

---

---

# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 14:4 April 2014

ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.

B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.

A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.

Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.

Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.

S. M. Ravichandran, Ph.D.

G. Baskaran, Ph.D.

L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.

C. Subburaman, Ph.D. (Economics)

Assistant Managing Editor: Swarna Thirumalai, M.A.

---

---

## Narrative Skills in Geriatrics Malayalam Speakers

Aswathy E Nebu, MASLP

Deepa Elizabeth Thomas, MASLP

Jittu Susan Varghese, MASLP

Satish Kumaraswamy, Asst. Professor & Ph.D. Scholar

---

---

### Abstract

Narrative analysis is a systematic procedure for the analysis of recording the naturally occurring talk produced in everyday human interaction. The study focused on analysis of narrative skills in geriatrics. It includes a total 15 geriatrics (8 males&7 females) of age 60-70 years with no history of speech and hearing problem, neurological problem and who spoke Malayalam as their native language.

Narrative samples of familiar and unfamiliar tasks were taken and analyzed to study types of trouble sources such as phonological, morphological-syntactic, semantic, discourse and **Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 14:3 April 2014  
Aswathy E Nebu, Deepa Elizabeth Thomas, Jittu Susan Varghese & Satish Kumaraswamy  
Narrative Skills in Geriatrics Malayalam Speakers

also repair strategies such as repetition, unrelated, elaboration, reduction and substitution along with the complexity and success of resolution like most successful, successful and unsuccessful and type token ratio using the systematic procedure.

The result shows that there is no significant difference between the trouble sources and type of repair strategies in familiar and unfamiliar tasks, while the repair sequences value is and type of resolutions showed highly significant difference. The comparison of type token ratio for familiar and unfamiliar tasks revealed that there is a highly significant difference for both open and close class words. So as the age increases there will be deterioration in the communicative skills. Future research is required to study the narrative aspects across various groups of adults and geriatrics and can be used in children with language disorders.

**Key Words:** Narrative skills, Geriatrics, Malayalam.

## **Introduction**

Narrative analysis is a systematic procedure for the analysis of recording the naturally occurring talk produced in everyday human interaction. Narrative Skills build upon vocabulary skills. In order to have the ability to describe things, emotions, and objects, a child needs to have a wide vocabulary. Having strong narrative skills helps build reading comprehension and fluency. Narrative skills help children understand what they are reading and hearing.

A narrative is some kind of retelling, often in words, of something that happened (e.g. a story). Gloria (2009) studied the narrative skills in the age group of 5-6 year old typically developing children and concluded that children had more phonological errors and they used reduction and unrelated repair strategy.

Westby (1989) stated that narrative skills forms the bridge between oral language and literacy by providing examples of the extended, decontextualized, cohesive discourse units that a child will encounter in written texts. In the field of Speech Language Pathology, narratives have served distinctive evaluative functions.

## **Aging**

Aging is a natural phenomenon and is inevitable. As an individual starts aging, there is a gradual wear and tear of one's body systems. Language and communication is no exception to this. The linguistic and communication patterns of the old are quite different from that of the younger groups. Geriatric individuals need to put in a lot of effort to get their message across to others. As we age, our ability to communicate effectively will get influence by some normal changes in speech, language, swallowing, and hearing. (Busacco, 1999) .

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 14:3 April 2014

Aswathy E Nebu, Deepa Elizabeth Thomas, Jittu Susan Varghese & Satish Kumaraswamy  
Narrative Skills in Geriatrics Malayalam Speakers

## **Narrative Analysis**

Narrative Analysis is a systematic procedure for recording the naturally occurring talk produced in everyday human interaction. “Narrative” in sequence and consequence: events are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience. Narratives represent storied ways of knowing and communicating (Hinchman 1997).

John, Veena, George & Rajashekhar (2008) compared narrative and procedural discourse in normal young adults and elderly subjects. They also studied the influence of age, gender and education in the Malayalam speakers. The results indicated that the discourse skills alter with the advancing age for all the parameters.

