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Speech

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Synonyms

Talking; Verbalization

Definition

Speech is the physical production of language. Speech is a complex act that requires the coordination of multiple systems including respiration, voicing, articulation, and prosody. Speech begins with respiration. Respiration provides the air supply necessary to create speech sounds, also known as phonemes. As the air moves through the vocal tract into the larynx, the vocal folds are vibrated to produce voiced sounds (e.g., /g/) or remain still to produce voiceless sounds (e.g., /h/). Once the air moves out of the larynx, it continues through the vocal tract and into the mouth where the air is shaped into sounds by the articulators (e.g., lips, teeth, and tongue). Accurate speech sound production requires appropriate timing, direction,

force, speed, and placement of the articulators (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association n.d.; Freed 2000; Zemlin 1998). Producing speech enables individuals to communicate (e.g., expressing wants and needs, asking for information or help).

See Also

- ▶ Expressive Language
- ▶ Phonemes
- ▶ Phonetics
- ▶ Phonology
- ▶ Prosody

References and Readings

- Freed, D. (2000). *Motor speech disorders: Diagnosis and treatment*. San Diego: Singular.
- What is Language? What is speech? (n.d.). In American-Speech-Language-Hearing-Association typical speech and language development. Retrieved 18 Jan 2011, from http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/language_speech.htm
- Zemlin, W. R. (1998). *Speech and hearing science: Anatomy and physiology* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.