Language disorders

Last updated: May 8, 2019

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Pagal LANGUAGE MODALITIES:
1) verbal fluency (motor aphasia)
2) comprehension (sensory aphasia)
3) repetition (conduction aphasia)
4) naming (anomic aphasia)
5) reading (alexia)
6) writing (agraphia)

Dar išskiriama LANGUAGE-RELATED DISORDERS:
7) aphemia – disturbance in verbal output (with preserved written language).
8) aprosody – kalbos emocinio atspalvio sutrikimas.
9) auditory aphasia (s. pure word deafness) – nesuvokia tik girdimų žodžių prasmės.

APHASIA

-acquired inability (of previously normal person) to understand or and express words as symbols for communication;

primary sensory systems (vision, hearing), phonation motor mechanisms, mental state are intact.

ETIOLOGY & EPIDEMIOLOGY

1. Most common cause of focal aphasias – STROKE in dominant hemisphere (a. cerebri media supplies parasy Sylvian zone exclusively!); 40% of stroke patients have aphasia!
2. Intracranial neoplasm (uncommon in sylvian region and are usually large before aphasia appears)
4. Neurodegenerative processes (e.g. Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia).
5. Primary progressive aphasia (frontotemporal dementia such as Pick's disease) - insidious decline in language, either dysfluency or semantic anomia, that progresses to full dementia.

TYPES

Pagal ANATOMIC SUBSTRATE:
A. Perisylvian
   I. Sensory aphasia (s. Wernicke aphasia, fluent aphasia)
II. Motor aphasia (s. Broca aphasia, nonfluent aphasia)
III. Conduction aphasia (s. associative aphasia)
IV. Global aphasia (s. mixed aphasia)

B. Extrasyllian
V. Transcortical aphasia

C. Nonlocalizing
VI. Nominal aphasia

D. Subcortical
VII. Thalamic, striatal, white matter aphasias

N.B. NAMING, WRITING* are impaired in all aphasias!
REPETITION impaired only in perisylvian aphasias

*writing errors typically parallel errors in spoken language

I. SENSORY aphasia (s. Wernicke aphasia, fluent aphasia, posterior aphasia)
- pažeistas Wernicke center (described in 1874, Karl Wernicke).

1. Impairment in COMPREHENSION of language – spoken (word deafness) & written (word blindness, s. alexia) & tactile.
   - comprehension ability may further decrease with testing (phenomenon called fatigue or jamming).
2. Verbal OUTPUT is fluent (articulated and effortless) – normal (or ↑) rate, sentence length, rhythm and melody (prosody); tačiau būdinga:
   1) PARAPHRASIA (s. PARAPHRASIA, PARAGRAMMATISM) – patient uses wrong letters, words or combinations of words.
   2) LOGORRHEA – excessive language (pressured speech).
   3) EMPTY SPEECH – kalba beprasmė.
   4) JARGON, NEOLOGISMS – naujų žodžių ir frazių sudarinėjimas (kuriuos suptanta (?) tik pats ligonis).
   5) impaired REPETITION and NAMING.

3. Patients are unaware of their condition - are not depressed in acute stage (may exhibit elements of paranoia); making rehabilitation difficult.
4. Galima right homonymous hemianopia (or superior quadrantanopia) – dėl Meyer-Archambault loop of visual pathway; frequent absence of associated neurological deficits may lead to erroneous diagnosis of psychosis or schizophrenia (in younger patients) or dementia (in older patients).

CLINICAL RULE: sudden onset of fluent aphasia without hemiparesis suggests embolus (to posterior branch of middle cerebral artery).

Differentiate from:
1) word salad of SCHIZOPHRENIA and confused speech of DELIRIUM (both have normal auditory comprehension).
2) PURE WORD DEAFNESS (disorder of auditory input with preserved written input).
3) DYSARTHRIA
   Dysarthric speech - stereotyped speech errors (repeating the same errors when trying to produce the same sounds).
   Paraphasic speech - substituted letters occur in variable pattern.
II. MOTOR aphasia (s. Broca aphasia, nonfluent aphasia, anterior aphasia, speech apraxia)

- pažeistas Broca center (described in 1861 by Paul Broca).

