Prologue

This special issue of *Folia Phoniatria et Logopaedica* is devoted to a selection of papers presented at the 2nd International Symposium on Communication Disorders in Multilingual Populations which took place in South Africa in July 2000. The articles were selected to represent the wide range of topics covered at the Symposium. Special emphasis was placed on the need for cultural awareness and for the education of speech language therapists to work with multilingual populations.

The papers by Cheng et al. and Semela address these very important issues. Cheng et al. focuses on a general educational perspective looking at the issues faced by speech language pathology (SLP) training courses in 'Western countries'. Semela looks directly at the kinds of cultural influences on the work of the SLP where starkly contrasting cultural traditions exist alongside each other.

Two papers deal with adult bilingual speakers. The paper by Marina Laganaro and Mary Overton-Venet presents a single-subject study describing an acquired reading impairment observed in a Spanish-English speaker. As well as addressing important issues in psy-

cholingistic models of language processing, the paper also raises questions of which languages should be used in therapy and what types of language processes generalize from one language to another.

The article by de Picciotto and Friedland outlines the fluency abilities of 6 bilingual subjects with Alzheimer's disease. The outline provides a framework for a discussion of assessment issues of bilingual speakers with dementia and also raises broader questions regarding the effects of various factors (age acquisition, pattern of usage) that might have a bearing on the language picture in these speakers.

In the field of child language disorders, Jordaan et al. set out to examine whether bilingual children would be differently affected in their development according to the different type of speech language disorder they present. The profile of a child with specific language impairment is compared with that of a child with semantic pragmatic disorder.

Phonological development of children acquiring two languages is reviewed in the paper by Holm and Dodd. At issue is the impor-

tance of differentiating between types of therapy, namely, articulation vs. phonological, that are best suited to specific targets in order to bring about promotion or generalisation of gains across languages as compared to those that are language-specific. The authors base their predictions on a model of language processing.

With the aim of minimising negative effects from the general socioeconomic factors typically faced by many bi- and multilingual

communities, Hus describes an early reading program for minority language children.

We hope that the articles in this special issue will stimulate interest in the many aspects of bilingualism in populations with communication disorders and encourage further research.

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