



# The Additional Effect of Dual Language Exposure on Disparities in Early Language Experiences and Language Development

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## Summary

Forty-one percent of children in families below the poverty level in the U.S. have at least one household member who speaks a language other than English at home (American Community Survey, 2012). Understanding how and why dual language exposure affects language development is, therefore, directly relevant to closing poverty-related gaps in children's language skills. Research on Spanish-English bilingual children provides evidence that properties of bilingual environments create an additional challenge for children in achieving levels of English skill that will support school success.

Our findings show that

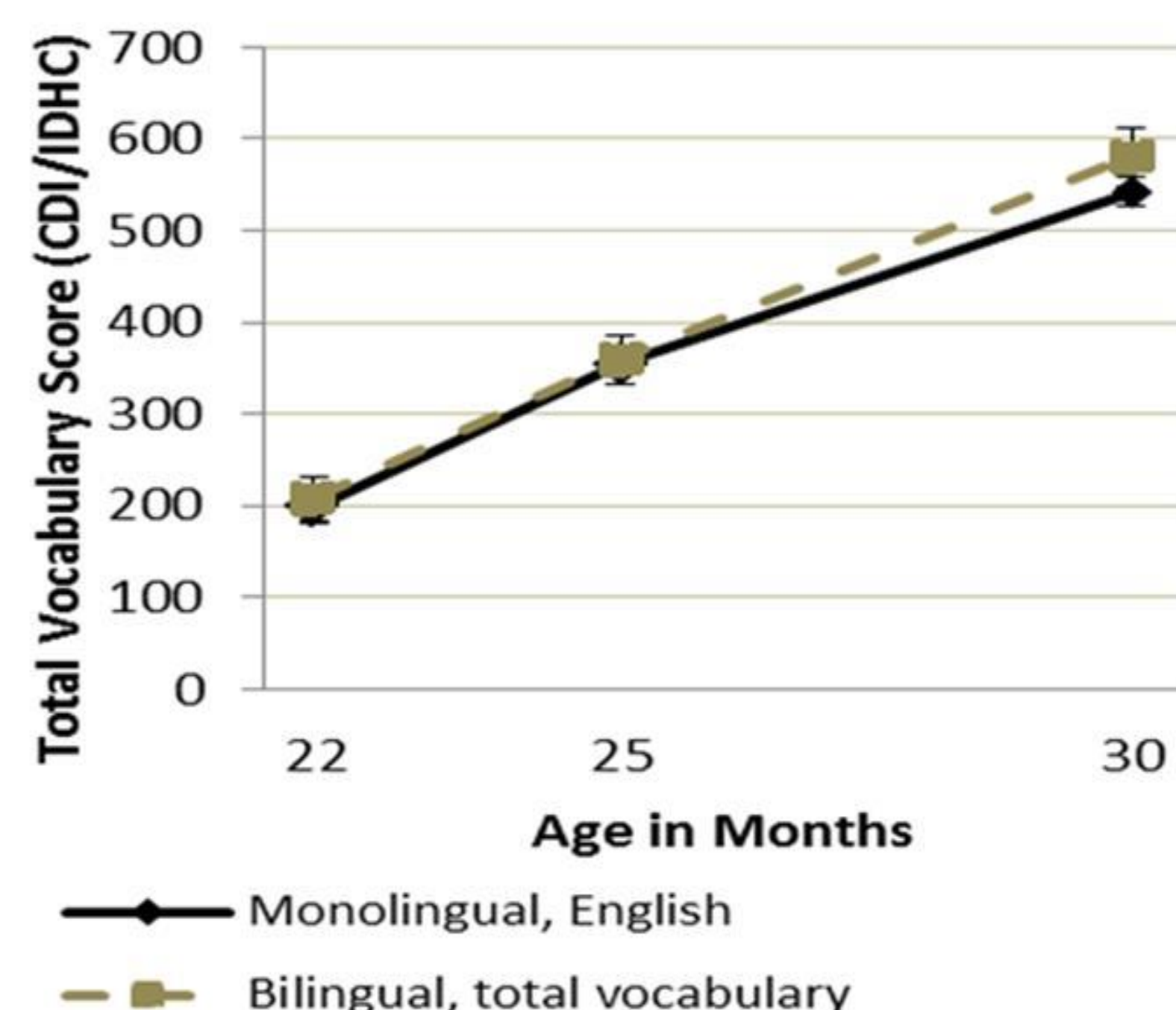
(1) Dual language exposure does not slow the rate of total language development, but it does slow the rate of development in each language considered separately.

