

Choosing not to respond in everyday conversation: Evidence from adults with pragmatic communication disorders

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Damage to the right hemisphere of the brain during adulthood can cause communication disorders that negatively affect participation in conversation. People with right hemisphere damage have been described as, for example, tangential, verbose, and inappropriate (Barnes & Armstrong, 2010; Lehman Blake, 2018). Although conversational symptoms like these are widely acknowledged in research and clinical practice, their measurement has proven challenging, and there is little empirical evidence on their presentation in everyday conversations. This presentation reports on analysis of a triadic, meal-time interaction involving a woman with a communication disorder caused by right hemisphere stroke, her husband, and adult daughter. It focuses on conversational turns produced by the woman with right hemisphere communication disorder that received no response from turn recipients, and uses conversation analysis to examine the embodied and talk-based practices that the turn recipients used to accomplish non-responsiveness.