

# THE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF BILINGUAL SPANISH-SPEAKING PRESCHOOLERS

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# Latino Preschoolers in US

- Come to school with varying proficiencies in Spanish & English
  - ▣ Some begin school with knowledge of Spanish (L1)
    - Which they build upon when acquiring English (Cummins, 1979)
  - ▣ Others are exposed to & expected to communicate in both Spanish & English before school entry

# When in preschool, children

- typically are provided instruction in English (Snow & Tabors, 2001)
  - ▣ Teachers/assistants may not speak Spanish
  - ▣ Except for specific geographic regions
- As a result, children
  - ▣ are expected to communicate in English, a prestige language
  - ▣ may not have their home language supported
    - which may make their development different from children in Canada & Europe who speak languages of equal status
- Because oral language skills are the foundation for later academic outcomes (August & Hakuta, 1997; Snow et al., 1998)
  - ▣ we need to understand the language development of bilingual children &
  - ▣ the relationship between early language and later literacy development

# Goals of the Presentation

- Review selected research on bilingual preschoolers' language and literacy development
- Discuss differences between the development of preschoolers who learn
  - ▣ Spanish and English at home from birth &
  - ▣ Spanish at home & English upon preschool entry
- Examine the relationships between early language and later literacy development
- Address environmental factors that impact development
- Identify future research needs

# BILINGUAL PRESCHOOLERS' LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT



# Bilingual Preschoolers' Language Development

- Studies compare bilingual preschoolers to monolinguals
  - ▣ Paucity of assessment instruments standardized on bilingual populations
  - ▣ FACES (2000, 2003); Hammer et al. (2008); Páez et al. (2007); Tabors et al. (2003)
    - Children received instruction primarily in English
- Spanish-speaking, bilingual preschoolers score below monolingual norms in both languages
  - ▣ In fall of preschool (-1 to -2 SD)
    - vocabulary
    - auditory comprehension
    - expressive language
  - ▣ as well as in spring of preschool
    - although increases in abilities are observed

# Morpho-syntactic Development

- Spanish morpho-syntactic development
  - ▣ Focus on Spanish-speaking children living in US (Mexican dialect)
    - with minimal exposure to English or
    - knowledge of/exposure to English unspecified
    - Bedore & Leonard (2000), Jacobsen & Schwartz (2005), Kvaal et al. (1988)
  - ▣ Have information about order of acquisition
- English morpho-syntactic development
  - ▣ has received less attention
  - ▣ Work of Bland-Stewart & Fitzgerald (2001) & Davison (2008)
    - Order of acquisition of early-developing morphemes differs from monolingual English speakers
- Wide variation in children's abilities

# Emergent Literacy Development

- Bilingual preschoolers begin preschool with minimal/low
  - ▣ phonological awareness (Tabors et al., 2003; Páez, et al., 2007; Hammer & Miccio, 2006)
  - ▣ letter Identification (HHS, 2000; Páez, et al., 2007; Hammer & Miccio, 2006)
  - ▣ emergent literacy skills in English (TERA-2; Hammer, Miccio & Wagstaff, 2003).
- Have higher abilities in literacy than language
- Experience minimal gains during preschool
  - ▣ Phonological awareness & letter identification
- Experience decreases in emergent literacy (Hammer, Miccio & Wagstaff, 2003)



# Literacy Development cont'

- By fall of kindergarten, significant changes occurred in both languages (Hammer & Miccio, 2006; Hammer et al., 2007)
  - ▣ Phonological awareness
  - ▣ Letter-sound knowledge
  - ▣ Emergent literacy – caught up to monolingual norms
  - ▣ Received systematic literacy instruction

