

Social Factors in Childhood Bilingualism (C-BI) in the U.S.

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Toronto CAN

5/6/2006

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This work was supported in part by NIH grant #[R01-HD30762](#)
to D. K. Oller, P.I., Bilingualism Study Group, University of Miami, Coral
Gables, FL.

Key to Childhood-BL

- Establishing the **MINORITY** language
- Language of commerce and the broader community, not a secret (even when parents do not command the language)
- How establish BOTH majority language and a heritage language?
 - (subquestion how establish a 2nd language for majority language speakers?—less of a focus today)

Added wrinkle in U.S. context

- Hostility to bilingualism
 - Xenophobia
 - Dim view of non-English languages
- Strong folk belief that 2nd language takes away from majority language
 - (and resistance to evidence to the contrary)

Overview of Talk

1. Give background on extent we observed of minority language use by potentially bilingual children
2. Propose candidate factors affecting minority language use
3. Show how factors interact
4. Provide examples of effects and non-effects
5. Summarize our suggestions

Focus on CIRCUMSTANCES

- In what circumstances does bilingual development in children happen?
- When *doesn't* it happen? What is it in the social context that fosters or doesn't foster childhood bilingualism?

...in the U.S.

- General principles, but derived from our experience with U.S. Cubans and how they differ from other Hispanic groups in US.
- Unique factors in Miami Latin population Miami a “great Latin American city”
 - Large, majority status (57% in 2000 census)
 - High SES: bankers, lawyers, etc. (English spoken here...“ethnic food”)
 - EXILE community—re-create down to social clubs, school (Viv’s *the* school in Havana)—Coral Way

Miami context—con't

- Not all Hispanics Cubans—other Central Americans
 - Large continuing immigration
 - Spanish a multi-million \$\$ market
 - Not OPOL
-
- Contrast to large populations in CA, TX, NY, etc.
--more typical immigrant populations, less political power

Each locality combines factors a little differently

Say 10 major mediating factors

- $2^{10} = 1024$ combinations
- If 3 levels: $3^{10} = 59,000$ combinations
- No surprise that Wales and Holland and Berlin and Quebec and everywhere are all different.

Sources

- Not work from a single study
- Synthesize on-going “post hoc” analysis of our own work and work of others—especially....

UMiami Bilingualism Study Group: Studies from birth through college

1. 25 babies, longitudinal study from before babbling (5 months) to 30 months (some children through age 5)
2. 950 elementary school children, controlled factorial K-2nd-5th graders, comparing effects of language(s) of home and language(s) of school, SES
3. Other studies with SAT, PPVT-TVIP
4. Language surveys college students; middle schoolers

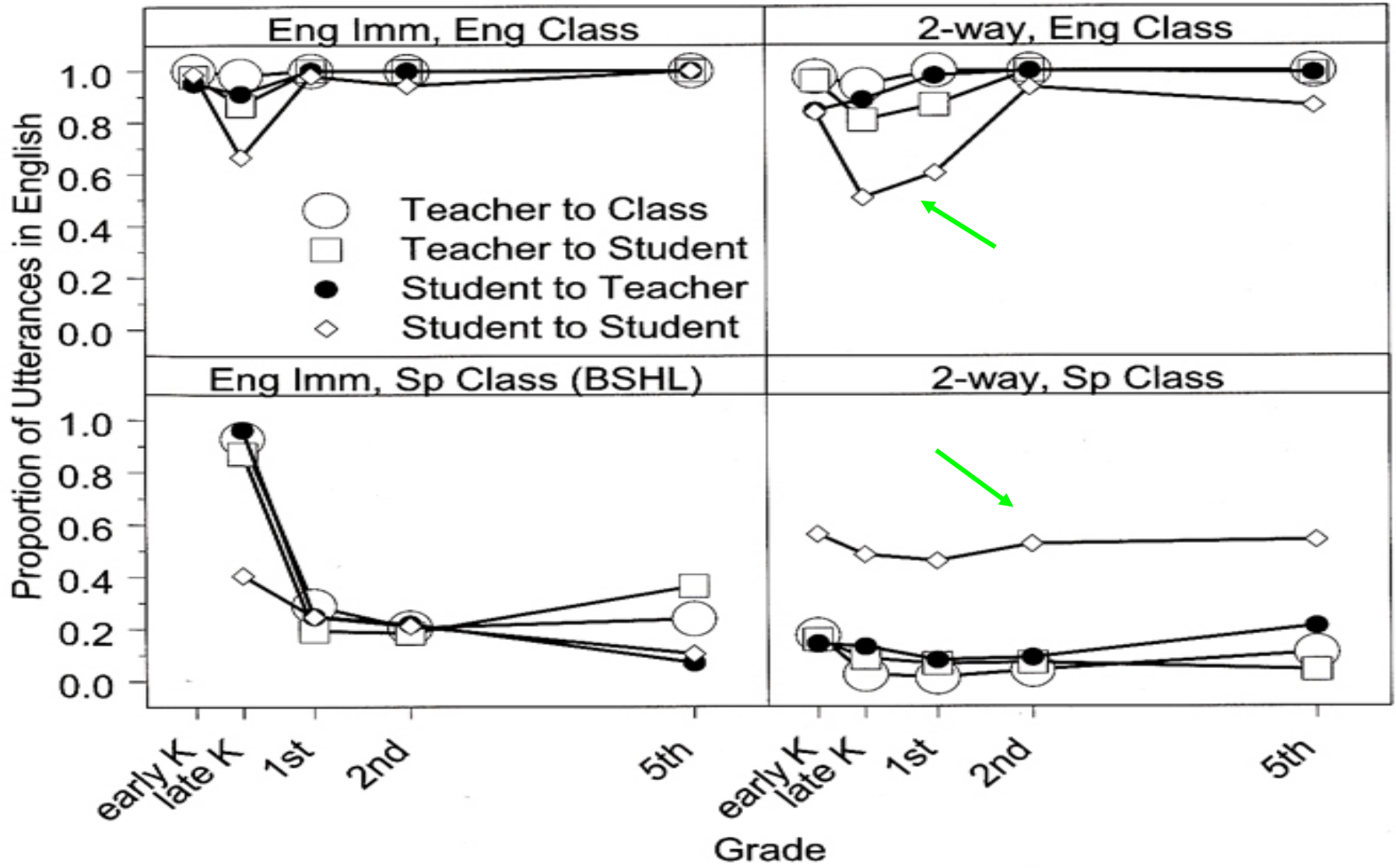
Major Refs:

- Oller & Eilers, 2002; *Language and literacy in bilingual children* (especially the 5th graders)
 - Pearson, Umbel, Gathercole, & Cobo-Lewis
- Pearson & McGee (1993), Pearson & Andrews de Flores (unpublished)
- Eilers, Pearson & Cobo-Lewis, 2006
- Oller, Pearson & Cobo-Lewis, (in press)
- Gathercole (in Wales, Welsh Language Board)
- Hakuta & D'Andrea (1992)
- Lambert & Taylor (1996)

