The Assessment of Aphasia in the Context of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

By

Samar Al-amawi

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Speech Pathology)

in School of Humanities and Social Science, Faculty of Education and Art

The University of Newcastle, Australia

November 2012
Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed………………………………………

(Candidate)

Date………………………………………
Dedication

The thesis is dedicated to my family members—

father, mother, husband, daughter, son and brothers
Acknowledgements

Undertaking this PhD thesis has been a great journey for me in my country, Australia. The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the invaluable support, sacrifices, encouragement and inspiration of Allah and several individuals. Hence, I wish to offer my appreciation to all those who extended their support in many different ways.

My first and greatest thanks are for Allah (God), who blessed me with the opportunity to undertake this research. Thanks to Allah for providing me with the strength to continue my PhD journey.

Great appreciation and enormous thanks are due to my husband, Mohammad Shadid, and my two little angels, Nada and Ibrahim, who have given spiritual support. I am grateful to my lovely children for their patience while I was absent from their lives due to my busy and stressful PhD journey. Thanks for your encouragement, sense of humour and laughter, which has made this time far easier for me. A special sorry goes to you, my son Ibrahim; you have been sick, admitted to the hospital many times during my PhD journey, while I was struggling trying to be a good mum and a good PhD student at the same time. My greatest thanks are to you, Mohammad, for being patient and supportive of me and of our children. Thanks Mohammad for your love and understanding.

I am also grateful to my very supportive parents, Dr Ibrahim Al-amawi and Fahmiah Taha, for their spiritual and financial support. They have remained the source of power and encouragement in my life, especially during the very harsh and stressful moments of my PhD journey. Thanks Father for your encouragement and for nurturing my thirst of knowledge. I would
like to thank my wonderful mum especially. She has always supported me and taught me how to strive to achieve my goals and dreams. Thank you Baba and Mama.

I would also like to thank my wonderful mother-in-law, Fadwa Shadid, who has supported me through encouraging my husband to be more patient and supportive. Special thanks also go to my two great brothers, Saed Al-amawi and Samer Al-amawi for their consistent support and love.

I would particularly like to thank my supervisors, Professor Alison Ferguson and Dr Sally Hewat, for their support during this journey. I am deeply indebted, as Professor Ferguson’s constructive feedback kept me constantly focused. I was very fortunate to be under Professor Ferguson’s supervision—your expertise and support have helped me to grow independently as a researcher.

I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to the University of Newcastle for its sponsorship, granting me a scholarship to achieve my doctorate. I also wish to thank Elite Editing for their professional proofreading and editing of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends, Dr Dalia, Dr Shatha, Samreen, Sheree, Dr Eman, Dr Shaymaa, Dr Rania and Dr Rana. They have been a constant source of encouragement, inspiration and strength. A special acknowledgment also goes to my special PhD mates, Dr Shatha Obeidat and Val Adams. We shared the same challenges while doing our PhD studies at the University of Newcastle and I will not forget the time we have spent having coffee together, talking about our PhD difficulties and supporting each other.

I would finally like to ask all PhD students: Have you cried while writing your acknowledgements statement? I did.
Publications Associated With the Thesis


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASHA</td>
<td>American Speech-Language-Hearing Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAT</td>
<td>Bilingual Aphasia Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDAE</td>
<td>Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Communication Complexity Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHIS</td>
<td>Central Health Interpreting Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>complementised phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICE</td>
<td>interpreted communicative events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>International Phonetic Alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>interpreted setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIG</td>
<td>Multicultural Interest Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>monolingual setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAATI</td>
<td>National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICA</td>
<td>Porch Index of Communicative Ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td>source language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLP</td>
<td>speech pathologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAA</td>
<td>Speech Pathology Australia Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>source text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVO</td>
<td>Subject Verb Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIS</td>
<td>Telephone Interpreter Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPH</td>
<td>Tree Pruning Hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>targeted language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>targeted text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSO</td>
<td>Verb Subject Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAB</td>
<td>Western Aphasia Battery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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The present research aimed to explore the challenges that monolingual speech pathologists and interpreters face during aphasia assessment sessions for bilingual speakers. A review of the previous research in the area of speech pathology assessment of bilingual speakers highlighted that the search for valid standardised assessment tools was problematic given both the complexities of obtaining adequate linguistic translation to cope with cultural and dialectal diversity among language groups, and the challenges faced by health care interpreters given the need to adapt materials to enhance interpreters’ partnerships with speech pathologists to ensure the validity of individualised assessment processes. The research aimed to develop an assessment guide that would facilitate these complex processes through providing these professionals with culturally and linguistically appropriate guidance.

