

## Book Review

### *Speech Prosody in Atypical Populations: Assessment and Remediation*

Edited by VESNA STOJANOVIC and JANE SETTER  
(Guildford, Surrey: J&R Press, 2011)  
[Pp. 172.] ISBN 978-1-907826-00-9.

This edited volume provides a much-needed resource on the perception and production of prosody in a range of developmental and acquired disorders. The origins of the book date back to a workshop on 'Speech Prosody in Atypical Populations' held in Reading, UK, in 2007. The editors have weaved together research in the area with implications for therapeutic practice. It is suitable for students, researchers, and clinicians who work with children and adults with atypical prosody.

The Preface provides a concise summary of prosody and its linguistic roles as well as an overview of how this aspect of speech has been largely overlooked in assessment and intervention. The book is divided into two sections: Developmental Disorders and Acquired Disorders, with chapters written by researchers and clinical experts.

In the first chapter within the Developmental Disorders section, Sue Peppe discusses the importance of determining whether atypical prosody is a primary or secondary disorder. She points to the dearth of standardized assessment tools for examining prosody prior to an in-depth description of her PEPS-C (Profiling Elements of Speech Communication) battery. A key point is that the PEPS-C assesses both receptive and expressive prosody. While the PEPS-C was designed to assess prosody in children with high-functioning autism, it has been applied to a number of clinical populations including children with Williams syndrome and Down's syndrome, which is the topic of the second chapter by Stojanovic and Setter. The authors demonstrate that although receptive abilities are comparable in both speaker groups, they differ in pragmatic aspects and production.

Chapters 3 and 4 use conversational analysis techniques to examine both speaker and interlocutor patterns of prosody. Samuelsson, Plejert, Nettelbladt and Anward show that speech therapists use

stereotypical and somewhat restricted prosodic patterns when administering assessment batteries and that children with language impairment adopt the clinician's prosodic patterns which may not be ideal. The need to assess prosody in a variety of contexts with a variety of methods is echoed by Kelly and Beeke who analysed video recordings of spontaneous speech between a 7-year-old child with high-functioning autism and his mother. The authors call for clinicians to observe speech prosody in a variety of contexts and to use multiple levels of analyses.

The final three chapters focus on atypical prosody in acquired disorders such as stroke. Verhoeven and Marien describe a patient with Foreign Accent syndrome whose speech rhythm changed post-stroke leading listeners to perceive her as a French speaker rather than a Dutch speaker. Yet despite this perceptual change, many prosodic features of this patient's speech remained unchanged.

In the second chapter in this section, Abberton and Fourcin illustrate differences in voice quality using direct measurement of vocal fold activity and acoustic analyses. Specifically, electroglottography signals are displayed alongside acoustic signals derived from a microphone. The authors discuss how these displays contribute to the scientific literature tying physiological changes to acoustics and how they can be used to provide real-time biofeedback during therapy. The final chapter of the book by van Nuffelen provides a general overview of assessment and treatment of prosodic disturbances in dysarthria, a neuromotor speech disorder. Although the author discusses the need to assess receptive prosody, the proposed interventions focus mainly on the role of prosody in improving intelligibility.

Overall, this edited volume fills a clear void in the literature in the area of atypical prosody. Many of the authors are based in the UK and thus much of the cited literature is drawn from recent European sources and augmented with more classic works from North America. For some topics, the breadth of the literature could have been expanded and more current. On a positive note, there was a concerted effort on the part of almost all the authors to relate their work to clinicians. In many instances, assessment tools are surveyed and treatment strategies provided. A major

limitation, however, was the lack of attention on a theoretical framework of prosodic phonology. Given the discussions relating to perception and production of prosody in several chapters, this framework would have been useful. Further elaboration on the measurement of prosody perceptually, acoustically and through the use of physiological tools would have strengthened the clinical utility. That said, clinicians, students and researchers now have a resource that serves as a starting-off point for issues related to atypical prosody which

had until now been tucked away in various diverse fields.

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