

A CASE OF CHILDHOOD APHASIA

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It has long been discussed by many specialists whether the childhood aphasia is a definable entity or a part of a symptom complex. According to Myklebust, childhood aphasia can be roughly defined as an impairment in the verbal function that is characterized by an extraordinarily poor ability for language acquisition without manifestation of sensory, motor or intellectual abnormality.

The present authors have made a close observation on a typical case of an eight-year-old boy which could be diagnosed as the childhood aphasia according to the definition mentioned above, during a course of two year clinical sessions. Some findings are summarized below.

The patient showed inconsistent response in the standard audiometry, while normal threshold was obtained in a range of 0.5-2.0-kHz in the EEG audiometry. This peculiar behavior, viz. inconsistency of response to auditory stimuli, can be assumed as one of the essential characteristics of the childhood aphasia. No abnormal sign was found in neurological examinations except slight abnormality in EEG. Psychological and psychiatric evaluation revealed also negative results.

Concerning the spoken language, his vocabulary was extremely poor (estimated at a 2-year level), and the accepted length of sentences both in understanding and expression was restricted to two or three words. His language skill was greatly influenced by the particular situation. He revealed average scores in performance of reading and dictation. However, his spontaneous writing was

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poorly developed and its level was comparable to that of speaking. As characteristics in his conversation, perseverance and jargon-like speech were observed. Thus it may be concluded that he is poor in conception by use of language.

His school-teacher reported that, although his performance in the class work was poor, he was well adjusted to the school life.