



Sentence Recall in Monolingual and Bilingual Children with and without Parental Concerns about Language Development

Areej Balilah and Lisa Archibald
The University of Western Ontario
larchiba@uwo.ca



Introduction

- Children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI) unexpectedly fail to develop language
- School age children receiving English instruction whose first language is not English (ELL) also fall below their peers in language abilities.
- ELL and SLI can be difficult to distinguish.
- Distinguishing these groups is important to our understanding of language development, our ability to identify children struggling with language, and to provide appropriate intervention.
- Recently, tasks highly sensitive to language differences in children have been described such as *sentence recall* (Cont-Ramsden, 2003; Ramsden & Botting, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

- To examine the utility of sentence recall as a measure to discriminate SLI and ELL.

Methods

Participants

6-9 years old children in 34 elementary schools for a total of 1253 children

Parent questionnaire

- Is English the first language your child learned?
 Yes No
- If no, what other languages are spoken in this child's home (please list): _____
- Have you ever been concerned about this child's language development?
 Yes No

Participants Groups

Four groups identified based on ±ELL and ±parental concern about language:

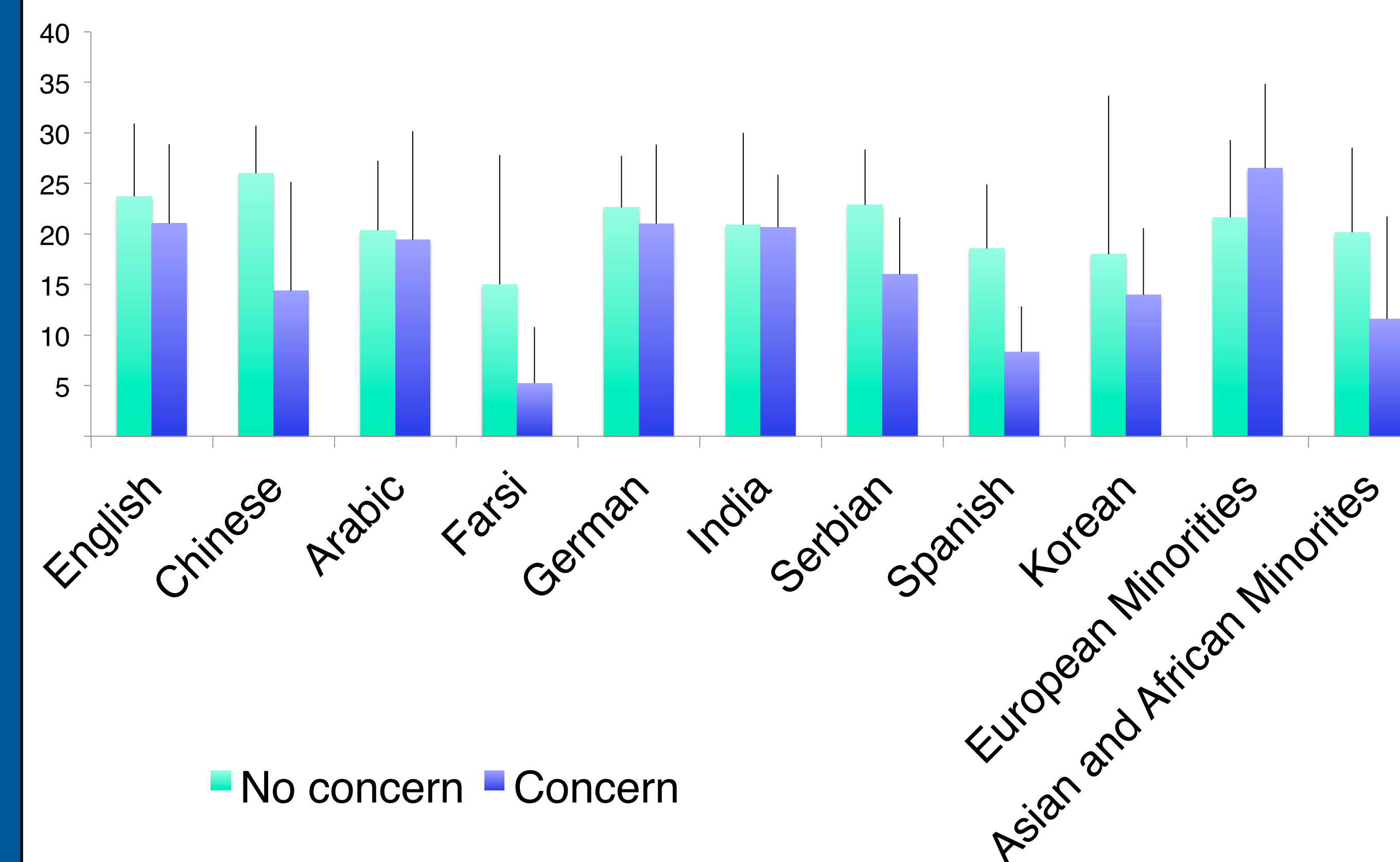
- 1) Monolingual with no parental concerns ($n=902$)
- 2) Monolingual with concerns ($n=201$)
- 3) Bilingual no concerns ($n=92$)
- 4) Bilingual with concerns ($n=58$)

