

Pragmatic and Discourse Disorders: A Workbook

An essential study-aid for students of speech and language pathology, this highly practical workbook includes short-answer questions and data analysis exercises, which help students to test and improve their knowledge of pragmatic and discourse disorders. The book contains a detailed examination of the causes, and language and cognitive features of these disorders, and includes frequently encountered clinical populations and conditions that are overlooked by other texts. The use of actual linguistic data provides readers with an authentic insight into the clinical setting.

Features:

- 200 short-answer questions help students to develop and test their knowledge of pragmatic and discourse disorders.
- 68 data analysis exercises provide readers with real-life clinical scenarios.
- Fully worked answers are provided for all exercises, saving the lecturer time, and allowing the reader to self-test and improve understanding.
- A detailed glossary of terms makes the text a self-contained reference tool.
- Carefully selected suggestions for further reading are provided for each chapter.

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LOUISE CUMMINGS



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Preface

The need for a workbook on pragmatic and discourse disorders has been apparent to me for some time. Like many other instructors, I have been frustrated at the lack of available resources in this area of communication disorders. While published texts and data in clinical phonetics and phonology are commonplace, lecturers on speech–language pathology (SLP) courses have always had to do extra work to secure similar material on pragmatic and discourse disorders for use with their students. This lack of resources can be explained in part by the fact that pragmatics and discourse are still relative newcomers to linguistics in general and to the study of language pathology in particular. These important linguistic disciplines have not had as much time as phonology and syntax to become embedded in SLP curricula. Certainly, pragmatics and discourse do not command the same emphasis within the clinical education of SLP students as structural aspects of language (e.g. syntax and semantics). An essential first step in giving pragmatic and discourse disorders the prominence they deserve is the availability of accessible material that can be readily employed with SLP students in the clinic and in the classroom. This workbook is intended to be just such a resource.

In devising this workbook, my overriding aim has been to give its readers maximum exposure to data obtained from children and adults with impaired pragmatic and discourse skills. These data take a number of forms. There are transcriptions of conversational exchanges between clinicians, clients and family members. Non-dialogical forms of discourse are also used throughout the volume. These include the production of narratives which are either generated spontaneously or are elicited through specific discourse tasks (e.g. storytelling based on the events depicted in a wordless picture book or in a sequence of pictures). The use of procedural discourse to give directions to an individual or to explain the rules of a game to a listener will be examined on occasion. Referential communication tasks which involve naïve listeners are the source of some of the data which will be featured in the following pages. Alongside the production of discourse there will be consideration of a range of data relating to the comprehension of discourse and pragmatic aspects of language. This includes the ability to draw causal and temporal inferences during story listening and to respond to pragmatically demanding questions. In short, no aspect of the pragmatic and discourse performance of clients is omitted from consideration in this workbook.

The workbook also acknowledges that the successful analysis of clinical data is only possible under certain conditions. These conditions include a sound understanding of the types of clients who are likely to experience pragmatic and discourse disorders. Among these clients are children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability and traumatic brain injury. Alongside these well-known conditions there are a number of other client groups in which pragmatic and discourse disorders are only just beginning to be captured (e.g. adults with non-Alzheimer dementias). It is vitally important for SLP students to have knowledge of all aspects of these conditions and of their likely impact on language and communication. To this end, four chapters in the workbook contain a number of short-answer questions which are designed to test students’ knowledge of the

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PREFACE

clinical conditions in which pragmatic and discourse disorders are found. These questions will serve instructors well both as classroom exercises and as assessment tasks. With answers provided to all questions, SLP students can also use them independently of their tutors to test their knowledge of particular topics. Additional features of the volume, which will be equally useful to instructors and students, are a detailed glossary of clinical terms and numerous suggestions for further reading.

Acknowledgements

There are a number of people whose assistance I wish to acknowledge. I particularly want to thank Dr Andrew Winnard, Commissioning Editor in Language and Linguistics at Cambridge University Press, for responding so positively to the proposal of a workbook in the area of pragmatic and discourse disorders. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Judith Heaney, who prepared the index for the volume. I have also been supported by family members and friends who are too numerous to mention individually. I am grateful to them for their kind words of encouragement during my many months of work on this volume.

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