

Book Review/ Évaluation de livre

Cognitive Communication Disorders of Dementia
Kathryn A. Bayles & Cheryl K. Tomoeda (2007)

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Bayles and Tomoeda's book represents a long overdue textbook for speech-language pathologists addressing communication issues in dementia. With its comprehensive content, logical organization, and wealth of clinically-relevant basic facts, it has the potential to provide context for language impairments in cognitive-communication disorders. It includes information on the fundamentals of language assessment and basic intervention strategies in dementia necessary for every new clinician and welcomed by those in need for a refresher.

The authors have divided the book into four sections, organized by conceptual themes that include (1) general cognition and communication (2) the effects of dementia on cognition and communication, (3) assessment of cognitive-communication disorders, and (4) treatment approaches. Each section contains multiple chapters.

The first section defines the features of normal aging and provides a concise description of the neural bases of cognition and language. It also includes a general introduction to dementia as a syndrome couched in memory disorders. While it may be useful to present some dementias within the context of memory disorders, especially those for which memory is one of the defining features (e.g., dementia of the Alzheimer's type) it does not necessarily provide a sufficient framework for understanding the fronto-temporal group of dementias (FTD), where either executive function (e.g., frontal variant of FTD) or language-based deficits (e.g., temporal variant) play a more important role than memory. The first section also contains a brief summary of neuroimaging techniques relevant to studies in dementia.

In the second section, the authors present important clinical information regarding a number of dementias other than dementia of the Alzheimer's type, including vascular and fronto-temporal dementia, dementia in Down's syndrome and dementia associated with neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease and Lewy Body dementia. This section provides easily accessible basic facts relevant to clinical S-LP practice and represents a nice compilation of language profiles associated with different dementias.

The third section of the book provides a comprehensive description of various assessment tools, including historically important (but outdated) as well as current and up-to-date tools. Emphasis was placed on the Arizona Battery for Communication in Dementia, developed by the book's authors in 1993. Overall, the book is heavily focused on language impairments resulting from dementia of the Alzheimer's type and falls short on outlining both the assessment procedure and interventions for its FTD counterpart. In addition, the portion covering the diagnosis of semantic dementia (SD) is somewhat confusing. In the current literature, SD is commonly described as the fluent variant of primary progressive aphasia. Bayles and Tomoeda assigned the term "fluent" to a variant of primary progressive aphasia that seems to be different from SD. The basis for this classification is not clear and may appear confusing to a new clinician who is unfamiliar with this particular patient population and/or nosology. However, there are many publications that may easily remediate this shortcoming (e.g., Hodges & Patterson, 1996; Snowden, Neary & Mann, 1996). For more information regarding differences related to typology of language profiles in fronto-temporal dementia, one could refer to the literature on the topic (e.g., Kertesz, Davidson, McCabe, Takagi, & Munoz, 2003; Gorno-Tempini, Dronkers, Rankin, Ogar, Phengrasamy, Rosen, et al., 2004).

The fourth and final conceptual section of the book consists of information related to intervention strategies in dementia. Again, most of the information pertains to dementias characterized by a progressive loss of memory, rather than dementias characterized primarily by a language deficit (i.e., FTD). To the authors' credit, the subsection relating to care planning focuses on issues that are not generally addressed in other dementia-focused publications, but that are important to the successful management of dementia and its progression.

Each chapter ends with a helpful summary section highlighting important points followed by a list of references. Readers will also be happy with the glossaries of terms and clear visual aids to the text in the form of tables and figures/drawings.

With the exception of the previously mentioned shortcomings related to fronto-temporal dementia, this book is an excellent dementia resource and could become easily the starting point for both students and new clinicians working with clients affected by Alzheimer's dementia. I intend to use sections of the book as a resource when teaching a graduate course on cognitive communication disorders. It is a showcase of many years of successful research into communication issues in Alzheimer's disease. Next to Mendez and Cummings' 'Dementia: A Clinical Approach' (2003), and Dan Kempler's 'Neurocognitive Disorders in Aging' (2005), the 'Cognitive-Communication Disorders of Dementia' by Bayles and Tomoeda is a sound addition to the library of every speech-language pathologist with a special interest in communication and aging.

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ERRATUM

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Material and Resource Review

Educating Children with Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome

In the material and resource review on the book "Educating Children with Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome", the name of the author of the review was given as Christie Mellies. The correct name of the author is Christina Mellies. The publisher regrets and apologizes for this error.

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