

Book Review

Review of *Language Disorders in Children and Adolescents*. By Joseph H. Beitchman, Elizabeth B. Brownlie. Abingdon, UK: Hogrefe, 2014, 130 pages, ISBN: 978-0-889-37338-9 (hbk).

Reviewed by Anonymous Author¹

Language impairment is potentially a life-long disability that is related to increased risk for significant academic, social, emotional and behavioural problems. Its manifestation in children and adolescents as language-learning disability is considered to be a lifespan issue. “*Language Disorders in Children and Adolescents*” sheds light on this complex issue by concisely presenting evidence-based practice and a brief introduction to advances in psychotherapy. The conciseness accentuates the user-friendliness of the content along with easy to follow guidance relating to most common language disorders. Despite the centrality of analytical theory-based discussion, practical treatments and clinical practices draw on a “theory to practice” approach to language disorders. In fact, language disorders and language impairments appear mostly in childhood, and the comprehensive description of the symptoms and their treatments, which are presented in this book, can clarify this issue significantly.

The book is divided into four main parts along with two additional chapters accommodating some further readings, tools and resources for assessing and investigating language disorders. The chapters are organized in a clear and concise manner outlining theories, diagnosis as well as treatment of language disorders in children and adolescents.

In the introductory chapter, Beitchman and Brownlie provide a description of language disorders and language impairment along with a clear explanation of the relevant technical terms. The choice of chapter topics offers a comprehensive overview of language disorder and impairment as well as associated issues. The reader is also introduced to comprehensive definitions of language disorders and language impairments in children and adolescents. Chapter 1 is a primer that provides with detailed information ranging from terminology and definitions to epidemiological and diagnostic procedures and documentation. Two main diagnostic criteria, namely ICD-10 and the DSM-5, have been considered as major sources of information and practice. The chapter also discusses the differences between expressive and receptive language disorders. Language assessment and language screening are introduced as useful tools to gain a sense of conditions that might need further investigation.

Once the essential groundwork is established, in Chapter 2, Beitchman and Brownlie go on to discuss different overarching theories and models of language disorders in children and adolescents. The subtle and clearly complex interplay between language and various aspects of development is a recurrent theme throughout the book. In addition, the role of critical periods for language acquisition are discussed in relation to parenting, social environment and cognitive processes; all these have been

¹ Correspondence concerning this review should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief Dr. Laura A. Cariola. Email: laura.cariola@ed.ac.uk
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enumerated as important issues in understanding language impairment. It could be stated that this chapter illustrates the complex connection between language developmental procedures and language impairment, on the one hand, and environmental and social factors that affect psychological outcomes, on the other.

Following this, Chapter 3 deals with the fundamental issues of diagnostic approaches toward language disorders and impairments. These diagnoses include both the assessment of speech and language along with the assessment of behavioural and emotional issues. The chapter also states that clinicians should consider the importance of clinical presentations when assessing language impairment (LI) with comorbid disruptive behaviour disorders, and LI and comorbid anxiety disorder identified language profiles should also be discussed and reviewed together with parents and the child to target the specific area of deficiency.

Chapter 4 provides an in-depth discussion of treatment guidelines with a due emphasis on cognitive functioning aspects of language impairments. It ends with guidelines for further reading and a very useful appendix of resources for working with children, young people and their parents. It was suggested throughout the content that the focus of investigating a disorder should emphasize the language and its components, although the deficits in other domains, such as speed of processing or memory problems may be the actual causes of the language impairment. It is suggested that for improved treatments, all available pathways should be utilized and by doing this, to make use of the beneficial support from parents, teachers and peers. Many important problems are pragmatic in nature. These include, resistance of parents and children due to slow speed of progress and a lack of commitment to the therapeutic goals. This issue has been acknowledged in the new categorization of language impairment by the American Diagnostic System, which perceives stuttering and pragmatic impairments as important and overlooked subcategories of LI.

It should be taken into consideration that treatments are most effective for children with less severe language disorders while they may not function to their highest capacity for children with severe disorders and difficulties that are likely to persist throughout children's' whole life span. The way society treats those who have language impairment and speech disorders can potentially affect children's language achievement, and such social aspects should be considered especially when it comes to bilingual children who learn two languages simultaneously.

In addition, it should be noticed that providing culturally un-biased assessment and treatment protocols could increase the quality of any investigation about language impairments. Moreover, for a better assessment, psychiatric disorders should be differentiated from learning disabilities or neurological diseases. Consideration of such an issue could enhance the quality and comprehensiveness of this book in terms of both theoretical and practical dimensions. Given that many factors are involved in prognoses and outcome of treatments, a straightforward guidance and explanation should be provided to support coping with possible complications, such as difficulties in understanding and using language as a social interaction, which can result in experiencing anxiety and depression as well as other emotional problems that may aggravate the situation.

Overall, it could be suggested that this is a very accessible book capturing the theoretical and practical aspects of language disorder and each chapter encompasses an array of key information for the experienced and novice readers. This well referenced book does a good job of discussing specific research studies that inform the topics being discussed. I found this book filled with practical tools and guidance from the early stages of diagnosis to treatment. In addition, as well as useful tables, shaded boxes provide summary points. Students will find it particularly helpful as an introduction to theory and practice.

I highly recommend this book to all those concerned with language difficulties, including psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers and speech and language therapists, as well as parents.