

# Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances

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# Overview

- ▶ I. The Linguistic Problems of Aphasia
- ▶ II. The Twofold Character of Language
- ▶ III. The Similarity Disorder

# I. The Linguistic Problems of Aphasia

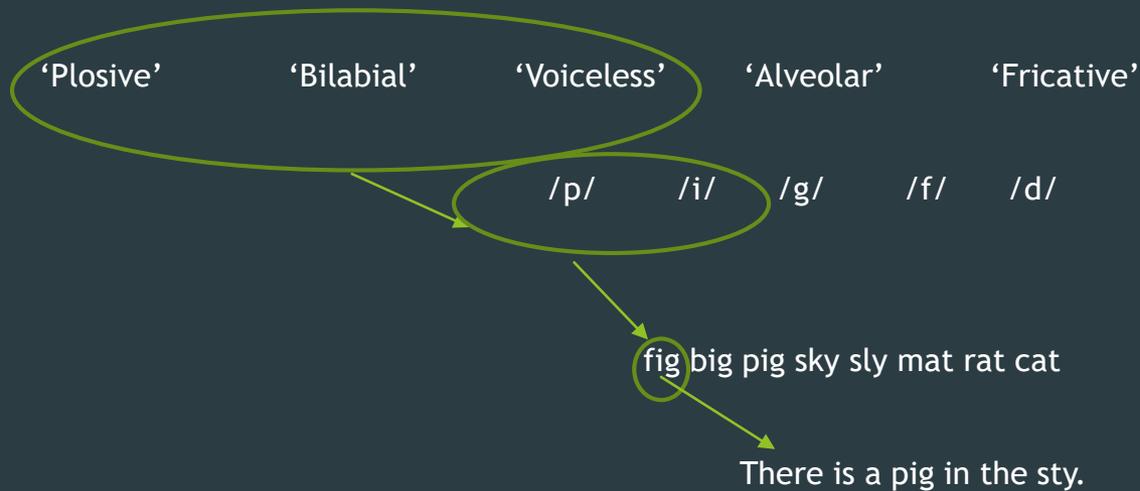
- ▶ Aphasia - language disturbance - inability to use language correctly.
- ▶ John Hughlings Jackson (1835 -1911) British Neurologist - studied epilepsy.
- ▶ Why not use Linguistics? - concerned with language in all aspects.
- ▶ Linguists have not studied aphasia intensely even though
  - ▶ Tools of structural linguistics are well developed to study aphasia
  - ▶ Studying aphasia can provide insights into the general laws of language.
- ▶ Aphasic regression - disintegration of speech in patients - shows language acquisition in reverse.

## II. The Twofold Character of Language

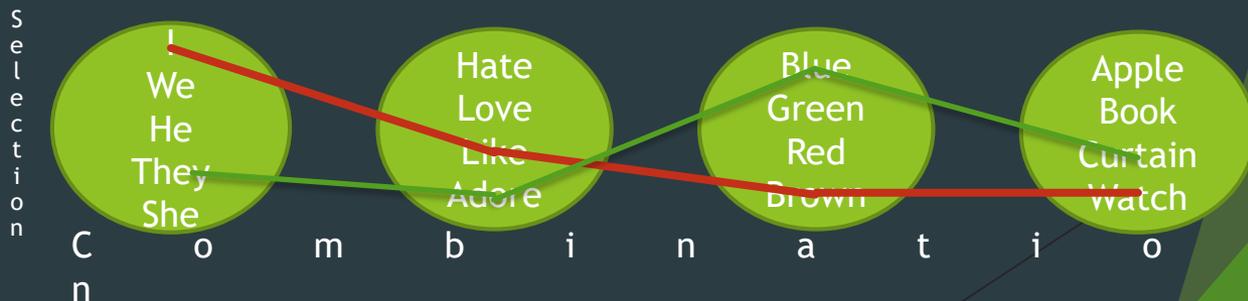
- ▶ Speech is like LEGO.
- ▶ From less complicated to complex. Sounds to syllables to words to sentences to utterances etc...
- ▶ The speaker is not completely free - LEGO - not clay!
- ▶ Cannot make new sounds or words.
  - ▶ Must choose from what is available in a language.
- ▶ In communication the sender and receiver must both share the same “filing cabinet of prefabricated representations”.
- ▶ Twofold Character of Language (selection and combination of linguistic units)
- ▶ An example. Two words : ‘pig’ and ‘fig’. The difference in meaning is due to the selection and combination of distinctive phonemes with others.
- ▶ /p/, /f/, /b/, /i/, /g/, /u/ etc concur in the English language.
- ▶ /p/ was selected and concatenated (combined) with /i/ and /g/ to create the word ‘pig’.