DIFFERENCES IN  
DEVELOPMENT DEPENDING  
ON TIMING OF EXPOSURE TO  
ENGLISH



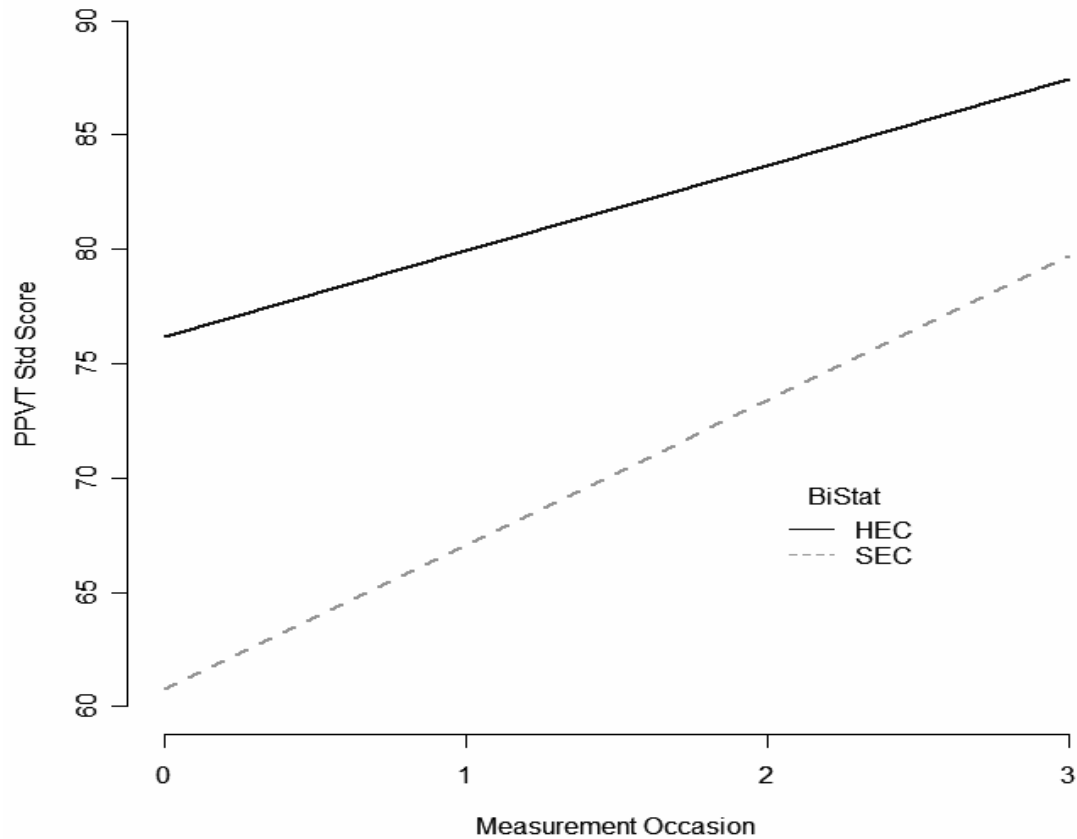
# Bilingual Preschoolers: Precursors to Literacy

- Study of bilingual preschoolers language & literacy
  - ▣ Hammer & Miccio w/Rodríguez & Lawrence
  - ▣ Funded by NIH-NICHD & ED-IES (5-R01-HD-39496-05)
- Investigated the development of children from Spanish-speaking homes
  - ▣ Exposed to English from birth (Home English; HEC) v.
  - ▣ Exposed to English in Head Start (School English; SEC)
  - ▣ School entry – key point in development (Butler & Hakuta, 2004; Genesee, 2004; Oller & Eilers, 2002)
- Followed children for 2 years in Head Start (English Immersion)
  - ▣ through 1<sup>st</sup> grade
  - ▣ subset through 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> grades

