Thursday, February 14th 2019, 2pm ET

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From a single word to many words: analyzing connected speech in aphasia

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Much of what we know about the language system and its underlying neural architecture is grounded in studies of single word retrieval. To successfully retrieve a word, such as the name of an object, one must access at least three levels of information: conceptual (what it is), lexical (its associated word) and phonological (the sounds to select and organize). When we describe a situation, however, we do not simply name objects. Instead, we select two or three words per second from an active vocabulary spanning an estimated 40,000 words, and making this feat more complex, our word selection is vulnerable to "competition" from multiple sources, such as previously accessed words or words that have been selected for future production. There are reports of patients with aphasia demonstrating superior word retrieval during single-word retrieval tasks (e.g. confrontation naming) compared to connected speech and vice versa, as well as reports suggesting that paraphasia (i.e. single word error) distributions are different between connected speech and single-word retrieval tasks. While few studies have directly contrasted connected speech with single-word retrieval in aphasia, it is becoming evident that connected speech requires dynamic changes in the linguistic system, resulting in differing distributions of linguistic components compared to naming. The complexity of connected speech makes it an intrinsically difficult entity to quantify, but by nature of its high ecological validity and its relevance for communication, it is no surprise that analysis of connected speech in aphasia has seen such growth. A recent international survey of practicing speech-language clinicians from English-speaking countries found that 86% reported utilizing discourse analysis during assessments for persons with aphasia, as a primary outcome of intervention and/or as a measure of generalization of intervention. In this talk, I will draw upon brain and behavior evidence to highlight the importance of evaluating connected speech, as well as discuss issues and future directions in connected speech analysis in aphasia that will improve the reliability, replicability and robustness of this data.

Room #140, Discovery I, 915 Greene Street, Columbia, SC 29208
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The viewing event will be catered!
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