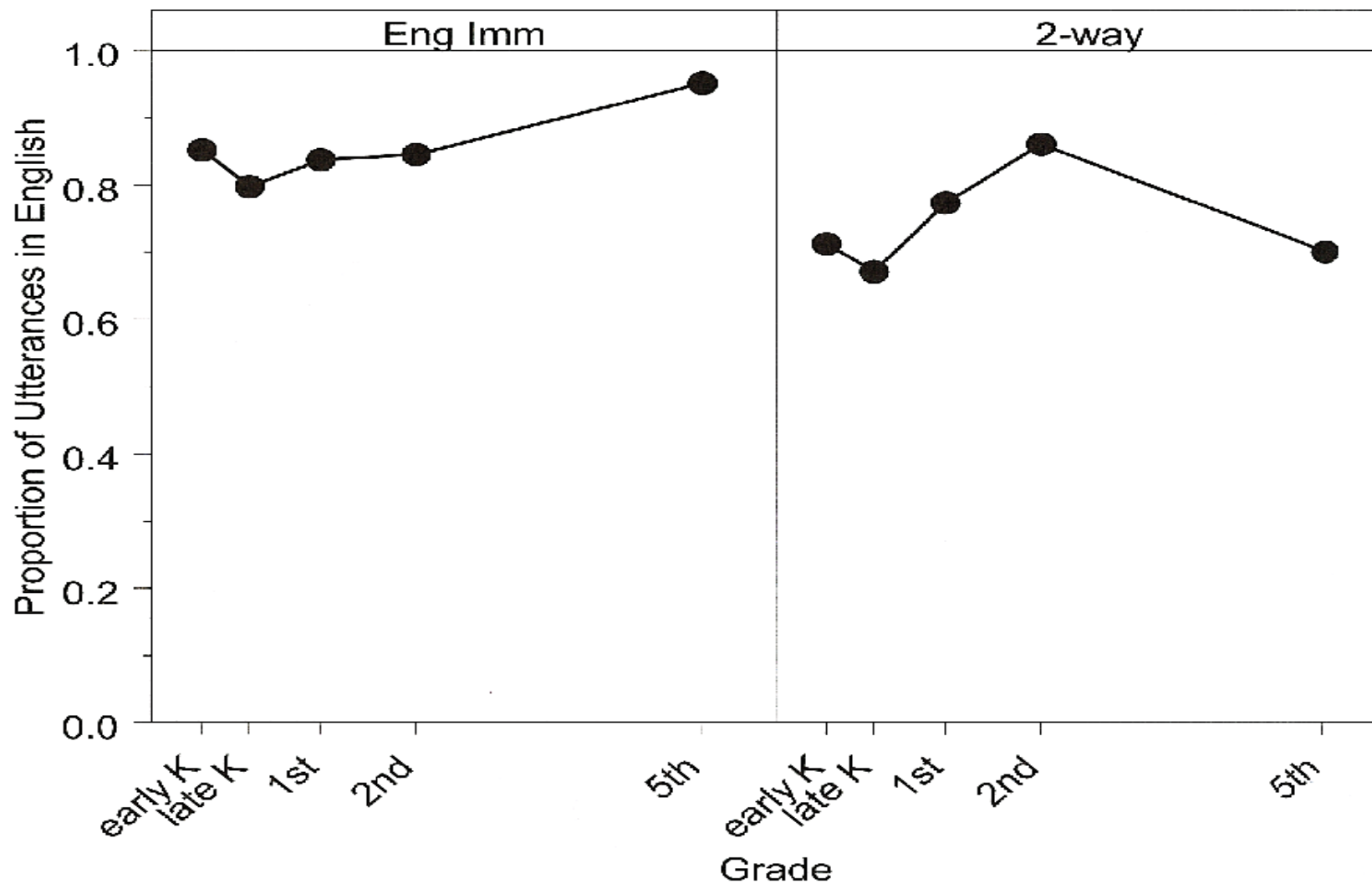
Not the CHILD's decision-1

- If it were up to the children,
 - **MAJORITY RULES**
- Without some strong motivation to do otherwise, I think we could safely say that children go for the majority language. We found this even among children who did not speak the majority language very well.

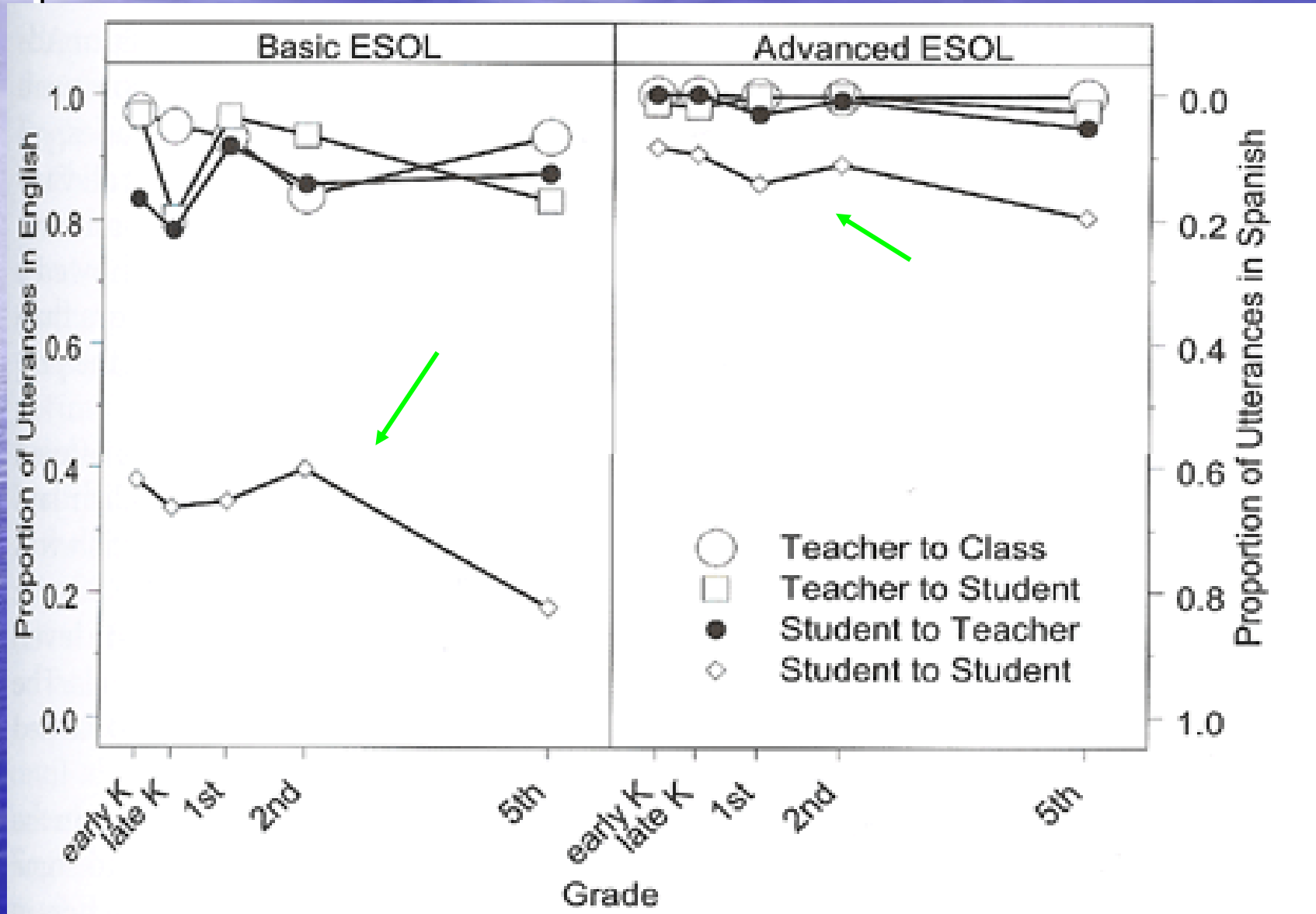
Language choice *(LLBC 2002)*



Language choice



Language choice—where do we see Spanish?



Not the CHILD's decision-2

- Child doesn't decide: parents and institutions do.
- Conspire to create the circumstances where C-BL can happen.
 - Give the **opportunity** to learn 2 languages,
 - Give them **reasons to choose** a 2nd language.
- Some circumstances better than others.

Today's SUBTITLE

- **Beyond INPUT and AGE of Exposure**

- Input is the “engine” of LL
- AoE is a turbocharge

- **Other Social Factors** (brakes and accelerator):

- The languages
- The families
- The communities

(Basically, factors that increase or decrease the amount of input.)

Greater quantity of input

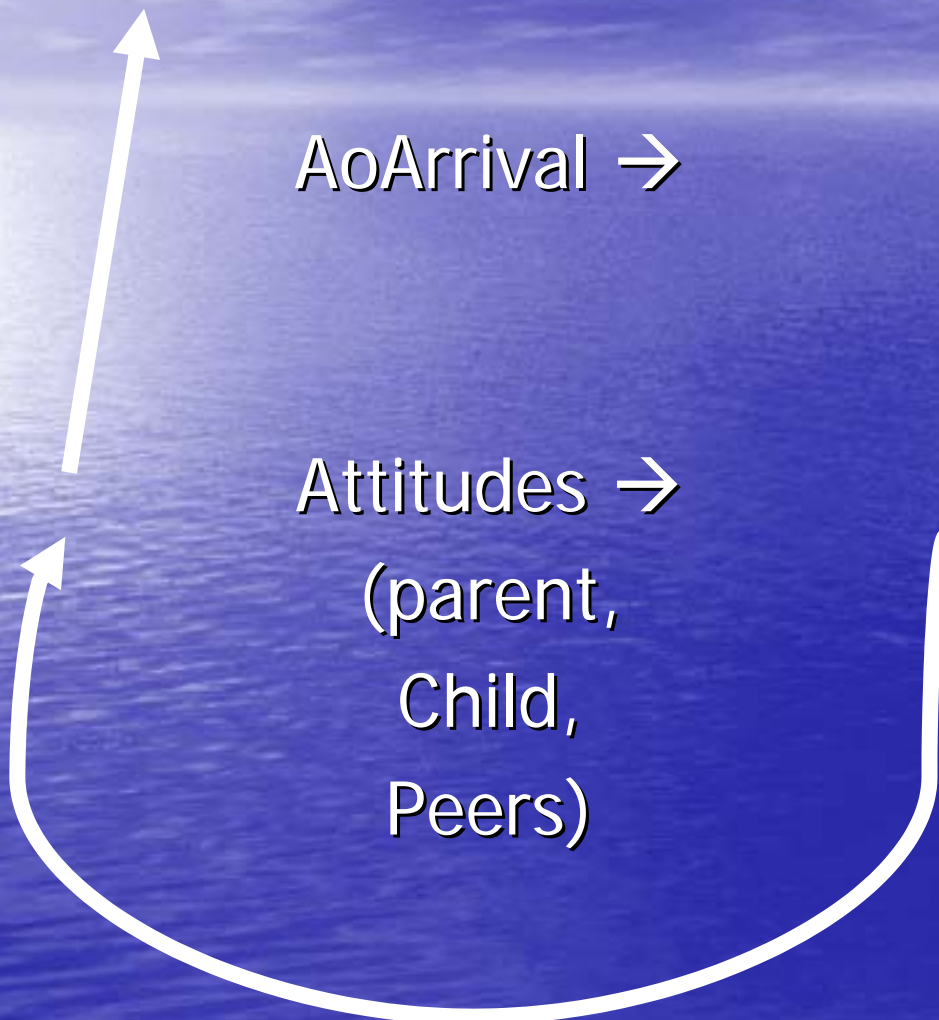
AoArrival →

→ Greater proficiency

Attitudes →

→ Greater use of 2nd
language (choice)

