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CHOOSING AMONG RELATED FOILS IN APHASIA: THE ROLE OF COMMON
AND DISTINCTIVE SEMANTIC FEATURES (72 pp.)

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This study investigated the nature of semantic feature knowledge in persons with aphasia. The relationship between feature knowledge and the ability to choose among semantically related foils was also examined. In addition, the relationship between semantic feature knowledge and comprehension and naming abilities was investigated. Participants completed tasks including choosing among unrelated and related foils and a sorting task involving common and distinctive features controlled for mid and low importance. The primary hypothesis was that participants who have difficulty choosing among semantically related foils would have significantly more difficulty with the identification of distinctive features than common features. The findings support the primary hypothesis in that those participants who had difficulty choosing among semantically related foils were significantly more impaired with the identification of distinctive features than the group who were able to choose among semantically related foils. The participants who had difficulty choosing among related foils were also significantly more impaired with identification of distinctive versus common features. In addition, the group who were able to choose among semantically related foils did not have a significant difference between the identification of distinctive versus common features. Importance was not a significant factor when comparing mid- importance to

low-importance features for either group. Comprehension scores were also significantly correlated with distinctive feature identification. These results suggest that distinctive feature knowledge contributes in a significant way to the integrity of semantic representations in people with aphasia, influencing their comprehension, and, perhaps, naming abilities. Potential clinical implications of these results were discussed.