with the English language demands of kindergarten by helping them to overcome language barriers. Such a balance can hopefully be a model to other centers, particularly when they serve large numbers of Spanish-speaking DLLs, as programs know it is important to support the home language, but often struggle how to do so. The joint policy recommendations from the U.S. DHHS and ED for ECE educators can be particularly useful here including fostering a climate that embraces diversity, partnering with families, and using a specific approach for second language acquisition (2016).

Significance and Future Directions

The results from this research have possible significance for practice. The local Head Start umbrella agency in this study spends a considerable share of their annual budget hiring bilingual teachers. However, as this study demonstrates, even the teacher who was not fluent in children's home language of Spanish, but knew important words and phrases, was able to use the home language and successfully address the needs of DLL children in her class together with the support of a Spanish-speaking assistant teacher. Therefore, in cases where Head Start cannot hire an appropriate, highly-qualified bilingual teacher, it may behoove the program to teach the new hire key words and phrases that they can use with the DLL students in their class and pair them with an assistant who speaks the language. Hiring a monolingual English-speaking teacher, however, does not negate the importance of the teacher being able to communicate effectively with parents, which may require a deeper and more detailed knowledge of the home language. In this instance, an assistant teacher who speaks the home language can be particularly helpful as was the case in this study. To that end, the recent policy recommendations from the U.S. DHHS and ED stress the importance of considering the language background of children in the community when making hiring decisions (2016).

Moreover, this study examined classroom use of the Spanish language specifically. Spanish-speaking DLL children accounted for about 85% of all the total enrolled children at this umbrella Head Start agency, and in the U.S. as a whole, the majority of DLLs come from Spanish-speaking homes (García, 2012). The Spanish language is ubiquitous as Latinos are the fast-growing population in the U.S. Such a substantial majority minority population allows

institutions such as Head Start to have the language resources and capacity to accommodate the language needs of these children. Parents of current or former Head Start children make up close to 25% of all Head Start staff and Spanish-speaking DLL families account for almost 40% of all Head Start participants (U.S. DHHS, 2014), thus creating an infrastructure in which many Head Start staff members speak Spanish.

This may not be the case with other language minority groups. Although Spanish-speaking DLL children were the vast majority of the Head Start participants at this umbrella agency, there was also a considerable Asian population, which was very diverse and included Vietnamese, Korean, Hmong, Chinese, and Filipino children. The classrooms I observed had very few of these children, and it would be interesting to see how Head Start accommodated these home languages, particularly because they are not as similar as Spanish is to English. Would it be possible, for example, to teach an English-speaking teacher the same key words and phrases to communicate effectively with other DLL children and parents or to solely rely on an assistant teacher for translation? Future work can observe these types of classrooms to gain insight into how centers incorporate home languages that are less common. Interviews with center directors indicated this was possible (Center Director Site 3, personal communication, February 20, 2015), though again, it is still unclear how this actually occurs day-to-day.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that although the centers I observed tried to be mindful in incorporating the home language in ways that truly respected the family's culture and language, underlying this instruction was the presumption that children would become sufficiently fluent in English, and the expectation was that the DLL children would learn English successfully. During my observations and in my discussions with the teachers and directors, there was no mention of the benefit of instructing in Spanish for the few English-only speaking children in the class, or how this might possibly enable them to learn some Spanish words as well. True dual-immersion programs in Spanish and English do exist in Head Start, such as the East Harlem Bilingual Head Start program. However, the centers I observed were not among them. Future work can examine how these dual-immersion centers incorporate Spanish when it is considered on equal footing with English.

In sum, this study used exploratory observations to investigate how Spanish was supported day-to-day in ECE classrooms and how it may have possibly contributed to Spanish-speaking DLL children's school readiness. Consistent with bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) as well as prior research in this area (Carlo et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2007; Collins, 2010; Lugo-Neris et al., 2010), the findings reveal that Spanish was quite deliberate in Head Start classrooms and was used to promote English oral language skills of vocabulary and comprehension across multiple school readiness domains in line with Head Start's "whole child" model of development. Given that oral language is one of the key building blocks of academic competence and particularly for DLL children (Yesil-Dagli, 2011), the constant incorporation of Spanish at each site across domains seemed to help solidify DLL children's understanding of English in ways that may prepare them sufficiently for kindergarten in cognitive, health, and socio-emotional development.

