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Phonological Processes of Arabic-Speaking Children with Speech Impairment

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the phonological processes and the consonant substitutions of the speech of thirty functionally misarticulating Arabic-speaking children, ages 7 to 12 years who all live in Irbid-Jordan. A total of seventeen boys and thirteen girls constituted the sample of the current study. Data of the participants’ speech were elicited through a word-list test carefully designed by the researcher to serve the basic aim of the present study. Children’s spontaneous responses were audiotapped and then transcribed and analyzed individually on the basis of generative and autosegmental phonology (chapter 3).

Examination of the large variety of phonological processes utilized across the participants shows that stopping ranks on top of the most frequently used ones. In contrast, dentalization is the least occurring one. With regard to consonant substitutions, it is found out that out of the twenty eight consonants, the most commonly substituted consonant is the emphatic fricative /ɣ/. Whereas, /h/ is the most commonly used substitute. Another observable fact about Arabic consonants is that /ɣ/ ranks first among the most missing sounds from the participants’ phonetic inventory. Many other
details and specific results have been discussed and elaborated on in this study.

The results are explained and justified in light of theoretical implications of language acquisition and language development; especially the markedness theory.