

- **Project Title:** Assessing Morphological Treatment Response in African American English Speaking Children with Specific Language Impairment.

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Project Summary:

This preliminary study is an attempt to further define the parameters for judging the progress of child African American English (AAE) speakers with specific language impairment in treatment targeting auxiliary *is/are/was*, and 3rd person singular *-s*. The specific aims of the proposed project are to 1) assess the degree of validity for the current grammatical morpheme probes based on AAE and General American English (GAE) participant response processes and 2) develop and field test grammatical morpheme probes that are specific to morpho-syntactic properties of AAE. Participants were monolingual-English speaking preschoolers between the ages of 5;0 and 6;0. Other criteria for inclusion in the study are typically-developing (TD) language skills, cognitive levels within the normal range, passing a hearing screening at 20 dB HL, and no neurological or emotional concerns based on teacher report. Fifteen participants were recruited from Luling ISD. All participants will receive a language screening in order to document typical development. A set of tasks were used to elicit the children's use of the above grammatical morphemes. Probe responses were then transcribed and analyzed for accuracy of the target morphemes based on the general American English dialect. Language and narrative samples were also obtained in order to document participants' dialect status. Results show that the current grammatical morphemes are appropriate for general American English speakers but may place African American English speakers at risk for misdiagnosis. More participants are being recruited, in particular African American children for further testing. New probes are being developed based on current results.

Presentations:

1. Burns, F., & Marks, R. Identifying morphological impairment in young African American English speakers. Paper presented at the National Black Association for Speech, Language, & Hearing, Washington, DC, April 2008.

- 2.) Burns, F., Thompson, J.R., & Kraemer, L. (2007). Is verbal-s a marker of SLI

in child AAE Speakers? Paper presented at the National Black Association for Speech, Language, & Hearing, Charlotte, NC, April 2007.

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