MENTAL REPRESENTATION OF EVENTS: TENSE & ASPECT IN AGRAMMATIC APHASIA
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PARTICIPANTS

Neurotypical college-aged participants
- N = 32; Mean age = 19.5 yrs, Right handed, native English speakers

Persons with aphasia (matched in aphasia severity, passed sentence reading screen)
- Agrammatic speech with Broca’s aphasia
  - N=3; Mean age = 64.5 yrs; Mean Verb inflection Accuracy = 27.5%
- Non-agrammatic with mixed aphasia
  - N = 2; Mean age = 61.5 yrs; Mean Verb inflection Accuracy = 83.2%

METHOD

Task - Sensitivity judgment (adapted Bergen & Wheeler, 2010)
- Visual presentation of sentences
- Dependent measure – Reaction Time

Stimuli - 20 transitive eventive verbs
- 120 critical sentences (20 each of six tense/aspect types)
- Sentences implied direction toward or away from the body
- Response direction on keyboard and sentence meaning were congruent or incongruent (toward/away from body)

RESULTS

- High accuracy
  - Mean = 97.2%, Mean D-prime 2.8

- Reaction Time:
  - No main effects of tense or aspect for group (Kruskal Wallis test) and individual participants (Crawford & Garthwaite’s test, 2002)

DISCUSSION

- Sentence processing is influenced by verb aspect
  - Temporal distance between event time and reference time (event completion)

- Insensitive to temporal relations implied by verb aspect (or tense)
  - Conceptualization of event completion is likely impaired
  - No evidence of past tense difficulty

- First study with fine-grained manipulation of tense/aspect processing
  - Needs further research

REFERENCES


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