MORPHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BANGLA-SPEAKING CHILDREN: A PILOT STUDY

ABSTRACT: Verb inflections have often been found to be challenging for children to acquire. This paper explores the methodological specifications for eliciting a set of inflected forms in Bangla morphology that is of interest for examining children’s morphosyntactic development, based on a pilot study conducted with 20 monolingual Bangla-speaking children between ages two and four. The study identifies a preliminary picture of development with regard to the grammatical markers examined, and puts forward a set of guidelines specific to examining those markers in larger studies.

KEYWORDS: language acquisition, verb morphology, Bangla, language elicitation technique

0. INTRODUCTION

Analysis of child language has been an area of interest to linguists, psychologists and speech-therapists. Child language research, beginning as diary studies in the early 20th century (Ingram 1989), has today evolved into elaborate and systematic investigations involving a variety of testing instruments. A linguistic examination of typical development is crucial for assessing the progress of the children with language difficulties, and for developing intervention activities accordingly.

Bangla child data has not been examined to the extent required for identifying a reasonably detailed profile of typical development. The repercussions of this are manifold. Having no profile of typical development particularly affects speech and language therapy, since an accurate assessment of children’s language difficulty cannot be made in absence of a typical profile. Bangla is one of the largest spoken languages (Comrie 2005; Klaiman 2008).

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1. CROSSLINGUISTIC FINDINGS OF MORPHOSYNTACTIC DEVELOPMENT

Studies conducted on a range of typologically diverse languages have identified typological properties of the language reflected in children’s language use. Children learning an agglutinative language (e.g. Turkish, Tamil) are different from their fusional language-speaking counterparts (e.g. English, Italian) with regard to the errors they make. Children exhibit significantly higher scores on the forms when the target languages offer agglutinative properties compared to when the target language is a fusional one (Acarlar & Johnston 2011; Raghavendra & Leonard 1989). Agglutination allows for a degree of linearity and transparency in the morphological paradigm (Aksu-Koç & Slobin 1985) and results in enhanced evidence for the markers (Pinker 1984), which contribute towards the relative ease of mastering the language. Also, morphological complexity of the target language has been identified to contribute in children’s performance; children speaking morphologically rich languages have been found to have a faster rate of acquisition (Xanthos et al. 2011), and their errors in the target language are often non-finite inflected forms as opposed to the bare forms observed in morphologically sparse languages (e.g. English, German) (Phillips 2010).

A common finding in child data is that production of grammatical inflections is regulated by the cognitive demands of the target forms. Morphological markers that are deemed cognitively complex often obtain lower production scores (e.g. Aksu-Koç & Slobin 1985). On the same lines is the finding, irrespective of the language typology, that children tend to substitute target markers with other non-target forms. These forms are typically less specified with regard to morphological embellishments (Tamil: Lakshmanan 2006; Italian: Leonard, Caselli, & Devescovi 2002; Hebrew: Lustigman 2012). Children’s extensive use of the less challenging forms appears to be in line with the processing constraint-based account of language acquisition; children’s utterances are regulated by their processing capacities, and in the face of limited facilities, their utterances result in a compromised production of the language (see Leonard 2014 for a review).
2. ELICITATION TASK AS A RESEARCH TOOL

Early investigations of child data were primarily based on spontaneous language samples, which presented data in a relatively unstructured format. Spontaneous language studies are still popular due to ease of data collection, and for offering a direct and comprehensive portrayal of children’s performances. However, structured research tools such as sentence elicitation tasks have gained popularity due to the control they offer the researcher. When specific language items are warranted from the data, elicitation tasks are ideal. Spontaneous language samples often fail to obtain enough and comparable evidence of the target utterance, which may make them ineffective for assessment. Therefore, it is commonly recommended to collect converging evidence from spontaneous and structured data for building specific as well as comprehensive impressions of children’s performance (e.g. Eisenbeiss 2010).

Since the present study aims to test a specific area of interest, i.e. use of a set of verb inflections, the elicitation task was deemed appropriate. It is acknowledged that a profile of children’s use of verb inflections needs additional evidence from spontaneous language samples.

