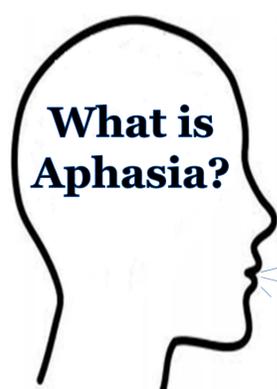


A linguistic analysis of Supported Conversation interventions with people with aphasia

Dr Traci Walker – Department of Language & Linguistic Science
Professor Ian Watt – Department of Health Sciences



What is aphasia?

What is Aphasia?

Aphasia is an impairment in the ability to communicate as a result of brain injury.

What is Supported Conversation?

An intervention using conversation with 'communication ramps' (pictures, gestures, writing) to ensure the person with aphasia's access to participation in everyday life (Kagan 1999)

Questions inspiring the project, from speech and language therapists (SLTs) working in the NHS:

Are our Supported Conversation techniques truly effective, and if so why?

Why do non-SLT professionals express relief and/or gratitude at the presence of SLTs in conversations with people with aphasia?

How can we better describe/explain what we do?

Research question: How and why does a Supported Conversation intervention work?

We need to understand the differences between conversations involving persons with aphasia and typical conversations, looking especially at:

- sequential organisation and linguistic structures
- claims vs. displays of understanding

Using Conversation Analysis, a qualitative research methodology

What is a claim vs. a display of understanding?

CLAIM	DISPLAY
Responding simply to polar questions using only single word answers like "yes" or "no" (often left intact in aphasia) merely <i>claims</i> understanding. True understanding may not be achieved.	<i>Displays</i> of understanding can be done by rephrasing the prior question/statement, or repeating some of it with appropriate grammatical changes.
In everyday conversation, "yes" and "no" generally preface longer, expanded answers (especially true in the case of "no"); bare "no" answers are almost always pursued by the conversational partner if no account is forthcoming.	Persons with aphasia may lack the linguistic resources to continue their responses beyond "yes" or "no," and may need extra help from a skilled conversational partner, e.g., being prompted to repeat some or all of the prior talk, or being asked 'do you agree?'
In conversations with persons with aphasia, the conversational partner may feel uncomfortable pursuing additional talk – thus, creating a different conversational structure.	