

# INDIVIDUAL MYANMAR CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES IN HEAD START

## CLASSROOMS Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum

Boo Young, Lim., & Dr. Sherri, L. Castle., Early Childhood Education Institute

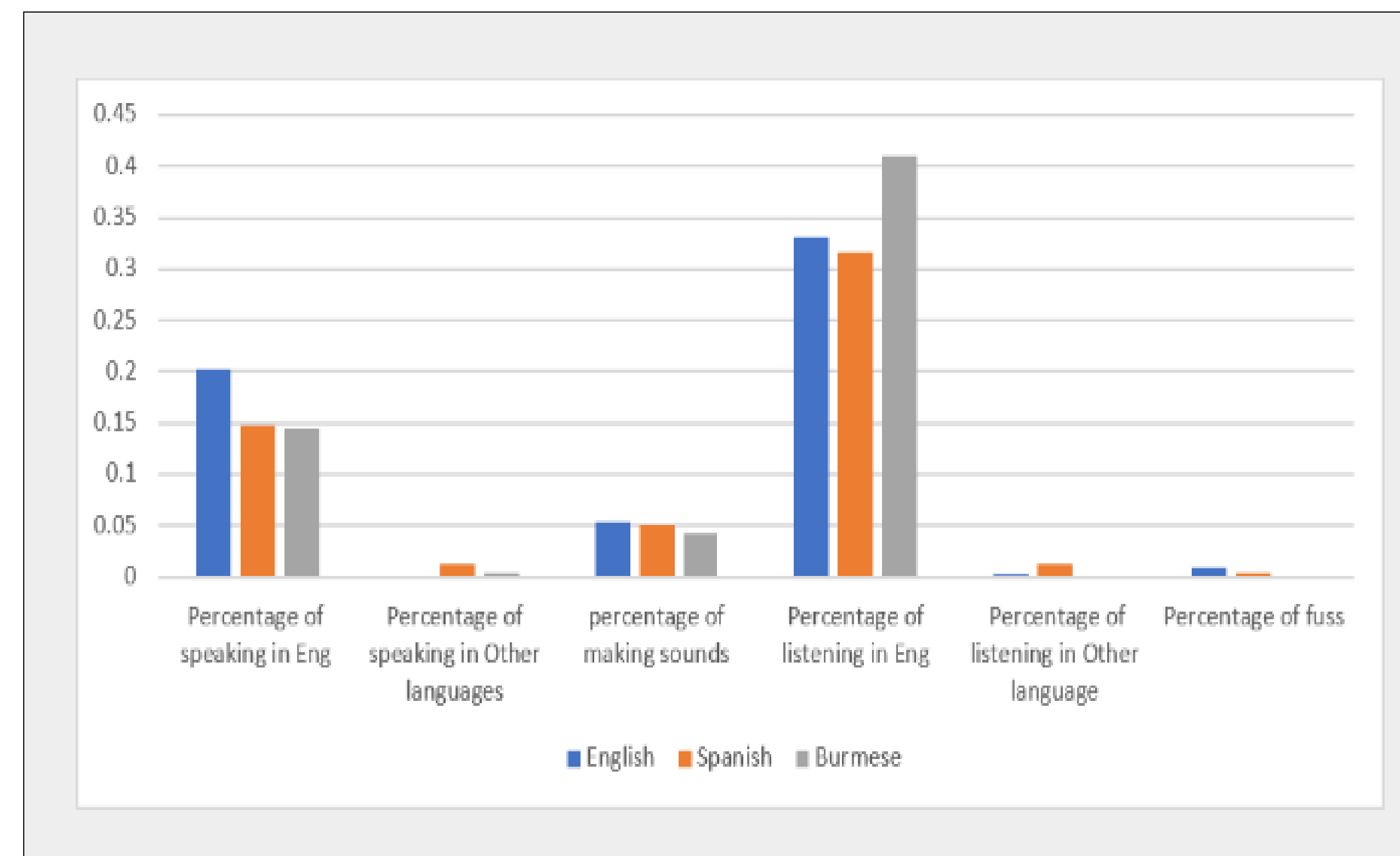
### INTRODUCTION

- Early childhood is a crucial period for children who are dual language learners (DLLs), struggling to learn the new language as well as other skills for school readiness (Buysse, Feinberg, Páez, Hammer, & Knowles, 2013).
- In contrast to comprehensive research in ECE, there are relatively few studies conducted with DLLs, and mainly for the Latino DLLs, no other language groups (Boyce, Gillam, Innocenti, Cook, & Ortiz, 2013).
- Recently, Myanmar migrants are growing rapidly and makeup 25% of the total migrant population in Tulsa (NBC news, 2017).
- Previous studies have shown that DLL children differ in various developmental outcomes because of a myriad of factors including poverty, systemic racism, and oppression (Buysse, Feinberg, Páez, Hammer, & Knowles, 2013).

