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Narrative Production of Bilingual Children from Class Three to Class Six: A Comparative Study between English and Bangla

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Abstract: Oral narratives provide an index of children's cognitive and social abilities. Accordingly, to investigate communicative competence in children, narrative analysis is considered by researchers as an ecologically suitable way. Yet monolinguals are given preference in the design and norms of the most existing elicitation and assessment tools, and the designs and tools are not always applicable to cross-cultural issues but to only one of the child's languages. These facts play crucial roles in the research and assessments of the narrative abilities of multilingual children. This study examines macrostructural aspects of narrative skills in 10 bilingual Bangla- and English-speaking children aged 8–12 years. Elicited fictional story production tasks were administered in a parallel process in both English and Bangla using a translated and adapted Bengali version. Scores on MAIN were compared across languages; moreover, story structure components in the narratives and answers to probe questions were qualitatively analyzed. Age effects (8–9-year-old vs. 10–12-year-old) for macrostructure production were evident with, but no effect on language (Bangla/English).

Key Words: narrative, bilingual, multilingual, macrostructure, production

Introduction:

A narrative task taps into knowledge that goes beyond the specifics of a particular language (Gagarina, N., Klop, D., Kunnari, S., Tantele, K., V¨alimaa, T., Balˇci¯unien˙e, I.et al., 2012) and is therefore thought to be a less biased method of language assessment for bilingual children than many other norm-referenced tests (Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2010). The present study contributes to a growing body of literature studying narrative abilities of children with LI (e.g., Bishop & Donlan, 2005; Dodwell & Bavin, 2008) and bilingual children (e.g., Pearson, 2002; Uccelli & Paez, 2007). A narrative task provides rich information about the linguistic development of children in an ecologically valid way and is considered a valuable clinical tool (Botting, 2002). It may be especially valuable for the challenging identification of bilingual children with language impairment (LI). Research show that narrative tasks are often found to be problematic for children with LI and appear to remain problematic into adolescence and children with LI perform weak on various aspects, including morphosyntax, lexical richness and use of complex clauses, and this has also been found within a bilingual context. Language delays of bilingual children can arise not only from impairment but also from insufficient exposure to and, consequently, limited knowledge of the target language (Kohnert, 2010).

Narrative production and comprehension skills in bilingual and multilingual children have rarely been studied for each of the child's languages (Pearson, 2002; Schwartz & Shaul, 2013), as

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usually only one language of the child, typically the majority language, is investigated. There are yet no systematic studies of the narrative abilities of bilingual Bangla–English children. In a short language sample about a child's multiple linguistic skills, it is generally approved that narratives make available rich data and multiple linguistic abilities include story structure, complexity of structures, internal state language, morphosyntax, cohesion, and lexical diversity and efficiency.

To overcome some of these shortcomings, a new tool, the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives (MAIN; Gagarina et al., 2012) was developed and piloted for 17 different languages and language combinations within an EU-COST Action project on child multilingualism (http://www.bi-sli.org). The intent was to design a reliable assessment instrument for bilingual children that probe not only language-specific but also language-general narrative skills at the cognitive–linguistic interface. MAIN contains parallel sets of picture stimuli with different fictional characters and events but with identical macrostructure, that is, identical overall story and episode structure. Protocols for eliciting storytelling, retelling, and answers to story comprehension questions and scoring methods were designed to tap into the narrative abilities of multilingual children aged 4–10 in a parallel manner in each of their languages. The development of MAIN proceeded on the widespread assumption that narrative structure has universal characteristics and properties that hold across languages (culture-specific storytelling conventions notwithstanding) (Pearson, 2002). There appears to be a strong cognitive, language-general component to story structure and to the development of story structure in children. The working hypothesis is thus that story structure should be invariant across a bilingual child's two languages at a given age, with similar understanding of story events and causality and similar awareness of the intentions and goal-directed behavior of the protagonists. A bilingual child should readily carry over such language-general narrative abilities from one language to another and profit from them, even in cases where one language is weaker than the other regarding morphosyntax or vocabulary development, as is often the case in simultaneous and sequential bilinguals (Berman, 2001; Iluz-Cohen & Walters, 2012; Kupersmitt & Berman, 2001; Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2011; Pearson, 2002).

In the present study, different stimuli resources and a more comprehensive evaluation have been used and it is to be noted that to express macrostructural knowledge linguistically, some language aptitude is essential, even though in the literature, the least proficiency approach is not generally recapitulated (Pearson, 2002; Viberg, 2001). Using a more detailed and rigorously designed new assessment tool (MAIN), the current study investigates whether macrostructural knowledge in narrative production is invariant across a bilingual child's two languages at a given age and a comparison across languages.

