



LLCd Symposium.
SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS.

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- Brief Bio:** Remya P Nair presently working as Assistant Professor in Department of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology in Kasturba Medical College at Manipal University. She has done Bachelor in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology in the year 2008 and Masters in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology in the year 2010 from Manipal University. She is the member of Indian Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA) and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI).
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- Theme:** Language and literacy development in the alphasyllabaries
- Title of Presentation:** Comparison of certain reading measures in good and poor readers of Malayalam alphasyllabary
- Abstract:** Reading can be described as a multi-dimensional cognitive process of decoding symbols for the purpose of deriving meaning (reading comprehension) and or constructing meaning. Most of our understanding of reading and its disorders is derived from research in alphabetic languages, particularly English. A range of reading measures has been identified in dyslexic readers of English language, namely deficits in phonological awareness, non-word reading, reading speed, etc. However, are these reading measures equally affected in readers of non-alphabetic languages, requires an answer. Present study thus aimed to investigate reading measures that differentiated good from poor readers and those that predict reading accuracy in an unexplored orthography, Malayalam. Malayalam is a Dravidian language which is spoken by more than thirty million people in Kerala, the south-western state of India. The writing system of Malayalam is derived from the Brahmi script containing sixteen vowels and

thirty-six consonants. The akshara in Malayalam orthography generally have a vowel-ending (CV) (Bright, 1996).

A total of 80 children between 7-9 years (Grade 3) participated in the study. Participants were further divided as good and poor readers on word reading scores. Reading measures of phonological awareness, non-word reading, orthographic knowledge, working memory and reading speed were assessed for participants in the two groups. Phonological awareness is the awareness of sounds in the language and this ability is assessed by tasks such as rhyming, matching sounds, deleting sounds, blending or segmenting sounds. Non-word is any sequence of letters that is not a word and not recognized or accepted as legitimate. Akshara knowledge corresponds to the knowledge about the akshara in alphasyllabic scripts. Working memory is the cognitive process that maintains information in the system during active processing of reading. Reading speed is the rate at which one can read. Analysis of the measures was done using Mann-Whitney U test.

Results revealed significant differences in good and poor readers' scores on all measures like phonological awareness, nonword reading, orthographic knowledge and reading speed (except for working memory) with good readers outperforming poor readers. Reading measures like syllable stripping, reading speed, nonword reading and syllable reversal were found to predict word reading performance. For phonological awareness measure, phoneme level tasks were found to be more difficult than syllable level tasks with phoneme reversal task being most difficult. For akshara knowledge measure too, participant scores for both groups reached maximum limit for akshara with inherent vowel and vowel in primary form. However, akshara with vowel diacritic and consonant clusters showed a developing trend, with later varying maximally across good and poor readers. Hence, findings of the study were in accordance with those reported in alphabetic and alphasyllabic scripts. In addition to this, the study results also pointed towards the differential pace of acquisition of phonological awareness and akshara knowledge skills in Malayalam orthography. Study findings have implications in assessment and treatment of reading impaired in alphasyllabic script Malayalam.