Factors influencing the error patterns of patients with apraxia of speech: Group effects and individual variation I. Aichert, W. Ziegler

Several factors are known to influence the error patterns of patients with apraxia of speech (AOS). However, conflicting results were often obtained for the same factors, which point to individual differences between patients with AOS. A disadvantage of most studies lies in the low number of participants, which often disallows for a discussion of the representativeness of results. Our aim was to investigate, on the basis of an exceptionally large data sample, the influence of the factors "word length", "syllable structure" and "word position" on apraxic speech errors.

We present the results of 33 patients with AOS, seven of them exhibited pure AOS. Word lists were presented for oral repetition. The material was controlled for several linguistic factors (e.g., syllable structure). Speech samples were primarily analysed with respect to segmental errors. Further error categories were prosodic errors and articulatory groping.

For all three factors, significant effects were obtained in group analyses. However, we also found individual patterns which differed from the group effects and which point to the heterogeneity of the apraxic error pattern. Furthermore, the factors influenced the occurrence of prosodic errors and searching behaviour. We discuss these error types as a compensatory strategy in apraxic speakers.