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Face-to-Face : An exploratory study of how people with aphasia and speakers of English as a second language perceive their interactions with government agencies

Susan Booth
Edith Cowan University

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Face-to-Face: *An exploratory study of how people with aphasia and speakers of English as a second language perceive their interactions with government agencies*

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This Thesis is presented for the degree of Master of Social Science

Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia

Date: 4th October 2012

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When I embarked on this journey, I had no idea what lay ahead, or how personally I would draw from the stories of resilience and determination to overcome the challenges that life presented to the people I spoke to. Only three years earlier I had migrated from Scotland to live with my family in Australia. Although I have extensive experience working with people with aphasia, the narratives of the ESL speakers also struck a chord with me. Even though English is my first language, speaking with a Scottish accent and the responses of some of my communication partners has given me a small glimpse of their lived experiences.

Six months into this project I was faced with my own serious health issue and from then, the creation of this thesis became intertwined with challenging treatment regimes and a slow process of recovery. I can never thank Gary, Eve and Tom enough for their immeasurable love and tolerance. This thesis is therefore undoubtedly a team effort and is dedicated to all my wonderful family and friends, whose love has held my hand, across the continents, helping me to recover and complete what I had started. A special thanks to my mum, Carole, Colin, Catriona and Gary's family in Australia, who were always there for me when the going got tough.

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Abstract

Creating communication accessible environments is increasingly recognised as an essential component to facilitating the social inclusion of people with aphasia (a language disorder after brain damage), (Cruice, 2007; Duchan, 2006; Duchan, Jennings, Barrett, & Butler, 2006; Howe, Worrall, & Hickson, 2008 ; Pound, Duchan, Penman, Hewitt, & Parr, 2007; Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2007). There have been suggestions that communication access principles in aphasia may also assist people with the communication difficulties associated with English as a second language (ESL) (Kagan & LeBlanc, 2002; Law et al., 2010; Worrall, Rose, Howe, McKenna, & Hickson, 2007). Currently, in Western Australia for example, ESL speakers are supported by interpreting and translation services (Government of Western Australia. Office of Multicultural Interests, 2008). However, there appears to be a gap in assisting the collaborative communication strategies which ESL speakers and public service providers naturally use to succeed in their interactions (McPake et al., 2002).

Interacting with government agencies is a common experience for many people. However, despite a growing body of evidence of the need for improved communication access, in Australia this knowledge has yet to translate into policies and supporting documents on access and inclusion. For these services to become socially inclusive, a multidimensional approach to communication access needs to be considered. This study explores whether there is any foundation to anecdotal information that communication access principles which support people with aphasia (PWA) also facilitate access and inclusion for ESL speakers. The findings of this study highlight the need for access and inclusion policies to recognise the broad principles of communication access to create environments which are more readily reached by people with reduced communication competency.

Aims: This study explored people with aphasia and ESL speakers' perceptions of their face-to-face interactions with public service providers in Western Australia. The study investigated three principal questions:

- What features appear to enable communication access?
- What features appear to constrain communication access?
- What do participants perceive to be the impact of these encounters?

Methodology: Using a sociological conceptual framework based on a social interactionism approach, the study will draw from the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Erving Goffman and Anthony Giddens to construct an argument to illustrate how communication access is socially situated and can impact on identity construction, resilience, the negotiation of social capital and ultimately, social inclusion.

Key words

Aphasia, ESL, communication access, social inclusion, social capital, resilience, empathy, power, reflexivity, in-depth interviews, qualitative descriptive analysis

Chapter One

Introduction

Background and structure of the thesis

This thesis sets out to explore the perceptions of people with aphasia (PWA) and English as second language (ESL) speakers regarding their face-to-face interactions with public service providers. While PWA and speakers of ESL may both encounter communication access issues, the two groups have rarely been studied together. Principally, the study investigates what they conceptualise as the main features that appear to either enable or constrain the notion of communication access. It also aims to explore their impressions of the impact of these service encounters. A qualitative description approach is used against the backdrop of a sociological theoretical conceptual model to consider a deeper nuanced understanding of the connections between communication access, social capital and social inclusion. This thesis aims to provide insights that could inform future government policy development and engender a broad understanding of communication access amongst service providers.

It has been suggested that as many as one in five people may experience communication difficulties at some point in their lives (Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007). This reflects a wide range of the population from those with a specific communication difficulty (e.g. acquired communication difficulty, developmental speech and language difficulties, stammering, hearing impairment, mental health disorders, autism) to those who face the challenges of speaking English as a second language. Participation in the wide range of community opportunities can be restricted for both groups as often the communication support required to facilitate access and inclusion is not available (Law, Pringle, et al., 2007; Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007; Parr, 2007; Parr, Byng, Gilpin, & Ireland, 1997; Perez, Wilson, King, & Pagnier, 2006). *Communication access* is a term used within the communication disability literature, to describe the ways in which society can modify the environment to support people with communication problems in their interactions. For instance, this can range from providing communication support training, addressing the negative attitudes of others, providing information in an accessible format and making sure the

environment is conducive to a successful encounter (Kagan, Black, Simmons-Mackie, & Square, 2001; Kagan & LeBlanc, 2002; Parr, Wimborne, Hewitt, & Pound, 2008; Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2007; Worrall et al., 2005).

The second chapter of this thesis aims to explore whether the fields of aphasia and ESL share any common ground in how they might approach future legislative recommendations which support the inclusion of people from both groups. As an example, the policy context in Western Australia is outlined and the lack of recognition of the broad principles of communication access is highlighted. Government service interactions are an increasingly important part of life for many people and the nature of these encounters may significantly impact on quality of life (Adelman, Ahuvia, & Goodwin, 1993; Gutek, 1995, 1999). However, despite the prevalence of service interactions in our lives, communication within specific service encounters has not been well researched (Ford, 2001).

Although there is evidence that the communication partner can reduce the impact of the communication difficulty, many service providers lack awareness of how to help (Brown et al., 2006). There is a recognised need for training and education on how to make environments more accessible so people with a range of communication difficulties can engage in discussions, understand the information and make their own decisions (Kagan, 1998; Kagan & LeBlanc, 2002; Pound et al., 2007; Simmons-Mackie et al., 2007). However, the literature on the experiences of people with communication difficulties and the training programmes that improve their access to services is often specific to the conditions that caused the impairment e.g. stroke, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, autism, and cerebral palsy (Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007). This reflects a "bottom up" approach to communication skills training and although this may be useful at promoting communication access at a local level, it is unlikely to have an impact on facilitating the relevant legislative changes and systemic policy development that is required.

As an experienced speech and language therapist with a specialist interest in aphasia, I was cognisant of the growing body of literature relating to access and inclusion issues with aphasia. Aphasia is an acquired language disorder

resulting from neurological damage which can result in difficulty with speaking, understanding, reading and writing, usually without affecting other cognitive processes. However, it would seem that despite the recognition of the extensive disabling societal barriers for people with aphasia, there continues to be limited support offered to people with a broad range of communication difficulties at a policy level (Law, Pringle, et al., 2007; Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007). Although it is well recognised that the personal impact of aphasia can be immense, the lack of recognition of the disorder at a legislative level is likely to reflect the relatively small numbers of people who suffer from aphasia. With this in mind, this study is an attempt to explore whether the face to face experiences of PWA were similar to another group who may experience communication difficulties to see whether policy could address the needs of a larger cohort.

Australia has a significant multicultural population which is expected to continue to evolve and diversify (Commonwealth of Australia. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIC), 2011). Many years ago I taught English to Chinese students recently migrated to Australia and I was struck by how their communication encounters were often quite similar to people with aphasia. I was interested in exploring whether these two distinct groups, who on the surface seem very different in terms of need, actually report some commonalities in terms of their experiences in their the face-to-face encounters with community services. Initially, my focus reflected the aphasia literature's social model of disability stance towards communication access. The dominant description of a social model views access as an issue for society to solve in terms of modifying aspects of the environment to facilitate inclusion of people with aphasia. For instance, within this literature, there are numerous studies which have highlighted the effectiveness of training communication partners to improve the participation of PWA, the results of which have been highlighted in a recent systematic review (Simmons-Mackie, Raymer, Armstrong, Holland, & Cherney, 2010). However, although there are some reports of training programmes which appear to have effected change at an organisational level (Kagan & LeBlanc, 2002; Pound et al., 2007; Simmons-Mackie et al., 2007), this is an area that still requires further research.

It has been suggested that speakers of ESL may also benefit from communication access principles (Kagan & LeBlanc, 2002; Law, et al., 2010; Worrall et al., 2007). In a review of the *communication support needs* literature, Law, van der Gaag, et al. (2007), recognised the need to examine the experiences of the full range of people with communication difficulties, to improve public attitudes and to develop an accessible communication environment across all community settings. Although they excluded speakers of English as a second language, they acknowledge that at times the distinction between the communication support needs of this group and the broader groups of people requiring this level of support is not always clear.

Tenuous links have already been established from the perspective of aphasia research and therapy advice with the experiences of speaking a foreign language. For instance, it is not uncommon for aphasia therapists to talk about the similarities between an auditory comprehension deficit in aphasia to visiting a different country where a different language is spoken. This link is further demonstrated in the aphasia literature on identity construction where several authors have drawn from the sociolinguistic and sociocultural literature to explain the process of identity negotiation in every day talk in aphasia (Hagstrom, 2004; Hagstrom & Wertsch, 2004; Shadden, 2005; Shadden & Agan, 2004; Shadden, Hagstrom, & Koski, 2008). However, despite the potential wider application of communication access principles, there have been no studies exploring whether people from these two diverse groups report any commonalities in their communication experiences.

In a move towards embracing the reciprocal aspects of a communication encounter, Chapter Three explores the social context of every day interactions and outlines the conceptual framework for this study. The study is underpinned by the theoretical and methodological framework of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). This proposes that meaning is understood and negotiated through language based interactions with others in a social context and is a useful scaffold for understanding that people act and respond to situations depending on the meanings that they attribute and the meanings others give to that situation. Society is therefore constructed through collaborative actions and should not be considered through considering the acts

of individuals alone. Within the aphasia literature there is a wealth of research on the collaborative aspects of communication, although the focus has tended towards the impact of the linguistic features of the aphasia and the linguistic resources used by PWA and their communication partner to manage communication breakdown (Booth & Perkins, 1999; Kagan, 1998; Lock, Burch, & Wilkinson, 2006; Milroy & Perkins, 1992; Perkins, 1999; Simmons-Mackie & Kagan, 1999; Wilkinson, 2004; Wilkinson, Beeke, & Maxim, 2003; Wilkinson, Lock, Bryan, & Sage, 2011).

Originally the focus of the study was to explore the PWA and ESL speakers' perceptions of the strategies used by the communication partner which appeared to enable or constrain communication access and feelings of inclusion. This knowledge would help to explore whether a core set of principles could be identified to develop future communication support training that could be suitable for a bigger cohort of people with reduced communication competency. However, as the study progressed, there was greater recognition of the interactional role of the participants within the encounters described. Chapter Three outlines the social context of communication where, set in a particular social field, each person influences the response of the other.

Communication is essentially a social affair. As Goffman points out "every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to-face or mediated contact with others" (Goffman, 1972, p. 5). Through verbal or non verbal behaviours they communicate their view and evaluation of a particular situation which in turn will influence the impression the co participant in the encounter has of them. Communicating is therefore not only about transmitting information but is also central to the co construction of social identity and influences how a person achieves self representation (Gee, 1996; Giddens, 1991; Hagstrom & Shadden, 2004; Hagstrom & Wertsch, 2004; Miller, 2000). The sociological literature provided the relevant theoretical frameworks to consider what influenced communication access and the impact and ramifications of the face-to-face encounter on social inclusion. In particular, the work of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), Erving Goffman (Goffman, 1972, 1974, 1990) and Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1979, 1984) provided a multifaceted understanding of what was occurring below

the surface of the verbal and non verbal behaviours of the communication partner as described by the participants. Their theories also facilitated a deeper interpretation of how the PWA/ESL speakers negotiate social capital within the government service interactions reported, which lead to an exploration of the central role of power and authority in everyday interactions. The study considers how being able to participate fully in communication encounters impacts on emotions, identity and self representation which ultimately can impact on agency, social inclusion and exclusion.

Chapter Four outlines the methodology which draws from the sociological framework described in Chapter Three. The study, underpinned by a symbolic interactionist paradigm, used a qualitative description approach (Milne & Oberle, 2005; Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen, & Sondergaard, 2009; Sandelowski, 2000) to describe the key features which were perceived as enabling or constraining communication access as well as exploring the interconnection between communication access and social inclusion. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1990) were conducted with ten participants (five PWA and five ESL speakers). An accurate and detailed description of the participant responses to the questions was achieved using the orthographic transcription methods described by Poland (2001). Throughout the results chapters (Chapters Five to Eight), the participants' quotes are verbatim accounts with pauses, repetitions, non verbal behaviours and unintelligible speech all included in the transcription. In doing so, the aim was to maintain the authenticity of their narratives. Chapter Four also describes how the researcher constructed a research plan which considered the four primary criteria to enhance validity; credibility, authenticity, criticality and integrity, as reported by Whittenmore, Chase & Mandle (2001).

Chapter Five presents the participants' perceptions of their communication partners' specific verbal and non verbal behaviours which influenced the face-to-face interactions within a government service encounter. This chapter indicates the high degree of uniformity in what the ESL speakers and PWA considered as the main factors impacting on whether their communication partner's verbal and non verbal behaviours enabled or constrained

communication access. The interpretative themes of empathy and power and the ways these are communicated are explored.

Chapter Six explores the meaning the participants appeared to attach to the verbal and non verbal behaviours of the service provider. It outlines the evidence describing what the participants perceived to be the consequences of how they were received by the communication partner in the service encounters described. Three constructs emerged which appeared to be directly linked in the data to the actions of the communication partner. These included the impact on the PWA and ESL speakers' emotions, their construction of identity, and their social inclusion. This chapter explores each of these three aspects in more depth by examining the evidence which revealed the impact of the service encounter described. Specifically, it explores the role of social capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991) in promoting access and inclusion by highlighting the interactional aspect of how service providers and service users negotiate capital at a relationship level.

Chapter Seven discusses how, as the study progressed, there was a shift in thinking with regards to using a social model of disability standpoint. Through the data analysis and literature review, it became apparent that it was unhelpful to consider only the communication partner's contribution as both the ESL speakers and PWA often revealed how constructs like resilience and reflexivity also played a role in how the interaction unfolded. This observation highlighted the recursive nature of the interactive relationship between the PWA/ESL speaker and the service provider, where the actions of one person are going to directly influence the response of the other person (Blumer, 1969; Bourdieu, 1991; Giddens, 1984; Goffman, 1972; Mead, 1934). Therefore to consider future training needs in terms of the communication partner alone would not recognise the interactive perspective of what the ESL speaker or PWA brings to the encounter that may impact on whether an interaction is accessible or not.

Consequently, the initial position of examining the PWA/ESL speakers' perception of the communication partner's impact in a government service encounter, developed into a broader and deeper question about what constitutes communication access in terms of the interactive relationship

between the speaker, the listener and the field. The focus on the communication partner remained, but the contribution of the ESL speaker or PWA as an agent was also explored at a more interpretive level.

Chapter Eight considers the influence of the social field of government services with reference to the Australian Public Service (APS) which was the focus of the study. In particular, two diverse services; Centrelink (an Australian government service which provides support to people in need and encourages self sufficiency) and university education are discussed to highlight the potential broad application of the principles of communication access. This chapter explores how the structures in place within the social field of government services can have an impact on whether face-to-face interactions are accessible.

In Chapter Nine, the thesis concludes by drawing the findings together and relating them back to the sociological frameworks underpinning the research. Overall the results confirm the similarities of how communication access is experienced by both PWA and ESL speakers. This chapter discusses the potential application of the findings of this study with regard to how government policy could be developed to support the APS to improve communication access in face to face settings. In keeping with the interactional ethos of communication access, recommendations for future research to enhance the positive adaptive skills of PWA and ESL speakers are also discussed.

This study is unique in its attempt to bridge the knowledge and expertise between the literatures associated with the study of aphasia and ESL usage. It aims to explore whether a range of different stakeholders could benefit from the development of government policy which recognises the centrality of communication for social integration and well being. Government service interactions will be a focus, as they represent a common interactional opportunity across the two groups, and are directly related to potential implementation of government policy.

The study investigates three principal questions:

1. What do people with aphasia and ESL speakers perceive to be the features which enable a successful face-to-face interaction with government service providers?
2. What do people with aphasia and ESL speakers perceive to be the features which constrain a successful face-to-face interaction with government service providers?
3. What are the key features of the perceived impact of these service encounters?

Chapter Two

Aphasia and ESL: A new alliance?

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to identify the significance of communication difficulties within the general population, to consider the literature around the construct of communication access, and to support the argument for a combined approach to campaigning for increased recognition of communication access at a policy level. Specifically, the chapter will explore literature where there is an overlap between the study of aphasia and ESL usage, as well as identifying where each area may benefit from the other to promote future practice on access and inclusion.

In order to contain the scope of this research, the social field of government services has been identified as the area under investigation. By considering the structures in place in terms of policy and legislation, this chapter will explore whether the construct of communication access is adequately recognised within key national and state policies in Australia which advocate for improved accessibility and social inclusion of PWA/ESL speakers.

This chapter aims to draw together insights from the fields of aphasia and ESL to explore whether there are areas of common ground in terms of promoting access and inclusion at a government service level. This sets the scene for the overall objective which is to explore what these disparate groups conceptualise as the key enablers and constraints to an accessible encounter with government service providers.

Significance: What is the size of the problem?

Although there is no definitive measure to assess the prevalence and the impact of communication difficulties at a population level, some authors report that there may be up to 20% of the population who experience difficulties at some point in their lives (Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007). This higher estimation is likely to be more representative if we consider the communication needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CaLD)

who may be ESL speakers. In Western Australia (WA) for instance, twenty-seven percent of the population are migrants, making the state one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, DIC, 2008). In some local government areas in WA, it is estimated that up to 14% of the population speak English not well or not at all. It is well recognised that for some migrants, communicating in English can be a barrier to participating fully in Australian society (Government of Western Australia. Equal Opportunity Commission Substantive Equality Unit, 2005; Government of Western Australia. Office of Multicultural Interests, 2008).

A significant communication disorder affecting a sizeable number of adult speakers is aphasia. The most common cause of aphasia is stroke. It is estimated that of the 48,000 Australians experiencing a stroke each year 14,400 will present with aphasia (Thrift, Dewey, Macdonell, McNeil, & Donnan, 2000). Engelter et al. (2006) estimate the incidence of aphasia for people experiencing a first ischaemic stroke to be as high as 30%. However, there are no reliable statistics on the incidence and prevalence of aphasia in Australia, which makes it difficult to plan evidence based services to address the needs of this group. Like the CaLD group, aphasia can have a significant, long lasting impact on the individual (Hilari, 2011; Hilari & Northcott, 2006; Parr, 2007; Parr et al., 1997; Shadden, 2005). However, despite this knowledge, there remains a poor public and professional awareness of this condition (Code et al., 2001; Flynn, Cumberland, & Marshall, 2008).

Although this study is focusing on two distinct groups, it is important to consider the broader context of communication disability. As discussed by Byles (2005), the most comprehensive estimate of the number of people in Australia affected by restricted sensory impairment or speech loss is 6% (1.2 million), highlighted in the 1998 national survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (1999). A study by Perry, Reilly, Cotton, Bloomberg & Johnson (2004), investigated the prevalence of people with complex communication needs in Victoria, Australia and concluded that approximately 1-2% of the population have severe communication difficulty which require the assistance of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) methods. This highlights the significant number of people who are living with restricted communication access. The

'information age' has also increased the need for effective communication skills and has resulted in people with communication difficulties facing even more barriers to participating in society.

The social consequence of communication difficulty

Law, van der Gaag, et al. (2007), in their review of how people with communication support needs in Scotland engaged with services, highlighted evidence that healthcare, education, criminal justice, financial and social services all failed to meet the needs of a diverse group of people with communication difficulty. Although the review did not include people who speak ESL, the authors recognised that in Scotland the distinction between ESL related government reports which talk about developing communication support services for this group with other disability related communication support services, is not always clear. A similar situation appears to exist within Australian government policy. In failing to fully recognise the communication needs of a wide range of people, government policy is potentially restricting the social inclusion and equity of services to a diverse group and in turn is creating a social justice issue for those who face communication barriers in government interactions.

Language barriers, related to people from a CaLD background and those with a specific disability, have been identified as a key component to increasing the risk of an adverse event in acute care hospital setting (Bartlett, Blais, Tamblyn, Clermont, & MacGibbon, 2008; Divi, Koss, Schmaltz, & Loeb, 2007). Other studies have also highlighted the difficulties faced by people with a range of communication disabilities in public services such as education (Law et al., 2002; Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007; Miller, 2000, 2003; Toohey, 2000), criminal justice (Togher, Balandin, Young, Given, & Canty, 2006) and healthcare (Balandin, Hemsley, Sigafoos, & Green, 2007; Balandin et al., 2001; Finke, Light, & Kitko, 2008; Hemsley, Balandin, & Worrall, 2012; O'Halloran, Hickson, & Worrall, 2008; Thiederman, 1996).

Finke et al. (2008), in a systematic review of the effectiveness of nurse communication with complex communication, draws attention to the lack of formal training to support nurses in their interactions with patients, despite this

being identified as a priority by nurses and patients (Balandin et al., 2001; Chevannes, 2002; Hemsley & Balandin, 2004). In a training needs analysis of health professionals working with ethnic minority groups, the issue of communication dominated the discussion, with the majority of nurses citing difficulties with communication as having the biggest negative influence on how care could be delivered (Chevannes, 2002).

Despite the gendered language of that time, the effect of everyday social relationships at the personal level is clearly captured in Argyle's assertion, "man is a social animal: he collaborates with others to pursue his goals and satisfy his needs. It is well known that relations with others can be the source of the deepest satisfactions and of the blackest misery" (1983, p. 9). Aphasia can significantly affect a person's ability to integrate and engage in life in a satisfying way (Cruice, Worrall, & Hickson, 2006; Hilari & Northcott, 2006; Parr, 2007; Ross & Wertz, 2002, 2003). The impact can be immense, with people reporting feelings of personal exclusion such as isolation, boredom, depression, low self-esteem, frustration and anger (Parr, 2004; Parr et al., 1997). At the interpersonal level, aphasia can make it difficult to engage with family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and members of previously enjoyed social groups (Law, Pringle, et al., 2007; Parr et al., 1997). A lack of public and professional understanding of aphasia makes access to a wide range of public, health, voluntary and educational services a major issue for some people with aphasia, increasing the likelihood of people experiencing negative social interactions within service encounters (Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007; Parr, 2007). This is important when we consider the literature on service interactions which suggest a link between satisfying encounters and a positive impact on quality of life (Adelman et al., 1993).

In the seminal work by Parr et al. (1997), in-depth interviews with 50 people explored the impact of aphasia on their everyday life. They encountered a range of attitudinal, structural, informational and environmental barriers which restricted their full participation in life's opportunities. Attitudinal barriers related to the negative responses of other people, while structural barriers concerned the lack of legislation and policies as well as the lack of adequately designed systems, services and resources which facilitate the inclusion of people with

aphasia. Information barriers reflected the difficulty people with aphasia have either finding or understanding the information they need to access services. However, although this study discussed the role of the communication partner in the construction of these barriers, there was no in-depth analysis of how their behaviour actually connected with the underlying principles of access and inclusion.

Language and communication barriers are repeatedly reported in the ESL related literature as restricting participation and inclusion. However, traditionally the focus has been on associating participation with increased language proficiency (Harklau, 2000; Kanno & Applebaum, 1995). There is now a growing body of evidence within the ESL related literature, exploring the link between language use, identity negotiation and social interaction, particularly within the field of education (Lippi-Green, 1997; Norton, 1995, 1997; Norton & Toohey, 2001, 2011), which has seen a move away from an exclusive focus on linguistic accuracy towards recognising the important social and cultural aspects of participation and inclusion for ESL speakers with varying degrees of English competency (Dooley, 2009; Miller, 1999, 2000, 2003; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Yoon, 2007). Yoon for instance suggests the ways in which teachers support or constrain active participation in the classroom environment. However, unlike the expanding body of knowledge in the aphasia literature regarding the experiences and concerns of service users with aphasia, there is a considerable gap in the knowledge of the ESL service user's perspectives (Mc Pake et al., 2002) and how the research within the field of education could translate to other social fields.