- ▶ The code of the language determines what combinations are permissible.
- ▶ It is only past the level of words that the speaker has freedom to create unique sequences.
- ▶ There is an ascending scale of freedom. Higher you go, more free you are.
- ▶ At the utterance level there is considerable freedom.

- ▶ Any linguistic sign involves two modes of arrangement
- ▶ 1) Combination
  - ▶ A sign is made of constituent signs and/or occurs in combination with other signs.
  - ▶ At any one time, all linguistic units serves as a context for simpler linguistic units and finds its own context in a more complex linguistic unit.
  - ▶ Eg. /p/ is a combination of many determining features like 'bilabial', 'plosive', 'voiceless' etc. In a word like /pig/ /p/ exists in a context created by all 3 phonemes occurring together.



- ▶ Concurrence and Concatenation - Two types of combination
  - ▶ Concurrence - occurrence of events/things at the same time.
  - ▶ Concatenation - linking together events/things in a series, sequence.
- ▶ Ferdinand De Saussure recognized the importance of concatenation only.
  - ▶ Did not believe in concurrence.
- ▶ Selection
- ▶ Apart from combination, selection/substitution plays an important role.
- ▶ Selection connects terms in absentia.
- ▶ Combination connects terms in presentia.
- ▶ I like the brown watch.



- ▶ Combination and Selection provide each linguistic sign with two *interpretants*. - *ALTERNATION & ALIGNMENT*
- ▶ Serves to interpret the linguistic sign
- ▶ One to the code. (selection from all possible signs) - *Alternation* - reveals the general meaning of a sign.
- ▶ One to the context. (the message - the particular combination of signs) - *Alignment* - refers the contextual meaning of the sign.
- ▶ Charles Sanders Peirce

# III. The Similarity Disorder

- ▶ Aphasia that results from faulty selection/substitution.
- ▶ Aphasia with selection deficiency
  - ▶ Can understand anything only within a context.
  - ▶ Cannot understand signs in and of themselves.
  - ▶ Mostly reactive speech. Cannot initiate a conversation;
  - ▶ Cannot say “It rains” unless it is actually raining.
  - ▶ Words out of context cannot be said.

- ▶ Loss of Metalanguage
- ▶ Object Language and Metalanguage
- ▶ Carnap, “In order to speak about any object language, we need a metalanguage”.
- ▶ Using language to speak about language.
- ▶ Trying to explain the meaning of one linguistic term using another homogeneous one from the same language is a metalinguistic operation.
- ▶ Aphasia affecting selection/substitution is a loss of metalanguage.
- ▶ Such aphasics also lose bilingualism - inability to link one term to its equivalent in another language.
- ▶ Inability to grasp internal relationship between words - words serving as metaphors.
- ▶ They “grasped the words in their literal meaning but could not be brought to understand the metaphoric character of the same words”.
- ▶ Metaphors and Metonyms - the 2 main figures of speech.
- ▶ Metonyms are used by aphasics but not metaphors.

- ▶ ‘fork’ for ‘knife’, ‘lamp’ for ‘table’, ‘smoke’ for ‘pipe’, ‘eat’ for ‘toaster’.
- ▶ A sign ‘fork’ which usually occurs together with another sign, ‘knife’ may be used for this sign.
- ▶ The relation between the use of an object (toast) and its means of production - ‘eat’ for ‘toaster’.
- ▶ “When the selective capacity is strongly impaired and the gift for combination at least partly preserved, their contiguity determines the patients whole verbal behavior, and we may designate this type of aphasia *similarity disorder*.”

