Introduction

Anomia is a characteristic of aphasia defined as difficulty retrieving words. Persons with anomia have difficulty retrieving words, such as nouns and verbs, which affect their conversational interactions with others. Most of the aphasia research targeting anomia has focused on noun retrieval treatments, such as Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA). A study looking at word retrieval of nouns and verbs in aphasia found that poorer naming performance of verbs correlated with poorer sentence production skills.

Verb Network Strengthening Treatment (VNeST) was developed to increase word retrieval, generalize lexical retrieval to sentences and discourse, and generalize and maintain these skills outside of the therapy room. Studies that have investigated VNeST have found “promising generalization to sentences and discourse and maintained these skills outside of the therapy room. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Saint Xavier University.

Methods

Participants

This case study included two male participants who were diagnosed with anomic aphasia secondary to a CVA. Participant 1 (P1) • 67 years old • Left CVA 12 years prior to study • Moderate anomic aphasia per Western Aphasia Battery-Revised (WAB-R)

Participant 2 (P2) • 53 years old • Left CVA 8 months prior to study • Mild anomic aphasia per WAB-R

Both participants were monolingual, English speakers who had never received VNeST therapy, nor were they familiar with the treatment program. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Saint Xavier University.

Procedures

Pre-assessment • The Test of Adolescent/Adult Word Finding-Second Edition (noun and verb naming) • The Cookie Theft picture Description from the Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination (BDAE) • Conversational discourse Intervention • Two one hour sessions each week of VNeST treatment for 5 weeks

Post-assessment • Two week break following intervention • TAWF-2 (noun and verb naming) • Cookie Theft picture description • Conversational discourse

Results

The Test of Adolescent Word Finding -2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12/24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cookie Theft Picture Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Test Complexity Index</th>
<th>Post-Test Complexity Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Test Complexity Index</th>
<th>Post-Test Complexity Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P1 felt that his ability to retrieve words stayed the same following treatment

P2 felt that his word retrieval abilities improved following treatment

Conclusions

Both participants improved their scores in all three post-assessments.

1. Participation in VNeST for 2 hours per week increased the use of trained verbs in sentences for both participants.

2. Participants improved the use of trained and untrained verbs during picture description and conversation tasks.

3. Participants’ ability to retrieve verbs continued 2 weeks post treatment.

4. Participants found the Verb Network Training process to be a useful strategy to use outside of therapy when trying to retrieve words.

5. VNeST treatment can benefit persons with acute and chronic anomic aphasia.

References