This is a pilot study of morphosyntactic development in Bangla-speaking children. It aims both to validate elicited production as a research tool for the target language forms, and to obtain a preview of the developmental trends for these forms. The study centres on verb morphology, namely, the present progressive, the present perfect, the past simple, the past progressive, and the past perfect forms in Bangla.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF BANGLA VERB MORPHOLOGY

Bangla finite verb forms are usually marked for person, tense, aspect, and honorificity. Verbs are not marked for plurality or gender. The markers attach to the verb in an incremental or agglutinative fashion (Kar 2009). In the structurally simplest form, i.e. the Present Simple, the verb takes the person marker. Bare forms of finite verbs have restricted linguistic
contexts (imperative sentences containing the 2nd person intimate honour form). Therefore, inflected finite verb forms usually contain two to four markers. While the present simple has no overt realization of the tense and aspect markers, all three verb inflections can be detected in the past progressive form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st person</th>
<th>2nd person</th>
<th>3rd person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present progressive</td>
<td>(Ami) por-ch\textsuperscript{i}i-prog-1p</td>
<td>(Tumi) por-ch\textsuperscript{o}o-stem-prog-2p</td>
<td>(She) por-ch\textsuperscript{e}-stem-prog-3p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(I) am reading.</td>
<td>(You) are reading.</td>
<td>(He/she) is reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present perfect</td>
<td>(Ami) por-ech\textsuperscript{i}-I</td>
<td>(Tumi) por-ech\textsuperscript{o}-o-stem-perf-2p</td>
<td>(She) por-ech\textsuperscript{e}-e-stem-perf-3p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stem-perf-1p</td>
<td>(You) have read.</td>
<td>(He/she) has read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past simple</td>
<td>(Ami) por-l-am-stem-past-1p</td>
<td>(Tumi) por-l-e-stem-past-2p</td>
<td>(She) por-l-o-stem-past-3p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(I) read.</td>
<td>(You) read.</td>
<td>(He/she) read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past progressive</td>
<td>(Ami) por-ch\textsuperscript{i}-i-1-am-stem-prog-past-1p</td>
<td>(Tumi) por-ch\textsuperscript{i}-i-1-e-stem-prog-past-2p</td>
<td>(She) por-ch\textsuperscript{i}-i-1-o-stem-prog-past-3p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(I) was reading.</td>
<td>(You) were reading.</td>
<td>(He/she) was reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past perfect</td>
<td>(Ami) por-ech\textsuperscript{i}-i-1-am-stem-perf-past-1p</td>
<td>(Tumi) por-ech\textsuperscript{i}-i-1-e-stem-perf-past-2p</td>
<td>(She) por-ech\textsuperscript{i}-i-1-o-stem-perf-past-3p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(I) had read.</td>
<td>(You) had read.</td>
<td>(He/she) had read.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Morphological analysis of Bangla verb conjugation

Verb stems formed with /al/, i.e. \textit{kha-} ‘to eat’, \textit{mar-} ‘to hit’, change to \textit{khe-} and \textit{mer-/} in perfective contexts. The progressive aspect markers \textit{ch\textsuperscript{i}-} and \textit{ch\textsuperscript{hi}-} become \textit{chch\textsuperscript{i}-} and \textit{chch\textsuperscript{hi}-} respectively when attached to stems ending in vowels (e.g. \textit{kha + ech\textsuperscript{i}i} $\rightarrow$ \textit{kheyech\textsuperscript{hi}i}) (Lahiri 2000).

Table 1 presents the morphological forms tested in the study. The honour markers were not included; the neutral-honour form was used in the tests.
4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Participants
A group of 20 typically-developing children between ages two (± three months) and four (± three months) participated in the study (Table 2). Parents were informally interviewed and also filled out a questionnaire with information about the child and his/her language behaviour. This was so that children with any medical condition or speech, language and hearing difficulty (as reported by parents) could be excluded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (months)</th>
<th>Mean (N= 20)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range (Max- Min)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.60</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>28 (53- 25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Age profile of children*

4.2 Tests and Procedures
Leonard and his colleagues have used language probes extensively to elicit target inflections in a variety of languages (Bangla: Chakraborty & Leonard 2012; Chinese: Fletcher, Leonard, Stokes, & Wong 2005; Finnish: Kunnari et al. 2011; Hungarian: Leonard, Lukács & Kas 2011). They created contexts for obligatory production of target inflections with the help of pictures, toys or puppets, and through enactment. A fixed set of stems were consistently used in all the contexts. Following this model, elicitation tasks were designed to elicit verb inflections, i.e. tense, aspect and person markers, using a fixed set of verbs. Situations were demonstrated using age-appropriate toys to elicit sentences using verbs with tense, aspect and person inflections. The test to elicit the five tense-aspect forms contained 30 items (5X6) and the set for the three person markers contained 15 items (3X5). The list of verbs is presented in the Appendix.