(2) Children in bilingual environments lag behind monolingual children in English language development to the degree that they hear less English and also to the degree that their English exposure is provided by non-native speakers

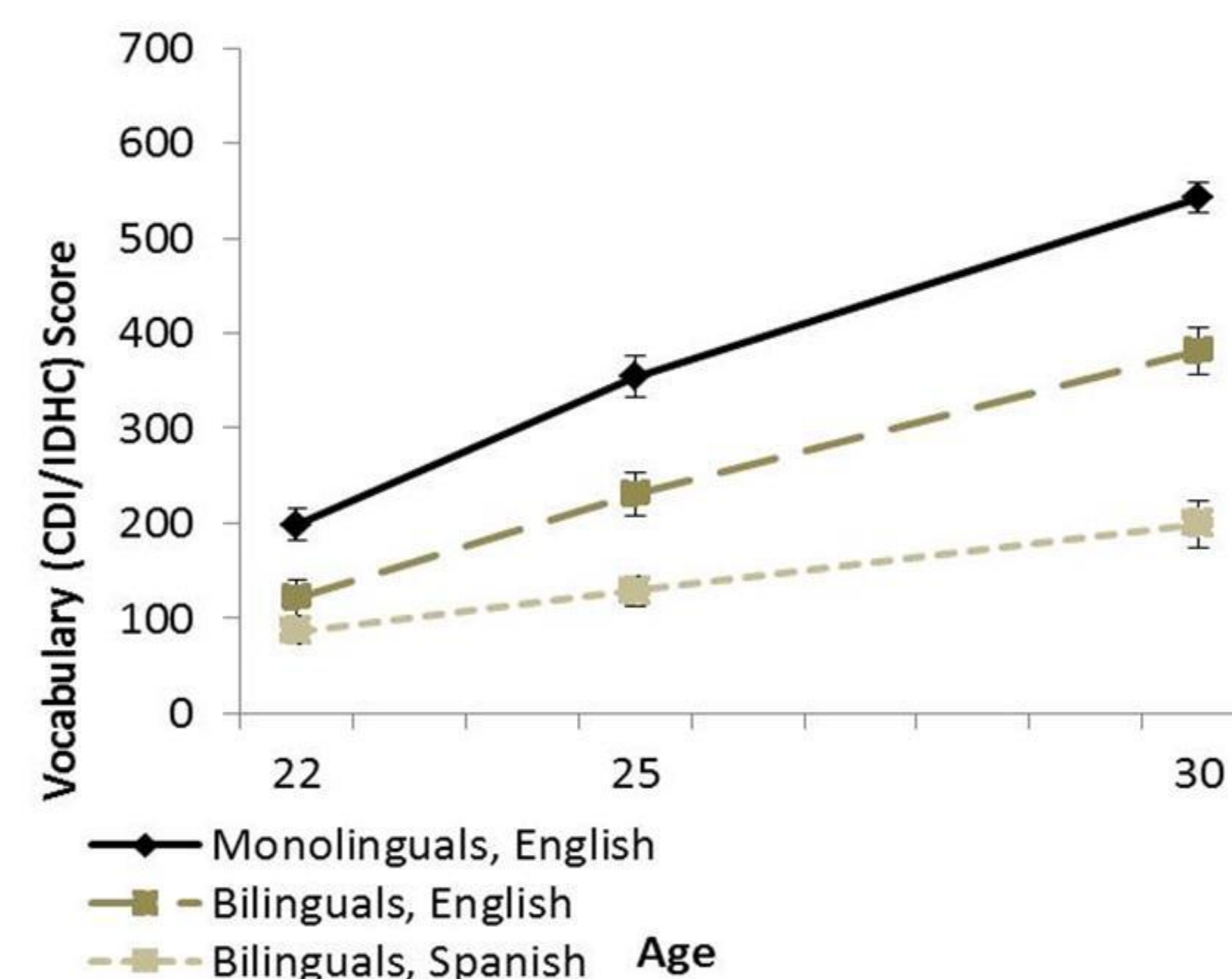
(3) Teachers in early care and education (ECE) settings in Spanish-speaking communities are frequently nonnative speakers of English, with possible consequences for the value of ECE experience as a route to closing language gaps.

