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Word Retrieval Deficits in Malay-Speaking Adults with Nonfluent Aphasia

A Aziz M. a,*, Abd Aziz A. b, A Razak R. c, Abd Hamid B. c

a Cheras Rehabilitation Hospital, Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Health Malaysia
b Raja Perempuan Zainab II Hospital, Kota Bharu, Ministry of Health Malaysia
c Speech Sciences Program, School of Rehabilitation Sciences. Faculty of Health Sciences, National University of Malaysia

Introduction

Word retrieval deficits are commonly seen in aphasia following stroke. Past studies have reported impaired noun comprehension and/or production in fluent aphasia while difficulty in verb comprehension and/or production has been found in nonfluent aphasia. However limited studies have been done on the naming abilities of Malay-speakers with aphasia.

Aim: This study examined the verb and noun production and comprehension abilities in individuals with aphasia using the Malay Object and Action Test (MOAT), which is a newly developed prototype test whose purpose is to identify the word retrieval deficits and explicate the nature of the difficulties among Malay-speaking adults with aphasia. A classification of error type patterns will be produced.

Method

11 non-brain damaged subjects (mean=44.9, SD=13.58) and 10 subjects with non-fluent aphasia (mean=50.30, SD=17.27) were recruited and matched according to age and educational level. The subjects were native speakers of the Malay language. 101 nouns and 50 verbs which were controlled for syllable length, imageability and familiarity were elicited via the single-word naming pictures and auditory comprehension tasks. The word lists were converted to coloured photographs in both production and comprehension tasks. In comprehension task, subjects were asked to point to a set of photograph picture which included the target object or action and two distractors. In production task, subjects were asked to name the object or action represented in the photograph.

Results

Results are summarized in figure 1. The performance of noun production and comprehension were found better than verb for the group of non-brain-damaged and subjects with nonfluent aphasia. Two sample t tests comparing the groups showed a significant difference (p<.05) on both tasks. Subjects with nonfluent aphasia showed a greater deficit on verbs than nouns in production and comprehension. Overall the predominant categories of error type exhibited by all subjects were the semantically-related errors and unrelated-response errors.

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: mrazmarul@gmail.com
Conclusion

The present findings have provided some useful preliminary data in the naming abilities of Malay adults with aphasia, aside from demonstrating an assessment tool in determining naming abilities of Malay adults with aphasia which could contribute to better planning in managing communication difficulties among Malay-speaking population.

Reference

