



An Analysis of Microstructure Features in Emergent Spanish-English Multilingual Learners



Anya Chatani, Sofia Gasbarro, Jennifer Godwin, Kiana Hines

Abstract

This study's purpose was to analyze the microstructure features of English Oral Narratives produced by Spanish-English Emergent Multilinguals in K-2. This was done through conducting narrative retells along with standardized assessments with 15 K-2 students to evaluate the microstructure features. The microstructure features coded for included MLU, Number of Different Words (NDW), Number of Total Words (NTW), Subordinate Index, Errors, and Morphological Diversity Index. When assessing the microstructure features of the oral narrative retell, it appears that students in kindergarten students produced less morphologically complex narratives while second grade students produced more lexically, morphologically, and syntactically diverse oral narrative retells as suggest the MLUw, NDW, and SI.

Introduction

In 2016, 22% of children in the United States — more than 12 million kids total — spoke a language other than English at home.

Reading comprehension is an area where second language learners can struggle,

Narrative discourse, which is a form of oral language, has been associated with future literacy skills

Narrative discourse can be carried through oral narratives (creating an oral story) or with narrative retells (retelling of an oral story).

Narrative discourse can be expressed in terms of microstructure.

Microstructure involves the use of language at the word and sentence level to narrate the story

Methods

- 15 multilingual Spanish- English speaking participants in grades K-12 from a rural school located in North Florida.
- Two English **standardized tests** and one Spanish standardized test was conducted to assess the children's cognitive abilities as well as their expressive and receptive language abilities.
- Oral samples were collected from the students though **Narrative retells** in English done with the wordless story "Frog, Where Are You".
- The oral language samples were transcribed and coded through **SALT**. Specifically looking for **microstructure features** refer to *figures 1-5*

Discussion

- The children that performed better on the assessments also had better oral production and vice versa.
- Older students were more likely to lose microstructural skills in their native language.
- Clinicians can use the information found to better select assessments for multilingual speakers.

