Book Reviews


The authors begin by defining the psycholinguistic framework as a cognitive, information processing account of the structures and processes that are proposed to underlie the comprehension and production of speech and language. Their objective is to afford, especially for practitioners in speech and language therapy, explicit guidelines for interpreting task performance profiles in accordance with current theories of language information processing. Their psycholinguistic framework is governed by two factors, input and output processes, and the relative contribution of lexical representations. Subsequent chapters guide the reader gently through the “stages” of speech processing within the psycholinguistic framework and identify the implications of such skills for metaphonological abilities and literacy development. The introduction of activities, in which the reader is given the opportunity to assign various tasks to their appropriate position in the framework, accompanied by descriptions of case studies to illustrate these issues further, encourage engagement with the material and consolidate understanding. The rationale is that consideration of the psycholinguistic requirements of conventional tests allows any individual’s performance profile, taken from a range of tests, to be characterised as reflecting standard or impaired functioning of specific aspects of language processing. The result is a convincing argument for the applicability of the psycholinguistic framework to describe the strengths and weaknesses of an individual’s language processing abilities rather than forcing their assignment to a perhaps inappropriate or inflexible category of impairment.

Having thus established the level of explanation sought by the framework, the theory of language information processing on which the framework is based is presented in more detail. A description of the changing pattern of children’s speech processing abilities during development is put forward, together with the proposal that children with disorders of language development encounter either slow or disordered progress through the common sequence of phases. Extensive examples of disordered development illustrate the deficits in both speech and literacy that are likely to arise from failure to progress through specific phases.

Albeit perhaps in accordance with the requirements of their primary audience of practitioners, the consideration of the implications of the framework for future research is somewhat perfunctory. One issue, however, remains particularly enticing. The authors maintain that their model does not address issues of the relative contribution of lexical representations to “at risk” samples, identify the relatively new “D” (Disorganised) pattern of attachment that appears in such samples, and assess patterns of attachment beyond infancy. The final chapter of the section, by Crittenden, presents an idiosyncratic approach to attachment, with many unvalidated assertions. There are major points of departure from Bowlby’s theoretical position as well as Ainsworth’s classification system and the associated interpretations of particular attachment patterns. Departure could be found, except that the same Bowlby/Ainsworth terminology is used with quite different meanings—a potential source of confusion, not only within this volume but also within the field as a whole.

In Part II—Risk and Protection—Bretherton taps her deep understanding of Bowlby’s work to provide a unifying framework for the complex interactions that arise from divorce. This involves going beyond traditional assessments of patterns of attachment to “address issues of separation, loss, loyalty, conflict, jealousy, anger, ad resolution of mourning” (p. 98). Statistics are nicely backed up with illustrative quotes from individuals, to lead to the conclusion that “for post-divorce parents to function as secure bases for their children, the resolution of their marital attachment relationship (i.e. emotional divorce) is of the highest importance” (p. 129).

Van Ijzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg provide a masterly overview of the AAI (Adult Attachment Interview), including 18 studies showing correspondences between the AAI and infant attachment classifications. They conclude that “intergenerational transmission of attachment should be considered an established fact” (p. 163)—a parent’s own early attachment experiences lead to attachment representations, which affect parenting behaviour, which then influences at-
attachment experiences in the next generation. “Contextual” influences on this chain involve attachment relationships beyond childhood, the social context, and child characteristics. While appreciating the time-consuming nature of the AAI, they conclude that “a good alternative is not yet available” (p. 150), and go on to make an excellent point that is too often overlooked: “Attachment questionnaires bring insecure subjects into the paradoxical position of having to present a balanced self-diagnosis of their mental representation of attachment, whereas they are insecure because they are not able to reflect on their attachment experiences in a balanced way” (p. 150).

Goldberg presents results from a number of studies, concluding that “as we move along a continuum of risk to clear diagnosis, the likelihood of secure attachment decreases and the likelihood of disorganized, controlling, and insecure-other attachment increases” (p. 190). She offers the challenge that “further differentiation within these categories based on clinic samples may prove to be more useful than are the normatively derived classification schemes” (p. 190). I would add that any attachment classifications with clinic samples should be backed up by validation against other criteria, such as observed mother/child interactions in home settings. Lest clinicians sit back, Goldberg also offers a challenge to them—to improve diagnostic criteria for childhood disorders.

