Background

The language(s) of academic instruction used with dual language learners (DLLs) in the school setting has become a politicized and controversial topic over the years. Opponents reflect the sentiment that English should be the sole language of academic instruction, as all students are expected to demonstrate academic achievement in English. Proponents see the bilingualism of DLL students as a resource that can bridge the gap between the two languages, resulting in bilingual and biliterate individuals. The debate gauges whether academic maintenance and support of the home language is important for further bolstering progress in English as a second language (Garrity et al., 2016).

Method

English immersion participants

31 school-age Spanish-English DLLs.

Language sampling

31 narrative retell language samples collected in Spanish in the Fall of Kindergarten for each student.

Four wordless picture books about a boy and his frog (counterbalanced) were used to elicit the samples (Mayer, 1969; 1974; 1975a; 1975b).

The retell language samples were digitally audio-recorded, and then orthographically transcribed and coded using the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) software (Miller & Iglesias, 2017).

Language sampling analysis

Mean length of utterance in words (MLUw), and number of different words (NDW) were calculated using SALT as measures of Spanish proficiency from Fall of Kindergarten.

Measure of English Reading Achievement

English Reading Fluency test scores from the Measure of Academic Progress (MAPread) from Spring of 2nd grade.

Table 1: Chronological Age and Descriptive Statistics for MLUw and NDW in Spanish and MAPread Scores in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in months</th>
<th>MLUw</th>
<th>NDW</th>
<th>MAPread</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Kindergarten</td>
<td>68.71 (3.78)</td>
<td>5.35 (1.71)</td>
<td>69.39 (26.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2nd grade</td>
<td>96.37 (3.75)</td>
<td>192.23 (15.61)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. MLU = mean length of utterance, NDW = number of different words, MAPread = measure of academic progress.

Table 2: Linear Regression: MLUw in Kindergarten on MAPread scores in Grade 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F(1, 29)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLUw</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>5.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. MLUw = mean length of utterance in words (Spanish), MAPread = measure of academic progress (English).

Table 3: Linear Regression: NDW in Kindergarten on MAPread scores in Grade 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F(1, 29)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NDW</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. NDW = number of different words (Spanish), MAPread = measure of academic progress (English).

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Selected References