Results

Figure 1

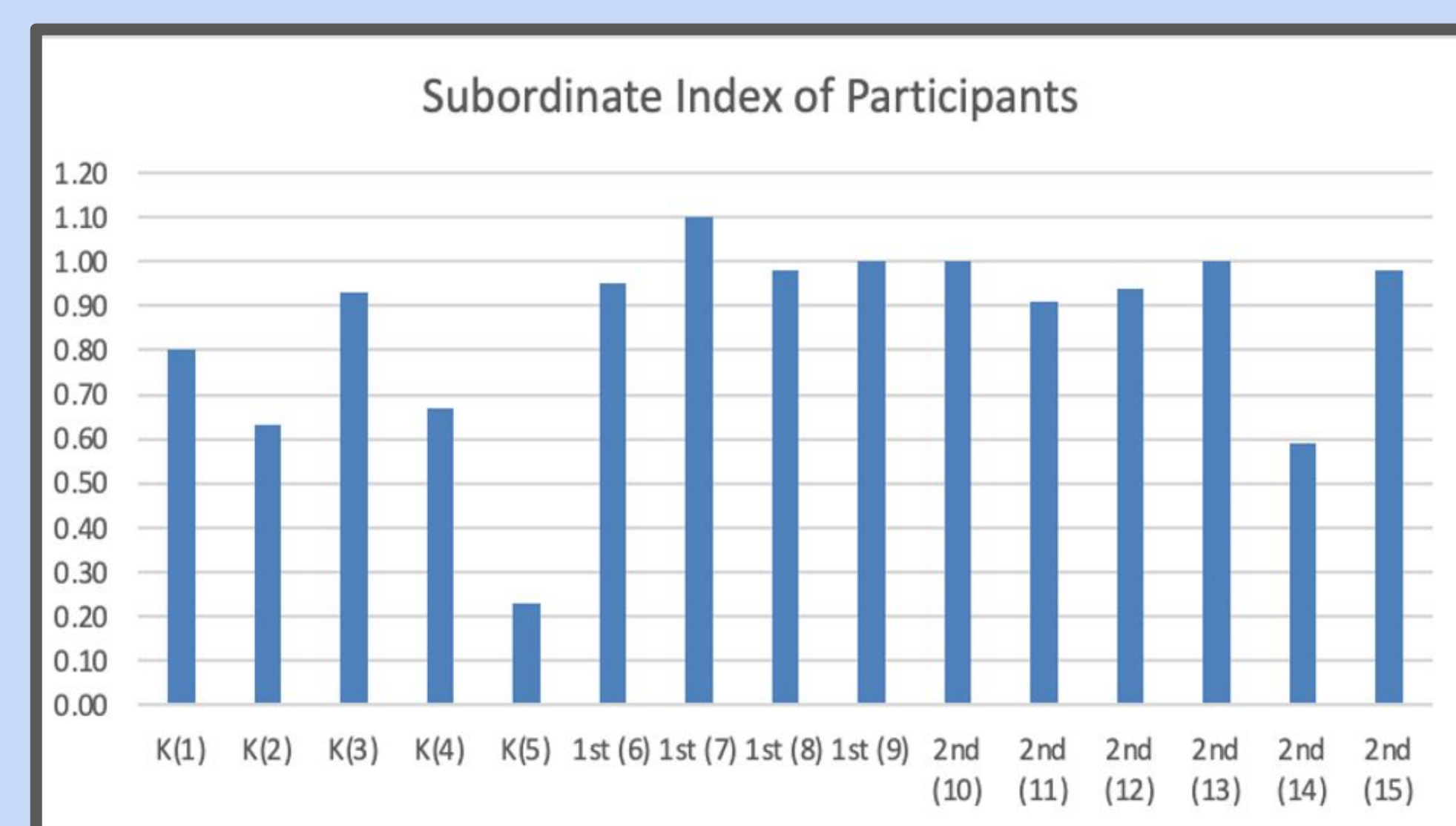


Figure 2

