

NARRATIVE MACROSTRUCTURE IN LITHUANIAN MONOLINGUAL AND BILINGUAL TYPICALLY DEVELOPING 6-YEAR-OLDS



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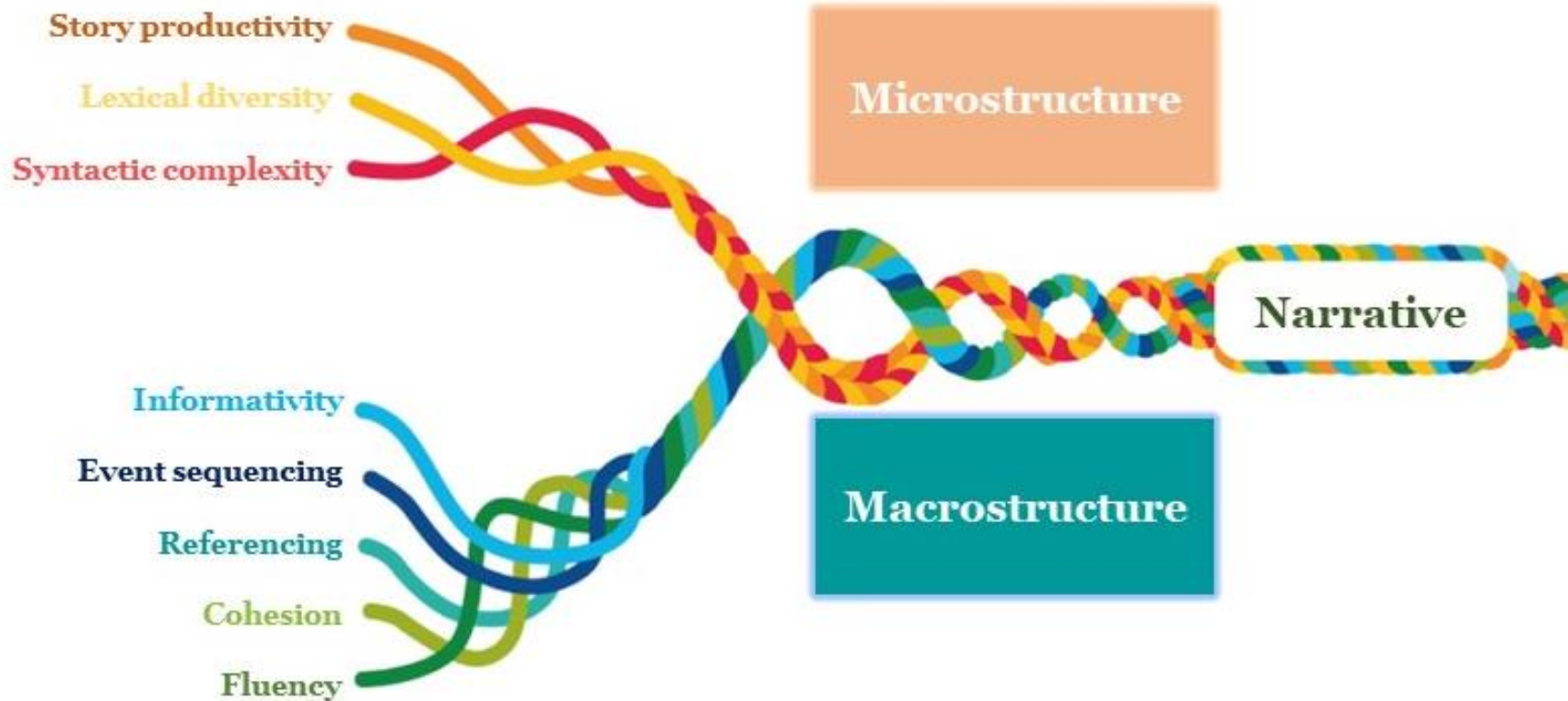
Ingrida Balčiūnienė

Why study pre-primary school age?

Why study narratives?

Why study macrostructure?

Narrative components



- ❖ Narratives constitute instances of language in use rather than in isolated components out of context; they are an integral part of everyday social interactions and the school curriculum (Hayward, Schneider, 2000).
- ❖ They are typically monologues that have a recognizable beginning and end, thus are relatively easy units to identify; they are also familiar to people of all ages, excepting only infants and toddlers (Peterson, McCabe, 1991: 29).
- ❖ Narratives play a critical role in the development of discourse, literacy, and socialization abilities (McCabe, 1996).

