



# Fictive Interaction in Aphasic Discourse: Evidence from Production Data

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## Introduction

This study focuses on the distribution and forms of *quoted speech* and *fictive interaction* in the semi-spontaneous speech of individuals with anomic aphasia and individuals with Broca's aphasia. To examine how individuals with aphasia behave differently from non-brain-damaged (NBD) individuals, a NBD control group was used. The following research questions were addressed:

- To what extent do individuals with aphasia and NBD speakers use quoted speech and fictive interaction in semi-spontaneous speech?
- Are the forms and relative frequencies of quoted speech and fictive interaction produced by individuals with aphasia in semi-spontaneous speech different from those produced by matched NBD controls?
- Are the forms and relative frequencies of quoted speech and fictive interaction in semi-spontaneous speech produced by individuals with Broca's aphasia different from those produced by individuals with anomic aphasia?

## Assumptions

Fictive interaction (Pascual, 2002): A cognitive phenomenon which reflects the *interactional structure of conversation*, and is manifested in language structure and use. In grammar, fictive interaction is mainly manifested through the *non-genuine use of direct speech* and the *question-answer pattern*. In contrast to direct reported speech, fictive interaction is neither intended nor understood as a replication of earlier language.

Thanks to their relatively intact pragmatic abilities, direct reported speech appears to be a common and successful discourse practice for individuals with aphasia (Hengst et al., 2005).

## Aim

The purpose of this explorative study is to assess the use of quoted speech and fictive interaction in the semi-spontaneous speech of individuals with aphasia. The question is whether these constructions, which are highly communicative, are used by aphasic speakers. Moreover, we would like to find out whether the nature of the underlying disorder, in this case grammatical versus lexical, plays a role in the use of quoted speech and fictive interaction.

## Methods

### Participants

25 individuals with aphasia (15 male, 10 female)

- 16 anomic aphasia
- 9 Broca's aphasia
- Average age 56 (SD 14.5; range 24 – 82)
- Average TPO 33 months (SD 44.9; range 3 – 154)

30 NBD controls (17 male, 13 female)

- Average age 51 (SD 13.2; range 27 – 77)

### Material

Transcripts of semi-structured interviews of the Aachen Aphasia Test (Graetz et al., 1992):

1. Can you tell me what happened when you had your stroke (your most recent illness)?
2. Can you tell me something about your (former) job?
3. Can you tell me something about your family?
4. Can you tell me something about your hobbies?

## Analysis

- Identification and categorization in terms of 4 patterns deduced from the data:
  - Speech quotation (quotes with reporting verb e.g., *to say*)
  - Thought quotation (quotes with reporting verb e.g., *to think*)
  - Bare quotation (quotes without reporting verb)
  - Question-answer pattern (e.g., *formerly? yes*)

- Calculation of relative frequency: # instances divided by total # utterances in the transcript. To determine the boundaries of an utterance, the rules of the Analyse voor Spontane Taal bij Afasie (ASTA: Boxum and Zwaga, 2007) were applied.

## Examples

Schematic representation Example 1

Example 1 (anomic aphasia, m, 35)

1. SLT: en toen ging je naar het ziekenhuis denk ik, of
2. zo
3. BR: ja, ik werd eh wakker bij eh nummer 7 hier boven en
4. ja dan krijg je zoiets van ik werd wakker en ja **hoe heet ik** en eh **hoe oud ben ik** en mijn broer en mijn
5. moeder die kwam eh binnen en ja ach ik kende ze
6. wel maar **wie zijn het** dat soort dingetjes allemaal
- 7.

1. SLT: and then you went to the hospital I guess, or
2. something
3. BR: yes, I woke uh up at uh number 7 above and yes
4. then you are like I woke up and yes **what's my name** and eh **how old am I** and my brother and my
5. mother came eh in and yes well I knew them but
6. **who are they** those kinds of things
- 7.

Schematic representation Example 2

Example 2 (NBD, m, 55)

1. HL: alleen m'n vakliteratuur lezen achter het bureau vind
2. ik 't altijd verve- een van de vervelende kanten van
3. 't beroep
4. SLT: oké
5. HL: ja en in de trein die trein die rijdt wel
6. SLT: ja
7. HL: dus ik heb een tas vol en dan denk ik **je moet aan 't eind van de dag moet je leeg zijn** dus dat is aanpoten
- 8.

1. HL: but reading my literature behind the desk I think
2. is always annoy- one of the annoying aspects of
3. the profession
4. SLT: OK
5. HL: yes and in the train the train keeps riding
6. SLT: yes
7. HL: so I have a bag full and then I think **you have to be empty by the end of the day** so that takes pains
- 8.

