



## Semantic, lexical, and phonological influences on the production of verb inflections in agrammatic aphasia

Yasmeen Faroqi-Shah\* and Cynthia K. Thompson

*Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Northwestern University, 2240 Campus Drive, Evanston, IL 60208, USA*

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### Abstract

Verb inflection errors, often seen in agrammatic aphasic speech, have been attributed to either impaired encoding of diacritical features that specify tense and aspect, or to impaired affixation during phonological encoding. In this study we examined the effect of semantic markedness, word form frequency and affix frequency, as well as accuracy and error patterns, in an attempt to evaluate whether diacritical or affixation operations are impaired. Verb inflections (*V + ing*, *V + ed*, *V + s*, and *V stem* in present progressive, past, present 3rd person singular, and future tense contexts, respectively) were elicited in eight mild-moderate agrammatic aphasic individuals in a sentence context using a picture description task. Results revealed that the majority of verbs produced were affixed (75%) although accuracy was low (36%). Word form frequency was found to be a significant predictor of the accuracy with which verb inflections were produced; while affix frequency and semantic markedness were not found to influence accuracy. These results suggest that a diacritical deficit is more likely to undermine the production of verb inflections than a affixation deficit, and indicate that when diacritical processes are compromised, word form frequency is likely to influence production of verb inflections in agrammatic aphasia.

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