Hegde, Shruthi and Subba Rao (2010) evaluated the narrative skill performance in normal young adults under familiar and non-familiar communication contexts and they states that the number of trouble sources and repair strategies used were higher in young adults than the middle aged adults and geriatrics.

## **Need of the Study**

The average life span of human being is increasing, so it is important to know the narrative skills of older individual and it is also taken into consideration when we assess the older individual. From previously mentioned studies, it is clear that there is only few research work in narrative analysis of geriatrics in Malayalam. It is also an important population for study because Malayalam users are a large fiction of Indian population. India is a multilingual country so that cultural variations will directly affect the narrative skills. Hence the present study focuses on narrative skills of geriatrics in Malayalam.

## **Aim**

The aim of the present study was to analyze the narrative skills in normal geriatrics of 60-70years Malayalam speakers.

## **Methodology**

A group of 15 geriatrics (8males &7females) with no history of speech and hearing problem, neurological problem and who spoke Malayalam as their native language participated in the present study.

The geriatrics were seated comfortably in a sound treated room and a narrative sample was video recorded for each subjects for familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Familiar contexts involved story narration & past experiences of life (e.g.: About family, job, festivals etc.) Non-familiar contexts involved asking subjects to imagine the specified situation and narrate with respect to different characters/personality (e.g.: Clinician would ask ‘what developments will

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 14:3 April 2014

Aswathy E Nebu, Deepa Elizabeth Thomas, Jittu Susan Varghese & Satish Kumaraswamy  
Narrative Skills in Geriatrics Malayalam Speakers

you do if you become a Chief Minister?). Obtained data were transcribed and analyzed to study types of trouble sources such as phonological, morphological-syntactic, semantic, discourse and also repair strategies such as repetition, unrelated, elaboration, reduction and substitution along with the complexity and success of resolution like most successful, successful and unsuccessful and type token ratio using the systematic procedure [Orange, Lubinski & Higginbotham (1996)]. The analyzed data was subjected to statistical analysis using Man-Whitney t test for significant values.

## Results & Discussion

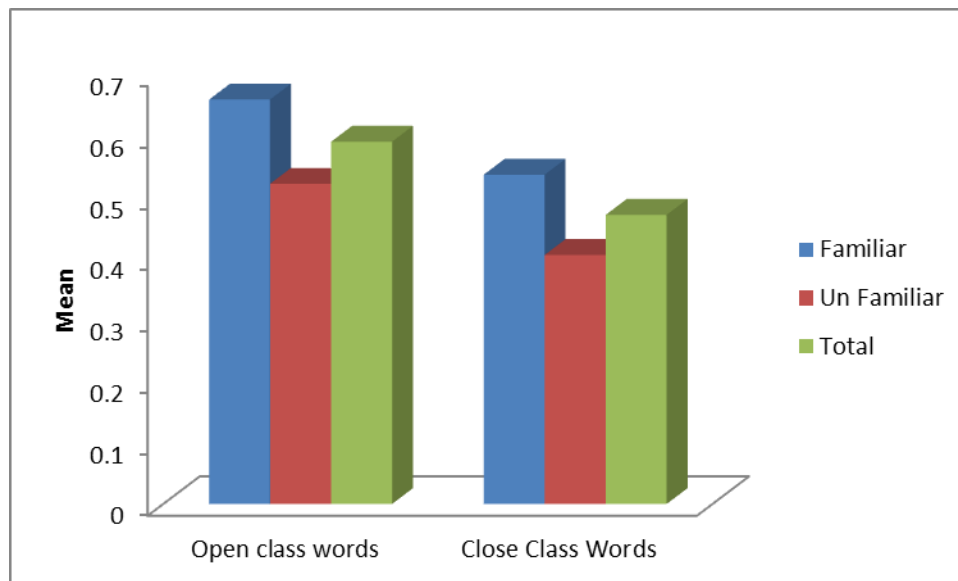


Figure (1) shows that there is a highly significant difference between open class and close class words for familiar and unfamiliar tasks.

