Introduction to aphasia and its basic forms

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Disorders of Language
Introduction to aphasia and its basic forms

Aphasia

- Weakness of right arm and leg
- 200,000 in UK; 1M in US
- Same incidence as MS or Parkinson's

Reading List

- Disorders of Language: Reading List
- Michael Thomas

Course

- Disorders of Language: Spring 2006
- Seminar 1: Specific Language Impairment
- Seminar 2: Specific Language Impairment

History

- Egyptians, Greeks, Romans
  - 2800 BC: loss of language + treatment in Egyptian papyrus
  - Hippocrates 400 BC: loss of speech 'aphonia'
  - Valerius Maximus, AD 30: selective problems with reading

- Confused with paralysis of tongue, deafness, mutism, stuttering
- Relation to brain?
  - heart seen as engine of thought (Aristotle)
  - mind seen as controlled by non-physical spirit (Descartes)
## History

- **19th century**
  - Gall = well-developed mental faculties correspond to large areas of cortex; language in frontal lobes
  - 1825 French physician Jean-Baptiste Bouillaud delivers scientific paper with same conclusion
  - 1830 Marc Dax, language in left hemisphere

- **1861 Paul Broca**
  - Post-mortem reports of two patients with impaired language function
  - Tan (named after one of few utterances)
  - 1863, 8 more patients
  - All cases, damage = left anterior lesion
  - Additional patient, right anterior lesion + no language impairment

- **Conclusion**
  - Impaired language production associated with left anterior damage to third frontal gyrus
  - Suggestion of second type: posterior damage, impaired associations between language and thought
  - Did not offer specific localisation

- **1884 Carl Wernicke**
  - Aphasia + predominant difficulty with comprehension = lesions to left superior temporal lobe
  - Further type predicted, due to disconnection between anterior and posterior areas (conduction aphasia)
  - 1885: Lichtheim proposes diagrammatic form of model

- **1965: Geschwind extends theory to produce “Wernicke-Geschwind” model**
The Wernicke-Geschwind model

History

- 1885-1965: Why the 80-year delay?
- Early writings of Broca and Wernicke controversial
  - e.g. Pierre Marie (1906) proposed that:
    - All aphasias have some comprehension deficit
    - Broca’s aphasics = interference with more posterior zone
    - Broca’s area purely for motor aspects of speech
    - Critical lesions in Broca’s aphasia are sub-cortical

The brain of Paul Broca’s patient, Tan

- Note the gross subcortical extent of the lesion in the coronal section – Tan case study supports Marie?

Why the 80-year delay? (cont.)

- 1860s John Hughlings Jackson - rejection of localisationist approach
- Head (1926) - more psychological description of aphasia, irrespective of neural correlates
- 1940s - Behaviourist approach rejects mentalistic analysis
  - External S-R schedules of reinforcement

Two modern approaches

- Cognitive neuropsychology
  - Single case studies looking for dissociations between psychological components of language system
  - Less concerned with relation to underlying substrate
- Syndrome approach
  - Groups patients according to symptoms, looks for common patterns of underlying damage
- Approaches interact; imaging may bring them together
  - Functional module may be realised by distributed network of brain areas
  - Imaging may help us link network with module via regions of brain damage
Cognitive neuropsychology

Patient JCU: naming problem with semantic errors (Howard & Orchard-Lisle, 1984)

Patient EST: could give precise semantic info about objects unable to name (Kay & Ellis, 1987)

Patient JJ: naming problems, unable to give meanings, but could write word forms (Hillis & Caramazza, 1991)

Syndrome approach

- Let’s identify the broad types of language breakdown
- First, what are the language ‘areas’ of the brain?
  - Try poking it

The language areas

- Electrical mapping: Penfield and Roberts (1959)

The language areas

- Electrical mapping: Ojemann et al. (1989)

Bigger language areas?
or
Individual variability?

Cross-species comparison

Language areas
Types of Aphasia: The Wernicke-Geschwind model

- Predicts three types of aphasia...