Literature Review:

Employing MAIN, an adaptation of the story grammar model of Stein and Glenn (1979) is used in the present study. To elicit comparable narratives in the two languages of a bilingual child and depict stories of comparable complexity and plotline, parallel sets of picture stimuli were designed. A story with distinct animal protagonists is depicted by each set of picture stimuli and the picture stories are identical with global story structure and episode structure. In each picture story, there is a setting (e.g., once upon a time there were three goats in a meadow) which is

accompanied by three short episodes. Each episode in the picture stories includes the protagonist's goal, the protagonist's attempt to reach the goal, an outcome concerning the goal, an internal state (e.g., a cognitive or emotional condition), that brings about the goal, an internal state (e.g., a cognitive or emotional condition), which is the response to the result. For instance, in the Baby Goats story (Figure 1), in the first episode, the goal of the big goat is to help the baby goat out of the water; in the second episode, the goal of the fox is to catch or kill the baby goat; and in the third episode, the goal of the bird is to rescue the baby goat from the fox. While the actions of the protagonists are explicitly depicted, the perceptions, thoughts, emotions, motives, and goals of the story characters must be inferred from the pictures to tell a complete story.

Narrative study permits clinicians and linguists to make assessments of multiple linguistic features because a rich source of data about a child's language use in a moderately natural environment is provided by oral narratives and macrostructure (e.g., categories of story grammar such as goals, attempts and outcomes) and microstructure using relatively short language specimens (e.g., relational and referential devices, lexical diversity, complex syntax and morphosyntax) are included in multiple linguistic features (Heilmann, Miller, & Nockerts, 2010; Heilmann, Miller, Nockerts, & Dunaway, 2010). There are also suggestions in the literature that narratives may be less biased and more appropriate for bilingual children than other language assessment tools, because "language tasks that require a cognitive component might . . . be tapping into language-general capacities" (Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2010, 221).

Research on bilingual children's oral narrative development is only in the initial stages and is even more limited for Spanish/English bilinguals from low-SES families. The few studies that have studied narratives in this population suggest some interesting directions for inquiry and highlight the need for additional research (Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2002; Muñoz, Gillam, Peña, & Gulley-Faehnle, 2003; Pearson, 2002). Pearson compared the narrative performances of second and fifth graders in a cross-sectional sample of Spanish/English bilinguals and monolinguals from Miami, Florida. Using the wordless picture book *Frog, Where Are You?* (Mayer, 1969) as an elicitation procedure, Pearson examined narrative quality at two levels: (a) At the language level, lexical and grammatical elements were identified; (b) at the story level, the organization of the story was captured by assessing story elements (e.g., characters and events), story sequence, and narrators' perspectives. Results revealed effects of SES, grade, and lingualism (monolinguals vs. bilinguals) in English narrative quality, favoring high-SES, older students, and monolingual children. Larger differences were identified at the language level than at the story level, suggesting that these dimensions capture different patterns of change in bilingual skills. Also, bilingual children produced better performances in English than in Spanish, with larger differences on language elements than on story features. Interestingly, results revealed significant cross-language correlations at the level of story and complex syntax, but not at the level of specific language elements, such as lexicon or syntactic accuracy. The author interpreted these findings as evidence of positive "carry-over across languages," offering initial evidence that warrants further research on cross-linguistic associations (Pearson, 2002, 149).

Muñoz and colleagues (2003) collected English narrative skills from a cross-sectional sample of 4- and 5-year-old "predominantly English-speaking Latino children" also using the picture book

Frog, Where Are You? (Mayer, 1969). These authors documented developmental progress at the level of syntax and story organization but found that the length of children's narratives did not vary significantly by age. Length was calculated using two measures of narrative productivity—total number of words (TNW) and total number of different words (TDW). None of these measures was a sensitive indicator of English narrative development in their sample of young, low-SES Latino children. These authors suggest that measures of narrative productivity that are commonly used with English monolinguals might not be sensitive for Spanish/English bilinguals from low-SES (socioeconomic status) families.

Children are often already credited with full points for story structure when having mentioned the main protagonists, an initiating event, one attempt, and one outcome/consequence (e.g., Akinci et al., 2001; M¨oller, 2010; cf. Fiestas & Pe˜na, 2004; and Lanza, 2001, for a scale of max 7 points). This may be partly due to the special recursive structure of the Frog story with its series of attempts to reach the goal (i.e., to find/retrieve the frog), which all fail except for the final attempt, the goal being repeatedly reinstated (Trabasso & Rodkin, 1994). With other stimuli materials too, story structure is often investigated on a scale of few points only (Iluz-Cohen & Walters, 2012).

