Book Reviews/ Évaluation de livres

Phonology for Communication Disorders
Martin J. Ball, Nicole Müller and Ben Rutter

Publisher:	Psychology Press
Cost:	115.50 (hardcover), $51.95 (softcover)
Reviewer:	Tim Bressmann
Affiliation:	University of Toronto

Linguistic phonology is an area of study that should be of interest to speech-language pathologists. Unfortunately, modern phonological theory is often encrypted in a dense and impenetrable code that is only accessible to the initiated. Non-members of the tribe will be made to feel their outsider status whenever there is an animated debate whether the setting *! for Dep-IO outranks *!* for Max-IO (Optimality Theory), or whether D:L ->R or D:R ->L when F:LH (Metrical Phonology). This propensity for obscuring the subject with notation systems and formalisms is unfortunate because it limits the reach and the practical impact of most phonological theories.

With "Phonology for Communication Disorders", Martin J. Ball, Nicole Müller and Ben Rutter are providing the CliffsNotes to the main phonological theories of our day. The textbook is written for students of Speech-Language Pathology. It is the companion book to "Phonetics for Communication Disorders" by the same authors. The aim of the book is to give Speech-Language Pathology students solid background knowledge in contemporary phonological theory, so that they may be able to understand and apply phonology in the diagnosis and treatment of communication disorders.

The book begins with a short and concise introductory chapter about the general purpose of phonology. The following chapters each introduce and discuss a specific school of thought. The order of the chapters is roughly chronological, demonstrating how different theories build on each other. The first chapters describe classic concepts in phonology, such as sonority, features and early generative phonology. The later chapters feature more recent theories such as Natural Phonology, Optimality Theory, or Government Phonology, to name but a few. Each chapter begins with a description of where the theory fits into the overall pedigree and offers a short digest of some of the major scholarly works. Since the text is aimed at students, each chapter comprises a number of practical exercises that require the reader to dissect phonological structures or draw diagrams or tableaus. The solutions to the exercises are provided in an appendix. There are also short sections in each chapter that describe possible clinical applications of the theory in question and direct the reader to research publications on different clinical populations. The authors provide short concluding sections in which they comment on the perceived benefits and shortcomings of each of the theories. Each chapter closes with review questions and suggested topics for further study.

The book closes with a thoughtful chapter on the benefits and shortcomings of current phonological theory, with a special focus on applications in speech-language pathology. The authors argue that linguistic phonology tends to cling to a division of phonological structure and phonetic output that does not hold up in the face of recent research on speech disorders and articulatory errors. While linguistic phonologists will often be content to classify phonological paraphasias as segmental substitutions, speech motor research has demonstrated that what may perceptually sound like a segmental substitution will often result from confused articulatory gestures, i.e., subphonemic errors. Consequently, the authors favour those theories that are based on articulatory and psycholinguistic research, most notably Articulatory Phonology, over generative approaches that recur to a hypothetical Universal Grammar. Ball, Müller and Rutter specify desiderata for a clinical phonological theory, such as the ability to identify error commonalities, explain error patterns, measure severity or deviation in a metric, and guide the planning of clinical interventions.

Unlike many of the original works in linguistic phonology, this book is an absolute pleasure to read. The writing is engaging and concise, and the argument is very clear and structured. Concepts are illustrated with well-chosen examples, and the frequent references to clinical applications bring the subject to life for speech-language pathologists. This clarification does not result in simplification or dumbing-down of the subject, and the authors use exercises and study questions to challenge the reader to actively digest the materials presented. The critical commentary for each of the phonological theories is measured and well balanced. The authors' own enthusiasm for phonology and its clinical application comes through in their writing.

Practically Speaking: Language, Literacy & Academic Development for Students with AAC Needs

Edited by: Gloria Soto and Carole Zangari

Publisher:	Brookes Publishing
Cost:	$39.95
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"Practically Speaking: Language, Literacy & Academic Development for Students with AAC Needs" is a new publication that is dedicated to working with school-aged students who are AAC users. Speech-language pathologists working in the public school system will often have students on the caseload who are AAC users. Knowing just how to assess, support and program for these students can be challenging. This book serves as an excellent resource.

The book was written in the US, which means there are references to American educational laws and policies. However, the information regarding assessment and intervention practices with AAC users is very relevant to S-LPs involved with the educational system in Canada.

The book is divided into three sections: Assessment, Instruction & Intervention, and Supports. The Assessment section consists of five chapters addressing topics ranging from overall educational assessment issues to assessing higher level language comprehension and writing skills in AAC users. Throughout the book, real case studies are used to provide practical examples for the reader. Case studies are chosen from all grade levels (pre-kindergarten through to high school). These case studies help the reader envision how he or she might apply the information in the text to a real student on the caseload. June E. Downing, author of the "Assessment of Early Communication Skills" chapter, promotes an all encompassing view of the AAC user. Observations must be made in various settings not only within the educational context but also outside of school as well. Lynn Proctor and Carole Zangari ("Language Assessment for Students who use AAC") discuss standardized tests and subtests that are applicable to AAC users. The authors argue that while vocabulary is often the key focus of assessment for AAC users, pragmatics should be the focus of both assessment and intervention. Two chapters are devoted to assessment of literacy skills of AAC users. The authors argue that all AAC users should be considered candidates for learning to read and write independently. In all chapters, the authors outline how assessment results can be linked to instructional objectives in the school curriculum and the Individualized Program Plan.

The Instruction and Intervention section consists of seven chapters on topics such as general academic adaptations, addressing communication needs in the classroom and supporting literacy. The authors provide information and case studies about a range of abilities and school ages. A chapter that was of particular interest to this reviewer was "Academic Adaptations for Students with AAC Needs" by Gloria Soto. Soto outlines adaptations that may be required for AAC users on everything from classroom set up to the curriculum. While we typically develop Individualized Program Plans for AAC users, Soto reminds us that, often, our AAC users are quite capable of handling the regular curriculum once provided with the proper adaptations. .

Another chapter of particular interest was "Integrating Assistive Technology with Augmentative Communication" (Yvonne Gillette). The author does an excellent job of merging educational AT with the AAC world. Gillette provides some helpful suggestions and checklists to facilitate the organization and application of AT into the AAC users successful day at school.

The final two chapters in the Supports section of the book provide further considerations to those school-based professionals working with AAC students. One chapter provides suggestions and ideas to engage in collaborative practices with the school teams and the families of AAC users (Nancy Robinson and Patti Solomon-Rice) and the other purports consideration of the student's cognitive, attentional and emotional demands in the use of aided AAC systems (Krista Wilkinson and Shannon Hennig). While the collaboration chapter provides some interesting suggestions, the final chapter by Wilkinson and Hennig seems to have been just stuck in at the end of the book because it did not fit anywhere else.

In summary, if you are a Speech Language Pathologist or other professional working in the public school system and you have AAC users on your caseload, this book would be a worthwhile read. It is a book you might like to have on your shelf for frequent reference. It is packed with suggestions, ideas, and relevant case studies that will help guide your own practice working with school aged children. It really is just the type of book I have been looking for in my own practice.