INTRODUCTION

• Aphasia batteries lack the sensitivity needed to identify the subtle language deficits in people with mild aphasia (PWMA).

• Analyzing discourse is an effective method of identifying the informativeness and efficiency of language production (Dietz & Boyle, 2017).
  - Discourse analysis is time consuming. It can take up to thirty minutes to transcribe and analyze one minute of discourse.
  - This is not feasible for a busy clinician. (Bryant, Spencer, & Ferguson, 2017).

AIMS

In order to identify a faster, simpler method of discourse analysis, we explore the relationship between verb use and informativeness, efficiency, and Correct Information Unit (CIU) count. Specifically, we investigate whether:
  - verb production is associated with more informative discourse
  - verb errors are associated with decreased discourse efficiency
  - verb production is associated with more CIUs

METHODS

• Language samples obtained from AphasiaBank (MacWhinney, Fromm, Holland, 2011) from participants classified as anomic (n=102) or not aphasic (n=27) on the Western Aphasia Battery (Kertesz, 2006) (Table 1).
• Total verbs used correctly and incorrectly were counted for each transcript.
• Correct Information Units (CIUs; Nicholas & Brookshire, 1993) were calculated for each transcript.
• Greater than 90% intra- and inter-reliability was established between research assistants.
• Strength of associations were determined based on correlation coefficients.
• Simple linear regressions were conducted for variables with significant correlations to determine whether verb use predicted the various discourse measures.

RESULTS

• There was a significant weak correlation between informativeness and total number of verbs used (r=.016, n=119, p=.0001) (see Table 2 and Figure 1).

• There was a significant moderate correlation between efficiency and total number of verbs used (r=.457, n=117, p=.0001) (see Figure 2).

• There was a strong significant relationship between the total number of CIUs and total number of verbs used (r=.811, n=119, p=.0001) (see Figure 3).

• Results of the regression indicated that correct verb use explained 20.7% of the variance in efficiency and total number of verbs explained 65.8% of the variance in total CIUs (see Table 2).

DISCUSSION

• The simple tallying of verbs may offer an efficient, practical alternative to analyzing discourse for CIUs.

• CIU analysis requires transcription and evaluation of each word as it relates to the sample but counting verbs is something that can be done in “real time” making transcription unnecessary.

• Our results suggest that CIU counts can be predicted by total verb use and, by extension, the efficiency and informativeness of discourse. These results may have immediate clinical utility.