Thus, with increasing age and cognitive maturity, there is a gradual move away from descriptive and action sequences and a development toward a more complex episodic organization with causal connections, where the thoughts, feelings, motives, and goals of protagonists, as well as their reactions to successful or failed outcomes, are made explicit for the listener. The development of certain narrative components and story complexity is often seen in relationship with the development of theory of mind, that is, the awareness of shared as opposed to unshared knowledge. As such, it forms part of children's cognitive development (Berman & Slobin, 1994; Nicolopoulou & Richner, 2007; Pearson, 2002; Shapiro & Hudson, 1991; Soodla, 2011; Tomasello, 2003; Westby, 2012). The ability to produce well-formed episodes (including GAO sequences) indicates understanding of underlying narrative schemas, causality, perspective taking, and the need to justify plans and actions (Shapiro & Hudson, 1991; Trabasso & Nickels, 1992; Trabasso & Rodkin, 1994). This development continues during the primary school years. By age 9–10, children's fictional narratives are said to resemble those of adults concerning macrostructure, with evaluative comments and frequent attributions of emotional states to protagonists (Berman & Slobin, 1994).

There is, however, a fair bit of variation concerning the exact age at which monolingual children are reported to be able to produce or regularly express certain narrative components and full GAO episodes. This is because studies have employed a wide variety of elicitation materials and data collection procedures with different task demands and analyzed their data according to slightly different story grammar models.

Method:

Participants:

The present study examines the macrostructural aspects of narrative skills in 10 bilingual Bangla - English speaking children in the age group 8–12 years. The children are divided into two sub-groups according to age: The first group consists of 6 children between 8-9 years and 4 children fall in the second age range of 10-12 years. Of these, 7 are girls and 3 are boys. The choice of subjects was restricted by the following factors: the first major factor was that the pandemic restricted the access to larger groups of children as well as children belonging to younger age groups as schools in Bangladesh were closed. I did try to contact teachers and parents to explore the possibility of conducting the study online, but the attempts did not meet with success. Thus, I was able to identify these 10 children who belonged to two similar age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and a similar amount of exposure to the first language Bangla and the second language English. The second reason for choosing these age groups was that in urban areas in Bangladesh, children of this age range are exposed to a second language to a great extent not only as a classroom language but as a home language as well. This makes it possible for me to elicit narratives in both the languages that the children speak.

The younger group comprises children of class 3 and 4. 3 children in this group attended a school where both Bangla and English are media of instruction. Two of them are from English-medium schools and they are 9 years old, and 1 child aged 9 is studying in a Govt. primary school. The older group comprises children of class 5 and 6. In the older group, 2 children are 10 years old, 1 is 11 years old and 1 is 12 years old. One studies in Bangla English mixed- medium primary school, one is from an English medium school that follows a national curriculum where both English and Bangla are given the same preference. The 11-year-old child studies in class VI in a Govt. High school where both Bangla and English are used as the medium of instruction and the 12-year-old who is from an English-medium school. All the schools are in the urban area of Chattogram, the port city of Bangladesh.

The 10 children have been selected from the families where both Bangla and English are spoken on a regular basis. The parents of the participants have completed secondary and higher secondary levels and 50% of the families (5/10) have at least one parent who holds a Graduate or Post-Graduate degree. In 20% of the families, at least one parent has an undergraduate degree. Some criteria were followed to select the participants, and these are: They had to belong to the age groups that we were interested in, i.e., 8-9 or 10-12 years of age; they had to have no record of hearing impairment, language impairment, or cognitive disorder; they had at least 4 years of regular and recurrent exposure to each language, a good understanding of and fluency in both Bangla and English. To ensure that these criteria were met, I administered a language profile questionnaire that is a part of the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives (MAIN).

Tools Used for Data Collection:

In the current study, the English version of MAIN and its Bangla adaptation were used. Sets of 6 colored, wordless picture sequences are provided by MAIN as stimulants to elicit four stories with identical overall story and episode structure.

In contrast to conventional picture books, the MAIN stimulus materials were carefully constructed with story grammar as a theoretical base to allow clear identification of the story grammar elements generated by the child. By portraying three episodes in each picture sequence, children are provided with more than one opportunity to produce each element targeted for macrostructure analysis. Two of these picture stories were used in the present study: Baby Birds and Baby Goats (see Figure 1). These were designed for storytelling, with parallel plots and identical story structure. The picture sequences were used to elicit two narratives per child, one in each language (narrative production task).

Methodology:

In this study only two stories were used - Baby Birds and Baby Goats - as we were examining narrative abilities across two languages in the Telling mode only. Children were seen individually in a quiet room on two separate occasions. Each session was conducted entirely in one language, in Bangla or in English.

