“But how can kids learn English if they’re in bilingual education programs?"

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Research Question

How do first and second grade Latino/a emergent bilingual children in a Dual Language Immersion program perform on English and Spanish oral narrative retelling relative to those enrolled in English-only programs?

But I didn’t start out asking this question...
Why this presentation?

Sometimes people think that elementary “bilingual” programs in the U.S. don’t teach kids enough English to be successful later in school.

Parents from minority communities are sometimes the most concerned.
**The Instructional Contexts**

*Dual Language Immersion* - programs in which content instruction is provided in two languages on an ongoing basis.

*English Only* - programs in which all instruction is provided in English only (the vast majority of schools in the U.S.)
Participants

N = 120 heritage Spanish-speaking emergent bilinguals in Eugene/Springfield Schools
- 49 first graders, 71 second graders
- 68 in Dual Language, 52 in English Only

The Task: Oral Narrative Retell

- Children heard a story in English (on headphones) while looking at a wordless picture book
- Children retold the story in their own words to a naïve listener
So which student was in which program?

What makes you think so?
English Findings

The only significant differences were between first and second graders.

There were no significant differences between children in dual language and children in English Only programs.
Spanish Findings

- The only significant differences were between first and second graders on the combined dependent variable.
- There were no significant differences between children in dual language and children in English Only programs.
Takeaways

- Second grade heritage Spanish-speaking children in both kinds of programs did better in English and Spanish than first graders.
- Children in both programs performed similarly in Spanish and English.

Bilingual education is supportive of overall language development for these kids.