

# Phonological Processes in Young Stutterers

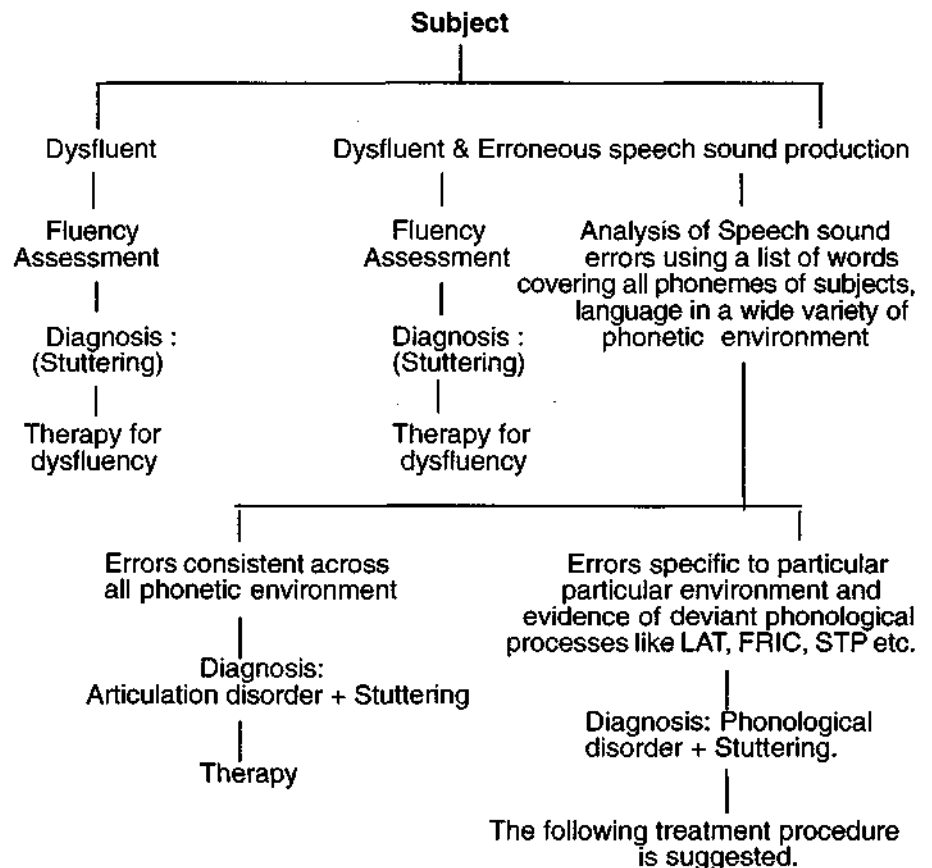
**Sneha Vasanthkumar**  
Student, A.I.I.S.H, Mysore

The term Phonological process refers to systematic sound changes that affect classes of sounds or sound sequences (Edward & Shriberg, 1983).

The present study aimed at comparing the phonological processes of three to seven years old, Kannada speaking stutterers with their normally fluent peers.

The speech samples of these children were obtained using Kannada Articulation Test and picture description task. The speech samples thus, obtained were analyzed for phonological processes: (Varieties, number, frequency and percent occurrence and specific processes).

The results indicated that Kannada Articulation Test elicited more number of processes than picture description task. The young stutterers were found to exhibit more varieties and more number of processes than their fluent peers. The frequency and percent occurrence of these processes were also high in the young stutterers than their fluent peers. Further, ten phonological processes: Stopping, Frication, Multiple processes, Lateralization, Depalatalization, the Substitution of glide, Epenthesis, Inter change of place of articulation, Dimunutization and change in place of articulation were identified that were specific to stutterers and not seen in normal children. Among these, Stopping, Frication and Lateralization were deviant phonological processes.



It appears that phonological disorder co-exist in a percentage of stutterers.

In the light of these findings the following procedure for assessment and management of young stutterers has been suggested.

A weightage for the severity of stuttering and phonological disorder could be used as follows:

Severe	-	3
Moderate	-	2
Mild	-	1

Depending on the weightage, if the presence of the phonological disorder contributes more to the communicative difficulty than stuttering does, then the phonological disorder needs to be remedied first, as the listeners reaction to the deviant speech production may in itself increase the dysfluency. If, however, the contribution of the phonological disorder to the

communicative difficulty is less, then, the dysfluent speech is first remedied followed by correction of deviant phonological processes.

Further, the percent phonological process exhibited by the normal children in this study, could be used as cut-off scores (percent of occurrence of phonological processes for LAT, STOP & FRIC was zero, for normals).

Age	Cut of Scores
3 - 4 y	12.95%
4 - 5 y	4.44%
5 - 6 y	14.82%
6 - 7 y	2.42%

It would be interesting to assess the fluency and phonological processes in stuttering children which would be helpful for the treatment as well as contribute towards the concept of sub-grouping in stutterers.