ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Putting this thesis together has been challenging in many ways, and I would like to thank

Prof. R. Amritavalli, for sticking it out with me patiently over the years. Her guidance and friendship have gone a long way in helping me grow professionally and personally,

Dr. Michael Ullman, Department of Neuroscience, Georgetown University, for sharing so generously the test materials used in this study and also for his comments on earlier versions of this thesis,

Chris Maloof and Matt Walenski, Georgetown University, for help rendered,

Dr. P. Madhavan, CIEFL, for helping me with various aspects of the Malayalam tasks,

Dr. Somdatta Sinha and Dr. C. Suguna, CCMB, for taking time out to make statistics comprehensible,

the staff and children of The Choice School, Tripunithura, who made data collection enjoyable,

Vijaya, who has proved to be an invaluable friend,

Nani, Mayma, Granny, Amma, and my uncles and aunts who rallied around in times of grief and joy. Their care and support has been vital to the completion of this thesis,

Ananya, for her uncommon understanding,

and most importantly, Jayan, with whom I have rediscovered life and the joy of living.