

An Interactive Sinhala Storybook Designed to Identify Early Signs of Dyslexia among Children

Abstract – "I can't spell it," or "I can't read it." Have you ever come across a child who is yelling like this? This might be Dyslexia. Dyslexia is a common learning disability that affects children's ability to read. Children's Dyslexia can be identified at the early stages of their lives when they start reading through standardized assessments. According to researchers in Sri Lanka, most children remain without clinically diagnosed the early signs of Dyslexia. Leaving these children without support causes detrimental effects on their learning which can lead the child to frustration, anxiety, and low self-esteem. However, early detection and evaluation of identifying specific needs of this child with Dyslexia can lead these children to become competent readers. This project focused on overcoming this problem by identifying the early signs of Dyslexia at the age of 6 to 8 when a child begins to read in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, this project aims to create an interactive book that spots any possible early signs of the condition by adapting the York reading and comprehension assessment into the Sinhala language. At present dyslexic children are identified in a clinical context. The interactive book was developed after observing and identifying the challenges faced by children when doing the clinical assessment. The standardized assessment method of the York Assessment of Reading and Comprehension was chosen to detect dyslexic children because of its simplicity, and it is also used in Sri Lankan clinical context. The four assessment criteria used in the York assessment were developed and adapted to the Sinhala language through an interactive storybook to overcome challenges faced by children when doing the standardized assessment in the prevailing context. The storybook acts as a fun and engaging tool for both dyslexic and non-dyslexic children so that both groups can enjoy it without their neurobiological strengths. It acts as a way for parents to keep track of their kids and encourages them to get professional help.

Keywords: Dyslexia, Sinhala language, Interactive Children's book, Assessment tool