

SPEECH SOUND PRONUNCIATION DISORDERS AND WAYS TO OVERCOME THEM

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Abstract: This article highlights speech sound pronunciation disorders, their causes, and influencing factors. Incorrect pronunciation of sounds can negatively affect a child's speech development, social adaptation, and academic success. The article suggests effective speech therapy exercises, pedagogical approaches, and correctional methods for identifying, classifying, and eliminating pronunciation disorders. It also emphasizes the impact of family and educational environments, as well as the importance of timely intervention.

Keywords. sound pronunciation, speech disorders, speech therapy, phonetic defects, articulation, correctional exercises, pedagogical approach, speech development, speech therapy sessions, inclusive education.

Children around the world begin developing their language skills from a very early age. In most cases, they learn to speak their native language simply by listening and imitating the sounds they hear around them. However, some children may face difficulties in pronouncing certain sounds correctly. This phenomenon is referred to as a speech sound disorder or articulation disorder. One of the most common types of speech sound disorders is a phonological disorder, in which a child struggles to produce certain sounds or classes of sounds. Children with such disorders may substitute one sound for another, omit sounds in words, or distort sounds while speaking.

Pronunciation difficulties negatively affect the proper development of a child's speech. These defects may arise for various reasons. For example, physiological issues of the speech organs - congenital abnormalities of the tongue, lips, teeth, or palate — may lead to speech disorders. Additionally, central nervous system dysfunctions and hearing impairments can complicate pronunciation. A lack of sufficient verbal interaction or exposure to an incorrect speech environment can also contribute to pronunciation problems.

The most common disorders include mispronunciation of “s, z” sounds (sigmatism), inability to pronounce the “r” sound (rotacism), defects in the “l” sound (lambdacism), as well as difficulties with “k” and “g” sounds. Sometimes speech is nasal in tone, which is known as rhinolalia.

Pronunciation disorders make a child's speech difficult to understand, cause challenges in reading and writing, and may lead to embarrassment or shyness in social interactions. Speech therapy is one of the most widespread and effective methods of treating such conditions. A speech therapist works with the child to improve their sound production skills and teach them proper pronunciation.

The therapist may use various methods such as articulation exercises, phonological awareness tasks, and oral motor activities to improve the clarity of speech. In addition to speech therapy, parents and teachers can also apply strategies to help children with speech sound disorders. Encouraging children to practice speech sounds regularly, positively reinforcing their efforts, and creating a supportive environment contribute to improvement.

It is important that parents and teachers treat children with patience and understanding, as progress requires time and consistency. Speech development plays a crucial role in a child's overall cognitive and social development. However, some children may face difficulties known as speech sound disorders. These disorders manifest in various forms, such as articulation disorders, phonological disorders, and fluency disorders. Therefore, it is essential for parents and teachers to be aware of these difficulties and take appropriate measures to address them.

One of the most common speech difficulties in children is an articulation disorder, which involves trouble producing sounds correctly. Children with articulation disorders may substitute, omit, or distort sounds, making it hard for others to understand them. This can lead to frustration and feelings of inadequacy, negatively impacting self-esteem and social relationships. For this reason, it is important for parents and teachers to seek assistance from speech therapists to assess and treat articulation disorders.

The most important way to correct pronunciation problems is through regular speech therapy exercises. A speech therapist conducts individual or small-group sessions with the child, focusing on each mispronounced sound separately until correction is achieved.

First, special articulation exercises for the speech organs are performed. For example, raising the tongue, proper opening and closing of the lips, and controlling airflow help in correct sound production. Later, the sound is practiced in isolation, then in syllables, words, and sentences. If a child has difficulties distinguishing sounds, phonemic hearing development exercises are conducted. During this process, children are taught to differentiate sounds, compare similar sounds, and accurately repeat what they hear.

It is also important that parents continue these activities at home. Talking with the child more often, reading books aloud, and practicing poems and tongue twisters accelerate speech improvement. If pronunciation difficulties are related to physiological causes, such as cleft palate or dental structure issues, medical specialists and speech therapists should work together in treatment.

Most importantly, when exercises are carried out consistently and systematically, children gradually learn to pronounce sounds correctly, their speech becomes more fluent, and their self-confidence increases.

Many scholars have conducted research on speech and pronunciation disorders. For instance, the Russian scholar L.S. Vygotsky studied speech development in connection with a child's psychological growth and emphasized that pronunciation problems affect overall social activity. R.E. Levina systematically classified speech disorders and developed methods for correcting phonetic and phonemic defects.

In the field of speech therapy, researchers such as M.E. Khvatsev and O.V. Pravdina systematized articulation exercises and proposed a step-by-step approach to sound correction. Their scientific contributions are widely applied in speech therapy practice. Research has also been conducted in Uzbekistan in this area. For example, educators and speech therapy specialists have developed methodological guidelines for early detection and correction of speech disorders, particularly pronunciation defects. Taking into account the phonetic features of the Uzbek language, special exercises were created and tested in preschool institutions.

Scientific studies have also shown that pronunciation defects are linked not only to phonetic issues but also to deficiencies in phonemic hearing. Therefore, many researchers have stressed the importance of developing phonemic awareness in the correction process.

Conclusion

Speech sound disorders significantly influence a child's speech development, literacy skills, and social life. Early detection and correction through speech therapy and pedagogical methods help ensure proper speech formation, boost self-confidence, and enable children to communicate freely in society. Therefore, cooperation among parents, teachers, and specialists plays a crucial role in this process.

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