1. Impairment in language OUTPUT – central feature; spontaneous speech:
   - decreased, slow, halting (words are hard to come by); sunkiais atvejais – almost complete mutism.
     N.B. complete muteness is seen in some psychiatric syndromes (e.g. catatonia, elective mutism) but not in aphasia!
   - dysarthric
     Patient may be able to hum melody normally (however, if patient is musician and views music as language, deficits in "producing" music will be experienced). Curses or other ejaculatory speech may be well articulated.
   - simple grammar ("telegraphic" speech):
     - naudoja tik tiktai key words (vardininko linksnyje, praleidžia artikelius, įvardžius, būdvardžius) - agrammatic speech;
     - 2-3 words express the whole range of meaning and emotion (markedly dysprosodic speech);
     - sometimes the words retained are those which were being spoken at accident time.
   - REPETITION, NAMING impaired.
   - AGRAPHIA (agraphia esti visų afazijų atvejais, kuomet sutrikęs verbal output!) – nebélikę būdu kaip save išreikšti → tremendous frustration! (may contribute to mutism, depression)

2. Normal COMPREHENSION – supranta kas parašyta, bet negali perskaityti garsiai;
   - some difficulty with relational words (such as up and down, inside and outside).
   - patient is aware of impairment.

3. Dažnai (80%) right hemiparesis (esp. brachiofacial).

4. Conjugate ocular deviation to left is often present initially (due to frontal eye field lesion).

Differentiate from APHEMIA (s. little Broca aphasia, cortical anarthria, speech apraxia) - disturbance in verbal output with preserved written language (žr. žemiau).

III. CONDUCTION aphasia (s. associative aphasia)

- it was thought to be due to arcuate fasciculus lesions (most often deep to supramarginal gyrus); now it appears that it is due to lesions in and around auditory cortex (areas 40, 41, 42).

- most common cause - occlusion of angular branch of middle cerebral artery.
  1. Wernicke center intact - normal COMPREHENSION.
  2. Broca center intact - verbal OUTPUT is fluent (but paraphasic).
  3. Severely impaired REPETITION and NAMING.
     - PARAPHASIAS are common (esp. substitutions of phonemes), and naming is often limited by these paraphasic intrusions.
     - reading aloud is disturbed (severely paraphasic output), but reading for comprehension is normal.

IV. GLOBAL aphasia (s. mixed aphasia)

- pažeista visa left parasyvian area.

- sutrikę VISI kalbos, kaip bendravimo priemonės, aspektai.
- kartu būna right hemiplegia-hemianesthesia-homonymous hemianopia.
• patients who do not make rapid recovery soon after onset have poor prognosis.

V. TRANSCORTICAL aphasia

- left parasylvian area is intact but isolated from rest of hemispheric cortex.
  
  – dažniosiaus priežastis – infarction in watershed area (junction of vascular territories) – from prolonged hypotension or hypoxia in patients with severe carotid stenosis, cardiac arrest.

• preserved REPETITION!!!

• skirstoma:
  1) TRANSCORTICAL MOTOR APHASIA (damage in left supplementary motor area or between that area and Broca center) – kaip Broca aphasia (but repetition normal!).
  2) TRANSCORTICAL SENSORY APHASIA (damage in left posterior parietal region, e.g. in Alzheimer’s disease) – kaip Wernicke aphasia (but normal repetition, with apparent unawareness of what is said).
  3) MIXED (unusually frequent in Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease) – ECHOLALIA, o kitos kalbos funkcijos iškritę (t.y. kaip global aphasia, but repetition normal!).

SUPPLEMENTARY MOTOR AREA APHASIA (variant of transcortical motor aphasia) - damage to left medial frontal structures (cingulate cortex, supplementary motor area); differences from transcortical motor aphasia:
  – occlusion of anterior cerebral artery.
  – slow hypophonic output that improves considerably with repetition.
  – weakness of right lower extremity and shoulder + normal strength in arm & face.

VI. NOMINAL aphasia (s. anomic aphasia, amnestic aphasia)

- lesion anywhere in cerebrum.*

  *N.B. anoma is not reliable localizing abnormality - may result from toxic / metabolic encephalopathies or space-occupying lesions (far from speech area that exert pressure effects) – always search for reversible, metabolic causes!

  Frequent cause is Alzheimer disease!

• vienintelis sutrikimas – difficulty in finding names for seen words or pictures (visual information is not processed and transmitted to Wernicke area), i.e. defect of confrontational naming → results in:
  – empty speech (lack of substantive words, with substitution of many nonspecific words that fail to communicate idea satisfactorily);
  – excessive word-finding pauses!
  – patient acts as though the name has been forgotten, and may give functional descriptions instead; if description demands substantive word that cannot be produced, another description is tried - this rapidly produces circuitous output (circumlocution).

• no difficulty with speech or understanding of auditory information! reading and writing may be entirely normal!

N.B. naming is disturbed in all aphasias! (anomia often remains complaint of many well-recovered aphasics).

Lesion of left temporal pole (area 38) - inability to retrieve names of places & persons but preserved ability to retrieve common nouns (i.e. names of nonunique objects), verbs and adjectives.

