

SOP1-2

Impact of Academic Language of Instruction on Spanish and English Growth in Bilingual Children

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There is a relative lack of research that examines the impact of language of instruction on bilingual children's language development and its potential impact on language loss. There are conflicting views on whether academic instruction primarily in English or Spanish yields higher overall achievement. This longitudinal study examines the growth and deceleration of 90 typically developing Spanish-English bilingual children's grammatical and lexical development accounting for primary language of academic instruction – English or Spanish. The children were matched according to age, gender, SES, and maternal education level. Narrative language samples in Spanish and English were collected across six consecutive semesters from kindergarten to second grade. Conditional growth curve models were estimated to determine the effect of language of instruction on dual language development. Spanish-instructed participants demonstrated slower rates of Spanish language loss and higher levels of Spanish oral language skills. English-instructed participants demonstrated higher levels of oral language skills in English.

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