

Characterizing agrammatic aphasia in Bahasa Indonesia

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Agrammatic aphasia is a language disorder that results after damage to language areas in the brain, affecting grammatical/syntactic processing in both comprehension and production of language. Stroke or Cerebro-Vascular Accident (CVA) is the most common cause of all kinds of aphasia. Due to the increase of stroke incidence in Indonesia, the need to provide good rehabilitation service for the general public, and the current absence of a linguistic description of agrammatic aphasia, there is a need to characterize agrammatic aphasia in Bahasa Indonesia. This study describes an attempt to describe what is agrammatic spontaneous speech in Bahasa Indonesia, and adds insights to the crosslinguistic discussion from structures that unique to Bahasa Indonesia.

From the aphasia literature, the following characteristics are found crosslinguistically in the spontaneous speech of grammatic speakers: non-fluent speech, shorter and more simple sentences (as evidenced by Mean Length of Utterance and embeddings), and reduced number of function words. Also of interest to our research group is the inverse relation between the diversity of finite verbs and verbal inflection in the agrammatic spontaneous speech that has been observed in the speech of agrammatic Dutch and Italian speakers. Based on these, the current study to Bahasa Indonesia investigated the following aspects in the speech of the speakers with aphasia: speech rate, Mean Length of Utterance in words, sentence types (minor, simple, or compound), predicates, syntactic particles, derivational and inflectional affixes, accusative markers, and aspectual adverbs.

Based on the analysis on the speech of six speakers of Bahasa Indonesia who had been clinically diagnosed as having Broca's/motoric aphasia or aphasia with nonfluent speech by a speech therapist and the speech of fifteen non-brain-damaged control patients matched with the speakers with aphasia in age, gender, length of education, and professional background, we replicated characteristics of agrammatic

aphasia which are found in the literature. Furthermore, an inverse relation between diversity of verbal predicates and frequency of occurrence of aspectual adverbs with verbal predicates was revealed, thus showing the possible existence of a general problem with simultaneously naming an event and expressing the time frame of the event faced by speakers with agrammatic aphasia. A more detailed explanation will be given in the presentation.

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