

Some Aspects of Fluency in Children - (4-5Years)

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This study aimed at assessing the disfluencies in normal children (4-5 years). Twelve Kannada speaking children (two each in two months interval) from middle socio-economic status were considered for the study. Speech was elicited through four tasks namely conversation, rhymes, picture description and story telling and the speech sample was recorded and a descriptive analysis of their disfluencies was done for each task. The kinds of disfluencies analysed included. Filled pauses, unfilled pauses, parenthetical remarks, repeats (syllable repetitions, part-word repetitions, word repetitions and phrase repetitions), false starts, prolongations and audible inspiration. The percentage of disfluencies, their occurrence before each grammatical category (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, numbers, prepositions, determiners, pronouns, and negatives) and their position of occurrence (initial, medial and final) was also analysed and the number of disfluencies were converted into percentages. The results indicated that children in the age group 4-5 years had more filled pauses followed by repetitions and parenthetical remarks. Audible inspirations were seen minimally in the age group 4-4.4 years and the other types of disfluencies occurred minimally. More disfluencies occurred before the content words especially nouns than before functional words. More disfluencies occurred on the initial part of the utterance than in the medial or final part.

On the basis of the results, a test has been proposed using picture description task and a cut-off scores and ranges for different disfluencies at each age group has been given.

It is suggested that the test be used with children diagnosed as having normal non-fluency and stuttering and validated so as to assist in diagnosis and management of children with fluency disorders.