In sum, living in language minority communities is likely to have effects on English language development that add to the effects of poverty for many children.

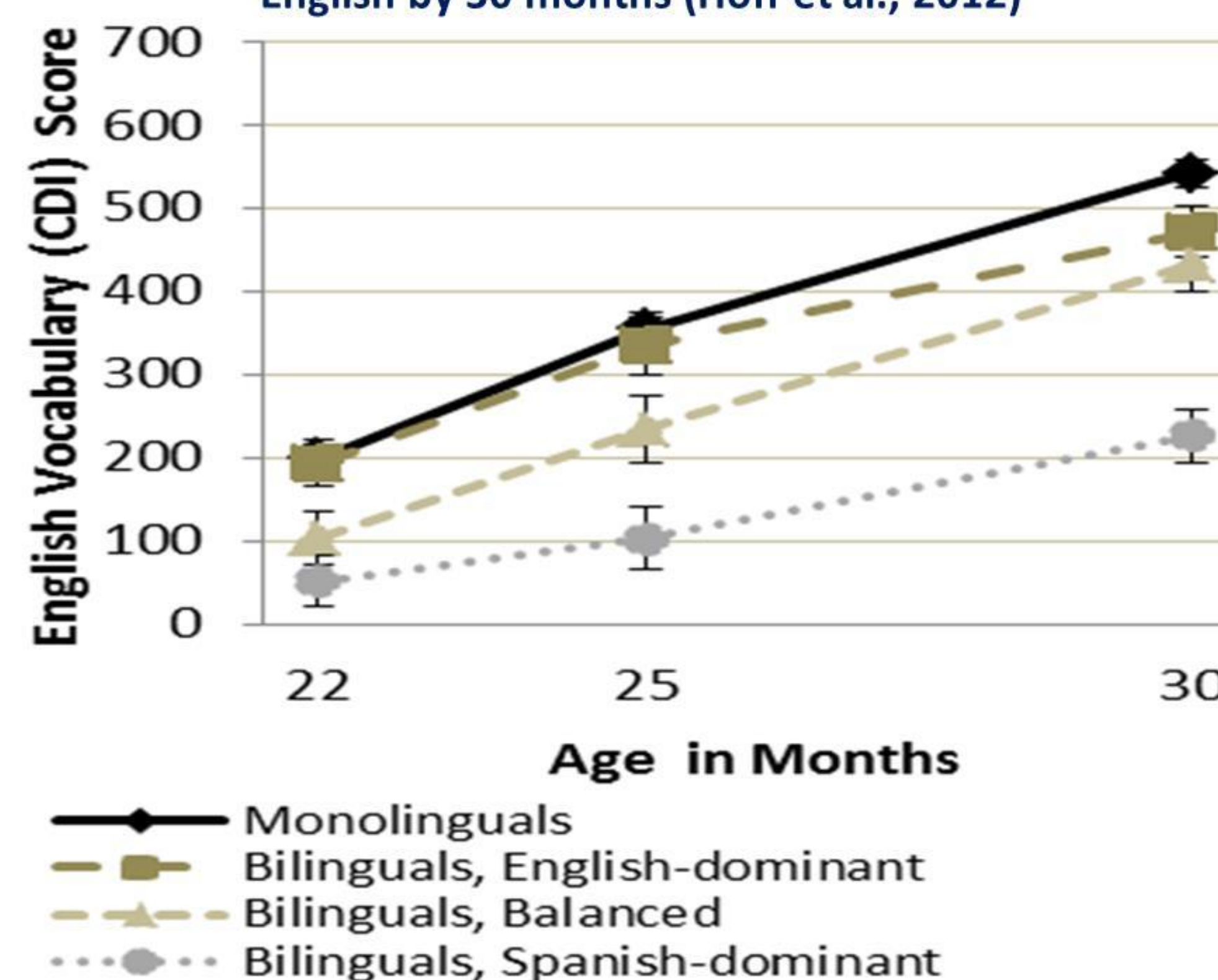
Rates of total vocabulary growth in monolingual and bilingual children are comparable (Hoff, E., Core, C., Place, S., Rumiche, R., Señor, M., & Parra, M., 2012)



