

THE TEAR

What is that thing
That's in your eye?
Looks like a tear—
Are you going to cry?

ECHO

Through the woods one day
I sat up into a tree—
I was sitting there.
I began to sing
—I sat on the grass to listen
I could hear the song in my heart.

The writer lingers the echoes of these frag-
ments and girls expressed naturally, yet

One medium of expression
Voice or play or song
Gracefully fitted into
Of frail and strong.

In all His justice
One flawless plan
Is really needed
Too, is given to man.

THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

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Educators are awakening more and more to the importance of good speech. In addressing a group of school administrators some time ago, Dr. William O'Shea of New York City said that the development of correct speaking has become one of the outstanding objectives of the public school. He said further that success in every walk of life, in a large measure, depends upon the ability to speak with purity, propriety, and clarity; that because of some unlovely defects in speech, some racial peculiarity of utterance, some vulgarity of which they may not even be aware, otherwise worthy members of society, fine characters and efficient workers, frequently find the doors of opportunity and advancement closed.

Our schools, as integrating social forces, must bend their efforts to eradicating the hampering limitations imposed upon the individual by poor speech. Speech habits are an important part of the personality, and adequate training in speech will help an individual to make a much better personal and social adjustment.

SPEECH HANDICAPS OF ORGANIC ORIGIN

Any injury to the speech organs, the tongue, hard palate, soft palate, lips, teeth, or nasal passages usually causes defective production of the speech sounds produced by those organs. For instance, if there is a palatal cleft, the individual's speech is affected by a pronounced nasality, or if the tongue is injured, such sounds as *s, l, r*, and many others are produced defectively. Before any remedial work can be successfully done, the proper surgical or orthodontia treatment should be given, after which speech correction should be attempted only by a trained speech correctionist.

Speech handicaps resulting from inadequacy of the speech mechanism are outnumbered by those of psychological and functional origin.

SPEECH HANDICAPS OF FUNCTIONAL ORIGIN

The large majority of speech defects among children in the public schools are due to the fact that they have never learned correct habits of articulation.

Many persons slur word-endings in pronouncing such words as *months*, which is often pronounced as if it were spelled *m-u-n-c-e*; or the word *breathes* as if it were spelled *b-r-e-e-z-e*; or the word *fourths*, pronounced as *f-o-r-c-e*; or the word *masts*, pronounced as *m-a-s-s*, and the word *acts*, as *a-x*.

Misuse and stiffness of the tongue and jaw often cause lack of precision and distinctness in uttering words. In order that correct articulation may be acquired every consonant and vowel must be correctly formed. The articulation defects are for the most part indicated by the incorrect production of some of the consonant and vowel sounds. Usually incorrect production is caused by the incorrect position of some of the speech organs, though it is occasionally caused by malformation of teeth or jaw.

The common articulatory defects found among children in our public schools are:

1. Lipping on the consonant sounds *s*, *z*, *sh*, *zh*, *ch*, *j*, observed as protrusion of the tongue, causing substitution of the *th* sound. Example: *thing* for *sing*.
2. Other substitutions: lateral (unvoiced) *l* for *s*, *w* for *r*, *f* for *th*, *w* for *l*.
3. Omissions of consonants.
4. Infantile speech as *tan* for *can*, *won* for *run*, *free* for *three*.
5. Invented language, completely or partially unintelligible.

The advantages of graceful, clean-cut articulation seldom enter into the calculation of the average person, and yet the muscles of the tongue, lips, and jaw can be brought just as effectively under control of the will as can the muscles of the hand.

The three essentials for clear articulation are:

1. Control of the tongue.
2. Flexibility of the lips and jaw.
3. Voluntary contraction of the soft palate.

Tongue gymnastics have been found to increase tongue flexibility. Such an exercise as lifting the tip of the tongue up and down, using the syllable *la* with variations in the accent may be helpful.

Trilling is also a means of loosening the tongue. Another exercise is raising and lowering the back of the tongue, as in *ing-ah*, repeated in a manner similar to that used for *la* above.

In order to bring about a flexibility of lips and jaw, a few gymnastics of these muscles should be practiced until this free movement and control has been learned. The jaw action especially should be free in order to provide the necessary space within the mouth for the many tongue movements involved in the production of words. A combination of three sounds stretches the jaw and produces the sensation

of flexibility, as the use of *ah-m-ah-oo*, or *oo* twelve times. This should be followed by words in verses or sentences, illustrated by Stevenson:

The world is so full of a number
I'm sure we should all be as happy

One of the causes of nasality is a slurred soft palate. This may be due to carelessness, to a habit of raising the soft palate. After the removal of the latter obstruction the soft palate should be done with the palate through training. In the production of vowels and consonants, with the exception of the soft palate should be raised so that it touches the hard palate and pharynx. A person is conscious of this position at the beginning of a yawn, or when the throat relaxes and water.

After a little practice the soft palate can be raised at will. Exercises open the throat and prepare for the vibration of tone. This elevated position of the soft palate should be followed by placing the lips in position for a clear tone may be produced in the following manner: at the beginning of a yawn, pucker the lips for saying *oo*. Move the lips through various pitches. Follow with tunes using this position.