Basic forms of aphasia
- Broca’s aphasia
  - Agrammatism
  - Wernicke’s aphasia
  - Conduction aphasia
  - Word deafness
  - Global aphasia
- The Transcortical aphasias
  - Transcortical motor aphasia
  - Transcortical sensory aphasia
- Subcortical aphasia
- Right hemisphere damage

Broca’s aphasia
- Cinderella’s story (from Safran, Berndt, and Schwartz, 1989)

“...three kids... bad mother... one kid beautiful... rich Italian... mother... stepmother... talk about Cinderella... clean my house... you Cinderella close the door... Cinderella like all... mother... three kids... I love mother... Cinderella walk ball... people ball... rich people... man and Cinderella dance dance dance party... one... dance dance dance... dance every time... ball beautiful people... people watched Cinderella... Cinderella... beautiful clothes... and garments... twelve o’clock night/ Cinderella... oh no/ oh no/ I’m sorry/ I’m sorry people! I love you baby!... walk walk/ tumble/... one shoe bye-bye!... Cinderella... pumpkin cab... oh shoes/ oh please/ oh well/ walk pumpkin car.”

Broca’s aphasia
- Symptoms:
  - Difficulties in production (lack of function words and inflections), some problems in comprehension of syntax (e.g., reversible sentences)
  - Non-fluent / Agrammatism
  - Repetition difficulties
- Type of damage:
  - In excess of Broca’s area. Arterial system means motor areas typically also damaged
- Problems with simple model:
  - 1. Lesion location – need to damage more than original Broca’s area. Broca’s alone = articulation difficulties
  - 2. Terms too broad, individual variability of agrammatism: small vs. large Broca’s patients; function word/inflection deficit dissociate from word order deficit; (syntactic) comprehension deficits

Patient with small Broca’s aphasia
- Initial speech assessment (Andrewes, 2001, p.309)

HH: Sometimes I say “yes”... (halts in mid sentence) when I mean “no”. I realise immediately afterwards that I have said the wrong thing and... correct myself.
DA: Does this happen often?
HH: ... (Appears to be thinking about what to say and lunges forward as if forcing out the word) “No” (we both saw the humour in the situation, but he refrains from elaborating).
DA: How does this affect your everyday life?
HH: It’s a problem when ... converse with the mates.
Wernicke's aphasia

**Symptoms:**
- Comprehension difficulties
- Fluent (sometimes excessive), word finding difficulties, paraphasias, excess of grammatical words but paucity of meaning; some syntactic difficulties
- Severe: 'jargon' aphasia: neologisms (new words) + lack of awareness
- Repetition difficulties

**Type of damage:**
- In excess of original Wernicke's area. Posterior superior temporal gyrus still appears crucial

**Problems with simple model:**
- Patients appear to be aware of meaning they are trying to produce: Not semantic deficit but communication with phonological output system?
- Lack of awareness of jargon implies 'unconscious' route to production

Comparison

- Broca's vs. Wernicke's aphasics
**Cookie theft (from Boston aphasia exam)**

**Wernicke's vs. Broca's aphasia**

- **Description of cookie theft story**
  - **Wernicke's patient** (Goodglass, 1983)
    
    "Well this … mother is away here working her work out o'here to get her better, but when she's looking, the two boys looking in the other part. One their small time here. She's working another time because she is getting, too."
  
  - **Broca's patient** (Helm-Estabrooks et al., 1981)
    "Well … see … girl eating no … cookie … no … ah … school no … stool … ah … tip over … and ah … cookie jar … ah … kid … no … see … water all over … spilled over … yuck … Mother … daydreaming."

**Basic forms of aphasia**

- **Broca's aphasia**
  - Agrammatism
  - Jargon aphasia
  - Conduction aphasia
  - Word deafness

- **Wernicke's aphasia**
  - Jargon aphasia
  - Conduction aphasia

- **Global aphasia**

- **The Transcortical aphasias**
  - Transcortical motor aphasia
  - Transcortical sensory aphasia

- **Subcortical aphasia**
- **Right hemisphere damage**

**Conduction aphasia**

- **Symptoms:**
  - Comprehension and production relatively intact
  - Repetition is predominant impairment

- **Type of damage:**
  - Supramarginal gyrus and insula (close to arcuate fasciculus)