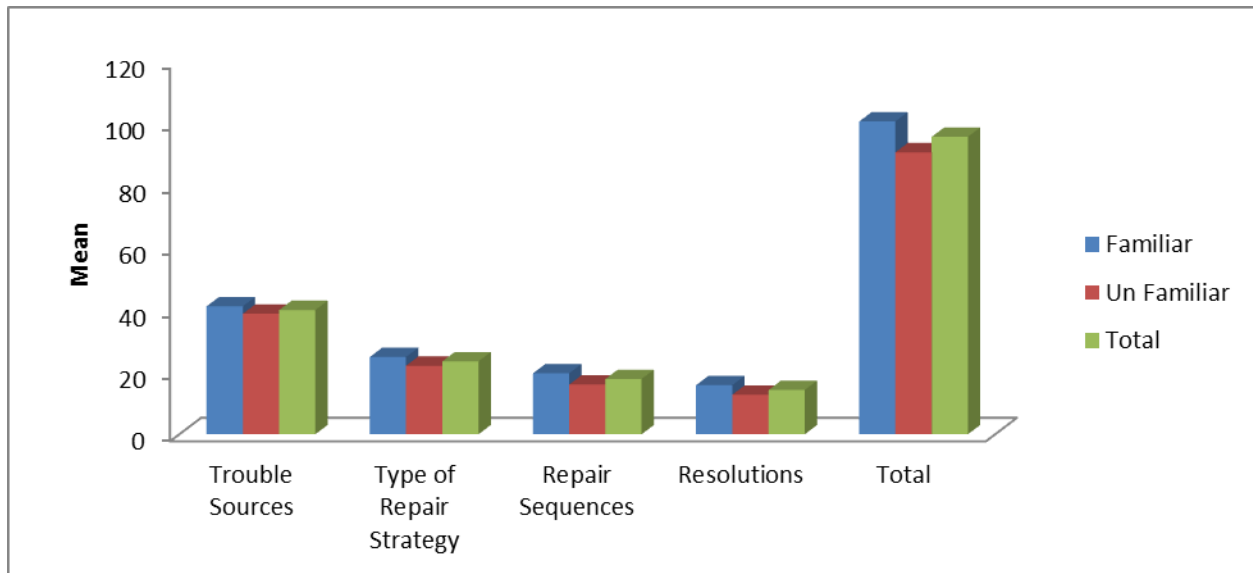


Figure (2) shows that there is a highly significant difference between the repair sequences and type of resolutions

The above graphs depicts that there is no significant difference between the trouble sources and type of repair strategies in familiar and unfamiliar tasks, while the repair sequences value is (.034) and type of resolutions (.000) and showed highly significant difference. The comparison of type token ratio for familiar and unfamiliar tasks revealed that there is a highly significant difference for both open (.001) and closeclass words (.000)

Performance of geriatrics on familiar and unfamiliar tasks can be distinguished from each other using narrative skill analysis. Since there are few studies on narrative skill analysis it is difficult to validate the result in more stringent fashion. Among geriatrics when we compare the familiar and unfamiliar tasks there has more number of trouble sources and type of repair strategies in familiar tasks compared to non familiar tasks. The values reported in the studies are out of hundred consecutive utterances so that further studies can be carried out in different language and culture of groups to understand the phenomenon of narration of language.

## Summary and Conclusion

Narrative analysis can be used for both assessment and treatment of language disordered population. It also gives information regarding individual's communication skills in a natural situation. Also gives information regarding the parameters of language. Narrative analysis can be used among various communities and also helps to know the deficits across languages.

Narrative Analysis is a systematic procedure for the analysis of recording the naturally occurring talk produced in everyday human interaction. “Narrative” in sequence and consequence: events are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience. Narratives represent storied ways of knowing and communicating (Hinchman 1997). The aim of the study was to analyze the narrative skills in normal geriatrics of age 60-70 years. The study was done on group of 15 geriatrics seated comfortably in a sound treated room and a narrative sample was video recorded. The statistical analysis was done using Man-Whitney t test and the result showed that there is only significant difference in repair sequences and type of resolutions. The comparison of type token ratio revealed a highly significant difference for both open and close class words. The comparison of familiar and unfamiliar topics using type token ratio revealed that there was a significant difference in both open class and close class words. This is in accordance with the study done by Mahendar and Raksha (1994) indicating less generative naming abilities in aged individuals. So as the age increases there will be deterioration in the communicative skills. Future research is required to study the narrative aspects across various groups of adults and geriatrics and can be used in children with language disorders.