REFERENCES

August, D. L., & Hakuta, K. (1997). *Improving schooling for language-minority children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National*

Literacy Panel on language-minority children and youth. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Barnett, W. S., Yarosz, D. J., Thomas, J., Jung, K., & Blanco, D. (2007). Two-way and monolingual English immersion in preschool education: An experimental comparison. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 22*(3), 277-293. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2007.03.003

Best, J. R., Miller, P. H., & Naglieri, J. A. (2011). Relations between executive function and academic achievement from ages 5 to 17 in a large, representative national sample. *Learning and Individual Differences, 21*(4), 327-336. doi:10.1016/j.lindif.2011.01.007

Bialystok, E. (2001). *Bilingualism in development: Language, literacy, and cognition.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Bialystok, E. (2011). Reshaping the mind: The benefits of bilingualism. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology, 65*(4), 229-235. doi:10.1037/a0025406

Bialystok, E. (2015). Bilingualism and the development of executive function: The role of attention. *Child Development Perspectives, 9*(2), 117-121. doi:10.1111/cdep.12116

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R. M. Lerner & W. Damon (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development* (6th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 793-828). New York: Wiley.

Burchinal, M., Soliday Hong, S., LaForett, D., Hammer, C., Páez, M., …, Castro, D. (2016). Change in language and literacy knowledge for Spanish-English Dual Language Learners at school entry: Analyses from three studies. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Calderón, M., Slavin, R., & Sánchez, M. (2011). Effective instruction for English learners. The *Future of Children, 21*(1), 103-127. doi:10.1353/foc.2011.0007.

Carlo, M. S., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C. E., Dressler, C., Lippman, D. N., …White, C. E. (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing the vocabulary needs of English-language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly, 39*(2), 188-215. doi:10.1598/RRQ.39.2.3

Castro, D. C., Espinosa, L. M., & Páez, M. M. (2011). Defining and measuring quality in early childhood practices that promote Dual Language Learners' development and learning. In M. Zaslow, I. Martinez-Beck, K. Tout, & T. Halle (Eds.), *Quality measurement in early childhood settings* (pp. 257-280). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Castro, D. C., Páez, M. M., Dickinson, D. K., & Frede, E. (2011). Promoting language and literacy in young dual language learners: Research, practice and policy. *Child Development Perspectives, 5*(1), 15-21. doi:10.1111/j.1750-8602.2010.00142.x

Chan, R. C. K., Shum, D., Toulopoulou, T., & Chen, E. Y. H. (2008). Assessment of executive functions: Review of instruments and identification of critical issues. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, *23*(2), 201-216. doi:10.1016/j.acn.2007.08.010

Chang, F., Crawford, G., Early, D., Bryant, D., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., ... & Pianta, R. (2007). Spanish-speaking children's social and language development in prekindergarten classrooms. *Early Education and Development, 18*(2), 243-269. doi:10.1080/10409280701282959

Collins, M. F. (2010). ELL preschoolers' vocabulary acquisition from storybook reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 25*(1), 84-97. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2009.07.009

Dickinson, D. K., McCabe, A., Clark-Chiarelli, & Wolf, A. (2004). Cross-language transfer of phonological awareness in low-income Spanish and English bilingual preschool children. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 25*(3), 323-347. doi:10.1017/S0142716404001158

Durán, L. K., Roseth, C. J., & Hoffman, P. (2010). An experimental study comparing English-only and transitional bilingual education on Spanish-speaking preschoolers' early literacy development. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 25*(2), 207-217. doi:10.1080/15235882.2012.735213

Espinosa, L. M. (2013). *Early education for dual language learners: Promoting school readiness and early school success.* Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

Farver, J. A., Lonigan, C. J., & Eppe, S. (2009). Effective early literacy skill development for young Spanish-speaking English language learners: an experimental study of two methods. *Child Development, 80*(3), 703-719. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01292.x

Fuligni, A. J., & Fuligni, A. S. (2007). Immigrant families and the educational development of their children. In J. E. Lansford, K. Deater-Deckard, & Marc H. Bornstein (Eds.), *Immigrant families in contemporary society* (pp. 231-249). New York: Guilford Press.

García, E. E. (2012). Language, culture, and early education in the United States. In R. C. Pianta, W. S. Barnett, L. M. Justice, & S. M. Sheridan (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood education* (pp. 137-157). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Garnica, O. (1983). Social dominance and conversational interactions: The omega child in the classroom. In C. Wallat & J. Green (Eds.), Meeting the challenge of linguistic and cultural diversity in early childhood education (pp. 49–63). New York: Teachers College Press.