### Purpose

- Research examined the classroom experiences of Myanmar children in a Head Start program by measuring their individual language use and level of engagement then, comparing them to other racial groups.

Children talking/listening in English (Mean comparison)



### METHOD

#### Sample

- 1,101 preschoolers, 3- and 4-year-old children (n=1,101) in a Head Start program
- Northeast school district in Oklahoma

#### Observation Procedure

- Classroom and child observation were conducted during the 2019-2020 school year in a Head Start program
- Observations took place during the prime instructional time (8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) of a typical day

#### Instrument

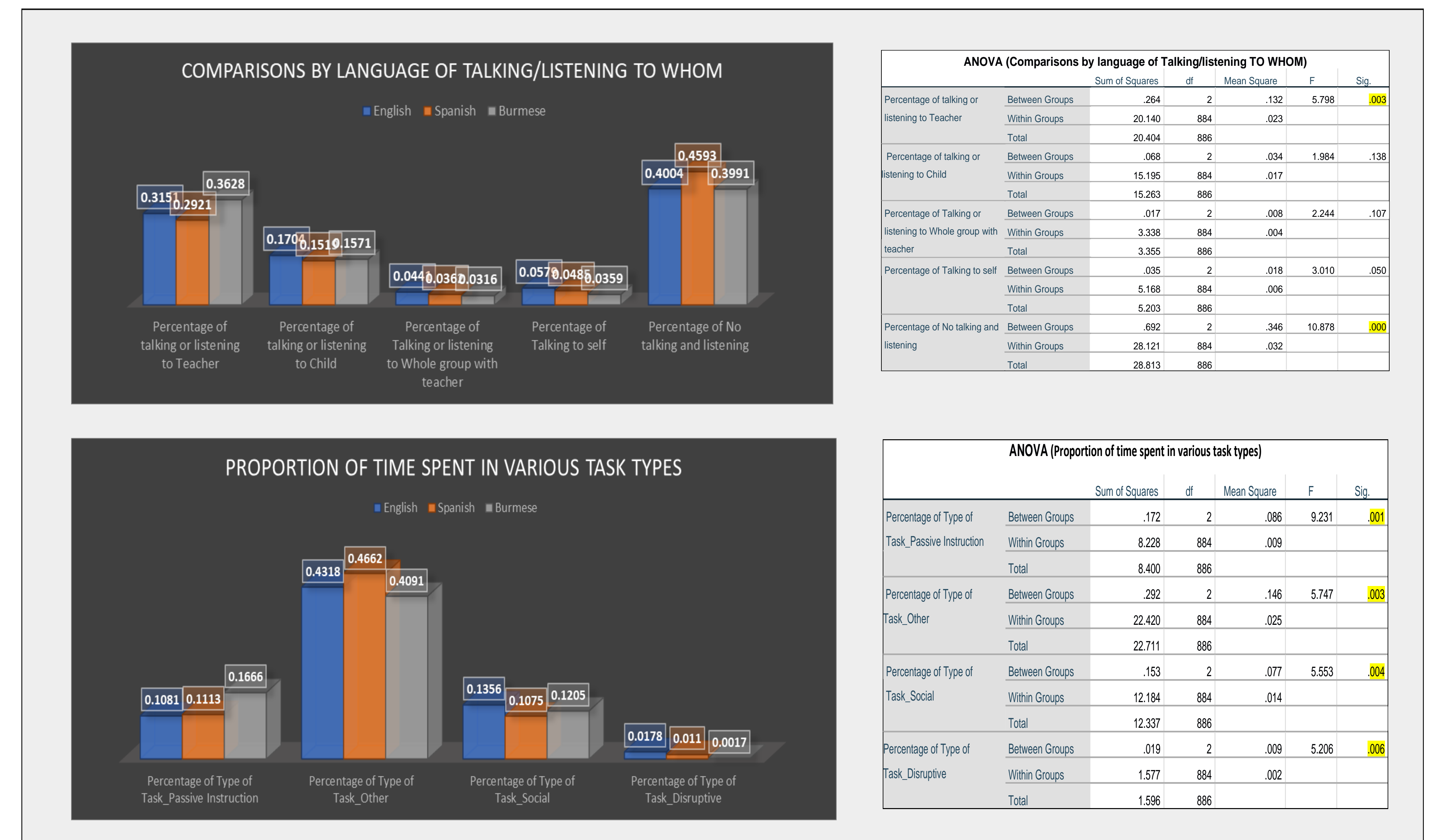
- Child Observation in Preschool (COP)  
The COP procedure consists of locating each child, attending to his/her behavior for a count of three, and coding the behavior across nine dimensions.
- 3-second sweeps (snapshots of individual children's behavior across a period time in the classroom)
- All children in the classroom were observed and had an average of 9 sweeps per child.

