Linguistic Features of Agrammatism in Korean-speaking Individuals with Aphasia

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Introduction

- Linguistic symptoms of aphasia may manifest themselves in very different ways across the languages.
- Agrammatism in people with aphasia
  - Agrammatic symptoms may manifest differently as a function of cross-linguistic variability.
  - Research on Korean-specific linguistic symptoms in aphasia is limited.
- Distinctive linguistic characteristics of Korean
  - Korean is a predicate-final language.
  - Korean allows linguistic elements to be omitted in a sentence as far as it is predictable from the discourse context.
  - Due to the pro-drop tendency, Korean is often regarded as a predicate-salient language because predicates alone can build a sentence (Sohn, 2013a).
- Korean predicates: verbs and adjectives
  - Korean adjectives inflect for honorifics, tenseness, and modality, and thus there are no differences between verbs and adjectives in syntactic morphological inflections (Sohn, 2013a).
  - Verb compounding in Korean is very common, and include both serial-verb and auxiliary-verb constructions (Sohn, 2013a).
  - Korean speakers very commonly combine verbs in order to add semantic information.
  - "They are trying to eat" or "they are wanting to eat," rather than "they are eating."
  - "Mek-a pota (try eating") instead of "mek-ta"

Purpose of the Study

To determine whether Korean-speaking individuals with Broca’s and anomic aphasia differ in the types of predicates and case markers that they use during picture description tasks.

Participants

- Non-brain damaged control group
  - 10 age- and education-matched Korean speakers
- People with Aphasia
  - n=19, Broca=9, Anomic=10
  - Korean-Western Aphasia Battery (K-WAB) (Kim & Na, 2001)
  - Broca’s Aphasia: 28.6-61.4
  - Anomic Aphasia: 75.9-94.3

Experimental Material

Instructions: “Here is another picture. Look at everything that’s happening and then tell me a story about what you see. Tell me the story with a beginning, a middle, and an end.”

Linguistic Analyses

- Tokens & Types of Predicates
- Tokens of Case Markers
- Normalized variables by utterance

Results

- Group (Control, Broca, Anomic) MANOVA
  - No Sig. differences in the overall number of utterances
  - Sig. effect of group in the number of complex predicates (Verb + Aux + Be copula) per utterance, F(2, 26)=6.021, p=0.007
  - Broca’s aphasia produced fewer than Anomic’s aphasia
  - No sig. differences b/w Anomic and Control
  - Sig. effect of group in the number accusative case markers per utterance, F(2, 26)=5.888, p=0.008
  - Broca’s aphasia produced fewer accusative case markers than controls, p=0.007 and marginally than Anomic group, p=0.091
  - No Sig. differences b/w Anomic and Control, p=0.820

Discussion

- The groups can be differentiated based on the number of words they produce and the complexity of their utterance
  - Broca’s aphasia produced significantly fewer complex predicates per utterance than the anomic group.
  - This is consistent with work showing that English speakers with agrammatic Broca’s aphasia produce relatively simple syntactic forms
  - Controls and individuals with anomic aphasia produced more accusative case markers than individuals with Broca’s aphasia.
  - It did not suggest that individuals with Broca’s aphasia omitted obligatory case markers.
  - Broca’s aphasia seems to have used fewer accusative nouns.
  - Broca’s aphasia produced less complex utterances than those with anomic aphasia.

References