

## **Morphosyntax and the Efficacy of Explicit Intervention for Children with Developmental Language Disorder**

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Our understanding of the morphosyntactic skills and efficacious treatments for early school-aged children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is evolving. Literature has previously been dominated by investigations into the verbal inflection skills of children with DLD, which has informed the design of interventions focussed upon this area of deficit. Further, most interventions can be described as implicit, which aim to enhance the quality and quantity of linguistic input to improve expressive morphosyntactic skills without drawing upon conscious awareness of the learner. However, recent studies have indicated morphosyntactic difficulties extend beyond verbal inflection, and evaluations of explicit interventions to systematically teach children with DLD the rules of grammar have increased. This programme of research presents investigations into morphosyntax in early school-age children that considers nominal inflection (possessive 's) as well as verbal inflection (regular past tense, third person singular) using elicitation and grammaticality judgement tasks. This programme also aimed to systematically evaluate the efficacy of a novel explicit intervention approach to improve past tense marking moving through levels of evidence and analogous research designs. Results indicated that early school-age children with DLD present with broad inflectional morphology deficits that are perhaps more representative of syllabicity effects and not driven by specific morphological classes. The efficacy of the explicit intervention was also demonstrated, suggesting that explicit interventions should be considered as viable treatment options for children with DLD. Current projects extending on this programme of research will be discussed, as well as future directions and clinical implications.

### **Bio**

Dr Sam Calder is a speech pathologist and lecturer at the University of Tasmania. He is the early career representative for the International Collaborative Network for N-of-1 Trials and Single-Case Designs. Sam is passionate about evidence-based practice in speech-language pathology and evaluating the effectiveness of paediatric speech, language, and literacy interventions. In particular, his work has focused on improving outcomes for early school-aged children with Developmental Language Disorder.