To elicit the five tense-aspect forms, a range of contexts was created. The present progressive forms were sought to be elicited by showing a toy performing some actions and asking children what the toy was doing. Children were expected to say, ‘Teddy is dancing/walking.’ In order to elicit the present perfect form, the toy was shown to do an action which later stopped. Then children were asked, ‘What has Teddy done?’ Children
were expected to say, ‘Teddy has danced/walked.’ For the past progressive forms, the toy was shown to do an action which got interrupted. This was followed by a question from the examiner ‘What was Teddy doing?’ Children were expected to say, ‘Teddy was dancing/walking.’ In the simple past situation, the toy was shown to be doing an action. After stopping that action, children were told, ‘Now he is not walking anymore/Now the dance is over. What did he do?’ Children needed to say, ‘He danced/walked.’ There was a time lapse at this stage when free-play happened between the child and the examiner. This was required to set up the past perfect situation. After the brief play session, the examiner and the child returned to the toy and the child was told, ‘Oh Teddy is so tired! What had he done?’ Children were expected to say, ‘He had danced/walked’. These situations were repeated for all the selected verbs.

To elicit the person markers, in the presence of the parents, children were asked, ‘Now let’s play a game. Can you do the things Teddy has done? I can do some of them. Look, I am dancing. Can you do anything else?’ After children demonstrated an action, they were asked, ‘What are you doing?’ The children were expected to say, ‘I am flying/walking’. Then actions were demonstrated by the examiner and the parent, and children were expected to say, ‘You are flying/walking’ and ‘Mom/Dad is flying/walking’. (Due to considerations of task time, this task was later omitted from the research.)

Note that the elicitation questions contained the target morphological forms with non-target verbs. The skill examined in the tests was to identify if the children had mastered the morphological forms to use them with given stems (see Kunnari et al. 2011 for similar methodological details). Also, it is often reported in child data (e.g. Tomasello 2003) that the morphological forms are present, but not productively used by children. Therefore, although the target morphological forms were supplied in the stimuli, the task for the children was to exhibit their mastery by using those with a set of given stems.

Three criteria guided the selection of the verbs. They had to be demonstrable in the elicitation or repetition. The verbs were all early-emerging according to the Cross Linguistic Lexical Norms (http://www.cdi-clex.org) and they all translated to simple base (one-word) verbs in Bangla.
4.3 Procedure
The tests were conducted in the children’s homes with the participation of their parents. The tests were conducted in two visits, and the elicitation test was presented in blocks to avoid fatigue. All sessions were video recorded using the video feature of a digital camera, Canon Powershot S5IS.

4.4 Tasks and Responses: a first attempt
The primary reasons for conducting the extensive pilot study were to receive feedback on the use of the elicitation task as a research instrument, to examine if the verb forms identified lent themselves to being tested in such a format, and also to provide a preliminary overview of the development of verb inflections.

The elicitation tasks varied in their effectiveness. In some contexts it was possible to elicit the target sentences through the task, while some probes did not elicit the desired response. For example, after responding to six actions in progression (e.g. What is Dolly doing? - Dolly is dancing), when the children saw the doll complete the action and were asked ‘What has Dolly done?’ they replied ‘Dolly is walking.’ This could be an artifact of the previous series of similar tasks. Secondly, it was difficult to communicate the situations for the past progressive and the past perfect to children below age three. Finally, the task set with all the structural contrasts was lengthy and compliance became an issue. This issue of length was addressed by removing the tasks designed to elicit person markers.

