

# Articulation Proficiency In The Mentally Retarded

Panda. K. C.  
Student, A.I.I.S.H, Mysore.

This study was carried out to develop an articulation test in Oriya language, since no standardized tests are available in Oriya.

6 vowels and 29 consonants of Oriya were selected for the present study. Two hundred and thirtyone words with these sounds in various positions, which were picturable and unambiguous were selected and a word list was prepared. This list was administered to 70 Oriya speakers in the age range of 15 to 30 years for familiarity ratings. 5 point rating scale was used. The words which were rated most familiar by 75% of subjects were considered for the test. These words were picturized on cards of 4" x 3" size to make the test.

For obtaining the normative data this test was administered to 120 normal children in the age range of 3 to 6 years in Bhubaneswar city. They were divided into six age groups of six months interval each. The cards were visually presented to elicit oral output. These responses were audio recorded.

The data for each age group was statistically analyzed. Mean and percentage of scores were obtained. Mann-Whitney "U" test was used to find out the significance of difference between the age groups and between the boys and girls of same age group.

It was found that performance varied from one age group to another. As the age increased the scores also increased. It was found that there was no significant difference between boys and girls of the same age in terms of articulatory skills. Girls exhibited superior articulatory skills when compared to boys.

It was observed that all the vowels were acquired by the age of 3 years. Most of the consonants were acquired by the age of 3 years except /s/ (voiceless retroflex) /r/ (voiced alveolar flap) and aspirated stops.

/s/ and /r/ were acquired by the age of 4 years. Aspirated stops were acquired as last as 6 years.

After the establishment of norms and the test was administered to 41 moderately mentally retarded. Performance varied from one mental age group to another. As the mental age increased the scores were also increased. It was found that there was no significant difference between mentally retarded boys and girls in terms of articulatory skills. As in normals, girls exhibited superior articulatory skills when compared to boys.

Considering the order of acquisition of the phonemes it was observed that the order of acquisition was same as in normals and articulatory defects during the course of development was same as in normal children. It was also found that substitutions and omissions of sounds were predominant in the mentally retarded over distortions and additions.

Among frequency of consonant defect fricatives are mostly affected followed by laterals and aspirated stops.

Thus it can be concluded that the test developed is useful in assessing the articulatory ability of the Oriya speaking normal and mentally retarded children.