Methodological approach

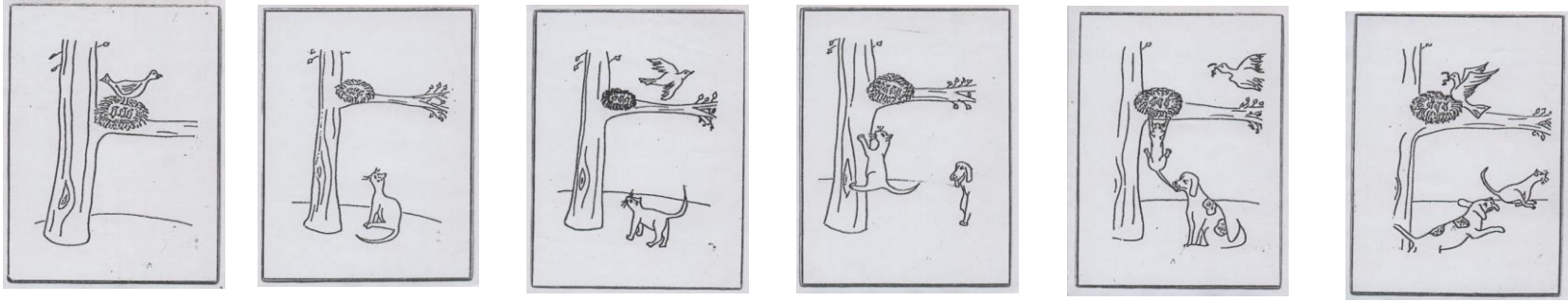
Subjects

Group	MONO-LT	BI-LT-EN	BI-RU-LT
Age	5;5–6;5 years		
Language development	Typical		
Country of residence	Lithuania	United Kingdom	Lithuania
Language(s)	Lithuanian	Lithuanian (L1) English (L2)	Russian (L1) Lithuanian (L2)
Status of Lithuanian language	Home language Majority language	Home language	Majority language

The study was carried out in the framework of the project *Pasakojimo struktūros ir gramatikos įsisavinimas* (*The Acquisition of the Narrative Structure and Grammar*) funded by the **Commission of the Lithuanian Language, K-28/2002**.

Narrative elicitation

Storytelling according the *Cat Story* picture sequence (Hickmann, 2003).



The stories were transcribed and coded according to CLAN (*Child Language Data Exchange System* – CHILDES, McWhinney, 2010) tools for automatic linguistic analysis.

Macrostructural variables analyzed

- ❖ Topic maintenance
- ❖ Event sequencing
- ❖ Informativeness
- ❖ Referencing
- ❖ Conjunctive cohesion
- ❖ Fluency

(Adapted from McCabe, A., & Bliss, L. S. (2003). *Patterns of Narrative Discourse. A Multicultural, Lifespan Approach*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.)

Scoring procedure (1)

- **Topic Maintenance:** Are the majority of utterances on topic?
- **Event sequencing:** Are the majority of the events organized in chronological order?
- **Informativeness:** Is enough information presented for the listener to understand the narrative?
 - Is the narrative sufficiently elaborated?
 - Is there adequate description, action, and evaluation in the narrative?
- **Referencing:** Is there appropriate referencing of time and place, individuals, and attributes?
- **Conjunctive cohesion:** Are linking devices used for both semantic and pragmatic purposes?
- **Fluency:** Is the production fluent?

- *What patterns of digression are evident?*
- *What patterns are evident?*
- *What specific information does the listener need to understand the narrative?*
- *If the narrative seems short, how the speaker should elaborate it?*
- *Are any of these components consistently deleted?*
- *What kinds of inappropriate referencing are used? Are references vague, overspecified, omitted, or confused?*
- *What linking devices are missing or inappropriate?*
- *Are there false starts, internal corrections, and/or repetitions?*

(Adapted from McCabe, A., & Bliss, L. S. (2003). *Patterns of Narrative Discourse. A Multicultural, Lifespan Approach*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.)

