

Book Reviews/ Évaluation des livres

*Neurogenic Communication Disorders:
Life Stories and the Narrative Self*

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As an educator of future professionals in speech-language pathology, this book intrigued me because of the potential for its content to broadly alter and enhance clinical practice. It held further interest for me because of the focus on neurogenic communication disorders, my area of clinical practice for many years.

Together, the three authors of this book explore concepts related to life stories and how these concepts are manifest in people with acquired neurogenic communication disorders, offering advice to clinicians who practice in the field. The book expands our current understanding of these concepts beyond the area of aphasia in which they are most widely applied in the field of speech-language pathology.

In Section I, the book's opening two chapters provide an overview of the existing body of work relating to concepts of self and narrative. From their different fields of speech-language pathology, sociology, and psychology, the authors describe related constructs. They introduce the concept of "narrative self" as a framework with which to explore the impact of neurogenic communication disorders on the individual. For the uninitiated reader, they describe and contrast the four disorder areas that are addressed in later chapters.

In Section II, the authors explore more deeply the various theoretical concepts they believe support the model of narrative self. In three separate chapters, they address self, narrative processes, and temporal/life span considerations.

Section III contains four chapters, each of which explores the impact of a specific disorder on narrative self. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, stroke-related aphasia, and dementia are chosen as illustrative examples, based on the fact that the authors have each had personal experiences with individuals living with these conditions.

Section IV is specifically tailored to speech-language pathologists, presenting each author's personal perspective on implications for clinical practice in a separate

chapter. The brief chapter addressing postmodernism is particularly refreshing and thought-provoking. The authors acknowledge that the conceptual framework they have developed is "still in its infancy as applied to neurogenic communication disorders."

This book represents a strong effort to use theoretical concepts to help understand the personal impact of communication disorders on the people who live with them. Because our profession has traditionally borrowed from many related fields, the concepts reviewed in the book will not be new to most practising clinicians, although the framework is new. Familiar ideas relating to adjustment to disability, change management, and client-centered care are recast into a framework for understanding and supporting the client's narrative self.

Unfortunately, the authors' approach to reframe such well established concepts can be confusing for the reader. Aspects of narrative and of self are explored in depth, revisited, illustrated, and juxtaposed without convincing resolution of these two concepts into a singular construct of narrative self. There is only a single diagram, which presents three overlapping circles, illustrating the self-evident notion that impairment in any of motor speech, language, or cognition will disrupt narrative self, each in unique ways. Perhaps additional efforts to illustrate the model of narrative self, incorporating the concepts explored in the text, would have helped to clarify the concept. While written dialogue (such as this book) is a useful method of presenting and reflecting on a challenging topic area, the lack of a defined process for exploration hampered the effectiveness of this approach.

Personal stories from the perspective of the client are always interesting to clinicians, and the words of the individuals represented in this book are no exception. The authors include excerpts informally collected from emails, support groups, and informal interviews to illustrate their various points. Unfortunately, this approach makes it a challenge for the reader to develop a coherent sense of the individuals. A case-based approach might have been more helpful.

The authors have made a daring and commendable attempt to translate important concepts of narrative and self into the clinical realm of speech-language pathology. For readers and researchers interested in exploring the literature on narrative processes and self, the content and the exhaustive references will be helpful. Clinicians whose clients live with the neurogenic disorders addressed in this book will benefit from reading specific chapters in Section III to enhance or refresh their understanding of the personal experience of their clients. As the authors suggest, additional material in the book can then be explored to deepen understanding of underlying concepts of narrative self if desired.

Future efforts to explore the model of narrative self would benefit from a clearer representation of the model and the application of established qualitative research methods.

Together with other recent publications on the topic of narrative processes and health narratives, this book acts as a helpful background resource. Narrative processes are more fully understood and applied in related health fields such as medicine and occupational therapy, so an exploration of these concepts as they apply to speech-language pathology is valuable. Clinicians interested in practical approaches to incorporating narrative processes into clinical practice are encouraged to pursue works by Hinckley (2008) and Holland (2007).

References

Hinckley, J. J. (2008). *Approaches to narrative-based practice in speech-language pathology*. San Diego: Plural Publishing.

Holland, A. L. (2007). *Counseling in communication disorders: A wellness perspective*. San Diego: Plural Publishing.



Classics in Voice and Laryngology

Ryan C. Branski and Lucian Sulica, Editors

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The purpose of this text is to provide a compendium of seminal texts in clinical laryngology and voice science. The papers identified as classics by Branski and Sulica were compiled using the Scopus bibliographical database and the editors' judgement. In order to be included in the compilation, the paper had to be cited more than 50 times. The authors then vetted and divided the papers into different topical chapters. Each chapter is prefaced with a brief introductory note in which the editors present a historical perspective of the specific topic at hand. The original classic papers are faithfully reproduced, often with an introductory note from an author. The resulting volume comes out just a little under 600 pages, and 38 classic papers and their commentaries have been included.

Laryngology is a field that is shared by otolaryngologists and speech-language pathologists. The selected papers in this book are slanted towards the otolaryngology side: 29 of the 38 papers deal with primarily otolaryngological topics. Obviously, all included papers are interesting and germane to the field of laryngology. The papers that one would expect are all there: Blitzer and Brin's description of the use of botulinum toxin for spasmodic dysphonia, Isshiki's account of laryngeal framework surgery, Ramig et al.'s introduction of Lee Silverman Voice Treatment, Koufman's discussion of laryngopharyngeal reflux,

Verdolini-Marston et al.'s research on the effect of hydration on phonation threshold pressure, and the list goes on. The selection and the quality of the papers are excellent. The author commentaries add human interest and often provide interesting tidbits about the circumstances under which the research was done and the papers were written.

While the selection of papers is impressive, omission of certain classic articles is admitted and explained. In their introduction, the authors give an account of the challenges they faced in putting this volume together. In the end, not all papers that the editors wanted to include could be reproduced because of copyright and compensation issues associated with some of the publishers. The introductory notes for the topical chapters list and discuss all papers that the authors deemed classics and that met the search criteria. The interested reader could then retrieve those missing classics and complete the full set of papers.

The book is well made and the structure is very clear. Since some of the papers are older, the quality of the reproductions is variable. One flaw of the book is that the original paginations of the papers have been removed. This allowed for a larger print area, resulting in better quality of the reproductions; as well, two different page numbers per page would have been visually confusing. However, to cite or reference a specific section or statement, one either has to hand count the pages to figure out the original pagination or else cite the edited reproduction rather than the original paper.

The book would be useful for graduate students or residents who are specializing in vocology and laryngology. It could form the basis for an introductory reading course, and the classics could be juxtaposed with current papers on the same topics. This would allow an interested student to quickly get up to speed with the canon of laryngology. Obviously, while the papers were seminal at their time, it is a hallmark of a classic to be of a certain age. The volume cannot, and is not meant to, replace an up-to-date textbook on voice. Nevertheless, for any serious voice specialist, this is a book that is worth acquiring.

