README

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Introduction

Speak slowly is a free, small web-based software. The purpose of this software is to help people who stutter (PWS) to speak with more fluency. Users are allowed to choose news stories that change daily from Yahoo ™ News, and are asked to read with stretched vowels in selected syllables following the highlighted instructions on the screen. Stretching vowels has long been known to inhibit stuttering; and five to ten minutes of practice a day may be enough to improve stuttering.

Requirement

The *speak slowly* software is a web-based software and works in computer systems based on Windows XP and Mac OS X. We have not tested all computer systems, so please give us feedback when you have problems with your specific computer configuration.

You have to install Unity Web Player first. Unity Web Player can be downloaded at the site below and has Windows and OS X version.
http://unity3d.com/unitywebplayer.html

Right now, *speak slowly* software can be accessed in the web site below:
http://www.speechrate.com/

Operation

Choose the news

Pull down the Yahoo! ™ News box, and click the one you want to read. Then click “read” at the right of the box, wait for probably a second (depends on the computer and internet speed), till you see the article appear in the text box, then click “show” around the right bottom corner of the text box.

Reading speed

Now you should be able to see the words flying through the display box. By default, the speed is at 1.00 and you can see the number at the middle bottom of the box. You can increase the

reading speed by pressing the up arrow key in the keyboard (not the keys in the number pad) or "w" key, and decrease the speed by using the down arrow key or "s" key. Try to read the flying words and choose the speed at which you like to read.

Reading difficulty

By default, the difficult is set at 1. There are 3 difficulty levels you can choose from. At level 1, you can see every first vowel in every word is highlighted in red with an arrow indicating "prolong it"! At level 2, you will see only the first vowel in every three words is highlighted and should be prolonged when reading. At level 3, only the first vowel in each sentence should be prolonged.

The difficulty level is selected by pressing 1, 2 or 3 on the keyboard, but not the numbers on the numpad.

You may work on a difficulty level, improve your fluency, and then go to the next level.

Pause and continue

Press space bar to pause. To continue, pause it again.

Read and prolong

Whether or not you use an AAF device like SpeechEasy ™ or CasaFutura device, it might benefit you to practice on prolonging the vowels in your speech. As said before, the prolongation of vowels may help a PWS to inhibit stuttering and improve fluency.

We will provide a video clip about how to read with the prolonged vowels online for free view.

Questions and Comment

To help us improve the software, please write to us if you have any questions or comments about the software, or any thoughts about stuttering treatment.

Joseph Kalinowski, Ph.D., at kalinowskij@ecu.edu
Or Jianliang (Albert) Zhang, researcher, at jz1208@ecu.edu
Or the form here to send your comments.

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