The social model of disability has been the dominant approach to aphasia research on social participation, access and inclusion. This defines disability as arising from barriers within society and not the individual (Finkelstein, 1980). For instance, it is suggested that social inclusion can be facilitated through increased awareness of strategies that improve communication support (Byng, Pound, & Parr, 2000; Kagan, 1998; Kagan, Black, Duchan, Simmons-Mackie, & Square, 2001; Parr et al., 1997).

Similar to the findings within the aphasia literature, Jennifer Miller, in her seminal book *Audible Difference* (2003) highlights that ESL students require collaboration from the social field of education to recognise the need for policies, training and education to support ESL speakers in their interactions with others. She argues that linguistic competence is a measure of difference and discrimination within social practice and can have a significantly greater effect on social integration than the impact of race or ethnicity. Being heard by others is therefore inextricably linked with how we view ourselves and can have a significant impact on social participation and inclusion.

Similar to PWA, communication support is therefore crucial in helping ESL speakers negotiate a positive self representation as everyday social encounters are central to identity construction. Like the aphasia literature, Miller (2003) argues that a lack of collaboration in terms of the communication support available, attitudes of others, lack of policy to support institutional change can result in the ESL speaker feeling marginalised and disempowered. However, in spite of this awareness, there seems to be limited acknowledgement of the benefits of supporting ESL communication through promoting policies or practices which recommend ways for the service provider to facilitate communication access other than interpretation and translating services.

Within the field of aphasia there is a significant body of evidence which promotes 'aphasia friendly' approaches to service delivery to encourage active participation and inclusion of PWA (Howe, Worrall, & Hickson, 2004; Kagan, Black, Simmons-Mackie, et al., 2001; Rose, Worrall, & McKenna, 2003; Simmons-Mackie et al., 2007; Worrall et al., 2005; Worrall et al., 2007). The term *communication access* is increasingly used to describe approaches which support access and inclusion of a wide range of people with specific communication difficulties. The following section will outline the literature in this area.

Communication access

Aphasia research and practice has experienced a gradual shift away from a medical model of service delivery to one which embraces a more social approach (Byng et al., 2000; Hewitt & Byng, 2003; Holland, 2007, 2008; Kagan

et al., 2008; LPAA Project Group, 2001; Parr, Pound, & Hewitt, 2006; Pound, 2011; Pound et al., 2007; Simmons-Mackie, 2000). The fundamental tenet of social inclusion is that everyone has a basic human right to access all that society has to offer. It is generally recognised that aphasia can restrict a person's full participation in life and can result in social exclusion (Parr, 2007; Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2007). Speech pathologists in particular have become involved in a wide range of communication partner training programmes to increase awareness of how sections of society can promote access and inclusion for people with aphasia (Simmons-Mackie et al., 2010). This is an area which has received limited recognition in the ESL related literature despite a plethora of research highlighting the impact of speaking the non dominant language on issues of identity, self representation and inclusion (Dooley, 2009; Miller, 2003; Yoon, 2007).

Within the aphasia literature, the construct of communication access has emerged over time and although there is no universal definition, the key components can be considered in terms of the barriers faced by people with aphasia and the support they need to fully engage with their community. Kagan and Gailey (1993) challenged speech pathologists to consider the analogy with wheelchair ramps to create communicatively accessible environments through training and education of members of society to acknowledge the inherent competence of people with aphasia. Kagan (1998) went on to develop the well recognised supported conversation for aphasia technique. This training approach provides instruction for communication partners on how to facilitate the transmission of information within a conversation and also recognises the social connections within conversational activities.

Cruice (2007) neatly outlines the concept of access and inclusion as it applies to aphasia in her introduction to the work of various aphasia research studies which have investigated access to information (Ghidella, Murray, Smart, McKenna, & Worrall, 2005; Howe et al., 2004; Pound et al., 2007; Worrall et al., 2007), access to services (Bunning & Horton, 2007; Kagan & LeBlanc, 2002; Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007; Pound et al., 2007; Threats, 2007), access to conversations and decision making (Kagan, 1998; McVicker, Parr, Pound, & Duchan, 2007; Simmons-Mackie et al., 2007) and access to life's opportunities,

including work and education (Garcia, Laroche, & Barrette, 2002; Lock, Jordan, Bryan, & Maxim, 2005; Parr, 2007). In her conclusion, Cruice suggests the need to recognise that the issues highlighted within the aphasia literature on access and inclusion are shared with other people with communication disabilities and as suggested by Bunning & Horton (2007), working across boundaries is more likely to have a significant impact than focusing on aphasia alone.

There is a growing body of work which explores the difficulty PWA have accessing the written information (Brennan, Worrall, & McKenna, 2005; Rose et al., 2003; Worrall et al., 2005; Worrall et al., 2007). A number of aphasia studies have also investigated the wider environmental factors that influence how accessible a particular situation is for someone with aphasia (Brown et al., 2006; Howe et al., 2007; Howe et al., 2008 ; O'Halloran et al., 2008). O'Halloran et al. reviewed the relevant environmental factors impacting on adults with a range of communication difficulties when interacting with healthcare professionals in acute hospital settings. Their findings were consistent with the Parr et al. (1997) study, suggesting a degree of similarity across the different types of communication impairments.

Howe et al. (2007) conducted in-depth, semi structured interviews with 25 people with aphasia to explore their perspectives on the broad spectrum of barriers and facilitators that impact on community participation. Using the World Health organisation's *International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health* (ICF) (2001) as a theoretical framework, the findings revealed six categories of environmental factors which enabled or constrained access and participation. In one of the categories, the impact of other people, the barriers included: overcorrection of linguistic errors, lack of eye contact, poor listening skills and negative attitudes, while facilitators included: offering more time and patience, being clear, offering suggestions, speaking slowly, helping with form filling, displaying some knowledge about the communication difficulty and exhibiting good communication skills. An emergent theme in a further companion study (Howe et al., 2008) was the interactional aspects of communication encounters, such as the use of humour, the role of respect, and the manner of the communication partner, which all appeared to influence feelings of inclusion or exclusion. However, there was limited exploration or

definition of what was meant by *included*, or how the factors underpinning the notion of inclusion were signalled or received.

Although many of these studies have drawn attention to the verbal and non verbal behaviours exhibited by the communication partner and the importance of underlying attitudes, beliefs and values, there has been little attempt to offer an investigation of what these behaviours appear to signal or an interpretation of *why* these factors are important. Few studies have considered the underlying meanings that people attribute to the verbal and non verbal behaviours of their communication partner and how this may influence the accessibility of an encounter. Similarly, the ubiquitous use of the ICF as a theoretical framework, with the focus on health and the consequence of disease, has encouraged a tendency to restrict thinking in terms of the interactional aspects of the model (Penn, 2005). Penn suggested that this unnatural categorisation of complex human behaviour using the WHO framework disregards the reality of the issues linked to language use (p.876). Kagan and Simmons-Mackie (2007) also recognised that the linear, box like presentation of environmental and personal factors, fails to capture how access and inclusion are influenced by the relationship between these component parts. More recently, there has been a move away from the health related and disability frameworks towards sociological frameworks to increase our understanding of how the issues of access, participation and social inclusion are deeply intertwined with issues of identity, self representation, social group membership and social capital (Hagstrom & Wertsch, 2004; Parr, 2007; Pound, 2011; Shadden, 2005; Shadden & Hagstrom, 2007; Shadden et al., 2008).

The use of a sociological theoretical framework makes it possible to consider the experiences of two very different groups by exploring communication access out with the realms of health and disease. Instead, placing people's experiences on the continuum of normal social action promotes the exploration of how all interactants negotiate the rituals of social interaction within a particular social context. A thorough review of the literature revealed few studies which have specifically explored perceptions of the face-to-face service encounter and how features of the interaction can impact on participation and inclusion.

Advocating for a combined approach to communication access

Several authors have suggested that the barriers and facilitators to participation are not specific to people with aphasia and that a common approach to improving the accessibility of the environment may benefit a range of groups with communication disabilities (Bunning & Horton, 2007; Howe et al., 2007; Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007; Parr et al., 2006; Parr et al., 2008; Worrall et al., 2007). In the UK for instance there is a move towards considering the needs of a wide range of specific communication difficulties within a single group (Turnball et al., 2004). It has been suggested that the philosophy of universal design (North Carolina State University. The Center for Universal Design, 2007) may be applicable, which aims to increase accessibility for all through the design of accessible products and environments (Howe et al., 2007).

Recently, in Victoria, Australia, the Communication Access Resource Centre, Scope, in partnership with people with communication disabilities, the Communication Access Network (CAN) and other peak bodies, has launched a 'communication access for all' training symbol (2011). This is a significant step towards improving universal access for a broad group of people with communication support needs. To display the new symbol, services must meet specific criteria for communication access. The focus is on improving the communication environment, improving signage and producing written information in a plain English format. Another important aspect is improving the communication skills of others, with tips for successful communication including such things as giving extra time, being aware of comprehension difficulties, listening carefully, using other forms of communication, treating the person with dignity and respect, and establishing eye contact.

The suggestion that communication access principles in aphasia may also benefit ESL speakers, particularly those involving communication partner training, has not been fully explored. Although the cognitive processes underlying the linguistic impairment in aphasia are distinct from those involved in acquiring a second language, the assumption is that both groups may experience similar behavioural responses from the communication partner. By implication, there is a tacit suggestion that if this is the case, then improving

communication access in society could have a considerable impact on the lived experiences of a significant number of people.

Examination of the aphasia and ESL literatures suggests that one area where there is significant overlap between both groups is with how communication repair can be facilitated by the communication partner.

Improving the communication skills of others

The powerful nature of collaboration in communication has been well documented in the aphasia literature (Booth & Perkins, 1999; Lock et al., 2006; Lyon, 1989; Lyon et al., 1997; Oelschlaeger, 2000; Wilkinson et al., 2003; Wilkinson et al., 2011), where the success of the interaction is not just attributed to the person with aphasia, but is significantly influenced by the communication partner. By using a variety of communication support skills, the communication partner can contribute to the enhancement of the appearance of social and communication competence, which helps the person feel more socially included (Kagan, 1995; Parr, 2007; Simmons-Mackie, 1998; Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 1995) and provides enormous psychological benefit (Kagan & Gailey, 1993). In aphasia research and practice, it is therefore well recognised that accessibility and social inclusion are often equally dependent on the interactional practices of the communication partner as on the PWA's own abilities. However, within the ESL related literature, although there is a significant knowledge base on the communication partner's role in conversational repair, there have only recently been studies which have acknowledged their role in promoting access and inclusion (Dooley, 2009; Miller, 2003; Yoon, 2007).

Both literatures therefore contain evidence that when one participant has difficulty communicating, it often falls to the dominant language partner to provide the necessary communication scaffolding to support the development of the exchange. Repair sequences are more complex and happen more frequently if one person has a communication difficulty (Clark & Schaefer, 1987, 1989). An exploration of the communication strategies used by the conversational partner to promote understanding, negotiate meaning and manage conversational features such as turn taking, topic management and

repair in ESL usage (Bremner, Roberts, Vasseur, Simonot, & Broeder, 1996) would suggest similarities across both groups.

Within a service interaction, PWA and ESL speakers may therefore rely on their communication partner to help reveal their inherent competency as a competent service user. Duchan, Maxwell, & Kovarsky (1999) describe six dynamic and interactional constructs which are crucial to how the concept of competence is constructed in social interactions. One of these principles is of particular interest to this study of face-to-face interactions; “communication resources for expressing evaluation” (1999, pp. 7-10). A wide range of resources can be used implicitly or explicitly by the communication partner to evaluate a person’s competency and can have a significant impact on their identity negotiation. For instance, our lexical, grammatical and discourse choices may imply a negative or positive competency evaluation. Similarly, paralinguistic resources such as timing of the response, repetition, intonation and movement of the body can all have an evaluative effect. However, although there has been a move towards recognising and improving the interactional skills of the communication partner to promote social relationships, there has been limited exploration of which evaluative behaviours are deemed important by PWA or ESL speakers or the sociological theories which underpin why interactional skills may be as important as increasing skills which improve the transaction of information.

Within the ESL literature, although there is recognition of the important influence of the communication partner, recently, Dooley (2009) and Yoon (2007) highlighted that there continues to be a lack of attention to training teachers on how to monitor their own communication skills to facilitate successful interactions. Both discuss the need for a socially inclusive model of intercultural communication in the classroom setting, whereby all students (ESL and non-ESL) learn the basic principles of how to manage conversational contributions in a positive and collaborative manner. Although some ESL speakers may have learned conversational management skills as part of the ESL acquisition process (Thornby & Slade, 2006), the dominant language user learns these rules implicitly and therefore may not have adequate knowledge of how to use or develop these skills to circumvent disruptions in talk due to linguistic or cultural misunderstandings. By readjusting the balance and recognising the

collaborative nature of conversations, the non-ESL partner's support can help reduce similar issues of 'threat-to-face', stigma and incompetence (Bremner et al., 1996) that are also apparent in the experiences of people with aphasia.

Dooley (2009) also draws attention to the need for more research on what can be done to facilitate the native speaker's involvement in successful interactions to promote a more inclusive approach in the ESL classroom environment. Normally, the burden of establishing understanding in a conversation falls to the listener. However, in ESL/non-ESL discourse, the situation is reversed with the ESL speaker often the one who has to support the understanding, even if they are not the listener (Lippi-Green, 1997). This reflects the notion of *linguistic power*, which in many instances, equates to *racial power* with non-ESL communication partners viewing the misunderstanding as the problem of the ESL speaker because they don't speak English well enough, reinforcing the ESL speaker's negative feelings of shame, embarrassment, loss of face, reduced self image and confidence (Lippi-Green, 1997; Yoon, 2007).

From the literature review so far, it would appear that there is a connection between the experiences of PWA and ESL speakers in how the communication partner potentially enables or constrains access and participation through the use of communication support strategies. However, to date, there have been no studies investigating whether the two groups actually conceptualise their experiences in a similar way. This study breaks new ground in exploring whether PWA and ESL speakers report areas of common ground in their perceptions of interactions with government service providers.

Australian Public Service interactions

Government service interactions are an integral part of everyday life (Whelan, 2011). In Australia, frontline public services include: the health and education systems, police and emergency services, social security and welfare which includes housing, Centrelink and other community services, public transport, immigration services, museums, libraries, leisure centres to name a few. Whelan outlines how the APS is larger today than at any other stage and now employs approximately 160,000 employees in 130 agencies, indicating the significant resource it offers within the community. Several authors have highlighted the positive social impact that engaging in constructive service encounters can have on a person's quality of life (Adelman et al., 1993; Ford, 2001; Gutek, 1999). Shadden (2005) emphasises the connection with social identity and stresses how for PWA, social interaction is replete with opportunities for identity negotiation, promoting empowerment or marginalisation.

In her discussion about service encounters, Ford (2001) draws attention to the service user's expectation that in certain service transactions, information will be intertwined with "communication of a "social" nature" (p.16). By engaging in some form of social conversation, the service providers communicated what she terms *social caring*. Ford goes on to highlight how the issue of communication within specific service encounters has not been well enough researched suggesting a gap in this area of knowledge. This is also reflected in the aphasia and ESL literature where few studies have specifically explored the deeper meanings of how service encounters are conceptualised or how they are perceived to impact on the person at an individual and social level.

Bourdieu refers to the site where social interactions take place as *the field* (Allard, 2005; Bourdieu, 1977, 1991; Rhynas, 2005). Within the social field of government services, socio-historical conditions have established a particular set of linguistic practices as dominant and legitimate. Compromised communication competence, either through ESL or aphasia, can therefore position the person in the non-dominant role which has consequences for how they are received. However, the field is a dynamic structure which changes depending on how the relationships of power are negotiated between the

individual agents in the field and importantly the effect of the organisational structures within it.

People who have migrated to Australia are likely to have increased contact with the social field of public services of some description. Parr (2007) in her in-depth study which tracked the social exclusion of people with severe aphasia, recognised that although interpersonal relationships often dwindle as a consequence of aphasia, new service relationships with a range of providers actually increase. Within this field, service providers and service users interact with its structural aspects. For example, governments across the globe have instituted legislation and policies to promote access and inclusion, particularly within public services. In Australia, the APS is governed by a range of federal and state documents from which communication access should be supported as a basic human right. However, universal acknowledgement of communication access is still in its infancy, with many access and inclusion documents still failing to recognise the needs of this group of people. The following section will consider how government policy and legislation, offers support to those disadvantaged by either being ESL speakers or having aphasia in Australia.

Policy context

It is recognised that people with a disability (which includes aphasia) and those from a CaLD background may be at risk of social exclusion and discrimination, (Commonwealth of Australia. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), 2008). The following section explores policy and legislation relating to social inclusion, disability and health, and CaLD populations. The examples draw from key Australian and Western Australian policy and supporting documents. In particular, it explores how PWA and ESL speakers who present with compromised communication skills are supported by the institutional structures delivered within the policy and whether the notion of communication access is supported.

Social inclusion

It is difficult to consider social inclusion without reference to social exclusion as they are both at different ends of a continuum. Throughout this thesis, both

terms are used to represent the two ends of the same continuum. Levitas et al. offer the following definition of social inclusion:

It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in society, whether in economic, social, cultural, or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole. (2007, p. 9)

Historically, social exclusion was linked with the lack of social integration resulting from poverty, deprivation and disadvantage. However, it is now well recognised that a person can be socially excluded without being in poverty (Saunders, 2008; Saunders, Naidoo, & Griffiths, 2007). Over the past two decades, reducing social exclusion has become an important political goal in many parts of the developed world including Australia, Europe, the United Kingdom and Canada and is embedded within a social justice framework. Although there is still a strong emphasis on the economic benefits of reducing the number of people requiring social welfare support and increasing the number of people in employment, in many countries, including Australia, the concept of social inclusion has been developed and expanded to recognise the importance of developing stronger communities through providing access to opportunities for individual and group participation. However, this shift in social inclusion policy is fairly new in Australia and it will take time for policies to become part of normal practice.

The basic principle of social inclusion is that everyone has a right to participate fully in society. In 2009 the Australian Government, produced the report, *A Stronger Fairer Australia* (Commonwealth of Australia. Social Inclusion Unit. DPMC, 2009b), which outlines the strategy for achieving a vision of social inclusion to help reduce long term dependency. The report highlights the need for Australia as a nation to: improve the opportunities of people who are facing the greatest disadvantage to participate in the full range of community services; strengthen resilience, identity, respect for others and pride for all cultures and communities; to help develop each individual's potential to shape their own

social inclusion and to ensure that all sectors contribute to tackling the social issues connected to social inclusion.

Alongside this report, the Social Inclusion Unit of the DPMC, produced a social inclusion policy design and delivery toolkit for the APS (Commonwealth of Australia. Social Inclusion Unit. DPMC, 2009a). The aim of the toolkit is to increase the social inclusion of those most disadvantaged through a six step process to improve the design and delivery of policies. However, although people who require communication support are recognised as examples of those for whom equity of access to services may be compromised, there is no detail on how services could increase their inclusion. This is likely to be governed by legislation and policies which support the inclusion of people with a disability or those from CaLD backgrounds.

As highlighted throughout the government report, *A Stronger, Fairer Australia*, (2009b), this multi-pronged approach to social inclusion therefore takes place at a national level, community level and personal level. It is about all people working together to identify the problems and the solutions to help to ensure that people have the capabilities, opportunities, responsibilities and resources to participate fully in Australian life. In particular, core service providers such as health, education and local government need to be more responsive to the needs of people who are disadvantaged. For organisations, this means putting people at the core of service developments, looking at the range of contexts they want to participate in, what the barriers are and how the organisation can help to dismantle some of the disabling barriers. The aim is to provide support when things are difficult and encourage personal independence and the capacity for people to make the right decisions for themselves.

Some of the key drivers of social exclusion include poverty, low income and income inequality, poor health and wellbeing, lack of access to social supports and networks and exclusion from services (Commonwealth of Australia. DPMC, 2008). There is no clear-cut boundary between the main drivers of social exclusion which are often inter-related and can cause a vicious cycle that makes it difficult for people to maintain their resilience. As effective communication skills are often central to participating in many aspects of life, it

is clear that people from a CaLD background and those with a disability such as aphasia are therefore more likely to be at risk of social exclusion. People with communication difficulty are at risk of their linguistic and communication skills masking their competence as adults who are able to make their own decisions and choices. For this reason, communication support needs to be integral to community life and not viewed as a supplementary service that can be provided as and when required or at worst, ignored. This has significant implications for policies which aim to address language, access and social inclusion.

The Disability policy context

In Western Australia for example there are six documents which should support communication access for PWA. These documents or Acts recognise that people with disabilities are entitled to the same level of service that is available to other members of the community. A summary of the following documents is outlined in Appendix 1.

1. The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Person with Disability (2006)*
2. The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Austl.)*
3. The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (Commonwealth of Australia. Council of Australian Governments (COAG), 2010b)
4. The *Equal Opportunity Act (WA) 1984 (amended 1998)*
5. The *Disability Services Act (WA) (1993) (amended 2004)*
6. Count Me In: Disability Future Directions Strategy (WA) (Government of Western Australia. Disability Services Commission (DSC), 2009a)

In 2004, the amendment to the *Disability Services Act (WA)* made it mandatory for all public authorities in WA to develop and implement Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) to facilitate the independence, opportunities and inclusion of people with a wide range of disabilities. The six desired outcomes of the DAIP are that people should all receive the same level of quality service, have the opportunities to access services, buildings, information, public consultations and make complaints.

Using the principles of access and universal design (North Carolina State University. The Center for Universal Design, 2007) as suggested in Howe et al. (2007), the Disability Services Commission (DSC) in WA has produced advice on how public authorities can make information, services and facilities accessible to people with disability. However, although it would appear that some public authorities have started to include the needs of a range of people with communication difficulties (Government of Western Australia. Department of Health, 2010), communication access has predominantly been interpreted as access to written information. Providing accessible written information is a legislative requirement of State and Commonwealth Governments and there are comprehensive guidelines available on how to provide written information in formats that meet the needs of people with communication difficulties (Government of Western Australia. DSC, 2009b).

In a supporting document, the Access Resource Kit (ARK) (Government of Western Australia. DSC, 2001) was developed to help public services to improve access for people with disabilities. In relation to communication difficulties, it suggests that access could be improved through: clear signage; clear pathways through a building; provision of information with clear instructions; service provision through personal assistance; and well planned uncluttered environments. However there is little mention of how specific aspects of face-to-face communication access could be improved. As this is likely to be the key method of how the public interface with services, this is a significant gap and fails to recognise the potential impact for those who require communication support to facilitate access and inclusion.

Similarly, although there is some consideration given to the needs of people with hearing loss, visual impairments and intellectual or psychiatric illness within the *WA State Government Access Guidelines for Information Services and Facilities* (Government of Western Australia. DSC, 2009b), the *DAIP Resource Manual for Local Government* (Government of Western Australia. DSC, 2006a) and the *Resource Manual for State Government* (Government of Western Australia. DSC, 2006b), there is little evidence that policy makers recognise the concept of communication access and how it may apply to broad groups of people for whom face-to-face interactions may be challenging.

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Policy context

Government policies attempt to establish benchmarks for the provision of a variety of services to people from a CaLD background. In WA, for example, there are seven documents which promote equal participation and access to opportunities to encourage inclusion in Western Australian society. A summary of the following documents is outlined in Appendix 2.

1. *The Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
2. *The Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
3. *The Equal Opportunity Act (WA) 1984 (amended 1998)*
4. *The WA Language Services Policy* (Government of Western Australia. Office of Multicultural Interests, 2008)
5. *The WA Charter of Multiculturalism* (Government of Western Australia. Office of Multicultural Interests, 2004)
6. *WA Office of Multicultural Interests Strategic Plan, 2009-2013* (Government of Western Australia. Office of Multicultural Interests, 2009)
7. *The Policy Framework for Substantive Equality* (Government of Western Australia. Equal Opportunity Commission Substantive Equality Unit, 2005)

In terms of communication, in WA for example, The Office of Multicultural Interests produced *The WA Language Services Policy (2008)* which outlines the processes involved for State Government agencies to improve service delivery through better communication between staff and service users by focusing on translation and interpretation services. However, although of commendable quality, these services do not offer the range of communication access solutions that may be required in different situations. For example, an ESL speaker may in fact be using 'imperfect' English in an encounter rather than requiring interpreter services per se. Similar to disability policies, there is no recognition of the potential benefits of improving the core communication skills of the government service providers to facilitate communication access and service inclusion to service providers who are still improving their communication competency in ESL.

