

The Effect of Stimuli with and without Time-out on Stuttering*

BASAVARAJ, S.

There are several studies indicating that stuttering decreases when time-out is made contingent with stuttering. Most of these studies have used visual or auditory stimuli to indicate the occurrence of stuttering and to be silent for the required duration as time-out. Thus, there are two factors in the process of time-out. It was the purpose of the present study to find out the effect of visual or auditory stimuli with time-out from speaking or reading and the effect of visual or auditory stimuli only.

The following five male stutterers were made to undergo four experimental sessions :

- (1) Light with time-out for a duration of five seconds (LTO) ;
- (2) Light without time-out (LNTO) ;
- (3) Sound with time-out for a duration of five seconds (STO) ; and
- (4) Sound without time-out (SNTO).

An observer experimenter was trained to note the occurrence of stuttering and also to present the predetermined stimuli.

The results of the present study indicate that :

- (1) Stuttering increases when light with time-out was made contingent with stuttering ;

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- (2) Stuttering increases when light without time-out was made contingent with stuttering ;
- (3) Stuttering increases when sound with time-out was made contingent with stuttering ; and
- (4) Stuttering decrease when sound without time-out was made contingent with stuttering, in general.

Further, there was a greater increase in stuttering when the signal was presented with time-out contingent to stuttering than under the condition where the signal was presented without time-out.

It was also observed that the signal with and without time-out had different effects in different subjects. Thus the present study questions the claim that the time-out acts as a punisher, when made contingent to stuttering.

Recommendations for Further Research

- (1) To repeat the study with the similar set-up in a large group of stutterers ;
- (2) To study the effect of longer duration and more intensive stimuli on stuttering when presented contingently.
- (3) To study the effects of different kinds of stimuli with and without time-out by presenting the stimuli contingent to stuttering ;
- (4) To repeat the study in spontaneous speech situation.