(parent,
Child,
Peers)



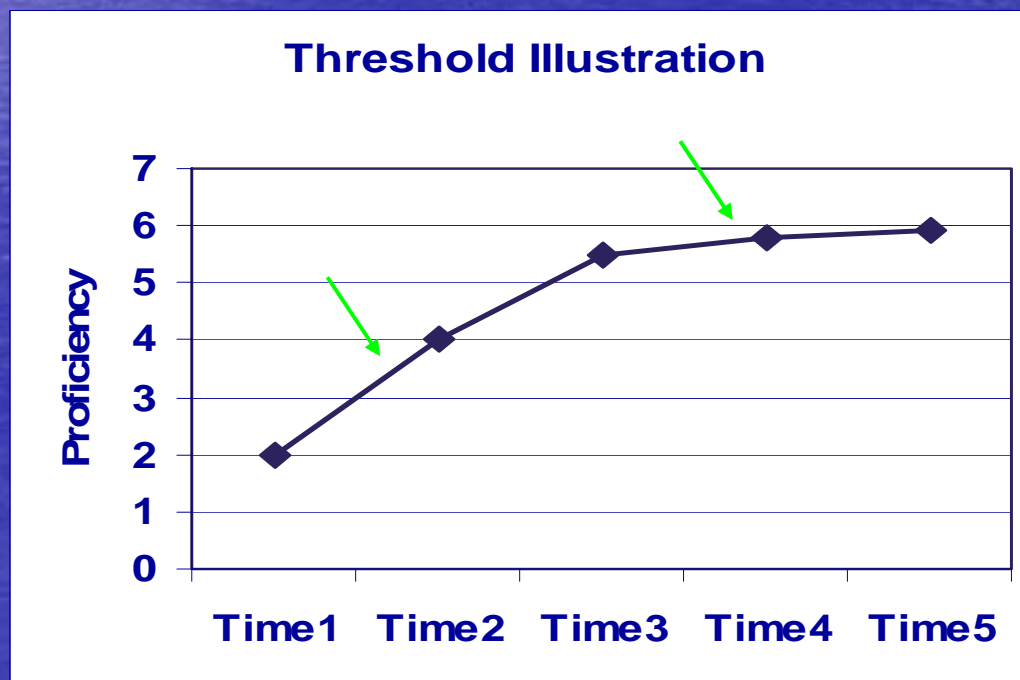
Not a direct relationship between exposure and proficiency

- Concept of Threshold
 - (Gathercole 2002, 2006)
- Direct effect up to a threshold
- After threshold, less effect

Concept of THRESHOLD

- Exposure matters --up to a threshold
- Beyond which, exposure no longer matter

❖ Gathercole, 2002 for illustration



INPUT + UPTAKE = Proficiency

- Factors that add value increase uptake reduce need for input
- Factors that promote retention reduce need for input....

How much input do you need?

What timing is optimal?

What contributes value?

In terms of Lambert's (1977) ADDITIVE vs SUBTRACTIVE distinction.

- In a U.S. context, if we add input in a second language, what are the **odds** that the child will end up with 2 languages:
 - native command of two languages, or
 - native command of one + 2nd language command of second, or
 - native command of neither

Language Factors

- Language Status: Minority/ Majority
 - Educational opportunities in each language
 - Instrumental value
- Relative Language Prestige
 - locally
 - world-wide
 - (does the language have a literature? Children's materials? Other speakers available)
- Language Modalities: esp. literacy
 - If literacy is achieved, language is less vulnerable to attrition
 - A GOOD STUDY THERE.
- Language relatedness (also in FL):
 - extent of interdependence

FAMILY Factors

- SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SES)
 - (cf. majority language acquisition, L1 or L2)
 - Access (which provides input of majority language)
 - Attitudes (which affect choice -- > input etc.)
 - Lambert & Taylor 1996—high versus low
- Parental values
- Parental goals
- Family dynamics
 - (parent-centered or child centered)

Family Factors, cont

- Immigrant status
- Within Generation
 - 1st generation—AoA crucial
 - 2nd generation (born here of parents born abroad)
 - AoA of parents crucial
 - Whether BOTH parents are born abroad
 - 3rd generation
 - Depends on intergenerational households; precisely what declines as “depth” increases (25-15-10, *Pearson & McGee*)

See Hakuta & D’Andrea illustration

COMMUNITY (Cultural) Factors

- Community cohesiveness (good ghettos and bad ghettos; churches & community orgs –L&T)
- Community prestige
- Perceived threat to ID (Southworth, 1980)
- Community Goals (Cubans “exile” in Miami, Welsh Language Board)

Reiterate: Striking absence of CHILD factors

(become more relevant as they get older, no longer “child bilinguals”)

For childhood bilinguals, it's a parent/ family issue strongly influenced by a community context.

Just as we have universal learning of a first language, I know of no cases of a child in a proper environment UNABLE to learn a 2nd language. (TELL ME IF YOU KNOW OF ONE.)

Getting a cohort of young children with cochlear implants: consensus “if you can hear enough to learn one (oral) language, you can learn two.”

Remarks apply to hearing children learning a spoken and a manual language (may be some other factors to consider for deaf children learning an oral language).

But not everyone does! Why or why not?

Reiterate:

Key DEPENDENT variable for CB

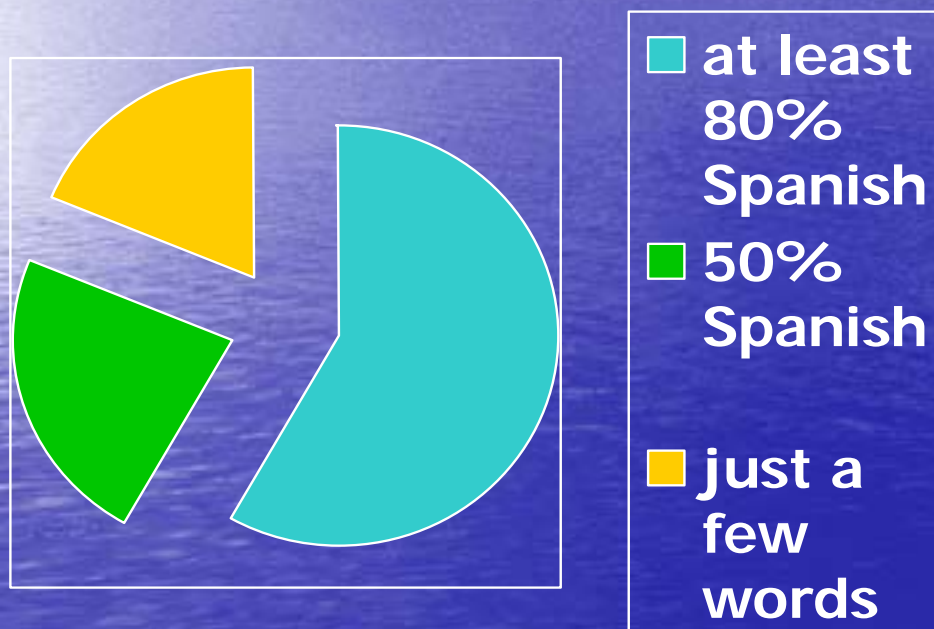
- **Strength of MINORITY language**
(whether it's L1 or L2)
 - Key factors may differ for different language skills/ modalities (Oller et al. in press)
- but minority language is the key to childhood bilingualism.

“Valueing the language” helpful, not sufficient

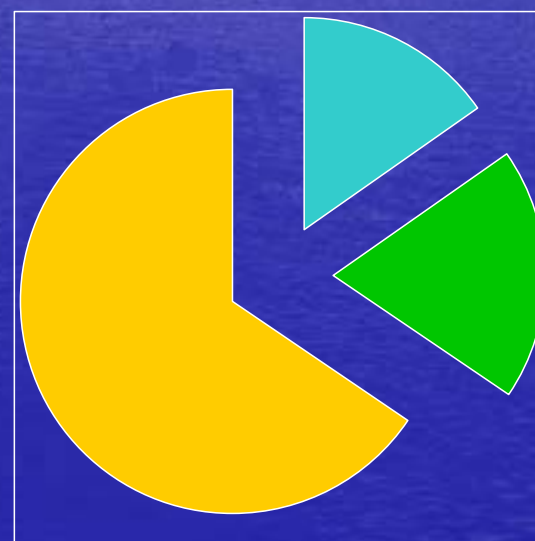
- Survey results: “Plan to teach children”
 - ❖ 90+%
- Most of the people responding “yes” didn’t even speak minority language to their brothers and sisters; not likely to use consistently with child.
- Without a specific intention to do so, **BLs don’t tend to use minority language with each other to the extent that they think they do.**