In the first stage of the current research, the results of an online national survey (58 respondents) highlighted a lack in the availability of appropriate assessment materials for speech pathologists for use with bilingual speakers in Australia. It also revealed that speech pathologists’ lack of knowledge about other languages and cultural diversity is a main barrier towards improving the quality of the assessment sessions obtained for bilingual speakers. The findings highlighted that bilingual speech pathologists are often unavailable within the Australian context those who can work as consultants for monolingual English-speaking speech pathologists, to help in interpreting the assessment outcomes of bilingual speakers, including those with aphasia. Despite the reported difficulties faced by speech pathologists when assessing bilingual speakers with aphasia, as revealed from the survey findings, speech pathologists rated themselves as competent in doing the assessment and believed that the assessments they obtain for bilingual speakers are effective.
In the second stage of the research, the analysis of transcripts from focus group discussions identified the difficulties that arise in the partnership and collaborative teamwork between interpreters and speech pathologists when they are working together to assess bilingual speakers within the Australian context. In particular, misunderstandings were reported as common between speech pathologists and interpreters in relation to each other’s expectations of their roles within the sessions.

In the third stage, based on the findings revealed by the previous two stages of this research, anaphasia assessment guide was developed to providing interpreters and speech pathologists with an assistive guide to allow them to better identify and explain their role within aphasia assessment sessions for bilingual speakers. The guide developed for the present research narrowed the focus of the research to the pathology of aphasia and to the Arabic language, for the purpose of material development. The guide provides important knowledge needed by the English-speaking speech pathologists about the main Arabic language characteristics. The guide also provides health care interpreters with basic information about the meaning of the term ‘aphasia’ and about the expected language and speech behaviours and symptoms associated with the disorder. The guide provides some examples of more culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment materials that might be useful when obtaining language assessment for Arabic speakers with aphasia.

The current research findings suggest the importance of the development of assessment materials that can readily be understood by health care interpreters and used flexibly in partnership with monolingual speech pathologists. While the present research develops such assessment material for Arabic adult speakers, it is suggested that the research offers a potential model for the development of similar assessment processes and materials for use with a range of other languages and cultures.
Introduction

The assessment of aphasia for bilingual speakers is well recognised as a challenging procedure for speech pathologists in Australia and in other countries with multicultural communities (Kambanaros & Van Steenbrugge, 2004). Previously published research has identified some of the major difficulties that occur during interpreter-mediated assessment sessions for bilingual speakers with aphasia. Such difficulties and challenges are reported to emerge from the linguistic and cultural diversity, speech pathologists’ lack of knowledge about other cultures and languages, inappropriate assessment materials and interpreters’ unavailability (Battle, 2000; Isaac, 2002b; Roger, Code, & Sheard, 1996, 1998, 2000).

The present research aimed to explore the challenges that monolingual speech pathologists and interpreters face during aphasia assessment sessions for bilingual speakers, with a view to developing an assessment guide to facilitate the process by providing professionals with more culturally and linguistically appropriate guidance. The assessment guide developed by the researcher as part of this research was designed to assist with the assessment of Arabic speakers with aphasia (as Arabic is the researcher’s first language).