## Results

### All participants:

- Aphasic (n=25): 84% (140 instances)
- NBD (n=30): 80% (92 instances)

- Aphasic (n=25) > NBD (n=30) (independent samples T-test:  $t(15.7) = -2.77, p=0.008$ )

### Users:

- Aphasic (n=21) > NBD (n=24) (2-tailed MWU:  $Z = -2.20, p=0.03$ )

### Comparison subgroups:

- Anomic (n=16) ≈ Broca (n=9) (2-tailed MWU:  $Z = -0.45, p=0.15$ )

- Anomic (n=16) > NBD (n=30) (2-tailed MWU:  $Z = -0.46, p=0.01$ )

- Broca (n=9) ≈ NBD (n=30) (2-tailed MWU:  $Z = -0.13, p=0.89$ )

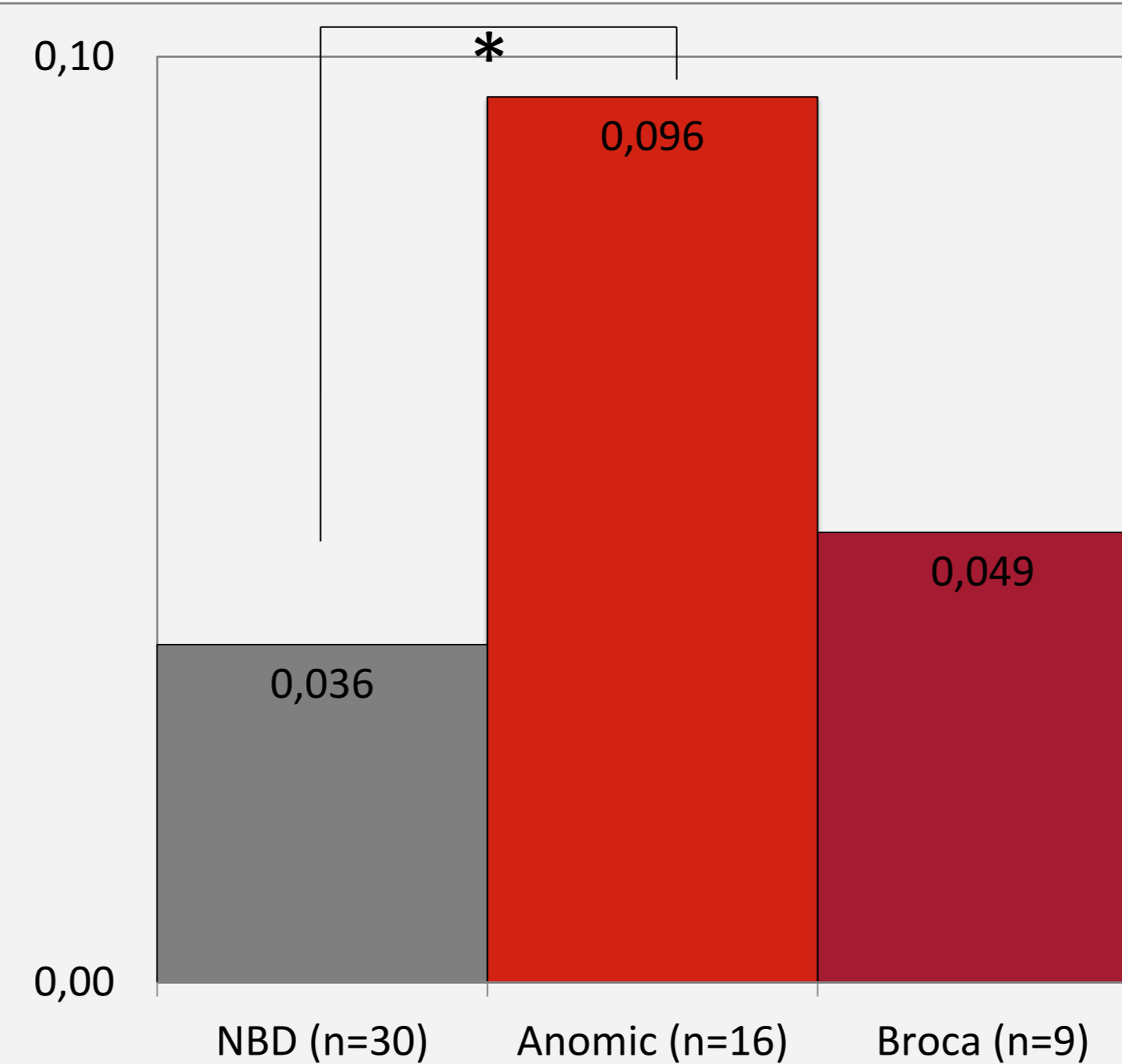


Figure 1. Average relative use of quoted speech & fictive interaction (# instances/# utterances/individual)

