



Review

The social–emotional development of dual language learners: Looking back at existing research and moving forward with purpose



Tamara G. Halle^{a,*}, Jessica Vick Whittaker^b, Marlene Zepeda^c, Laura Rothenberg^a, Rachel Anderson^a, Paula Daneri^a, Julia Wessel^a, Virginia Buysse^d

^a Child Trends, United States

^b University of Virginia, United States

^c California State University, Los Angeles, United States

^d University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Available online 4 January 2014

Keywords:

Dual language learners

Social–emotional development

Early childhood

Developmental trajectories

ABSTRACT

This review describes the state of existing knowledge with regard to dual language learners' (DLLs) social–emotional development birth to age 5. The review focuses on several widely recognized dimensions of children's social–emotional development: self-regulation, social competence, social cognition, and problem behaviors. We begin by presenting a theoretical perspective that frames our understanding of the interplay between relational and contextual factors that contribute to the social–emotional well-being of DLLs. A targeted search of the literature identified 14 peer-reviewed studies published from 2000 to 2011 that examined social–emotional outcomes for young DLLs in family, school, and peer contexts. Results suggest that DLLs have at least equal (if not better) social–emotional outcomes compared to native English speakers. There is also some evidence that the use of the home language in early childhood classrooms can be a positive, moderating factor for DLLs' social–emotional development. Contextual and individual characteristics are highly correlated with DLL status, making it difficult to develop clear conclusions about the unique influence of DLL status on social–emotional outcomes. We conclude by identifying avenues for future inquiry.

© 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Contents

1. Theoretical perspectives for understanding social emotional development in young DLL children	735
2. Relationships within the family and early care and education contexts	736
2.1. Relationships with parents	736
2.1.1. Attachment	736
2.1.2. Parental socialization practices	736
2.2. Relationships in early care and education contexts	737
3. Child and family characteristics	738
3.1. Socioeconomic status	738
3.2. Immigrant status	738
3.3. Summary	738
4. Key dimensions of social–emotional development	739
4.1. Self-regulation	739
4.2. Social competence	739
4.3. Social cognition	739
4.4. Problem behaviors	739
4.5. Summary	739

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 202 572 6034; fax: +1 202 362 5533.

E-mail address: thalle@childtrends.org (T.G. Halle).

5. Method	740
5.1. Search terms	740
5.2. Inclusion criteria	740
5.3. Procedure	740
6. Results	740
6.1. Analysis of methodological characteristics of articles reviewed	740
6.2. Findings across studies	741
6.2.1. Self-regulation	741
6.2.2. Social competence	741
6.2.3. Social cognition	742
6.2.4. Problem behaviors	742
6.3. Consideration of child and family characteristics	742
7. Discussion	743
7.1. Limitations and future research directions	744
8. Conclusion	745
Acknowledgments	746
Appendix A. Supplementary data	746
References	746

Children's social-emotional development is critical to their overall well-being (Damon & Eisenberg, 1998; Fabes, Gaertner, & Popp, 2006; Halle, 2002; Thompson & Lagattuta, 2006). Being able to regulate one's own emotional states and recognize and respond to others' emotions are necessary skills for functioning successfully in social situations (Gross, 2002; Saarni, 1997). Similarly, being able to initiate social interactions, reciprocate appropriately to social gestures made by others, share with others, resolve conflicts, and take turns are important components of social-emotional competency (Denham, 1998; Hubbard & Coie, 1994). There are also important linkages between early social-emotional development and cognitive achievement (Arnold, Kupersmidt, Voegler-Lee, & Marshall, 2012; Raver & Knitzer, 2002). The early childhood years provide the foundation for the development of social-emotional competencies. The relationships that develop between parents and children, as well as non-parental caregivers and peers, set the stage for later patterns of social interactions.

Understanding the social-emotional development of dual language learners (DLLs) is important because it is occurring within the unique context of acquiring multiple languages. By definition, a dual language learner is someone who is acquiring two or more languages simultaneously, and learning a second language while continuing to develop his or her first language (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). Most learning, both social and cognitive, takes place through interactions with others within specific cultural contexts, and language is the principle medium for these social interactions (Eisenberg, 1999; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Acquiring language is an act of "becoming a person" and a member of a particular society, as language conveys important cultural norms (Nelson, 2003; Shatz, 1994). Thus, a child who is learning two languages may need to negotiate between two competing sets of cultural expectations that have distinctive goals for behavior relevant to social-emotional development.

Although acquiring more than one language at the same time presents challenges to socialization and acculturation (especially when a child's home language has a minority status within a society which does not have bilingualism as a goal), developing two or more languages also affords opportunities for the development of bi- or multi-culturalism, such as the ability to communicate feelings in different, culturally-appropriate ways (Cervantes, 2002). In addition, there is some research to suggest that bilingual children demonstrate a number of cognitive advantages that are related to their need to understand social and contextual cues in order to determine which language to use in any particular situation (Cheung, Mak, Luo, & Xiao, 2010; Goetz, 2003). Studies have shown that when bilingual children are compared to monolingual children they demonstrate greater inhibitory control

(Bialystok & Martin, 2004; Kovacs & Mehler, 2009), better metalinguistic understanding (Bialystok & Barac, 2012; Galambos & Goldin-Meadow, 1990; Ricciardelli, 1992) and perform better in perspective taking tasks (Greenberg, Bellana, & Bialystok, 2012). It is postulated that the executive control system, associated with such behaviors as planning, initiation of activity, mental flexibility and self-monitoring, is the cognitive mechanism that influences linguistic processing in bilingual children (Bialystok, 2011). There is a growing body of literature that shows that bilingual children outperform their monolingual peers on a variety of executive function tasks (Bialystok, Barac, Blaye, & Poulin-Dubois, 2010; Bialystok & Martin, 2004; Carlson & Meltzoff, 2008; Yang, Yang, & Lust, 2011). In comparison, the social and emotional development of bilingual children has been a focus of scientific inquiry to a lesser degree (Halle et al., 2011). The purpose of this current investigation is to determine the extent to which recent scholarly literature provides information about DLLs' social-emotional development in early childhood, from birth to age five, and the extent to which this information helps us understand DLLs' developmental trajectories within the social-emotional domain in the early years of life.

We begin with a discussion of theoretical perspectives that are useful in understanding the interplay among cultural, relational, and contextual factors that contribute to the social-emotional well-being of DLLs. Although empirical evidence for understanding the connection of these relational and contextual factors to social-emotional development is limited, for DLL populations, these factors underpin cultural distinctions that are especially salient in comprehending early social-emotional development in bicultural environments. We then provide a brief overview of several important dimensions of social-emotional development: self-regulation, social competence, social cognition, and problem behaviors. These dimensions have been widely recognized as key elements of children's social-emotional functioning and have figured prominently within conceptual models of social-emotional development (National Research Council, 2008; Raver, 2008). We follow this overview with a summary of the methodology we used for conducting a targeted literature review to examine evidence for the patterns of social-emotional development of DLLs in early childhood. Findings from the literature review are presented and discussed, and implications for future research are considered.

1. Theoretical perspectives for understanding social emotional development in young DLL children

As culture plays an important role in both social and cognitive development (Rogoff, 2003; Saarni, Campos, Campos,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/353819>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/353819>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)