After an initial period of warming-up conversation or play, the children sat at a table facing the investigator and were presented with three envelopes, each containing an identical copy of one of the picture sequences as a six-picture strip (Baby Birds or Baby Goats). Following the standard MAIN procedure, the children were told that there were different pictures in the envelopes and that they were to choose one. After selecting an envelope, the children were asked to take out and unfold the pictures and look at them to familiarize themselves with the story. They were instructed to tell the story and the pictures were held in front of them so that the investigator could not see the pictures. This was done to minimize effects of shared knowledge and to discourage the use of pointing. After an initial previewing of all six pictures to minimize task demands, fold-out was used during the actual storytelling, with pictures presented in pairs of two (first two, then four, then all six pictures visible). Care was taken not to start the story for the children; they were encouraged to tell the story themselves. The investigator listened without interrupting much, except to provide back-channeling encouragement, to direct or help with the folding out of pictures, or when queried by the child for a word or the name of an animal. In cases when the child hesitated, the investigator used standard MAIN prompts (e.g., *Tell me more*; *Anything else?*; *Let's see what else happens in the story*). After the children had finished telling their story, the investigator asked the comprehension questions, with the entire picture sequence visible on the table. Finally, the children received stickers as a small thank-you gift.

Half the children did the task first in Bangla and then in English, and half vice versa, in randomized order, with a break in between. A 5- to 7-day interval between sessions for all children was maintained as recommended in the MAIN manual. The investigator counterbalanced for both languages (Bangla first vs. English first) and picture sequence (Baby Birds first vs. Baby Goats first). The narrative tasks were audio-recorded and transcribed by the investigator. Table 1 below shows the design employed in the elicitation of narratives across languages.

	Stories used across languages	
Age groups	Bangla	English
8-9 years	Baby Bird (SUB 1)/Baby Goat (SUB 2)	Baby Goat (SUB 1)/Baby Bird (SUB 2)
10-12 years	Baby Goat (SUB 1)/Baby Bird (SUB 2)	Baby Bird (SUB 1)/Baby Goat (SUB 2)

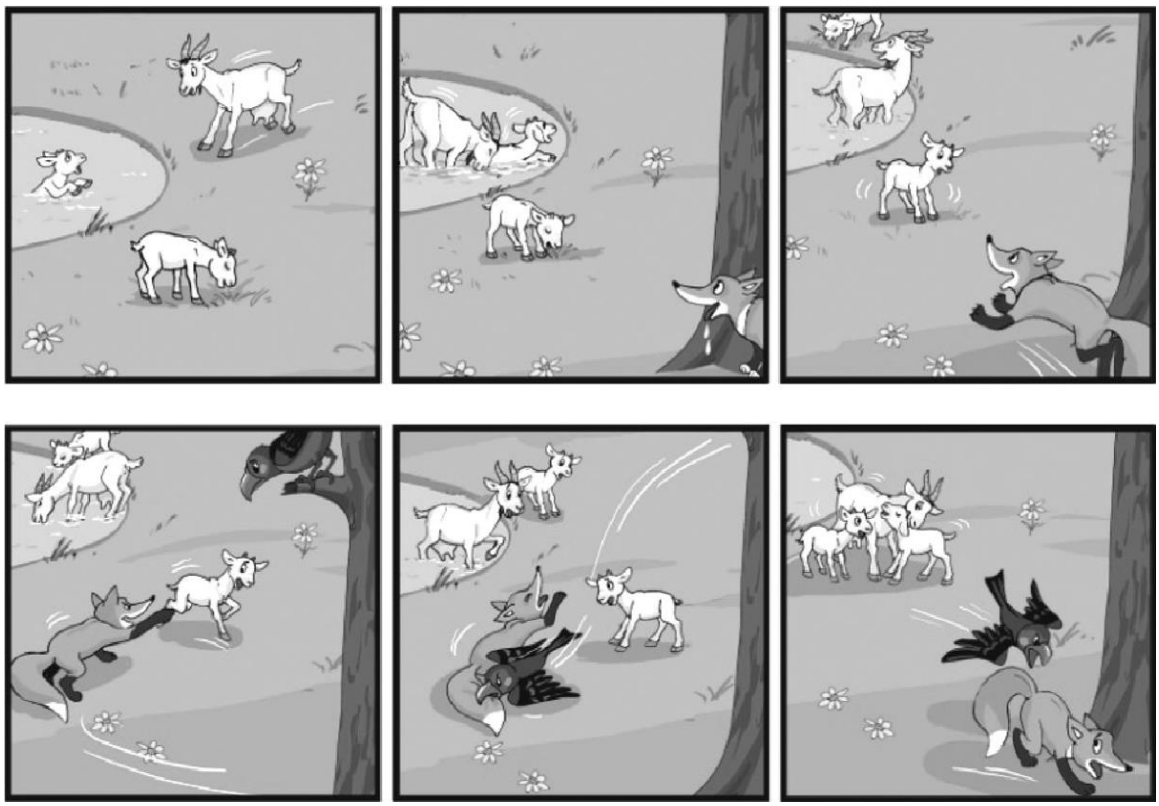

Figure 1. The picture stimuli for the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives Baby Goats story (originals are 9 × 9 cm-colored pictures in a folded strip).