Language choice with peers

Pearson & McGee, 1993

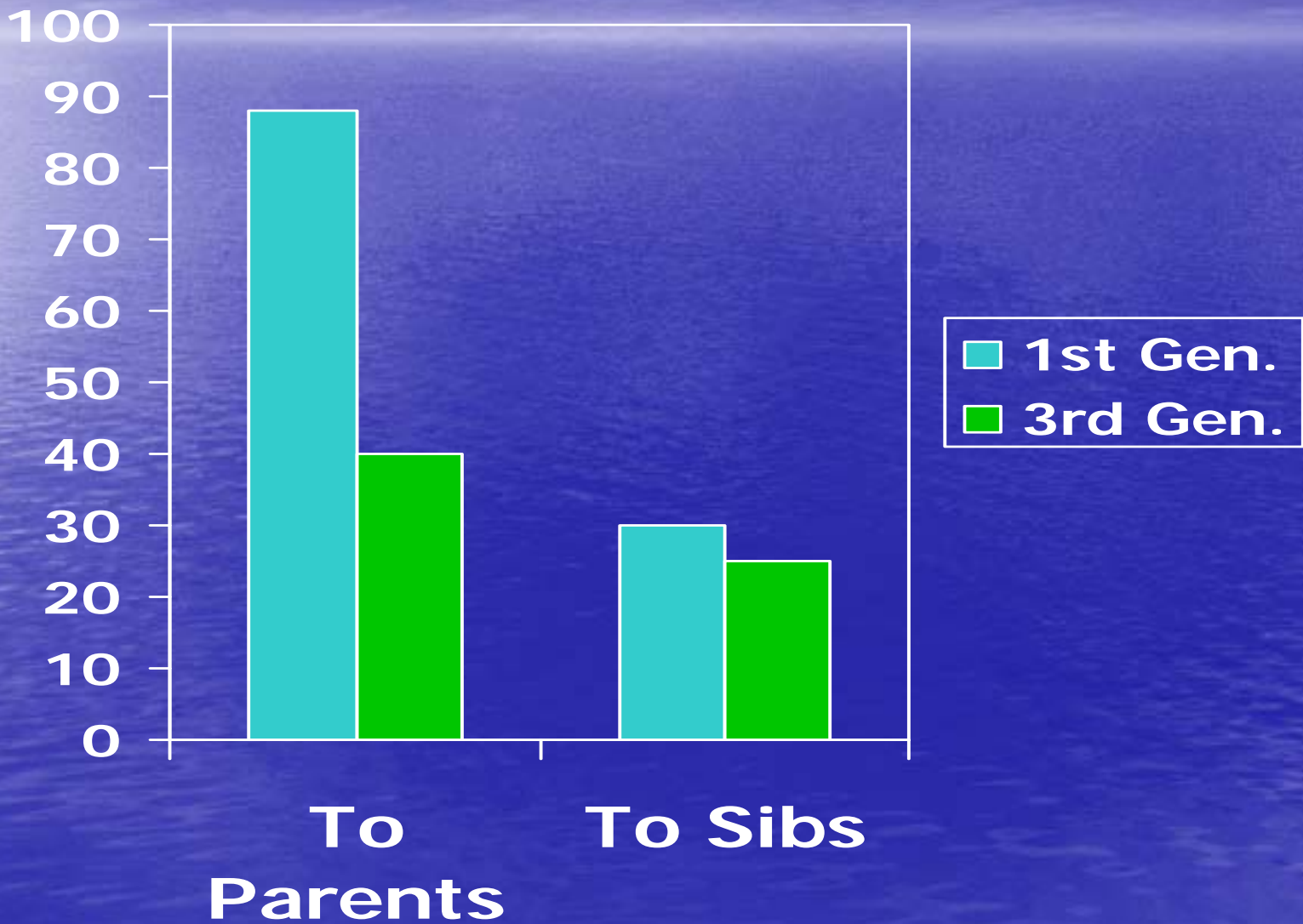


Children to Parents



to Siblings

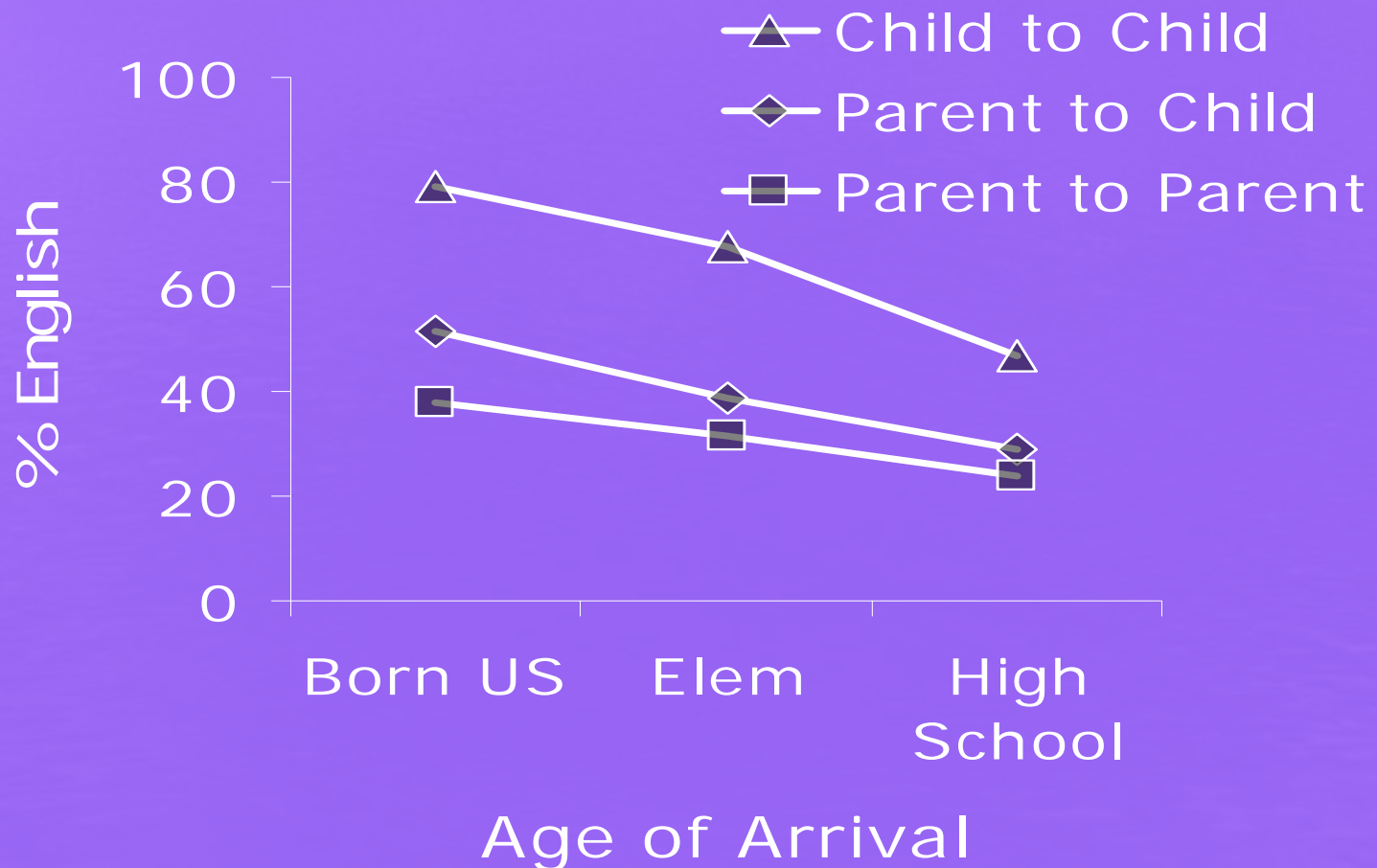
Language choice to Sibs by generation (Pearson & McGee)