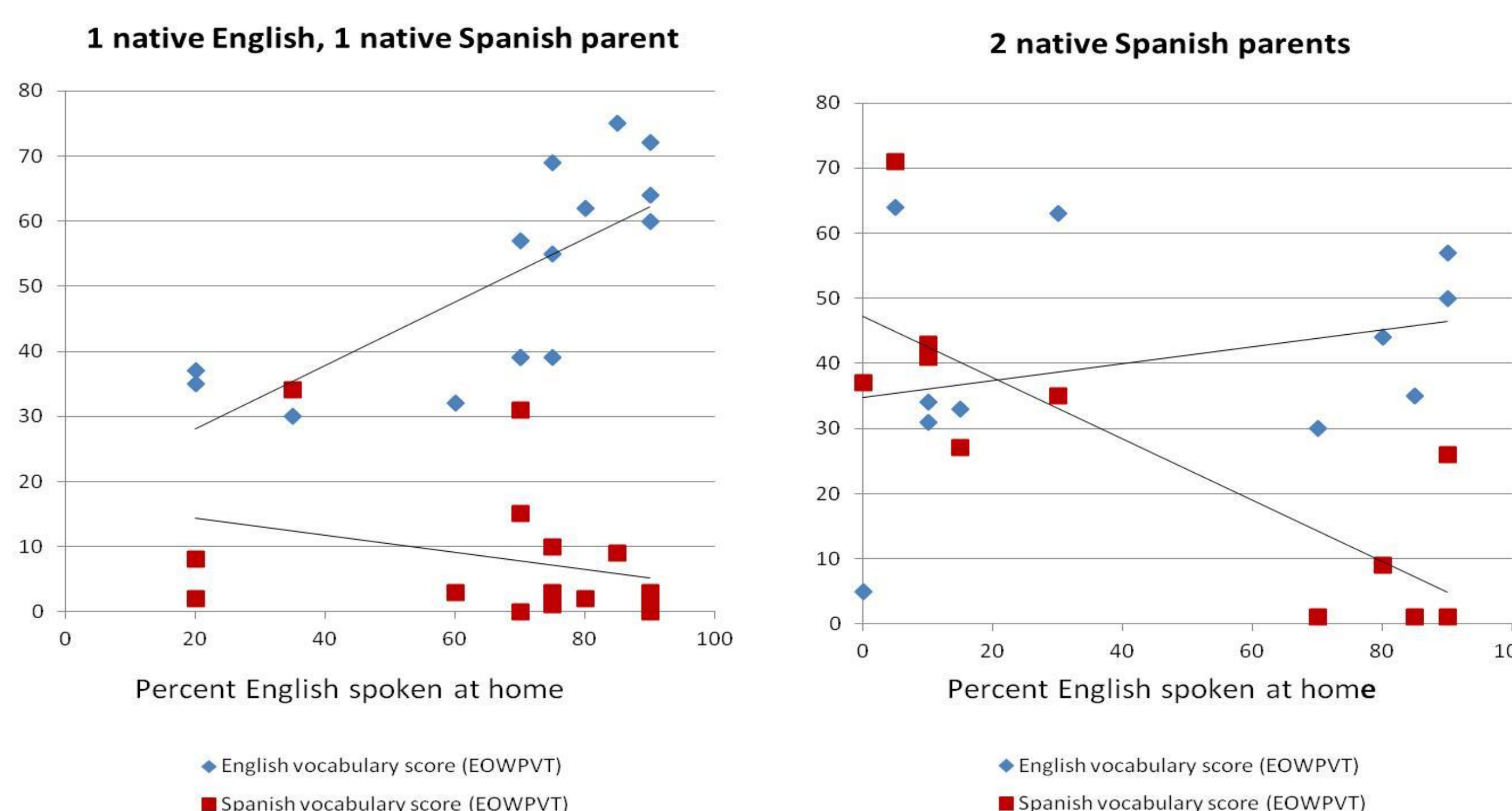
Bilingual children lag behind monolingual children in English – even when English is their dominant language (Hoff et al., 2012)