Measure

- Sentence recall (Redmond, 2003; Archibald & Joanisse 2009)
 - 16 sentences each composed of 10 words
 - 10-14 syllables
 - Max score = 32

Result

Figure 1. Mean (SD) percent sentences recalled correctly by children with or without reported concerns across language groupings.

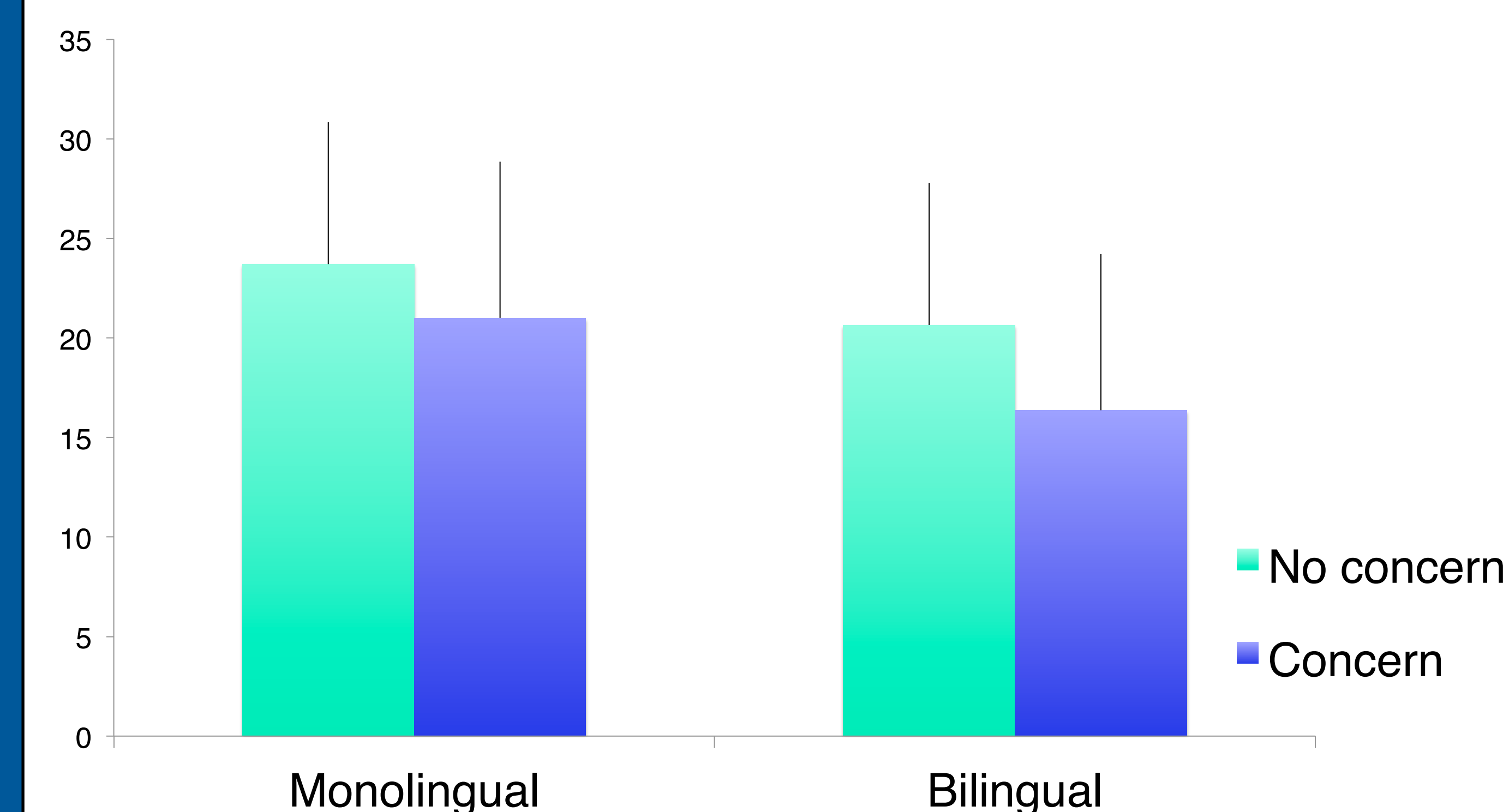


Sentence Recall Test Results for Age Groups

Table 1. Developmental increase in mean (SD) scores for both monolingual and bilingual groups

Age	Monolingual				Bilingual			
	Concern		No concern		Concern		No concern	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
6 yrs	17.14	9	19.16	8	6.00	6	17.00	8
7 yrs	19.82	7	24.15	6	17.40	8	20.00	6
8 yrs	23.18	8	26.40	5	17.08	9	22.26	9
9 yrs	25.55	5	27.90	4	22.50	7	27.06	4

Figure 2. Significantly higher overall mean scores for the monolingual and bilingual no concern groups



