

### BACKGROUND

Children with Language delay present with difficulties in noun & verb morphology<sup>[1]</sup>. Different clinical markers in terms of error patterns and error rates across noun and verb morphology have been identified from cross-linguistic studies with different typologies<sup>[2-4]</sup>. Patterns on morphological acquisition among young children speaking Tamil is less explored.

Tamil language is a member of the Dravidian language family and is spoken in India and other South Asian countries, including Sri Lanka, Malaysia & Singapore

### OBJECTIVES

To examine profiles of **noun and verb morphology** among Tamil-speaking 3-year-old children using picture-elicited morphology tasks

### PARTICIPANTS

**n = 100**; 3-year-old children with **Tamil** as first language;  
Mean age (SD) months = 36.95 (1.74)  
No significant developmental disorders

### METHODS

Classification of children based on **observation** of child's language by Speech Language Pathologist and **parental report** of language skills

**Typical Development n=64**

**Language at-risk n=16**

**Language Impairment n=20**

#### Stimuli:

**Noun** - 8 targets across 5 categories

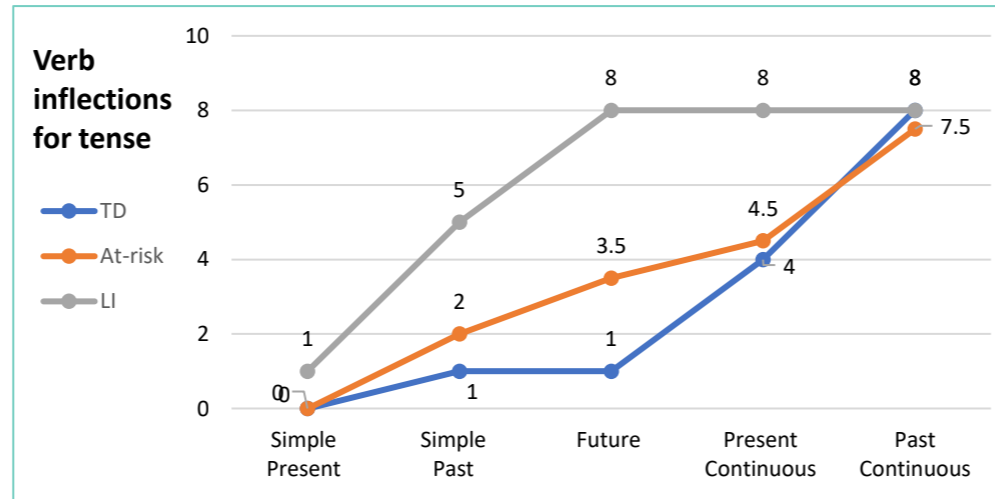
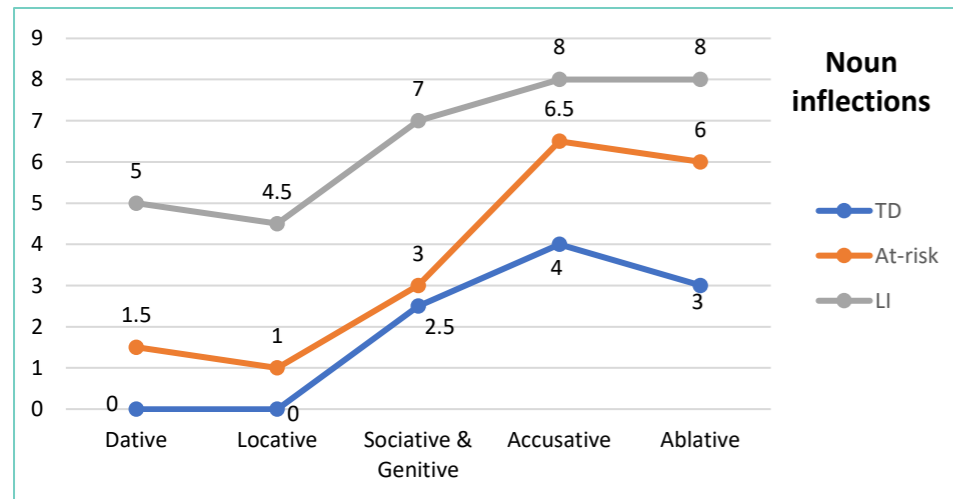
**Verb** - 8 targets across 5 tenses



Examples of the picture stimuli

### RESULTS

Median error productions of noun and verb inflections among typically developing children (TD), children at-risk for language delay (At-risk) and children with language impairment (LI)



Significant error patterns produced by children with language delay (LI) in noun and verb tasks

- Omission of case markers
- Production of noun stems
- Substitution errors were absent

- Production of bare verb stems
- Substitution of simple present for all tenses
- Increased presence of no-responses

### CONCLUSIONS

- Distinct patterns of development among different categories of noun and verb markers in Tamil at 3 years of age.
- Children with language impairment demonstrate significant delays in development of noun and verb morphology in comparison to TD children: Quantitative differences in error rates and qualitative differences in terms of types of errors observed.
- In depth analysis of noun and verb morphology in spontaneous language contexts is ongoing.

**Why 3 years?** : Critical to identify LI - probability of normalizing beyond 3-years decreases<sup>[5]</sup>. Norm referenced databases are not available in languages like Tamil. There is a need to identify language specific measures to effectively identify children with LI early.

### REFERENCES

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<sup>2</sup>Lukács, A. G., Leonard, L. B., & Kas, B. (2010). Use of noun morphology by children with language impairment: The case of Hungarian. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 45(2), 145-161.  
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<sup>4</sup>Sultana, A., Stokes, S. F., Klee, T., & Fletcher, P. (2019). Development of verb inflections among Bangla-speaking children with language disorder. *International journal of language & communication disorders*, 54(1), 143-153.  
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<sup>a</sup>Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (Deemed to be University), Tamil Nadu, India; <sup>b</sup>Kasturba Medical College, Manipal Academy of Higher Education and Research (Deemed to be University), Karnataka, India  
 Email: [adhiraigg@sriramachandra.edu.in](mailto:adhiraigg@sriramachandra.edu.in), [lakshmiv@sriramachandra.edu.in](mailto:lakshmiv@sriramachandra.edu.in)