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Funding Source: MU Undergraduate Research Scholars Program

## Relationship between conversational language performance and stuttering over time

There has been increased interest recently in the effects of young children's developing language skills on stuttering (e.g., see Ratner, 1997, for a discussion). Over time, as language develops, the types of disfluencies displayed by individual children sometimes change, with the frequency of stuttering increasing or decreasing. By looking at individual children's patterns of stuttering relative to their language performance, we can examine how aspects of language might influence changes in fluency characteristics. The purpose of this study is to examine longitudinally the relationship between language skills and various types of stuttering for individual preschool-age children. Method: Eleven children who stutter, ages 2 to 5, participated in the study. A subset of these was included in the analyses for this project. Each of the children was administered a series of speech and language tests and was determined to have typically developing language skills. In addition, the testing confirmed that each participant was, in fact, a child who stuttered. To examine the relationship between language and stuttering, we elicited monthly speech/language samples from each child, over a period of ten months. Each sample was transcribed, coded, and analyzed for the presence and frequency of three types of stuttering: blocks, part-word repetitions, and prolongations. Samples were also coded to analyze several aspects of language performance. The frequency of stuttering types and performance on the language sample measures across the ten sessions were then graphed for each child, to examine relational patterns of language and fluency for each child. Results and Implications: Preliminary results suggest that some children do show changes over time in the types of stuttering they produce. Individual children vary, however, in the types of stuttering produced and the frequencies of each type of stuttering. For some children, there appears to be a relationship between aspects of language performance and stuttering.