This lack of awareness of the need for more general communication support is also reflected in the international literature. For instance, McPake et al. (2002) in a review of translating, interpreting and communication support services in Scotland recognised that there is a noticeable gap in the understanding of the collaborative communication strategies which people with ESL and public service providers naturally use in their interactions. Although the focus of the McPake et al. review was Scotland, they drew heavily from the international literature, particularly Australia because of the recognised high quality language support services. They recognised that many interactions take place where ESL speakers do not necessarily require interpretation and translation services. For some, their ESL competency is sufficient to allow independent interactions although they may still be at risk of communication breakdown and require the service provider to demonstrate empathy in the form of assistive repair strategies.

McPake et al. (2002) argue that although the increase in the professionalism of interpreting and translation services is laudable, there needs to be a multidimensional approach to communication within non conventional English. However, even their definition of *communication support* fails to acknowledge the more general principles of support and instead restricts thinking to include only those with visual or hearing impairments or those who rely on augmentative and alternative communication aids. A further review of translating, interpreting and communication support provision in public services in Scotland recommended that a more coordinated approach may help to avoid service disparity and highlighted support for more research to determine the needs of the full spectrum of those requiring communication supports (Perez et al., 2006, p. 2). A review of the policy context in WA suggests that a similar approach is needed here. Broadening the thinking beyond translating and interpreting services to thinking in terms of communication access would potentially provide the paradigm shift suggested by McPake et al. (2002) This could produce widespread benefits which lie at the heart of social inclusion by attempting to ensure that everyone has the appropriate support required to facilitate their participation in all that their community has to offer.

Summary

The lack of a broad understanding of the principles of communication access across all policy areas puts people with aphasia and other communication difficulties at risk of discrimination and unequal opportunities. This can be compared with the excellent multifaceted and universal approach to reducing physical barriers through the use of strict 'physical access' legislation that supports people with physical disabilities to engage at all levels of society. A similar multidimensional approach to communication access needs to be considered which recognises the importance of communication and how to create environments, services, information and communication contexts which are more readily reached by people who have a wide range of difficulties. Similar to the findings of (Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007), further research examining the diverse needs of the different groups that experience communication barriers is required. The findings could be used to formulate the key directions for future policy development in Australia.

This chapter has drawn attention to the significant number of people who may benefit from the key principles of communication access as outlined in the aphasia literature. In particular, it has explored the theoretical basis to the largely anecdotal reports that 'aphasia friendly' approaches, which aim to increase participation and inclusion, may also assist speakers of ESL. From the review of the literature presented, it would appear that both groups may indeed share some common ground in how they are received and supported by their communication partner. Furthermore, it would appear that both groups are at risk of marginalisation and discrimination through the lack of awareness of the centrality of communication access in the policy and legislative structures that underpin the functioning of government services.

However, studies of communication access to date have tended to use a disability related theoretical model and few have adequately explored the actual interactive relationships between the service provider and service user within the context of the field. Additionally, although many studies appear to link social participation, social inclusion and communication access, there is limited depth in the understanding how these important ideas are linked. The following chapter will explore a sociological framework to scaffold thinking on how

communication access is embedded in social practice. It will explore how people construct their identities and achieve self representation and agency through negotiating social capital which in turn influences their social inclusion.

Chapter Three

The social context of communication access

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the studies in aphasia and ESL research which highlighted the role of the communication partner in supporting or constraining participation in face-to-face communication encounters. The field of government service interactions was highlighted as an area of interest as few communication access studies have explored specific aspects of face-to-face interactions in this context. Within each research area, communication is recognised as a social process involving the collaborative construction and negotiation of the sending and receiving of a message between two or more people, functioning within the structures of the social field. However, few studies within the communication access literature have actually considered the interactional features of the individual's performance along with the sociological processes which underpin access and inclusion.

This chapter will draw from the work of Erving Goffman, Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens and other sociological research to explore how communication access is embedded in social practice and is linked with social capital and social inclusion. It will explore how people construct their identities and achieve self representation and agency through social action. This study offers new insights, not only regarding the role of communication partner and the structure of the field, but crucially it begins to explore features of the interactional role of the PWA/ESL speaker. Few studies have considered how PWA/ESL speakers mobilise personal resources to meet the challenge of functioning with reduced communication competency. The theories highlighted through out this chapter will form the conceptual framework supporting this study.

The social and interactional aspects of communication

This study is underpinned by the philosophy of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). Skeat and Perry (2008) in their discussion of the relevance of social theory in speech and language therapy research, outline the core

principles of the philosophy. Through the symbols of language (verbal and non verbal), people attach meaning to what they hear through their internal thought processes. Consequently, the meaning we attach to these symbols will affect our social reality and future action. For instance, in the course of social action, one agent produces a symbol which they expect the other person to read in a particular way based on their knowledge and empathic understanding of the other person's position. The other person similarly constructs an interpretation of the symbol and response to it based on their own empathic understanding of the probable intentions of the underlying meaning of the symbol used by the first person (Dingwall, 2001). So much of this occurs implicitly that it can be difficult for people to deconstruct what is actually happening below the surface level of symbol production.

Capitalising on the work of Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969), Erving Goffman's work on interaction rituals and self presentation offers an in-depth exploration of the multifaceted features of the social and interactional aspects of everyday face-to-face encounters (Goffman, 1972, 1990). He highlights how the study of interaction should not exclusively examine the individuals' behaviour during co-presence, but instead should reflect the syntactical relations between the actions of the individuals and the social structures in which they function. Social action is negotiated on a turn by turn basis between the two performing agents which means that how we respond is directly influenced by how we were received in the previous turn. Personal factors such as personality traits, attitudes, values beliefs and other forms of capital such as, skills, qualifications, physical features, ethnicity, economic and social capital (Carrington & Luke, 1997) will all influence the capacity an individual agent has to act in a certain way. However, positive interaction rituals dictate that agents generally work towards achieving a collective impression of competence so that everyone can maintain their line (Giddens, 2009; Goffman, 1972).

When we are communicating with another person, we both emit and receive impressions of one another. This may be through a variety of visible signs, for instance, the person's age, gender, way of dressing, hair style, ethnicity or audible signals such utterances or non verbal behaviours which communicate what Gee (2005) refers to as the *who* we are and *what* we are about. The *line*

the person acts out will in turn impact on the impression he or she makes to those co present. For PWA/ESL speakers, reduced linguistic competency can make it difficult for them to achieve satisfactory self representation and consequently, they may rely on the communication partner to *legitimise* their presentation and in doing so, include them as part of the social group.

This social act of the communication partner extending support can help the PWA/ESL speaker to construct a more positive identity which in turn, can increase their agency for future encounters. Giddens (1984, p. 9), defines agency as a person's capacity to act, implying 'power to do', and is achieved by access to, and application of, the structural properties (the rules and resources), which enable agents to achieve and maintain social control. Essentially, a person needs to be 'counted in' the social group to be able to maintain and negotiate their agency. This can reward them with the power to act in a way that effects change when required. For instance, the PWA/ESL speaker who feels legitimised and authorised as a functioning group member may be more likely to have the confidence to direct the communication partner in the use of assistive strategies.

The concept of communication access within the aphasia literature has largely focused on the need to increase awareness of the communication partner's role in facilitating the interaction to help reveal the competence of the PWA. There are now many well recognised training programmes which provide communication support education as well as raising the profile of other environmental changes that promote access (Kagan, Black, Simmons-Mackie, et al., 2001; Parr et al., 2008). Similarly within the ESL literature, creating communication access through training and educating communication partners of ESL speakers on the central importance of providing this inclusive approach is also gaining increased recognition. However, this appears to be restricted to promoting access within the classroom setting and has not extended to a range of fields where ESL speakers may require this inclusive approach.

While these approaches have been a positive move away from the aphasia impairment or the ESL speaker's linguistic skills being the focus, it's crucial to recognise the influence of the relationship between the co-participants in any

encounter. For this reason, there needs to be a balance between addressing what the communication partner can do to facilitate the encounter, and promoting the PWA/ESL speakers' agency in terms of what other embodied capital they bring to the interaction from a 'whole-person' perspective. Although there is some research in both fields which considers the interplay between communication competence and a person's ability to draw from their deeply personal arsenal of resources (Goodwin, 2004; Miller, 2003), there appears to be limited research on how this synergy can impact on how they position themselves as a communication partner. Furthermore, just as the more linguistically dominant communication partner's verbal and non verbal interactional skills will influence how the PWA/ESL speaker may respond, the interactive relationship of any encounter means that PWA/ESL speaker's own signals will also impact on the interaction rituals described by Goffman and ultimately how an encounter unfolds.

Goffman also refers to the term *face* which he defines as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken" during communication encounters (1972, p. 5). In the often time restricted government service encounters, first impressions will therefore be very important as they will have a strong bearing on how the encounter progresses. Both the aphasia and ESL literatures recognise the important social consequences of maintaining face and as discussed in the previous chapter, acknowledge how the communication partner can support this. However in both areas of study, there appears to be a lack of research on how PWA or ESL speakers contribute to the management of these interactional aspects.

Goffman talks about two radically different signals in impression management; the expression that a person *gives* and the impression that a person *gives off* (1990, p. 14). The first concerns the use of language or other signs solely for the purpose of the transaction of information. The second concept concerns a range of verbal and non verbal behaviours which may communicate something different to the actual content of the interaction, revealing the person's internal attitudes, values, beliefs, knowledge and socio cultural experiences. Through what we say and how we say it, we define who we are to others, negotiate our self identity, relationships and membership of social groups (Bourdieu, 1977;

Gee, 1996; Giddens, 1984; Goffman, 1972; Miller, 2003). Goffman's work highlights the incredibly complex and powerful consequences of the "small behaviours" such as the fleeting facial expressions, eye movement, body positioning, tone of voice – the subtle aspects of communication competence which are often not considered in enough depth in studies of communication access.

Communicative competence

The interconnectedness of the features of language use as a social act and the transaction of information via linguistic competence are highlighted in Celce-Muria, Dörnyei and Thurrell's model of communicative competence (1995, p. 10). As presented by Miller (2003, pp. 22-24), the key categories of this model include:

Discourse competence: e.g., knowledge of how we link our utterances to produce coherent spoken discourse and the rules of conversational management

Linguistic competence: e.g., knowledge of how to use phonology (sounds), semantics (words), syntax (grammar)

Actional competence: matching linguistic form with communication intention e.g. the use of interactional rituals such as greetings, ways of expressing opinions, giving information etc

Sociocultural competence: awareness of the appropriate social use of verbal and non verbal aspects of language use within cultures

Strategic competence: awareness of the appropriate use repair strategies, self monitoring and interactional strategies (e.g., for instance knowledge of how we might appeal for assistance, responses to communication breakdown etc)

Communication competence thus involves the complex integration of these different aspects of language use. Verbal and non-verbal communication are two elements of behaviour that are key components of how people interact and cooperate to produce meaningful and satisfying dialogue. Separating verbal and non verbal features into two distinct categories is virtually impossible and continues to be the subject of a sophisticated, on going debate (Knapp & Hall, 2006). However, commonly, verbal communication refers to the linguistic

aspects of communication and how we link our utterances to produce coherent spoken discourse.

Verbal communication is generally supported by the broad principles of paralinguistics which includes non verbal nuances such as changes to the prosodic features of speech: intonation, rhythm, stress, pitch, tone and resonance. Non-verbal communication includes; kinesics (body language) and proxemics (distance between speakers). Few studies have explored how people with reduced communication competence conceptualise specific aspects of the communication partners' verbal and non verbal behaviours or the meanings they assign to these acts. This thesis will consider the principal verbal and non verbal behaviours that PWA/ESL speaker conceptualise as either signalling that they are being heard and essentially authorised as legitimate members of the social group or rebuffed and consequently marginalised and disempowered.

Linguistic competence is therefore only part of successful communication and participants are also required to demonstrate communication competence which takes into account the verbal and non verbal interactional features of language use in different contexts. ESL speakers in particular may have issues with linguistic and communication competence as the socio- cultural rules of interacting may differ substantially across cultures (Gallois & Callan, 1997; Pauwels, 1995; Samovar & Porter, 2003). Meanwhile, aphasia predominantly affects verbal communication skills, with non verbal communication thought to be relatively intact for those without a concomitant physical disability. However, both groups are at risk of experiencing stigma as they struggle to express themselves and subsequently impress the other person. Goffman (1990) terms this *impression management*, whereby each participant in the interaction is rapidly making implicit judgements about the other person and deciding how to respond to them. This is a reciprocal process which not only implicates the communication partner, but also the PWA/ESL speaker.

Goffman's work on the sociological analysis of stigma laid the foundations for our understanding of the relationship between self presentation and how society responds to those who may possess an attribute that may be considered as

different by the receiver (1974). What's important is not so much the attribute, but the relationship between how this attribute is viewed by the receiver and the possessor. If the difference is considered undesirable then the possessor may not be legitimised within the social group and this can result in the person being reduced from a whole, to one who is different and discredited. By treating a person as different, or incompetent, their opportunities for participation and inclusion may be intentionally or unintentionally reduced. If a person encounters a particular stigma in their daily social interactions, this can lead to a form of social wounding capable of impacting on the dynamic formation of self-identity, leading to a shrinking of the social world (Williams, 2004) and ultimately to the person becoming socially excluded and isolated.

However, how the person responds to this attitude also has a bearing on the outcome, emphasising the interconnectedness of the agents in co-presence. Goffman (1974) talks about how the person conveying the interpersonal attitude which assigns stigma, may also react to the person's defensive attitude regarding his situation as a reinforcement of his defect or incompetence and a justification of the way they treat them. However, through their agency, it is possible that a stigmatised person does not buy into this sense of rejection or incompetence and instead retains a normal, competent social identity. Their deepest feelings retain a sense of being 'normal', although there may still be a perception that others are not treating them equally and that they fall short of what others expect them to be. At times this may lead to feelings of shame and or incompetence or they may choose to ignore it and draw from their own personal resources to help to empower themselves. In summary, for some, loss of agency through reduced communication competency can lead to complicity with the person who is withholding support, while others refuse to take this standpoint and instead rally alternative resources to maintain their position and impress their communication partner.

The communication encounter: A reciprocal relationship

One of the merits of thinking about interactions in this way is that social theory emphasises the connections between individuals and the social contexts in which they operate. Thus, the importance of the actual relationship between the key components is underlined as one influences the other in an iterative

process. Similar to Goffman, Bourdieu (1977) for instance, in his theory of practice, proposes that everyday linguistic exchanges are socially situated encounters between two or more intersecting agents within a particular social field. As highlighted by Thompson in the introduction to *Language and Symbolic Power*, in this way, every communication interaction “however personal and insignificant it may seem, bears the traces of the social structures that it both expresses and helps to reproduce” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 2). In simple terms, Bourdieu’s theory equates linguistic relations with relations of symbolic power, where a person either is rewarded with feelings of empowerment and agency or can be marked as different, deficient and consequently disempowered. Capital represents an individual’s power and can be traded in order to improve the social position of the person in the field.

Similarly Giddens’ theory of structuration (Giddens, 1979, 1984; Hardcastle, Usher, & Holmes, 2005) emphasises the “duality” of the relationship between the agents and the social structures, where one cannot exist independently from the other. Giddens refers to this as a “reciprocal relationship” (1984, p. 25), where social structures are evident in the choices the individual agents make in every day social action, and at the same time, individual agents manipulate and shape these social structures. Individuals therefore shape and are shaped by the social spheres they live in.

As far as the author is aware, there are no studies in the communication access literature that have explored the complex, interconnected social relationships between service users and service providers within the context of government services. This study will explore the key intersecting components of a social action model of communication as depicted in the diagram in Figure 1. The study will consider how aspects of the model contribute to communication access and social inclusion as conceptualised by PWA and ESL speakers.

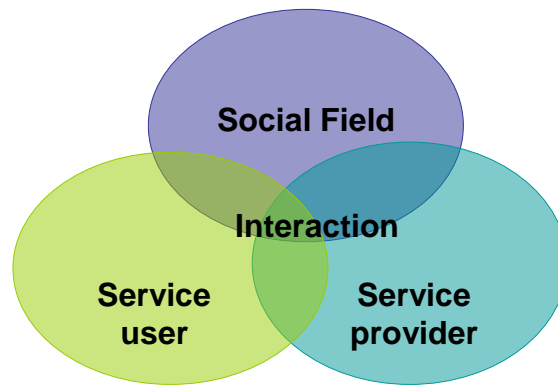


Figure 1: Intersecting components of social action model of communication

As discussed in the previous chapter, there is significant evidence within the aphasia and ESL literature connecting the experiences of both groups with reduced participation and social inclusion. However, although both fields recognise the need to consider communication as a social process, there is still limited use of a sociological model to conceptualise issues of access and inclusion. One emergent area which uses a sociological template is the understanding of the deep rooted connections between issues of identity with access and inclusion (Hagstrom, 2004; Hagstrom & Shadden, 2004; Hagstrom & Wertsch, 2004; Miller, 2000, 2003; Shadden, 2005).

Identity

People construct their behaviours and beliefs through their face to face, social interactions (Blumer, 1969). Consequently, societal responses and expectations can strongly influence a person's perception of how they are viewed and can give rise to a plethora of emotions which can impact on the delicate re-forming of identity. Traumatic life events such as a stroke or migration to a foreign country that is culturally and linguistically different from your own will, in many cases, result in a person having to go through a process of renegotiating and transforming their identity.

Although, traditionally, there was a view of identity as a rather stable, static entity constructed within and by the individual, in recent times there has been a significant shift towards the notion of multiple identities, constantly developing and evolving (Miller, 2003). Giddens (1991, p. 14) for instance, talks about

identities as a trajectory across the different social contexts in which interaction takes place. Gee discusses different *identity kits* that can be drawn on depending on the context of the interaction (1996, p. 127). He advocates for a focus, not on language but discursive practises which are socially situated and collaboratively constructed and are the channel through which our interactions are considered normal or deviant, leading to an empowered or marginalised identity (1999).

Language has a dual function as a way for individuals to scaffold their individual performance in social activities and as a scaffold for legitimacy to social group membership (Gee, 1999). The complex dynamic processes at play in everyday interactions therefore include language, group membership, culture and identity which are all communicated through our discursive practices (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2003). This emphasises how communication is what Simmons-Mackie and Damico suggest as “the ultimate form of social action” (2007, p. 82). Gee in his description of how these different dynamic processes are intertwined, stated: “It’s not just what you say or even how you say it, it’s who you are and what you are doing while you say it” (Gee, 1996, p. viii).

Both aphasia and ESL related literatures have drawn from sociological research to explore the centrality of communication in the construction of identity and self representation. Shadden (2005) in her description of aphasia as “identity theft” gives a clear overview of how the actual features of the person’s aphasia may not be the most important aspect of recovery. Instead, she emphasises how loss of language equates with loss of identity and therefore a loss of a means to express who we are and what we think. This altered sense of identity may be the actual reason that people choose not to participate as PWA often construct a self image as less competent, especially if they have experienced encounters where they have been treated as such (Duchan et al., 1999).

Identity construction is therefore situated in social practice, although it has both personal and social components (Shadden, 2005). The construct of social identity refers to how a person achieves self representation during social interactions in a variety of social contexts (Sarbin, 2000; Sarbin & Scheibe, 1983). While the ESL literature makes extensive reference to social identity

(McNamara, 1997; Norton, 1995, 1997; Norton & Toohey, 2001, 2011), this is an emerging research area in aphasia studies (Hagstrom & Shadden, 2004; Hagstrom & Wertsch, 2004; Shadden, 2005). Social identity therefore arises out of the actions we take during reflexive monitoring of events and signals within an encounter (Giddens, 1984). During this reflexive monitoring we assign meaning to the verbal and non verbal signals communicated by the other person. If the communication partner responds positively, then usually this is constructed as an acceptance of your *line* which can increase a person's confidence to act with a more self assured manner.

Goffman's theory of 'co presence' describes how society is formed through the highly skilled and knowledgeable agents who operate within it via a shared tacit knowledge that can not be explained by the specific or aggregate actions of individuals alone (1990). We learn to categorise people through anticipating whether specific attributes are considered ordinary and natural for members of these categories. The construction of social identity is therefore concerned with how we anticipate a person's 'category' and will influence how we react to them. This is usually done at an unconscious level. Consequently, communication forms the basis for "establishing and advertising our social identities" (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 5). Identity does not therefore simply reflect aspects of the internal self, but is also the result of the interactions we have with others and the meanings we attribute to these interactions.

Being recognised as a competent person is an important part of the integration into the social groups in which people operate within society (Duchan et al., 1999; Kagan, 1995). We need to understand the social dynamics of how the potential for altered recognition in PWA/ESL speakers' interactions actually affects notions of identity and inclusion/exclusion. How is this altered recognition communicated and received and what are the underlying sociological constructs at play? As outlined by Miller (2003), discourse as a marker of inclusion/exclusion is the focus of much of the research on identity and social power which are inextricably linked. Giroux (1990) suggests that practises which legitimate or exclude the cultural capital and discourse of marginalised groups, reinforce the concept of difference, denying access to social group membership and the rewards that this may bring. This study will

explore how PWA/ESL conceptualise the impact of the service encounters with reference to the literature on identity and social inclusion.

Communication, culture and identity

Communication competence and identity are intricately linked and influenced by a person's socio-cultural background (Gallois & Callan, 1997; Pauwels, 1995; Samovar & Porter, 2003). Cultural beliefs and values implicitly underpin our personal and interpersonal communication, influencing the content and the structure of our interactions. The relationship between culture and communication has been extensively reported in the multicultural sociolinguistic and anthropological literature. As Gallois and Callan point out, we are largely unaware of the impact of our culture on our communication and it is not until something changes, for instance, when moving to a new country, learning a new language and having to interact in different personal and interpersonal situations, that we become more acutely aware of its powerful influence. As well as the obvious linguistic differences, a person's cultural framework will also impact on paralinguistic features of communication (Samovar & Porter, 2003, pp. 15-16). These more implicit aspects can have a significant effect on the communicative accessibility of an encounter.

For people with aphasia who were brought up within the dominant culture, the cultural differences alluded to above will not have the same relevance as ESL speakers who have migrated to a new country, different in history, tradition, customs and principles from their own. However, like the ESL group, it is equally important to consider the more implicit aspects of their personality, learned through the imitation of the behaviours of others through a process of iterative learning (Lane, 2000) that will influence the PWA's actions. Understanding aspects of the personal components of identity, in particular how pre-morbid personal attributes contribute to the recovery process is crucial for aphasia therapists (Shadden, 2005). Shadden advocates for increased recognition of how PWA had constructed their sense of self, how much they relied on others to define this, what was their usual response to change and how much value they placed on relationships. This relationship between the environment and the influence of personal factors in communication access has been highlighted as an area for future research (Threats, 2007).

Individual performances

Although identity is socially constructed, there is a deeply personal component as well. Individual performances reveal a person's internal values, beliefs, knowledge and socio-cultural experiences (Bourdieu, 1991). Bourdieu talks about the *habitus*, which is a person's manner of being and provides the individual with the "tacit knowledge of how to 'go on' as a competent social agent" (Haugaard, 2002, p. 225). It gives them a feel for the *game* - a practical sense of what is and what isn't appropriate.

The *habitus* is a set of embodied dispositions which result in practises, perceptions and attitudes which are taught and learned through imitation from early childhood and also reflect the contextual social and cultural conditions in which they are acquired. Dispositions are durable and transposable in that they are deeply ingrained in the body and operate at a pre conscious level throughout the history of one's life. Age, race, gender, culture and class will all influence the construction of the habitus and will play a part in how a person portrays themselves, or using Goffman's terms – the *line* they take. This self presentation will affect how they are received by the other person in communication encounters and the meaning their actions are given in the context in which they take place. This can also be understood in terms of *structure* and *agency*, with the social field and the distribution of a capital (or power) being the structure of the relationship and the individual's actions considered as their agency which is regulated by the habitus (Rhynas, 2005).

In contrast to Bourdieu's theory of the habitus operating at a pre conscious level, Anthony Giddens in his theory of structuration (1979, p. 144), outlines the reflexive nature of the individual whereby agents continuously monitor their activities and the contexts in which they act which means that they can usually explain most of what they do. He argues that by being knowledgeable about their environments and the rules and resources available to them, all agents are inherently reflexive at a conscious and sub conscious level. Reflexivity in this sense, is therefore the agent's ability and motivation to monitor interactional aspects of an encounter.