VII. SUBCORTICAL aphasia – pažeidus subkortikalines struktūras:
1) **thalamic (anterolateral nuclei of thalamus, thalamic peduncles)** - Wernicke-like aphasia with good comprehension and repetition (∼ transcortical sensory aphasia).
2) **striatal (basal motor nuclei)** ∼ transcortical motor aphasia + paraphasias*.
3) **internal capsule** - usually manifest dysarthria.

*paraphasic errors are not due to lesion of cerebral surface, as was claimed traditionally

- very good prognosis (transient nature can be accepted as diagnostic characteristic!).

**Wernicke-Geschwind model** of language and **language disorders**:

**ASSOCIATION cortex**

Production

Transcortical motor aphasia

Broca center

Broca aphasia

Repetition

Conduction aphasia

Wernicke center

Wernicke aphasia

Reading

Alexia (s. visual aphasia)

**DIAGNOSIS**

- **differentiate** from DISORDERS OF MECHANICAL PROCESS OF SPEECH (dysarthria, dysphonia) - grammar and word choice are correct.
- various formal tests for diagnosing aphasia (e.g. Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination) are available. However, bedside interaction usually suffices! see D1 p.
- all other **COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS** are intact (except – **verbal memory**).

**Ligonio tyrimo metodika** – žr. EXAM TECHNIQUE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APHASIA</th>
<th>Verbal output</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Repetition</th>
<th>Naming</th>
<th>Reading aloud / comprehension</th>
<th>Associated signs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broca</td>
<td>nonfluent</td>
<td>normal</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>marginally impaired</td>
<td>poor / good</td>
<td>RHP (esp. lower face)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wernicke</td>
<td>fluent (paraphasic)</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>poor / poor</td>
<td>± RHH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduction</td>
<td>fluent (paraphasic)</td>
<td>normal</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>impaired (paraphasic)</td>
<td>poor / good</td>
<td>± RHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>nonfluent</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>poor / poor</td>
<td>RHP, RHS, RHH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anomic</td>
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<td>normal</td>
<td>normal</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTOR</td>
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<td>impaired</td>
<td>poor / good</td>
<td>RHP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>normal</td>
<td>impaired</td>
<td>poor / good</td>
<td>RHP, RHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIXED</td>
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<td>impaired</td>
<td>normal</td>
<td>normal</td>
<td>poor / poor</td>
<td>RHP, RHS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RHP – right hemiparesis
RHS – right hemisensory deficit
N.B. NAMING, WRITING are impaired in all aphasias!

Characteristic responses when shown picture of chair:
Broca aphasia: “Tssair”
Wernicke aphasia: “Stool” or “Choss” (neologism)
Conduction aphasia: “Flair…no, swair…tair”
Anomic aphasia: “I know what it is… I have a lot of them”

N.B. aphasia localizes lesion in left cerebral cortex!

Quick differential:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aphasia Subtype</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Repetition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominal</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcortical Mixed</td>
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<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Impaired</td>
<td>Impaired</td>
<td>Impaired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differentiation algorithm:

- **NONFLUENT aphasia**
  - Poor repetition
  - Poor comprehension
  - Global aphasia
  - Broca aphasia
  - Mixed transcortical aphasia
  - Motor transcortical aphasia

- **FLUENT aphasia**
  - Poor repetition
  - Poor comprehension
  - Wernicke aphasia
  - Conduction aphasia
  - Sensory transcortical aphasia
  - Anomic aphasia

**TREATMENT**

Treatment is controversial.
- patients treated **soon after onset** do best; but **treatment delays** are not detrimental (are warranted until patient is neurologically stable).
- patients systematically treated by **qualified speech therapists** improve more.
- special **language therapy techniques** (speech therapy) are available (e.g. melodic intonation therapy).
- training in use of **visual imagery** as internal cue helps to overcome word blocking of Broca aphasia.


- picture board may circumvent expressive language deficit.
- drugs have little success.

N.B. depression is associated with left hemisphere injury (esp. deep frontal regions - Broca aphasia, global aphasia, subcortical aphasia with anterior extension).

**PROGNOSIS**

- children < 8 yr often regain language after severe damage to either hemisphere.
- > 8 yr old - most recovery occurs within first 3 months (but improvement continues to variable degree up to 1 year).
- comprehension improves more than language (i.e. fluent aphasics respond better to rehabilitation than do non-fluent aphasics).
- if right hemisphere is dominant (15%) for hand and speech - injuries to either hemisphere can cause aphasia, but nearly all recover rapidly!!!
  In most left-handers hemispheric dominance for language is incomplete!
  Left-handers are more likely to become aphasic because of bilateral representation, but their aphasia tends to be milder and more brief!
- prognoses blogėjimo tvarka:
  subcortical, anomic, conduction, transcortical > Broca > Wernicke > global

- traumatic cases do better than stroke.
- patients are often assumed to be incompetent (because of reduced communication ability), but patients have intact nonverbal communication, thinking, expressing opinions!