A range of research methods was used through the three-stage research process. The first stage was a quantitative study, which made use of an anonymous online survey, distributed nationally through the provision of a web-link via a number of professional electronic communication networks. This stage aimed to explore monolingual speech pathologists’ perspectives regarding the assessment of aphasia in bilingual speakers to identify the challenges they face in such sessions. It also aimed to reveal more about the availability of interpreters and about the relationship and partnerships between speech pathologists and interpreters in clinical sessions. The second stage of this research made use of a qualitative study that involved several
focus group discussions with groups of interpreters and of speech pathologists to learn more about the challenges speech pathologists and interpreters face when working together to assess bilingual speakers. This stage of the study also aimed to explore the nature of the partnership (if it exists) between speech pathologists and interpreters when they are working together in the assessment of bilingual speakers within the Australian context. In addition, the study aimed to uncover the role of expectation on the part of each of these professionals in relation to the other, and to gather participants’ suggestions and opinions on how best the speech pathologist–interpreter partnership can be improved and enhanced. The final stage of this research emerged from the prior stages’ identification of the specific difficulties that make the assessment of bilingual speakers with aphasia challenging for interpreters and speech pathologists. To meet the difficulties identified, a new aphasia assessment guide was developed from this research to provide professionals with ideas and suggestions that are more useful to facilitate the assessment process. In particular, the guide was designed to provide speech pathologists and interpreters with a resource to help them to develop more cooperative partnerships when obtaining aphasia assessment for bilingual speakers (particularly, for Arabic speakers with aphasia). The guide provides culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment items for use with Arabic speakers. As part of this development stage, a review of the content of the guide was sought and obtained from a range of experts (Arabic speech pathologists from Egypt and Jordan, Arabic interpreters that work in the health care sector in the Australian context, and English-speaking speech pathologists that work with speakers with aphasia in Australia). In response to expert feedback, the material was revised.

This research contributes to the body of knowledge on the assessment of aphasia in bilingual speakers, and it fills a gap in current understandings of ways to meet challenges faced by speech pathologists and interpreters in assessing bilingual speakers with aphasia in Australia and in other countries with multicultural populations. The research argues that the complexities involved in the assessment of aphasia in bilingual speakers cannot be addressed solely by the development of
standardised assessment. Instead, the findings suggest the importance of the development of
assessment materials that can be readily understood by health care interpreters and used flexibly in
partnership with monolingual speech pathologists. While the present research developed such
assessment materials for Arabic adult speakers with aphasia, it is suggested that the research offers
a model for the development of similar assessment processes and materials for use with a range of
other languages and cultures.

The following eight chapters will discuss these research stages in more details and present
the methods and findings of each study.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the relevant literature about aphasia and bilingualism.
It focuses particularly on the emerging challenges in interpreter-mediated assessment sessions for
bilingual speakers. Chapter 2 focuses on the Arabic language and provides relevant information
about the structure of Arabic and the main differences between the Arabic and English languages.
The purpose of this chapter is to help the reader to identify some of the problems that occur
specifically when translating from Arabic to English and from English to Arabic. Chapter 3 focuses
on translation and interpreting, particularly as provided by interpreters in the speech pathology
sector. The important issues related to translation and interpreting in the health care sector are
discussed in detail in this chapter. This chapter sheds light on the difficulties that emerge within the
health care setting from the three different perspectives that comprise this setting: the bilingual
speaker to be served, the health care provider and the interpreter that facilitates the communication
between the interlocutors. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the research methodologies used to
conduct each stage of this research, and details the triangulation obtained between the research data.

In Section 2, Chapter 5 provides the data analysis and findings of the survey conducted for
this research through several focus group discussions. Chapter 6 then explains the main findings
generated from the qualitative analysis of the data. Chapter 7 details the development process of the
aphasia assessment guide for Arabic speakers. This development process was initiated, modified and finalised through the different stages of this research. The resulting aphasia assessment guide aims to provide speech pathologists and interpreters with a useful tool for use when working with Arabic speakers with aphasia within the Australian context. Chapter 7 also provides details about the several revision stages carried out upon the assessment guide in response to the gathering of expert opinions and suggestions, sought by the researcher to improve the assessment guide. The specific changes made to the aphasia assessment guide are explained in this chapter.

Chapter 8, the discussion and conclusion chapter, provides a thorough discussion of the research’s main findings. An urgent call for further research is made to fill the remaining gap in research in regards to aphasia assessment in bilingual speakers.