Results

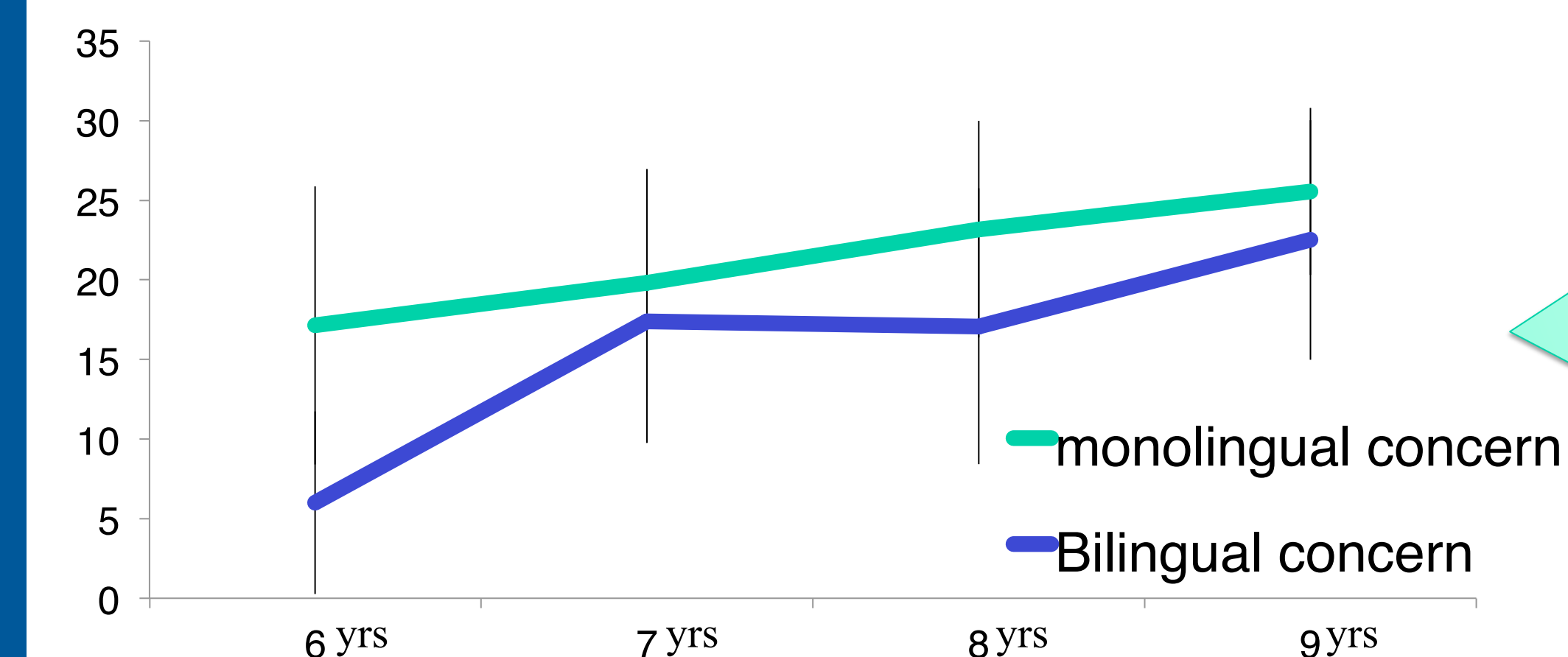


Figure 4. Narrowing gap in sentence recall scores for monolingual and