Educational Trajectories of EL Students in Two-Way/Dual Language Programs

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Purpose

- Examine educational trajectories of 4th – 8th grade Latino students who entered school as EL students
- Implications

Research: Importance of English proficiency at Kindergarten

1. ELs enter kindergarten with English language and preliteracy skills far below Native English Speaking peers (Hammer, Hoff, Uchikoshi, Gillanders, Castro & Sandilos, 2014)
2. ELs who enter kindergarten with relatively limited proficiency in English are at risk of not achieving proficiency during early grades of schooling (National Academy of Sciences, 2017).
3. Language abilities of ELs in kindergarten are predictive of their academic achievement trajectories through eighth grade (Halle, Hair, Wandener, McNamara, & Chien, 2012; Han, 2012).

Research: Importance of English proficiency at Kindergarten - IMPACT

1. Interpretation of Research by many educators: Spanish-speaking ELs should have as much English language development as possible to help them catch up to native English speaking peers as early as possible
2. Therefore
   - Immersion of Spanish-speaking ELs into English preschools,
   - Leads to language loss in Spanish before adequate language development in English

Trajectory = the path that a moving object follows through space as a function of time
Research: Importance of L1 or Bilingual proficiency at Kindergarten

1. Study - dual language profiles of Latino Kinders of immigrants:
   English proficient, Spanish proficient, or Bilingual
   • By grade 2, most made substantial gains in both languages, 64% competent. Students limited in both languages, tended to stay limited and showed little growth (Collins, O’Connor, Suarez-Orozco, Nieto-Castanon, & Toppelberg, 2014)

2. Spanish literacy is at least as good a predictor of English literacy as English language development (National Literacy Panel, 2006).

So, English language proficiency is important, but strong Spanish language proficiency and Spanish literacy in kinder important for English reading achievement

What do we know about the Students?

- 2201 current 4th – 8th grade Latino native Spanish-speaking students who started school as English language learner (EL) and attended a dual language (DL) program for at least the last four years or at least since second grade;
- 49% males, 51% females;
- 48% currently in grades 4-5, 52% in grades 6-8;
- Most (89%) low income and had parents with a high school diploma or less formal schooling;
- 7% special education

What about the Schools?

- 23 public elementary or middle schools in 16 school districts
- Program types: all two-way programs
- All students learned to read first in Spanish and second in English (grade 2-3) – successive biliteracy
- 90/10 (78%) and 50/50 (22%) models
  • Students fairly equally distributed by grade level in
    • 90:10 (47% grades 4-5, 53% grades 6-8)
    • 50:50 (53% grades 4-5, 47% grades 6-8)

How did we measure English language proficiency?

- **Measurement** = California English Language Development Test (CELDT) - categorizes students into one of five proficiency groups (Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced, Advanced). ELs evaluated as English proficient according to scores on the CELDT (and other criteria) reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP).
What are the 4 CURRENT English proficiency groups?

- For this study, students classified into **4 groups** according to **current** proficiency in English
  1) **BEG**=Beginning/Early Intermediate (n=154, 7%)
  2) **INT**=Intermediate (n=590, 27%)
  3) **ADV**=Early Advanced/Advanced (n=513, 23%)
  4) **FEP** (n=944, 43%).

What Does This Mean?

- Students in these 4 categories of **current** English proficiency vary significantly according to socio-economic background
- However, they are still most likely to be low income and have parents with less formal education

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Do Students differ in background information according to **current** English language proficiency groups?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BEG Begin/Early Intermediate</th>
<th>INT Intermediate</th>
<th>ADV Early Adv/Advanced</th>
<th>FEP Classified Fluent Eng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Econ Disadv</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Educ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS or Less</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Grad</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Proficiency in English**

Percent Intermediate, Early Adv/Adv or RFEP

- By end of elementary, 2/3 proficient in English.
- By the end of middle school, 86% proficient in English.
- Percent of RFEPs in DL much higher than recent research of CDE data showing about half of students RFEP in grades 7-11 (Hill, 2014).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>BEG</th>
<th>INT</th>
<th>ADV</th>
<th>RFEP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**What were Students’ Levels of Spanish/Bilingual Proficiency at School Entry?**

- **Low or High in Spanishoral** language proficiency using Language Assessment Scales (LAS) or Stanford Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM)
  - Fluent =2, Not Fluent = 1

- **Bilingual proficiency at entry** (earliest grade, K or 1):
  - Low in both languages
  - Low in Spanish, moderate/high in English
  - Low in English, moderate/high in Spanish
  - High in both languages

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**Do Entry Levels (Gr K-1) of Spanish Proficiency Vary by Current English Proficiency Level?**

**YES!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BEG Begin/Early Intermediate</th>
<th>INT Intermediate</th>
<th>ADV Early Adv/Advanced</th>
<th>RFEP Classified Fluent Eng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPANISH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Proficiency</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Proficiency</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Do Entry Levels (Gr K-1) of English Proficiency Vary by Current English Proficiency Level?**

**YES!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENGLISH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beg/Early Int</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Adv/Adv</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Do Entry Levels (Gr K-1) of Bilingual Proficiency Vary by Current English Proficiency Level?**

**YES!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BEG Begin/Early Intermediate</th>
<th>INT Intermediate</th>
<th>ADV Early Adv/Advanced</th>
<th>RFEP Classified Fluent Eng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BILINGUAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low in Both</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Span, Hi Eng</td>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Eng, Hi Span</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High in Both</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Does This Mean?

- Students who differ in *current* English language proficiency also varied somewhat when they started school.
- Entering Spanish and bilingual proficiency more important to current level of proficiency than entering English proficiency.
- Note that some Advanced and RFEP started as Beginner.

Impact of Spanish Reading Achievement on English Reading Achievement

- Examined **impact of Spanish reading achievement** at grade 3 on **English reading achievement** at grades 3 and 5, and impact of Spanish reading at grade 5 on English reading at grades 5 and 6-8 for the four English language proficiency groups.

  Results showed:
  
  - Language proficiency group (Beg, Int, Adv, FEP) and Spanish reading achievement level (Low, Mid, High) have significant effects on English Reading Achievement.
  
  - Other analyses show that FEP and ADV scored significantly higher than INT and BEG, and students HIGH in Spanish reading scored significantly higher than those at MID levels who scored higher than those at LOW Spanish reading levels.

Thus, Spanish reading level has a significant impact on English reading level at grades 3 and 5-8 overall and for each English language proficiency group.
Conclusions & Implications

- Dual language instruction ➔ bilingualism & biliteracy
- Higher Spanish/bilingual proficiency at school entry ➔ higher English proficiency at later grades
- Students entering school with low levels of English proficiency can achieve at/above grade level in English reading achievement if they develop mid to high levels of Spanish reading
- Even among highly English proficient (FEP and ADV, former EL) students, higher Spanish reading ➔ higher English reading
- The idea that preschool and kindergarten ELs need more English to reclassify or achieve at/above grade level in English is not accurate; students need strong language and literacy in both languages, especially L1, to later achieve at/above grade level in English
- Plus they will be bilingual and biliterate!

3 Recent Reports in 2017 You Should Know About

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The National Academies of SCIENCE • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE
Committee on Fostering School Success for English Learners: Toward New Directions in Policy, Practice, and Research

“...The ability to understand, speak, read, and write in world languages, in addition to English, is critical to success in business, research, and international relations in the twenty-first century.”