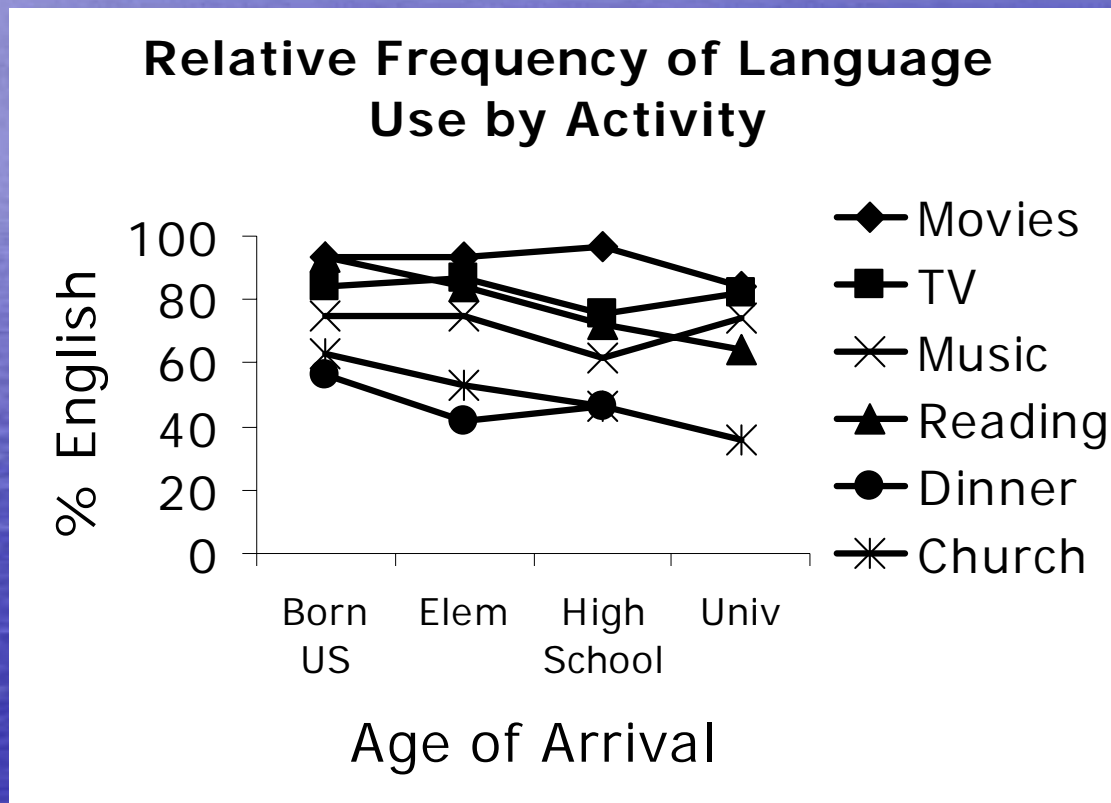
Language choice

(Pearson & Andrews de Flores, unpub)

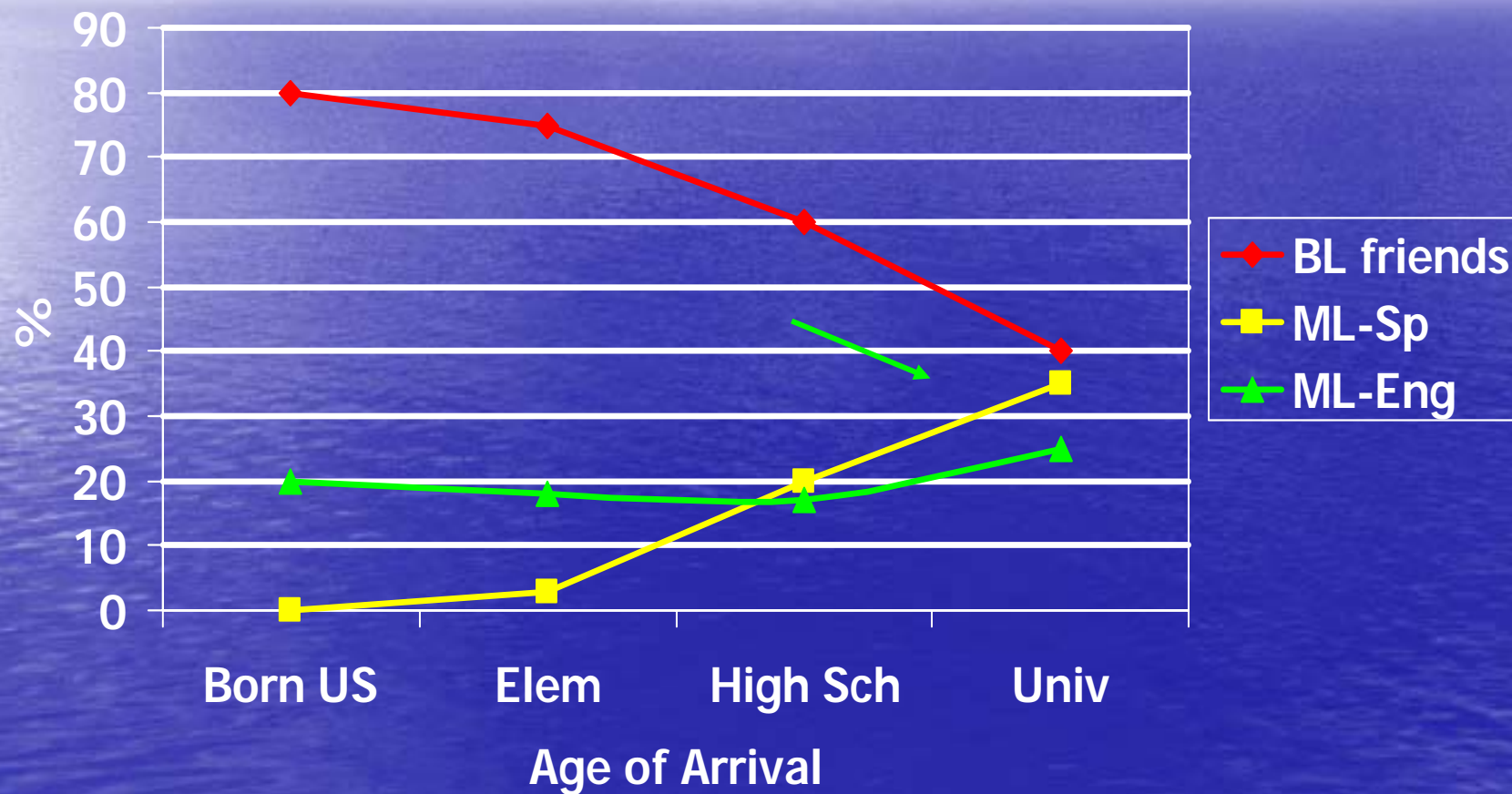
Relative Frequency of Language Use by Interlocutor



Language choice by activity



Linguality of Friends



Longitudinal baby study

- All learned in both languages
- But 6 of 25 not use one of the languages enough to get a language sample
- Key factor: input, but input varied according to language history of parents

Need finer grain than generation

- Hakuta & D'Andrea 1992 propose "depth"

Hakuta and D'Andrea's "depths"

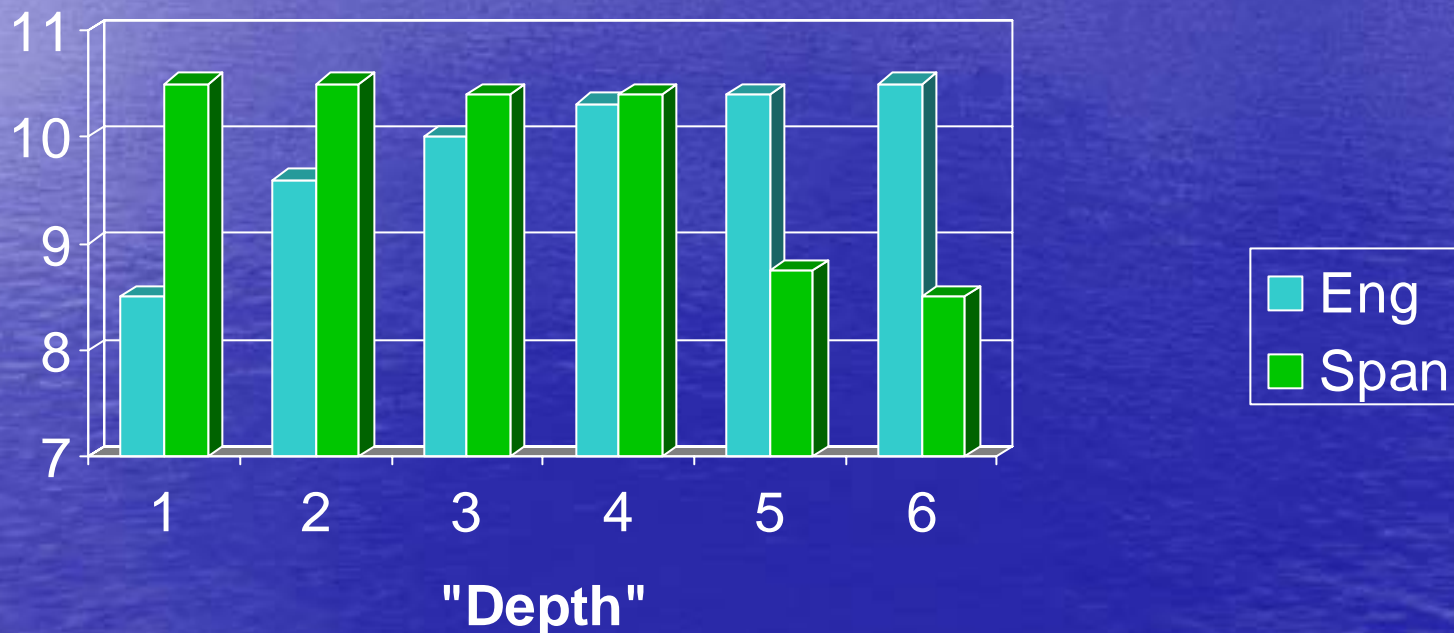
1. Born abroad; Arrive after age 10
2. Born abroad; Arrive between 5 and 10
3. Born abroad; Arrive before age 5