# IV. The Contiguity Disorder

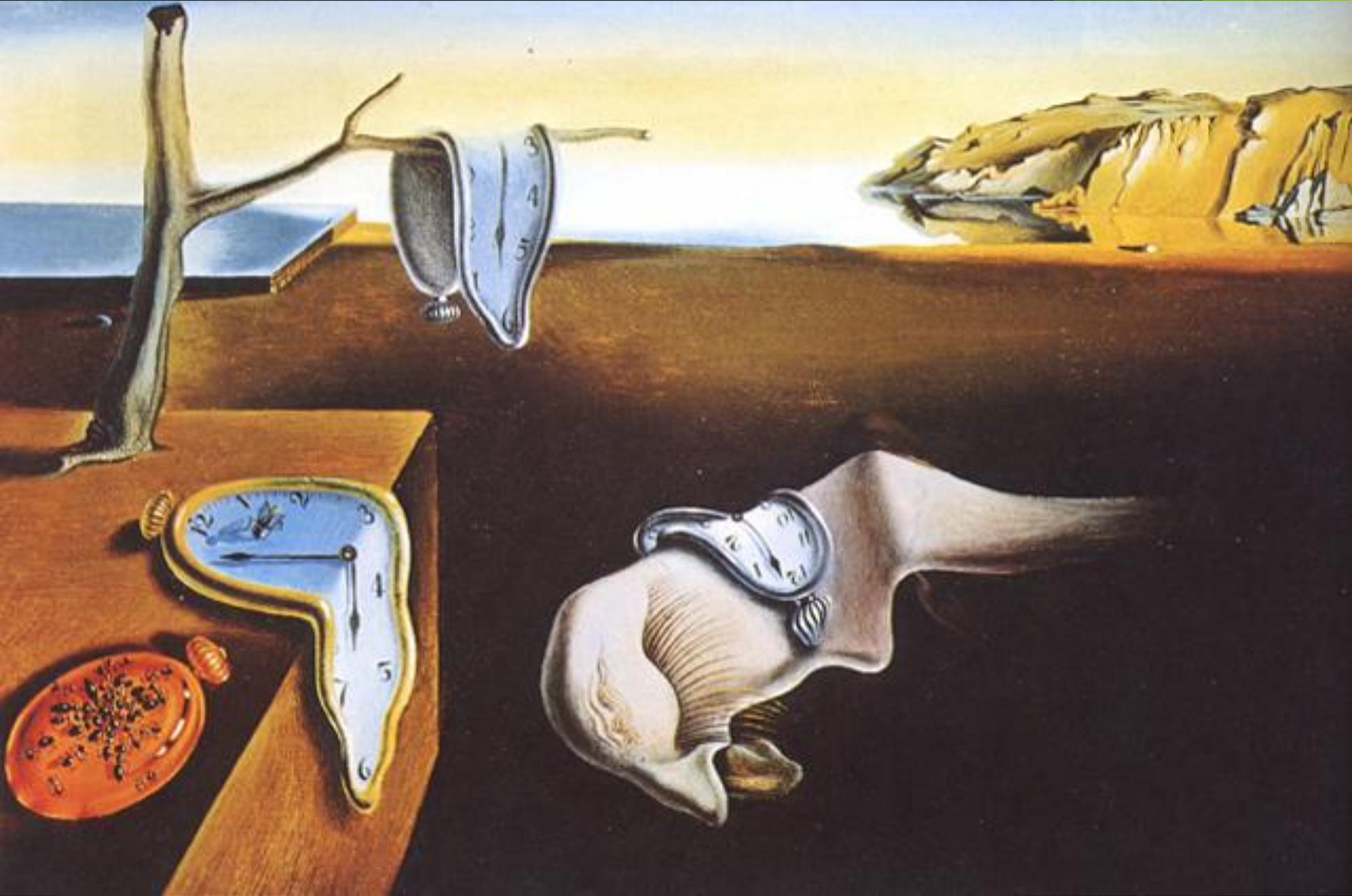
- ▶ The other type of aphasia
- ▶ Inability to put linguistic units together.
- ▶ Contexture deficient aphasia termed '*Contiguity Disorder*'
- ▶ Aggramatism.
- ▶ Chaotic word order. Loss of grammar words (prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, articles etc)
- ▶ Telegraphic style.
- ▶ Opposite to Similarity Disorder.
  - ▶ In similarity disorder, grammatical words survive because they are linked to the context.
  - ▶ In contiguity disorder, all words linked to the context are dropped.
  - ▶ 'Kernel Subject Word' survives in Contiguity disorder. In Similarity Disorder, vice versa.

# The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles

- ▶ No metaphor in Similarity Disorder
- ▶ No metonym in Contiguity Disorder
- ▶ The two poles of Language Use. Metaphoric/Metonymic.
- ▶ Preference found in all verbal levels - morphemic, lexical, syntactic, phraseological.
- ▶ In diff. kinds of poetry, the preference to either pole is marked.
- ▶ Eg; Russian Lyrical songs - metaphoric
- ▶ In Russian heroic epics - metonymic
- ▶ Romanticism >> Realism >> Symbolism
- ▶ Metaphoric >> Metonymic >> Metaphoric