Results and Discussion:
The results show overall findings between groups (First Group—8-9 years and Second Group—10-12 years) and languages (L1/L2) for narrative production.

Narrative Production:
First group (8- to 9-year-old)

The 12 narratives, 6 in Bangla and 6 in English elicited from the 8- to 9-year-old contained on average 6.41 (out of 17) story structure components as assessed by MAIN. No child achieved

more than 11 points. Broken down by language, the mean for Bangla (*M* = 5.7, *SD* = 2.7, range = 5–11 out of 17 points) was higher than for English (*M* = 3.1, *SD* = 2.4, range = 2–7 out of 17 points). The 8-9-year-old at group level scored nearly similar for macrostructure in both their languages. At an individual level, most children scored differently in their two languages. SUB8 who was 9 years old scored only 2 points in English but in Bangla that child scored 11 that was the highest score in Bangla among the 10 children. The child was a student at a Govt. primary school where Bangla, the mother tongue, is used more than English. Moreover, the parent of this child reported that the child preferred to use Bangla over English. This contrasts with SUB5, who scored 5 in both English and Bangla. This child was studying in a school where (s)he was exposed to both languages equally. SUB10 scored more in English than Bangla as the child was a student at an English medium school. In 5 out of 6 cases, though the children have exposure to both Bangla & English at school, Bangla is the predominant language of use in the home and environment of the children. This accounts for their higher language proficiency in Bangla than in English. The lower level of English language exposure and its use thus leads to the production of shorter narratives as well as the lower English scores. Further analysis with a larger sample is required to determine whether there is a relationship between a lower or higher production score on MAIN, age of first exposure, and language exposure and use at school. Despite the warm-up session, shyness, or hesitation to speak in English might be also one of the reasons for the lower performance.

Table-2 shows the distribution of story structure components across the two languages of the two groups.

Component	**8-9 Years**		**10–12 Years**	
	English	**Bangla**	**English**	**Bangla**
Setting (time & place)	2	4	3	4
A & O	7	8	8	3
Goal	2	8	3	4
GA/GO	2	6	2	4
GAO	0	3	1	0
IST as IE	3	9	3	5
IST as IR	6	2	3	2

Note: A & O as Attempt and Outcome, GA/GO as Goal-Attempt/Goal-Outcome, GAO as Goal-Attempt-Outcome

The first example below shows how the 9-year-old child's narrative was dominated by Attempt and Outcome and with little reflection about the feelings, intentions and goals of the protagonists involved in the story. The scorable attempts and outcomes are underlined and it is observed that instances of code-switching ('ghash' instead of 'grass') is also here. The narratives of this group contain passages where objects and characters are not sequentially narrated, and all make the identification of events and attempt them and connect these together.

Example-1: Two little goat and one big goat. One eat green ghash…they play in water. A fox run and they see fox. The fox, goat play and happy. There is flower…beautiful…flowers. A bird in tree. Black bird eat the tail…goat see. Goat are here…Bird fly …fox runs...end.

(Baby Goats, English, 9-year-old child, MAIN story structure score = 2/17)

The second example reflect the 8-year-old child's several attempts and outcomes (underlined) and some internal states of the protagonists (in boldface), such as *the birds smile and happy*, when the mother bird brings food, or the *birds shout* seeing the cat goes up the tree to catch them. Such story structure elements are articulated by at least 4 8–9-year-old children in the first group and example 2 is the narrative with the highest score for story structure in the 8–9-year-old data.

Example- 2: A big tree is there and three bird live. It is big tree..birds are happy…playing…a little cat is there. …the big bird bring food…bird smiles and happy and …birds eats food. cat goes up tree ….bird shout here…then a red dog comes.. Red dog bite the tail of cat..the bird see it. The cat runs…runs and also dog run . the bird play in tree..happy.

(Baby Birds, English, 8-year-old child, MAIN story structure score = 7/17)

There are only 3 full GAO episodes in Bangla and no GAO episodes in English because of the low frequency of overtly expressed Goals in the 8–9-year old's data. The internal state as reaction is higher in English than in Bangla and internal state as initiating event is lower in English than in Bangla. The attempts and outcomes are almost similar in both the languages (see Figure- 2).

