Lessons from the Language Interaction Snapshot (LISn)

Identifying instructional inequities

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Progress Together

Prevalence of Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in the United States

/ **33% of all children birth to 5 years old in the U.S.**

/ **52% of children in families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level**

Overview of Language Interaction Snapshot (LISn)

/ LISn purpose: Assess the type and quality of language interactions in early childhood settings serving DLLs

/ LISn approach: Observed time samples ("snapshots") of an individual child's language experiences

- 3 or 4 children selected for observation in a classroom
- Observers cycle through selected children until each child has six 5-minute snapshots
- Observers code type of talk and language used with the child in each 30-sec cycle
- Describe the context(s) for the interactions including the number of conversations

Five-minute Snapshot

/ **Each snapshot has ten 30-second cycles**

/ **Child talk by partner**

/ **Type of teacher talk by language**

/ **Type of other adult talk by language**

/ **Note conversations by partner**

Context for interactions

/ **Content/developmental domain,**

/ **Activity structure**

/ **Child engagement**

/ **Time adult is focused on that child**

/ **Number of conversations with peers**

/ **Number of conversations with adults**

Teacher/Other Adult Types of Talk

Responsive talk

/ **Repeats or confirms**
/ **Elaborates (topical)**

Teacher initiated and types of elaboration

/ **Gives routine directions**
/ **Requests – Contextualized**
/ **Provides information – Contextualized**
/ **Provides information – Decontextualized**
/ **Elicits information – Decontextualized**

Group or individual
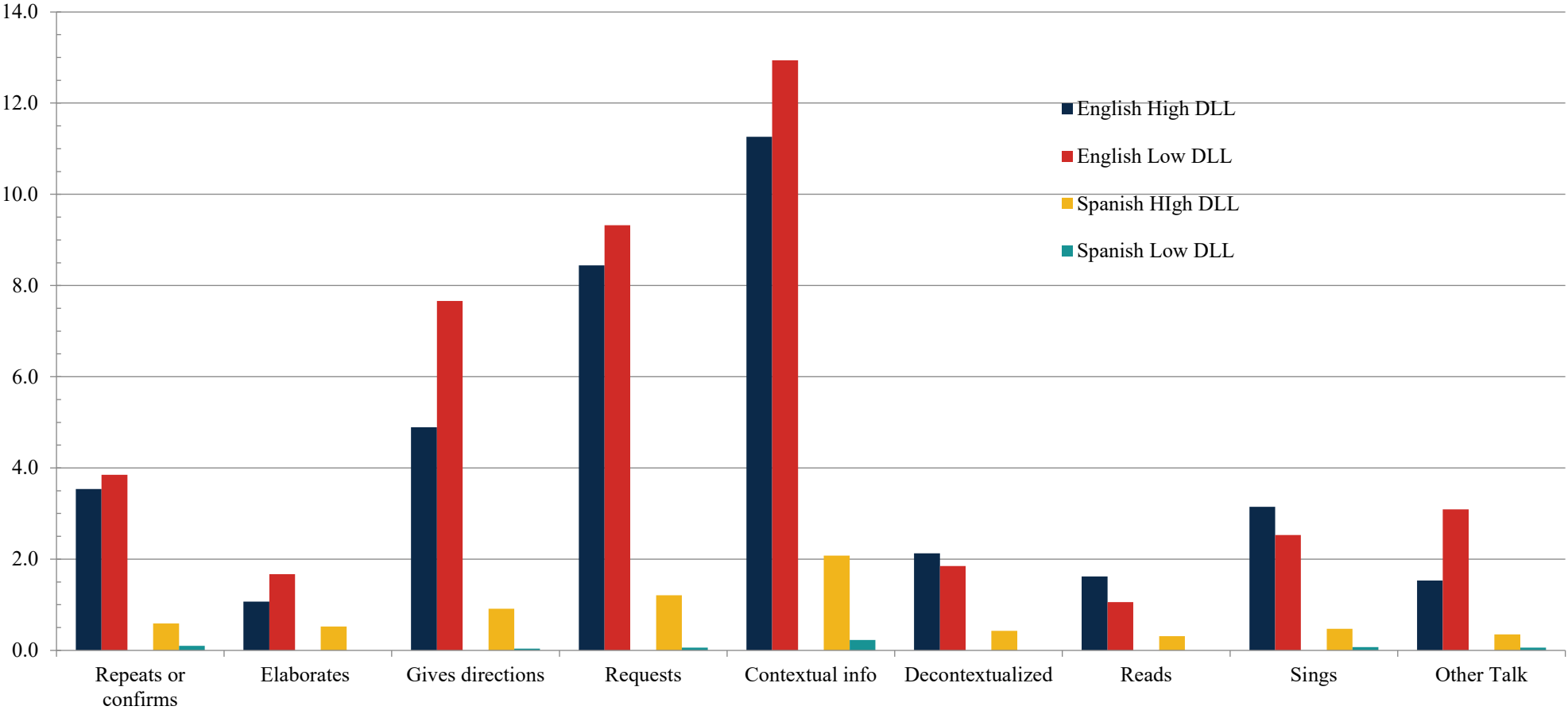
/ **Reads**
/ **Sings**
/ **Other**

# Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (UPCOS-3): Lessons from the LISn

Number of Timepoints* that Teacher Spoke in English and Spanish by Category of Talk in High and Low DLL Concentration Classrooms

Legend:
- English High DLL
- English Low DLL
- Spanish HIgh DLL
- Spanish Low DLL

Number of timepoints with child talk by partner and language in high and low DLL concentration classrooms

High DLL

Low DLL
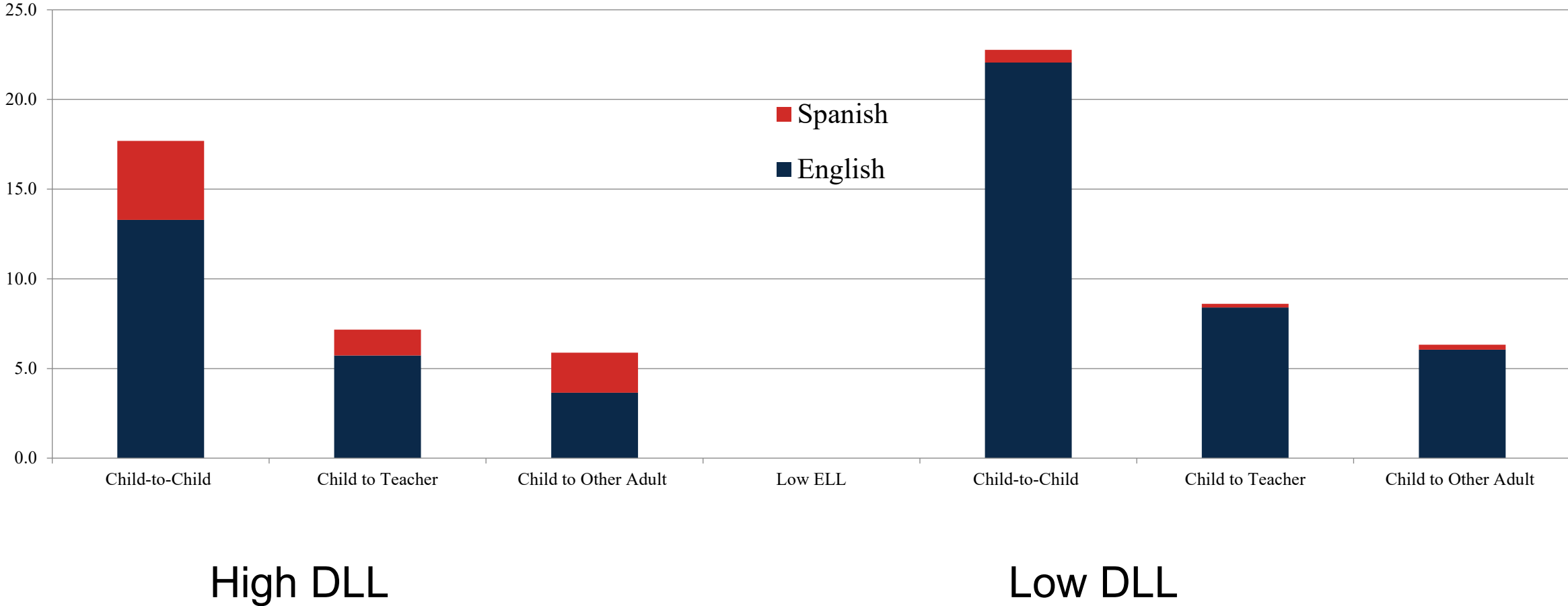
Lessons from the LISn in other studies

