ABSTRACT

Hearing is an essential sense for human beings due to the dependence for safety, communication, education and social interactions. If a person is unable to hear sounds it is termed as “Hearing loss”. It results in a terrible waste of human potential. Hence, it needs to be identified and remediated early. In this regard, many developments have taken place and one among them is cochlear implantation surgery and in the literature many studies have reported the benefits of cochlear implantation particularly in children with hearing loss with respect to improvements in speech production, language improvement, social and educational development. The present thesis investigated the development of language skills and reading comprehension in Kannada children with severe to profound hearing loss who were implanted. The study examined three important aspects in linguistic skills and reading comprehension in children with cochlear implants with the help of appropriate Indian standardized tests namely Linguistic Profile Test (LPT) and Kannada Reading Comprehension Test (KRCT). The relationship between linguistic skills and reading comprehension was examined. The influence and relationship of demographic variables (e.g., age at implantation, duration of implant use etc) on linguistic skills and reading comprehension was also examined. Case studies of high performers and poor performers were also discussed. In general, findings revealed, majority of children with cochlear implants performed below as compared to standard scores both in linguistic skills and reading comprehension. They had specific problems in test items related to syntax and semantics in linguistic skills and questions related to reorganization and inferential comprehension were difficult for these children in reading comprehension. Significant relationship was found between number of siblings, duration with cochlear implant, and linguistic skills as well as age at testing and reading.
comprehension. Significant influence was found of speech intelligibility on linguistic skills. The results of the present thesis are discussed with reference to relevant studies of linguistic skills and reading comprehension in children with cochlear implants. The study underscores the importance of providing continued educational support through evidence-based practices and strongly advocates for implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) framework. It also emphasizes the need for upgradation of teacher education programs in these aspects, setting up of a common platform for educators who deal with children using cochlear implants all over the country, a multidisciplinary team approach with active involvement of parents in providing support technically, educationally and socially to children with cochlear implants.

Key words: Linguistic skills, Reading comprehension, and children with cochlear implants