

6. Fama, M., Lemonds, E. & Levinson, G. (2021) The Subjective Experience of Word-Finding Difficulties in People With Aphasia: A Thematic Analysis of Interview Data
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Purpose: Anomia, or difficulty with naming and word finding, is a pervasive deficit among individuals with aphasia. There is an extensive literature on the mechanisms underlying anomia and on approaches to treatment, but very little is known about the subjective experience of anomia during day-to-day life.

Method: As part of a larger testing battery, 53 adults with poststroke aphasia took part in a novel, structured interview that included an open-ended question about the general experience of anomia: "Do you ever know what you want to say, but you can't say it out loud? Please describe that feeling." Video-recorded interview responses were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, an iterative, data-driven process that categorizes interview data into common themes.

Results: Five main themes emerged among the data from 37 participants who produced adequate responses for use in thematic analysis: strategies to cope with or compensate for anomia, comments on awareness of the level of breakdown (e.g., "I have an idea, but can't get the right words"), negative emotions, impact on relationships, and changes in frequency over time.

Conclusions: Participants showed strong awareness of anomia and its implications, demonstrating an ability to describe their language breakdown, identify relevant strategies to compensate and/or cope, and acknowledge the impact of anomia on their emotions and social interactions. This patient perspective may serve as a valuable supplement to information typically gained via objective language assessments. Clinicians and researchers may wish to consider incorporating similar subjective measures during assessment and treatment planning.