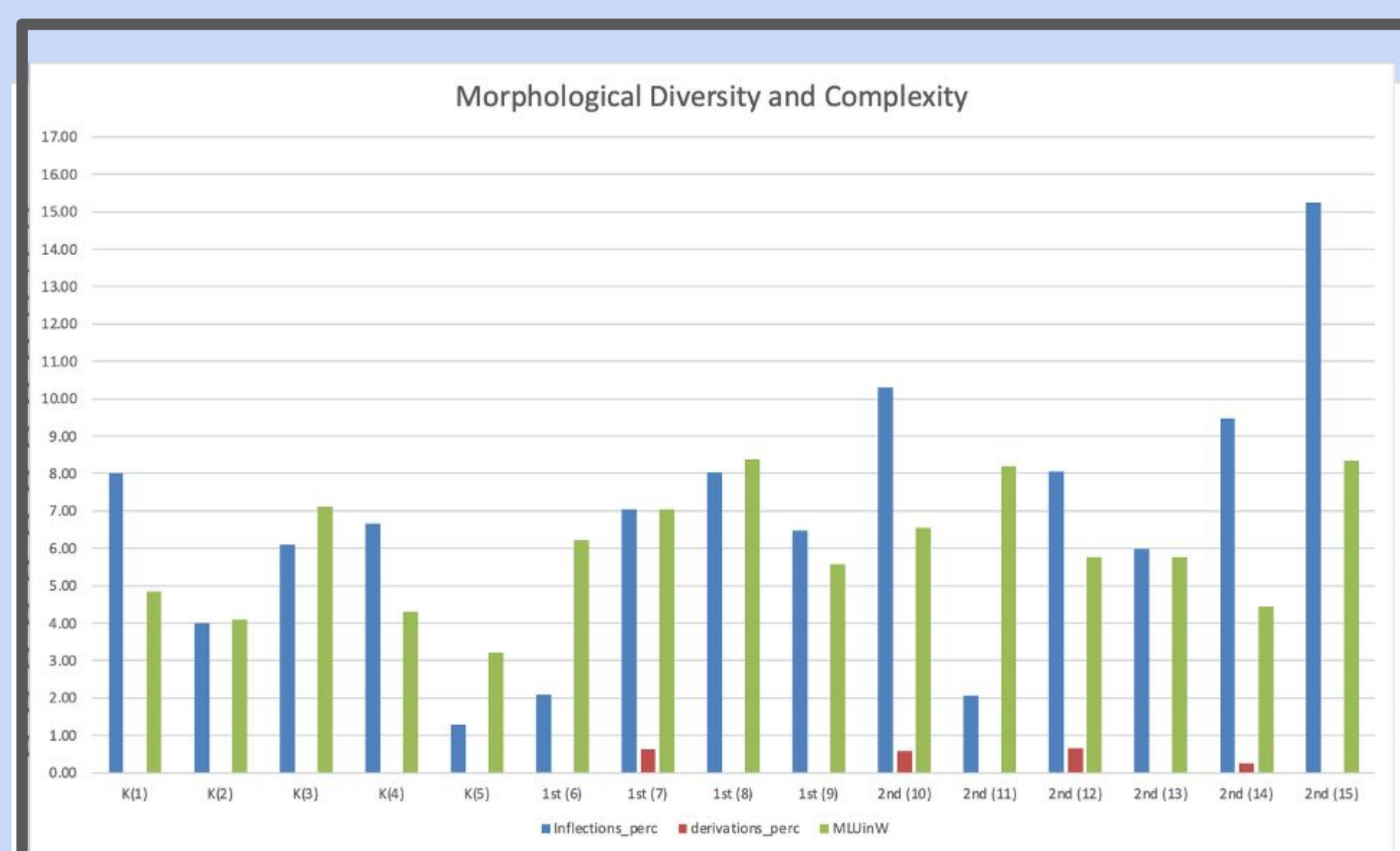
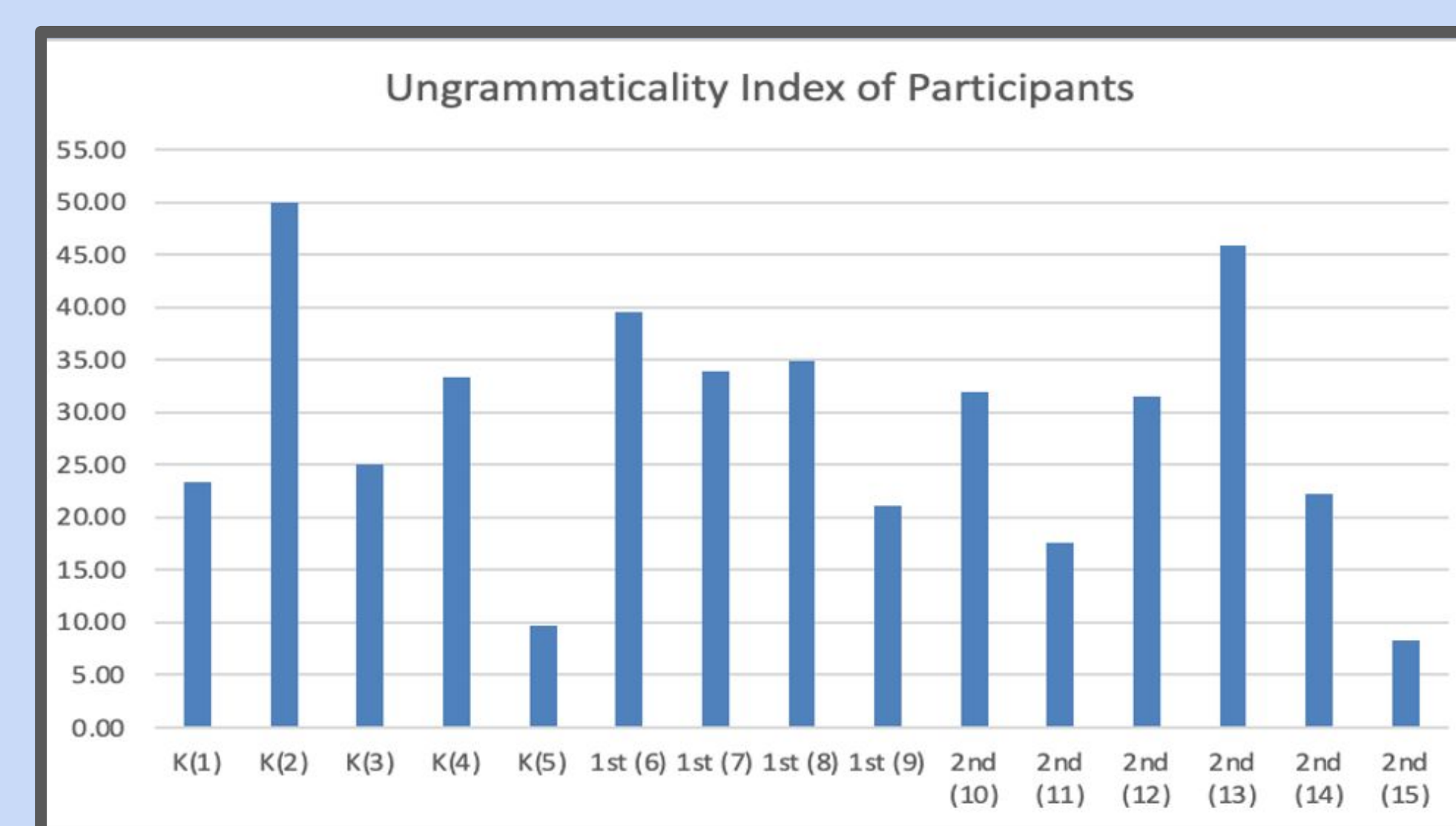


