Language Profiles of Younger and Older School-age Children who Stutter
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Introduction

- Disfluencies of people who stutter are more likely to occur within long, syntactically complex utterances (Yaruss, 1999).
- Disfluencies of older children and adults who stutter are likely to be different than those of younger children.
- As children who stutter grow older, they might use coping mechanisms that replace core stuttering like disfluencies (SLD) with linguistic mazes to sound more fluent.

Method

- All participants had a diagnosis of mild to moderate stuttering.
- Examiners obtained conversational language samples from each participant using a semi-structured interview.
- Participants produced an average of 55.36 utterances in their samples.
- A trained research assistant transcribed the samples using Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT; Miller & Chapman, 1993) conventions.
- Abandoned, incomplete, or unintelligible utterances were excluded from analyses.
- Variables were computed based on the transcribed samples using SALT software.

Results

- No significant differences in SLDs or Mazes per Utterance across age groups (p > 0.05).
- Number of SLDs and Mazes per Utterance
- Average Number of SLDs per Utterance
- Average Number of Mazes per Utterance
- Average Mean of Utterance in Morphemes (MLU-M)
- Average % of Mazes in Utterances with 1-6 Words
- Average % of Mazes in Utterances with 7-13 Words

Discussion and Conclusion

- Sentence length was a substantial predictor of disfluencies (Yaruss, 1999).
- Longer sentence → greater processing demand → breakdown in the fluency.
- We will continue to examine the impact of stuttering severity, language skills, and linguistic complexity to better understand the language and disfluency profiles of these school-age children.

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References:

Participants CWS (N = 14)
Younger: 7- to 11-year olds (n = 6)
Older: 12- to 16-year-olds (n = 8)