4. Born US; Both parents born abroad
5. Born US; at least one parent born US

6. Born US;
at least one grandparent born in US

Depth: Child and parent factors

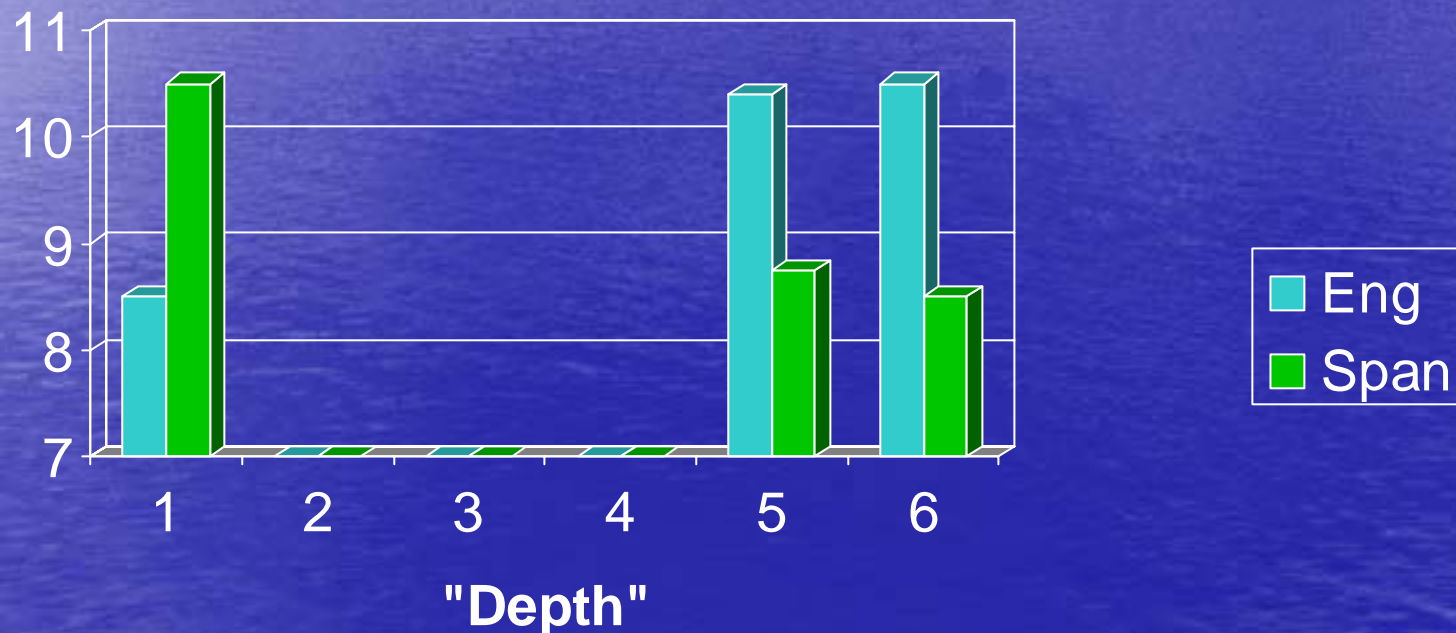
English and Spanish Proficiency by Time in U.S.



From Hakuta & D'Andrea, 1992

Demonstration of subtractive LL

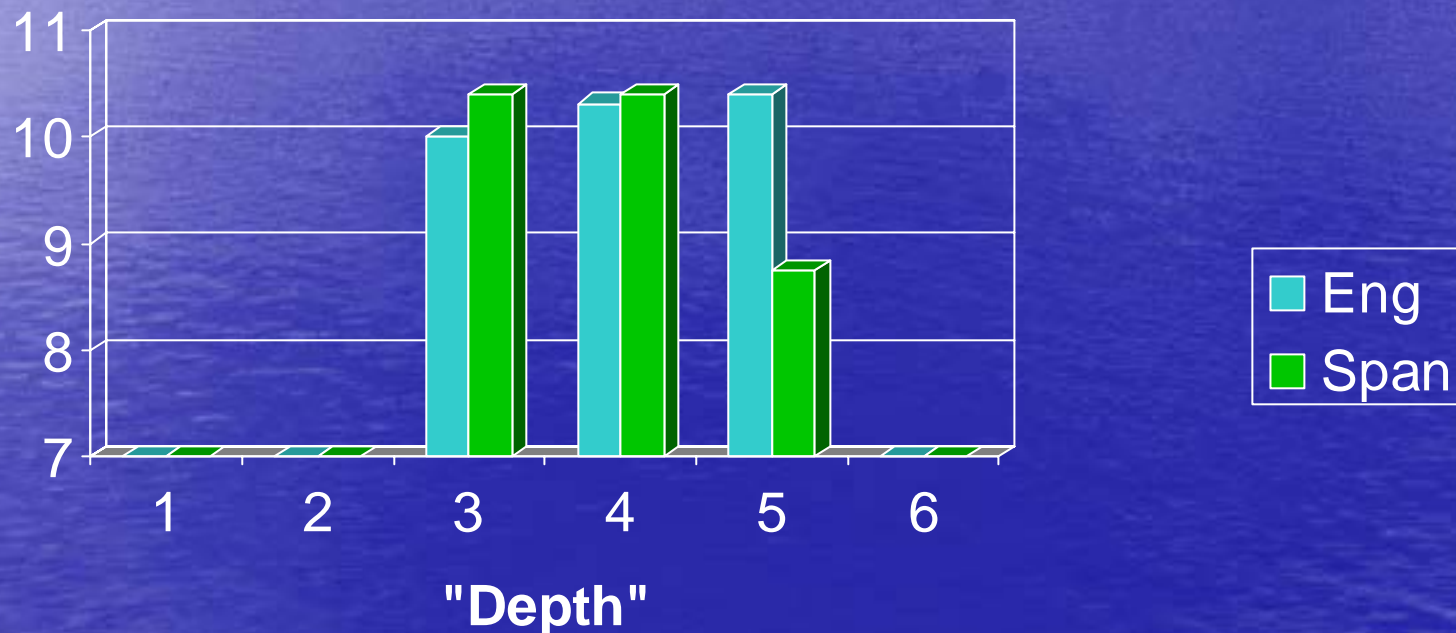
English and Spanish Proficiency by Time in U.S.



From Hakuta & D'Andrea, 1992

Demonstration of additive BL

English and Spanish Proficiency by Time in U.S.



From Hakuta & D'Andrea, 1992

Review of moderating factors

- Minority/ majority Lg
- Language prestige
 - Locally
 - Worldwide
- Parental attitudes
- Parental values
- Parental proficiency
- Immigration Status
- SES
- Extended family
- Family dynamic
- Community cohesiveness
- Community values

Overlap between factors

Immigration status as proxy for parental proficiency in majority language, access to majority culture—reduce to amount of input

Language prestige affects motivation to learn or willingness to use a language

Cultural congruence controls access to majority culture, interest in majority culture

Overlap between factors – con't

Family dynamic – extended family related to immigrant status (P & McGee)

Latin family – father's language more central

- Older siblings—bring English into the home

Ready for our question(s):

- Holding immigration status (depth) constant,
 - What is the role of SES?
 - What is the effect of cultural congruence (e.g. for different language pairs)?
- Holding SES and language pairs constant,
 - What is the role of language of the home?
 - What is the role of language of the school?

The Core Design

Replicated at Kindergarten, 2nd and 5th Grades- 952 children

Monolinguals

Bilinguals

English Immersion

Two-Way

Hi

Lo

ESH

OSH

Hi Lo

Hi Lo

ESH

OSH

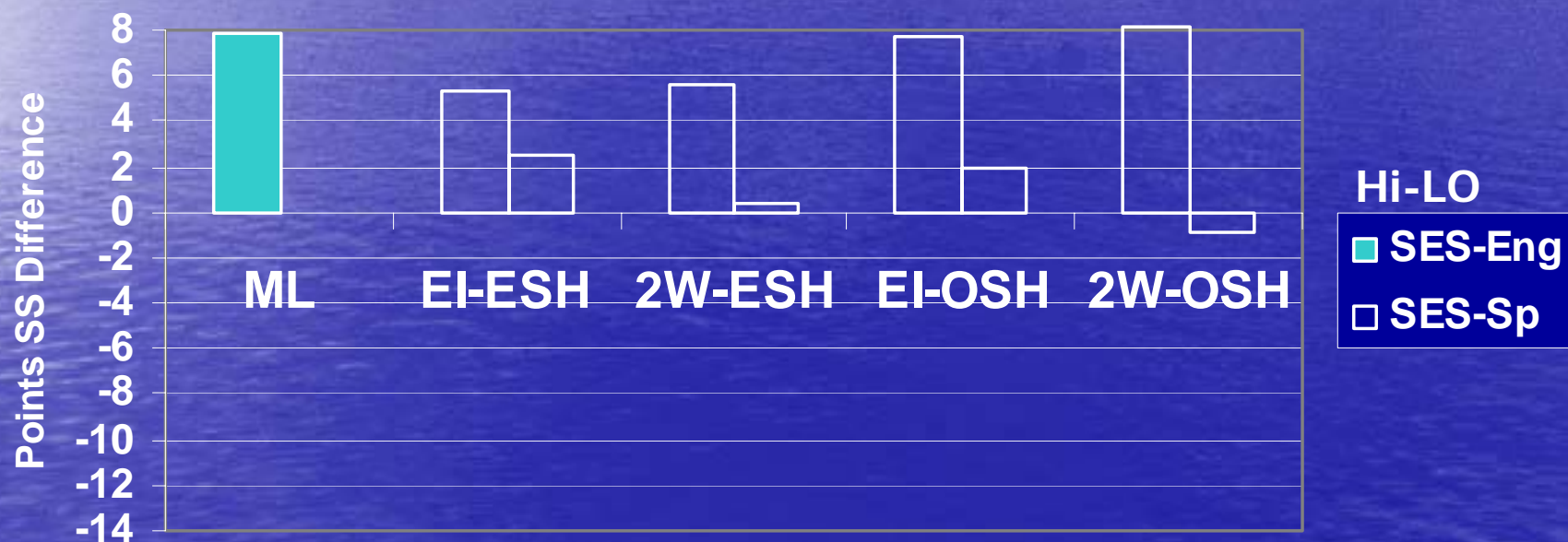
Hi Lo

Hi Lo

SES

Role of SES on L1 *(LLBC)*

Effect of SES on Stand. Scores
(LSH & IMS constant)