#### Analysis Procedure

- Focusing on the proportion of sweeps in which a child was listening to or talking to someone else in the classroom (in any language) and
- The proportion of sweeps a child was observed speaking in English.
- Descriptive analyses were conducted using ANOVA in SPSS.

### RESULTS

- Children who speak Myanmar at home had fewer times observational sweeps in which they were speaking in English (15%) compared to their African American and White peers (19-20%). However, whereas Latino children were observed more frequently to be neither speaking nor listening (45% of sweeps)
- Burmese children spend more time in passive instruction (watching teacher give instruction) than other children.
- Myanmar children were not significantly different than their Latino peers. Instead, Myanmar children were more likely to engage in passive instruction (15%) than their African American (10%) and White (12%) peers.



### CONCLUSION

- Overall, these results suggest that Myanmar children who were enrolled in a Head Start program had bit fewer opportunities to practice their language skills and are less likely to be engaged in their classroom activities. This may indicate teachers need more support helping children engage.
- Prior research suggest that children are more engaged that their teacher are more aware of language and culture.
- These initial analyses indicate that children whose home language is not English may have more limited opportunities to practice their language skills in the ECE classroom, with a particular disadvantage for children who enter with limited English proficiency.

### Further Research

- Further research is needed to see whether these outcomes are due to language proficiency, cultural aspects, or influenced by others.
- Further study of how teachers interact in the classroom based on the different racial groups.

### REFERENCES

- Boyce, L. K., Gillam, L. S., Innocenti, S. M., Cook, A. G., & Ortiz, E. (2013). An examination of language input and vocabulary development of young Latino dual language learners living in poverty. *First Language*, 33(6), 572–593. DOI: 10.1177/0142723713503145
- Buysse, V., Feinberg, P. E., Páez, M., Hammer, S. C., & Knowles, M. (2013). Effects of early education programs and practices on the development and learning of dual language learners: A review of the literature. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 29(4), 765-785. DOI: 10.1016/j.ecresq.2013.08.004