



# SPEECH THERAPY TERMINOLOGY

Adapted from Various Sources

*Speech Therapy (ST), formally known as Speech-Language Pathology is a health care profession specializing in the detection and treatment of communication as well as swallowing disorders. Speech-Language pathologists (SLP's) provide services including assessment and treatment related to cognitive aspects of communication, speech, language, swallowing dysfunction, voice, and sensory awareness related to communication.*

**Article:** a noun modifier that denotes specificity; i.e., a, an, the

**Articulation:** the way phonemes are formed in speech

**Articulators:** organs of the speech mechanism, which produce meaningful sound; i.e., lips, lower jaw, velum, tongue, and pharynx

**Aspiration:** breathing in a foreign object

**Audition:** the sense or act of hearing

**Auditory Processing:** the ability to fully utilize what is heard

**Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC):** any approach designed to support, enhance or supplement the communication of individuals who are not independent verbal communicators

**Babbling:** verbal conduct of infants during the first year of life

**Barium Swallow Study:** an evaluation employing videofluoroscopy to monitor each stage of a swallow after barium-infused liquids and/or solids have been ingested

**Bilabial:** pertaining to the two lips

**Bilingual:** the ability to utilize two languages with equal facility

**Bite:** the forcible closure of the lower teeth against the upper teeth; to seize or grasp with the teeth; a) Mature Bite: the teeth close easily on the food, biting through it gradually; b) Phasic: a rhythmical bite and release pattern seen as a series of jaw openings and closings occurring when the gums or teeth are stimulated. Present at birth and continues until 3 to 5 months of age in the typical infant; c) Tonic: a forceful or tense biting pattern that interferes with all aspects of feeding

**Block:** in stuttering, the stoppage or obstruction at one or several locations--larynx, lips, tongue, etc.; experienced by the stutterer when trying to talk which temporarily prevents smooth sound production

**Bolus:** the rounded mass of food prepared by the mouth for swallowing after chewing

**Carryover:** in speech, the habitual use of newly learned speech or language techniques in everyday situations outside of therapy

**Cause-Effect:** performing one behavior in order to achieve a further objective, e.g. hitting a switch to activate a toy

**Cluster Simplification:** occurs when one or more consonants is deleted from a sequence of consonants, e.g. blue = bu

**Cueing:** a function to assist or obtain a desired response, e.g. giving the command while also pointing



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**Deaffrication:** the deletion of the stop feature of an affricate, e.g. matches = meshes

**Deglutition:** the act of swallowing

**Dental Arch:** the curved structure formed by the teeth in their normal position

**Dentition:** natural teeth, considered collectively, in the dental arch

**Diadochokinesis:** in speech, the ability to execute rapid repetitive movements of the articulators

**Diadochokinetic Rate:** the speed with which one can perform contrasting (or repetitive) movements, as in saying the following syllables: puh-tuh-kuh

**Epenthesis:** the insertion of an additional phoneme in a word or in a group of sound, e.g. tree = taree

**Eye contact:** looking at person in the eye while talking to the listener; generally a natural, although not a constant, interaction of the speaker's eyes with those of the listener

**Final Devoicing:** the substitution of a voiceless consonant for the final voiced consonant, e.g. bed = bet

**Fluency:** the smoothness with which sounds, syllables, words and phrases are joined together during oral language; lack of hesitations or repetitions in speaking

**Frenum:** the small cord of tissue extending from the floor of the mouth to the midline of the inferior surface of the tongue blade; if too short it may restrict the elevation and extension of the tongue

**Grammar:** the rule-oriented system of organizing spoken and written language

**Idiosyncratic:** used to describe a structural or behavioral characteristic peculiar to an individual

**Intelligibility:** the degree of clarity with which one's utterances are understood by the average listener

**Initial Voicing:** inappropriate voicing of initial voiceless consonants, e.g. pen = ben

**Intonation:** culturally specific parameters within a language concerning vocal stress, pitch, and the rising and falling (melodic) quality of the flow of speech

**Jargon:** verbal behavior of children, beginning at about 9 months and ceasing at about 18 months, which contains a variety of syllables that are inflected in a manner approximating meaningful connected speech

**Jaw Grading:** the ability to vary the extent of jaw depression in small amounts that are appropriate for biting foods of different thicknesses

**Jaw Stabilization:** active, internal jaw control with minimal up/down jaw movements especially significant in cup drinking; initially obtained by biting on the cup rim at about 13 to 15 months of age; gradually develops using active jaw musculature by 24 months of age

