



# Thematic Analysis of Topics from Elicited Stories about an Important Event Told by Individuals with Aphasia from AphasiaBank

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## Background

### Incidence of Stroke

Stroke is the leading cause of long-term disability and the leading preventable cause of long-term disability. Approximately 795,000 people in the U.S. have a stroke each year<sup>1</sup> and a third of people with stroke have aphasia.<sup>2</sup>

### Impact on Identity

The impact of living with stroke and aphasia can be devastating and chronic as individuals with aphasia have a range of losses that can include physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and communicative abilities.<sup>3</sup> These can all impact how a person with aphasia conceptualizes their identity<sup>4</sup>. Individuals with aphasia report a lower quality of life than stroke survivors who do not have aphasia<sup>5</sup>. Further, having aphasia was ranked as the largest negative impact on quality of health out of 60 diseases and 15 health conditions in individuals living in long term extended care facilities<sup>6</sup>.

### Storytelling

Storytelling is a fundamental aspect of being human<sup>7</sup>. Stories are a way to make meaning out of traumatic events, such as having a stroke and aphasia. Stories contribute to our identity and provide a lens through which we view ourselves<sup>8</sup>.

### Themes from Stories

Theme is used as attribute, descriptor, element, and concept<sup>9</sup>. Meanings are conveyed in terms of themes and their related subdivisions as subthemes<sup>9</sup>. Knowing the themes of important events told by persons with aphasia may allow rehabilitation clinicians insight into relevant topics of interest.

### Research Aim

What are the themes of topics found in prompted stories about an important event produced by persons with aphasia?

## Methods



- **Data Source:** AphasiaBank. A search revealed a total of 400 prompted important event stories; 162 stories were selected for analysis.
- **Procedures:** Stories were coded by 10 reviewers. Each reviewer individually coded 40-45 cases. Reviewers cross-referenced their findings with another reviewer. Discrepancies between reviewers were brought to all reviewers for consensus.
- **Analysis:** Thematic analysis was conducted to identify topics of each important event story. The topics were then reviewed to identify 1-2 themes evident in the important story events.

## Results

Table 1: Participant Characteristics (n = 102)

Mean Age	62.96
Sex	Male (54), Female (48)
Aphasia Types	Global (1), Broca's (14), Wernicke's (17), Anomic (17), Transcortical Motor (5), Transcortical Sensory (1), Conduction (23), Not Aphasic (24)
Aphasia Severity	Severe (11), Moderate (42), Mild (49)

Table 2: Frequency of Themes

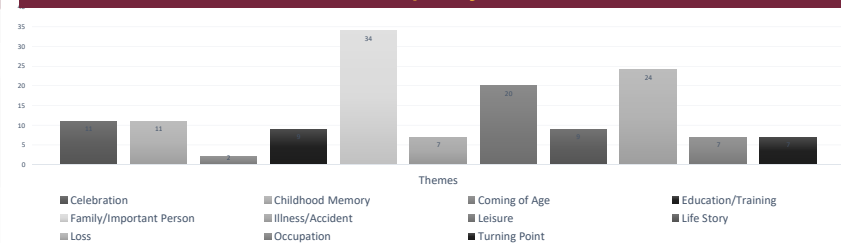


Table 3: Themes and Subthemes in Elicited Important Event Stories

Theme	Celebration	Childhood Memory	Coming of Age	Education/ Training	Family/ Important Person	Illness/ Accident	Leisure	Life Story	Loss	Occupation	Turning Point
Subthemes	Birth, Communion, Baptism, Anniversary, Wedding, Birthday, Marriage	Pets, Fire, Funny Story, Sledding Injury	Getting License, Life Transition	Service, College	Children, Grand-children, Significant Other, Siblings, Parents, Godchildren	Stroke, Fell Down Stairs, Bike Crash, Chicken Pox, Fire, Sledding Injury	Travel, Hobbies, Motorcycle, Ranching, Dancing, Sailing, Horses, Car, Band, Basketball, Childcare, Golf	Review of Life, Stroke Story, Life Before Stroke	Death, Stroke Story, Challenges Post Stroke, Divorce	Service, Speech-Language Pathologist, Construction Worker, Gas Company, Producer/Director, Engineer	Moving, Marriage, Change in Job Position, Finding Speech Therapist, Living Alone, Divorce

## Discussion

### Key Findings

The important event stories in this study were categorized into 11 themes. The two most predominant themes found were *Family/Important Person* and *Loss*. The loss of certain abilities due to aphasia may warrant the desire to talk about those challenges and the need for support from family and people important to them. *Leisure* was the third most common theme, showing that even with the potential losses that come with having aphasia, enjoyed activities such as hobbies and travel were selected as important events to share.

### Clinical Application

Knowing the themes of important events told by persons with aphasia may allow rehabilitation clinicians working with people who have aphasia insight into relevant topics of interest to individuals with aphasia. This knowledge may be able to help clinicians guide clients through the process of recovery as well as regaining their identity through storytelling.

### Limitations

Limitations consist of participant responsivity may vary due to the difference in clinicians and settings.

### Future Research

Future research may include investigating various independent variables such as age, sex, aphasia type, and severity of aphasia, and how they relate to themes in stories told by people with aphasia.

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