4.5 Modified Tasks
The challenges of administering structured probes with very young children suggested that a more conversational framework might be suitable. However, unstructured tasks also had pitfalls; a conversation that was not controlled for language items ran the risk of obtaining a large amount of ‘irrelevant’ language. Therefore, a combination of structured probes and spontaneous language samples promised a more effective method.
Figures 1 and 2. Sample pictures used to elicit the Present Progressive form
The revised method employed conversations with children in five situations, designed to again elicit responses containing five target verb forms: present progressive, present perfect, past simple, past progressive and past perfect.

Present progressive: Children were shown a picture book (Bernthal & Full 2006) with pictures of Bop (a cartoon character) and his friends doing some actions in school such as riding bicycles, making sand castles, and playing with tea sets. The children were asked what those characters were doing in the pictures (Figures 1 and 2).

Present perfect: Children were asked what they had done since morning. In Bangla the present perfect form seems a more natural choice than the past simple to use in this situation. The expected responses were such as ‘I have brushed my teeth,’ ‘I have played with mummy’.

Past simple: Children were asked to tell a story they knew. Narrative is one mode which typically employs past simple constructions in Bangla.

Past progressive: To elicit responses bearing the past progressive forms, children were told about the examiner’s visit to a zoo. They were told, at the time of the visit, different animals were engaged in different activities. For some animals, sentences were left incomplete and children were asked, for example ‘Can you say what the tiger was doing?’

Past perfect: Children were asked about their visit to a restaurant or an amusement park, or how they celebrated a festival. The expected responses were for example ‘We had ridden the toy train there’ and ‘We had eaten lots of sweets’.

A group of seven adults (21 - 65 years) was also invited to do the same tasks in order to identify the extent to which children’s language errors were due not to their ages, but to language input and usage. The adults were unrelated to the children who participated in the study.
5. RESULTS

Table 3 presents children’s production of the target forms in the expected contexts. Since the revised tasks were semi-structured, and employed a conversational style, the number of opportunities was not the same for all participants. Therefore, scores are reported as a percentage of actual to expected verb forms. The results indicated that the present perfect form was produced in the highest number of expected contexts. Unlike in English (Brown 1973), the Bangla present progressive form was not one of children’s early forms. In addition, the children had low production rates for the past progressive and the past perfect forms, as anticipated. Using these forms meaningfully has certain cognitive prerequisites, which are likely to have reflected in the low scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range (Maximum-Minimum)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present Progressive</td>
<td>66.87</td>
<td>29.70</td>
<td>92.86 (100-7.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Perfect</td>
<td>92.79</td>
<td>9.85</td>
<td>27.78 (100-72.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Simple</td>
<td>54.66</td>
<td>37.52</td>
<td>100 (100-0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Progressive</td>
<td>23.99</td>
<td>33.48</td>
<td>83.33 (83.33-0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Perfect</td>
<td>27.97</td>
<td>31.66</td>
<td>100 (100-0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Actual to expected production scores (% in contexts of elicitation (N= 20)

5.1 Present Progressive

Although assumedly a frequently occurring form, the present progressive form obtained a moderate production score. An error analysis identified a dominant pattern of substitution by the present simple form. Interestingly, Bangla permits production of the present simple form in place of the present progressive in conversation the context of the present study (Dhaka, Bangladesh). However, such substitutions were not observed in the adults except for one; 97.06% of the stimuli presented in the present progressive form were responded to by the adults using the same form. Figure 3 presents children’s performance on the Present progressive task by age in months.
5.2 Present perfect

The mean production of the present perfect form was over 92% for the children tested. Some older children (3;9 and 4;5) replaced the target form with the past progressive or the past perfect form. Analysis of the substitutions made by younger children (2;2 and 2;3) showed a different pattern. These children produced the aspect markers, but combined them with inappropriate person markers. Figure 4 demonstrates children’s production of the present perfect form.

5.3 Past simple

Performance on the past simple showed a consistent pattern of substitution by the present perfect by children as well as the comparison group of adults. Figure 5 contains children's scores on the past simple task.
5.4 Past progressive

The task to elicit this form required listening to and comprehending a story and completing the story with utterances containing the present progressive form. Due to task demands it was difficult to communicate the situation to most children below 2;6. But the older children showed increasingly better responses. A common substitute was the present progressive form. Children’s production of the past progressive form is presented in Figure 6.