There is general recognition that a slurred soft palate is an important part in creating an attractive personality. Some suggestions might be made to improve the manner of speaking to speak quietly and smoothly. Make the lips slightly between phrases. Do not speak too fast. Practice clear speech, modulation, and fluency. Study the speeches of celebrated statesmen; reading with pauses, and emphasis that the distinguished speakers have used. In addition to such reading practice, stories and items of interest may be repeated to study the mechanics of speech, and also to cultivate a rich vocabulary and clearer expression of thought. A clear voice necessary for reading well gives a delightful voice in conversation. In our modern day the art of pleasing and interesting conversation is a lost art.

SPEECH HANDICAPS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGIN

Perhaps the most common defect attending speech is a disturbance is stammering or stuttering. This is the most difficult to correct. Other speech handicaps are

word-endings in pronouncing such words as pronounced as if it were spelled *m-u-n-c-e*; or were spelled *b-r-e-z-e*; or the word *fourths*, or the word *masts*, pronounced as *m-a-s-s*,

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of flexibility, as the use of *ah-m-ah-oo*, or *oo-ee-ah-aw*, repeated about twelve times. This should be followed by the distinct formation of words in verses or sentences, illustrated by the following verse from Stevenson:

The world is so full of a number of things
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

One of the causes of nasality is a sluggish action of the soft palate. This may be due to carelessness, to imitation, or to adenoids. After the removal of the latter obstructions, however, much can be done with the palate through training. For the formation of all vowels and consonants, with the exception of *m, n* and *ng*, the soft palate should be raised so that it touches the back of the throat or pharynx. A person is conscious of this position of the palate in the beginning of a yawn, or when the throat relaxes just before swallowing water.

After a little practice the soft palate can be raised and lowered at will. Exercises open the throat and prepare the resonance chambers for the vibration of tone. This elevated position of the soft palate should be followed by placing the lips in position to say *oo*. A smooth, clear tone may be produced in the following manner: Start the feeling of a yawn, pucker the lips for saying *oo*. Make soft tones on several pitches. Follow with tunes using this palate and lip position.

There is general recognition that a pleasing voice plays an important part in creating an attractive personality. A few practical suggestions might be made to improve the manner of speaking. Learn to speak quietly and smoothly. Make the tone musical. Pause slightly between phrases. Do not speak too rapidly nor too slowly. Practice clear speech, modulation, and fluency by reading aloud speeches of celebrated statesmen; reading them with the inflection, pauses, and emphasis that the distinguished speakers probably would have used. In addition to such reading aloud with expression, stories and items of interest may be repeated in order to improve the mechanics of speech, and also to cultivate a better choice of vocabulary and clearer expression of thought. The culture of the voice necessary for reading well gives a delightful charm to the same voice in conversation. In our modern days of speed and slang the art of pleasing and interesting conversation has been neglected.

SPEECH HANDICAPS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGIN

Perhaps the most common defect attributed to psychological disturbance is stammering or stuttering. This, of all speech defects, is the most difficult to correct. Other speech handicaps of psychological

origin are neurotic lisping, infantile speech, and hysterical loss of speech.

The principal cause of stammering is generally conceded to be emotional maladjustment and the spasmodic action of the speech organs is only the external symptom of deep-seated mental and emotional conflicts. In order to reach the basic causes of speech handicaps of psychological origin a number of approaches are made in each case.

1. The physical equipment and well-being of the individual is the first consideration in the treatment of nervous speech disorders. Physical weakness frequently gives a feeling of inability to cope with life situations. An undernourished body or any organic inferiority may produce a lack of confidence, and an upset mental condition may make for an unhealthy body. Methods for developing fine physical equipment, as well as good eating and play habits, have a part in the correction of nervous speech disorders.

If the report from the doctor or the board of health shows some physical defect in the child suffering with a speech handicap that can be corrected, the matter should be referred to the proper authorities without delay.

2. The mental hygiene of the patient is a vital consideration. A case study may be made by a trained speech correctionist in order to obtain an understanding of the various contributing causes which have led to the speech difficulty. By studying the developmental and environmental conditions which have been influential in molding the child's behavior, the causes of his speech disorders may be detected. Definite attempts are made as a part of the treatment to

- a. Adjust the attitude of the child toward his world.
- b. Adjust the attitude of the parents, family, teacher, principal, and classmates toward the child.
- c. Establish a program of activity which will adequately meet the needs of the individual.

3. It is essential that the individual establish a wholesome, positive attitude toward his own speech. Stammering sometimes appears during the acquiring of articulatory coordination, when the child is fumbling not only for speech and language, but also is laboring under the stress of many inrushing ideas. If no serious emotional disturbance comes at this time, the child sooner or later establishes the proper coordinations and his stammering disappears. Occasional stammering or hesitation of this type is noticed in adults and is frequently due to a lack of organization and clearness in thinking, and to temporary emotional disturbances.

Stammering symptoms may also appear after language has been completely acquired. Causes are emotional maladjustment, due to environmental factors causing some emotional conflict. Since speech is a function which man is able to express his emotions, emotional conflicts are manifested in speech. The type of emotional conflicts is found most frequently in the stammerer.