How the PWA/ESL speaker responds to the challenges of a communication encounter does not rest solely with their linguistic or communication competency, but can also be attributed to features of their socio-cultural and embodied habitus. As Threats (2007) highlighted, factors which impact on communication access for a PWA, also include how the person actually responds. This takes into account their demographics, personality traits, their pre-morbid views on disability, their coping styles, their self advocacy traits and how they can position themselves within the interaction to achieve self representation of their attitudes, beliefs and values. Miller (2003), in her study of ESL speakers in Australian classrooms, capitalised on Bourdieu's theories to discuss this aspect of identity and self representation, implicating both the ESL speaker and the communication partner in identity construction.

Whether an encounter is accessible or not, very much depends on a holistic approach which looks beyond the aphasia or ESL issues as the defining factor and explores the contribution of personal attributes such as gender, race, age, culture, values, beliefs, identity, past experiences, coping mechanisms and other characteristics. As highlighted by Threats (2007), researching the relationship between personal and environmental factors is crucial to developing a deeper understanding of access issues for people with aphasia.

Communication access therefore needs to consider the syntactical relationships between the intersecting agents in a field.

Within the aphasia literature, there appears to be an assumption that increased participation through promoting a positive, competent identity is linked to social inclusion. However, as Shadden highlights, "simply placing a person in a social milieu" does not necessarily equate with successful identity negotiation (2005, p. 219) or ultimately inclusion. What actually counts is the quality of the relationships which promote a person's capacity to act in a way that encourages self advocacy through the satisfying presentation of their fundamental personal characteristics, promoting a sense of self worth, so that they feel valued and connected within their communities.

In terms of communication access, the co-construction of identity is therefore an important factor in developing a deeper understanding of how issues of access

and inclusion interact. It is not just about what or how something is said, it is about the underlying message that we process from our interactions that will have a bearing on our self construction of identity and may also influence access and inclusion.

Communication access, social inclusion and social capital

Within the aphasia literature social participation is recognised as being restricted and can contribute to poor self image, anxiety, depression, vocational outcomes, problems with relationships and difficulty accessing social support networks (Cruice, Worrall, Hickson, & Murison, 2003; Parr et al., 1997; Penn & Jones, 2000; Townend, Brady, & McLaughlan, 2007). All of these are intricately linked with the key drivers of social exclusion in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia. DPMC, 2008). Parr (2007) recognised that the issue of social inclusion does not feature highly in stroke related research, which is the primary cause of aphasia. However, participating in social life through simply being part of a community and taking part in activities does not necessarily equate with social inclusion (Pound, 2011; Shadden, 2005).

The regular use of an ICF model in aphasia studies which explore access, participation and inclusion does not sufficiently investigate the connections between these constructs. As Simmons-Mackie and Damico (2007) point out, there has been limited exploration within aphasia studies of the deep rooted sociological connections between access and inclusion. In their examination of the interactional principles of communication access and social inclusion, they suggested that the aphasia deficit itself is usually thought to be the cause of social exclusion. They recognised that this assumption fails to acknowledge the complex processes of social action that underpin inclusion/exclusion and therefore recommended that research on communication access and inclusion moves towards exploring the sociological processes, in particular the influence of symbolic acts of power which can serve to undermine and consolidate feelings of low self esteem or empower and promote the construction of a more positive identity. The approach used in this study will explore an interpretation of how communication access and social inclusion are linked. However, as well as considering the role of the communication partner and the social field, the influence of the PWA/ESL speaker will also be considered.

Social inclusion (or exclusion) is recognised as a complex, dynamic and multifaceted concept which can be interpreted differently depending on the context it is used to describe. Daly and Silver (2008), in a critique of the constructs of social exclusion and social capital, highlighted that historically social ills are viewed as reflecting the fundamental social relations of belonging or not belonging to your society. In this definition, the emphasis on social inclusion therefore rests with social relationships and participation. Exclusion can occur when an individual experiences what Daly terms “multiple deprivations and social ruptures” (p. 541). When an individual experiences regular dissatisfying social relations, it can be very difficult for them access society leading to a deprivation of social capital.

More recently, within the disability field, the concept of social inclusion has drawn on the work of Putman (2000) and Coleman (1988) to link inclusion with the notion of social capital (Bates & Davis, 2004). Some aphasia studies are beginning to capitalise on this research by using the concept of social capital to consider ways to promote social inclusion for people with aphasia (Parr, 2007; Pound, 2011). Putman refers to social capital as emerging from a combination of a development of community identity, norms, networks, trust and shared objectives and values. The emphasis is therefore on social connections as a way to construct and accumulate social capital within community organisations. For PWA or ESL speakers who often operate on the brink of social exclusion, to be more socially included, there needs to be a move towards increasing their social capital.

However, some authors (Allard, 2005; Lin, 2001), have criticised the lack of focus on the actual meaning or the quality of the social interactions within Putman’s definition. Instead, similar to Miller (2003), Allard, draws from the work of Pierre Bourdieu and proposes that social capital is negotiated through the quality and type of everyday interactions within a particular social field. Using a micro-level analysis of the narrative gained from a three year study of how social capital was negotiated in a range of social fields by a marginalised young woman, Allard reveals “how the complexities of social practices, contexts and capital intersect in both productive and inhibiting ways” (p. 77). Social capital is therefore negotiated between the person and the recipient through the person’s

capacity to act (agency) and the social structures of the particular context. Bourdieu's analysis of social capital is interested in the emotional, social and cultural relationships of social action. According to his theories, exchanges of capital reflect the constant struggle for domination in the hierarchically organised practise of interacting in social life.

Although recently within the aphasia literature there has been increased recognition of the notion of social capital in promoting access and inclusion, the interactional aspect of how service providers and service users negotiate capital at a relationship and social field level has rarely been investigated. For instance, Parr (2007) highlights in her ethnographic study of severe aphasia that social inclusion was largely constructed by other people in how they communicate with PWA and how they organise their environment. She discusses how the way discriminatory behaviour manifests, is entrenched and influenced by social groups, cultures and the institutions in which people operate (p. 116). However, in terms of people with less severe communication difficulties, to focus primarily on the other person and the social field is potentially discriminating against the intrinsic personal power that some speakers may possess which enables them to negotiate agency and influence communication access.

This study will explore the key themes influencing the PWA/ESL speakers' agency. In particular, it will consider how they negotiate their social capital at a relationship level within the every day interactions in the context of government service encounters.

Bourdieu's concept of social capital

The notion of capital is a fundamental part of the theoretical framework provided by Pierre Bourdieu in his theory of practise (1977). Miller (2003) clearly demonstrates the usefulness of Bourdieu's theories as a scaffold to conceptualise the complex relationships between power and capital in ESL classrooms in Australia. For Bourdieu, social capital is about how agents rally and use resources to position themselves within the social context. He refers to different forms of capital (e.g. economic, cultural, professional, social and symbolic, linguistic) with the appropriate forms determined by the social context. Capital reflects the intersections of power within the social field and the quality

and meaning attached to the interactions. Capital can be accumulated in order to improve the position of an agent within the field. Symbolic capital is commonly called reputation or prestige and is the form taken by most types of capital when they are recognised as legitimate and authorised (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 230).

Linguistic exchange is viewed as an economic exchange which is determined within the symbolic relation of power between the speaker and the hearer. In this sense, face-to-face communication is not only about encoding and decoding messages, but is also about “*signs of wealth* intended to be evaluated and appreciated”, and “*signs of authority* intended to be believed and obeyed” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66). Viewed in this way, communication is therefore rarely just about the transmission and reception of information, but is entwined with the unconscious quest for symbolic capital in order for the individual to feel included within the social group and validated as a functioning member.

Variations in the communication competence between the dominant and non dominant PWA/ESL speakers can act as a marker of difference to the service provider. The amount of symbolic power accrued by the speaker to an extent depends on the value the listener is prepared to bestow on the particular linguistic product on display. This is summarised by Thomson in the introduction to *Language and Symbolic Power*, “...differences in terms of accent, grammar and vocabulary - the very difference overlooked by formal linguistics- are indices of the social positions of speakers and reflections on the qualities of linguistic capital (and other capital) which they possess” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 18).

Bourdieu’s concepts of field, capital and habitus from the theory of practice, therefore draws attention to how the symbols of communication can become an instrument of power and agency. A number of studies in the field of second language acquisition, health and social science have demonstrated the usefulness of Bourdieu’s conceptual framework (Allard, 2005; Garrett, 2007; Miller, 2003; Rhynas, 2005). However, few studies within the speech pathology literature have considered the applicability of sociological frameworks to deconstruct what constitutes communication access.

This chapter has highlighted how communication access involves the syntactical relationship of interaction between socially situated people. Few studies have examined the intersecting components which influence access and inclusion. Using elements of Bourdieu's theoretical framework, this study will aim to develop a more grounded understanding of the wider sociological aspects of the concept of communication access

Aims and objectives

This study will explore how PWA/ESL speakers conceptualise their face-to-face interactions with public service providers. This study will draw from the wealth of research regarding communication access within the aphasia literature. Additionally, it will consider the links established by Miller (2003) in the ESL literature between how a person is heard, how they negotiate their self identity and how this impacts on their social inclusion. In light of the literature review and the theoretical explanations, as well as addressing the three principal questions outlined in Chapter One, the study will:

- Consider whether two distinct groups conceptualise their experiences in a similar way
- Consider the interconnectedness of the communication partner, social field and PWA/ESL speaker and how each component enables or constrains communication access
- Consider a sociological conceptual model to scaffold the links between communication access and social inclusion
- Explore communication access in terms of the behaviours that indicate whether someone is/is not being heard and legitimised as a speaker and social group member. In particular it will explore some of the more tacit, interpersonal aspects of face-to-face interactions that can impact on access and inclusion
- Explore the impact on identity, self representation, agency and negotiation of social capital
- Make recommendations for the future policy direction in Australia and specifically in WA, which recognises the right of all citizens to be heard
- Explore whether there is a mutual benefit for the fields of clinical aphasiology and second language acquisition to combine their expert

knowledge, skill and resources to inform the direction of future policy to improve communication access in the broadest sense

Chapter Four

Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapters have established the backdrop to the theoretical framework for the study. This chapter will present a critical evaluation of the type of qualitative methodology used, the methods of data collection and the four key features which aimed to enhancing the research rigour; credibility, authenticity, criticality and integrity (Whittenmore et al., 2001).

The theories of Goffman, Giddens and Bourdieu highlighted in the previous chapters, originate from a symbolic interactionist approach with their focus on how people negotiate social order and agency in every day encounters. Symbolic interactionist concepts of social action require a naturalistic and qualitative methodology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through the eyes of participants, a qualitative approach enables the researcher to develop and understand rich insights of a person's lived experiences with careful consideration of the context (Bryman, 1996). A variety of qualitative methodologies were considered during the planning phase in order to select the method which would obtain the desired results in an accurate and valid way e.g. grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) phenomenology, (Sokolowski, 2000) and qualitative description (Sandelowski, 2000). Grounded theory was of particular interest, with its capacity to develop new social theories from the concepts revealed by the data. However, given the size and the initial timescale of this study (12 months), the research strategy of qualitative description was considered to be the most appropriate.

Qualitative description has not been as clearly defined as some of the other methodologies (Milne & Oberle, 2005). Basically it aims to summarise events and experiences by using the words and phrases used by the research participants to describe the particular situation in question. Kearney (2001) suggests that this type of approach is particularly useful for studies which involve exploratory research. Neergaard et al. (2009) describe how it is an

excellent method to gain first hand knowledge of people's experiences within a particular topic.

The goal is to produce an accurate and detailed description of the participant responses to the questions using orthographic transcription methods (Poland, 2001). The following table highlights the main transcription symbols used, adapted from Poland's alternative abbreviated transcription instructions (p.641).

Table 1: Transcription symbols

Transcription Symbols	
Pauses	Short pauses of less than two seconds indicated by (...) four dots. Pauses longer than two seconds indicated by the word pause in parentheses (pause). Pauses longer than four seconds indicated by (long pause)
Laughing, coughing etc.	Indicated in parentheses; e.g. (coughs)
Emphasis	Capitals used to denote strong emphasis
Paraphrasing others	Place relevant text in double quotation marks
Researchers comments/observations	(()) Placed in double parentheses

In addition to the above, for the purpose of this study and in a move away from Poland's transcription methods, boldface text is used in longer narratives to highlight the key text being discussed.

Sandelowski argues that basic or fundamental descriptive research requires less interpretation and theorising than other qualitative methodologies, allowing the researcher to stay closer to the actual data (2000). Unlike grounded theory and phenomenology, there is no in-depth level of interpretation of data and theory development. By achieving an accurate reflection, using the words of the participants, this approach may also enhance inter-rater reliability and the dependability of the data analysis.

The study will use a qualitative description approach to report on how PWA/ESL speakers conceptualise their face-to-face experiences when interacting with

government service providers. Using this approach, the study will explore the interconnection between communication access and social inclusion.

Participants

Five people with aphasia and five ESL speakers were interviewed in a location they deemed convenient (at home, at a university or some other quiet place, conducive to videotaping), about their face-to-face interactions with government service providers in Western Australia. Participants with aphasia were recruited through networks of speech pathologists and self-help groups. Participants who were ESL speakers were recruited through refugee groups, CaLD community groups and university students and staff. As with most small scale qualitative studies, a cross section of people who represented a wide range of different factors and experiences were targeted for recruitment. As far as possible, a maximum variation sample approach with purposeful sampling was undertaken to include characteristics such as; age, gender, ethnicity. The ethnicity of the ESL participants reflected some of the broad group categories outlined in the Australian Standard Classification of Cultural & Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Meanwhile, using the descriptors outlined in the ASCCEG, the participants with aphasia were of Oceanian background and at the cultural and ethnic group level were considered as 'Australian'.

Inclusion criteria

1. Have experienced a degree of communication difficulty either due to aphasia or ESL issues when communicating in face-to-face interactions with a government service provider(s)
2. Able to independently* participate in an in-depth interview in English using speech, iconic gestures, writing, pictures and/or drawing as determined by the researcher who has over 20 years experience as a speech pathologist with extensive skills in supporting communication access
3. Aphasia group should have English as their first language
4. Largely independent* in their dealings with service providers
5. Age 18 years or over

6. At least 6 months post neurological event (aphasia group) and lived in Australia for a minimum of 6 months (ESL group).

* In this context, largely independent meant that although the person may require communication support from the service provider, they were able to attend the service interaction on their own and did not depend on a member of the family or a friend to communicate for them.

Exclusion criteria

1. PWA
 - Significant visual or hearing impairment
 - Severe aphasia
 - English as a second language
 - Cognitive or psychiatric impairment

2. ESL speakers
 - Significant visual or hearing impairment
 - Limited spoken English language skills, requiring assistance from translation/interpreting services
 - Acquired or developmental communication impairment
 - Cognitive or psychiatric impairment

Assessment and informed consent

In this study, participants did not undergo any formal language assessment. Similar to the Parr (2007) study, it was deemed not appropriate to put people through unnecessary testing given the nature and scope of this particular project. The various networks were asked to nominate suitable and interested people based on the inclusion criteria. The researcher outlined the project to the network contacts by phone, who then asked potential participants if they were interested in participating in the project. The network contacts gained consent to provide the researcher with contact name and number. The purpose of the project was reiterated to the individual participants at the start of each interview using visual prompts and accessible written information as required (See Appendix 3). Participation in the project was encouraged using an approach similar to the one outlined by Taylor and Bogdan (1984) who suggest emphasising the importance of hearing about their experiences in order to

develop ideas about how to help other people who are in a similar position in the future.

Once the participants who met the sampling criteria were identified by the network contacts, a mutually convenient time was arranged to conduct the interviews and an accessible informed consent form (See Appendix 4) detailing the purpose and content of the research was signed by each participant. Before the interview began, the researcher informally assessed the level of conversational support required, and took note of the nature of the person's communication ability, strategies that facilitated any auditory comprehension difficulty and strategies that facilitated expression. The extensive experience of the researcher in assessing communication competency and support for people with a range of specific communication difficulties facilitated this informal assessment.

A broad overview of participant characteristics is provided in Table 2, below. Pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis. More detailed information is presented in Appendices 5 to 8, e.g. other relevant information such as education, living situation and work status and a summary of the key features of their communication along with the main communication support strategies used by the researcher. For the aphasia group further information is available on aetiology and self reported severity of any physical difficulties.

Table 2: Participant characteristics

Participant	Gender	Age	ESL or PWA	Time* (years)	Broad ethnic group**	Cultural & ethnic Group**
Daniel	M	63	PWA	12	Oceanian	Australian
Gwen	F	63	PWA	10	Oceanian	Australian
Roslyn	F	56	PWA	6	Oceanian	Australian
Patricia	F	83	PWA	7	Oceanian	Australian
Jacqui	F	57	PWA	8	Oceanian	Australian
Anita	F	38	ESL	2.5	Sub-Saharan African	Burundian
Farah	F	21	ESL	6	North African and Middle Eastern	Iraqi
Winston	M		ESL	4	Sub-Saharan African	Burundian
Jin	M	19	ESL	2	South-East Asian	Malay
Katrina	F	21	ESL	2	Sub-Saharan African	Mauritian

*post onset of neurological event (PWA)/time in Australia (ESL)

**Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG), 2011

For most participants, communication support involved the researcher speaking slowly, using plain English and paraphrasing if there was a signal that participant's hadn't understood the question. Only with one participant, who had moderate to severe word finding difficulties associated with aphasia, did the researcher have to offer ideas and then ask specific yes or no styled questions to establish his view. In this situation, the researcher re styled the yes/no questions to check the accuracy of his response in an attempt to increase the rigour of the results.

Including people with communication problems after acquired brain damage in qualitative studies can present methodological challenges (Carlsson, Paterson, Scott-Findlay, Ehnfors, & Ehrenberg, 2007). As discussed by Luck and Rose (2007), a traditional, open-ended approach to interviewing does not yield much information from people with aphasia. Hence, a semi-structured, in-depth interview technique was used assisted by the researcher's use of communication support strategies (Kagan, 1998). Several aphasia studies on access and inclusion have used in depth interviews to explore PWA's

conceptualisation of the barriers and facilitators to communication access (Howe et al., 2007, 2008). However, the focus of this study was specifically the face-to-face aspect of interaction, therefore limiting the extent of the research to a well defined area

Data collection

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews (Minichiello et al., 1990) were conducted with each participant, lasting up to 90 minutes. In this type of interviewing, the researcher developed pre identified themes or questions which underpinned the research questions and addressed these in a flexible manner during the interview (See Appendix 9). There was no fixed sequence to the questioning which allowed the researcher to be responsive to the participant's account and explore areas of interest in more depth. A semi-structured interview process like this also allows for the generation of a 'narrative' type interview that provides greater flow and interaction and leads often to greater contextualisation of the life experiences of the participant, in this case, their experiences of communication difficulty.

The initial questions were broad and allowed for rapport building between the researcher and the research participant. Interviews were video recorded to allow for transcription of non verbal behaviours and communication support techniques. Participants were encouraged to take part in the interview on their own to encourage them to answer questions in their own words instead of spouses answering on their behalf (Croteau, Vychytil, Larfeuil, & Le Dorze, 2004). A funnelling technique was used with the interview questions gradually narrowing to address more specific themes relevant to the research questions. The following themes were explored in the interview:

- What enabled communication in the context of a government service interaction?
- What constrained communication in the context of a government service interaction?
- How did you feel as a result?
- What could improve communicating in this situation in the future?

The researcher introduced further prompts and open-ended questions, as required, relating to the concept of 'communication access'— particularly verbal and non verbal aspects of the service providers' communication and the impact on self identity, confidence, community participation and access to opportunities. At the end of the interview, the participants were offered the opportunity to arrange a subsequent session if they had more information to offer. This offer was not taken up by any of the participants.

Research rigour

There are numerous frameworks which contribute to the scientific rigour of qualitative studies. This study will use the four primary criteria proposed by Whittenmore et al. (2001) which enhance rigor in qualitative description studies: credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity.

Credibility and authenticity

The credibility of the study is directly related to whether it accomplishes what it set out to achieve. The purpose of this study was to explore and describe how PWA/ESL speakers conceptualised their face-to-face interactions with government service providers. Key to this was the ability of the researcher to capture and portray a true reflection of the insiders' perspective (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Authenticity is described as paying close attention to what the research participants are actually saying. In order to promote authenticity, the researcher had to ensure: that each participant had the freedom to speak; had their voices heard; and had their perceptions accurately represented.

As highlighted by Milne and Oberle (2005), strategies which promote credibility and authenticity begin with decisions which relate to purposeful sampling which impacts on whose voices will be heard.

Purposeful sampling

Generalisation of the results was enhanced by ensuring participant diversity through as much variation sampling as is achievable in a small study and using sufficient naturalistic language in the results section. Purposeful selection of participants who could participate in an in-depth interview with communication support provided as required by the researcher and who could provide

information relevant to the research questions was undertaken. As discussed earlier, initial recruitment strategies attempted to ensure the inclusion of people who had a range of experiences. After recruitment, close attention was paid to the strategies which would ensure that the data was driven by participants.

Ensuring participant driven data

In order to facilitate participant driven data, the topic guide for the in-depth interviews remained flexible at all times. The aim of this approach was to establish partnership and trust, and to engender a feeling of the researcher taking the lead from the participants, allowing them to tell their own stories in their own ways. For instance, the researcher tried to avoid asking lots of specific questions which might create a tangential influence on the flow of the topic. Silences were also allowed to encourage spontaneous initiation of topics by participants. However, when this did not occur, the researcher had to achieve the balance between asking too much and not probing enough. Specific questions were asked in order to ensure that deep data and not just superficial data was captured. This was important as the depth of the findings lay with the often tacit rules and influences within face-to-face interactions that people find difficult to conceptualise and verbalise without some prompting.

Ensuring accurate description

All interviews were transcribed word for word to enhance the scientific and ethical integrity of the data (Mason, 1998). Accuracy was further enhanced by the researcher's considerable experiences carrying out a similar type of in-depth transcription (Booth & Perkins, 1999) and knowledge of the subject area. Communication issues can sometimes lead to a discrepancy between what was anticipated and what was actually meant. When this occurred, the researcher reflected and clarified the issue with the participant during the interview. Transcriptions were completed directly after each interview and 20% of the transcripts were randomly checked by an independent expert. A methodical approach to recording, storing and analysing transcripts was maintained by using QSR International's NVivo 8 software to store and organise the interview data.

Data analysis

Qualitative content analysis (Sandelowski, 2000) was used to analyse the qualitative descriptions into a comprehensive summary. This approach enabled the researcher to explore a coding system along with a systematised summary of the informational content of the data which facilitated the examination of key themes, similarities and commonalties as well as differences and irregularities in the data. Codes were developed and systematically applied from the data itself. In this way, the coding system which emerged directly reflected the actual data presented and not any pre conceived system. Analysis was based on the system proposed by Graneheim and Lundman (2004). This involved:

1. Reading and re reading the data several times to get a sense of the whole
2. Dividing the data into three broad content areas: a) the influence of the communication partner b) the influence of the PWA/ESL speaker and c) the influence of the social field
3. Identifying the unit of analysis (or meaning unit) in each of these areas, which Graneheim and Lundman define as “words, sentences or paragraphs containing aspects related to each other through their content and context” (2004, p. 106)
4. Further dividing the unit of analysis of each area into sub categories which appeared to a) constrain the communication process, b) enable the communication process or c) reflected the PWA/ESL speakers’ conceptualisation of the impact of the interaction.
5. Transcribed data was broken down into smaller units and coded depending on their content or the concepts they represented using the participant’s words as much as possible.
6. Codes were categorised into subtypes that shared a common content in the basis of similarities and differences. For example sub types of the category *the influence of the communication partner* which is depicted in Figure 2, included codes which described the verbal and non verbal communication behaviours that appeared to enable or constrain communication access, while the sub types of *impact* included codes which described issues relating to emotions, identity construction and social inclusion.

7. Key themes were identified which appeared to cross the boundaries of each category. For instance, the major theme was that communication access reflects the intersections of power between each component part of the intersecting model depicted earlier in Figure 1.

