

**BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY**

**Internal State Terms in Narratives of Bilingual and  
Monolinguals Children at Risk for DLD**

Noy Glitz Perry

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree  
in the School of Education Bar-Ilan University

Ramat Gan

2020

## ABSTRACT

Internal State Terms (ISTs) reflect children's understanding of the mind as the source for motivation, emotional state, and beliefs. In narratives, children express the characters' goals, thoughts, plans, and wishes using ISTs. The use of ISTs indicates lexical diversity and lexical depth, which reflect measures of microstructure. Furthermore, macrostructure represents the ability to organize the content into a cohesive idea and demonstrates a sequence of hierarchical events that drive the character to action and reaction, expressed by the use of ISTs. The main question addressed in the current research is how proficiency status (DLD/TLD) and bilingualism (bilinguals/monolinguals) affects the frequency and type of ISTs during narrative telling. Ninety-three children participated at a mean age of 5;7 years. Proficiency tests were administered to assess language skills in L1/*Russian* and L2/*Hebrew*. Narratives were elicited with the wordless picture book, *Frog, where are you?*. Narratives in Hebrew were transcribed and coded for macrostructure, microstructure, and IST production (e.g., perceptual, mental, motivational, emotion, physiological and linguistic). Findings showed that for macrostructure, children with DLD (both bilinguals and monolinguals) produced fewer macrostructure elements overall and fewer elements in the categories: characters, initiating events, attempts, and consequences. For microstructure, children with DLD produced fewer word types and shorter utterances than children with TLD. The effect of bilingualism was not observed in either the macrostructure or microstructure analyses. Perceptual ISTs was the most frequent category produced, occurring mainly in settings, initiating events, and consequences. The frequency of total ISTs yielded no significant differences between children with DLD and their peers with TLD. However, children with DLD used less perceptual ISTs types (e.g., “see”) than their peers with TLD, and used motivational ISTs (e.g., “want”) more frequently. Bilinguals produced fewer ISTs types than monolingual children and fewer linguistic IST types (e.g., “call”). Moreover, the frequency of ISTs correlated significantly with the macrostructure score, which shows their contribution to the narrative structure's complexity level. The discussion will relate to the source of difficulty children experience in macrostructure, microstructure, and ISTs.