bilingual groups without concerns across ages.

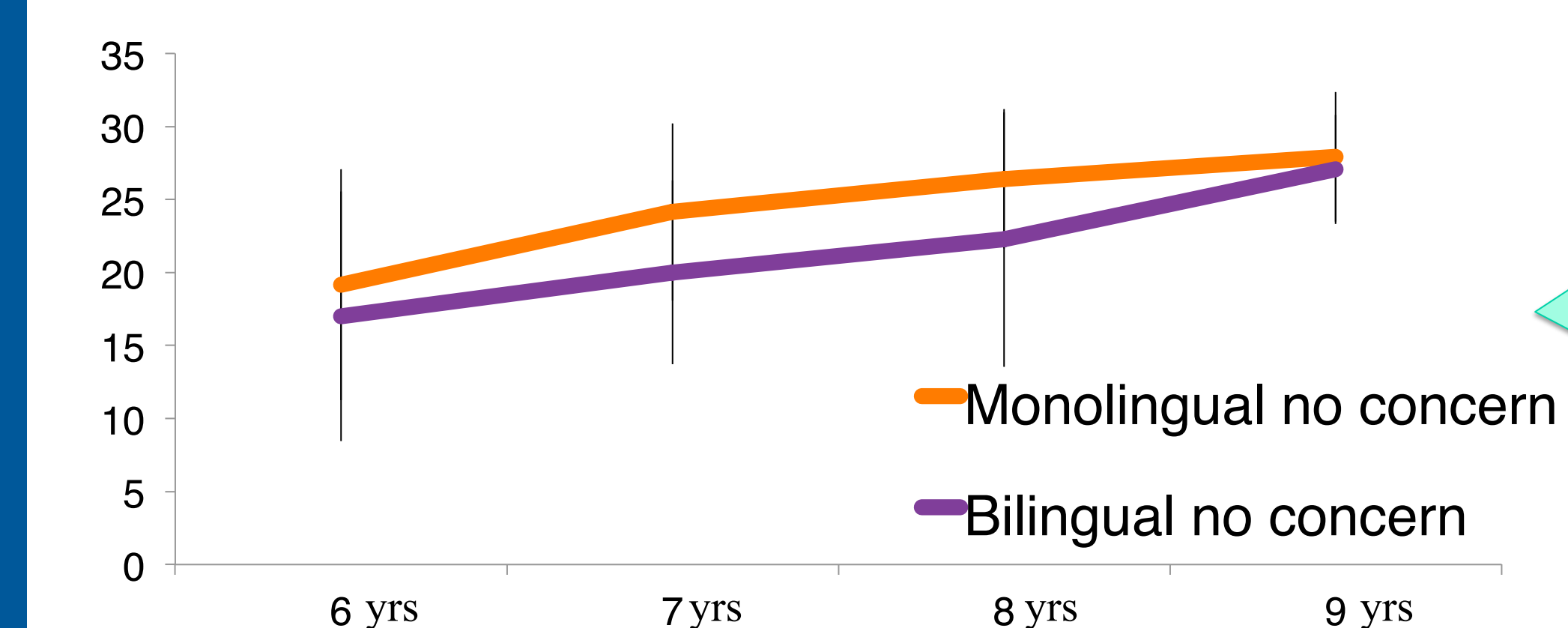
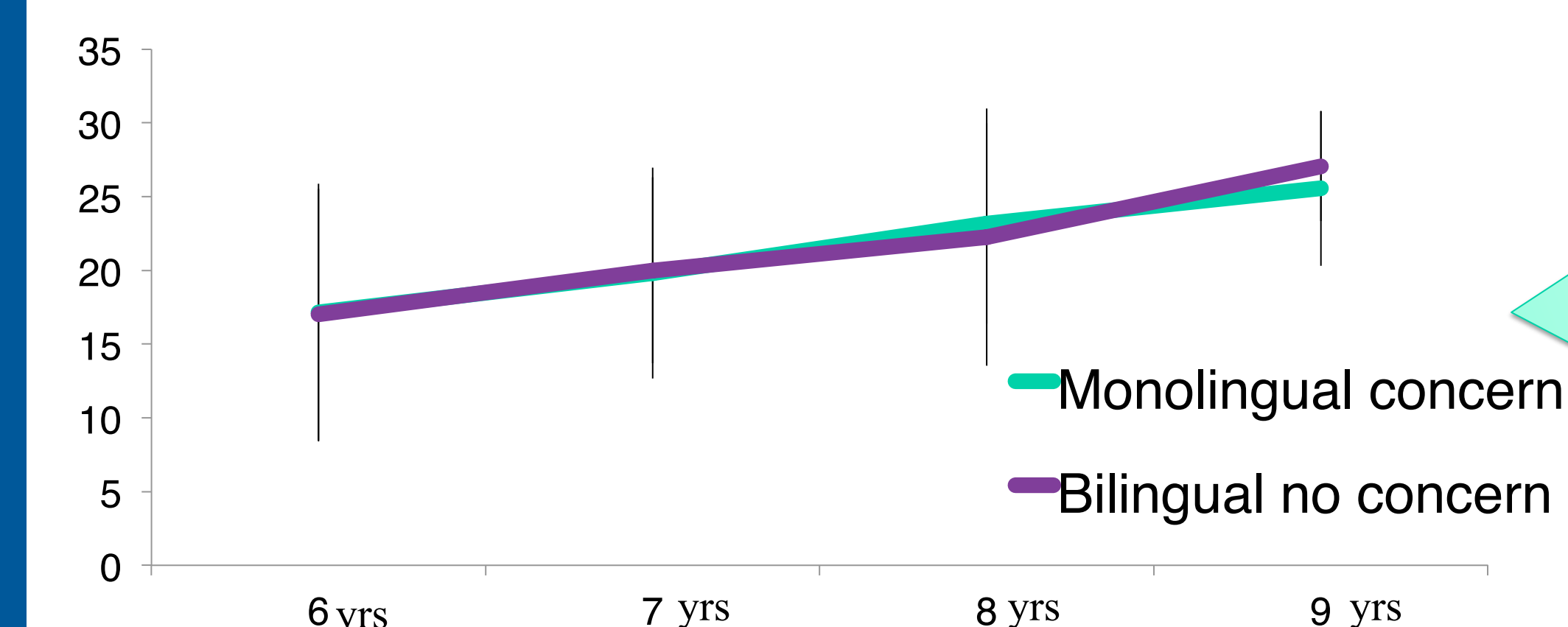