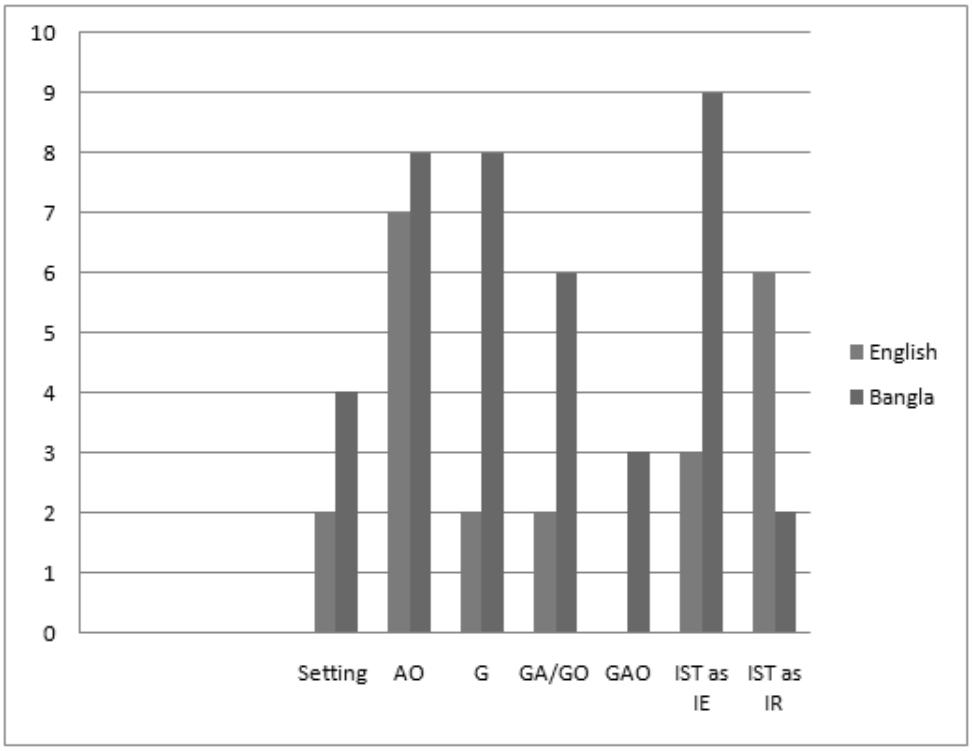

Figure-2: English & Bangla Structural Complexity & IST of Group 1

Second group (10- to 12-year-old):
The 8 narratives, 4 in Bangla & 4 in English, produced by the 10- to 12-year-old contained on average 7.25 (out of 17) Main story structure components, which is about 1 point higher than the first group. None of the children got more than 10 points, which shows that for story grammar elements, their narratives were all in the middle range. Broken down by language, the mean for Bangla (*M* = 3.1, *SD* = 1.7, range = 5–10 out of 17 points) was virtually similar with English (*M* = 3.3, *SD* = 2.2, range = 6–9 out of 17 points). The 10- 12-year-old at group level scored almost the same for macrostructure in both their languages.

At an individual level, most children scored differently in their two languages. SUB3 who was 11 years old, scored 9 points in English and 10 points in Bangla and that child scored the highest score in English among the 4 children. The child was a student at a Govt. high school where exposure to both Bangla and English almost similar. SUB7 who was 12 years old scored 8 in English and 6 in Bangla and the child scored more in English than Bangla as the child was a student at an English medium school. Nearly the same result is identified with SUB2, an 11-year-old child who scored 7 in English but got only 5 in Bangla and the child was from a school where both English and Bangla are the medium of instruction. In this group, two children scored higher

in English than Bangla and the other two scored better in Bangla in comparison with English. Consulting the information from the background questionnaire, in each of the four cases, the high score in English indicates that the children's language preference, that is, they prefer English than Bangla, age of first exposure not only in the home but in the school premises also, estimated amount of exposure, and language use at school show relationship with production of scores.

Example 3 illustrates the highest score (9/17) for story structure of the 10–12-year-old narratives. Setting is provided and in addition to attempts and outcomes (underlined), the goal of the protagonist is mentioned (in boldface). Internal state as reaction is mentioned too (in capitals), such as, the dog saves the baby birds and mother crow is happy by having her children.

Example-3: There is a tree and live a bird family. Mother bird is flying sky. Mother bird want food for her child. And a cat climb up that tree and the cat catch the bird. The dog sees it. The mother bird is afraid. Dog catch the cat. And the cat is afraid and running. The dog save back. The mother crow have her children.

