Some Aspects Of Fluency In Children 6-7 years.

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The differentiation of normally nonfluent children and stuttering children remains a matter of controversy. In this regard much is needed in the area of speech fluency in normal children. In this context an attempt has been made to evaluate the disf luencies of 12 Kannada speaking normal children between six and seven years.

The subjects for this study were twelve Kannada speaking normal children in the age group of 6-7 years from the low socio-economic group. Two children (one male and one female) each in the age range of two months interval were selected using story narration task. Six Panchatantra familiar stories were selected and were picturized. These pictures were visually presented to the child one at a time and he/she was asked to narrate the stories. Pictures belonging to simple stories were presented first followed by those of complex and all the stories were elicited in a single testing. The speech samples were audio-recorded and were transcribed verbatim and analysed for different types of disfluencies.

In general the overall disfluencies were found to be more for male subjects. Except in the age range 6.2 to 6.4 years, the overall percentage of disfluencies gradually increased from 6.0-6.2 years to 6.4-6.6 years, and overall disfluencies reached its peak in this age range of 6.4-6.6 years; and then declined. However, again in the age range 6.10-6.12 the percentage of disfluencies increased slightly.

Among the different types of disfluencies, FP was the most frequently occurring with a percentage of 24.2% followed by PR and R. The order of occurrence of types of disfluencies in the age range were FP (24.2%) ; PR (21.6%) ; R (21.2%) ; FS (10.8%) ; Al (9.4%) ; P (6.1%); UFP (4.7%) ; BW (0.6%); H (0.4%).

In R many types of repeats were observed in the subjects and in general, SyR was found to be most commonly occurring in this age range which constituted about 25.3% followed by WR-16.8% and sentence repetition were least. The order of occurren ;e of types of R were Sy.R (25.3%); WR (16.8%) ; PWR (12.6%); PhR (4.8): OR (0.8). Maximum disfluency occurred on/after the verb category with a percentage of 24.98% followed by conjunction (20.69%). The order of occurrence of disfluencies on the grammatical categories were on the conjunction (20.69%); noun (19.32%); interjection (19.16%); pronoun (9.05%); adjective (4.35%), preposition (1.30%); adverb (0.54%).

Maximum disfluencies occurred in the initial position which constituted about 65.8% followed by disfluencies in the medial position (25.5%) and in the final position disfluencies occurred least (8.8%).

Based on these results a test for fluency was proposed and story narration task is proposed for the purposes of speech elicitation. The percent disfluency and ranges in each age group is provided with as a cut off score for the differentiation of children as normally nonfluent or stuttering. However, this is only a proposed test and it has to be administered with children to validate and thus to utitlize in diagnosis and rehabilitation of fluency disorders.

FP-filled pause
Al- audible inspirations
SyR- syllable repetition
PR-parenthetical remarks
UFP-unfilled pause
WR-word repetition
R-repetition
BW-broken works
PWR-part word repetition
FS-false starts
H -hesitaiton
PhR-phrase repetition
SR-sentence repetition