Among the first to consider how attachment processes might contribute to the development of psychopathology was Mark Greenberg, who was also responsible for the development of the preschool attachment classification system. His chapter with others in the Seattle group provides an overview of their work on children with externalising problems. The studies combine observed patterns of attachment with assessments of child and mother representations of attachment, and show the value of “person-oriented” analyses. The chapter fits nicely with Goldberg’s, showing a high incidence of controlling and insecure-other attachment patterns in clinic samples, and a need for improved diagnosis.

Attachment research is brought to bear on morality, disruptive behaviour, borderline personality disorder, and criminality in a wide-ranging and original chapter by Fonagy and his colleagues. They conclude that an early environment characterised by low warmth/support and high conflict/negativity leads to limited and hostile IWM’s of caregivers, and a reliance on physical experiences (alcohol, drugs, violence, and crime) to provide a sense of consolidation and a coherent identity. Thus, instead of being a serious threat, “the inhumane and mechanical world of most prisons may be an attractive alternative to the discomfort of many social situations to such individuals. The dehumanizing atmosphere of prisons may further weaken the individual’s mentalizing capacity and would therefore be expected to increase the probability of further offenses” (p. 259).

Part III—In the Clinic—consists of two very readable chapters that beautifully illustrate the dynamics of transmission of attachment from mother to child. Lieberman stresses the importance of maternal attributions, which “offer an unedited view of fantasies and concrete perceptions that guide the mother’s actual ministrations toward the child and directly shape the infant’s emerging working model of the self in relation to attachment” (p. 284). Zeanah, using one longitudinal example, shows how intensive infant–parent psychotherapy works to alter an intergenerational pattern of relationship psycho-pathology, characterised by “derogation”—“a form of dismissal in which attachment experiences...are actively and contemptuously devalued” (p. 293). To conclude, I hope this brief overview indicates that there is a lot in this volume, with the excitement and challenge that the union of clinical issues and good research brings.

*Joan Stevenson-Hinde*


This is the best book on statistics I have ever read by a long way. For anybody writing a research paper, or trying to evaluate one, either for their own sake or because they need to comment on its quality to somebody else, it is invaluable. What is so good about it is that it tells you precisely what to do in easily digested, step-by-step gobbets of information. There are bullet points in bold followed by an easily understood paragraph or two. Thus, it covers the main range of statistical tests and other procedures such as correlation, regression, or economic evaluations, but instead of telling you how to do the actual tests (for which you would go to a normal textbook of statistics) it tells you how to write them up. Thus, it tells you how to ensure that, for example, the experimental group and control group were not different to begin with; how you should specify what was done about outlying or dropped data; it suggests how you should try to explain equivocal results, and says you must distinguish between statistical significance and clinical significance; and it emphasises that you must report data that were not significant but which may have been expected to be so.

For all budding authors who have conducted a project, whether large or small, but do not feel confident about writing up the statistics and presenting them clearly, I heartily recommend this book. Equally, for those who have to review papers and need to brush up their knowledge and be aware of where the wool might be pulled over their eyes by inadequate analysis, this book will be invaluable and easily accessible.

*Stephen Scott*


In the last 10 years there have been a series of good books on understanding Asperger’s syndrome. This book does not concentrate on new research information and has relatively few references. So why recommend it? First, it describes the syndrome and its practical implications better than any other I have seen. I can only quote Lorna Wing’s praise for Tony Attwood’s “leap into the minds of people with Asperger’s syndrome” in the introduction. Second, this is the book for giving to parents and professionals in the field for understanding the syndrome and its implications. In my practice, I place considerable emphasis on helping parents and professionals to understand Asperger’s syndrome and by using this understanding to work with affected individuals. I strongly recommend this book as an adjunct to diagnostic explanations and discussions of the syndrome’s implications. For the practising clinician working with individuals with Asperger’s syndrome this book is a must.

*Christopher Evered*