Differences in types of talk based on English proficiency (Sawyer et al. 2019)

/ **Adults also spoke to all children most often in English**

/ **Adults' use of Spanish differed based on the child's DLL status, but did not differ on a child's assessed English proficiency**

/ **Most Spanish talk was non-instructional**

Child Talk

/ **All children talked more often with peers than to adults and talk with peers occurred more often in English**

/ **Children identified as English monolingual spoke more often to peers than children who were Spanish monolingual or Spanish dominant bilingual**

Sawyer et al. 2019

Similar use of teacher talk in Head Start programs in LA County

/ **All categories of teacher talk to observed children occurred in less than 16% of cycles (9/60 cycles)**

/ **Most frequent categories of talk across children**
- Giving routine directions occurred in (2-37%) of cycles,
- Providing information (0-57%) and requesting contextualized language (0-40%)

/ **Least frequent categories of talk across children**
- Reading 1.9% (range of 0-17%)
- Decontextualized talk (combined use and request) 3.6% (range of 0-25%)

/ **English talk in any category occurred in 7-70% of cycles while Spanish talk in any category occurred in 0-18% of cycles**

Blackstock-Bernstein, 2019

Language experiences differed by other child characteristics

/ **Shy children talked less to teachers than extroverted children**

/ **Sustained conversations with peers occurred twice as often for girls compared with boys**

/ **Children with disabilities had fewer conversations with teachers than other children – at half the rate of others**

Blackstock-Bernstein, 2019

Associations with child outcomes

/ **Teacher use of stronger language strategies is associated with more positive language outcomes (Franco et al. 2019)**

/ **Content and structure make a difference in the prevalence of high quality talk and relate to outcomes in different ways (Bratsch-Hines et al. 2019)**

   / **Math activities – correlated with gains in receptive vocabulary and literacy skills**

   / **Center time negatively associated with high quality talk, any teacher talk and any adult talk to child; only significant Center correlation with child outcomes was negative**

/ **Time in small group activities associated with gains in child outcomes**

Franco et al. 2019, Bratsch-Hines et al. 2019

Summary and implications

Highlighted findings across multiple studies

/ **Patterns in language and use of categories of talk similar across studies**

- Most adult talk was in English - even with Spanish monolingual children
- Adults most often used low level language strategies

/ **Variation in teacher talk is found across children with different characteristics—signaling differences in children's' learning experiences**

/ **Most conversations occur with peers and usually in English**

/ **Limited teacher support was observed for peer-to-peer talk**

(Atkins-Burnett et al. 2010; Atkins-Burnett et al 2011; Blackstock-Bernstein 2019; Franco et al. 2019; Sawyer et al. 2018

Implications

/ **Measures of quality that follow individual children identify differences in children's experiences and provide information about how to address inequities.**

/ **PD providers should increase teacher's awareness of the benefits of decontextualized talk (reasoning, story-telling, personal narratives)**

/ **Teachers would benefit from understanding of methods to build on using peer interactions to support stronger language skills.**

/ **Teachers should increase frequency of conversations, read and talk about books with children, conduct small group experiences, arrange activities that encourage peer talk**

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