

SEMANTIC FEATURE ANALYSIS FOR TREATMENT OF ANOMIA IN EARLY ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: TWO CASES STUDIES

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Objectives: Alzheimer's disease (AD) is one of the most common neurodegenerative diseases. In the early stages of the disease, a semantic memory deterioration can be observed and manifested through language production and comprehension difficulties in daily life. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) in early AD.

Methods: Two participants, MS (female, 87 years old, MMSE: 24/30) and MV (female, 87 years old, MMSE: 20/30), were selected for this study. The naming abilities of participants were assessed by a naming task of 100 concepts during the pretest, posttest and follow-up phases. A 16-sessions individualized treatment program was proposed, with participants attending twice-weekly 60-minutes sessions. At each treatment session, a chart of SFA was completed for 15 concepts failed during the pretest phase.

Results: Results showed a significant improvement of naming abilities and a maintenance of this improvement only for the participant MS. In contrast, for the participant MV, an enhancement was not observed. This lack of response can be partly explained by a more severe cognitive and semantic decline.

Conclusions: The treatment of anomia by SFA resulted in improvements of naming abilities only for one of our participants, by reinforcing the structure of her lexical-semantic network. Our initial findings provide evidence-based recommendations for treating anomia in AD. However, more studies are needed to support our results.