

Morphosyntactic Abilities in Speakers with Broca's Aphasia: A Preliminary Examination

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Abstract : Introduction: Broca's aphasia is a non-fluent type of aphasic syndrome, which is primarily manifested by impairment of language production. In connected speech, patients with this type of aphasia produce short sentences in which they often omit function words and morphemes or choose inadequate forms. Aim: This research was conducted to examine the morphosyntactic abilities of people with Broca's aphasia, comparing them with neurologically healthy subjects without a language disorder. Method: The sample included 15 patients with Broca's post-stroke aphasia, who had the relatively intact ability of auditory comprehension. The diagnosis of aphasia was based on the Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination. The control group comprised 16 neurologically healthy subjects without data on the presence of disorders in speech and language development. The patients' mother tongue was Serbian. The new Serbian Morphosyntactic Abilities Test (SMAT) was used. Descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean, SD, min, max) and inferential (Mann-Whitney U-test) statistics were used in data processing. Results: We noticed statistically significant differences between people with Broca's aphasia and neurotypical subjects on the SMAT ($U = 1.500$, $z = -4.982$, $p = 0.000$). The results showed that people with Broca's aphasia had achieved low scores on the SMAT, regardless of age ($p = -0.045$, $p = 0.873$) and time post onset ($p = 0.330$, $p = 0.229$). Conclusion: Preliminary results show that the SMAT has the potential to detect morphosyntactic deficits in Serbian speakers with Broca's aphasia.

Keywords : Broca's aphasia, morphosyntactic abilities, agrammatism, Serbian language

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