(Baby Birds, English, 12-year-old child, MAIN story structure score = 9/17)

There is only 1 full GAO episode in English and no GAO episodes in Bangla though the 10-to-12-year old's data show that the children attempted goals in both English and Bangla. The internal state as reaction is higher in English than in Bangla and internal state as initiating event is lower in English than in Bangla. The attempts and outcomes are the highest in English, (see Figure-3).

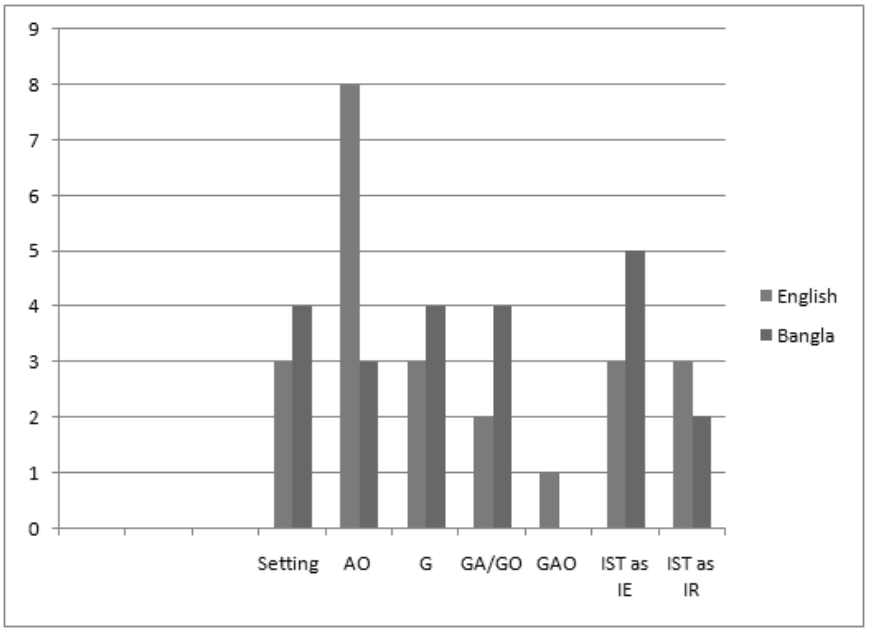

Figure 3. English & Bangla Structural Complexity & IST of Group 2

Narrative Production across Group 1 and Group 2:

The 8-9-year-old's narratives contained on average 7 story structure components (*M* = 4.4, *SD* = 2.6, range = 2–7 out of 17), in comparison with 7 components in the 10- to 12-year-old's narratives (*M* = 3.2, *SD*=1.9, range=6-7 out of 17). The difference between the two age groups is not statistically significant. This suggests that macrostructural discourse competence in production does not improve from age 8 to 12. All story grammar components do not become more frequent from age 8 to age 12, though some seem to develop more than others, (see Figure 4)