**Figure 5. Percent production of the Past Simple form**

**Figure 6. Percent production of the Past Progressive form**
5.5 Past perfect
The overall production of the target form in this task was very low (Mean = 27.97). Only two children (3;2 and 4;2) scored above 70% and eight of the twenty children had no success at all. This form was commonly replaced by the present perfect form. Figure 7 shows children’s performance on this task.

Figure 7. Percent production of the Past Perfect form

6. DISCUSSION OF VERB INFLECTIONS
The production of the morphological forms and their substitution patterns found in the present study indicate that children’s early use of these forms is strongly determined by the structural and the cognitive complexities of the target forms. Note that the substitute forms are typically simpler in structure than the target forms. Interpretations based on the structural properties of the target form are often observed in crosslinguistic research of child language (e.g. Tamil: Lakshmanan 2006; Italian: Leonard, Caselli, & Devescovi 2002). Also, the production of the past progressive and the past perfect forms appear to be challenging for children both due to their structural and cognitive demands. For example, production of the past perfect forms in Bangla warrants the understanding of three different points in time: speaking time, event time and reference time, which may be cognitively challenging for the two-year-olds. The possibility is in line with Aksu-Koç and Slobin’s
proposal (1985) that children’s acquisition of different past markers was
governed by the markers’ relative cognitive complexity. Therefore,
interpretations based on the structural and the cognitive complexities of
the target forms in relation to children’s processing capacities are strongly
proposed in the present study.

The Bangla data obtained from the present study also suggest that, unlike
the findings observed in English (Brown 1973), overt progressive
marking on verbs is not the earliest linguistic skill of a Bangla-speaking
child. On the other hand, present perfect forms are likely to be a child’s
strength from a very early age. Apart from the determinants discussed
above, a possible factor regulating children’s performance is the linguistic
scope of the target form. Children’s high production scores on the present
perfect form from an early age (as opposed to the present progressive
form) may be due to its acceptable use in the past simple and the past
perfect contexts, whereas positive evidence for the present progressive
form is reduced by acceptable use of the present simple in present
progressive contexts.

Apart from these main perspectives of interpretation, some specific issues
are discussed in the following sections. First, the findings also indicate a
possible hierarchy among some of the target markers. Children’s use of
the present simple form (containing stem and person markers) for the
present progressive form (containing stem, aspect, and person markers)
is an evidence for children’s early mastery of the person markers
compared to the tense and the aspect markers. Second, note that Bangla
verb morphological paradigm shows alterations of the person markers
in the present and the past forms (Table 1). It is possible that children
hypothesize the /-o/ and the /-e/ markers (the markers used in the present
forms) as default person markers for the 2nd and the 3rd person contexts
respectively, which they use (erroneously) in the past contexts. Recall
that the substitutes produced for the past forms are predominantly their
present counterparts which employ the ‘default’ person markers
mentioned above. It is possible that while substituting the past progressive
with the present progressive, and the past perfect with the present perfect
forms children omit the tense marker (because it is possibly acquired
late), and replace the person markers with the respective ‘default’ forms.
Third, it was expected that a subgroup of children would produce some ‘intermediate’ forms where phonological alterations are involved in the verb stems. Recall that Bangla verb stems formed with the vowel /a/ change to /e/ in most perfective contexts (e.g. mare ‘hits’ but merechhe ‘has hit’, and merechhilo ‘had hit’. Therefore, some non-target forms were expected to contain the target markers without the phonological alterations in the verb stems (e.g. marechhe and merechhilo). However, this was not found in the study. The explanation may partly lie in the possibility that children retrieve the adjusted forms as unanalyzed chunks from memory by association with the respective perfective contexts. Future research need to examine this with a larger set of verb stems requiring such phonological adjustments.

7. REFINEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the experience with the testing instruments, and the data obtained, some refinements are recommended for the original research project which was being piloted through the present study. It is believed that the recommendations would be useful to consider in any future study conducted on Bangla morphological development in children. The recommendations are described below.

The situational tasks in the pilot study were not controlled for the number of opportunities for each target marker. As a result, some markers had very limited opportunities, especially with very young children. Therefore, it was concluded that at least a certain number of opportunities need to be ensured for each marker.