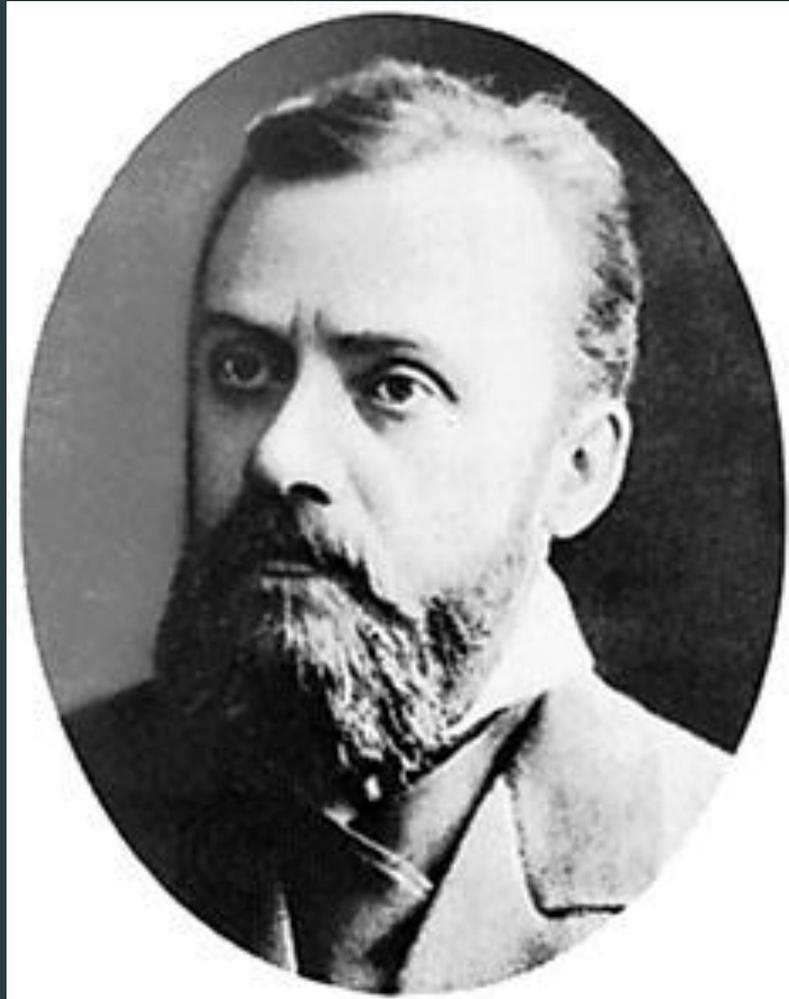
- ▶ Realist author - metonymical - plot to atmosphere. From characters to setting in space and time.
- ▶ Eg. In Anna Karanina - suicide - Tolstoy's attention on the heroine's handbag.
- ▶ In War and Peace - use of synechdoches.
- ▶ In non verbal art
  - ▶ Painting:
    - ▶ Cubism - Metonymic
    - ▶ Surrealism : Metaphoric
  - ▶ Cinema:
    - ▶ D. W. Griffith - metonymic closeups
    - ▶ Charlie Chaplin and Eisenstein - metaphoric dissolves. Filmic similies.





- ▶ Dichotomy of primal significance and consequence for all verbal behavior and for human behavior in general.
- ▶ Eg: From Russian folklore.
- ▶ “Thomas is a bachelor; Jeremiah is unmarried”.
- ▶ Parallelism as a comic device.
- ▶ “is a bachelor” == “ is unmarried” synonyms. Similar.
- ▶ Thomas == Jeremiah - both male proper names. Therefore morphologically similar.
- ▶ Modification of this. Wedding song. Eg; groom called Gleb Ivanovich
- ▶ “Gleb is a bachelor; Ivanovich is unmarried.”
- ▶ Gleb // Ivanovich . Contiguity. First Name - Second Name.

- ▶ Russian novelist Gleb Ivanovich Uspenskij



- ▶ Mental illness; speech disorder.
- ▶ For him his name split into
- ▶ Gleb Ivanovich Uspenskij
- ▶ Gleb - virtues
- ▶ Ivanovich - vices.
- ▶ Unable to use the two symbols for same thing.
- ▶ In other words - similarity disorder.
- ▶ Therefore, Uspenskij must have a preference for metonyms.
- ▶ This is demonstrably seen in his works.

- ▶ Metaphoric / Metonymic Conflict seen in any symbolic process.
- ▶ Structure of Dreams
  - ▶ Freud's displacement and condensation - metonymic/synechdochic
  - ▶ Freud's "identification and symbolism" - metaphoric.
- ▶ James George Frazer - anthropologist - magic
  - ▶ homoeopathic/sympathetic magic - Metaphoric
  - ▶ Contagious magic - Metonymic
- ▶ Metaphor has been studied more than metonyms
  - ▶ Easier to interpret literary metaphors than metonyms.
  - ▶ The principle of similarity underlies poetry.
  - ▶ Prose is governed by contiguity.
  - ▶ Metaphor for poetry, metonym for prose.
  - ▶ Literary interpretation suffering from a contiguity disorder.