Figure 5. No difference in sentence recall scores for monolingual group with concerns and bilingual group without concerns.



Conclusions

- The monolingual-no concerns group recalled sentences more accurately than all remaining groups and the bilingual-with concerns group performed least well.
- The monolingual-with-concerns group and the bilingual-no-concerns group achieved similar scores.
- The bilingual-no-concerns group scored lower than the monolingual-no-concerns group at 6 years (school entry) but similarly at 9 years (after 4 years of English instruction)
- Sentence recall measure is did not reliably distinguish concern and no concern groups in this multilanguage sample.

References

1. Archibald & Joanisse (2009) *JSLHR*, 52, 899-914; Fey et al. 2. Leonard, L. (1998). Children with specific language impairment. MIT Press. 3. Redmond, S. (2003). *Clin. Ling. & Phon.*, 19, 109-127. 4. Conti-Ramsden GM, Botting NF, Faragher B. (2001). Psycholinguistic markers for specific language impairment (SLI). *J Child Psychol Psychiatry*, 42(6), 741-8. 5. Redmond, S.M. (2005). Differentiating SLI from ADHD using children's sentence recall and production of past tense morphology. *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics*, 19, 109-127. 6. tokes, S. F., Wong, A. M.-Y., Fletcher, P., & Leonard, L. B. (2006) Nonword repetition and sentence repetition as clinical markers of SLI: The case of Cantonese. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 49, 219-236.