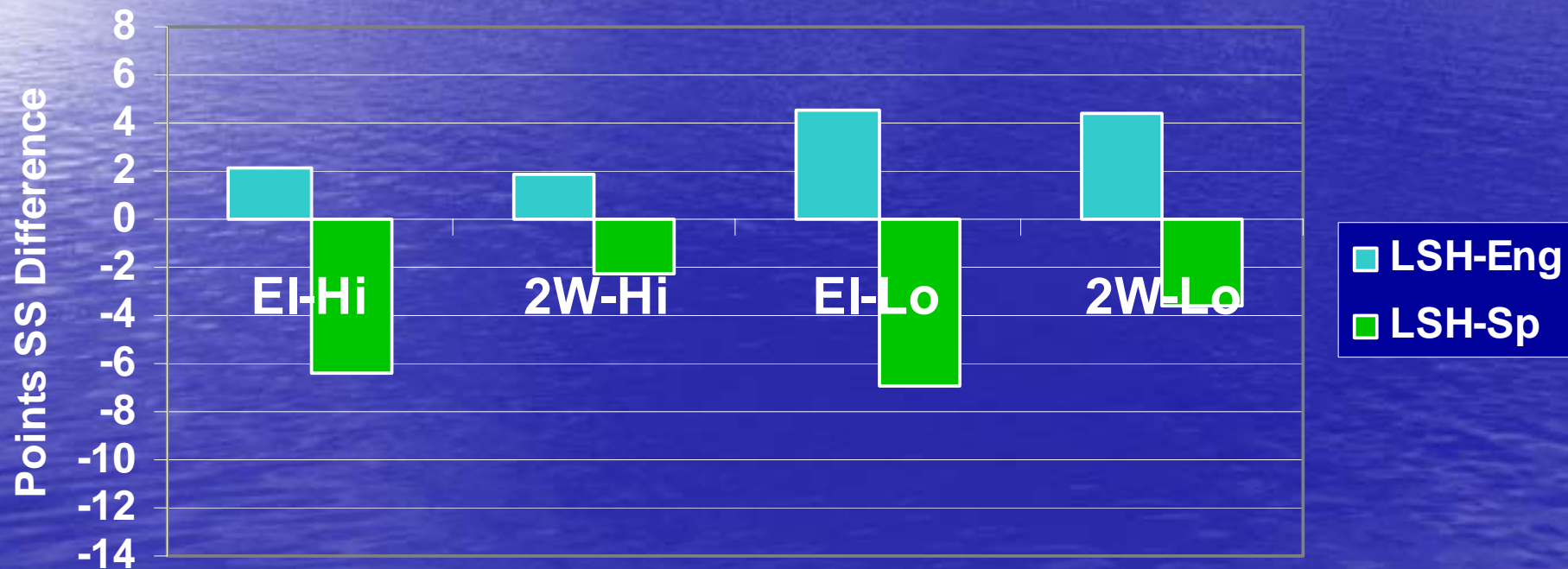
Role of SES on L1; L2

Effect of SES on Stand. Scores
(LSH & IMS constant)

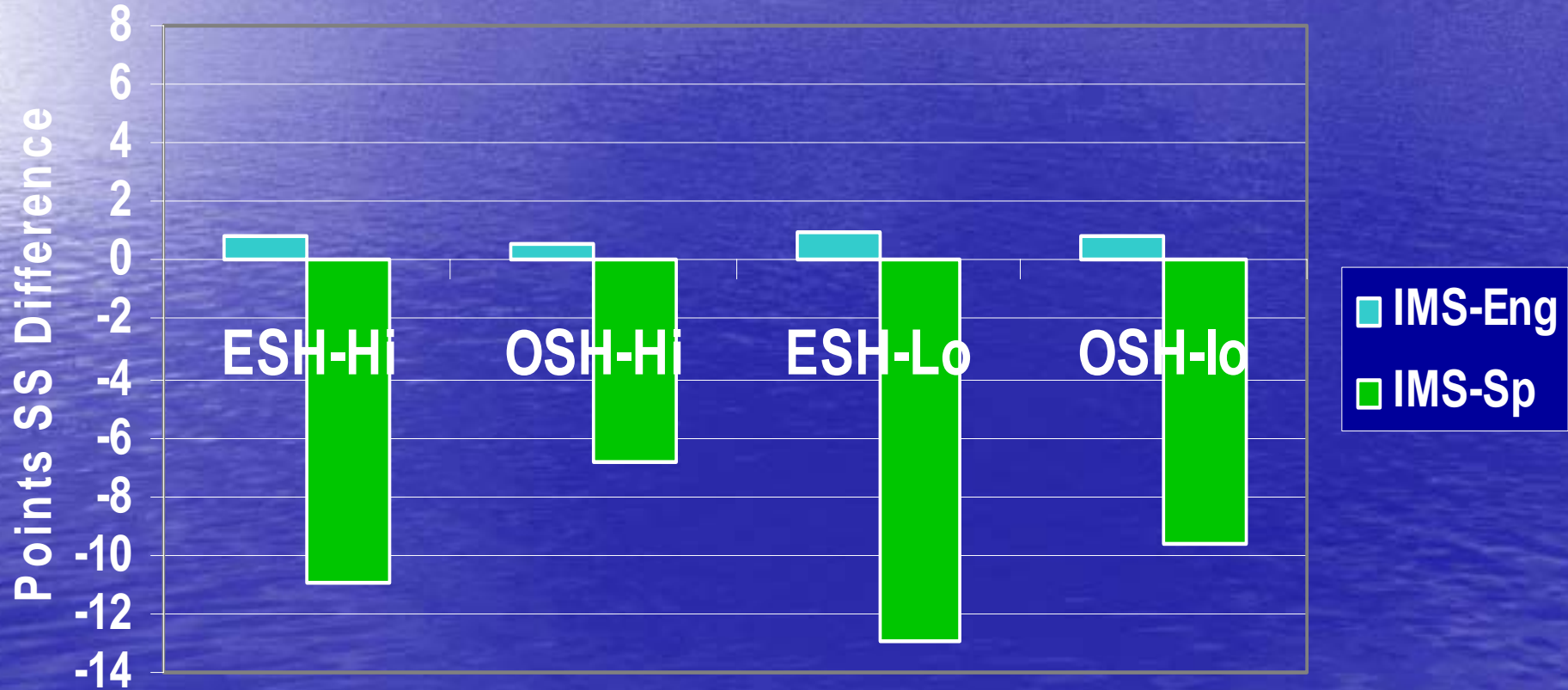


Home language effect

Effect of Home Language on Stand. Scores
(SES & IMS constant, ESH-OSH)



Effect of School Lang. on Stand. Scores (LSH & SES constant, EI-2way)



Cells with highest over-all score (9 English, 9 Spanish)

least Spanish				> most Spanish			
$E_S E_H$		$E_S S_H$		$E_S E_H$		$E_S S_H$	
(Only English at school/ English & Spanish at home)		(Only English at school/ Only Spanish at home)		(English & Spanish at school & home)		(English & Spanish at school/ Only Spanish at home)	
high	low	high	low	high	low	high	low
2	1	3	3	4	5	5	6

Two way school

Cell with greatest balance

least Spanish				most Spanish			
$E_S E_{SH}$ (Only English at school/ English & Spanish at home)		$E_S S_H$ (Only English at school/ Only Spanish at home)		$E S_S E_{SH}$ (English & Spanish at school & home)		$E S_S S_H$ (English & Spanish at school/ Only Spanish at home)	
high	low	high	low	high	low	high	low
2	1	3	3	4	5	5	6

