

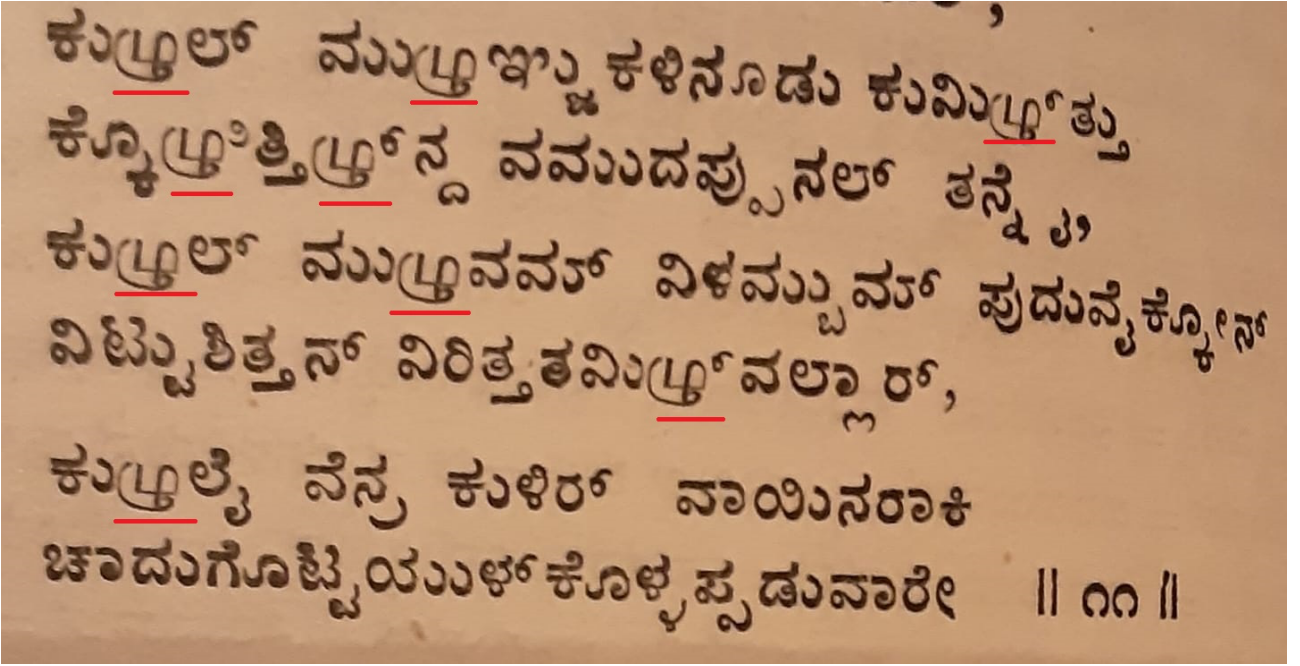
## Response to the proposal to encode two letters in Telugu (L2/20-119)

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The document L2/20-119 proposes to encode two letters in Telugu, namely LLLA and RRA.

The intent is to represent Tamil religious text in Telugu script. The attestations included in the proposal are all Tamil texts rendered in the Telugu script with both the proposed letters kept in tact in their Tamil forms.

Usage of the same Tamil letters, for the same purpose, were also seen in Kannada:



Tamil LLLA used in Tamil text transcribed in Kannada. Image taken from social media. Source unknown.

The reasons given in the proposal for using these forms is well accepted. Similar proposals may be written for usage of these letters in other scripts, like Kannada, in the future.

However, encoding two new letters in Telugu for this purpose may not be the solution. This is especially so when there are two equivalent letters already encoded in Telugu.

In the proposal, the arguments against using the already encoded letters highlights two points:

1. The old form of LLLA (U+0C34) is virtually unknown
2. The Telugu form of RRA (U+0C31) has a different phonetic realisation to that of Tamil.

Both the above arguments may be applicable in Telugu text. The forms used in Telugu are ీ and ు respectively. These are the forms when the language of the text is Telugu. However, they may not be the same when the language is Tamil.

A parallel can be drawn to Devanagari letters SHA (U+0936) and LA(U+0932). The forms are different when the language of the text is Hindi and Marathi.

Likewise, the forms of the proposed letters can vary based on the language of the text.

The solution for this is to add a `loc1` feature in an OpenType font for the Telugu script and switch the forms based on language.

Alternatively, since the archaic forms of these letters are not recognised by the modern populace, the font can provide a stylistic set with their Tamil forms. The set can even be named “Tamil forms”.

A third approach could explore the use of variation selectors, if the glyph variant information is to be preserved in plain text.

All the three proposed solutions above do not require any change to any of the standards, except perhaps an annotation at the appropriate place to advice the variant forms.

These solutions can be implemented today without adding two new letters to Telugu. They can also be applied to Kannada, if there is a need.