

Review of the Third Edition of Aphasia and Related Neurogenic Communication Disorders: A Letter to the Editor

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Letter to Editor

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Introduction

The work being reviewed in this correspondence is a thorough treatise that delves into the definition, history, assessment, and management of aphasia. Aphasia is characterized as an impairment or deficit in processing linguistic content, which impedes an individual's ability to articulate thoughts or understand others' speech. A key distinction to note is that aphasia is an acquired disorder; the individual once possessed linguistic competence but subsequently lost it, rather than being a congenital condition. However, deficits in both language comprehension and expression are also commonly observed in other neurocognitive conditions, such as dementia, right hemisphere damage, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and primary progressive aphasia (PPA). This text offers an extensive overview of the introduction, assessment, and treatment of these related disorders. Given its comprehensiveness and integration of the latest evidence-based practices, this book is positioned as an authoritative resource for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) dedicated to the assessment, intervention, and research of neurogenic language disorders.

Authors and a Brief Introduction

Aphasia and Related Neurogenic Communication Disorders is authored by Dr. Ilias Papathanasiou and Dr. Patrick Coppens (1).

Dr. Ilias Papathanasiou is a Professor in the Department of Speech and Language Therapy at the University of Patras, Greece, and a Visiting Professor at the Medical School of the National University of Athens. He is a prominent researcher in neurogenic

communication disorders, with a long-standing focus on aphasia, apraxia of speech, and neurogenic language impairments. His work emphasizes assessment, intervention, and the implementation of evidence-based practice, bridging the gap between neuroscience, linguistics, and clinical care. He has contributed to multiple editions of this text and is actively involved in international collaborations and education regarding aphasia and neurogenic disorders. According to Google Scholar, he has received 1,052 citations since 2021, with an H-index of 16.

Dr. Patrick Coppens is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at SUNY Plattsburgh, New York. He is a distinguished researcher and clinician in the rehabilitation of aphasia and associated neurogenic communication disorders. His expertise lies in the assessment and treatment of aphasia, focusing on speech and communication in activities of daily living and the social aspects of life with communication impairments. He has collaborated extensively on the editing and authorship of this comprehensive text, with a strong emphasis on clinical application, evidence-based practice, and international cooperation.

Originally published in 2011, the second edition was released in 2016, and the third edition was published in 2021 by Johns & Bartlett Learning. This latest edition comprises 25 chapters, organized into two primary sections: Aphasia (17 chapters) and Related Neurogenic Communication Disorders (8 chapters).

The textbook Aphasia and Related Neurogenic Communication Disorders is a comprehensive,

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clinically oriented volume centered on the conceptual core of aphasia. Rather than focusing exclusively on aphasia, it encompasses the diagnosis, assessment, and management of a broader spectrum of acquired neurogenic communication disorders, including right hemisphere disorders, traumatic brain injury, and dementia. The book's distinguishing feature is not merely its breadth but its framework grounded in clinical reasoning. It begins by addressing fundamental concepts—defining aphasia, its management, and the role of technology—and then provides a modern neurobiological description of connectivity, plasticity, and recovery in aphasia. Subsequently, the authors delve into the principles of assessment and intervention, leading into specialized chapters on language impairments (auditory comprehension, word retrieval, reading, writing, and sentence processing). The discussion then extends to discourse, quality of life, and client-centered living. Following the section on aphasia, the text covers the assessment and treatment of Right Hemisphere Syndrome (RHS), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), dementia, neurosurgery-related language disorders, apraxia of speech, and dysarthria.

Comprehensive Book Review:

1. Core Philosophy: A Person-Centered Approach Based on the ICF Model

This text provides a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to adult neurogenic communication disorders. In a departure from older literature, which primarily focused on lesion localization and disorder-based labeling, Papatanasiou and Koppen utilize the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) framework. This ensures that the clinician looks beyond 'impaired language' and focuses instead on the 'individual with the disorder' and their capacity for participation in life. By adhering to the ICF, the authors conceptualize aphasia not merely as a 'brain lesion,' but as a condition that impacts body functions and structures (neurological damage), activities (the ability to speak, read, or write), and participation (the ability to maintain employment, marriage, or social interactions). In other words, by leveraging the ICF model, the authors move beyond the "Medical Model"—which prioritizes the remediation of the impairment—and instead adopt a "Biopsychosocial Model." The structure of each chapter guides the clinician to perceive the individual not simply as a "patient with a lesion," but as a person who requires support to overcome barriers to social and vocational participation.