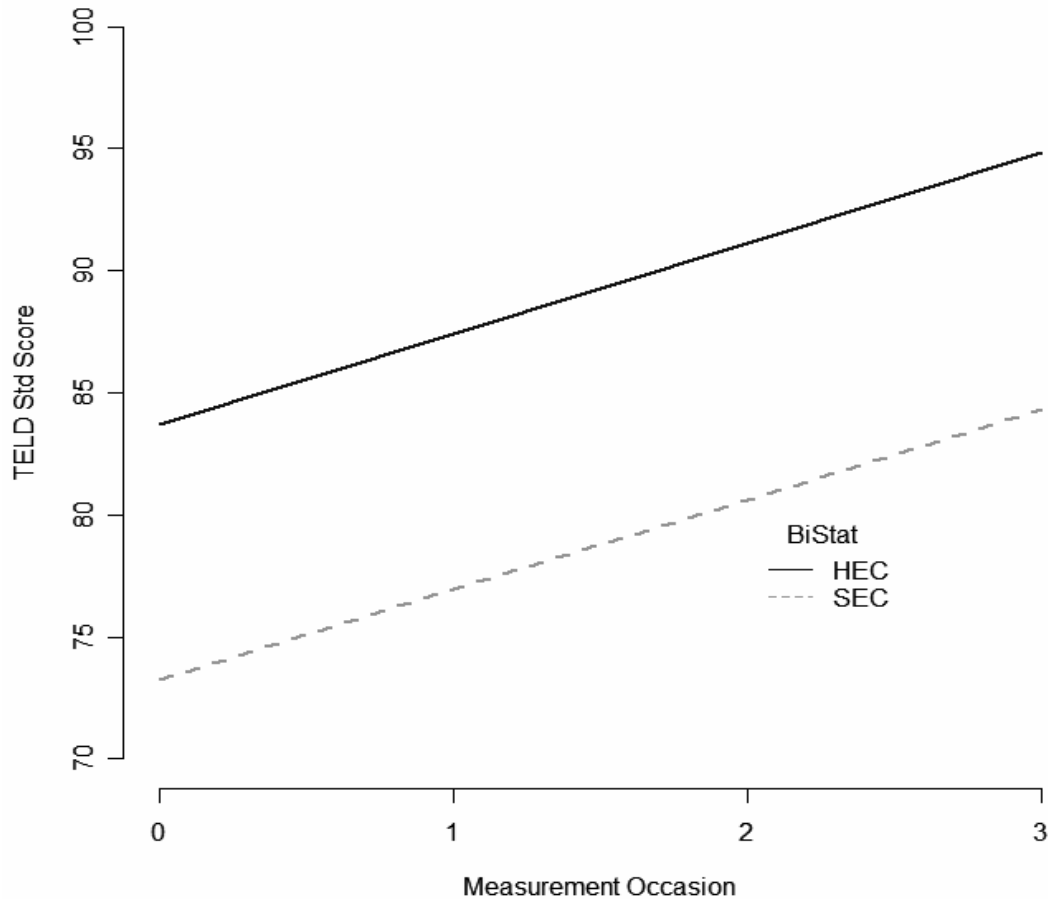
# English Receptive Language

- English vocabulary (PPVT-III) & Auditory comprehension (TELD-3) (Hammer, Lawrence & Miccio, 2008)
  - ▣ In the fall of their first year in Head Start,
    - Both groups scored below monolingual norms
    - HEC had higher scores than SEC
  - ▣ Linear growth observed over 2 years in HS & Kindergarten
    - Gaining on monolingual peers
    - SEC's vocabulary & auditory comprehension grew at faster rate
  - ▣ In elementary school,
    - Vocabulary - neither group caught up to monolingual norms by 1<sup>st</sup> grade (-10 pts below)
    - Auditory comprehension – both groups within monolingual norms by end of kindergarten

# English Receptive Vocabulary PPVT-III



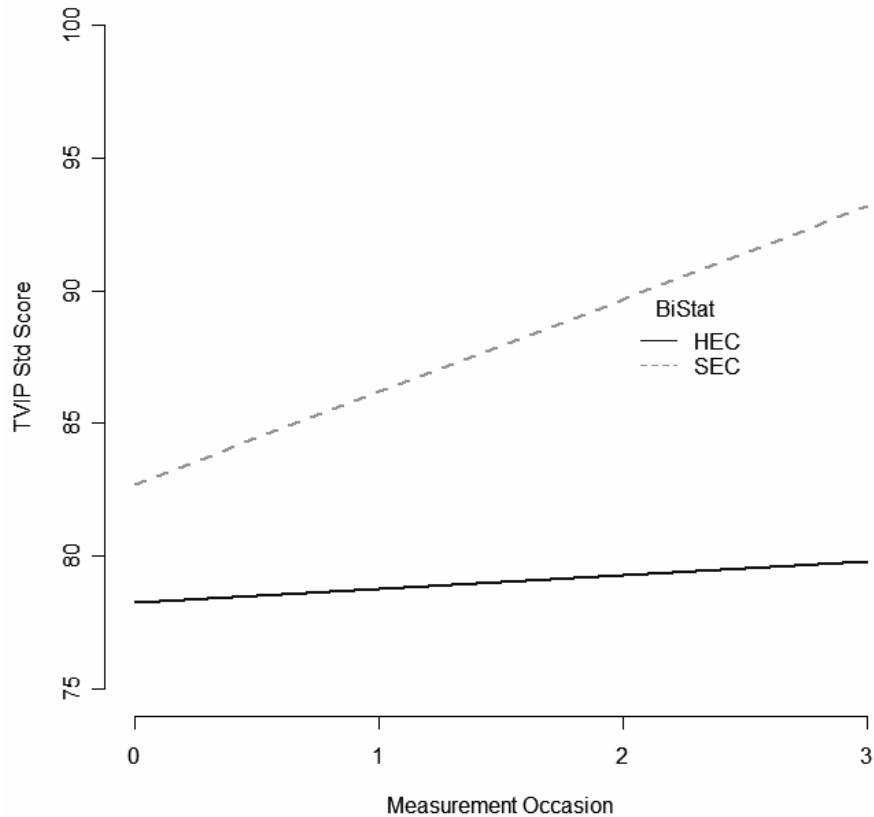
# English Auditory Comprehension – TELD-3



