

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



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## Abstract

This study's purpose was to analyze the microstructure features of English Oral Narratives produced by Spanish-English Emergent Bilinguals 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 can be an area where second language learners struggle, and researchers have begun to encourage the assessment of these students' comprehension through listening and retelling

Narrative discourse, a type of written or verbal communication that involves narration/telling a story, is an integral part of oral language that has been connected to literacy and academic outcomes in both monolingual and bilingual children.

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, and it makes use of linguistic knowledge to convey meaning and is described by measures such as lexical diversity.

## 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*

## Results

Figure 1

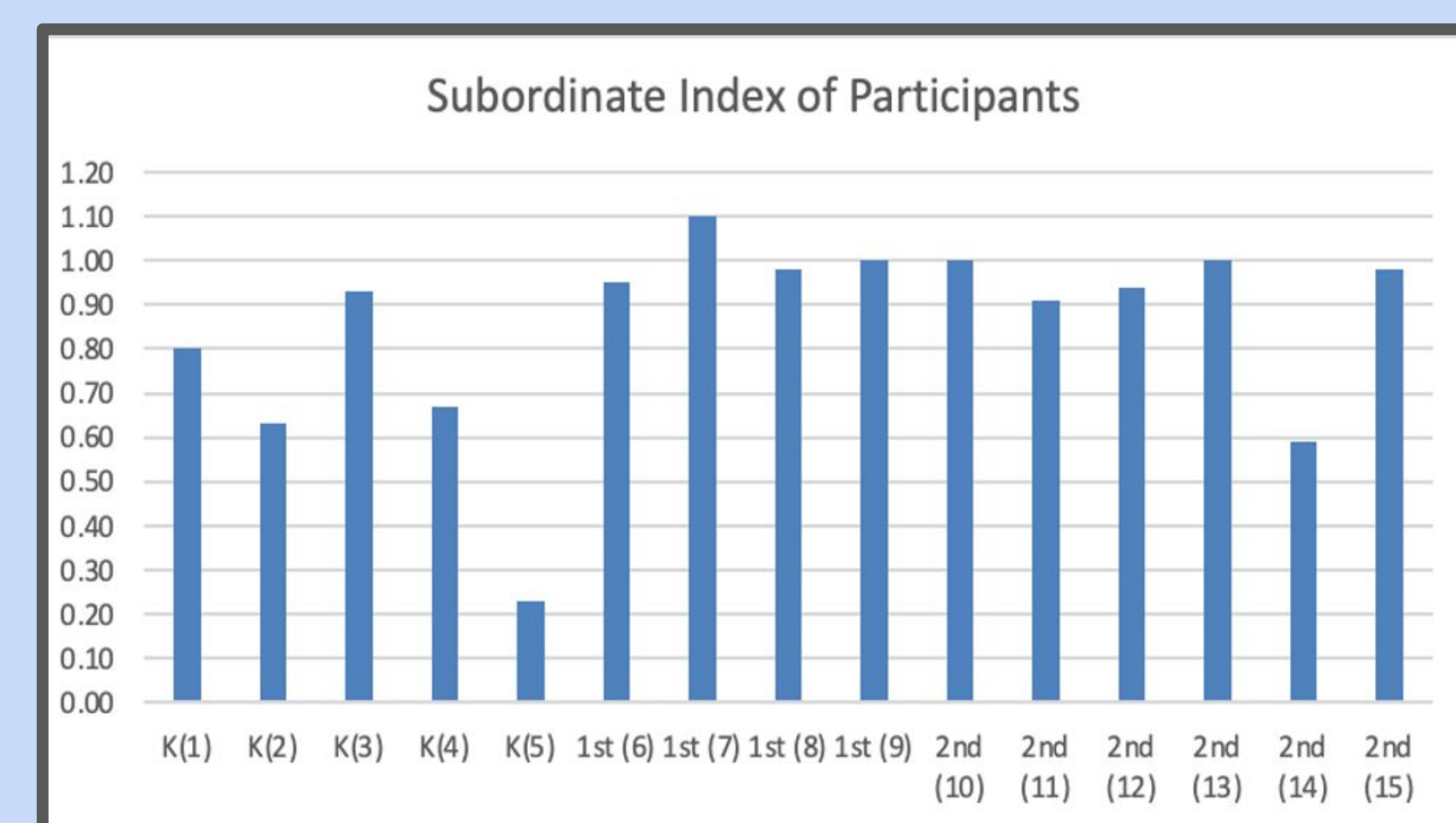


Figure 2

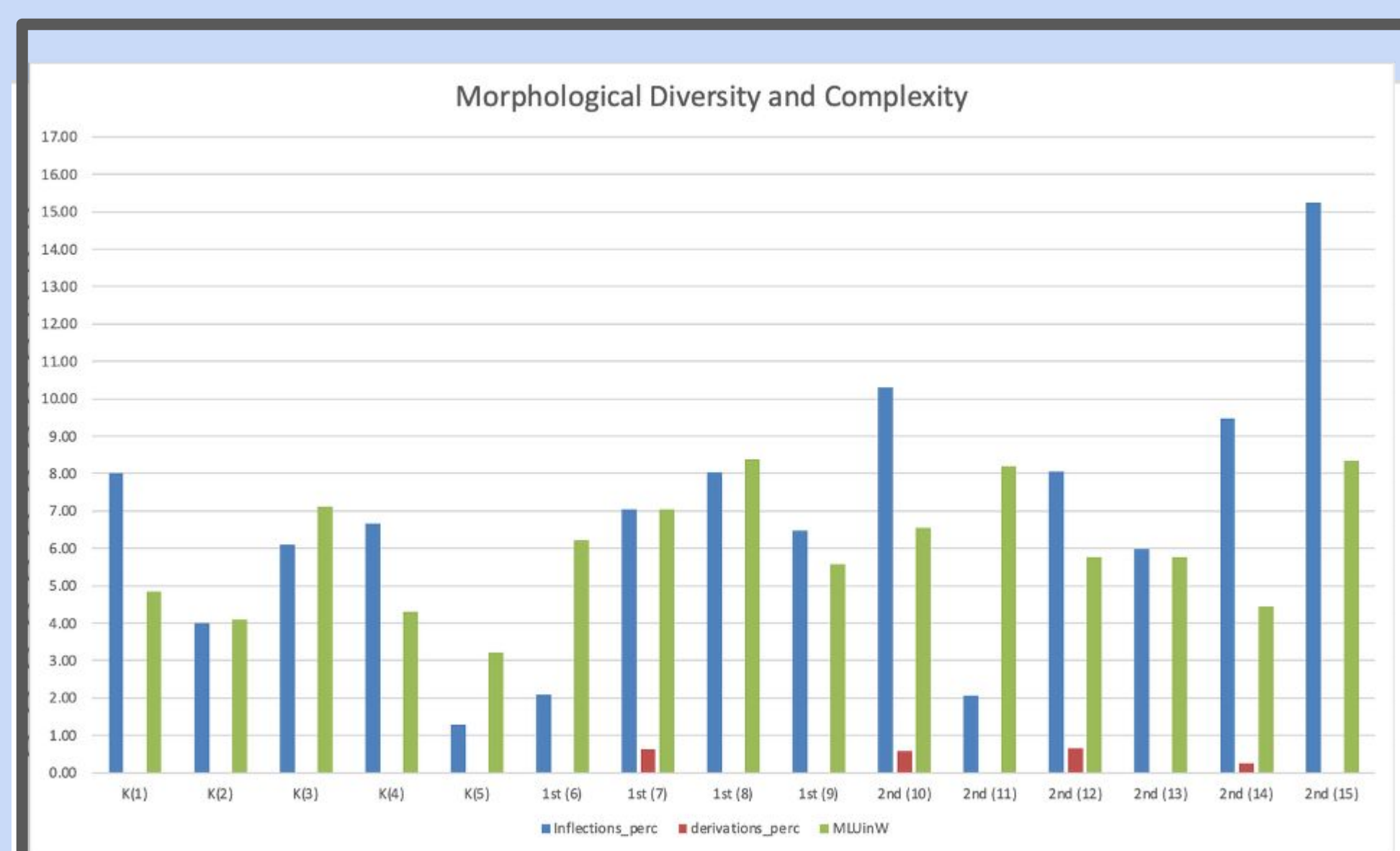
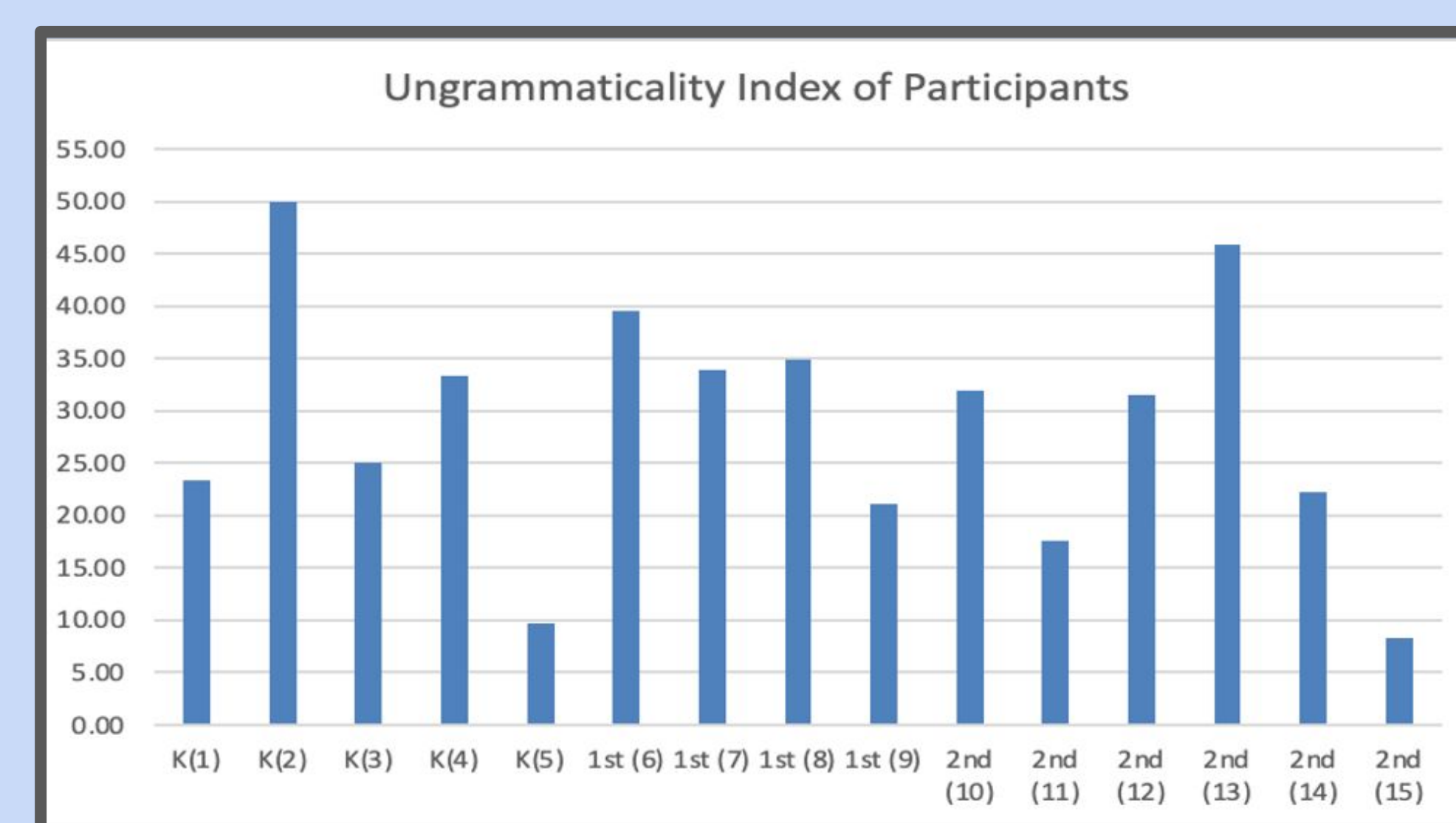