Scoring procedure (2)

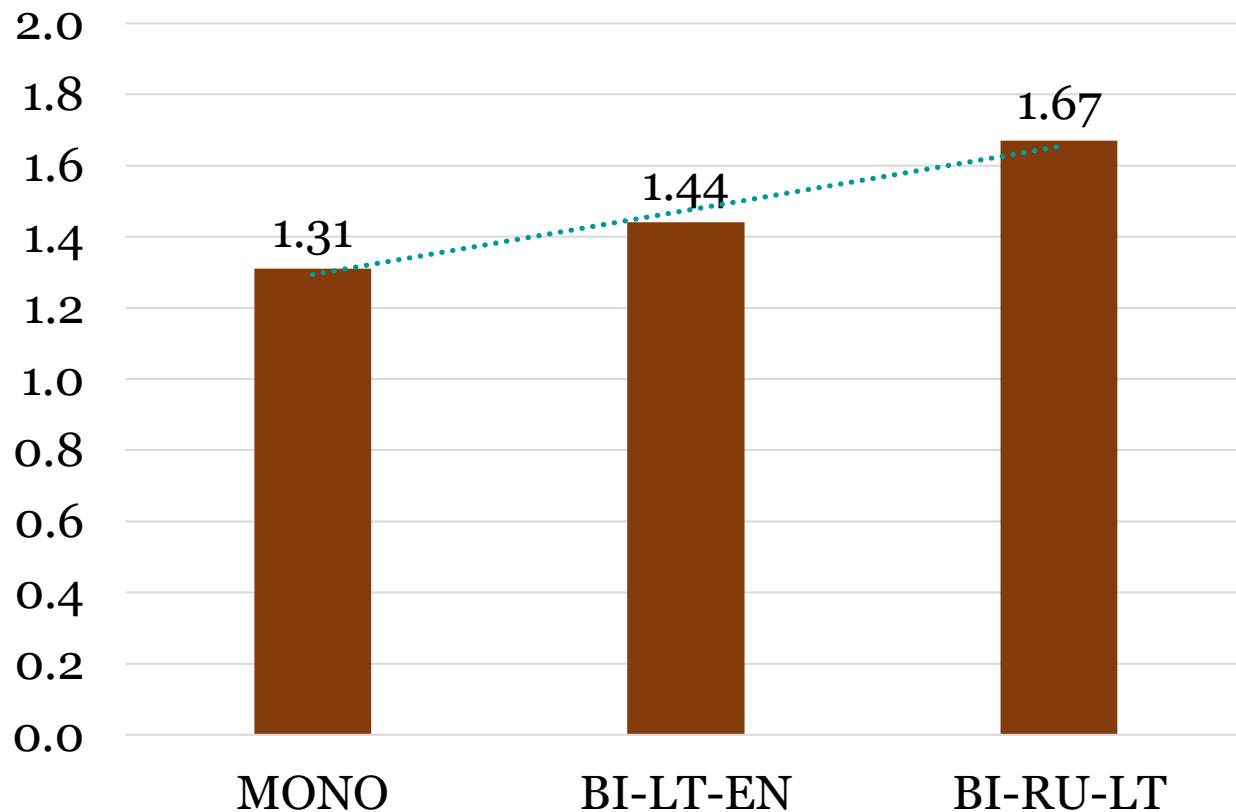
- **Topic Maintenance:** Are the majority of utterances on topic?
- **Event sequencing:** Are the majority of the events organized in chronological order?
- **Informativeness:** Is enough information presented for the listener to understand the narrative?
 - Is the narrative sufficiently elaborated?
 - Is there adequate description, action, and evaluation in the narrative?
- **Referencing:** Is there appropriate referencing of time and place, individuals, and attributes?
- **Conjunctive cohesion:** Are linking devices used for both semantic and pragmatic purposes?
- **Fluency:** Is the production fluent?

