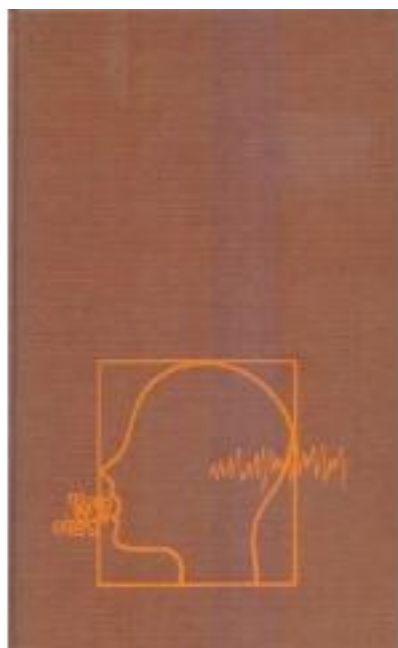


Language, Brain and Hearing



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This book is intended to give an insight into most of the major ideas and issues in the young science of psycholinguistics and to be, at the same time, intelligible to non-specialist readers. It should serve as an introduction to the subject for psychology or language students, clinical and educational psychologists, speech therapists and practising or student-teachers. These readers are invited to view Part Two as a case study in

which some of the theoretical ideas of Part One are applied to the practical problem of facilitating deaf children's learning of language.

But this second part will obviously be of special interest to teachers of deaf children and to educational psychologists. A child born deaf or becoming deaf early in life has the utmost difficulty in learning language and his teacher needs as good an understanding of language processes as is possible in order to tackle the handicap effectively. This book should at least partly meet the need.

The first four chapters introduce those ideas from psychology and linguistics which are required later in the book. Chapter 5 sketches the normal sequence of language development and Chapters 6 and 7 attempt to put these observations into an explanatory scheme.

In Part One I have given emphasis to those topics which strike me as particularly important or interesting, and in a similar way I have not attempted to be impartial in describing controversial issues. A recurring idea is the importance of economy and efficiency in the brain's handling of information and the role of schemata in this. Related to this is the parallel between the linguist's problem in developing a formal grammar, the child's problem in developing an intuitive grammar and the philosophical problem of induction. Although the bright star of Chomsky's transformational grammar seems to outshine earlier linguistic theories I have chosen to describe Fries's ideas fairly fully, both because they form a firm foundation to later developments in linguistics and because they seem to be more directly relevant to the psychology of language: in nasty jargon, the notion of distributional equivalence (or

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