**ALEXIA (s. visual alexia, sensory alexia, visual aphasia, word blindness, alexia without agraphia)**

- pažeista left occipital medial surface (visual cortex) + splenium corporis callosi – paciantas gali naudotis tik right visual cortex, bet informacija į kitą pusę nepatenka - visual information has lost access to language area (DISCONNECTION theory).
  - first described by Dejerine in 1892.
  - cause is nearly always stroke in a. cerebri post. sin.
  - nesuvokia tik PARAŠYTU ŽODŽIŲ PRASMĖS - word blindness (verbal alexia);
    — retained ability to read letters - no letter blindness (literal alexia)!
    — rega nesutrikusi.
    — palpuodamas (taktiliškai) raštą supranta; supranta raides nupieštas ant delno.
    — rašyba nesutrikusi (patient can write but cannot read his / her own written output!).
    — many have disturbed color naming as well as mild anomia.
  - diferencijuojama nuo anarthria (s. motor alexia) – loss of power to read aloud but reading for comprehension is normal.

**ALEXIA with AGRAPHIA**

- pažeista left gyrus angularis.

Gerstmann syndrome (finger agnosia, agraphia, acalculia, right-left confusion) - pažeista parietal-temporal-occipital association cortex.
**Angular gyrus syndrome** (alexia with agraphia + Gerstmann + anomia) – when Gerstmann localization includes gyrus angularis.

- **speaking & understanding spoken language** are normal.
- **ACQUIRED ILLITERACY** - previously educated patient is rendered unable to read and write.
- **inability to read both letters and words** *(verbal & literal alexia)*; *cues* are of little help:
  - tracing letter with finger does not aid in identification;
  - cannot decipher word when it is spelled aloud.
- **pažeidus** tik corpus callosum:
  a) **užpakalnią dalį** – gali skaityti tik kai tekstas in right visual field *(HEMIALEXIA)*.
  b) **prieškinę dalį** – negali rašytį kaire ranka.

Writing is abnormal in **all aphasias**! *(writing is consistently affected even in subtle aphasia; writing errors parallel speaking errors)* - **tests of writing ability** can be used as screening device to detect aphasia!

  N.B. agraphia may be without aphasia!

### APHEMIA (s. little Broca aphasia, cortical anarthria, speech apraxia)

- disturbance in **verbal output** *(BUCCOFACIAL APRAXIA)* with preserved **written language** *(i.e. nonfluent aphasia without agraphia)* - mute patient able to communicate using written language *(normal grammatical)*!
  N.B. speech problem rather than impairment of language!
- manoma, kad pažeidimas **paviršinis Broca center** arba **šiek tiek žemiau Broca center** (klasikinės Broca afazijos atveju pažeidimas nusitęsia gan giliai į požievį).
- laryngeal pathology should be ruled out!
- ligoniai greitai pasveiksta.

### AUDITORY APHASIA (s. word deafness, auditory verbal agnosia)

- two known loci of pathology:
  a) single lesion **deep in left superior temporal region** *(deep to Wernicke; affects primary auditory cortex or pathways to it from medial geniculate nucleus)*.
  b) bilateral lesion involving **mid-portion of superior temporal gyrus**.

N.B. Wernicke area is not involved!

It is **sensory transmission problem** rather than language disturbance - resembles deafness more than aphasia *(so also called AUDITORY VERBAL AGNOSIA)*.

- nesuvokia tik **GIRDIMŲ ŽODIŲ PRASMĖS**; cannot repeat; klausa nesutrikusi.
- **reading is intact** – patients often carry with them **writing tablet** for others to use.

### APRSODY

- lesions of **parasylvian area** in **nondominant (representational) hemisphere**.

Sutrikę kalbos **affective components** - emocinė gestikuliacija, intonacija:

  a) **pažeidus mirroring area of Broca center** – nesuteikia affective component **savo kalbai** *(“negyva” kalba)*;
    - **AMELODIA** *(MOTOR APRSODIA)* - loss of melody, prosody, emotional intonation in verbal output.
    - **EXPRESSIVE AMUSIA** - inability to produce melody when singing;
– decreased facial expression, sparse use of gestures.
N.B. easily misinterpreted as depression!

b) pažeidus **mirroring area of Wernicke center** – nesuvokia **svetimos kalbos** affective components (SENSORY APROSODIA, RECEPTIVE AMUSIA, etc).

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