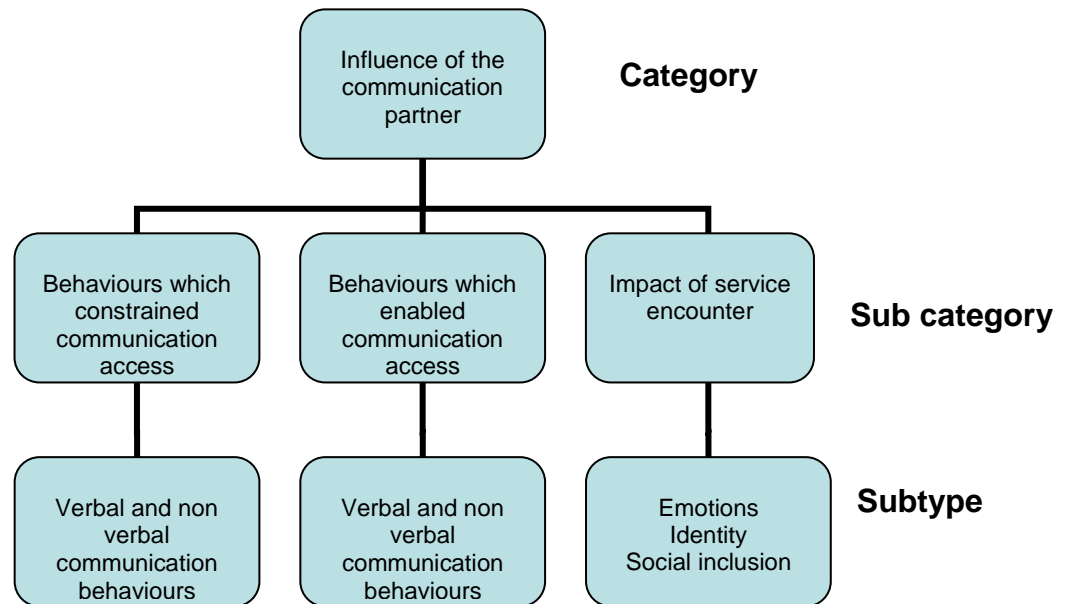


Figure 2: Example of category, sub category and subtypes

Categories and subcategories were reviewed several times and discussed with other research colleagues. In this way, the data defined the categories which were critically reviewed on an ongoing basis. As outlined by Milne and Oberle (2005), a danger of this process of breaking narratives into component parts is the loss of the overall meaning or context of the data. To avoid this happening, the data assigned to categories were longer meaning units (sentences or paragraphs which have related content) which conveyed the context of their description.

Data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously. This meant that the direction of the analysis was underpinned by the concepts and themes which emerged from the data. As an example of how the data steered the direction of the project, initially the researcher's predisposition towards a social model of care, with its emphasis on society and its members being responsible for dismantling the barriers created by social processes, resulted in an assumption

that the focus of this study should be the role of the communication partner and the influence of the social field. However, as the data analysis progressed, there was a recognition that many of the participants either implicitly or explicitly offered information on their strategic and communication competence and how this impacted on the outcome of the encounter. This finding prompted more specific questioning to help develop an understanding of how PWA/ESL speakers conceptualised their own role in negotiating communication access. Subsequently a deeper exploration of the interconnecting principles of access and inclusion was facilitated.

In keeping with the ethos of in-depth interviews as self reflection emerged as an area of interest, more targeted questioning was developed in the final stages of the data collection (Minichiello et al 1990). This development recognised the importance of considering how the actions and intentions of each agent affect the emergent pattern of behaviours which are underpinned by relationships of power and conflict.

Criticality and Integrity

Criticality is described by Whittenmore et al. (2001) as the researcher's ability to reflect on every critical decision applied to the study which facilitates its overall integrity. This includes reflection on any potential source of bias and what Milne and Oberle describe as reflection on "the dual role of the researcher, respondent validation and peer review" (2005, p. 418). Some researchers have termed this *reflexivity* (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Social constructionists such as Mead, Giddens and Bourdieu talk about the notion of reflexivity to explain how individuals make sense of their social world and their place in it. Researchers need to consider qualitative research as co constructed between themselves in the position as researcher and their relationship with participants in the study (Finlay, 2002). The researcher's self reflection can facilitate an exploration of how their perceptions, life experiences, expectations, personal and professional knowledge and skills may all impact on the research process. By documenting and analysing personal thoughts in relation to the research process, the researcher can improve the transparency of how personal and interpersonal considerations may influence the research decisions.

Reflecting on research bias

The researcher is therefore recognised as a key instrument in the naturalistic inquiry process. In this study, the researcher maintained a research diary to document personal and professional perspectives, observations and the initial interpretation of the data. One potential methodological bias was the researcher's knowledge and skills in working with people with aphasia over a period of 24 years. In contrast, apart from a short time teaching English to second language learners, the researcher was relatively inexperienced in this field. The challenge for the researcher was to ensure that the knowledge of the barriers and facilitators to communication access in aphasia did not lead to an assumption that both groups would experience similar aspects. Instead, the researcher had to make use of data driven strategies to ensure that the participant's conceptualisations facilitated the direction of the data collection and analysis.

Respondent validation

The integrity of the qualitative research study rests with the researcher's ability to accurately reflect what the participants actually said. Respondent validation, or member checking, involves going back to the participants to review the findings once the data collection and analysis took place. Given the timescale of this study, it was proposed that during the data transcription process, additional member checks would be arranged if there were any ambiguities or areas where a deeper understanding would be helpful. However, as there was a great deal of clarification carried out by the researcher within the interviews, additional respondent validation was not necessary.

Peer review

Peer review with two experienced speech pathologists and an experienced sociologist, facilitated an accurate representation of the data in the collection and analysis phases. Furthermore, most of the codes reflected the actual words of the participants. Peer review was particularly helpful when the meaning was tacit and less explicit and when exploring the themes. The themes that emerged were the result of the researcher being immersed in the data, reading and re-reading the categories to consider patterns that crossed the boundaries of each category. These themes were discussed in depth with the other three

colleagues to ensure accuracy and to encourage alternative interpretations. The results chapters consist of a prolific use of direct quotations and discussion of the core categories which sets the scene to explore the emergent themes and enables other readers to judge the credibility and the integrity of the study.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodological approach to the data collection and data analysis. Set in a paradigm of symbolic interactionism, this study used qualitative content analysis to report on the lived experiences of PWA/ESL speakers in their face-to-face interactions with government service providers. This chapter has provided details on how the researcher constructed a research plan to ensure the study considered the four primary criteria to enhance validity as reported by Whittenmore et al. (2001). The next chapter will explore the first of three broad content areas *the influence of the communication partner*.

Chapter Five

The influence of the communication partner

Introduction

This chapter presents the participants' perceptions of their communication partners' verbal and non verbal behaviours which influenced the face-to-face interactions within a government service encounter. Using the PWA/ESL speakers' own words, the first part of this chapter will highlight that there was a high degree of uniformity in what the ESL speakers and PWA considered as the main factors impacting on whether their communication partner's behaviour enabled or constrained communication access. For this reason, the results will predominantly focus on the joint perceptions of both groups. However, in the second part of this chapter, which explores the interpretative themes of empathy and power, areas specific to each group will be highlighted.

This chapter therefore addresses the first two research questions:

1. What do people with aphasia and ESL speakers perceive to be the features which enable a successful face-to-face interaction with government service providers?
2. What do people with aphasia and ESL speakers perceive to be the features which constrain a successful face-to-face interaction with government service providers?

Participants spoke about their experiences during specific service encounters within a wide range of government services such as Centrelink, the post office, police stations, migrant refugee services, their General Practitioner (GP) practice, public transport, hospital services, university, and TAFE. At other times they spoke more generally about the influence of the communication partner in service situations, without specific reference to a particular experience. These general comments will also be included in the results. One of the encouraging findings was the overall impression from both groups that generally their interactions with government services were positive. This would suggest that a degree of communication repair was happening naturally within the normal interactional rules of every day talk.

As demonstrated in Figure 2 in the previous chapter, the broad category of *the influence of the communication partner* was further divided into three sub categories; a) the behaviours which constrained communication access, b) the behaviours which enabled communication access and c) the impact of these behaviours on access and inclusion. This chapter will focus on the communication partner's behaviours which constrained or enabled communication access. The following chapter will consider how the participants conceptualised the impact of these behaviours.

The data within each sub category was divided into further subtypes: a) verbal or b) non verbal communication behaviours. However, even though the data was separated in this way, it is recognised that it is very difficult to divide these behavioural signals completely. The analysis will follow the work of Knapp & Hall (2006) who discuss how verbal communication is so inextricably linked with what has been termed the non verbal aspects as both systems operate in tandem as part of the broader communication process. Paralinguistic features such as tone of voice, rate, intonation, rhythm and accent, are more closely related to verbal behaviours than proxemics (social and personal space) and kinesics (body language). Verbal signals are often considered to be the main route for the transaction of information, while non verbal is predominantly used to convey emotions, although there is also a degree of overlap.

Using extracts from the narratives, meaning units were extracted and condensed into codes. The communication partner's behaviours which were perceived to promote communication access were often the converse of constraining behaviours, for instance, the communication partner using a slowed rate of speech aided understanding, whilst speaking too quickly was described as a constraining feature. Where this was the case, the enabling or constraining features impacting on communication access will be reported in tandem. Otherwise, they will be described individually. The details on the codes, meaning units and contexts which support the findings in the following sections can be found in Appendices 10 and 11. Figure 3 provides a schematic description of the analysis of the category *the influence of the communication partner*.

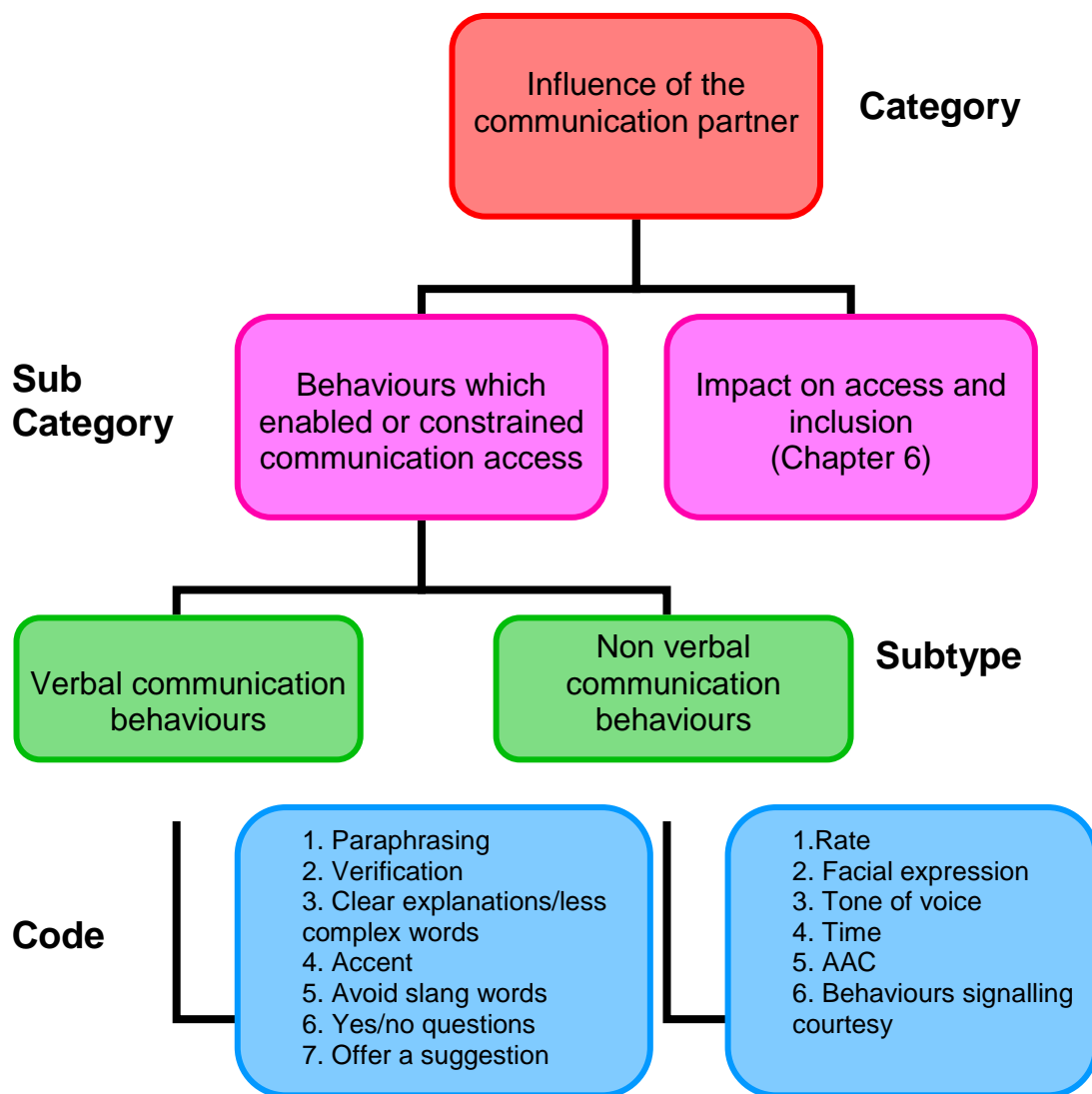


Figure 3: Analysis of the category *the influence of the communication partner*

Verbal behaviours of the communication partner

The text relating to the communication partner’s verbal behaviours was divided into meaning units which were condensed and then abstracted and coded. Overall there were seven codes relating to verbal behaviours of communication partners which were perceived to facilitate or constrain interactions (Figure 3).

In terms of the verbal acts which enabled access, there were six codes and 38 examples. Four codes related to facilitation of auditory comprehension, of which paraphrasing and verification were the two most commonly reported, followed by clear explanations and avoiding the use of Australian slang. Two further

codes related to the facilitation of expression; asking yes/no styled questions and offering a suggestion to facilitate word finding difficulties.

There were 18 examples, sorted into four codes related to the verbal acts which constrained access, three of which were the converse of the verbal codes which enabled access: the use of complex language, asking open questions instead of yes/no styled ones and the use of Australian slang words. The fourth code concerned the difficulty some people reported regarding understanding foreign accents.

Interestingly, within this sub category, several codes only contained examples from the ESL group, despite all of the strategies being recognised within the aphasia literature as enabling or constraining communication. For instance paraphrasing, the use of yes/no styled questions, the use of Australian slang words and the use of complex words were mentioned mainly by the ESL group. Naturally, it is to be expected that this group may have more difficulty understanding Australian slang than the aphasia group, who were all Australian citizens from birth. However, in terms of the other codes, although the reason for this difference between the groups was not explored, a possible explanation is that in the course of learning ESL this group may have learned the terminology related to conversational management skills training (Thornby & Slade, 2006). This could mean that they were more familiar with strategic terms such as paraphrasing and yes/no styled questions for example than the participants from the aphasia group.

Conversely, the PWA tended to report less on the verbal, linguistic aspects of the transaction and more on the paralinguistic aspects of verbal language. Two possibilities are likely here; first, this could be related to the implicit nature of the rules associated with strategic competence in that when English is our first language, normally we don't have to consider how conversational repair functions and therefore people may not have developed the reflexivity to discuss these tacit rules. Conversational management skills are learned and deeply ingrained in our habitus throughout the course of our life. This is an interesting point when we consider the PWA's role in contributing to the interaction which will be explored in Chapter Seven. Secondly, the

characteristics of the aphasia may further impede the description of these sometimes complex, embedded linguistic strategies, making it difficult for PWA to explain how they actually conceptualise the interaction.

Another interesting finding suggested that communication repair is highly individual. For instance, within the aphasia research, the advice to communication partners is usually not to correct the PWA (Croteau et al., 2004). However, when talking about the supportive strategies used by her GP, Jacqui (PWA) said *“and if I get words mixed up she will correct me”*. Similarly, in a general discussion about facilitation strategies, Farah (ESL) said: *“or maybe they say.... the word for you”*. In this instance, Farah suggested that this was a positive move by the conversation partner rather than seen as patronising. This appears to suggest that the non verbal features which support how these strategies are delivered are as important as the strategies themselves.

Non verbal behaviours of the communication partner

Overall there were six codes assigned within this sub type. Interestingly there were more common examples from both groups of how the communication partner’s non verbal behaviours contribute to communication access. However, the majority related to constraining rather than facilitating access. The first four codes in this section were the most commonly reported behaviours across both the verbal and non verbal sub types.

There were 56 examples of the six overall codes described, with 42 of these relating to rate of speech, extra time to communicate, positive tone of voice and positive facial expression. Other behaviours included those which signalled courtesy (e.g., eye contact, active listening, and greetings) and using an AAC (e.g., communication booklet with pictures of common items and written family names).

Five codes (53 examples) were conceptualised as constraining communication access, with negative facial expression and negative tone of voice accounting for 62% of these examples. Other features included the converse of the previously described behaviours which enabled access; lack of courtesy (no eye contact, not listening) lack of time, speaking too quickly or too slowly.

In view of the regularity of non verbal behaviours being conceptualised as having the main impact on the encounter, this section is worthy of more detailed investigation.

Rate: In terms of facilitating auditory comprehension and access to information, a slowed rate of speech was the main non verbal strategy highlighted by both groups as facilitating the encounter. This is recognised in the literature on communication support strategies as both aphasia and ESL learning can reduce the individual's ability to process information at a rapid rate. However two participants (ESL and aphasia) suggested that speaking too slowly can in some ways hinder the encounter as they assumed that the communication partner was displaying an underlying attitude of perceived incompetence towards them.

Facial expression: Knapp and Hall's report that "people can be extremely sensitive to non verbal cues" (2006, p.74), describing the face as the most prominent multi-message system, communicating personality traits, emotions, and connectedness during the encounter. In this study, the majority of participants highlighted the positive power of a smiling face. On the contrary, 30% of the examples which represented the constraints to access were related to negative facial expressions. The communication partner's facial expressions can therefore have a strong influence on how agents interact in the social world, with a smiling or unfriendly face having a significant impact on the outcome of an interaction. Although there are cultural variations in how facial expressions are used and understood Knapp and Hall suggest that there is a high degree of cultural recognition with the six recognised basic emotions: happiness, anger, disgust, sadness, surprise and fear. People assume that another person's face reveals their innermost thoughts and emotions. A smiling face can therefore communicate that the person is signalling a positive interpersonal attitude towards the other person in the interaction and can have a constructive influence on the social consequences of the encounter.

Tone of voice: is recognised as the second main clue to a person's emotions (Argyle, 1990). In this study, a 'warm' tone of voice appeared to signal to participants in both groups, a sense that the communication partner might be

willing to help, while an abrupt, negative tone signalled the opposite. As discussed previously, a person's response is based on their conceptualisation of how they were received in the previous turn. Subtle aspects of communication such as the communication partner's tone of voice can therefore be a powerful signal of their interpersonal attitudes towards the PWA/ESL speaker. This is reflected in the findings of this study where 32% of the data categorised into the sub category of constraints to access, related to the communication partner using a negative tone of voice.

Time: Extra time for communication was an important feature of a positive encounter for many of the participants in both groups. Participants reported the need for extra time to both access information and to express themselves. When this happened, they appeared to perceive the encounter as more satisfying. Conversely there were several reports of participants feeling rushed within service encounters which appeared to hinder the interaction.

Courtesy: Included the verbal and non verbal behaviours which help to provide structure to the interaction. For instance, the behaviours used to greet people (e.g. smiling, saying the person's name or using titles), or to show interest throughout the course of the conversation (e.g. eye contact, offering assistance, smiling, positive tone of voice), or to end the interaction (e.g. saying thank you). This was highlighted by Roslyn (PWA) in her interaction with a Centrelink employee when she said "*thank you would be nice, he wasn't interested in me at all*".

Four participants (two from each group) suggested that the communication partner indicating that they were actually listening to what they were saying was also positive feature of the interaction which provided connectedness and structure. Staying silent while the person was talking and maintaining eye contact were two ways for the other person to signal active listening. The opposite of this was if the other person didn't let the PWA/ESL speaker finish their turn before starting to speak or looked away during the participant's turn.

Using alternative modes of communication was recognised by both groups to be an important strategy used by the communication partner to facilitate the

encounter. For instance, pointing, writing, gesturing or encouraging the PWA/ESL speaker to use an alternative method when the spoken route is problematic.

This section has highlighted the PWA and ESL speakers' perception of the verbal and non verbal behaviours of the service provider within a government service encounter. In summary, it appeared that both groups were more sensitive to the often subtle, but very powerful non verbal signals, particularly facial expression and tone of voice. Like other studies, this suggests that the social aspects of the interaction, often signalled by the fleeting glances, raised eyebrows, gestures and bodily positioning of others during co presence were as important as the linguistic, transactional content of the information (Parr, 2007; Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 1995; Simmons-Mackie & Kagan, 1999). However, although the integration of non verbal behaviours with verbal support is recognised in conversational partner training programmes (Kagan, 1998; Parr et al., 2008) which aim to acknowledge and reveal the competence of PWA, it is not clear how much attention is given to these powerful interactional signals.

As recognised by Knapp and Hall (2006), the study of non verbal communication in relation to dominance is a complex area with many conflicting results, suggesting that future studies on communication access should focus attention on these important interactional features. It is recognised that training programmes for communication partners should also support an opportunity for potential partners to explore their underlying attitudes, particularly those that are negative, patronising or prejudiced and how these attitudes manifest in terms of their verbal and non verbal acts (Parr, 2007). However, this is a complex area as the attitudes that underpin the person's communication behaviours may be deeply entrenched, with some people being more reflexive and able to recognise these aspects more than others.

The results of this section provide an empirical insight into the communication experiences of two disparate groups. While the strategies reported are commonly recognised in aphasia and ESL studies as being influential in supporting both groups to communicate, this study offers new evidence that both groups conceptualise many of the verbal and non verbal behaviours of the

service providers in a similar way.

This finding supports Goffman's suggestion (1972) that there are universal aspects of co presence which apply to all cultures as underneath we are all human. He states that essentially individuals are conditioned by the interactional rituals imposed by societies everywhere, with self perception and feelings of pride, honour and dignity, expressed through face along with a degree of empathy being the key features of an individual's behaviour. These tacit rules are the gauge against which people evaluate their own performance and their communication partner's in any social encounter as within these rules lie the foundation for ritual equilibrium in all societies.

Interpretative themes of empathy and power

So far this chapter has looked specifically at the audible or visual, verbal and nonverbal behaviours of the communication partner. The next part of this chapter will explore the interpretative themes of empathy and power which appeared to explain the difference between whether these behaviours were processed by the participants as enabling or constraining communication access. Interactions reflect a complex web of implicit knowledge through which an individual reveals their socio cultural habitus developed through their social experiences in life. This knowledge generally operates at an unconscious level and can therefore be difficult for people to put into words (Giddens, 1979). With this in mind, the proceeding section will use the participant's own words to explore an interpretation of what the verbal and non verbal acts appeared to signal to them in terms of reflecting the internal attitude of the service provider and the different ways this manifested.

Drawing from Goffman's work on self presentation (1990), through the verbal and non verbal acts described in this section, the service provider is expressing their *line* which reflects their view of the situation, communicates their impression of the participant and establishes their position within the interaction. All encounters are socially situated and underpinned by the notion of power, providing an opportunity for the interactants to negotiate, maintain and develop their self and social identity. The normal interactional rituals of any social group emphasise the expectation that co-participants in an interaction should engage

in a certain degree of considerateness to help avoid the other person's humiliation and ultimate disempowerment (Goffman, 1972, p. 10). Within an interaction where one of the speakers has aphasia or is an ESL speaker, the onus is therefore often on the communication partner to provide the additional help required to circumvent the potential communication difficulty.

In those encounters where the participants described the verbal or non verbal behaviours that enabled the interaction to continue in a positive way, the service providers were essentially displaying a willingness to emotionally identify with the PWA/ESL speaker. Consequently, drawing from the work of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991) the PWA/ESL speaker is rewarded with a degree of social or symbolic capital which can be used as a resource to negotiate the relations of powers within all interactions, helping them to maintain face and to negotiate a more positive identity. Conversely, if a service provider, through their verbal and non verbal acts communicates an unwillingness to engage in this level of support, then the interaction is likely to be less satisfying or accessible for the PWA/ESL speaker and can consequently lead to feelings of disempowerment.

Within the qualitative content analysis process described in the methodology chapter which involved organising data into categories, subcategories, subtypes and codes, there then followed a process of reflection and discussion resulting in the creation of the two main themes of empathy and power which appeared to cut across the three broad categories.