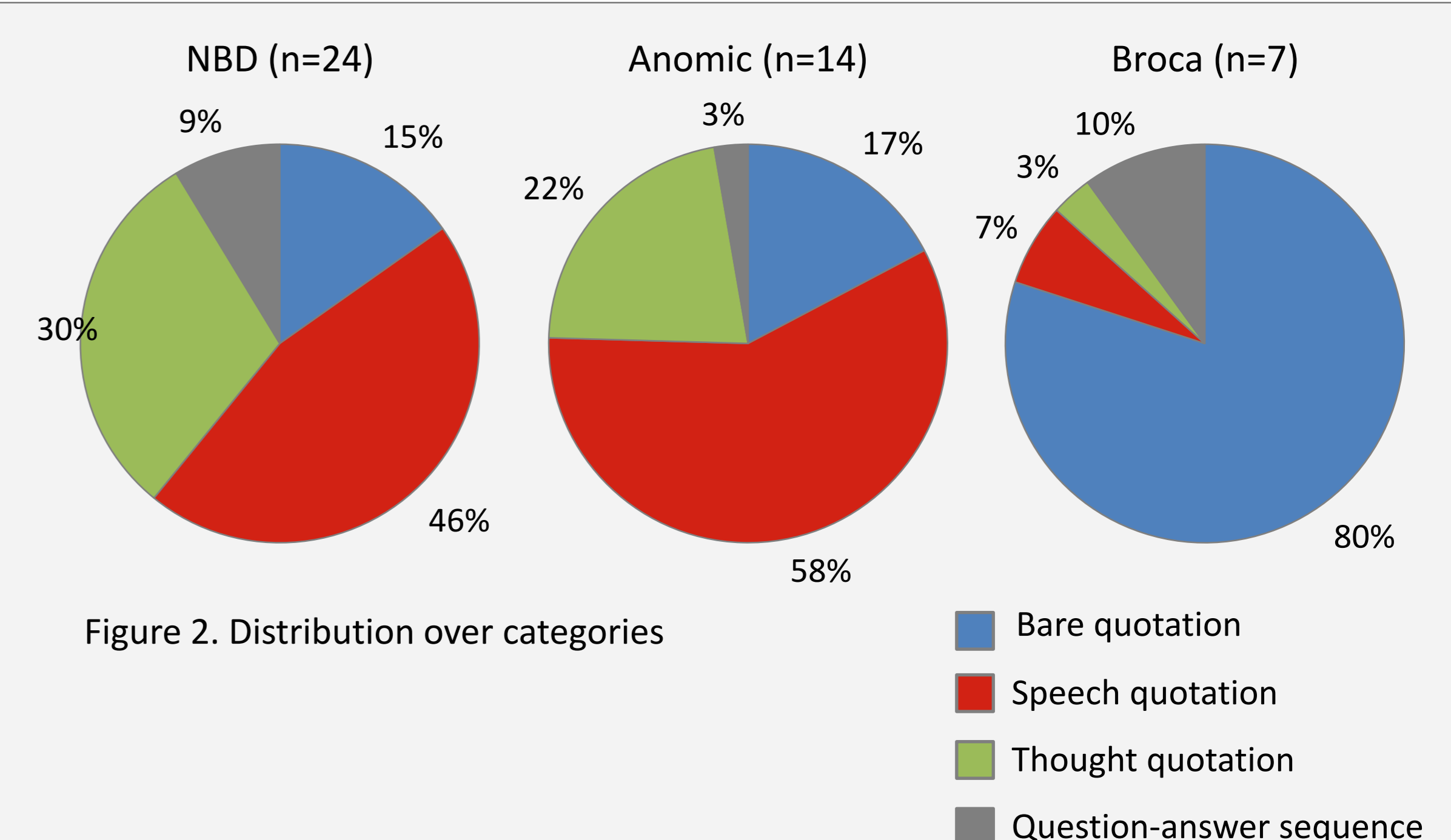


Figure 2. Distribution over categories

## Conclusion

Both the NBD and the individuals with aphasia used quoted speech and fictive interaction in their semi-spontaneous speech. However, the aphasic individuals used it significantly more often than the matched controls. With regard to the forms that were used, *speech quotation* occurred most often in the semi-spontaneous speech of both anomic aphasic and NBD speakers. *Thought quotations* were also important categories for these subgroups. Individuals with Broca's aphasia had a preference for *bare quotations*. The *question-answer sequence* was the smallest category in both the aphasic and the NBD group.

## Future

Following this study, three themes have emerged that are relevant for the understanding of everyday aphasic interaction which will be investigated in a follow-up study:

1. distribution, forms, and functions of quoted speech and fictive interaction in *naturalistic* aphasic interaction
2. the *communicative effectiveness* of quoted speech and fictive interaction in aphasic discourse
3. the impact of quoted speech and fictive interaction on language *comprehension* by aphasic individuals