

The characteristics of aphasia

Chris Code, editor

London: Taylor and Francis, 1989. xii + 212pp.

This is a collection of papers, written by scholars from the USA, UK, and West Germany, reviewing the major symptoms of aphasia. There is a general opening chapter, followed by nine chapters, each of which examines a particular area, with reference to relevant neurological, linguistic, and clinical issues: fluency, naming and word-finding, auditory verbal comprehension, agrammatism and paragrammatism, phonological paraphasia, jargonaphasia, apraxia of speech, speech automatisms and recurring utterances, and acquired disorders of reading and spelling. The editor has focussed on those aspects of aphasia considered to impair core linguistic elements of communication, and has thus excluded, for example, gestural and non-verbal aspects of communication. The chapters vary considerably in level and emphasis, some spending more space on psycholinguistic theory, others more on clinical features. The implications for children are not a feature of the book, which concentrates on the acquired problems of adults. It nonetheless provides a succinct account of the current state of knowledge in aphasiology, and would be a useful perspective for anyone who needs a concise overview of the linguistic problems facing brain-damaged individuals.