Research and clinical services in Chinese aphasia: A recent update

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Background:

Chinese is the most widely spoken language in the world, with a total of approximately 1.2 billion native speakers worldwide. Living with aphasia negatively affects one's quality of life. Cerebrovascular accident is the most common etiology of aphasia in the Chinese population. With a prevalence of close to 40% of aphasia among survivors of stroke, there is a huge demand for language rehabilitation. Proper assessment of aphasia and other related neurogenic communication disorders is a critical component to managing these disorders (Kong, 2017). Due to the great paucity of culturally- and linguistically-sensitive resources geared to native Chinese speakers, adequate clinical evaluation and subsequent long term management of aphasia has been a challenge (Kong, 2011).

Aims:

The aims of this presentation are twofold. First, major recent research findings that are specific to Chinese speakers with aphasia and related disorders will be summarized. Second, factors to consider when evaluating and treating aphasia in Chinese will be discussed.

Methods & Procedures:

Research investigations, including single case and group studies, examining the unique deficits of lexical-, sentential-, to discourse-level processing in Chinese were reviewed. Newly constructed language corpora that contain rich information for addressing various theoretical and clinical issues in Chinese aphasiology, e.g., the Cantonese AphasiaBank (Kong & Law, 2015, 2018), and related acquired neurogenic communication disorders, e.g., the Chinese Traumatic Brain Injury Bank, were carefully examined.

Outcomes & Results:

The results of the reviewed studies, together with information and materials in extracted from the above-mentioned language corpora, were resourceful for managing Chinese

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speakers with aphasia and related disorders. Current major findings of investigations with important clinical implications using the Cantonese AphasiaBank have also been reported (Kong & Law, 2018). The advancement of multi-level and multi-modal assessment of aphasic discourse (Kong, 2016) was found to be clinically useful to assess and treat acquired communication disorders. Technology-based training for Chinese aphasia reported in the recent literature also facilitated and supplemented traditional behavioral intervention of aphasia. Finally, it was argued that cultural belief as well as communication styles and needs of Chinese speakers with aphasia needed to be adequately considered for effective service delivery.

Conclusions:

This review provided evidence that managing Chinese-speaking individuals with aphasia is more effective when the unique linguistic and cultural characteristics are properly considered. This presentation also highlighted specific recommendations and the need for a more robust international research paradigm around Chinese aphasia.

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