Frequently, at the onset of stammering the child is repeatedly called to his speech difficulties. In a few cases the child may be punished for stammering. Told to repeat the words over which he has stammered makes its impression. Around particular words many emotional memories, such as dread, fear, dislike of being different, and other disturbing emotions which result in a blockage of speech comes, it is the block which occurs. Will power alone can not control the situation. The nature of the fixed idea which is a conviction "I can't speak" is overpowered by the conviction "I can speak." This conviction controls the motor centers. A conviction of this nature, if not corrected by psychotherapy, this is termed *reversed effort* and results in the futile struggles of the stammerer.

The stammerer is a victim of wrong ideas. The fear of failure, he suggests to himself failure, is carried out through his speech mechanism. The only help the stammerer must be to make a conviction "I can speak" to change the "I can't" to "I can."

4. Psychological reeducation has revealed that to create new idea patterns, to displace undesirable ideas, and to replace the speech blockade with a conviction of accompanying emotional poise and control, the only help the stammerer must be to make a conviction to restore the confidence of a stammerer and to bring about social adjustment.

The classroom teacher may be equipped to help the child's development and may aid those children with speech difficulties, such as a tendency to disorderly speech (cluttering) or nonorganic defects (sour speech, and oral inactivity). But, unless a child receives special training in remedial procedures, special care for the more severe speech difficulties, the likelihood that the difficulties may be increased. The child made self-conscious through the classroom standing or knowledge of proper technique.

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Stammering symptoms may also appear after speech and lan-
guage have been completely acquired. Case histories show that an
emotional maladjustment, due to environmental disturbance, is
causing some emotional conflict. Since speech is one avenue through
which man is able to express his emotions, it is not unusual that
emotional conflicts are manifested in speech. Stammering caused by
emotional conflicts is found most frequently in our public schools.

Frequently, at the onset of stammering, the child's attention is
repeatedly called to his speech difficulties by the alarmed parents.
In a few cases the child may be punished and almost invariably is
told to repeat the words over which he has stumbled. This treatment
makes its impression. Around particular speech failures cluster
many emotional memories, such as dread of failure, fear of ridicule,
dislike of being different, and other disturbing emotions. The emo-
tional conflict which results causes a block. When the necessity for
speech comes, it is the block which occupies the whole attention.
Will power alone can not control the situation, because of the very
nature of the fixed idea which is a conviction of inability. The "will
to speak" is overpowered by the conviction of inability, and this
conviction controls the motor centers. According to authorities in
psychotherapy, this is termed *reversed effort* and is responsible for the
futile struggles of the stammerer.

The stammerer is a victim of wrong auto-suggestion. Through
fear of failure, he suggests to himself failure, and this is automatically
carried out through his speech mechanism. The efforts of those who
would help the stammerer must be to make his thinking constructive,
to change the "I can't" to "I can."

4. Psychological reeducation has revealed that it is possible to
create new idea patterns, to displace undesirable behavior patterns,
and to replace the speech blockade with a "fluency image" with its
accompanying emotional poise and control. New patterns tend to
restore the confidence of a stammerer and brings about the necessary
social adjustment.

The classroom teacher may be equipped to handle general speech
development and may aid those children who have slight functional
difficulties, such as a tendency to disordered speech (hesitation and
cluttering) or nonorganic defects (sound substitution, infantile
speech, and oral inactivity). But, unless a classroom teacher has had
special training in remedial procedures, she can not be expected to
care for the more severe speech difficulties. Moreover there is a
likelihood that the difficulties may be increased should the child be
made self-conscious through the classroom teacher's lack of under-
standing or knowledge of proper techniques.

The majority of nervous speech disorders are curable if attacked in a scientific way by trained speech correctionists.

SERVICE OF BUREAU OF CORRECTION OF SPEECH DEFECTS

The Bureau of Correction of Speech Defects and Disorders of the State Department of Education desires to render practical service in helping children to attain their maximum speech proficiency. The development of a well rounded and well adjusted personality is dependent upon the removal of serious handicaps such as speech disorders which may prevent the individual from attaining the poise and confidence necessary to take his place in the world as he finds it.

Books and materials will be suggested to teachers, principals and supervisors upon application to the office of the Bureau, 317 State Building, San Francisco. A brief list follows.

- BARROWS, SARAH T., and CORDTS, ANNA D. *The Teachers Book of Phonetics*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1926.
- BLANTON, SMILEY, and BLANTON, MARGARET GRAY. *For Stutterers*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1936.
- GIFFORD, MABEL FARRINGTON. *Free Speech, the Stammerer's Right*. San Francisco: Thompson Printing and Publishing Service, 1937.
- MURRAY, ELWOOD. *The Speech Personality*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1937.
- RAUBICHECK, LETITIA. *How to Teach Good Speech in the Elementary Schools*. New York: Noble and Noble, 1937.
- RICHMOND, WINIFRED. *The Adolescent Girl*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925.
- RICHMOND, WINIFRED. *The Adolescent Boy*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1933.
- WICKES, FRANCES G. *The Inner World of Childhood*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1937.

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