**Labial:** pertaining to the lips

**Labialization:** lip rounding; pursing or protrusion of the lips

**Labiodental:** relating to the lips and teeth



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**Language:** any accepted, structured, symbolic system for interpersonal communication composed of sounds arranged in ordered sequence to form words, with rules for combining these words into sequences or strings that express thoughts, intentions, experiences, and feelings; comprised of phonological, morphological, syntactical, semantic and pragmatic components. a) delayed- failure to comprehend and/or produce language at the expected age; b) expressive- ability to communicate via the spoken or printed word; c) prelinguistic- behaviors that are thought to precede the acquisition of true language; e.g., crying, cooing, babbling, echolalia; d) receptive- words one understands

**Language Sample:** the systematic collection and analysis of an individual's utterances used as part of a regular speech and language evaluation

**Linguadental:** pertaining to the tongue and teeth

**Liquid Simplification:** the substitution of /w/ or /j/ for /l/ and /r/, e.g. rock = wok

**Lingual:** pertaining to the tongue

**Lisp:** defective production of one or more of the six sibilant consonants (i.e. /s/, /z/); usually caused by improper tongue placement or by abnormalities of the articulatory mechanism; types- dental, frontal, lateral

**Localization:** the ability to identify the location of a sound source exclusively with auditory information

**Mean Length of Utterance (MLU):** the average length of oral expressions as measured by a representative sampling of oral language; usually obtained by counting the number of morphemes per utterance and dividing by the number of utterances

**Morpheme:** the smallest meaningful unit of language

**Morphology:** the study of how morphemes are put together to form words; indicates how words are formed and provides a bridge between phonology and syntax

**Munching:** the earliest form of chewing

**Myringotomy:** surgical incision into the tympanic membrane to allow drainage of fluid from the middle ear

**Nasal Emission:** airflow through the nose, usually audible and indicative of an incomplete seal between the nasal and oral cavities; typical of cleft palate speech

**Nasality:** general symptom classification that includes all voices that acoustically have an excessive nasal component

**Negation:** denial or refusal that may be noted in syntax or semantics; e.g., no, not

**Object Permanence:** the awareness that an object is relatively permanent and is not destroyed if removed from sight

**Occlusion:** the relationship between the various surfaces of the upper and lower teeth

**Oral Cavity:** in speech, the mouth

**Oral Peripheral Examination:** inspection of the mouth to determine its structural and functional adequacy for speech and chewing/swallowing; also known as an oral motor examination



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**Palatal Fronting:** the substitution of palatal consonants with nonpalatal consonants, e.g. shovel = sovel

**Palate:** the roof of the mouth, includes the anterior portion (hard) and the posterior portion (soft)

**Perseveration:** the tendency to continue an activity, motor or mental, once it has been started and to be unable to modify or stop the activity even though it has become inappropriate

**Phoneme:** the shortest unit of sound in a given language that can be recognized as being distinct from other sounds in the language

**Phonological Processes:** techniques used by children to simplify speech when attempting to produce adult words; Developmental processes that are frequently produced; characteristic of normal speech development in children: a) Deletion of Final Consonants; b) Syllable Reduction; c) Stopping; d) Cluster Simplification; e) Liquid Simplification; f) Velar Fronting; g) Palatal Fronting; h) Deaffrication; i) Initial Voicing; j) Final Devoicing

**Phonology:** the study of the sound system of a language, including pauses and stress

**Pitch:** the subjective quality primarily associated with frequency; e.g., high or low

**Pragmatics:** the set of rules governing the use of language in context; e.g., to comment, request (objects, actions, attention), inform, etc.

**Prosody:** the melody of speech determined primarily by modifications of pitch, quality, strength and duration; perceived primarily as stress and intonational patterns

**Rate:** the speech with which phonemes, syllables, and words are uttered

**Respiration:** the act of breathing

**Semantics:** the study of meaning in language, includes relations between language, thought and behavior

**Speech Mechanism:** the structures involved in the production of speech; includes: a) articulators (lips, tongue, velum, pharynx and lower jaw); b) larynx; c) resonators (pharyngeal, laryngeal, oral and nasal cavities); d) respiratory system (lungs and air passages)

**Stopping:** the replacement of fricatives with a stop consonant, e.g. soup = dup

**Syllable Reduction:** the deletion of a syllable from a word e.g. banana = bana

**Syntax:** the way in which words are put together in a sentence to convey meaning

**Tongue Thrust:** when, in a resting position, the anterior or lateral portions of the tongue contact more than half the surface area of either the upper or lower incisors, cuspids or bicuspid or protrude between them

**Utterance:** any vocal expression

**Velum:** the soft palate, comprised of the uvula and palatoglossal and palatopharyngeal arches

**Velar Fronting:** the substitution of /t/ and /d/ for /k/ and /g/, e.g. cat = tat

**Voice:** the sound production created by the vibration of the vocal cords and sustained by airflow