

Metaphor Use in Aphasia: Evidence from AphasiaBank (Mandarin)

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Aphasia is a combination of diverse symptoms of brain damage, and it affects the production or understanding of speech and the ability to read or write. Even though it is a language disorder, metaphor may still be helpful comparative devices meant to explain something unknown in an aphasic context. It can illustrate the prominence of metaphor in uncovering people's abstract thoughts and their emotional experiences (Gibbs, 2008:3).

Some previous studies (Barrow, 2008; Ferguson et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2011; Pound, 2013) have investigated metaphor use by English-speaking people with aphasia (PWA), their family caregivers and the medical staff, within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Conceptual metaphors relating to aphasia, such as aphasia as battle/tragedy/restitution/thief/gift..., have also been examined (Mitchell et al., 2011). Researchers have also used metaphor to explore PWA and their family caregivers' dissatisfaction with the experience of acute hospitalization (Ferguson et al., 2010).

This research tends to go through Mandarin data in the American database AphasiaBank, and analyse metaphor use by Chinese PWA and the controls without any language disorder from linguistic, conceptual and communicative perspectives, according to Steen (2008, 2011)'s three-dimensional model of metaphor, which involves metaphor in language, thought, and communication. It aims to explore how to apply MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedure VU University Amsterdam, Steen et al. 2010) to Chinese language, perform qualitative analysis on metaphor in thought within aphasic and control groups and discuss communicative functions of these metaphors in aphasic settings.

All data are drawn from the sub-database of AphasiaBank. These videos were recorded in Nanjing, south China, and then transcribed and annotated by local researchers. They are all conversations between medical staff and PWA (the aphasic speakers), or medical staff and family caregivers (the controls).

Through this study, it is expected that differences in metaphor use between Chinese PWA and the controls can be revealed, and aphasia-related metaphors in form, thought and function can be scrutinised and analysed.

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