Empathy

The Oxford dictionary defines empathy as “the ability to understand and share the feelings of others”. Underlying the descriptions of the verbal and non verbal acts of the communication partner, the participants appeared to be discussing a feeling of being more comfortable with certain behaviours and indeed to greater or lesser extents, attributing the service provider with a certain notion of empathy towards them in terms of their situation. The construct of empathy was thus considered to be a key aspect which described how the service provider's external verbal and non verbal acts communicated their internal attitudes. The analytic chart in Appendix 12 highlights how the text from the category, *the*

influence of the communication partner, was divided into meaning units and condensed meaning units to arrive at the themes of empathy and power.

Goffman's work on the alienation from interaction is also very relevant here (1972). He talks about how interactants owe it to each other to act in a way that not only maintains their own position (or face) but also helps the other person achieve and maintain theirs and therefore encourages participation. The more linguistically dominant communication partner, therefore needs to display empathy as anything less can intentionally or unintentionally disempower the PWA or ESL speaker.

From analysis of the interview data, there appeared to be five key sub themes which influenced the construct of empathy (or lack of) as depicted in Figure 4 below. There are few clear cut divisions between these factors as each influences and affects the other. For example, a service provider's knowledge of or interpersonal attitudes towards different cultural influences may affect how they engage in face work or whether they transmit a feeling of emotional attachment towards the PWA/ESL speakers' situation.

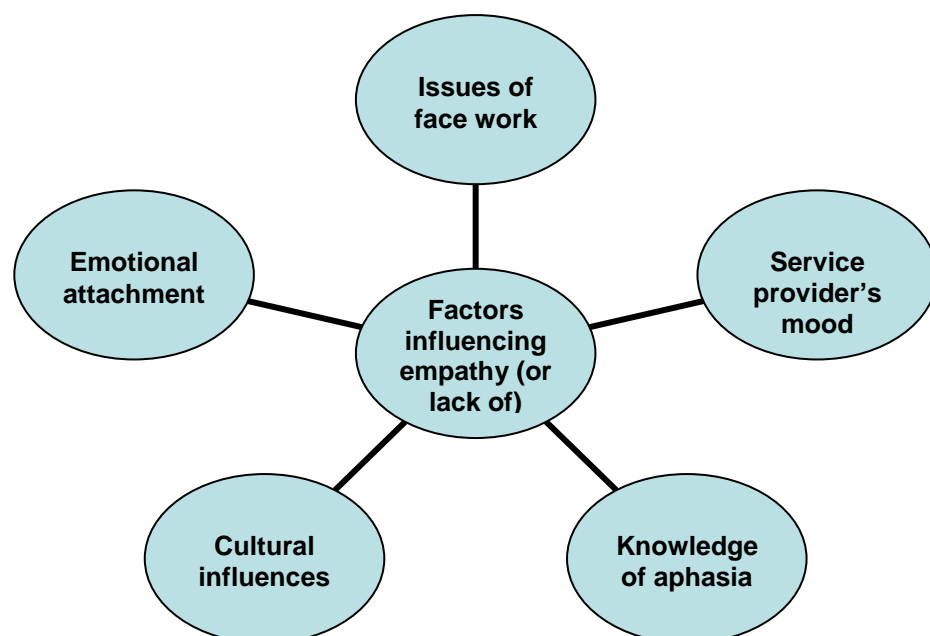


Figure 4: Key issues influencing empathy

Emotional attachment

As discussed, often the notion of empathy is communicated implicitly and it is not something that most people think about in an interaction. However, one participant in this study, Winston (ESL) clearly draws attention to the importance of empathy in the following extract. Here, in a general discussion he talked about how a service provider showing empathy indicated that he is “*forwarding his attachment to your feelings*” which subsequently made Winston feel good and encouraged his inclusion in Australia:

*“I think eh, I felt good, I felt well because eh when you are speaking to someone and the first thing is the how he is **showing the empathy of what you are saying so he’s forwarding his attachment to your feelings it’s good for the inclusion in Australia** that’s what I said, how am I going to live here”*

Winston ESL speaker

Although, not as explicitly as Winston, Farah’s comment “*people who really knows that we came from horrible situations*” in the extract below suggested that someone who could understand and identify with her feelings could help her to integrate into Australian culture and help to make it feel like it is “*home*”.

*“but what do I think it’s really helpful? When I dealt with em....like with**with people who really knows that OK, we came from em very very horrible situations** we’re here to you know, to **choose Australia** as second language, or as **as our home** em....you know home country”*

Farah ESL speaker

Issues of face work

Maintaining face: One way that empathy manifested was related to the issue of *face* which is recognised as a key feature of normal interactional rituals and is acknowledged in both aphasia and ESL literatures (Booth & Perkins, 1999; Bremner et al., 1996; Simmons-Mackie, 2000; Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2007). Within this study there was a strong emphasis on the importance of the

communication partner treating the PWA/ ESL speaker as competent, enabling them to maintain face and to feel like an equal participant in the interaction. For instance, the following extract captures the meaning Gwen (PWA) appeared to take from her first encounter with the receptionist at her new GP practice. In the lead up to this statement, she described the range of strategies used by the receptionist which signalled that she was willing to assist her. These included a friendly tone of voice, verbal reassurance to take her time and “*it will be alright*”, a smiling face, her acceptance of Gwen’s description of her aphasia and her use of written props to help Gwen to complete the biographical information on the written form. This appeared to result in Gwen feeling that she could contribute equally within the interaction as shown by the following comment:

*“Yeah, em, it was just as if we were talking to one another em....as if....em em....as if we were....**as if we were....two people talking**”*

Gwen PWA

Similarly, a strong feature of the interview with Roslyn (PWA) was how empathy was conveyed through being treated as a normal, competent person. At one point she talked about her positive encounters with the nurses in her GP practice and how “*they know I’ve got a problem*” but they don’t draw attention to her occasional word finding difficulties, described as “*confusion*” in the following extract:

*“I suppose **they don’t pick up on the problems and all the mistakes that I make**....so em, I get confused sometimes and em I suppose they **manage to ignore those em confusions that I have**”*

Roslyn PWA

Sometimes, this commitment to helping the person to maintain face appeared to be signalled by such things as showing an interest in their life story and commending them on how well they are doing in the face of adversity. In describing the manager at Centrelink's supportive behaviours, Jacqui (PWA) said:

*“a couple of times **he did ask me what had happened to me** and I told him and he said “Wow, he said ..I’ve heard about”ok, well let’s just go on and you know and explain what had happened and I did actually tell him and he said “**aw you look really good he said it look, oh, you’re doing well**”*

Jacqui PWA

Similarly, Katrina (ESL) talked about how much better she feels if the service provider acknowledged her competence as someone who had taken on the challenge of studying in a different country with a different language. She described how someone asking “*how’s my country*” and acknowledging the positive aspects of the language, “*I speak French and they say that’s a fantastic language*” contributes to a more positive emotional response.

These verbal and non verbal acts reflect normal interactional rituals, signalling that the linguistically dominant speaker is willing to help create a ramp that promotes the PWA/ESL speaker’s access to maintaining their line, i.e., acting out the *who* and *what* they are about. In these positive situations there is an underlying assumption that the service provider had assimilated a favourable impression of the participants which in turn bestowed them with a certain amount of symbolic power. The cyclical, interconnected feature of everyday interactions, where responses are formulated on a turn by turn basis means that this apparent favourable impression may consequently influence whether the PWA/ESL can respond with a degree of poise and dignity, further increasing their ability to achieve self representation and symbolic power.

Loss of face: There were also examples of the communication partner not engaging in face work which communicated that they were not empathetic to the PWA/ESL speaker's position. This was generally connected with an unsatisfying encounter. For example, in the following extract, Farah (ESL) talked about how the service provider's tone of voice communicated that they were not willing to provide the necessary communication support scaffolds to facilitate her participation in the encounter. In this example, Farah described how she conceptualised this type of behaviour as conveying the service provider's dominance and power to exclude her from the communication:

“sometimes they go like “oh, what do you mean?” ((in a patronising tone))....they just want to trick you and make you not really em go on with the communication”

Farah ESL speaker

Similarly, Patricia's (PWA) statement *“I didn't em....have em....right answers for her....and she got annoyed with that”* in reference to the post office assistant whose tone of voice and facial expressions indicated that she was irritated by Patricia's communication difficulty, also suggested that there was an unwillingness or inability to engage in face saving behaviours. This type of stance is inextricably linked with power and dominance and will be discussed further under the theme of power below.

Service providers' general mood

Some participants recognised that a lack of empathy may be related to the service providers' general mood and have nothing to do with communication access issues or how the other person is receiving the PWA/ESL speakers' personal presentation. This was highlighted by Jin (ESL) when asked if there were any other reasons apart from the communication difficulty which might have contributed to the police station receptionist appearing abrupt and unhelpful, Jin (ESL) said *“probably she's not in a good mood or something else like that”*. Similarly, when asked the same question about the unsupportive post office employee, Patricia (PWA) reported *“she had obviously gotten up on the wrong side of the bed or something or she had a fight....before hand or*

something". Winston (ESL) also suggested that the communication partner may not be able to fully empathise with the person who has difficulty speaking because "*they have their own problems*".

Interestingly, these comments also highlight that the PWA/ESL speakers were communicating empathy for their communication partner in realising that issues other than the presenting communication difficulties can cause the service provider to react in a negative fashion.

Knowledge of aphasia

The service provider having knowledge of aphasia was implied by some PWA as an important feature which facilitated a more empathetic approach within the interaction. For instance, Jacqui, when describing her interaction with her GP said she feels "*comfortable because she knows what aphasia is*", while Roslyn described her interactions with her GP as "*great*" and attributed this to the GP's awareness of aphasia. This is an interesting point, as for many people with aphasia, especially if they do not have a concomitant physical disability, the aphasia is a hidden disability, unlike the situation for some ESL speakers who may find that the service provider anticipates potential communication issues if there is a visible difference. A general lack of public awareness of the nature and difficulties faced by PWA can make it even more difficult for them to be on the receiving end of an empathetic communication partner.

The hidden nature and lack of awareness of aphasia can therefore make it difficult for the service provider to know there is a specific problem or indeed, to know how to help. Although some participants described how they were able to improve communication access by raising awareness of aphasia, for others the difficulty in raising awareness of aphasia was compounded by the complex nature of the condition. This was described by Roslyn when she said:

*“like here I am again with this horrible problem , **I don’t know what my problem actually is**, em, can you help me with it”*

and later:

*“it’s **it’s hard to ex, explain aphasia to people**, it really is and in the end you think god, blow it, why am I bothering you know”*

Roslyn PWA

According to Gwen and Roslyn, most people don’t seem to know what aphasia is and therefore have no idea how to support them. For instance, Gwen said *“sometimes they, and you know, they want to help but they don’t know how to”*, while Roslyn said, *“and eh, sometimes I can see people looking at me and em....they know there is a problem, but they’re not sure what the problem might be”*. In Patricia’s case, this lack of knowledge of aphasia was partly how she accounted for the member of staff in the post office getting annoyed when Patricia had taken in the wrong bill, *“I didn’t em....have em....right answers....and she got annoyed with that....I think she thought I was trying it on or something”*.

However, the approach of raising awareness of aphasia and improving knowledge of the condition does not automatically mean that service providers will respond in a more appropriate manner. Gwen and Jacqui indicated that even informing the service provider of their difficulty did not lead to a more satisfying encounter. Gwen for instance talked about a negative experience in her GP surgery where she explained how the receptionist and GP both appeared disinterested as displayed by their negative facial expressions and tone of voice. In the extract below she described her perception that her GP should know about aphasia and how her explanations to the GP and the receptionist still did not appear to facilitate the interaction:

G *“um..eh, the receptionist didn’t, the doctor didn’t at all, now **he was a doctor and he should have seem, eh, because I always eh, say to people that I’ve had aphasia or that’s for the doctors but for the receptionist I said um I have a little difficulty speaking em***

R* *and that didn’t help*

G *and it didn’t make a blind bit of notice”*

Gwen PWA

*R=Researcher

It would appear that the most influential factor was whether the other person’s interactional skills were able to support the inclusion of PWA. In the empathetic interactions, the service provider was able to achieve this by such things as smiling, using the other person’s name to indicate interest and connectedness, using a warm tone of voice, encouraging them to take their time, through not rushing them, acknowledging their difficulty and offering some assistance. The key did not appear to be whether the other person was successful in helping the PWA to transmit the informational content of the encounter, but more to do with whether they helped to make them feel like a worthy interactant.

This would suggest that although knowledge of specific communication disorders is important in raising awareness, the key to success in communication access training is focusing on improving awareness of the normal interactional rules of society and how these are played out. However, not all service providers are willing or able to engage in the level of interactional support that may be required to increase the participation of those who are functioning with reduced competency.

Whether they have the skills will depend on the extent to which they are able to engage in the process of reflexivity to determine how their own communication skills may influence the response of the PWA/ESL speaker. For many service providers this level of self awareness may not be sufficiently developed, making

it difficult to promote communication access, particularly with those who present with more complex communication needs. With this in mind, it would appear that the complex nature of interpersonal relationships, even within a short service encounter may not necessarily lend itself to solutions based on simple approaches to improving the verbal and non verbal behaviours of the service provider which is characteristic of many access training programmes.

Cultural influences

Another factor contributing to empathy (or lack of) concerned visible and/or audible differences between the participants and the service provider related to cultural backgrounds. The examples in this section reflected the data from the ESL participants as the PWA were of Australian descent.

Katrina described her positive conceptualisation of Australian people when she described them as more friendly and “open” in comparison to people in her home country. Later she went on to explain how this friendliness has helped her to integrate into Australian culture. She denied having experienced any racial discrimination, which she attributed to Australia’s multicultural constitution when she said: *“I haven’t met anyone like really racist but em yeah because I think there are quite a lot of immigrants here”*.

However, Jin and Farah spoke about negative encounters where the communication partner’s lack of cultural awareness created a barrier within the interaction. Jin recalled an incident with a policeman who perceived Jin to be drunk because of a difficulty understanding his accent. In the following account, he highlighted another encounter with a receptionist at the Magistrates Court registry. Jin was taking his friend to court over the non payment of money that he had lent to him. He described what happened when he went to make an application to the court:

*"When I was speaking with the lady and I ask her....what's the point about, what shall I fill in and then she's like, I **can't tell you anything you should refer this to your lawyer....but afterwards like there's another Australian guy sit down and ask....what should I do and the receptionist just tell him everything**"*

Jin ESL Speaker

In the extract above, Jin clearly perceived that he was discriminated against because of his different cultural background. This perception was reinforced when asked why he thought the lady had acted in this way he said *"probably because I'm not a citizen here"*.

Farah was much more explicit about the potential for racial discrimination either due to the visible difference of wearing the hijab *"before they hear you they actually judge you"* or because of speaking English with an accent. In the following extract she discussed the communication partner's reaction to the hijab and the difficulty some may have communicating with ESL speakers:

*"Sometimes....they have, em **bad relationships with people like us, like with the scarf or maybe just people who can't understand English....and then for you to come and not make them understand you, it's going to be hard for them to understand**"*

Farah ESL speaker

She went on to say that *"when they don't understand you, that's going to make them hate you....they don't want to listen anymore, they just want to go easy"*.

This would suggest she is aware that audible difference can also lead to racial discrimination and exclusion. She talked about how service providers “*just want to see people like them*”, which later she defined as meaning “*white with the blonde hair.... and just speaking English normal*” which she compared with “*not like US with the scarf or sometimes the Indian look or the Chinese look*”. When asked about her impression of the impact of the visible cultural differences as opposed to sounding different she initially revealed that she mainly feels discriminated because of how she looks. This is highlighted in the following account, however, she goes on to describe how the communication partner’s behaviour changes once they hear her good English skills, suggesting that sounding English can facilitate access to a more empathetic approach which promotes social group membership and inclusion:

*“When they **see people like me**...they speak to me in, you know a **low tone of voice or the words they try to use is easy for me to understand**, but when they speak to me and **I answer them back with English**, they go like “oh”, **they change back to their normal personality**”*

Farah ESL speaker

Although the PWA in this study did not have to traverse the complexities of negotiating their cultural identities, their compromised communication competence also puts them in a precarious position as being understood by others is critical to our development and maintenance of identity. Like people who migrate to a new country and have to learn a new language, PWA are also going through a process of renegotiating their identities (Scott, Julie, & Emma, 2008; Shadden & Agan, 2004). Similar to the ESL speakers, they are shaped by their communication encounters and negative experiences can lead to feelings of deficiency and difference.

Power

The issue of power was another main theme that was apparent across the three broad categories of the communication partner, the PWA/ESL speaker and the social field. In terms of the communication partner, empathy and power are

inextricably linked. For instance, an empathetic partner, who can demonstrate sufficient interactional skills such as face work, identification at an emotional level, awareness and acknowledgement of aphasia and cultural differences and well developed reflexivity skills, is more likely to be successful in promoting access and inclusion through empowering the PWA/ESL speaker within the interaction.

Lack of empathy, on the other hand appeared to signal that the service provider as a communication partner was not able or willing to identify with the PWA/ESL speaker at an emotional level and in some situations the consequence of this was marginalisation and disempowerment. As Miller (2003) points out, once someone opens their mouth and speaks, they can be marked as an insider or an outsider by their communication partner. This power to authorise or legitimise the speaker as an accepted member of the social group is another important aspect of communication access which can result in the person feeling empowered or marginalised.

PWA and ESL speakers both described encounters in which a power imbalance was obvious. In the following extract, Farah (ESL) was very explicit in her description of how some service providers position themselves as the dominant participant in the interaction. This is conveyed by Farah's use of the terms "*poor person*", "*a weak on*" and "*attack you with your language*" and highlighted her view that some providers did not recognise her as a competent ESL speaker:

*"they see you like a **poor person**, a **weak one** they em, I don't know, they, they see themselves em, you know, they've got they, you know, energy to actually **attack you with your language**"*

Farah ESL speaker

This extract clearly links the relationship between language competency and symbolic power. Bourdieu (1991) argues that linguistic relations are central to the issue of interactional symbolic power in that how we perceive ourselves and how we respond in social contexts is often dependent on the social dimensions

of power, authority and solidarity. In the next extract, Farah went on to describe how this dominance is portrayed through a negative and aggressive tone of voice as well as the content of the service provider's language. She suggested that some providers ignored her requests for them to explain things more clearly and were not prepared to alter their language to facilitate her comprehension when she said, "*oh, this is the way I talk*". This stance assumes that the service provider is not willing to engage in the normal rituals of interaction such as face work, accepting *the line* taken by others and helping others to maintain their line which was discussed earlier in this chapter and the preceding one. Whether this is because they don't recognise Farah as part of the dominant social group because of her language or visible difference is not clear:

*"yeah , every time you find yourself, you can't really answer them back they go like, **more aggressive with their language**, you know, **the tone of the voice, the words they use**, you know and sometime I go to people, I mean the few offices or anything, I, I will go like, if they, the way they speak I can't understand, I go like can you please use an easier word so I can understand you and I can answer you back, you know, some people understand that, some people they go like, **oh this is the way I talk**"*

Farah ESL speaker

There were many examples from both PWA and the other ESL speakers which emphasised how the actions of a non empathetic service provider could impact negatively on their self representation, their emotional response and their sense of inclusion. These aspects will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted the positive and negative features of the communication partner's behaviour that can impact on the accessibility of an encounter. Although most of the verbal and non verbal features reported in this study are recognised within both literatures, this study offers a unique perspective on several fronts. The narrow scope of this study focused exclusively on the face-to-face aspects of government service encounters. Within both literatures, there is a paucity of evidence regarding the role of the

government service provider in promoting communication access and inclusion. The evidence not only draws together the commonalities between these two very disparate groups in terms of how they conceptualised their experiences, but also highlights the connections between some of the deeper principles that underpin the interactions of both groups. Importantly these findings appear to support the anecdotal information within the communication access literature that general communication support techniques may also benefit some ESL speakers, suggesting that a mutual approach may be beneficial. By implication, this suggests that a wider group within society may actually benefit from communication access policy and not just those with specific communication impairments.

The findings highlight that non verbal behaviours, particularly tone of voice and facial expressions are a powerful way for the communication partner to influence whether an encounter is accessible or not. However, it is recognised that these features of the communication partner's style of communication are often deeply ingrained in their habitus and it can be difficult for some people to identify and change these highly personal characteristics. Future communication access research needs to address how training programmes could focus on these subtle but powerful aspects of communication, not only at the surface level, but more importantly asking what motivates the person for instance to use a negative tone of voice or facial expression. This should centre on encouraging the service provider to explore the different ways they communicate their interpersonal attitudes within an encounter.

Although within the social field of government service interactions, participants will function in a way to express and regulate the transactional aspects required, the findings of this study underline Goffman's view that the substance of interactions is in the actual structure of social encounters. In some ways, the content of the encounters reported did not seem as important as the meanings attributed by the participants to the service providers' behaviours in terms of the social connections such as being treated as an equal, sustaining a collective impression of competence (Giddens, 2009, p. 291), being supported in presenting a line, maintaining face, being attributed social capital and symbolic power. Service providers may need to explore how their own behaviours

contribute to the success of the normal underlying principles of interactional rituals of society through which there is a tacit acknowledgement that the more linguistically dominant linguistic partner will help to provide the scaffold to include the less dominant interlocutor.

This is reinforced by Goffman (1972) who points out that interactional features such as 'face-work' is a social skill that requires a degree of perceptiveness, especially within interactions where the interacting agents have different levels of communication competence. These perceptions not only need to take account of the verbal and non verbal acts of communication, but more importantly, what lies below the surface of these behaviours in terms of how attitudes, values and beliefs play a part in motivating the communication partner to "employ his repertoire of face-saving practises" (p.13). Communication partner training programmes which explore a deeper understanding of the impact of behaviours through reflection and the process of reflexivity are rarely described in the current research on communication access. However, this level of perception may be required before change in practise can be expected.

Two core interpretative themes of empathy and power were discussed in this chapter and highlighted as being intertwined. According to Goffman, the ability to show empathy is a fundamental skill for service providers functioning within complex interpersonal interactions (1974). He highlights that "one of the fundamental aspects of social control in conversation" is the ability of each co-participants to maintain adequate involvement of each other (1972, p. 116). For people with reduced communication competency, active involvement can be maintained if the linguistically dominant co-participant uses assistive strategies. By helping to maintain the face of the person with reduced linguistic capital, the communication partner is recognising their role as an interactant and rewarding them with a degree of social capital and symbolic power. As capital is accumulated across the different social fields, the capital accrued from successful service encounters can be used to mobilise resources in other situations as required. By facilitating a synergy between the different linguistic capabilities at play, the service provider encourages reciprocity and it is this level of commitment to help another that has been described as "the spark that lights up the world" (1972, p.117). On the contrary, a non empathetic partner

who either with holds or does not recognise the need for communication support is in effect not legitimising the linguistic capital of the PWA/ESL speaker and is therefore denying them access to the necessary social and symbolic capital that promotes agency and empowerment.

The many reports of successful government service encounters in this study suggest that service providers can certainly be successful in playing out these interactional rituals which consequently facilitates the *game* of communication access. This is an important finding as so often the literature focuses on the negative aspects of the communication partner's influence. However, the limitations of the study in terms of including participants who were able to participate in an in depth interview and as a consequence, had relatively mild communication issues, is likely to have contributed to this finding. It would be expected that communicating with those who presented with more challenging communication support needs could make it more difficult for service providers to engage with constructive interactional rituals. However, this might not be the case and further research is required which includes a wide range of people with different levels of communication competency. This would facilitate a broader understanding of how different people conceptualise the interactional aspects of an encounter.

Feeling a worthy interactant within a communication encounter is crucial as it is within the multitude of daily interactions our social identity is created and maintained. The next chapter will explore the participant's perception of the *impact* of the communication partner's verbal and non verbal acts.

Chapter Six

Impact of the communication partner's actions

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the evidence describing the perceived *impact* of the verbal and non verbal behaviours of the communication partner as reported in the previous chapter. Within this sub category, three sub types emerged which appeared to be directly linked in the data to the actions of the communication partner. These included the impact on the PWA and ESL speakers' emotions, their construction of identity, and their social inclusion. This chapter will explore each of these three aspects in more depth by examining the evidence which revealed the consequence of the service encounter described.

Each subtype will highlight the positive impact first, describing the effect of the service provider demonstrating the theme of empathy in the forms discussed in the previous chapter. This is followed by a description of what appeared to happen in an encounter where the service provider did not appear to be empathetic to the PWA/ESL speaker and instead was perceived to be either unwilling or unable to assist with the interaction. Throughout the chapter, the theme of power is interwoven with the descriptions and analysis of the data.

