

Glossary

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Alogia – poverty of speech, short and concise answers, with no additional information, usually monosyllabic.

Alzheimer's dementia – dementia occurring as part of Alzheimer's disease, a progressive irreversible, neurodegenerative brain disorder. Alzheimer's dementia is a mental disorder, with onset usually in old age, characterized by generalized cognitive impairment including memory, attention, and orientation disturbances, changes in judgment, mood alterations, and language impairments.

Animacy – feature of words representing animate (living) concepts, as opposed to inanimate (non-living) concepts.

Association – the relationship between two contents of a concept based on experience or on the quality and quantity of relations connecting two concepts.

Associations production test – a task in which subjects are asked to name either as many words that come to mind (free association test) or a predetermined number of them (discrete association test).

Attention – the cognitive ability to focus on one set or aspect of information.

Category relations – relations of concepts which share conceptual features of the same category.

Derailed – lack of cohesion in language production of which the subject is not aware, jumping from theme to theme, a characteristic of which is the use of unclear pronouns.

Down syndrome – a chromosomal disorder caused by the trisomy of chromosome 21. It is one of the most common causes of intellectual disability. It is accompanied by both cognitive and language deficits, a range of medical issues, and specific facial characteristics.

Early-course psychosis – a psychotic disorder in its early stages characterized by less significant social and work impairment, with relatively preserved cognitive functions. Although there is no clear consensus, a tentative cut-off of five years after illness onset has been suggested.

Embodied cognition – the set of theoretical approaches according to which cognition is shaped by (or based on) not just the brain, but also various elements of the entire body, such as the motor system, perceptual system, interactions of the body and the environment, etc.

Executive function – the set of cognitive abilities which enable cognitive control and purposeful behaviour.

First cluster – the first, and the least effortful, bout of production in verbal fluency tasks.

Forced choice comprehension test – a test which offers more than one answer, in which the subject compares the offered answers and chooses the most preferred one.

Formal thought disorder – a thought disturbance, usually associated with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders, affecting the form but not the content of thoughts. Formal thought disorder is characterized by the loosening of associations, incoherence and derailment, illogicality, tangentiality, perseveration, and neologisms.

Frequency – a lexical-semantic feature which denotes the frequency of occurrence, or use, of words. Highly frequent words are thought to have stronger and more easily activated connections in the semantic memory.

Hyperpriming – enhanced indirect semantic priming as a result of increased spreading of activation.

Hypoprime – diminished indirect semantic priming.

Imageability – a lexical-semantic feature which depends on the ease with which subjects create a visual or auditory reference to the concept.

Lexical semantic features – the basic conceptual components in the semantic memory with which a concept is constructed.

Neuropsychology – the discipline that investigates the relation between brain and behaviour by focusing on the behavioural consequences of neurological traumas or conditions.

Overinclusion – the inclusion of non-members of a category in the category; the inability to maintain the borders of a category.

Perceptual experience – experience based on perceiving; experiencing something based on data acquired through the senses, i.e. by seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, etc.

Psychosis – a mental condition characterized primarily by impairments in reality testing, delusions, and hallucinations. Psychosis is a leading feature of psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia, but it can also occur in other mental disorders.

Schizophrenia – a severe mental disorder from the spectrum of psychotic disorders, characterized by changes in thoughts, feelings, and behavior that lead to progressive impairment on multiple levels. Symptoms seen in schizophrenia can be divided into positive (e.g. delusions, hallucinations), negative (e.g. flat affect), and cognitive symptoms (e.g. impaired executive functions).

Semantic fluency – verbal fluency with semantic conditions. Subjects with semantic fluency are able to list examples of a specific semantic category.

Semantic memory – The semantic memory is a long-term memory system containing organized knowledge about words and their meanings, referents, and relations.

Semantic representations – mental representations stored in the semantic memory containing all information about the words they are encoding.

Spreading of activation – activation of concepts and their relations in the semantic memory in the process of the search and retrieval of concepts.

Tangentiality – the quality of answers that are only indirectly connected, or not connected at all, with the questions they purportedly answer.

Taxonomic relations – relations in taxonomic categories which are similarity-based.

Concepts in taxonomic relation fall under the same superordinate categories, and their features are largely shared. Their shared properties are a consequence of their intrinsic similarities.

Typicality feature – the degree to which a concept represents a certain semantic category.

Verbal fluency – language production ability under assigned conditions and time restrictions. Verbal fluency can be tested by means of semantic fluency tasks (e.g. listing examples of a specified semantic category), phonological fluency tasks (e.g. listing examples of words starting with a same phoneme), or syntactic fluency tasks (e.g. listing examples with the same syntactic limitations).

Williams syndrome – a rare genetic disorder caused by the deletion of about 26 genes on the long arm of chromosome 7. It is accompanied by cognitive deficits, primarily in the visuo-spatial domain, and a range of medical issues, in addition to specific facial characteristics. Language is relatively preserved.

Word concreteness – a lexical-semantic feature dependent on the attainability of a concept to sensory experience.