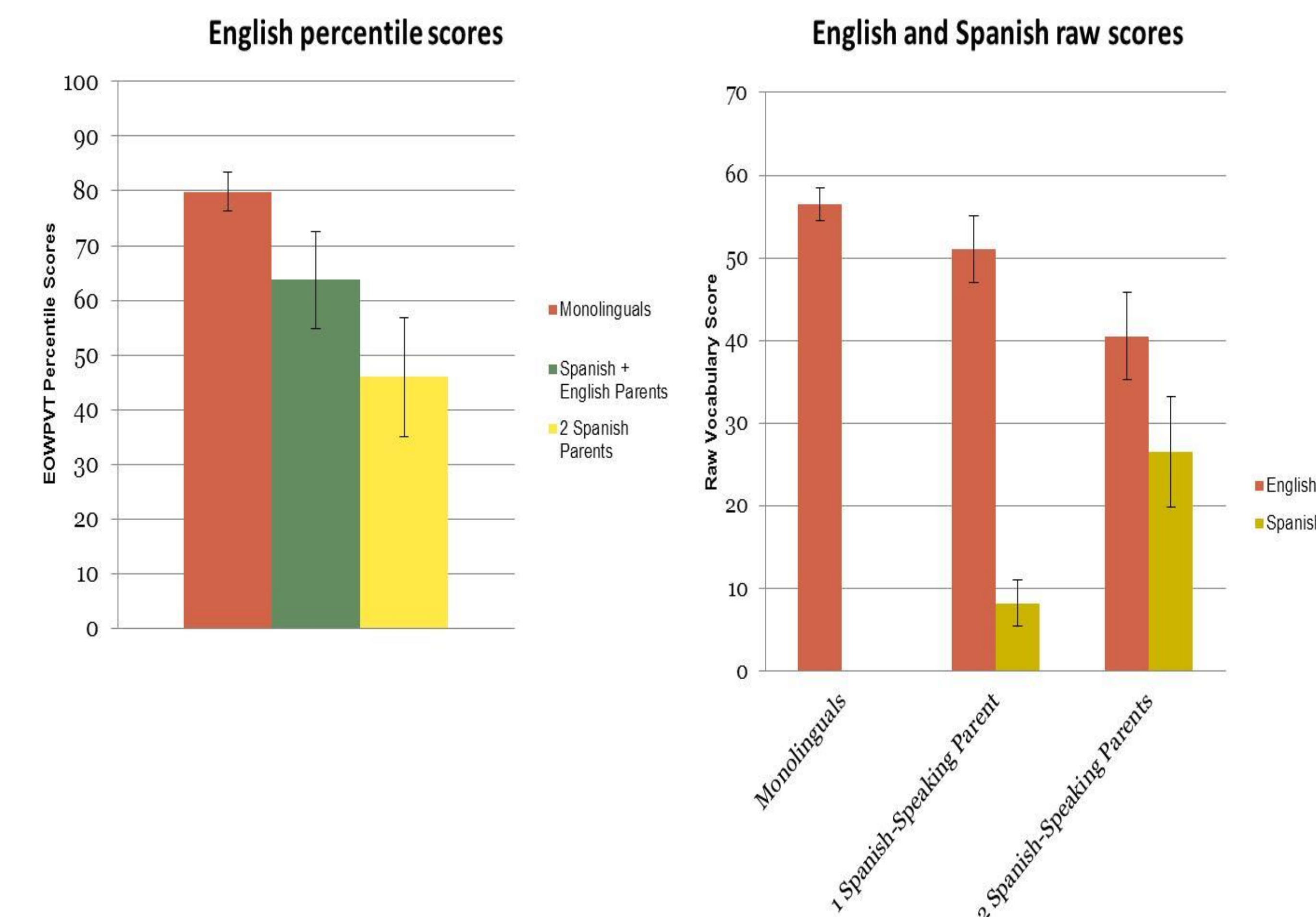
There are differences among bilinguals as a function of the balance in their input, but even children who hear mostly English lag behind from children who hear only English by 30 months (Hoff et al., 2012)



Language Minority Children with one native English speaking parent benefit more from English exposure at home than children with two native Spanish speaking parents (Hoff et al., 2014; Place & Hoff, 2011)



High SES bilingual children catch up to monolingual norms by age 4 years, but they still differ from high SES monolingual children (Hoff, E., Rumiche, R., Burrigge, A., Ribot, K. M., & Welsh, S. N., 2014)



Early care and education programs are not reliable sources of native English input for children from immigrant homes—especially for children from low SES immigrant homes (Hoff, Mock, Ribot, 2015)

	Low SES (n=26)	High SES (n=46)	
Mean Hours per week in ECE	31.35 (SD=12.28)	31.40 (SD=14.49)	ns
Percent language exposure in English in ECE	61.73 (SD=34.26)	71.96 (SD=29.88)	ns
Percent ECE programs with a native English head teacher	8.7	22.5	$X^2(1) = 6.91, p = .009$

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