



The Speech Chain: The Physics and Biology of Spoken Language

Peter B. Denes, Elliot N. Pinson

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Speech is usually taken for granted, and its fundamental importance is often overlooked. Communication by speech sets humans apart from other animals: it facilitates our ability to think abstractly, it allows us to coordinate our efforts with one another, and it contributes significantly to the development of human societies. Spoken communication is an extremely intricate process. A complex chain of events links speaker to listener, a chain that involves not only physics and acoustics, but also anatomy, physiology, linguistics, and psychology. The Speech Chain explains simply and clearly the basic mechanisms involved in spoken communication, from the speaker's production of words, to the transmission of sound, to the listener's perception of what has been said. The Speech Chain has been well-known as an easy-to-read introduction to the fundamentals of spoken communication. The book has now been thoroughly revised and updated to give a state-of-the-art description of each link in the speech chain. Included are new chapters on the digital processing of speech and on the use of computers for the generation of synthetic speech and for automatic speech recognition. Professionals, teachers, students, and others interested in how we communicate with one another will find The Speech Chain a useful introduction to this uniquely human capability. This interdisciplinary account is also accessible to persons with no previous knowledge of the fields involved.

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