

# BOOKS

## **Experimental Clinical Phonetics: Investigatory Techniques in Speech Pathology and Therapeutics.**

Edited by Chris Code and Martin Ball

*Croom Helm, £15.95*

In recent years, phonetics – the science of speech sounds – has developed a wide range of non-invasive instrumental techniques to study how speech is perceived and produced. So far, there has been only limited application of these techniques in speech pathology and therapeutics. The aim of the present collection of articles is to illustrate what has been and can be achieved in this field.

There is an introductory chapter on techniques of recording and displaying speech, and then chapters on spectrography, electromyography, aerometry, X-ray techniques, delayed auditory feedback, time-variased speech, dichotic listening and oral stereognosis. There is a bibliography of nearly 600 references, and an index.

The editors have concentrated on techniques which play a major role in experimental phonetics, and which have had widespread clinical application in speech pathology. This is a sensible decision, but I didn't think the principle was applied very consistently. You can't give a book this title, and have nothing on, say, electro-palatography.

I also missed a chapter on "the future", reviewing the newest techniques, and discussing their implications for the continued use of the above. Ultrasound gets only a single brief reference, and what of nuclear magnetic resonance?

On a smaller scale, there is a lot of exciting, inventive work going on, which also ought to be referred to, if the book is to live up to its name.

The book is written in a generally dry style, and lacks a sense of excitement. I did not find it very easy to read. The book claims to introduce the topics in a non-technical way, but the style varies greatly, and some authors take a great deal for granted.

I doubt whether speech therapy students would be able to make much of it until well into their course; and clinicians who want to catch up on these techniques will find parts quite hard going. But still – there isn't any other book quite like it, at present, and for a while, at least, it will be a useful source of reference to help understand and evaluate this rapidly developing field.

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