Understanding design features of aphasia-friendly written material: What matters most to people with aphasia?

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What is APHASIA?

- Aphasia occurs as a result of damage in the left hemisphere of the brain
- It can cause difficulties speaking, understanding, reading, and writing
- Approximately 1/3 of strokes result in aphasia
- People with aphasia often suffer from social exclusion, isolation and a reduced quality of life
- One way to address these problems is to create language supports for people with aphasia to use in their communities

GOAL OF THIS PROJECT:
To understand design elements that lead to increased comprehension of written information and to co-construct aphasia-friendly written material relevant to our community
Research Instrument:

- Focus groups consisting of three people with aphasia (PWA)
- **Inclusion / Exclusion Criteria:**
  - Participants had to be independent and live active lifestyles to be included. They also had to have high levels of comprehension and be able to verbalize opinions and experiences with support.
  - People with cognitive-communicative diagnoses such as dementia were excluded.
  - Each focus group session was recorded with the permission of the participants. Each session was analyzed and four were fully transcribed.
- **Session Breakdown:**
  - Six PWA that participated across two separate focus groups
  - Total of 11 sessions
  - Sessions ranged from 19 minutes to 42 minutes
  - Total number of minutes = 326 minutes & 38 seconds
Results:

- Research participants provided information that is essential for creating aphasia-friendly written material.

- Focus groups concentrated on three types of material important for them to fully participate in the community. These materials were political information, information related to health care and restaurant menus.

- One key result from this study is that the importance of particular design aspects (e.g., font size, white space) varies according to the type of material.
  - For example, bigger font size is always necessary for materials like wordy healthcare documents, but is less important for materials like a menu.

- Another finding from this study is that using bullets is almost always beneficial.
**Subs**
All subs come SMALL, MEDIUM, or LARGE

**Step 1: Choose a Specialty Sub or Make Your Own Sub**

**Hot Specialty Sub**
- Hook & Ladder
- Firehouse Meatball
- New York Steamer
- Italian

**Make Your Own Sub**
- Your choice of bread: White or Wheat Sub Roll
- Turkey
- Pepperoni
- Salami
- Ham
- Italian Dressing & Seasoning
- Pennslyvania Dutch Turkey
- Pepper Bacon
- Creamy Pepperoni Ranch Dressing
- Lettuce
- Onion

**Step 2: Choose Your Add-Ons**

**Turkey Bacon Ranch**
- Turkey
- Pepper Bacon
- Cheddar
- Mayo
- Tomato

**Add-Ons**
Subject to Additional Pricing
- Extra Cheese
- Pepper Bacon
- Mushrooms

**Step 3: Make it a Combo**

**Engineer**
- Turkey
- Ham
- Pepper Bacon
- Swiss
- Sautéed Mushrooms

**Firehouse “Hero” Sub**
- Roast Beef
- Turkey
- Ham
- Beef Brisket (Smoked for 16 hours)
- Mayo
- BBQ Sauce

**Smokehouse Beef & Cheddar Brisket**
- Cheddar

**Full Involvement**
- Lettuce
- Mustard
- Tomato
- Mayo
- Onion
- Dill Pickle on the side

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**Chopped Salads**

**All salads come with:**
- Romaine Lettuce
- Peperoncini
- Tomatoes
- Mozzarella
- Green Bell Peppers
- Cucumbers

**Choice of:**
- Turkey
- Ham
- Grilled Chicken
- No Meat

**Firehouse Salad**
Comes with:
- Turkey
- Ham

**Italian with Grilled Chicken**
Comes with:
- Saalami
- Grilled Chicken

**Hook & Ladder Salad**
Comes with:
- Turkey
- Ham

**Dressings:**
- Italian
- Balsamic Vinaigrette
- Peppercorn Ranch
- Honey Mustard
- Oil & Vinegar

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**Chili & Soups**

**Firehouse Chili**
Chicken Noodle Soup
Broccoli Cheese Soup

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**Sides**

- Chips
- Side Salad
- Brownie
- Cookie

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**Kids’ Combo**

**Drinks**

- Size SMALL, MEDIUM, or LARGE
- Coca-Cola Freestyle Fountain
- Cherry Lime-Aid
- Freshly Brewed Iced Tea

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**Swaps or a Cookie for:**
- Chili
- Side Salad
- Soup
- Brownie
For an additional cost.
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Invited to Participate
From: Jamie H. Azios, Anna Sagor

Why
- Understand perceptions of people with aphasia about reading printed information
- Determine design preferences that make written information easier to read
- You were selected because you are a person with aphasia who is an active member of the community and routinely access written information

Voluntary
- No obligation to be in the study or to continue in the study
- No bias or penalty if you wish to decline or leave study

Activities
- Participate in conversations with Anna and Dr. Jamie about your preferences for written information
- Participate in group activities that help Anna design aphasia-friendly material for local businesses
- Total time spent is 45 minutes per week for about 5 or 6 weeks
  - Scheduled at the same time as your clinic so you don’t have to make extra trips

Other Information
- Nothing will have your name or identification on it
- Minimal risk to you; loss of confidentiality, but records will be kept in a locked location on a password-protected device
- You will be video-recorded for this study. Video-recordings are confidential and will not be used in publications or presentations.
- Results presented at conferences or in a publication (NO NAMES OR IMAGES USED)
- There is no direct benefit for you, but the research may help us to better understand how people with aphasia can better use their devices in conversation

Contact for Questions
- Assistant Professor and SLP. Jamie Azios at (409) 880-8149 or jazios@lamar.edu
- Associate Provost for Research: Srinivas Palanki at (409) 880-7672 or spalanki@lamar.edu

CONSENT
I understand that I am participating in research and that the research has been explained to me so that I understand what I am doing. I understand that I may stop participating at any time.

Signed ___________________________ Date ________________
RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Undergraduate Researcher: Anna Sigur  
Research Mentor & SLP: Dr. Jamie Azios

Project Information:

The goal of this study is to make important printed information easier for YOU to read and understand.

Will you participate in conversations with Anna and Dr. Jamie?

☐ YES

Will you spend 45 minutes per week for 5 or 6 weeks with us?

☐ YES
Important information:

Nothing will have your name or picture on it.

You will be video recorded. These videos will only be seen by Anna and Dr. Jamie. Some videos will be typed.

The project’s findings will be presented at a conference.

I have read and understand this information.

I have had time to think about the information and ask questions.

I am happy with my answers.

I understand that I can stop at any time. I do not have to give a reason.

Participant’s Name__________________________

Date___________