As with the previous chapter, many of the issues were common to both groups and consequently the results will be presented together. This chapter therefore will explore the evidence which addresses research question 3:

- What do PWA/ESL speakers perceive to be the impact of the reported verbal and non verbal behaviours of the communication partner?

The impact on emotions

It is well recognised that people are likely to experience an emotional response to the verbal or non verbal signals which communicate the other person's attitude towards them (Argyle, 1983, 1990; Goffman, 1972; Knapp & Hall, 2006). Goffman for example, describes how a person experiences an immediate emotional response to how their communication partner presents as

this will confirm whether they are willing to accept the face or line that they portray. If the service provider is empathetic and helps the PWA/ESL speaker to either maintain or establish a face that is better than what was expected, this rewards them with positive emotions such as feelings of confidence and happiness. However, if loss of face is the consequence of a service provider failing to support the PWA/ESL speaker, then negative emotions such as feelings of sadness or low self esteem are more likely. The following sections will explore the emotional feelings attached to participating in encounters where the service provider's behaviours either constrained or enabled communication access.

"It's so much better": positive emotions

Some participants spoke about the positive emotional impact of the communication partner demonstrating considerateness and assisting with the interaction. Roslyn (PWA) for instance reported how she feels *"so much better" and "really good, yeah, happy I suppose"* when communicating with speech pathologists as opposed to other government service providers, such as Centrelink employees who may not know what aphasia is. However, when asked whether this type of positive encounter can have a lasting effect in the future, Roslyn highlighted the often significant effect of one negative encounter: *"it, it does until something happens again and you think oh, shit , then you've got to start, it's like going back to square one"*.

Similarly, when describing the experience with a helpful manager in Centrelink, Jacqui (PWA) highlighted the positive impact when she said *"yeah, I felt a bit more relaxed" and "a bit more comfortable" and "good"*. While in a general discussion, Anita (ESL) clearly made the connection between a supportive communication partner, positive emotions and her perception of improved English competency: *"if you know that they are friendly before you go, you are happy, you open your heart to them, you speak well then you solve the problem"*. This suggests that this type of approach leads to a more satisfying encounter. Anita went on to say: *"if those people are good to me, are friendly, I feel happy. Also then I feel confident, that even my language is improving, yes"*. This is in contrast to her response *"I fear to speak to anyone"* when asked what

happens when she talks to a service provider who does not offer this positive support.

***“It goes to you shutting right down”*: negative emotions**

Participants from both groups spoke about the negative emotions they experienced when they were involved in a service encounter where the service provider had not demonstrated an empathetic approach. They described being irritated, annoyed, shocked, furious, disappointed, frustrated, tearful, upset, sad and embarrassed. In the next extract, Patricia (PWA) described a negative interaction with the post office employee who became annoyed when Patricia had taken in the wrong bill to pay and eventually had to abandon the interaction because of the assistant’s irritation with her word finding difficulty. In describing the significant emotional impact of the encounter Patricia explained what happened when she left the post office and went into a local supermarket:

*“I remember this very well and I was eh, walking up and down with my shopping **trolley and I shook, shook (unintelligible), suddenly burst into tears and I was crying eh....leaning over the trolley and eh, some lady and (unintelligible) just em....comforted me and eh..called a a ((names supermarket))....and the man was in fact the manager and he he eh, got me a chair and sat me down **and I was just weeping**”***

Patricia PWA

Although this incident had taken place five or six years earlier, Patricia still remembered the significant emotional impact. She went on to describe how she felt partly responsible for the outcome as she had not informed the post office assistant of her difficulty speaking. This became a seminal event which resulted in her decision to be up front about her aphasia in future service encounters, described when she said: *“the eh....up shots that em....I go and say....to start with....I have a speech problem”*. Consequently, she reported that her communication partners were usually empathetic once she revealed she had a specific difficulty. However, she also highlighted that revealing her aphasia can

have a 'down' side if people then treat her as a "bit slow". She described how asking people to speak slowly and clearly could result in them assuming that she "is a bit of an idiot" which she found irritating. Later, Patricia reported how getting upset can also have an adverse effect on her attempts to speak: "if I get em....eh....upset....I have difficulties speaking" and how an unhelpful communication partner "makes it worse".

Similar to Patricia, Gwen (PWA) reflected on how she had experienced negative emotions during the unsupported encounter with her GP and the receptionist in her old GP Practice: "they were speaking as if I was DUMB em....and it really made me so cranky, em....when you sit down....I'm going to weep in a minute". She went on to reveal her perception that repeated negative encounters can have a significant impact on a person's overall functioning: "because if you ask a question and you get an answer of (disinterested expression) you don't need to ask that question again em....it goes to you shutting right down (gestures going in to oneself)".

Another PWA, Daniel, also described how an encounter with an unhelpful receptionist at his local hospital, whose facial expressions and tone of voice had indicated that she was irritated by his attempt to communicate had made him cry. Similarly, Jacqui (PWA) in the following extract reported how she was upset and frustrated with the unsupportive Centrelink employee and eventually had to withdraw from the interaction:

"oh, frustrated, I just (gestures as though head exploding) lost it, I couldn't get the words out and...more tears came, yeah and I sat back and I said sorry, I can't do all of this"

Jacqui PWA

In this study it was mainly the participants with aphasia who reported experiences of the negative emotional impact of an encounter with a service provider who failed to demonstrate empathy. This is not surprising as there is a wealth of research reporting the short and long term emotional and psychological impact of living with aphasia (Hilari, 2011; Hilari, Needle, &

Harrison, 2012; Law, Pringle, et al., 2007; Parr, 2007). People with aphasia frequently report feelings of depression and anxiety and often require the support of psychological services to help them with issues associated with low mood.

However, although the ESL participants did not specifically express their emotional responses, many of their experiences were potentially underpinned by negative emotions. For instance, Farah (ESL) highlighted the considerable impact repeated unsupported service encounters had on all aspect of her life: *“I stopped studying for a while, I, I couldn’t, I couldn’t go on with life for a while, for, I don’t know, 4 months, 3 month I just couldn’t go on, you know”*.

Farah went on to reveal the long term effect of her perception that she was being marked as different because of how she sounds. This was apparent when she asked herself the question *“do you think I’ll go on”* and she said *“no...I’ll just stop”*. She then indicated how this impacted on her self development and progress, *“I’m staying in my spot”*. In the following extract she described how a non empathetic service provider can discourage the ESL speaker and emphasises the significance of this when she says: *“it’s like 99.9% important”*:

F *“they go like, ‘oh I’m not going to do this again’, or I’m not going to speak to this person again, probably this person could be really helpful to help them out with their life, you know*

R *mmm (nods)*

F *but if they, if they see this person is not really engaging with them and not really understanding them or is not really helping them out, to talk or to speak out, do you think they will speak out (looking towards SB with hands in open gesture)....no*

R *(nods) how important do you think that is then?*

F *(pause) I thinks it’s eh....to eh, to put it as a **percentage percentage it’s like 99.9%, it’s so important”***

Farah ESL speaker

F=Farah, R=Researcher

Farah’s report that a negative interaction can have a direct impact on the ESL speaker’s confidence to speak English is an important point. As Miller (2003) points out, the more isolated the ESL speaker becomes in the dominant culture, the more difficult it will be to acquire the language, to negotiate a positive identity and ultimately to accumulate the required symbolic capital to integrate into the wider society. A person’s emotional response is closely related to their construction of identity and ability to achieve a positive self representation. If the communication partner, through their interactional skills can imbue a sense that the PWA/ESL speaker is *in face* then it would appear that they are more likely to feel some confidence and relief. However, on the contrary, if the PWA/ESL speaker is made to feel *out of face* then their feelings may be injured and it can be difficult for them to retain their self confidence and dignity.

The impact on identity construction

As was highlighted in the literature review, there is a substantial body of evidence connecting identity construction with language use. Part of the ongoing process of negotiating our identities and achieving self representation is enacted through our everyday communication encounters and involves how we are “heard, understood and legitimated as a speaker and a social group member” (Miller, 2003, p. 5). Drawing from the work of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), Goffman (Giddens, 2009; Goffman, 1972, 1974, 1990) and Miller (2000, 2003), this section will explore how the role of the communication partner is crucial to identity construction, as the receiver holds the power to legitimise the speaker and subsequently reward them with a degree of social capital and group membership. By implication, the service provider as a communication partner therefore holds the authority to include or exclude the person from communicating within the social group and in particular social fields.

Within the ESL literature, Gee (1996) and Lippi Green (1997) discuss how people who are not functioning within the dominant discourse style may find their social capital affected. If you speak in a different way from the dominant speaker, then your social capital may be in jeopardy and there are often consequences. PWA may also fall into this category along with the ESL speakers as different linguistic aspects of their communication may lead to them being viewed as a less legitimate speakers allowing the dominant partner to decide who is counted in and who is counted out.

***“I got no shame”*: the construction of a positive identity**

There appeared to be a link between communicating with service providers who used the supportive verbal and non verbal behaviours as outlined in the previous chapter with a more positive construction of identity. Within the data there was at times clear evidence of participants reporting a positive impact on their identity construction, while at other times, given the implicit nature of the construct of identity, the association was implied in what they said.

For instance, Roslyn (PWA) compared the unsupported encounter at Centrelink, which left her feeling “*more negative*” with the more satisfying

interactions in other service environments such as her GP surgery or her local chemist. In this example she described her GP, the chemist and the nurses as being “*nice people*”. By implication, it would appear that communicating with friendly, helpful people encouraged Roslyn to have the confidence in her ability to participate in these encounters as revealed by her statement “*I’m happy to go to the chemist*”. As was suggested in the preceding chapter, the communication partners in these situations were able to use their interactional skills to help Roslyn maintain face. Earlier she had explained how behaviours such as a friendly, smiling face and the other person having some knowledge of her communication difficulty, can make her feel “*so much better*”. Although Roslyn does not specifically make reference to an improved self representation, it is thought that this is what she meant when she reported to feeling so much better in this type of Interaction.

In her discussion about her positive experiences with her GP and the nurses in her GP practice, Roslyn repeatedly talked about the importance of being treated as a competent person. The role of the communication partner in helping the PWA to reveal their inherent competency is well documented in aphasia studies (Kagan, 1995; Simmons Mackie & Damico, 1999). As discussed in the previous chapter, by demonstrating empathy through constructive face work, the service providers in this situation appeared to help Roslyn to achieve what Goffman (1972, pp. 9-10) refers to as a degree of poise and dignity. By accepting her line, the service provider is rewarding her with social capital which subsequently makes Roslyn feel more confident to participate in this social field. Although her participation may partly be possible because of her familiarity with the people in her GP practice and her awareness that they know she has aphasia, the implication is that the nurses and doctor seem to be able to work with her to ensure that any conversational repair is kept to the minimum. In this way her competency is revealed facilitating a more confident outlook in terms of participating in this type of service encounter in the future.

In the previous chapter, Jacqui’s positive encounter with the Centrelink manager, was mentioned. She described how he had gone through a form with her step by step, explaining each line to her, speaking slowly and pleasantly as well as checking whether she had understood what he was saying. She

described how this caring approach had impacted on her ability to see her difficulties in a more positive light:

*"I felt until I, you know, until that gentleman came and I thought well, I'm not, **there's nothing really wrong with me, it's just, a bit you know a little bit brain dead (laughs) just a little bit**"*

Jacqui PWA

Both of these examples highlight the service provider's use of positive interactional behaviours which appear to recognise the person instead of simply responding to the aphasia. This finding supports what Shadden suggests can provide the recognition and affirmation that not only authorises group membership but can be central to how a person views themselves (2005, p. 220).

Like the PWA, Katrina (ESL) also highlighted how a positive encounter with a university employee in student services had a constructive effect on her perception of competency and self assurance:

*"**it increase my confidence**, like yeah, (nods and smiles) feel better like em em like but in these situations **I it increase it tells me to talk more to people** like try to em....(pause) like no eh **I got no shame I like learn to express myself**, yeah....em....more self esteem"*

Katrina ESL speaker

Katrina's comments suggest that this kind of supported interaction can increase her confidence to continue using her English to *"talk more to people"*. Consequently, by interacting more, she puts herself in a stronger position to improve her English competency and her identity representation. The issue of 'face' is implied again in this extract when she talked about how a satisfying interaction helps her to feel *"I got no shame"*. Goffman talks about how lack of support from the other person can disrupt the emotional attachment someone has to their self identity and can make them feel "shamefaced" (1972, p. 8). In

this example, Katrina, clearly demonstrates how an empathetic partner helps her to avoid feeling shame faced and increases her desire to learn and use English: *“I like learn to express myself”*.

***“I thought I was a dummy”*: the construction of a negative identity**

In contrast, to the section above both PWA and the ESL speakers spoke about how unhelpful (as discussed in the previous chapter) verbal or non verbal behaviours of the communication partner could impact negatively on their identity as a person who has the confidence to interact competently. Many participants discussed encounters that represented significant personal shifts in both perceptions about themselves and the strategies they were going to employ to manage situations. This section will explore some of these perceptions of identity.

Like Patricia, Jacqui (PWA) also described how the experience of particular service encounter became a seminal event in terms of her independence and construction of competency. In the following extract, Jacqui reported what happened when she presented the Centrelink employee with a card explaining aphasia and how to help:

*“so I had my aphasia information and my support group....and I showed that to her and I said this is aphasia , this is what my problem is and **she just pushed it back to me and said that’s not anything to do with me, I just need your information”***

Jacqui PWA

Although the encounter took place five years ago, the consequence was revealed in her statement *“that’s when I said to my husband, I can’t go on my own anymore”*. This outright rejection of the aphasia information meant she no longer had the confidence to interact independently in situations where she has to communicate specific information to an unfamiliar person. Even though Jacqui had the communicative competency to fully participate in the in-depth interview for this study, this encounter had directly affected her ability to achieve a positive self representation. Instead she now reports that she no longer uses government services independently and instead, relies on the support of her

husband or other family members when interacting with services such as Centrelink.

In the following extract, when she was asked about the impact of the encounter with the unhelpful Centre link employee, she went on to describe herself as feeling “*stupid*” and that she’s “*lost it*” which further suggested that this type of interaction could have a damaging effect on her construction of identity:

J *“I felt, I felt, I had no, I felt as though I wasn’t understanding what she was saying, I knew what she wanted, but I couldn’t get it out*

R *uhuh, and it made you feel*

J *oh, yeah, that I’m, I’ve lost it, yeah, completely”*

Jacqui, PWA

R= Researcher J=Jacqui

Jacqui also revealed her perception that people with aphasia are often treated as though they have a mental illness. In the next extract she talked about the work of an aphasia support group, CONNECT, WA (previously known as RECONNECT), which aims to improve public awareness of aphasia in Western Australia. Here, in her statement: “*we feel that we you know, em are treated the same as that*”, she makes the connection between PWA being regarded the same as people with epilepsy used to be viewed in society:

J *“I think that that’s what em ..the Reconnect is doing to, I know that I might be getting buried before it’s all, **it’s like epileptics**, we know that, em, **they were locked away in a funny farm, for the rest of their lives weren’t they***

R *mmm*

J ***so people who can’t do the talking or can’t take in everything, we feel that we you know, em are treated the same as that”***

Jacqui PWA

The discussion with Jacqui clearly linked an encounter with a service provider who failed to display any empathy with the potential for the construction of a wounded identity as a competent communicator. This appeared to have a

harmful effect on how she subsequently achieved self representation in service encounters. In Jacqui's case, the negative service encounter at Centrelink had a long term impact on her independence in certain government services. Even after she had experienced a more positive interaction with the Centrelink manager it appeared to be the negative interaction that had the longer lasting impact. She attributed this to her fear that she *"can't deal with this"* if she had to speak to another person who acted like the lady she described above and recognised that there was a high risk of this happening as *"they don't always have somebody there that they can call on to help"*.

In their descriptions of the impact of negative service encounters, other people with aphasia also talked about the often harmful effect on their identity construction. Roslyn spoke about feeling like a *"twit, or a bit of a loser"* when she described how she felt during an interaction with a Centrelink employee whose facial expression and tone of voice had signalled that he was not interested in helping her (this encounter is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven, pp. 133-136), Similarly, Gwen described why she felt annoyed by her GP and the receptionist who lacked empathy for her aphasia: *"it was making me feel a bit, you know, dumb....I thought I was a dummy"*.

Similar to PWA, ESL speakers also described how encounters with a service provider who lacked empathy and was not able to provide the bridge to a satisfying interaction, impacted negatively on their negotiation of identity. For instance, Katrina talked about being ignored by the librarians at her university when she explained: *"you don't even finish a sentence and try to explain it again, they just talk....I think it's too much of an effort to listen"*. She went on to express the direct effect this type of encounter has on her self-esteem and the potential for the construction of a self image as an incompetent ESL speaker:

“aw, eh, I feel like aw, I’m useless like ‘what about English I could have like I feel like em....my English is so bad and that eh (pause) mm that I should try like more like eh to. I feel like, not useless but em (pause) lower self esteem, like”

Katrina ESL speaker

Later, she talked about how the experience of not being understood by a service provider can have a long term impact on her confidence to participate in future service encounters:

Another ESL participant, Farah talked generally about the enormous impact of being involved in service interactions where the communication partner was not able to understand her or appeared unwilling or unable to help. In the extract below, she described how such situations can make her feel like a disabled person and talked about the incongruence between her different perceptions of competency as a “*healthy person*” and feeling disabled. This is an interesting comment as sometimes speech pathologists try and help people understand aphasia by asking them to imagine being in a foreign country without speaking the language. Here we have an ESL speaker comparing her situation to being viewed as disabled, suggesting a further similarity in how the two different groups view their experiences of interactions.

“but it’s hard for me, me feeling young, but I can’t speak to you, it’s like I’m deaf, I can’t , eh, eh I, I can’t say words, you know, I, I, a, it’s like I’m disabled but I’m healthy, so to feel thislike you can’t combine these two things..together,..disabled and healthy person together but he can’t speak, that doesn’t work”

Farah ESL speaker

In another powerful example below, she described how negative service encounters left her feeling “*weak*” and affected her perception of her English competency, and self identity. Her use of the word “*they*” in the first line,

suggests that she felt like an outsider, not part of the dominant language group. This is reinforced at the end of the extract where she said *“it’s like you’re nothing”* suggesting how prejudiced attitudes were an attempt to disempower her:

“they just want to make you weak, and I actually felt weak, I felt like oh, ah, oh I can’t , I’ll never learn English you know eh, why am I the only one who can’t speak English, why, just, just like eh I know I’m not the only on who can’t speak English and probably I can understand English, some people doesn’t really understand anything, but just that feeling they give you, you know, it’s like like you’re, you’re nothing, you know”

Farah ESL speaker

The data presented so far in this chapter has outlined the participants’ two perspectives: through the positive actions of the service provider, he or she is communicating a willingness to help them to ‘maintain face’ which can have a powerful impact on the PWA/ESL speakers emotions and construction of identity; conversely when the service provider rejects or fails to support the PWA or ESL speaker’s spoken attempts it can deny them the important psychological rewards that can be used as a resource in future interactions. The perceived lack of support can therefore, either intentionally or unintentionally, lead to disempowerment, impacting on the construction of identity and self representation.

As social identity is constructed through the meanings that people assign to the multitude of verbal and non verbal signals that they receive within everyday interactions, the communication partner’s response is crucial to how identity and issues of competence are co constructed (Hagstrom & Wertsch, 2004; Sarbin, 2000). PWA and ESL speakers can undergo a lengthy period of renegotiating their social identity. Whether or not they are able to renegotiate a constructive, competent, confident and self assured identity to some extent will depend on the regularity of their communication partner engaging in facilitative interactional rituals which encourages access to social capital and empowerment. The

evidence in this study has demonstrated this positive response to identity construction when communication access is supported by the other person.

The data analysis also appeared to suggest a relationship between communication access, the participant's emotional responses and the construction of identity with the construct of social inclusion. The following section will consider the data which suggested how the accessibility of an encounter either enabled or constrained the PWA and ESL speaker's social inclusion.

Social inclusion, exclusion and communication access

So far, the main focus has been on the communication partner's influence on the participant's emotions and construction of identity within the service encounter. However, as most social studies on communication emphasise, such things as power, identity negotiation, competency, empathy, verbal and non verbal behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and values are co produced by each interactant within the encounter. This reminds us that the PWA/ESL speakers are also participating in the role as an interactant, to which they not only bring their linguistic competency, but also communicate other aspects of their habitus which the communication partner will also respond to. This highlights that whether or not the communication partner bestows social capital on the PWA/ESL speaker is not solely influenced by their linguistic competency. For instance the participants' own ability to be empathetic to the communication partner and use the same positive non verbal strategies that they described as facilitating the encounter will also play apart in creating access and inclusion.

As discussed in the literature review, social inclusion is a multifaceted, dynamic construct which for some has been linked with the accumulation of social capital through the connectedness an individual has to their community (Parr, 2007; Pound, 2011). However, as Allard (2005) and Lin (2001) point out, what's crucial, is not so much the number of social connections a person has, but the meaning and the quality of these social relationships. Different forms of capital can be accumulated within these exchanges through the meanings people give to the multitude of interactions which constitute our daily life. For PWA or ESL speakers to feel a degree of self worth, the interactions need to be of good

quality, whereby they experience a positive emotional response and feel that their position has been maintained. Conversely when a person experiences regular dissatisfying encounters, it can be very difficult for them to access the social group in which they operate, leading to a deprivation of social capital. In terms of communication, access is therefore central to negotiating the power intersections within our everyday encounters which can help to promote a positive identity and self representation which subsequently encourages social inclusion.

“It’s going to be alright”: feelings of social inclusion

Daniel (PWA) spoke about a positive experience communicating with a lady in the place where he collects his senior citizen’s transport card. In the following extract, he described how her courteous behaviours, signalled through her smiling face, saying his name and offering assistance suggested that he was going to be ‘alright’ within the encounter:

*“he eh said **that will be alright the....the girl she eh....eh, she laughing she said (says his name) eh em (says his full name) is alright you know **it’s going to be alright so****”*

Daniel PWA

As Daniel’s aphasia was characterised by significant word finding difficulties, he was not able to give an in depth insight of what the service provider’s actions had communicated to him. However, his description of how he sensed that “*it’s going to be alright*” suggested that through the positive acts described above, the service provider had conveyed a willingness to offer the help Daniel required to maintain face and continue with the interaction. In doing so, she had included him as an ‘insider’, through authorising his attempts to speak and by extending help to facilitate his inclusion. Through being ‘counted in’ he is rewarded with social capital which he may assimilate as a positive sign for his social identity negotiation. This is in contrast to his description of how he cried after an unsupported encounter which was discussed in the section on negative emotional responses earlier.

***“I feel like they don’t like me”*: feelings of social exclusion**

In contrast, Anita (ESL) described an encounter at Centrelink where the service provider appeared to be dismissive because of his difficulty understanding Anita’s accent. When asked how she felt about this she replied “*very bad....it’s hard to come there back again to the office*”. When asked to explain what she meant by “very bad” she reported “*because there is a misunderstanding between me and the officer, so I feel like I’m alone, I feel like they don’t like me*”. The use of the word “alone” suggests that Anita had conceptualised the Centrelink employee’s lack of interest as a rejection of her legitimacy to the dominant social group, while her description “*I feel they don’t like me*” highlights how she had perceived their rebuff as a deeply personal insult. In another example, Anita talked about how repeated negative experiences within service encounters also makes her feel like an outsider and can result in marginalisation. The following extract also emphasised the connection with the emotional impact when she said “*it makes you suffer in your heart*”:

*“it makes you feel that Australian’s **don’t like you and you feel that you are not part of the community**, because anywhere I go, I am not received well. So **it makes you suffer in your heart**”*

Anita ESL speaker

The lack of interactional support can also have an economic consequence if people avoid government services because of the inaccessibility of an encounter. In the following example, Roslyn (PWA) described how she was prepared to withdraw from an interaction and forfeit her earnings rather than endure the frustration of trying to communicate with an unhelpful Centrelink employee:

*“I try to struggle through all this and most of the time I’m ok and if I’m not interested then I **just go out the door** and I say look, if I, if I **don’t**, if I get paid properly this week I **don’t bother**, **really can’t be bothered**”*

Roslyn PWA

Patricia (PWA) also spoke about how she “*just walked away*” after the upsetting encounter at the post office. Similarly, Gwen (PWA) recounted how she “*got up and walked out*” the GP surgery after the miscommunication regarding her appointment for a medical which would have enabled her to apply for her driver’s license. She went on to describe how these situations can increase her levels of stress.