---

### References

- Beekes, J., & Wilkinson, R.,(2007). Using conversation Analysis to assess and treat people with aphasia. Seminar in speech and language.
- Busacco., D.(1999). Let's talk. American Speech and Language Association .72 , 49-50. Retrieved from [http:// www.asha.org / uploaded files / publications / archive / 0499ashamag.pdf](http://www.asha.org/uploaded_files/publications/archive/0499ashamag.pdf)
- Busacco., D(1999). Cited in Fausti, S.A., Wilmington, D.J., Helt, V.P., Helt, J.W., & Martin, D.K. (2005).Hearing health and care: The need for improved hearing loss prevention and hearing conservation practices. Journal of rehabilitation research & development, 42, 45-62. Doi: 10.1682/JRRD (2005) 0039
- Hegde, M., Shruthy.T.S., & Subba Rao, T.A. (2010).Narrative skill performance in normal young adults under familiar and non-familiar communication contexts. Paper presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> ISHA conference, Bangalore, January.
- Heilmann, J., Nockerts, A., & Dunaway,C.(2010). Properties of the narrative scoring scheme using narrative retell in young school age children. American journal of Speech –Language Pathology, 19,154-166.
- Hinchman, L.P.,& ScieHinchman,S.K. (1997).Memory , identify, Community. The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences , Albany NY : State University of NY Press.

James, L., Burke. Austin, A., & Hulme , E. (1998). Production and perception of “verbosity” in younger and older adults. *Psychology and Aging* , 13(3),355-367

John. S., Veena, K.D., George, A, & Rajashekhar , B. (2008). Spoken discourse in normal young adults and elderly: influence of age, gender and education in Malayalam speakers. Paper presented at ISHA conference, Mangalore, February 1-3.

Mathias, C.S. (2008). Conversation analysis: A comparison between normal geriatrics and middle aged adults. Un published masters dissertation, Mangalore University Mangalore

Mahendra, N; & Raksha, H.R.(1994). Generative naming in Elderly: Evidence of an Age Related Decline? *The journal of Indian speech and Hearing Association.*52-55.

Murray, L.(2010). Bilingual Aphasia: A Theoretical and Clinical Review. *American Journal of speech Language Pathology*, 17, 299-317.

Orange J.B; Lubinski, R.B; & Higginbotham, D.J. (1996).Conversational Repair by individuals with Dementia of the Alzheimer’s type.*Journal of speech and hearing research*, 39,881-895.

Westby, C.E. (1990). The role of Speech Language Pathologist in Whole Language. *Language , Speech and Hearing Services in Schools*, 21 , 228-237.

---

## **Acknowledgement**

### **Our grateful thanks are due to**

Mr. Satish Kumaraswamy  
Assistant Professor  
Dr. M. V. Shetty College of Speech and Hearing  
Mangalore 575015  
Karnataka  
India  
[satishnayaka@yahoo.co.in](mailto:satishnayaka@yahoo.co.in)

**for his guidance and supervision in writing this paper.**

---

Aswathy E Nebu (**Corresponding Author**)  
Final Year Postgraduate Student  
Dr. M. V. Shetty College of Speech and Hearing  
Mangalore 575015  
Karnataka  
India  
[aswathy.enebu@gmail.com](mailto:aswathy.enebu@gmail.com)

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 **14:3 April 2014**

Aswathy E Nebu, Deepa Elizabeth Thomas, Jittu Susan Varghese & Satish Kumaraswamy  
Narrative Skills in Geriatrics Malayalam Speakers

Deepa Elizabeth Thomas  
Second Year Postgraduate Student  
Dr. M. V. Shetty College of Speech and Hearing  
Mangalore 575015  
Karnataka  
India

Jittu Susan Varghese  
Second Year Postgraduate Student  
Dr. M. V. Shetty College of Speech and Hearing  
Mangalore 575015  
Karnataka  
India