The person marker dimension was not controlled for in the target forms; the responses were sometimes in the first person and sometimes in the third person. Although the pilot study was designed primarily to generate the target tense and aspect marker combinations, consistent person marker forms (production of the same person marker forms throughout) are expected to obtain more reliable data.

A major finding of the pilot study was that all the target verb forms did not lend themselves to being tested with two-year-olds. Unlike English,
situations that necessitate production of the past simple forms in Bangla are limited. The pilot study employed a story-telling situation, because, in storybooks, narratives typically contain this form. But the pilot study revealed that i) story-telling as a task did not succeed with very young children; ii) very young children often told stories with the exact expressions used in the book which did not reveal their linguistic skills; and iii) while telling stories children commonly replaced the past simple form with the present perfect. Substitution of the past simple form by the present perfect was also common among the group of adults in this study. These findings indicated that a story-telling situation was inappropriate for the current study.

While designing the elicitation tasks for the past perfect forms, time was considered to be the only defining factor. Therefore, situations that required children to talk about something that happened in the remote past were considered a fit for the study. But the pilot study revealed that the use of past perfect in Bangla also depended on whether or not the impact of the referred action still held, which made the marker cognitively challenging; for example, ‘Why did you dirty the floor? I had mopped it awhile ago.’ This suggests that for Bangla the past perfect form is likely to be a later-emerging marker.

Therefore, the fact that elicitation of the past simple and the past perfect forms posed challenges suggested that these elicitation tasks may not be appropriate for examining these forms among children between age two and four. Although there are methodological disparities involved, a solution could to examine the development of these forms from spontaneous language samples.

Results of the present perfect task revealed that the children had very high scores on the production of this form. This was consistent with the finding that this form was often used by children as a substitute of other verb forms marking perfectivity, i.e. the past simple and the past perfect forms. Therefore, it was anticipated that, for the purpose of the main study, a task eliciting the present perfect form might not be adequately informative. However, for developing a general language profile of children this form needs be included.
The structured conversation used in the pilot study for eliciting the past progressive forms revealed that children below age three were often not able to respond to the situation. This could partly be due to children at that age not being cognitively ready enough to process such a situation. If this is the case, then we can expect that the past progressive form will be available to children only beyond age three. Therefore, the task was modified by employing some pairs of pictures depicting different actions with which the target forms would be elicited. Another important reason for changing the context was the possibility that children might produce the same verb for different situations. For example, when asked, ‘What was the monkey doing?’ and ‘What was the tiger doing?’, children might respond with ‘It was sleeping’ in both situations. A set of questions guided by unique picture pairs would be free from such overlaps.

The pilot study did not include the Present Simple form since this form in Bangla does not contain tense and aspect markers. Therefore, it was not considered intriguing enough to be examined in acquisition studies. However, the absence of these markers can lend a justification for the inclusion of this form. Since the Present Simple form in Bangla does not take any overt tense and aspect marker, it might present a good test case to be compared against the other verb forms that take more inflections. Considering these issues, it was recommended that the Present Simple form also needs to be examined in future studies.

Apart from identifying children’s language development with regard to different morphological markers, it is also important to evaluate other measures of language development, for example, mean length of utterance (MLU), count of word type (controlled for sample length), and use of bound morphemes in verbs. In addition, these measures can also be useful in interpreting the scores of the elicitation tasks. Structured conversations are not considered ideal for calculating these measures, since they produce biased opportunities for forms. Therefore, a language sample will be insightful to supplement the structured probes used in the studies.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Verbs used for the elicitation tasks

Tense-aspect task [nach] ‘to dance’
  [ur] ‘to fly’
  [hãt] ‘to walk’
  [mar] ‘to hit’
  [chhir] ‘to tear’
  [kat] ‘to cut’

Asifa Sultana is an assistant professor at the Department of English and Humanities, BRAC University, Bangladesh. With the purpose of developing a typical profile of morphological development of Bangla-speaking children, in her PhD project at the University of Canterbury, she examined children’s use of a range of verb inflections among preschool children. The present study reports findings of the pilot conducted in that research project.

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