Yes	Partially	No
2	1	0
2	1	0
2	1	0
2	1	0
2	1	0
2	1	0

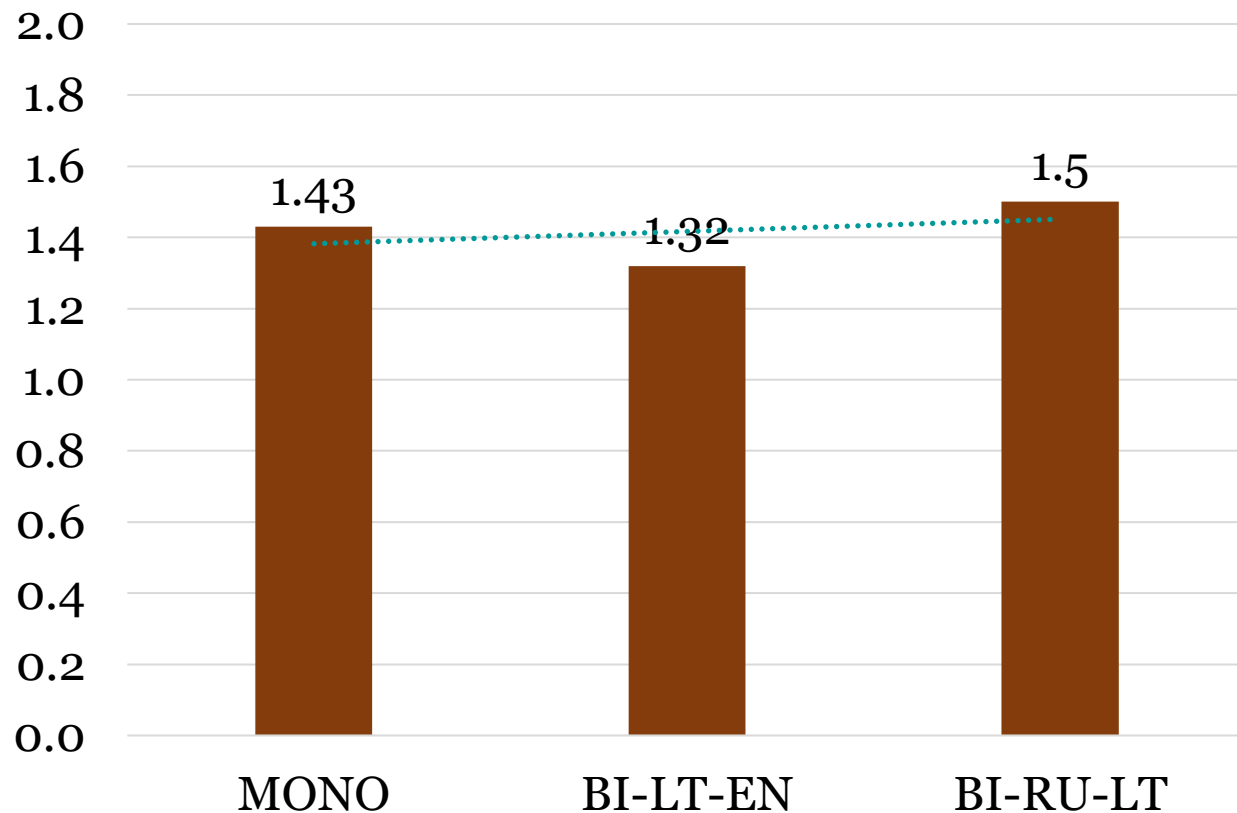
(Adapted from McCabe, A., & Bliss, L. S. (2003). Patterns of Narrative Discourse. A Multicultural, Lifespan Approach. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.)