# Spanish Receptive Language

- In the fall of Head Start Year 1,
  - ▣ Both groups scored below monolingual norms
    - receptive vocabulary
    - auditory comprehension
  - ▣ SEC scored higher than HEC
- Receptive Vocabulary (TVIP) - Growth
  - ▣ During Head Start
    - SEC - positive linear growth
    - HEC – no growth in standard scores
  - ▣ In 1<sup>st</sup> grade – both groups below monolingual norms

# Spanish Receptive Vocabulary - TVIP

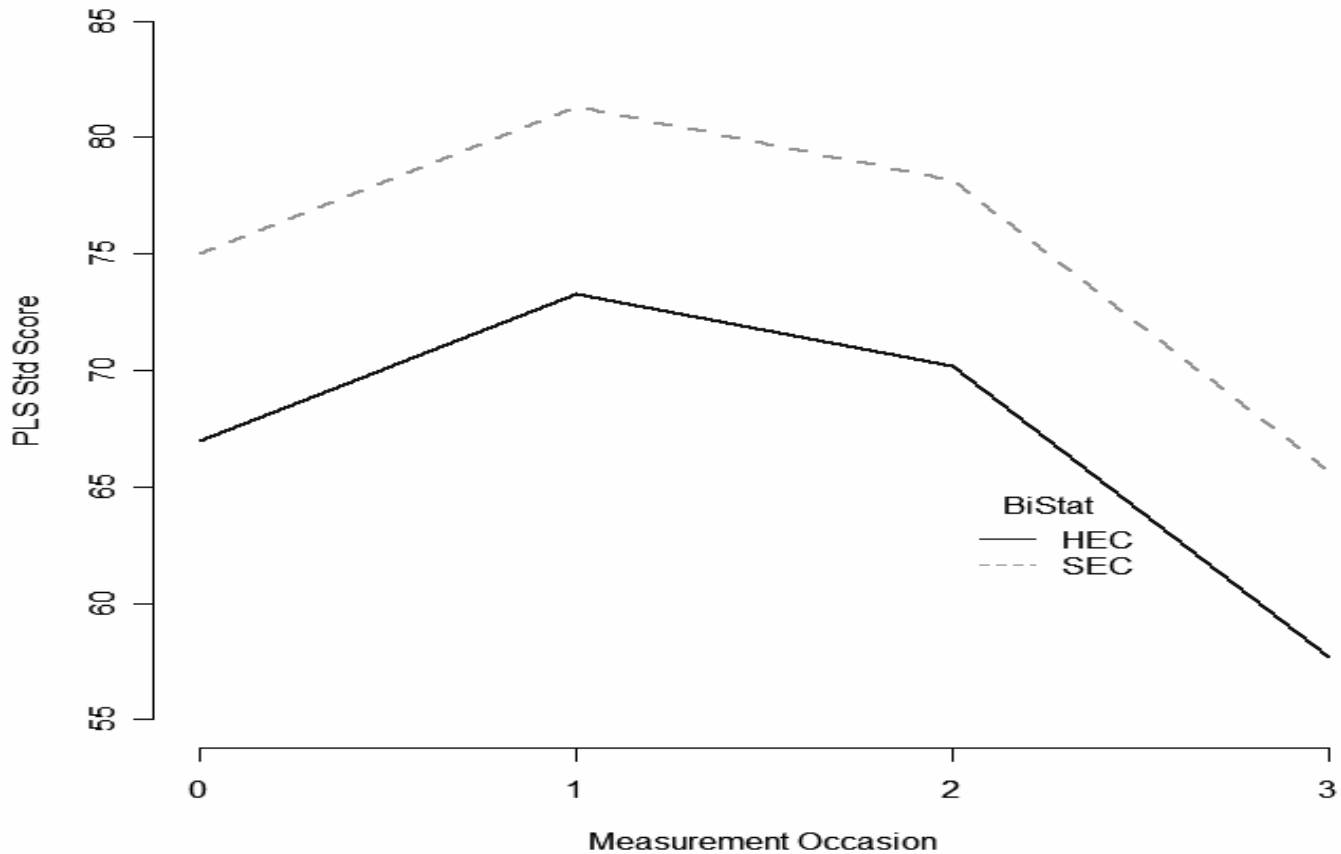




# Spanish Auditory Comprehension

- Growth during Head Start
  - ▣ Initially observe an acceleration
  - ▣ Followed by deceleration
- In kindergarten
  - ▣ Both groups below monolingual expectations

