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PROBLEMS IN CONJUNCT CONSONANT AND VOWEL
DIACRITICS IN MALAYALAM WRITING AMONG CHILDREN
WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES STUDYING IN PRIMARY
CLASSES

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Abstract

The study intended to explore the difficulties in Conjunct Consonant and Vowel Diacritics in Malayalam writing among children with learning disabilities studying in primary classes. The objectives of the study are 1) To find out the difficulties in conjunct consonants in Malayalam writing among children with learning disability studying in primary classes, and 2) To find out the difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing among children with learning disability studying in primary classes. The sample of this study consists of 40 children with learning disabilities studying in class third and fourth. Identification module for conjunct consonant problems among children with learning disabilities (IMCC – LD) and Identification module for vowel diacritics problems among children with learning disabilities (IMVD – LD) were used to data collection apart from personal data sheet. The findings are 1) 75% students with learning disabilities are facing difficulties in conjunct consonant in Malayalam writing 2) In the case of vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing 80% students with learning disabilities have difficulties 3) There is no significant difference in the difficulties in conjunct consonant in Malayalam writing between class 3 and class 4 and 4) There is no significant difference in the difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing between the students with LD studying in class 3 and class 4.

Key words

Conjunct consonant: one or more consonant in Malayalam to form a conjunct consonant may be joint horizontally or vertically so as to delivered a stress sound. **Vowel diacritics:** The vowel signs are place to the left or right of the consonant letter. **Learning Disabilities:** Heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning and mathematical abilities.

Introduction

Parents often are surprised to find out that a child they think of as bright and imaginative is struggling in school. They may be surprised by unexpectedly low scores on a standardized test, or a teacher might report that the child under achieving or not working up to his potential. Learning disabilities are often identified by school psychologists, clinical psychologists and neuro psychologists through a combination of intelligence testing, academic achievement testing, classroom performance and social interaction and attitude. Other areas of assessment may include perception, cognition, memory attention and language abilities.

Previous studies suggest that the most difficult area in writing Malayalam for grade 1 and 2 students is signs (Gafoor and Remia 2012) and that such children show improper use of vowel symbols in Malayalam. Four factors namely ordering words according to alphabet, identifying incorrect spelling, spelling of simple vocabulary and use of symbols for vowels distinguish learners with dyslexia from normal learners and low achievers in Malayalam.

Screening, identification, diagnosis and intervention for the language difficulties required in all language, which help substantial number of learners, depend for schooling and hence personal development. The review of related literature clearly shows that nobody has taken conjunct consonant and vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing as a topic for research.

Objectives

- To find out the difficulties in conjunct consonant in Malayalam writing among children with learning disabilities.
- To find out the difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing among children with learning disabilities.

Methods and Materials

Descriptive method used for the present study. The sample consists of 40 children with learning disabilities selected among from the list of students with LD identified by Block Resource Centers of the Department of Education, Government of Kerala. Identification modules for conjunct consonant problems among children with learning disabilities (IMCC – LD) and identification module for vowel diacritics problems among children with learning disabilities (IMVD – LD) were used as instruments apart from the personal data sheet. Mean and Standard Deviation were computed to describe the data statically and ‘t’ test used to find out the mean difference between the classes for the scores obtained in the conjunct consonants (IMCC – LD) and vowel diacritics (IMVD – LD).

Result and Discussion

Table 1

Data regarding the difficulties in conjunct consonant in Malayalam writing among children with learning disabilities studying in primary classes. (N=40)

Sl No	Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	Difficulty group score below 15	30	75
2	Non-difficulty group score 15 and above	10	25
		40	100

Table 1 show that 30 students, consisting 75% of total sample obtained score below 15 in the identification test (IMCC – LD) of conjunct consonants and this group is identified as the difficulty group. 10 students is 25% obtained score of 15 and above and included in the non difficulty group.

The test intended to find out the difficulties in conjunct consonant in Malayalam writing comprised with 40 items and each item carries 1 score for right answer as per the predetermined norm of the test those who secure 37.5% and above score in the test will be considered as having no difficulty and below 37.5% includes in difficulty group.

Table 2

Data regarding the difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing among children with learning disabilities studying in primary classes (N=40)

SI No	Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	Difficulty group score below 15	32	80
2	Non-difficulty group score 15 and above	8	20
		40	100

As per the data presented in table No.2, 32 students obtained score below 15, which comprising 80% of total sample and 20% comprised with 8 students secure score 15 and above.

It is clear that majority [80%] of students faced difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing, whereas only 20% of the total sample does not have the difficulty in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing.

Table 3

Mean value, Standard Deviation, ‘t’ value based on the scores obtained by the students with learning disabilities in the identification of difficulties in conjunct consonant in Malayalam writing with respect to class of study (N=40)

Class	N	Mean	Std Deviation	‘t’ value
3	18	15.9286	3.77164	1.72
4	22	18.5625	4.51617	

From the data presented in table 3, the mean value obtained by the class 3 students is 15.9286 and the standard deviation is 3.77164. In the case of class 4 the mean value is 18.5625 subject to a standard deviation of 4.51617. The ‘t’ value obtained is 1.72 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between students of class 3 and class 4 with respect to the difficulty in conjunct consonant in Malayalam writing.

Table 4

Mean value, Standard deviation, ‘t’ value based on the scores obtained by the students with learning disabilities in the identification of difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing with respect to class of study (N=40).

Class	N	Mean	Std Deviation	‘t’ value
3	18	16.6429	1.5942	0.322
4	22	16.3750	2.72947	

As per the data presented in table No.4, The mean value of 3rd class students is 16.6429 and the standard deviation is 1.5942 whereas the mean value of 4th class students is 16.3750 subject to a standard deviation 2.72947 the 't' value obtained is 0.322. From the above data it is very clear that there is no significant difference between class 3 and 4 in the difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing. Hence it is concluded that both the students of 3rd and 4th classes have the same amount of difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing.

Findings

1. 75% of the students with learning disabilities studying in primary classes have difficulties in conjunct consonant in Malayalam writing.
2. 80% of the students with learning disabilities studying in primary classes have difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing.
3. There is no significant differences in difficulties in conjunct consonant in Malayalam writing between students of 3rd and 4th class students.
4. There is no significant differences in difficulties in vowel diacritics in Malayalam writing between students of 3rd and 4th class students.

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