



Literacy for a Billion

Press Release, January 15, 2019

Facebook supports PlanetRead's Eye Tracking Research of Same Language Subtitling (SLS)



[Facebook Research recently announced](#) the winners of their Global Literacy & Accessibility Challenge. We are excited that they will be supporting PlanetRead for the development of Eye-tracking research of SLS on films and songs. We are grateful for their support.

Reading in India

Based on several studies, it is estimated that of the 800 million officially “literate” people in India, 500 million “literate” cannot read functionally. They are India’s half a billion “early-literates” whose quality of basic education and digital access is severely compromised. However, there is a well-researched solution that can potentially transition a majority of early-literates to functional reading.

Same Language Subtitling (SLS)

SLS is the idea of subtitling audio-visual content in the “same” language and script as the audio. Studies have found that regular viewing of existing film songs on TV, with SLS, results in reading skill improvement. In 2-3 years of frequent exposure, an early-literate who cannot yet read, transitions subconsciously to functional reading ability because the brain cannot but try and match sound and text that is in perfect synchronization.

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Globally, there is an exponential growth in video consumption, with a variety of subtitling options. Most of the research on subtitling relates to second-language learning and or media access, but only a handful of studies have explored subtitling's links with basic reading/literacy.

Eye Tracking Research to understand quantum of reading:

The research questions we would like to explore with early-readers are: How much reading along occurs with SLS on film songs and film dialog? Does that depend on reading ability and/or prior knowledge of the song-lyrics or dialog? We propose to eye-track the viewing of film songs and dialog, by 200 early-literates. To determine the quantum of reading caused by SLS, the same content will be shown with and without SLS.

For more information read: [Facebook's Announcement](#)

Other media coverage:

SBS Dateline, Australia <https://youtu.be/tOsWTol2Plw>

President Bill Clinton speaks about PlanetRead: <http://tinyurl.com/39epgrm>

Deutsche Welle, Germany's international broadcaster: <http://youtu.be/K7XDMzsLd5o>

PlanetRead's website: <http://www.planetread.org>

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