# Spanish Auditory Comprehension – PLS-3

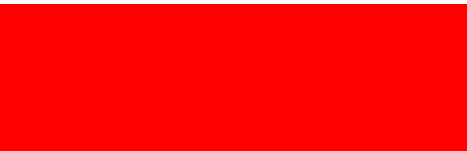


# Emergent Literacy

- During Head Start,
  - ▣ no group differences
    - Phonological awareness – Spanish/English
    - Letter knowledge- Spanish/English
    - Emergent Literacy – TERA-2

(Hammer et al., 2003; Hammer & Miccio, 2006)
- During early elementary grades
  - ▣ performed better in English than Spanish

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG  
EARLY LANGUAGE & LATER  
LITERACY OUTCOMES



# Early Language & Literacy Outcomes

- In monolingual children, predictive relationships between oral language & literacy have been shown
  - ▣ Limited research on bilingual preschoolers
- Phonological awareness
  - ▣ Relationships between two languages exist
    - In preschool (Dickinson et al., 2004; Tabors et al., 2004)
    - Early elementary grades (Branun-Martin et al., 2006; Durgunoglu et al., 2003; Lindsey et al., 2003; Manis et al., 2004; Oller & Cobo-Lewis, 2002)

# Preschool Language & Kindergarten

## Outcomes (Hammer, Lawrence & Miccio, 2007)

- Growth in English receptive language (vocab + auditory comprehension) during 2 yrs in Head Start predicted
  - ▣ Emergent literacy abilities (TERA-2)
  - ▣ English Letter-word ID
  - ▣ Spanish Letter-word ID
- Similarly, growth in Spanish receptive language predicted
  - ▣ Emergent literacy abilities (TERA-2)
  - ▣ English Letter-word ID
  - ▣ Spanish Letter-word ID in kindergarten
- End of Head Start scores did not

ENVIRONMENTAL  
FACTORS IMPACTING  
DEVELOPMENT



# Environmental factors



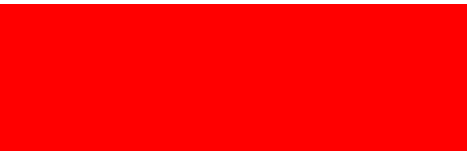
- A number of factors have been shown to impact children's development
  - ▣ Maternal education
  - ▣ Poverty
  - ▣ Maternal depression
  - ▣ Home language other than English
  - ▣ Impact of educational setting



# Educational Setting

- Effect of preschool on development
  - ▣ No preschool v. bilingual preschools (30/70 to 70/30 English-Spanish; Rodríguez et al., 1995)
    - Both groups made gains in their Spanish abilities
    - Children in bilingual preschool classrooms
      - Made greater gains in English in comparison to children who did not attend preschool
      - No impact on children's Spanish abilities
  - ▣ Dual language v. English immersion (Barnett et al., 2007)
    - No differences in English vocabulary & literacy development
    - Children in dual language made greater gains in Spanish vocabulary
  - ▣ Dual language/bilingual classrooms promote development in both languages

# RESEARCH NEEDS



# Research Needs


- Further investigation of preschoolers' language & literacy development longitudinally
  - ▣ Children with varying levels of exposure to and proficiency in English & Spanish when entering preschool
    - Evidence that developmental trajectories are different
  - ▣ Children of differing SES levels
    - Focus has been on children from low-SES homes
  - ▣ Children attending differing educational contexts
    - Home v. preschool
    - Various educational models (dual language, immersion, etc)
    - No one model is likely to be best for all children


# Research needs cont'


- Investigations that identify
  - ▣ home, school & community factors that impact children's development
  - ▣ & potential interactions that may occur among these factors
- Results of such studies can be used to inform preschool interventions that are
  - ▣ designed to support the outcomes of children from varying backgrounds
  - ▣ tested for their effectiveness

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