Figure 3

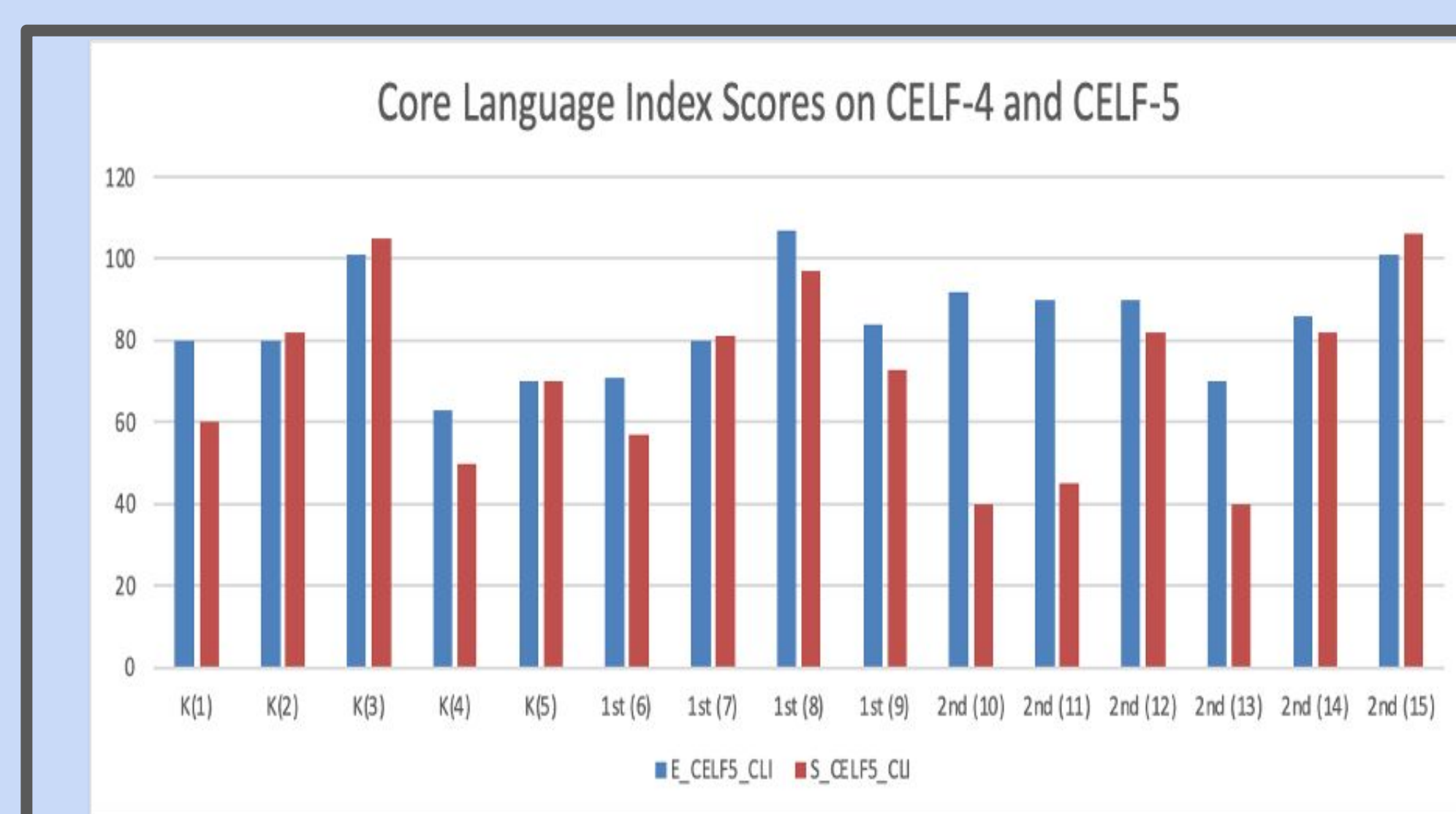


Figure 4

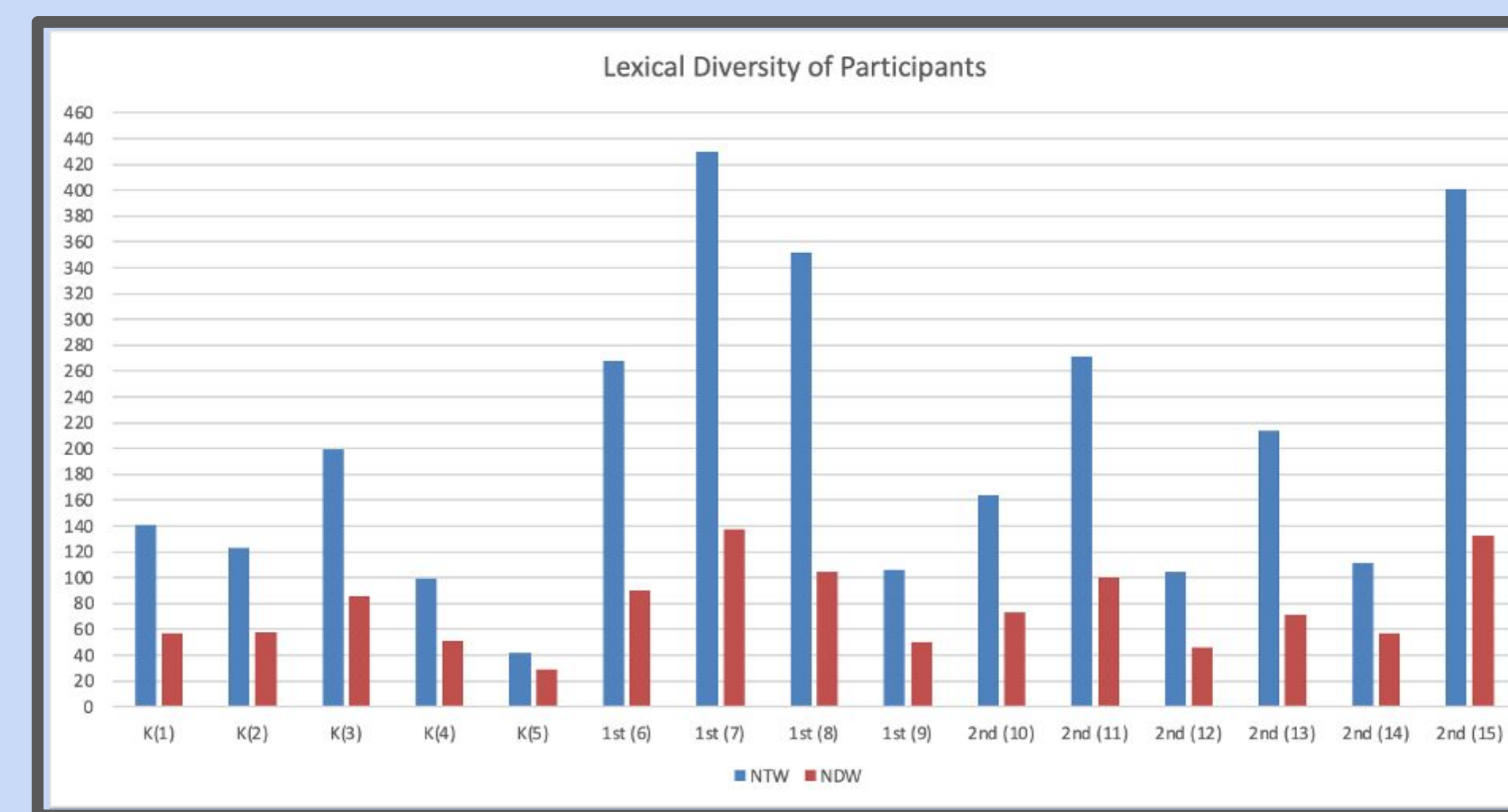


Figure 5

Conclusion

- The results from this study cannot be generalized to the larger population as the sample size was quite small.
- A correlation was found between the microstructural features within english decontextualized language assessments and contextualized english oral narratives.
- There does not appear to be statistically significant relation between English and Spanish; however, lack of statistical significance could be attributed to the small sample size.
- Each child came from a different background which could have affected the results.

References

- Kids Count Data Center. (2018). The number of bilingual kids in America continues to rise: Kids Count Data Center. KIDS COUNT data center: A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/updates/show/184-the-number-of-bilingual-kids-in-america-continues-to-rise>
- Leverkuhn. (2023). What is a narrative discourse? Language Humanities. Retrieved from <https://www.languagehumanities.org/what-is-a-narrative-discourse.htm>
- Lucero A. (2015). Cross-Linguistic Lexical, Grammatical, and Discourse Performance on Oral Narrative Retells Among Young Spanish Speakers. Child development, 86(5), 1419–1433. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12387>
- Méndez, L.I., Perry, J.L., Holt, Y.F., Bian, H., & Fafulas, S.A. (2018). Same or different: Narrative retells in bilingual Latino kindergarten children. Bilingual Research Journal, 41, 150 - 166.