



Tense/Aspect Category in Fluent and Nonfluent German Aphasia

Roma Wieczorek, Walter Huber, Robert Darkow (University Hospital, RWTH Aachen University, Germany)

Objectives & Background: The aim of this study is to describe the linguistic performance regarding sentence comprehension and production of tense/aspect category from the morphological and semantic point of view, in fluent and non-fluent German aphasia. As the category of aspect is reflected in German by means of tense morphology (Van Hout et al., 2005 ; Musan, 2001), the difference between the ongoing action (Präsens→Imperfektiv) and the completed past action (Perfekt→Perfektiv) is tested (Wischer & Habermann, 2004). Special interest is taken in observing any differences or similarities in verbal processing between fluent and non-fluent aphasia, since in majority of cases the data of non-fluent aphasia only are available in the literature.

Methods and Results :

The following four tasks were used in the experiment:

- Auditory comprehension task, based on the proper choice of the picture from the four provided
- Sentence completion task to be filled in with the correct inflected form
- Oral production task , aiming only at the imperfective vs perfective contrast
- Semantic-ordering task, depicting future, present and past situation.

On the basis of error analysis it was shown that some patients tend to replace perfective form with the imperfective one or vice versa and the measured difference turned out to be statistically significant for the fluent patient in sentence completion and oral production tasks ($p < .003$, $p < .000$, respectively), whereas for the non-fluent aphasic the difference observed referred to the morphological errors ($p < .006$, $p < 0.003$) We believe that such “aspect mixed up” phenomenon cannot be explained only in terms of the complexity of German verbal morphology since in most of the cases the inflections are correctly produced. On the other hand, the non-fluent patient who committed morphological errors, did not seem to have problems with the aspect differentiation.

References:

- Musan, R. 2001. The Present Perfect in German: outline of its semantic composition. In *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 19 ; pp.355-401
- Van Hout, A., de Swart, H., Verkuyl, J.H. 2005. Introducing Perspectives on Aspect. In J.H. Verkuyl, de Swart, H. & van Hout, A. (Eds.). *Perspectives on Aspect*. the Netherlands : Springer
- Wischer, I. & Habermann, M. 2004. Der Gebrauch von Präfixverben zum Ausdruck von Aspekt/Aktionsart im Altenglischen und Althochdeutschen. In *ZGL* 32 , pp. 262-285