

BACKGROUND

- Research has shown that the verb plays a key role in conveying the meaning of a sentence (Longacre, 1996). Persons with aphasia also tend to have more difficulty producing verbs than nouns (Bastiaanse and Jonkers, 1998).
- Conversational discourse has often been the focus of discourse intervention, as it plays a large role in social interaction. (Davidson et. al, 2003)
- However, procedural discourse is also important, especially for persons with aphasia who wish to work, volunteer, or give directions to a caregiver.

PURPOSE

- To investigate the differences in verbs used by persons with aphasia during procedural and conversational discourse, as well as the degrees to which these differences occur.
- These differences may have implications for approaches to language intervention and functional outcomes of treatment.
- These implications may include improved understanding of the types of verbs to target during treatment involving procedural discourse, increased use of procedural discourse analysis as a pre/post treatment progress measure, and increased involvement of procedural discourse when targeting Life Participation Approach to Aphasia (LPAA)-based goals.

PARTICIPANTS

- 45 people with mild-moderate non-fluent aphasia
 - 39 had Broca's aphasia
 - 6 had Transcortical Motor aphasia.
- 44% male, 56% female
- Ages 25-83 (mean = 58)
- All scored 10 or higher on the spontaneous speech subtest of the Western Aphasia Battery.

METHODS

Language samples were drawn from the Aphasia TalkBank, an online password-protected database containing audio-visual speech recordings, testing results, and demographic data of persons with aphasia. Samples were transcribed for coding.

Instructions for Collecting Language Samples:

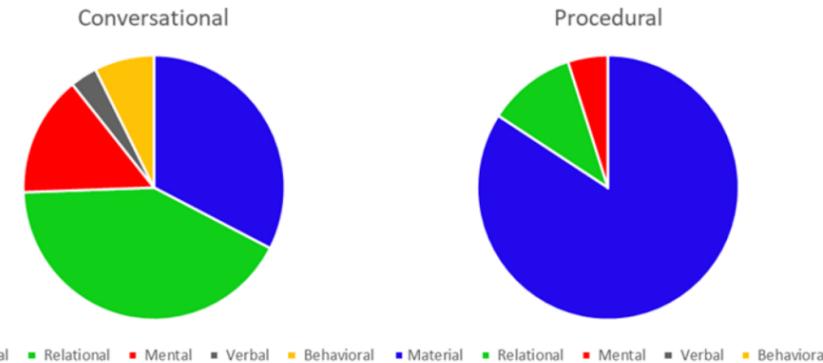
1. Talk about an important personal event (conversational discourse)
2. Explain how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich (procedural discourse)

Verb Classifications

- Halliday's Verb Categories (see table below)
- Past, present, future tense
- Transitive and intransitive
- Copulas, auxiliaries, and modals

Verb categories (Halliday, 1985)

Verb type	Definition	Discourse function	Example
Material (MAT)	Process of "doing"	Recounting actions, events, happenings	The boy was <i>walking</i> The storm <i>wrecked</i> the town
Relational (REL)	Processes of "being", "having", and "being all" i.e., intensive, possessive, and circumstantial	Description Evaluation/opinion Categorisation Connections of discourse participants	The car <i>was</i> white The play <i>was</i> great He <i>was</i> an artist He <i>had</i> a new dog
Mental (MENT)	Processes of sensing—feeling, thinking, and perceiving	Evaluation/opinion Reflection Conveying feelings Reporting experiences	I <i>believed</i> it was true I <i>decided</i> to go I <i>felt</i> tired I <i>heard</i> the noise
Verbal (VERB)	Processes of saying	Reporting conversation Metaphorical usage	He <i>said</i> he would come This book <i>tells</i> you a lot about the world
Behavioural (BEH)	Physiological/psychological processes	Reporting of physiological and psychological "actions"	She <i>dreams</i> a lot He <i>coughed</i> badly They <i>smiled</i> at the newcomer



RESULTS

- 5% of the samples were scored by 2 raters independently; 95% reliability was achieved.
- Relational verbs made up the largest portion (42%) of the verbs used in conversational discourse; while material verbs made up the largest portion (84%) of the procedural discourse.
- Present tense verbs made up the largest portion of the verbs used in both discourse types (64% of the verbs used in conversational discourse and 97% of the verbs used in procedural discourse).
- The procedural discourse samples contained more transitive verbs that intransitive, while the conversational discourse samples showed the opposite.
- The conversational discourse samples had more verbs per minute on average than the procedural discourse samples.
- The conversational discourse samples contained more copulas and auxiliaries than the procedural discourse samples.

CONCLUSION

These results indicate that conversational discourse may entail more complex use of verbs than procedural discourse. Procedural discourse, therefore, may be a more realistic starting place when targeting verbs. Coherence in procedural discourse could serve as an intermediary goal before coherence in conversational discourse.

No financial or non-financial relationships to disclose

References:
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 Halliday, M.A.K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
 Longacre, R. E. (1996). *The grammar of discourse* (2nd ed.). New York: Plenum Press.