

NARRATIVE SKILLS IN LITHUANIAN TD MONO- AND BILINGUAL 5-6-YEAR AGES

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Data

Experimental data of:

- 1) typically developing Lithuanian monolingual children (n = 12, mean age = 74 months) from middle-class families, living in Lithuania and attending state kindergarten in Kaunas (the second largest city in Lithuania);
- 2) typically developing Lithuanian bilingual children (n = 12, mean age = 74 months) from middle-class families, living in UK and additionally to state school attending private Lithuanian day-care centre (4 hours per week) in London.

Procedure

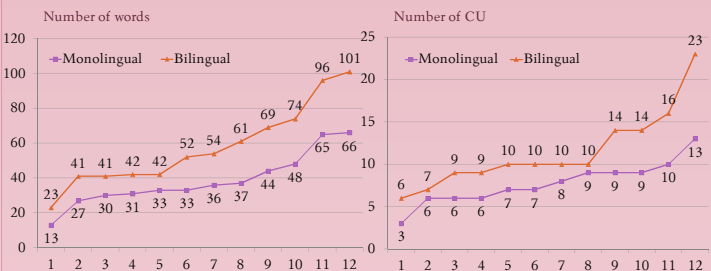
During the investigation, a semi-structured elicitation method was applied. The children were tested individually; they were asked to tell a story according to the *Cat Story* (developed by M. Hickmann (2003), modified by N. Gagarina *et al.* (2011) picture sequence.



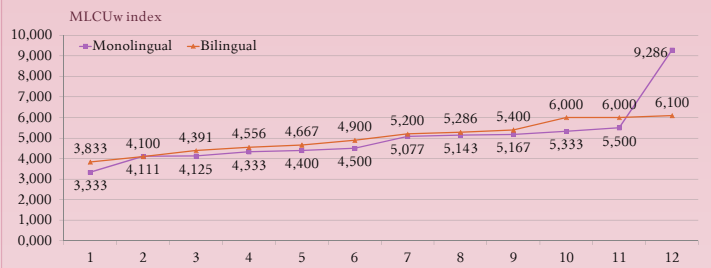
The stories were recorded, transcribed and annotated for an automatic analysis using CHILDES (*Child Language Data Exchange System*, MacWhinney 2010) tools. During the analysis, the main **micro-** and **macrostructural** characteristics were investigated.

Results

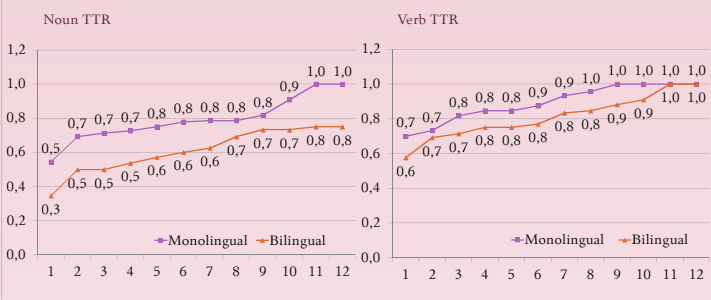
1. The bilingual children demonstrated higher productivity in words and CU¹:



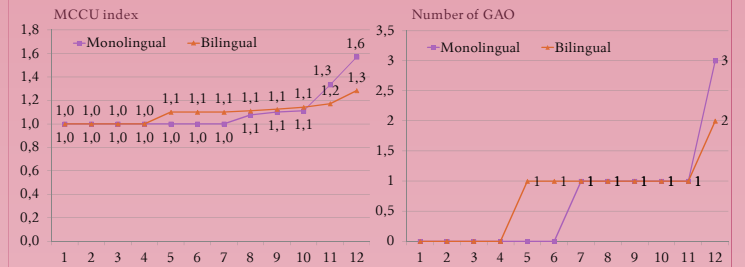
However, MLCUw² rate is similar in both populations:



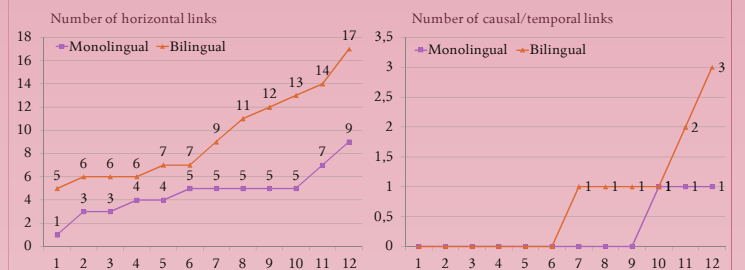
2. Lexical diversity (TTR³), in contrast, was higher in the monolingual children's stories:



3. Syntactic complexity (MCCU⁵) and story structure (GAO⁶) are similar in both populations; however, they seem to be more stable in the bilingual children stories:



4. Cohesion devices are better developed in the monolingual population:



Notes

- ¹ CU – communication unit – “independent clause with its modifiers” (Loban 1963: 9).
- ² MLCUw – mean length of CU in words.
- ³ TTR – type/token ratio.
- ⁴ MCCU – mean number of clauses per CU.
- ⁵ GAO – goal-attempt-outcome sequence.

Conclusions

The results indicated the main tendencies of Lithuanian narrative production in monolingual and bilingual populations, and highlighted differences between the populations in both micro- and macrostructure of the stories.

Generally, it can be stated that Lithuanian TD monolinguals (with a few exceptions) demonstrated higher lexical diversity (noun and verb TTR) and cohesion (horizontal vs. causal/temporal links), while Lithuanian TD bilinguals demonstrated higher productivity (CU and MLU rates). Syntactic complexity (CL/CU rate) seems to be similar in both populations.

Since the experiment was supplemented by semi-structured interview with the subjects and survey of their parents and teachers, the results of the study can be partially related to social, linguistic, and educational environment of the children, as well as to individual general language development, and experience in story-telling.

References

- Hickmann, M. (2003). *Children's discourse: person, space and time across languages*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Loban, W. (1963). *The Language in Elementary School Children*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- MacWhinney, Brian (2010). *The CHILDES Project: Tools for Analyzing Talk*. Electronic Edition. URL: <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/manuals/CLAN.pdf>.

Acknowledgments

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