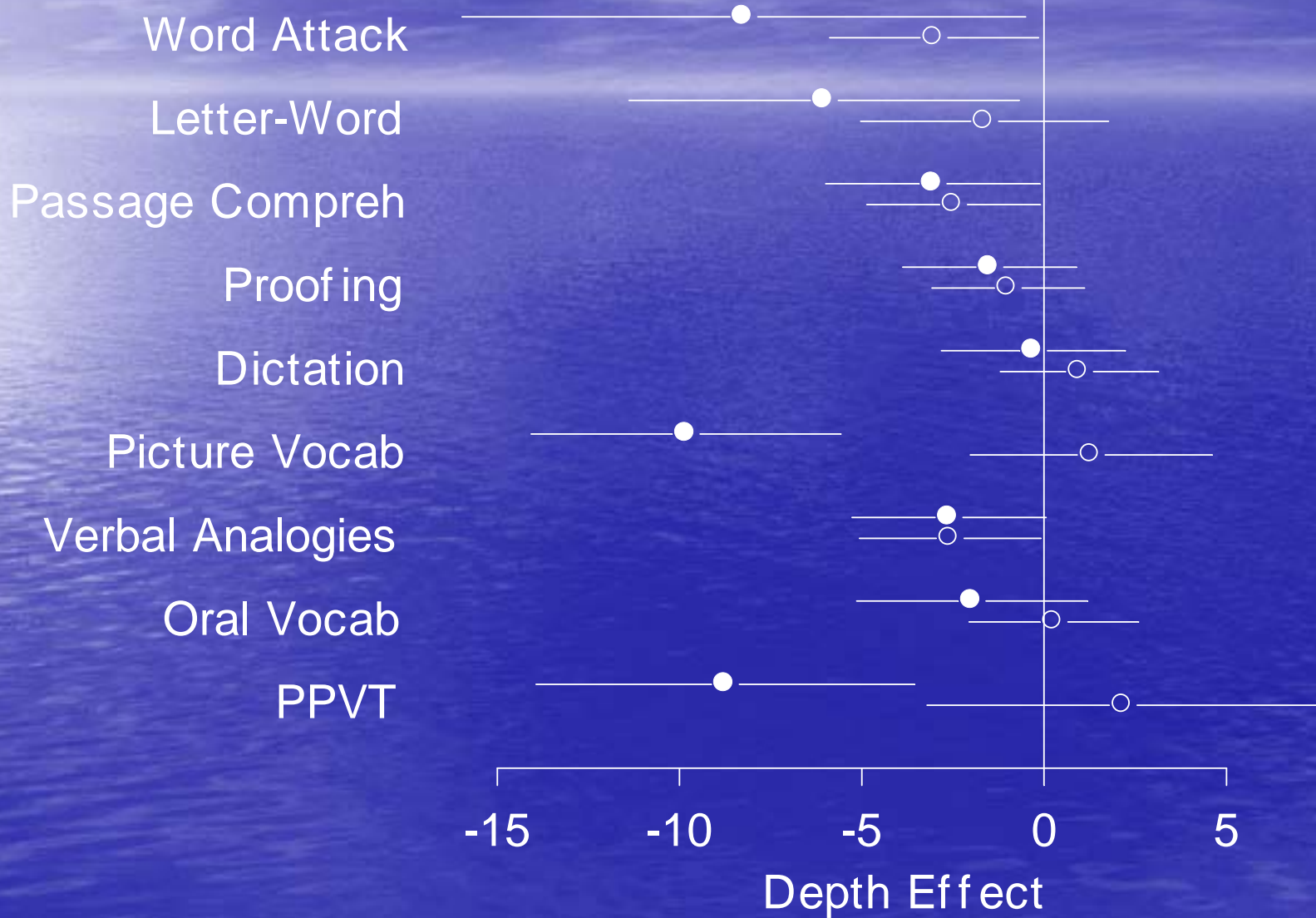
Number of subtests (of 9) with scores in average range in BOTH languages

DEPTH effect in LLBC

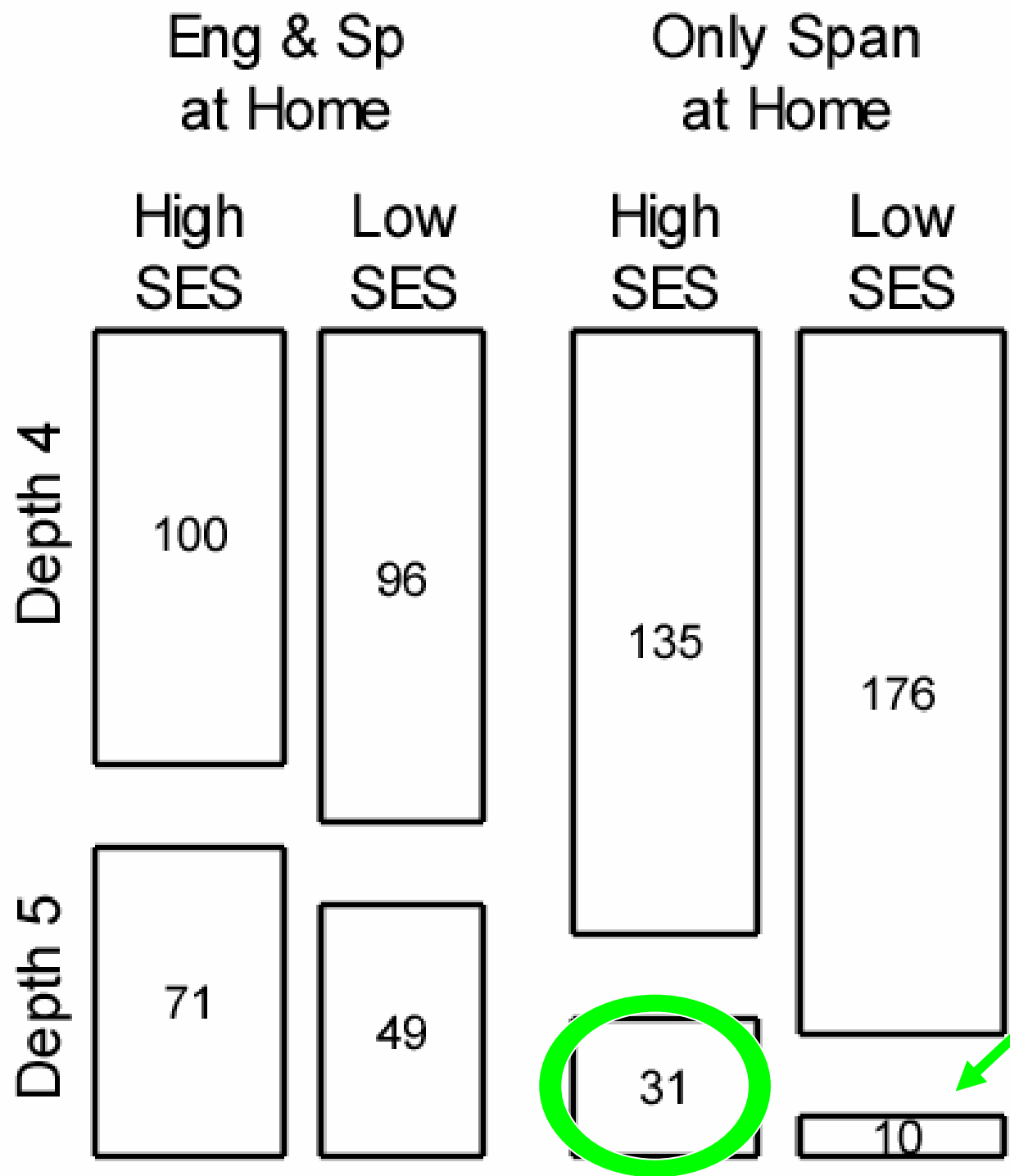
- All subjects at least "DEPTH 4" (born in U.S.)
- 160 DEPTH 5
- Consistent with Hakuta & D'Andrea
- Small English effect
- Large Spanish effect in favor of Depth 4

Depth 4 Better

Depth 5 Better



Cf.
Lambert
& Taylor,
1996



So what is the moral of the story?

- SES matters
- Immigration Status matters
- Language of School more important than Language of Home for literacy learning
- English in the home gave less benefit to English than the comparable loss to Spanish

Minority language chances increase if:

- It's a world-wide language (with commerce, a literature, lots of other speakers—even if one needs to seek them out)
- There's a local community to support interactions; (forestall assimilation, provide native speaking children)
- There's a strong family identity & ties to the country of origin

A child's chances increase if:

- Strong affective value (people who love child speaking it; pride in culture)
- "taken for granted"
- Institutions to support it (schooling, literacy materials)
- Access to Monolingual speakers

A community's chances increase if:

- They have ENOUGH speakers to carry on daily life in the heritage language
- They have a sense of urgency or responsibility to maintain the language
- MIAMI (or the U.S. generally)
 - Spanish is not perceived as “endangered” (because it’s not!)
 - The decline of the language in the U.S. population is masked by continuing immigration

Conclusion of *Language and Literacy in Bilingual Children*

Schooling in two languages versus schooling in English only

- By 5th grade:
 - 2-way English equivalent
 - Spanish better
- FOR FREE!

So, why are there not more 2-way schools?

- I don't want to be cynical, but I don't see any path from evidence to policy in the U.S.
- But even if we had a Minister of Official Languages, in the current administration I shudder to think how that position would be filled.

Questions????

References:

- Oller, D. K. & Eilers, R.E. (2002); *Language and literacy in bilingual children* (especially the 5th graders) Pearson, Umbel, Gathercole, & Cobo-Lewis. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
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- Lambert, W. E. & Taylor, D. (1996). Language in the lives of ethnic minorities: Cuban-American families in Miami. *Applied Linguistics*, 17, 477-500.