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## Participants

- 102 Latino English language learners (ELL)
- 80 African American native English speakers (NES)
- 89 girls, 93 boys
- Recruited from two urban Head Start centers

## Measures

- The Classroom Assessment System for pre-kindergarten classroom (CLASS PreK,
- Receptive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (ROWPVT; Brownell, 2000)
- Test of Preschool Early Literacy Definitional Vocabulary Subtest (TOPEL; Lonigan, Wagner, & Torgesen, 2007)

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## Problems of interest

- Growing linguistic diversity of US classrooms
- Continued existence of SES-based gaps in achievement
- The combined risk of growing up in both a language minority and low-income home



## Brief review of literature:

### Oral language skill

- National Early Literacy Panel (2008) identified oral language skills as the **strongest predictor** of subsequent literacy ability
- Oral language abilities served as a major source of differences in academic trajectories for children coming from **low-income** and **language minority** homes (Hoff, 2013)

### Vocabulary

- Differences in vocabulary acquisition appear to emerge **early** and remain **persistent**
- Competency most vulnerable to the effects of growing up in a low income or language minority home (Fernald, Marchman & Weisleder, 2013; Hart & Risley, 1995)
- Underdeveloped vocabulary as an **obstacle** to academic success (Hoff, 2013; Nagy & Townsend, 2012; Townsend Filippini, Collins, & Ross, 2012)

### Early childhood classroom

- Instructional quality and emotional support
- Conceptualizing classrooms as synergistic and dynamic systems (Connor et al., 2008)
  - Studies provide support for the **differential impact** of instructional and affective quality on outcomes based on child characteristics (Connor et al., 2008; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Lopez, 2012)

### Aim of current study

To examine if the moderating role of emotional support differs for ELLs and NES in predicting associations between instructional quality and vocabulary

performance

## Conceptual Model

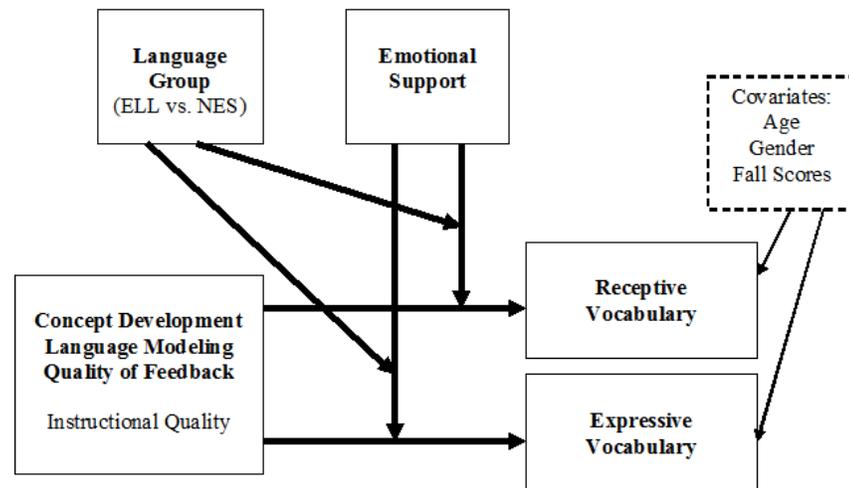


TABLE 1  
Classroom Assessment Scoring System Domains, Dimensions, and Behavioral Indicators

Domain/dimension	Behavioral indicators				
Emotional support					
Positive climate	Relationships	Positive affect	Positive communication	Respect	
Negative climate	Negative affect	Punitive control	Sarcasm/disrespect	Severe negativity	
Teacher sensitivity	Awareness	Responsiveness	Addresses problems	Student comfort	
Regard for student perspectives	Flexibility & student focus	Support for autonomy/ leadership	Student expression	Restriction of movement	
Instructional support					
Concept development	Analysis and reasoning	Creating	Integration	Connection to real world	
Quality of feedback	Scaffolding	Feedback loops	Prompting thinking	Providing information	Encouragement & affirmation
Language modeling	Frequent conversation	Open-ended questions	Repetition & extension	Self- and parallel talk	Advanced language

Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008

## Results: Emotional support as a moderator

- Expressive vocabulary → Strongest associations between **language modeling** and **concept development** were observed in classrooms with **high** emotional support ( $\geq 6.21$ )
- Quality of feedback → Strongest **positive** associations between **quality of feedback** and expressive and receptive vocabulary observed in classrooms with **low to moderate** emotional support ( $\leq 5.04$ )
  - **However**, for expressive vocabulary, at **high** emotional support ( $\geq 6.21$ ) the association between quality of feedback was **negative**

## Take away message

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- ELLs and NES appear to benefit from the same classroom practices
  - Findings highlight the complexity of the nature of classroom dynamics
    - The strength of the association between instructional support and vocabulary acquisition depends on the emotional quality of the classroom
    - The climate of the classroom must be one that can support instructional practices