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Acquisition of Speech Sounds in some South Indian Dravidian Languages: A Scoping Review

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Abstract:

The phonological development is a gradual process which is believed to follow a particular pattern. There have been considerable amount of research done to understand the speech sound acquisition among children. This study aims to understand the speech sound acquisition patterns among few South Indian Dravidian languages (Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam). A systematic search was done using different keywords in the databases: PubMed, CINAHL, Scopus, and Shodhganga. In order to identify grey literature, search was done in digital repositories of Indian universities. 15 studies were identified reporting on children's speech sound acquisition in the four South Indian Dravidian languages. Analysis of the data in these 15 studies showed that all the vowels, diphthongs and most of the consonant sounds were acquired by the children by the age of 5.0 years. It was observed that the plosives/ stop consonants were acquired earlier than fricatives, affricates and the trills. Nasal sounds were also acquired at a similar age and earlier than the fricatives, affricates or trills. Most bilabial sounds, velar sounds were found to be acquired by the children earlier than the dental sounds, palatal sounds, and the retroflex sounds. The aspirated sounds were also acquired at later ages than the non-aspirated sounds. Understanding the speech sound acquisition is crucial in terms of assessment and management of children with speech impairments. The future studies in the field of speech sound acquisition should ensure stricter criteria and use different stimuli.

Keywords: speech sound, consonant, acquisition, phonological development, age of acquisition