Genesee, F., Hamers, J., Lambert, W. E., Mononen, L., Seitz, M., & Starck, R. (1978). Language processing in bilinguals. *Brain and Language, 5*(1), 1-12. doi:10.1016/0093-934X(78)90002-0

Gibson, T. A., Oller, D. K., Jarmulowicz, L., & Ethington, C. A. (2012) The receptive-expressive gap in the vocabulary of young second-language learners: Robustness and possible mechanisms. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 15*(1), 102-116. doi:10.1017/S1366728910000490

Gillanders, C. (2007). An English-speaking prekindergarten teacher for young Latino children: Implications of the teacher-child relationship on second language learning. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 35*(1), 47-54. doi:10.1007/s10643-007-0163-x

Glaser, G. B. & Strauss, A. (1967). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis. In *The discovery of grounded theory* (pp. 101-115). Chicago: Aldine Transaction.

Goldenberg, C. (2012). Research on English learner instruction. In M. Calderón (Ed.), *Breaking through: Effective Instruction & assessment for reaching English learners* (pp. 39-61). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Goldenberg, C., Nemeth, K., Hicks, J., Zepeda, M., & Cardona, L. M. (2013). Program elements and teaching practices for young Dual Language Learners. Child Development Division, California Department of Education (CDE). Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/dllresearchpapers.pdf

Halgunseth, L. C., Jia, G., & Barbarin, O. A. (2013). Family engagement in early childhood programs: Serving families of Dual Language Learners. Child Development Division, California Department of Education (CDE). Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/dllresearchpapers.pdf

Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Hoff, E. (2013). Interpreting the early language trajectories of children from low-SES and language minority homes: Implications for closing achievement gaps. *Developmental Psychology, 49*(1), 4-14. doi:10.1037/a0027238

Hutchinson, L., Mead, D. L., & Winsler, A. (2015). Relations between executive function and second language fluency for English-Spanish bilingual children. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Philadelphia, PA.

Kieffer, M. J. (2010). Socioeconomic status, English proficiency, and late-emerging reading difficulties. *Educational Researcher, 39*(6), 484-486. doi:10.1.1.172.7069

Kuhl, P. K. (2009). Early language acquisition: Neural substrates and theoretical models. In M. S. Gazzaniga (Ed.), *The cognitive neurosciences* (4th ed., pp. 837-854). Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Lightfoot, D. (2004). "Some parents just don't care": Decoding the meanings of parental involvement in urban schools. *Urban Education, 39*(1), 91-107. doi:10.1177/0042085903259290

López, G. R. (2001). The value of hard work: Lessons on parent involvement from an (im)migrant household. *Harvard Educational Review, 71*(3), 416–37. doi:10.17763/haer.71.3.43x7k542x023767u

López, M. H., & Velasco, G. (2011). *Childhood poverty among Hispanics sets record, leads nation.* Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/09/28/childhood-poverty-among-hispanics-setsrecord-leads-nation

Lugo-Neris, M. J., Jackson, C. W., & Goldstein, H. (2010). Facilitating vocabulary acquisition of young English language learners. *Learning, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 41*(3), 314-327. doi:10.1044/0161-1461(2009/07-0082)

Malin, J. L., Aldoney, D., Taschman, K., & Cabrera, N. J. (2015). Mothers' Spanish-English talk and their toddlers' inhibitory control. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Philadelphia, PA.

Mancilla-Martinez, J., & Lesaux, N. K. (2011). The gap between Spanish speakers' word reading and word knowledge: A longitudinal study. *Child Development*, *82*(5), 1544-1560. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01633.x

Mancilla-Martinez, J., & Lesaux, N. K. (2014). Bilingual teachers in Early Head Start/Head Start. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field, 17*(1), 108-112.

Mancilla-Martinez, J., & Vagh, S. B. (2013). Growth in toddlers' Spanish, English, and conceptual vocabulary knowledge. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 28*(3), 555-567. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2013.03.004

McCabe, A., Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Bornstein, M. H., Cates, C. B., Golinkoff, R., Guerra, A. W., … Song, L. (2013). Multilingual children: Beyond myths and towards best practices. *SRCD Social Policy Report, 27*(4), 1-21.

Miller, E. B. (2016). Spanish instruction in Head Start and Dual Language Learners' academic achievement. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Morales, J., Calvo, A., & Bialystok, E., (2013). Working memory development in monolingual and bilingual children. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 114*(2), 187-202. doi:10.1016/j.jecp.2012.09.002

Morgan, P. L., Farkas, G., Hillemeier, M. M., Mattison, R., Maczuga, S., Li, H., & Cook, M. (2015). Minorities are disproportionately underrepresented in special education: Longitudinal evidence across five disability conditions. *Educational Researcher, 44*(5), 278-292. doi:10.3102/0013189X15591157

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2011). *The growing numbers of English Learner Students, 1998/99-2008/09*. Retrieved from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/9/growing_EL_0910.pdf

Nelson, C. A., & Sheridan, M. A. (2011). Lessons from neuroscience research for understanding causal links between family and neighborhood characteristics and educational outcomes. In G. Duncan & R. Murnane (Eds.), *Whither opportunity: Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances* (pp. 27-46). New York: Russell Sage.