2. Content and Organizational Structure

The book is logically divided into four sections,

beginning with the foundations of aphasiology. This part covers the 'hard science,' with the chapter on neuroplasticity in the third edition being particularly significant; it elucidates the biological mechanisms of recovery and provides the scientific justification for clinicians to pursue intensive therapy even months or years post-injury. This section also includes a robust review of neuroanatomy, linking specific brain pathways—such as the dual-stream model—to linguistic functions. The text then proceeds to aphasia. As the title suggests, the book's primary focus is the assessment and treatment of aphasia. However, what distinguishes it from other publications in the field is the balance it strikes between classical connectionist models (such as the Wernicke-Lichtheim model) and cognitive neuropsychological models, presenting them not as contradictions, but as aligned and complementary perspectives. The aphasia section is further subdivided into assessment and intervention. In the assessment domain, the third edition places greater emphasis on dynamic assessment—focusing on what the patient can achieve with support, rather than relying solely on deficits identified through standardized testing for clinical decision-making. Regarding intervention, the book covers a wide spectrum of evidence-based practices (EBP), ranging from Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) to Constraint-Induced Language Therapy (CILT). Following the discussion of aphasia, the text addresses comorbid disorders in the context of neurogenic language disorders. The book provides in-depth explorations of Right Hemisphere Syndrome (RHS), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), dementia, and Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA). Specifically, in the discussion of RHS, a notable strength is the focus on 'invisible' deficits, such as pragmatics, inference, and anosognosia (lack of insight). Regarding TBI, the text emphasizes the critical interaction between cognition (memory/attention) and communication. Furthermore, a significant highlight of the 2021 edition is the introduction of the latest diagnostic criteria for the subtypes of PPA (nonfluent, semantic, and logopenic). Finally, the book addresses professional and social considerations, delving into the 'real-world' aspects of clinical practice, including family counseling, navigating multicultural differences, and the integration of technology."

3. Notable Updates in the Third Edition (2022)

As the third edition was published in 2022, the content implicitly reflects contemporary priorities in aphasiology and the rehabilitation of neurogenic language disorders. Specifically, it emphasizes participation-oriented outcomes, discourse-level assessment and treatment, culturally responsive practice (including multilingual

populations), and the explicit integration of technology in service delivery. The robust structure of the table of contents demonstrates a deliberate intent to integrate impairment-level rehabilitation with functional communication and life participation, rather than treating these as distinct or competing 'schools' of thought.

Beyond these points, the authors of this edition have remained highly attuned to emerging research and clinical trends. One major addition is the focus on multiculturalism and global perspectives; this edition features significantly more content on bilingual aphasia and how culture shapes the experience of disability. The authors openly admit that 'standard' tests can be culturally biased toward non-Western or non-English-speaking populations. There is also a heavy emphasis on telehealth and technology. Written during a global pivot toward remote care, the third edition provides a much more detailed and prominent look at computer-based and remote rehabilitation than its predecessors. Lastly, the book is firmly rooted in evidence-based practice. Each treatment chapter incorporates the latest systematic reviews, ensuring that students and practitioners use the most proven methods available as of 2021/2022.

Consequently, this work represents a significant leap forward in the education of neurogenic communication disorders. By bridging the gap between complex neurological theories and practical, evidence-based clinical management, it has become a primary textbook for graduate students of Speech-Language Pathology (SLPs). It is widely regarded as the gold standard in the instruction of acquired language disorders. Another distinct advantage of the third edition is its integration of the latest advancements in telerehabilitation, neuroimaging, and the socio-cultural dimensions of disability.

Strengths of the Book

The foremost strength of this edition is the inclusion of expert contributors. Dr. Papathanasiou and Koppen have curated chapters authored by leading authorities in aphasiology. Consequently, each chapter is written as if a preeminent expert in that specific domain is presenting their theories at a professional symposium. Additionally, the book's clinical utility is exceptional. Perhaps its most defining characteristic is the integration of case studies and clinical note boxes alongside theoretical content; this effectively bridges the gap between a rigid textbook and the dynamic, fast-paced environment of a hospital ward. The third major strength is the book's comprehensive approach. The

authors never overlook the psychological impact of neurogenic disorders, including depression, the loss of identity, and caregiver burden. Furthermore, the authors treat the 'communication partner' (such as a spouse or caregiver) as a vital component of the patient's treatment. This approach is now considered the gold standard in modern speech-language pathology.

Potential Criticisms

Finally, it is necessary to address certain drawbacks of the text. The first point is the high density of scientific content. The book is characterized by rigorous, advanced discourse; consequently, its complex terminology and intricate cognitive models may make absorbing the material daunting for students—particularly those at the undergraduate level—without the guidance of a proficient instructor. Furthermore, the book's broad scope may be perceived as a limitation. Because the authors attempt to cover aphasia, TBI, RHS, and dementia within a single volume, the text is exceptionally voluminous. While a generalist or a student may find this "all-in-one" approach advantageous, some specialized clinicians might prefer a more focused text dedicated exclusively to one of these specific domains.

Closing Remarks

The third edition (2022) of *Aphasia and Related Neurogenic Communication Disorders* is far more than a mere textbook; it serves as a manifesto for modern speech-language pathology—one that is fundamentally client-centered and scientifically rigorous. For any clinician or researcher specializing in adult neurogenic language disorders, this volume is an absolute necessity.

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Authors' Contribution

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this article.

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1. Papathanasiou I, Coppens P. *Aphasia and Related Neurogenic Communication Disorders*; Jones & Bartlett Learning; 2021.