

ProGram: a usage-based theory in aphasiology

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Boye & Harder's (2012) ProGram theory is a usage-based theory of grammatical status that accounts for grammar in terms of communicative function, emphasizing its role in combining and prioritizing information units. Grammatical items are seen to be dependent on other items (ultimately on lexical ones) and express background information (lexical items can express foreground information). These definitions "entail a diagnostics for identifying and distinguishing lexical and grammatical words" based on focalization, potential to be addressed, and susceptibility to modification (see Martínez-Ferreiro, Bastiaanse & Boye, 2020 and references cited therein). In this context, grammatical impairment is seen as a result of damage to neurocognitive capacities for combining and/or prioritizing information units.

A growing number of cross-linguistic empirical studies support the ProGram theory. These include studies of monolingual and bilingual aphasia after stroke (Ishkhanyan et al., 2017; Boye & Bastiaanse, 2018; Messerschmidt et al., 2018; Martínez-Ferreiro & Boye, 2019; Martínez-Ferreiro et al., 2018, 2020).

In this presentation, I focus on two crucially distinct phenomena. First, I discuss the adequacy of the ProGram theory to predict the pattern of performance of people with fluent and non-fluent aphasias. The case of prepositions will be examined in detail. Then, I will show how code-switching and code-mixing can be seen as constrained by lexical-grammatical factors consistent with ProGram. Data from bilingual participants with non-fluent aphasias will be discussed.

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