Figure 3

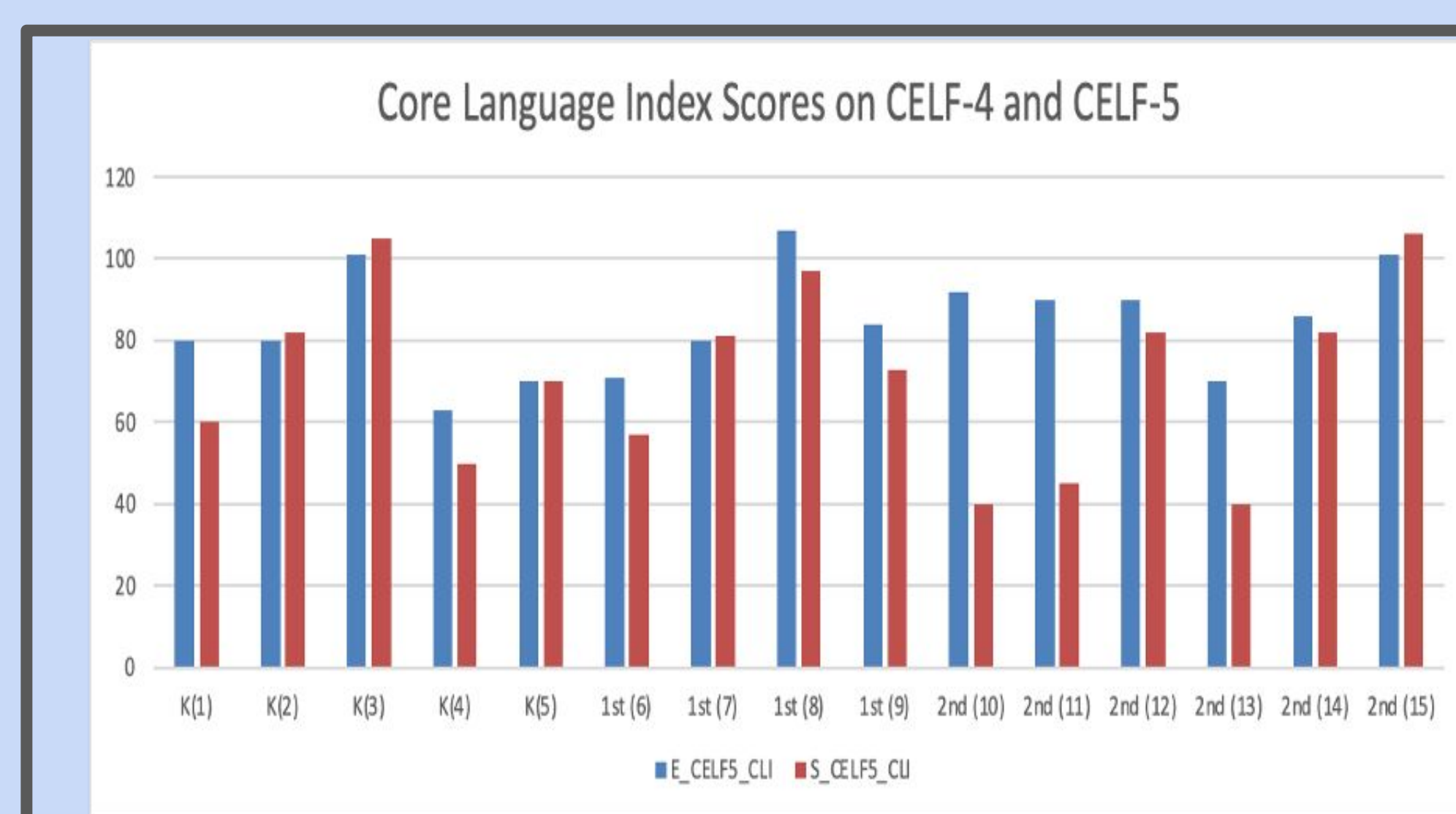


Figure 4

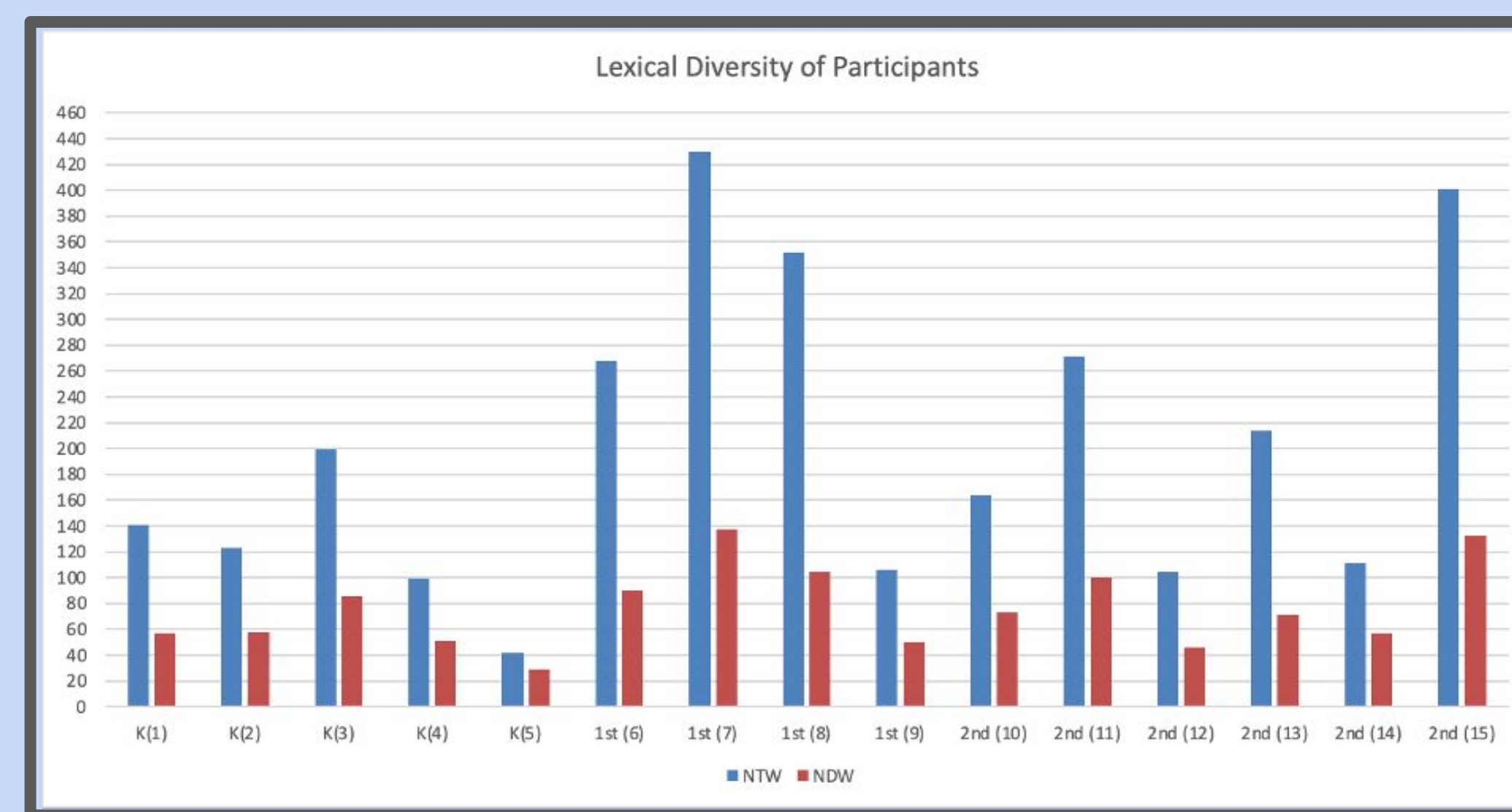


Figure 5

## 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.
- No statistically significant data was found in regards to the relation between spanish standardized assessments and english narratives.
- Each child came from a different background which could have affected the results.

## 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.

## References

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