

# A Syntax Screening Test in Tamil \*

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The present study was designed to investigate the efficacy of a Syntax Screening Test in Tamil. This test was constructed by the investigator to assess the syntactic development in children and to identify specific areas of syntactic deficits in language disordered children.

The Syntax Screening Test was administered to fifty-six normal children and three language disordered children.

Depending on the age of the subjects, the fifty-six normal children were grouped into six groups (Group I—2 to 2.6 years ; Group II—2.6 to 3 years ; Group III—3 to 3.6 years ; Group IV—3.6 to 4 years ; Group V—4 to 4.6 years and Group VI—4.6 to 5 years).

The Syntax Screening Test consists of ten subtests : Negation, Determiner, WH questions, Yes/No questions, Person, Adjectives, Tenses, Post positions, Comparative-Superlatives and Pronominal terminations.

The age range of the language disordered children varied from 6 years to 15 years.

The reliability of the test was established by computing the split-half reliability test.

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\* Master's Dissertation, University of Mysore, 1981.

The test was found to be valid as it identified the areas of syntactic deficits in language disordered children.

An increase in the overall performance on all the ten grammatical subtests was observed as a function of age.

The profiles plotted for the different age groups show the development of grammatical categories with advancement in age.

Significant differences between the performance of males and females on the test were not observed in any of the groups except in Group IV (3.6 to 4 years). A significant difference in the performance of children on the expression and comprehension items were observed across all age groups. The comprehension scores almost always remained superior than the expression scores for most of the grammatical categories.

The syntactic profiles for each language disordered child shows the areas of syntactic deficits in them.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that the present Syntax Screening Test in Tamil would be found helpful in collecting normative data on language acquisition by Tamil-speaking

children and also helpful in identifying areas of syntactic deficiencies, planning and choosing therapy techniques and in estimating prognosis.

#### **Recommendations for Further Research**

- (1) This test can be used to develop a comprehensive diagnostic test in Tamil.
- (2) The validity of the present test should be checked by administering it to a large group of language disordered children.

- (3) The efficacy of the present test should be judged by its use in Speech and Hearing Clinics.
- (4) The test can be administered to a bilingual population to see the difference in the performance of the bilingual and monolingual children.
- (5) The usefulness of this syntactic test in early identification of dyslexic patients may be investigated.
- (6) The results obtained from this test can be used in comparing the structure of language used in the first standard text-books.