

Speech-Language Pathology and Clinical Linguistics – Hope beyond the Horizon!

K. S. PREMA

All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysore, India

ABSTRACT

The discipline of Speech-Language Pathology is a specialized field that most often adopts some of the principles from various other disciplines including Linguistics. Since long, the strength of Linguistics and its application to clinical population was evident through the work of Aphasiologists. Yet, to date, the two disciplines have remained wide apart. The paper attempts to discuss the role of clinical linguistics drawing a few samples of clinical linguistic analysis from the author's research work. The paper also discusses the reasons for the two disciplines to stay apart for so long. Future directions are given to bridge the gaps in the knowledge source so that both the fields mutually benefit and that the clinical practice in Speech-Language Pathology becomes more efficient and effective.

The discipline of Speech-Language Pathology since its emergence has been addressing the issues related to language acquisition and its disorders – both in children and adults, while the linguistic science focuses towards the establishment of “standard language”, second language teaching/learning and the nuances of cultural-linguistic diversity. Given the tangential interests of the two disciplines, mutual application of principles of one to the other (Linguistics to Speech-Language Pathology and vice versa) although is very crucial, is still in its infancy.

Historically, the contribution of Roman Jakobson's theory of phonemic disintegration (1956) to Aphasia could be considered as the beginning of the convergence of the two disciplines. His valuable contribution to draw Aphasiology away from the mere surface description of symptoms and to provide the first interpretations of aphasics' language disturbances in a linguistically motivated way is a significant milestone in the history of Linguistics. The seeds of application of linguistic principles to clinical needs were thus sown