- **Problems with simple model:**
  - W-G model suggests disconnection but why is expression okay? Shouldn't concepts be disconnected from syntax and articulation, impairing production?
  - Possibly problem with working or short term memory

**Other perisylvian aphasias**

- **Global aphasia**
  - Complete loss of language
  - If recovery, comprehension before production, to state like Broca's

- **Type of damage:**
  - Damage of all language areas

- **Pure word deafness**
  - Patients unable to hear phonological form of words
  - Production may be faultless

- **Type of damage:**
  - Bilateral lesions to posterior temporal plane (Heschl's gyrus)
Global aphasia

Two modern approaches
- Cognitive neuropsychology
  - Single case studies looking for dissociations between psychological components of language system
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- Approaches interact; imaging may bring them together
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Types of Aphasia:
The Wernicke-Geschwind model
- Predicts three types of aphasia...

Basic forms of aphasia
- Broca's aphasia
- Wernicke's aphasia
- Conductive aphasia
- Word deafness
- Global aphasia
- The Transcortical aphasias
  - Transcortical motor aphasia
  - Transcortical sensory aphasia
- Subcortical aphasia
- Right hemisphere damage

Transcortical aphasias
- Known since Wernicke's time that aspects of Broca's and Wernicke's aphasia could appear in patients who had a preserved ability to repeat back.
- Due to damage outside perisylvian area – watershed infarction
- Position of damage (anterior / posterior) determines type of deficit
  - Transcortical motor aphasia (Broca-like)
  - Transcortical sensory aphasia (Wernicke-like)
  - (or both)
Transcortical aphasias

- Transcortical Motor Aphasia
  - Type 1
    - Dysexecutive production problems (echolalia, perseveration)
    - Prefrontal lesion superior to Broca’s area
  - Type 2
    - Motor initiation symptoms
    - Reduced motivation and drive, lower limb paralysis
    - Lesions in anterior cingulate and left supplementary motor area

- Transcortical Sensory Aphasia
  - Type 1
    - Comprehension problems, extreme difficulty naming objects / pictures, semantic paraphasias, visual object agnosia
    - Damage inferior and posterior to Wernicke’s area (non-overlapping)
  - Type 2
    - Word finding difficulties, few content words, difficulty with complex relational sentences - “semantic” aphasia
    - Superior angular gyrus and posterior parietal damage

Transcortical aphasias vs. Conduction vs. Wernicke’s aphasia

- Can aphasia be due to sub-cortical damage (e.g., to thalamus)?
- Do sub-cortical structures play a processing role or just connectivity?
- Nadeau and Crosson (1997): subcortical damage associated with
  - Anomia in spontaneous language
  - Poor verbal fluency
  - Problems in confrontation naming
- Ullman & Pierpont (2005)
  - Grammar uses ‘procedural’ memory system - a network including basal ganglia / cortico-thalamic loops
Subcortical aphasia

- But could be remote effects on distant cortical areas
- or metabolic effects on adjacent cortical areas
- thalamus may play role in boosting focus or selectivity of function
- may be part of sub-cortical circuit for complex motor articulation

Right hemisphere

- Damage to RH associated with deficits in prosody (production and comprehension)
- Hemisphere has limited speech expression
  - Swearing, emotionally charged words, singing, stereotyped phrases
- RH comprehends overall context or theme
- RH damage associated with
  - Deficits in thematic inferences
  - Deficits in non-literal language processing
  - Reduced sense of humour

Conclusion

- What does set of aphasias tell us about how language works?

The Wernicke-Geschwind model

- Modifications to Wernicke-Geschwind model
  - 1. Broca's area itself associated with articulation deficits. Agrammatism requires larger area of damage
  - 2. Broca's aphasics also have comprehension deficits for information related to syntax
  - 3. Conduction aphasia not disconnection but impairment in phonological working memory
  - 4. Jargon aphasia implies dissociable conscious and unconscious routes from posterior areas to production areas
  - 5. Subcortical structures implicated in connectivity between regions
  - 6. Right hemisphere plays a role in prosody and thematic processing

Modified model (Andrewes, 2001)