



LLCd Symposium.
SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS.

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Brief Bio: Dr Prathibha Karanth has degrees in Psychology and Speech Pathology and Audiology from the University of Mysore, India. She is a pioneer in the field of Speech-Language Pathology in India and has worked as a clinician, teacher and researcher. Her research in the area of language disorders has explored the effects of factors such as the nature of the Indian languages, the nature of the Indian writing systems and the multilingual/multiscriptal linguistic and educational context in India, on the manifestation and management of language disorders such as the aphasias and the dyslexias, in adults and children. Her current work is focused on the development and implementation of an indigenous early intervention program for children with the Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Further information: <http://www.communicationdeall.org/units.htm>

Theme: Language Diversity and Cognitive Science

Title of Presentation: Running a three legged race in a linguistic maze - the case of children with atypical language development in a multilingual society

Abstract: Children in multilingual societies like India are typically exposed to several languages in childhood. While the official school education policy prescribes a three language formula, many children arrive at school knowing more than one language, often from very different language families. While this is taken as the norm, the issue raises complex questions when applied to children with atypical language development. Among the plethora of questions raised are, should the child with atypical development be expected to learn the many languages that are acquired by his peers. If not, then which of the languages in his environment should be the language of choice and what should the rationale for the choice be? The 'given wisdom', that has guided practice so far, stemming largely in the context of the management of children with Hearing Impairment (HI), is that the child should be restricted to only one language. The contextual validity of such a choice has not been determined as yet, but nevertheless continues to be advocated not only for children with HI but also for those with other developmental language difficulties. The paper will present data on the linguistic background and skills of 30 children, below the age of 6 years, diagnosed with ASD and co morbid disorders; at the time of enrolment in an early intervention program in which the primary language used is English and their subsequent mastery over language/s after one to three years. Cognitive science would do well to draw upon evidence from fine – grained profiling of clinical groups and from detailed analysis of linguistic outcomes subsequent to clearly structured interventions.