Interactions between brain-injured participants in a rehabilitation-based group meal preparation activity

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Introduction.– Group therapy is considered beneficial for language recovery in aphasia. Few studies have examined the changes that occur in such groups in terms of interactions. However, the study of interactions occurring in a group setting may be conducive to understanding the effects of therapy on language.

Aims.– Describe the interactions of an aphasic patient in a rehabilitation-based group meal preparation activity. This group activity involved 4 adults with brain injury and 2 therapists. The group meal preparation activity took place once a week for 7 weeks and was included in a broader rehabilitation program.

Method.– Each session was videotaped. We conducted qualitative and conversational analyses on the interactions initiated by an aphasic subject. We compared the data from three sessions: at the beginning (T1), middle (T2) and end (T3). Interactions initiated by the participant were identified to create units of analysis. Verbal and nonverbal communication of the interactants was explored with respect to communication type (transactional, personal, and non-directed), speech acts, turn-taking and relationship signals (gesture, proximity, and gaze).

Results.– Over the three sessions, interactions initiated by the aphasic participant were primarily transactional, related to the ongoing activity and involved therapists. Over time, the participant initiated interaction more frequently and these involved longer turns. Speech acts evolved over time, from assertions or exclamations initially to more questions at the end. The participant initiated more interactions verbally over time.

Discussion.– The meal preparation group activity offered communication opportunities in a motivating, pleasurable context without emphasis placed on the use of language, thus promoting natural contextualized communication. This may be an optimal situation for understanding of the impact of aphasia therapy.

Conclusion.– Preliminary results indicate that the participant improved her communication skills. These results support the idea of benefits associated with contextualized group therapy focused on activity.

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Facilitate communication to facilitate social participation: Example of a dyade with one member has aphasia

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Aim.– Aphasia causes difficulties in social participation. Relatives of people with aphasia mention that to know how to communicate with their partner is one of their most important needs [1]. There is a growing interest in aphasiology concerning interventions focused on communication between the person with aphasia and his/her main conversation partner. Studies that aim to verify the efficacy of conversational intervention report interesting results, but they are often descriptive or qualitative. The aim of the present study is to verify quantitatively the efficacy of a conversational intervention.

Materiel and method.– An AB-A design was used. Four baseline measures, measures at each intervention session, three measures post-treatment and three measures three months post-intervention will be performed. Conversations (recorded on videos) about plans for the next week-end were analysed. Also, two videos per intervention where the couple had to discuss and propose a common solution to a problem have been analysed with a professional program called Studio-code 10.5. The dyad is composed of a 61 years old men with a mixed moderate to severe aphasia and his 59 years old brother. The intervention is inspired by Supporting Partners of People with Aphasia in Relationships & Conversation [2]. The specific aims for the dyad is to improve the efficacy of writing to communicate.

Results.– Results for the pre-therapy sessions are available. They indicate that there is a poor use of writing. Writing is efficient 7/14 times so at 50% and the person with aphasia often initiates writing without making it helpful for his partner.

Discussion.– Other quantitative and qualitative analyses will be performed in order to measure the efficacy of intervention. Analyses with Studiocode are interesting for conversation.

References