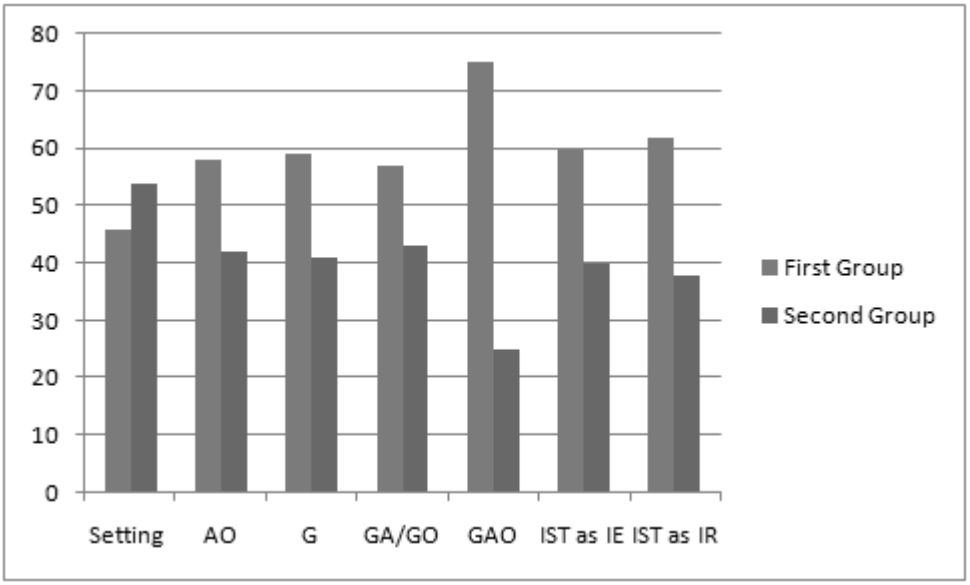

Figure 4. Narrative Production across Group 1 and Group 2

Regarding time and/or place of the story, settings familiarize the listener and in the narratives of the 8–9-year-old, settings are mentioned in 46% and in the majority (54%) of the stories told by the 10–12-year-old children. These setting statements are conventional fairytale openings or fragments. Besides macrostructural information, they refer to an increasing familiarity with storytelling conventions and formulaic storybook expressions specific to English and Bangla (e.g., *There was a tree in a jungle. There was a nest on that tree ..., There are three goats in field... One day three animals play together…, Akta khub shundor jangal chilo, shakhane onek poshu pakhi bashobash korto…* [There was a very beautiful jungle Many animals lived there], *Akdin akta chagol panite pore gelo …* [One day a goat fell into the water…], Anek anek din ager kotha , ak bot gache akti pakhir basha chilo…[Long day ago, there was a bird's nest upon a banyan tree…]). Such settings are infrequent in the 8–9-year-olds, instead of they often start their story by directly started telling the picture description (e.g., A baby goat eats grass. They play…; Two baby birds and mother are here; Akti pakhir akti chana chilo[A bird had chicks]; Duita pakhi ache . Bacchagulo ha kore ache …[There are two birds. The chicks open their mouth…]. There is no clear-cut difference observed between the two age groups and an 8–9-year-old child's

narrative includes a setting component and several narratives by the 10–12-year-old do not have the components of setting.

In the episodic system, the first group expressed 59% of the goals of the protagonists and group two expressed it at a rate of 41%. There is no development over age regarding goals from age 8 to 12 though there are not many complete episodes (GAO). This objective of narrative development appears to be managed to master by the average 8–9-year-old children when telling a story elicited by MAIN.

For other story structure components, we see some age differences and similarities also. Internal states as initiating events are greater in 8-9 years (60%) than 10-12 years (40%). Such explicit internal state terms are helpful when listeners are trying to follow the child's story and deduce what the (implicit) goal of the protagonist might be (e.g., *He is catching goat*). Attempts and outcomes of events increase in frequency, though from a much higher level of 42% at age 10 to 12 to 58% at age 8–9. Most episodes end abruptly with an outcome statement (e.g., *Crow attack fox and the fox is run away, The dog was watching it and it bite the cat and the cat run away from there*), spelling out the internal reaction or affective response of the story characters to that outcome (e.g. goat happy; the crow is happy; the bird is happy; Akta chagol dariya ache . Are bhoy pacche [A goat stands there and becomes scared]). Such internal states as reactions are mentioned by 8–9-year-old: 62% and 10-12-year-old: 38%), and the repertoire of such states is limited (*satisfied, relieved, screamed, surprised*).

The result for narrative production from 10 Bangla and English-speaking children from third to six grade age 8 to 12 such that story structure is not similar across a bilingual child in two languages. For the 8–9-year-old, story structure scores for Bangla (M = 5.7) were higher than for English (M = 3.1), which could be due to Bangla being the major language for these children growing up in Bangladesh and in some cases also the slightly stronger language, as rated by the parents. For the 10- to 12-year-old, story structure scores in English and Bangla were almost the same (M = 3.1 and 3.3, respectively). The younger children scored significantly higher on MAIN (8–9-year-old, M = 4.4) than the older ones (10–12-year-old, M=3.2). This suggests that macrostructural narrative skills measurably do not improve between the ages of 8-9 and 10-12. When we analyzed individual performance, all 8–9-year-old fell into the lower range on MAIN (2-7 out of 17) and the 10–12-year-old into the low to middle range (2-9 out of 17). The scores differed to a great extent for several children though composite scores in the two languages were often close. This happened though all children had received at least 4 years of frequent and regular exposure to Bangla and English and were using both languages regularly. Thus, the participants could reasonably be expected to have enough language-specific knowledge to express macrostructural knowledge in both the languages.

Conclusion:

It could be suggested that, for explorative research on narrative skills in bilingual children, the usefulness of MAIN mainly lies in the possibilities it provides through the composite scores by

the children though the MAIN composite story structure scores do not tell us all, such as whether the participants include a setting statement like time and place in their production or all story structure components. It has been shown in this study that MAIN is a helpful tool to bring out and evaluate narrative macrostructure in two languages. Although most children could not employ this scheme in telling, they applied a similar degree of level of story complexity and structure to the same levels in both languages and employed a more inclusive fundamental scheme for story understanding. Thus, it can be concluded that between ages 8 and 12 in Bangla-English bilinguals, aspects such as macrostructural discourse capability develop based on language-general and language-specific narrative skills in children across languages.

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