Results

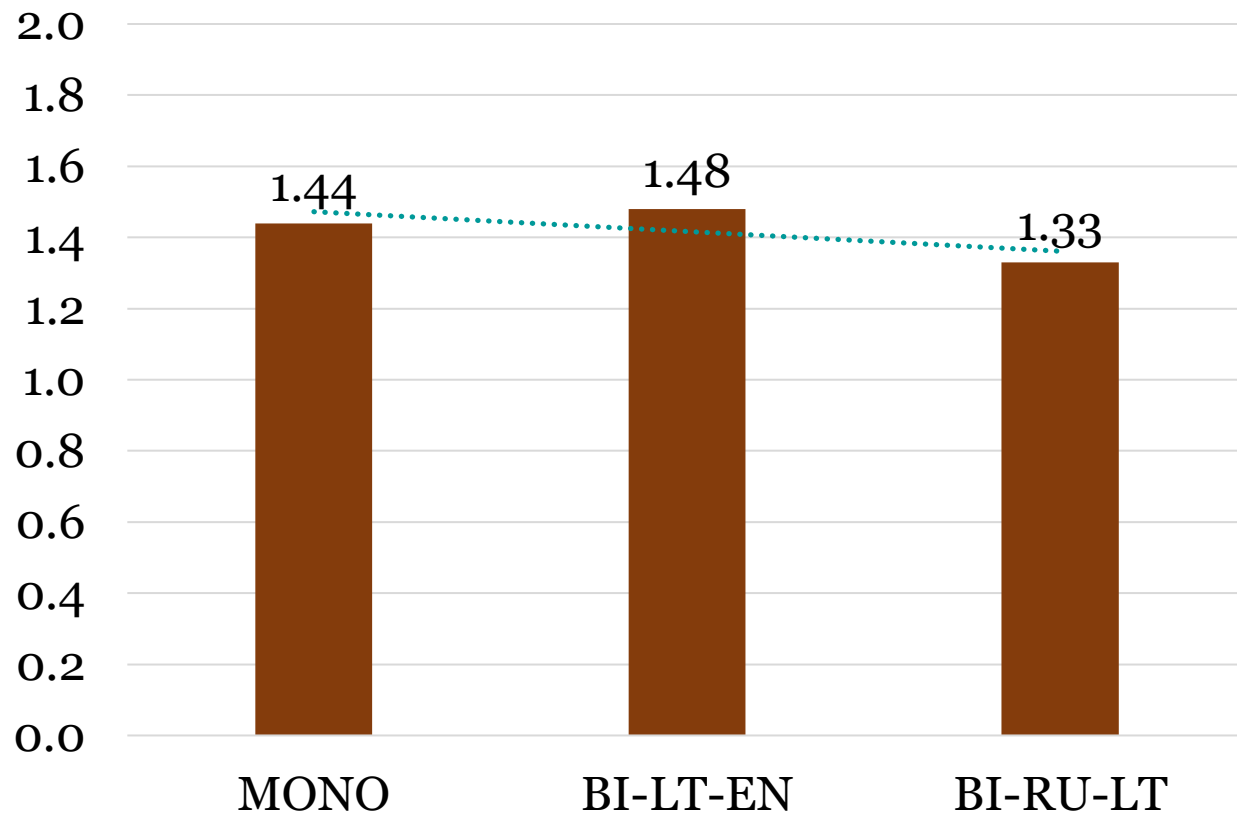
Topic maintenance



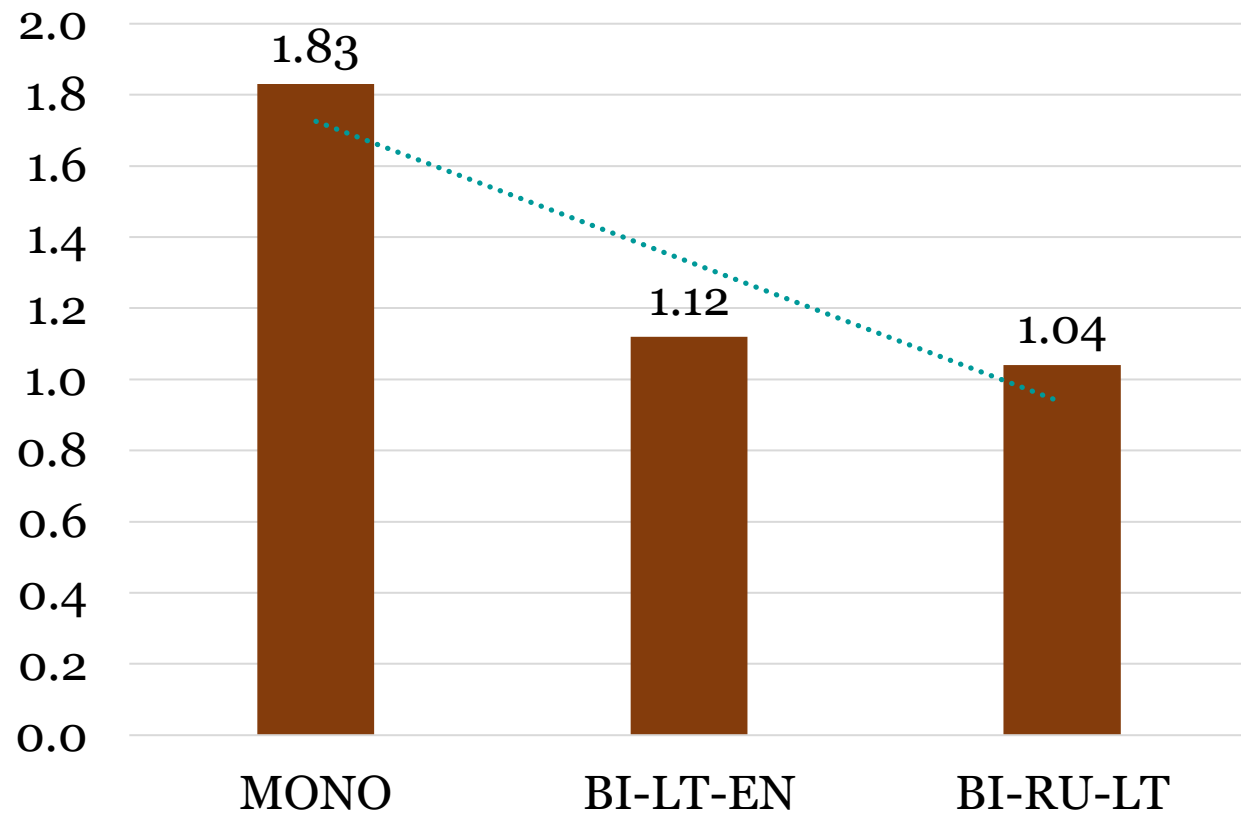
Event sequencing



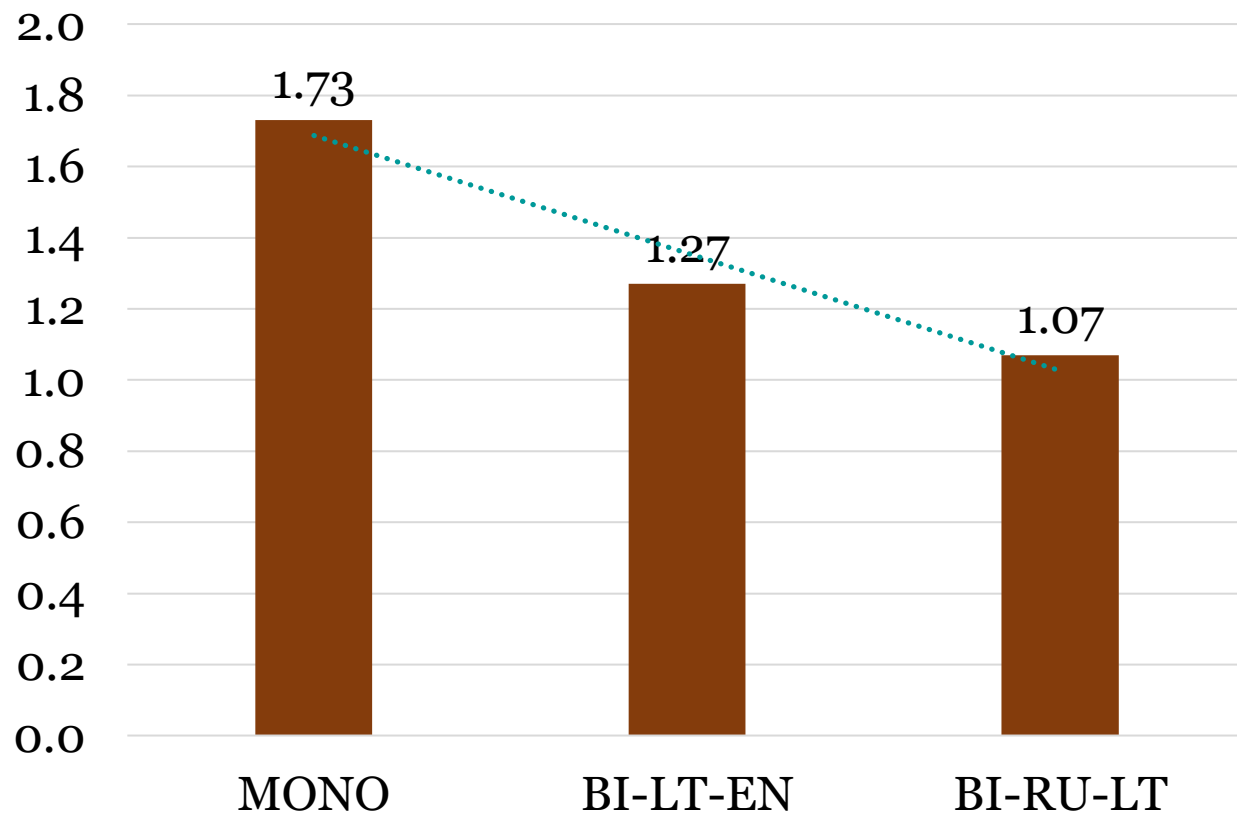
Informativeness



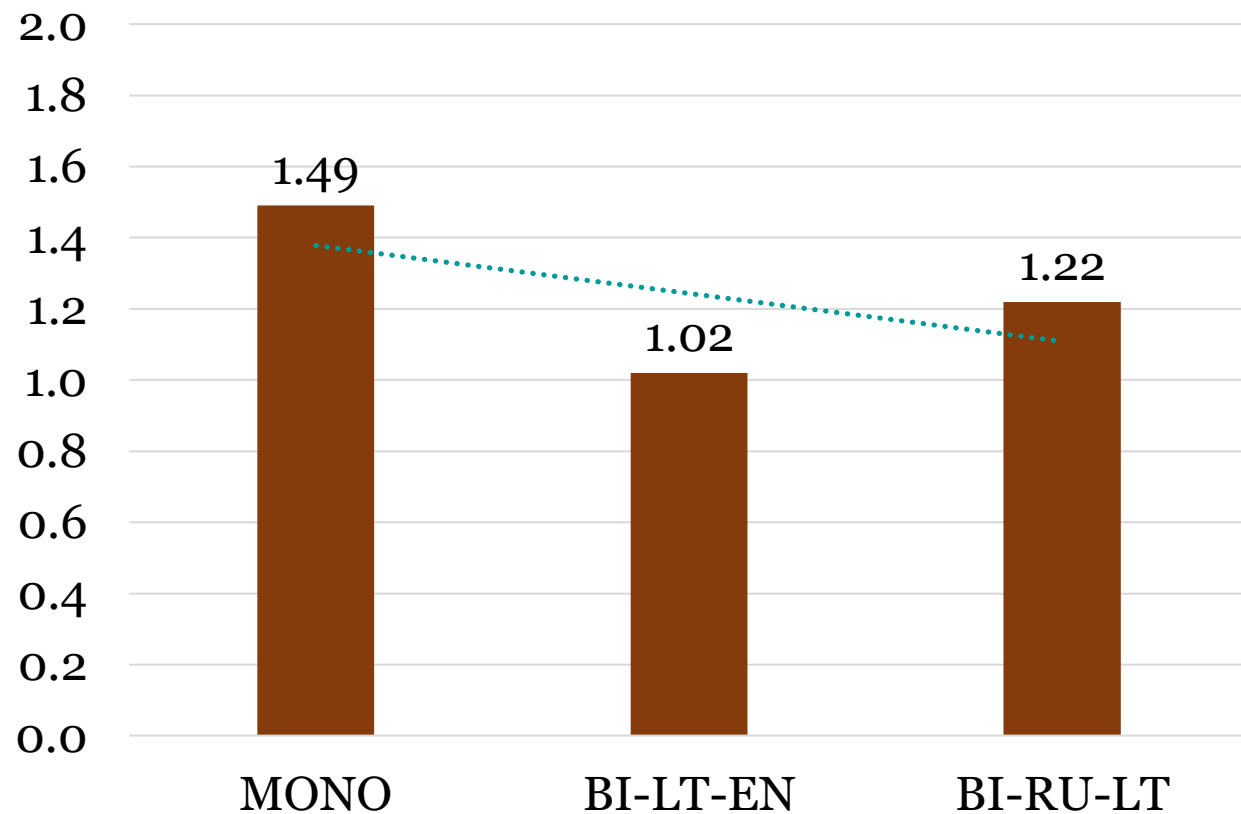
Referencing



Conjunctive cohesion



Fluency



Conclusions...

... and take-home message

1. The study evidenced, that *topic maintenance*, *event sequencing*, and *informativeness* were quite similar between the groups despite their different linguistic background and educational experience. The given macrostructural variables are related rather to cognitive than linguistic resources.
2. *Referencing*, *conjunctive cohesion*, and *fluency* were developed better in the monolingual group. The given macrostructural variables are related rather to linguistic than cognitive resources.

To what extent can *linguistic* vs *cognitive* deficit prevent from building appropriate narrative macrostructure?

How an impact of *linguistic* vs *cognitive* loading could be measured in clinical populations?

More on Lithuanian narrative studies:



Balčiūnienė, I. & Dabašinskienė, I. Language dominance in bilingual acquisition: A case study of narrative production in Lithuanian. *Estonian Papers in Applied Linguistics*. 2019. Vol. 15. Pp. 5–19.



Balčiūnienė, I. Lithuanian narrative language at preschool age. *Estonian Papers in Applied Linguistics*. 2012. Vol. 8. Pp. 21–36.

Thank you!