Nemeth, K., & Brillante, P. (2011). Dual Language Learners with challenging behaviors. *Young Children.* Retrieved from http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/Dual LanguageLearners/ecd/supportive_environments/DualLanguageLea.htm

Páez, M. M., Tabors, P. O., & López, L. M. (2007). Dual language and literacy development of Spanish-speaking preschool children. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 28*(2), 85-102. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2006.12.007

Paradis, J., Genesee, F., & Crago, M. B. (2010). *Dual language development & disorders: A handbook on bilingualism and second language learning*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Pearson, B. Z., Fernández, S. C., & Oller, D. K. (1993). Lexical development in bilingual infants and toddlers: Comparison to monolingual norms. *Language Learning, 43*, 93-120. doi:10.1111/j.1467-1770.1993.tb00174.x

Pianta, R. C., & Stuhlman, M. W. (2004). Teacher–child relationships and children's success in the first years of school. *School Psychology Review, 33*(3), 444-458.

Rinaldi, C., & Páez, M. (2008). Preschool matters: Predicting reading difficulties for Spanish-speaking students in first grade. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal, 6*(1), 71-84.

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Slavin, R. E., Madden, N., Calderón, M., Chamberlain, A., & Hennessy, M. (2011). Reading and language outcomes of a multiyear randomized evaluation of transitional bilingual education. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 33*(1), 47-58. doi:10.3102/0162373711398127

Spera, C., Wentzel, K., & Matto, H. (2009). Parental aspirations for their children's educational attainment: Relations to ethnicity, parental education, children's academic performance, and parental perceptions of school climate. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38*(8), 1140-1152. doi:10.1007/s10964-008-9314-7

Spomer, M. L., & Cowen, E. (2001). A comparison of the school mental health referral profiles of young ESL and English-speaking children. *Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(1), 69-82. doi:10.1002/1520-6629(200101)29:1<69::AID-JCOP5>3.0.CO;2-V

Tabors, P. O. (1997). One child, two languages: A guide for preschool educators of children learning English as a second language. Baltimore: Brookes.

Tabors, P. O. (2008). *One child, two languages*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Uccelli, P., Hemphill, L., Pan, B. A., & Snow, C. (1999). Telling two kinds of stories: Sources of narrative skill. In L. Butler & C. S. Tamis-LeMonda (Eds.), *Child psychology: A handbook of contemporary issues* (pp. 215-233). Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start (2008). *Dual language learning: What does it take? Head Start dual language report.* Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start (2011). *Head Start approach to school readiness – Overview*. Retrieved from http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/sr/approach

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start (2014). *Head Start program fact sheet, Fiscal Year 2014.* Retrieved from http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/factsheets/docs/hs-program-fact-sheet-2014.pdf

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES): 2009 Cohort. (2009-

2013). ICPSR34558-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor]. doi:10.3886/ICPSR34558.v1

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. Head Start Impact Study. (2002-2006). ICPSR29462-v4. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2012-06-15. doi:10.3886/ICPSR29462.v4

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education (2016). *Policy statement on supporting the development of children who are Dual Language Learners in early childhood programs*. Washington, DC: Authors.

Valentino, R. A., & Reardon, S. F. (2015). Effectiveness of four instructional programs designed to serve English learners: Variation by ethnicity and initial English proficiency. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 37*(4), 612-637. doi:10.3102/0162373715573310

Weiss, H. B., Bouffard, S. B., Bridglall, B. L., & Gordon, E. W. (2009). Reframing family involvement in education: Supporting families to support educational equity. *Equity matters: Research review No. 5*. New York: Teachers College.

Yesil-Dagli, U. (2011). Predicting ELL students' beginning first grade English oral reading fluency from initial kindergarten vocabulary, letter naming, and phonological awareness skills. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *26*(1), 15-29. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2010.06.001

Zepeda, M., Castro, D. C., & Cronin, S. (2011). Preparing early childhood teachers to work with young dual language learners. *Child Development Perspectives, 5*(1), 10-14. doi:10.1111/j.1750-8606.2010.00141.x

Zigler, E., & Styfco, S. J. (2010). *The hidden history of Head Start*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.