Similar to the actions of some of the people with aphasia, Jin (ESL) spoke about a conversation with an obstructive receptionist at a police station whose face had signalled disinterest. In the following extract he described his actions:
actions:

*“I just, after she reply me I just straight away **stand up and then walk away....because....em (pause) I can still sit there and talk to her again but I didn’t because I know she won’t explain to me any more**”*

Jin ESL speaker

For Farah, the negative reaction of the communication partner highlighted her perception that she was being discriminated against because of how she sounds. Although she was not referring to one particular situation, it appeared that she had many experiences in government service encounters where she had to engage with providers who were not particularly helpful. The intersections of power are clear in the extract below when Farah talked about how the service providers “*actually put me down*”. This culminated in her thinking that she should actually leave Australia and return to Iraq, the ultimate effect of exclusion:

*“so I ah, yeah, **so lots of people actually put me down**, you know, when I was trying to speak to them and the I don’t, they don’t really understand me, so, I thought, **I thought so that’s it I’m leaving Australia, I’m going back to my home country**”*

Farah ESL speaker

Later she described how repeated unhelpful experiences can make the ESL speaker feel like giving up trying to communicate in English: “*it’s eh just eh, make you STOP (claps hands together), not go on*”. When asked if this kind of negative service encounter had a powerful impact she explained how they: “*stop you, to stop you from actually going on, so it’s not only powerful, it’s really, major powerful*”.

This section has highlighted how PWA or ESL speakers often chose to exclude themselves from the interaction where the service provider was unable or unwilling to participate in face saving communication strategies which may have provided the social and symbolic capital necessary for them to continue within the encounter. The exact reasons why they chose to do this are likely to lie at a deeper psychological level and can be difficult for people to express. However, Bourdieu’s concepts of capital provide a useful framework to discuss the impact of lack of communicative accessibility and the connections with social inclusion.

For instance, as mentioned at various points in this thesis, social and symbolic capital (commonly referred to as reputation or prestige) is negotiated through the intersections of power and the quality of interactions within a particular social field. By authorising the PWA or ESL speaker as a social group member through offering support to facilitate communication access within the interaction, the communication partner is also creating access to valuable psychological resources that can be used at a later stage. Productive interactions can therefore increase access to social and symbolic capital, promoting the construction of a more competent identity and optimistic outlook. This in turn, increases the person’s capacity to act (their agency) and subsequently encourages participation and social inclusion.

If we consider Bourdieu’s metaphor of a game (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98), then thinking about communication access in this way highlights how face-to-face communication is rarely just about the exchange of information. Instead it reflects how interactions are entwined with the unconscious quest for symbolic capital. In Bourdieu’s terms, the verbal and non verbal behaviours of both participants in the interaction can be viewed as *signs of wealth*, intended to be evaluated and appreciated and *signs of authority*, intended to be obeyed and

believed (1991, p. 66). Through counting the PWA/ESL speaker in, the communication partner is validating the PWA/ESL speaker as a functioning group member. This underlines how simply participating in social interactions does not necessarily align with social inclusion. It depends on the amount of value the communication partner is willing to give to the communication products on display and how each participant assimilates the relations of power that are central to all interactions.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted the broad impact of the communication partners' behaviours in both the short and the longer-term. It establishes the important connections between good quality interactions, emotions and the construction of a more positive identity. This reinforces the significance of constructive interactions if a person is to develop and maintain a positive self-image as a competent communicator, facilitating access to life's opportunities in the future. For people with aphasia and speakers of ESL, the response of the communication partner can therefore be crucial in whether they engage with services and can impact considerably on their personal wellbeing.

The chapter also draws attention to the link between communication access and social inclusion. In service encounters where the communication partner was unsupportive, the PWA and ESL speakers often actually chose to withdraw from the interaction. Although the exact reasons for this were not explicitly reported, Bourdieu's theorising on social and symbolic capital provides a useful scaffold to consider what is happening below the surface level of verbal and non verbal behaviours of the communication partner. By withdrawing from the interaction, one possibility is that the PWA or ESL speakers could not access enough social or symbolic capital from the service provider to continue. These everyday interactions can therefore have significant, unintended consequences for those who are already functioning with reduced social and symbolic capital. The communication partner's reaction to the PWA/ESL speaker can serve as a catalyst for either inclusion within the social group or for marginalisation. This suggests that communication access therefore has significant implications for promoting connectedness and social inclusion.

However, as highlighted earlier, communication access reflects the intersecting power relations between each interactant within a particular social field. Although there has been increased recognition of the notion of social capital in promoting access and inclusion (Parr, 2007; Pound, 2011), the interactional aspect of how service providers and service users negotiate capital at a relationship and social field level has rarely been investigated in the aphasia/ESL literature. In aphasia, the current literature on access tends to focus on the communication partner's role, with limited exploration of the PWA influence in the interaction. Although the ESL literature is gradually moving towards this type of social approach, in terms of the ESL speaker, studies tend to focus on the linguistic qualities.

Interestingly, there were fewer examples of how the communication partner contributed to a positive encounter and promoted social inclusion. This initially seemed to be a paradoxical finding as in fact most participants reported that their experiences within government service encounters were often positive. However, through the data analysis it transpired that some participants attributed their positive identity construction and feelings of inclusion to their own ability to mobilise personal resources to combat potential negative experiences. For this reason, the data on the positive experiences will be explored in more depth in the next chapter.

Approaches which focus on the linguistic aspects of communication (ESL) or the contribution of the communication partner (aphasia) run the risk of not identifying with the potential strengths and resources of the individual's agency which can promote communication access and enable them to continue to flourish in the face of adversity. The next chapter will consider how aspects of the PWA or ESL speaker's agency (capacity to act) influence the construct of communication access.

Chapter seven

The influence of the PWA/ESL speaker

Introduction

As the interviews and data analysis progressed, there was a growing awareness that many of the participants offered insights regarding their own contribution to the service encounters. This chapter aims to construct and illustrate an argument to account for how the PWA/ESL speakers used aspects of their own agency to contribute to the accessibility of a communication encounter. Miller defines agency as:

a social phenomenon which refers to ways in which some people are able to take a standpoint, to show initiative even when there may be asymmetry of power relations, and to use discursive resources to represent themselves and to influence situations to their own advantage. (2003, p.115)

Being agentive in social interactions involves having the confidence and the ability to position yourself as a legitimate, competent communicator, able to act out a line, which Goffman (1972) describes as a pattern of verbal and non verbal behaviours through which a person represents their own values, attitudes and beliefs. Although communication competence plays a part in this, other forms of capital such as ethnicity, skills, qualifications, physical features as well as aspects of the person's habitus for example resilience, self awareness and personality traits, all influence how they can position themselves as agential. Consequently, a combination of factors facilitates a person's capacity to achieve self representation of their attitudes, beliefs and values.

How the PWA/ESL speaker chooses to respond to the interpersonal attitudes exuded by the communication partner, therefore, involves the interplay of communication competence and these other forms of capital which will subsequently influence the outcome of an encounter. Few studies have explored the reciprocal interactional processes that underpin how communication access is mutually constructed, where the PWA/ESL speaker's

interactional skills are implicated along with their communication partner. To date, while the interactive nature of communication has been increasingly emphasised in the aphasia literature, the focus still tends to remain on the communication partner in terms of their role in either facilitating or inhibiting communicative access. Apart from mainly the transactional aspects of communication, both literatures have fairly scant evidence on how PWA/ESL speaker's can (or can not) draw from their own personal resources to increase their agency to negotiate the interactional component of communication access.

Few aphasia or ESL studies have considered how agents in a social field are either able or not able to mobilise personal resources to influence the power relations within an encounter to their own advantage. Although there is a move within the disability literature to recognise the function of social capital in terms of participation and inclusion, as highlighted earlier, the focus tends to be on social connectedness. Bourdieu (1991) uses an economic analogy to describe social capital as representing how a person can rally their assets by drawing on their personal strengths which are internally regulated by their socio cultural habitus, enabling people to use their own personal history and experiences to shape future interactions. The amount of recognition and authorisation a person receives from other players in the field, will determine the amount of social capital (or symbolic capital) they are rewarded with (p.72).

The current literature's focus on the communication partner or the linguistic skills of the PWA/ESL speaker appears to imply that their disability/limitation is a relatively static phenomenon and 'separate' in a way from their personality, demeanour and attitudes which would typically be considered as important influences in communicative interactions. This in itself is an interesting omission, reinforcing the notion that the 'disability/limitation' dominates how even researchers interested in social inclusion might address particular questions of access. Within the aphasia literature there is emerging research on the positive rather than the negative adaptive factors which can influence how PWA live successfully with aphasia. In both fields, there is growing recognition of the influence of personal factors (Brown, Worrall, Davidson, & Howe, 2010, 2012; Holland, 2006; Miller, 2003; Shadden, 2005; Threats, 2007). For instance, Shadden recognises the significant influence of pre morbid attitudes of pre

stroke existence in recovery from aphasia. However, she highlights that more research is required into how features of a person's self representation of identity may also play a part in how competency is co constructed.

This chapter will therefore focus on an interpretative exploration of how the interactions of two ESL speakers, Farah and Wilson and two PWA, Roslyn and Gwen appeared to be shaped to some extent by their personal history and experiences. Overall, three sub categories emerged which appeared to suggest how their capacity to act within a service encounter may have been influenced by a) their past experiences, in particular their resilience and b) how they achieve self representation and c) how some of them appeared to have a conscious, practical awareness of how their own actions may influence the accessibility of an encounter. Throughout this chapter, the interpretative themes of empathy and power will be further highlighted within the narratives of each of the participants discussed.

Farah (ESL)

Farah, originally from Iraq, was 21 years of age and had lived in Australia for six years having migrated from Lebanon with her family. Although within her interview she tended to focus on the negative encounters, she reported that she had "*heaps*" of positive service interactions. She attributed this negative focus to be down to a tendency to think: "*in life you can't remember the good things; you always keep the bad thing*".

She presented as a friendly, confident and assertive person whose English language skills were sufficiently developed to enable her to communicate her thoughts and ideas effectively. She was very engaging throughout the interview and her confidence was demonstrated in her enthusiasm to take part in the project as she reported that she had a lot to contribute when she said:

"that's why I'm here today, put all my ideas to you and you can, I don't know, what do you want to put them, but just put them out there, just don't want to keep them inside me"

Farah ESL speaker

Like the other participants, although Farah highlighted service encounters where the communication partner had not collaborated to facilitate the interaction, on the whole she reported most of her interactions to be satisfying. This is an interesting point and suggests Farah's ability to draw from her own personal resources to achieve a positive self representation, facilitating access to social capital and feelings of inclusion. Farah's positive identity was revealed at several points in the interview. For instance, she talked about her observations of an encounter between a bus driver and a passenger who were both ESL speakers. Here, she highlighted how she would have reacted in a similar situation, revealing her competent ESL image "*I can speak English*" and the potential for her to retain a sense of power "*I can tell them off*" compared to other ESL speakers who have difficulty communicating with the bus drivers:

"the drivers with other passengers, not with me 'cause I can speak English so they, if they going to tell me something, I can tell them off"

Farah ESL speaker

This suggested that she viewed herself as having the communicative resources and the confidence to stand up for herself should the need arise. This was also apparent in another general discussion where she highlighted her awareness that it was unlawful for service providers to discriminate against ESL migrants and if this happened then she could "*tell someone in charge*". She also revealed that she recognised her 'rights' to ESL classes as a refugee "*the government is allowing us to speak second language and giving us an opportunity to go on*" and hinted that she may be able to use this seemingly belligerent attitude as a way of using her agency to gain social capital and symbolic power should the communication partner "*come and stop us*", referring to those interactions where she perceived the communication partner to be exerting a dominant role.

Farah's resilient approach to life as a refugee also suggested ways in which her optimistic internal attitudes might help to achieve a positive self representation and social capital. For instance, her proactive attitude to improving her English, proficiency to improve her integration into life in Australia, demonstrated her

desire to do well in her new country. This was revealed in the following extract when she talked about learning English:

“what’s amazing about it, you know, I’m here, I’m living here, I have to learn it, otherwise if I don’t learn it I, I must, you know sit at home and do nothing?”

Farah ESL speaker

Farah’s reflexive attitude displayed some awareness about the intersecting roles of the speaker and the listener in any interaction. For example, in a general discussion she reflected on the joint responsibility of the ESL speaker and non ESL speaker to improve the communication experience *“the people with English should understand the people with no English, people with no English should actually learn English”*. She demonstrates empathy with her acknowledgement that the ESL speaker should not expect the dominant language speaker to shoulder the burden of the interaction *“the English person can’t do all the work you know”*:

This awareness was highlighted at another part of the interview where she revealed her practical approach to improving her English competency by *“getting out there and speaking English”* and subsequently negotiating a positive self identity through accumulating symbolic resources and increasing her cultural capital as highlighted by Norton (1995, p. 17). She suggests that other people using ESL should follow her example of being proactive: *“just get yourself to know how to communicate with the world out there...the best way for them is to actually go to speak to people English, you know?”*. At another point, despite her reports of being part of interactions where she felt discriminated against, Farah revealed her stoicism when describing her general experiences living in Australia as a Muslim girl who wears a scarf when she said *“I just don’t care”* and later *“I just GO, that’s why I have lots of experiences”*. Her comment *“I’m very outgoing girl, so I go everywhere”* also demonstrated her confidence and assertiveness.

Farah described the level of emotional support and intimacy she received from her family and her religion during a difficult period of her resettlement in Australia when, as a result of people putting her down when she tried to speak, she wanted to return to Iraq. This suggested a time when she was not able to access the resources to be able to negotiate the relations of power within the service encounter. Social support and intimacy is recognised as a key feature of quality of life for refugees (Cummins, 1996). People can also draw strength from their religious belief systems which may help to alleviate any negative effects of discrimination (Berger & Luckmann, 1996; Forman, 2003). Farah's story reflected how her family helped her to realise that: "*this is meant to be you, this is where you are, you just have to go on*", and through this emotional support of her family and her religion ("*this is life and especially in my religion, we don't give up*") she was able to draw on her resilience to navigate her way through this difficult period in a positive manner. This attitude is recognised as a common feature emphasised by people from a Muslim background (Tilbury, 2007) and suggests the internal attitudes that she could draw on to help her achieve self representation and agency.

In summary, her mainly positive self representation, resilience and self reflection are suggestive of Farah having the capacity to draw on her personal resources to position herself in an influential role in social interactions. Potentially she could use her belligerent attitude to increase her agency and social capital, both of which may have a positive impact on the accessibility of a communication encounter. Her slightly more confrontational attitude contrasts with Winston's more easy-going position which is detailed below.

Winston (ESL)

Winston was originally from Burundi in central Africa. He spent ten years in a refugee camp in the Republic of Congo with his wife, four children (now between the ages of 3-14 years) and other members of his immediate family. His educational level was unclear, but he reported that he speaks four or five different languages (English, French and two other African languages) which suggested that he is particularly adept at acquiring languages. He explained that the little English learnt in the Refugee camp enabled him to start in a more advanced level of the ESL course offered to migrant refugees.

In the refugee camp he worked with professionals to support children with HIV/AIDS and their family. On coming to Australia, he initially worked for three years in a factory before he decided to try and capitalise on the skills and experience he had gained when working within the refugee camp. He recognised that his interpersonal skills and experience from overseas were not being put to good use in the factory. He began a Diploma in community services at TAFE which he was due to complete shortly after the interview.

Winston therefore appeared to present as someone who was keen to draw from his past experiences and continue to thrive under the challenge of migrating as a refugee to a new country. Resilience is recognised as the juxtaposition of remaining healthy in the face of human difficulty and for some, a significant life event such as ill health or humanitarian migration can result in remarkable positive adaptive features (Ryff & Singer, 2003). Fozdar and Torezani (2008) explored the paradox between high levels of discrimination and reporting of positive well being by refugees in Australia and found personality factors such as a lust for life, positive outlook, and the capacity to not worry about things over which one has no control, as contributing to this positive perception.

Winston's resilience was demonstrated in his eagerness to integrate into Australian society and part of the reason for studying for the diploma was so he could help to teach his children how to assimilate into Australian culture. He described himself as 'lucky' that he was able to come here with his immediate family. His mother, brother and his brother's family have also migrated to Australia, and he reported that he saw them regularly, suggesting that he had good external support from his family. This strong support network and his resilience to succeed demonstrate his capacity to position himself as agentive within the power relations of service encounters, thus able to contribute to communication access and promote inclusion and will be discussed in more detail below.

Winston was aware that many refugees do not have the same educational level as people in Australia and they may feel shame, lack of confidence and, in the early stages of migration, that the "*white skin every time do a better job*". He described his perception that many of the new migrant refugees from Africa feel

“shame” about their black skin and lack confidence because of the potential language barrier “*they do feel like...., maybe shame.....so they are not confident in themselves....and according to the language barrier*”. However, the use of the word ‘they’ instead of ‘we’ in this account, suggested that he did not describe such feelings for himself. Instead, he appeared to have negotiated and maintained a positive self image, drawing from; his resilience to continue to thrive, his family support, his calm and positive personality traits as expressed by his verbal and non verbal communication behaviours.

During the interview I was struck by Winston’s calm and happy presentation. He spoke slowly and clearly and was able to articulate his points well with a mixture of French/English accent. Although he was aware of occasional ‘miscommunication’, particularly with regards to Centrelink, he did not view this as a negative experience. He spoke generally about communication access, sometimes referring to his communication competency and other times talking about ESL speakers in general. He compared himself with ESL speakers who struggle to understand their communication partner, recognising that his ESL skills were more developed than other migrants. However, he recognised that he still struggled with English and can mix up words across the different languages he speaks and is aware of the difficulty some people have with his French accent affecting his ESL skills.

When talking about his government service interactions in general, Winston revealed how he assumes agency by taking the responsibility to “*avoid this conflict*” by “*showing my smile face*” to indicate his social desirability to his communication partner. He goes on to say that in order to integrate in his new country he needs to “*get new skill*” and in doing so he may “*help other people*”, to “*show them that where we are is totally different to where we come from*”. These resilient qualities are important as they emphasise how he can draw on his strengths to negotiate social capital within his every day interactions and is likely to account for his predominantly satisfying interactions.

Another feature which reflected Winston’s resources to negotiate communication access was his awareness that how he acted influenced how his communication partner received him. This is apparent in the extract below

when he says “*or is it me who caused the issue*”. He did not always seek to blame a breakdown on the lack of patience or understanding of the other person but reflected on his own ability to alter the outcome of such exchanges. When asked if he had experienced the communication partner using a negative tone of voice he replied:

*“no I **didn’t experience that tone of voice** and eh maybe I can say that people have different tones of speaking so it will be difficult for me to judge the person according , yes I know that when you ask looking for body language it can **because the tone and the face appearance**, both the body appearance **it can show that maybe the person is angry or there is another issue with him, or is it me who caused the issue**”*

Winston ESL speaker

Giddens talks about people as agents of action, enabled and constrained by “knowledgeability” (1984, p. 375). He claims that the more knowledgeable a person is about their own and other people’s actions, including the potential consequences of these, the more capacity they are likely to have to assert their agency. This knowledgeability is demonstrated by Winston in the extract below where he clearly expressed his empathy for the communication partner’s underlying feelings:

*“because when he or she is speaking I can pick, but when it’s my turn now to speak, **that’s where you have to see how maybe the person may react or how you have to assess the person feelings** but it’s difficult”*

Winston ESL speaker

By being aware of the other person in this way, he is more likely to modify his own actions as the need arises. This highlighted that he is conscious of his role in facilitating access to the communication encounter. As each person’s turn within an interaction will influence how the other person acts, so Winston is

demonstrating that he is capable of behaving in a way that may facilitate repair of the miscommunication and in turn may elicit a more positive reception.

His empathy and reflection are again demonstrated by his acknowledgment that conflict can arise if he is not focused on the interaction because of other personal worries. He talked about how he facilitates the interaction by “*staying calm and showing the person you don’t have anything negative in your mind*”. By recognising that his deeper emotional responses may contribute to how the interaction progresses he is likely to have more power and control over resolving any potential difficulties, which may be rewarded with symbolic capital by the receiver, adding to his construction of a positive self identity, increasing his agency and facilitating communication access.

Roslyn (PWA)

Roslyn was a 56 year old woman who has aphasia as a result of a stroke six years previously. She has a mild right hemiparesis, although this was not particularly noticeable. She left school at 15 years of age and went to Business College to study secretarial skills. At the time of her stroke, she was working part time as a secretary for an insurance company and for a law practice. She continues to work part time for a catering company and a law practice. She presented with a relatively mild aphasia characterised by specific word finding difficulties and occasional sound choice errors. She regularly used circumlocution to support her word finding difficulties.

Roslyn’s resilience in coping with her difficult situation was displayed by her determination to resume her secretarial work not long after her stroke. She also attended a self help group for people with aphasia and had been involved in raising awareness through telling her story at various training events. This was interesting as she also revealed that in face-to-face interactions she preferred not to highlight her aphasia and generally got by through “*fudging it*”. However, she was conscious that sometimes this strategy may cause a problem and could impact on the accessibility of the encounter: “*I suppose my problem is that I never say, by the way, I’ve got aphasia*”. This suggests that she is aware that choosing not to reveal her aphasia can be confusing for the service

provider as aphasia is not well known in the community and this may subsequently impact on how they react to her.

Like most of the others she perceived her interactions with government services to be mainly positive, particularly if the communication partner assisted her to maintain face and participate equally in the interaction. However despite her perception that she was generally able to get by without having to mention aphasia and that compared to other people with aphasia she was “*really, really lucky*” as she could still talk, unlike the other participants, she emitted an impression of sadness and loss. This was mainly conveyed through her facial expression, posture and verbal transactions signalling despondency such as “*I just can't be bothered*”.

As well as suffering a stroke at a young age, Roslyn had recently been diagnosed with a progressive neurological disease and was still adjusting to her marriage break up two years previous. Separating from her husband had meant the loss of her main support system as she now lived alone and reported feeling socially isolated. Issues relating to physical health and reduced social support are recognised as two key factors which can make it more difficult to live with successfully with aphasia (Hinckley, 2006; Holland, 2007). As highlighted in the literature review, many people with aphasia become depressed and considering her social and medical situation, Roslyn's negativity may be a symptom of low mood. However, as well as recognising the existence of these issues, it is equally important to consider how her low mood and negativity may influence her self representation and consequently how an interaction is played out.

Just as a reflexive attitude has the potential to impact positively on the communication encounter as discussed in particular with Winston, the lack of reflexivity can have a negative effect on the quality and the outcome of the interaction. At some points in the interview there was evidence that Roslyn was aware of how features of her communication could influence the outcome of the interaction. For instance in discussion about the negative encounter with a Centrelink employee who spoke English with a Chinese accent, she said that she “*may be part of the problem*”. However, the following series of extracts explores how her lack of empathy or awareness of how she might have

positioned herself within the interaction, may have contributed to the poor quality and the negative outcome of her Centrelink appointment where she eventually *“walked out the door”* without having her query answered sufficiently. Just as this study has highlighted the need for an empathetic communication partner to support PWA/ESL speakers, there is a tacit reciprocal agreement in satisfying interactions which also implicates the PWA/ESL speaker’s ability to convey a degree of empathy to their communication partner. The following interpretation offers an account of how a lack of awareness or empathy for the communication partner’s position can influence the accessibility of an encounter.

Throughout the interview, there was a sense of Roslyn making evaluative judgements based on her past experiences with Centrelink. Although it appeared that she anticipated communication issues, it would seem that she had resigned herself to participating in this pattern of interaction, as reflected by her tone of voice and her comments; *“I don’t like going up there anyway”*, *“yeah, yeah, whatever”*, *“can’t be bothered explaining all of it”*, *“talking to a brick wall”* and *“they’re just a pain in the ass...they’ve got no idea”*. This negative attitude together with her verbal and non verbal signals which portrayed a more pessimistic impression could impact on how she is received by her communication partner. Roslyn had communicated that lack of awareness of aphasia was part of the problem during the interactions at Centrelink. However, for whatever reason, it would appear that despite her knowledge that revealing her aphasic identity might help, she was not able or willing to act on this awareness to contribute to potentially facilitating a more positive interaction at Centrelink as discussed below.

In her discussion about the interaction with the Centrelink employee who spoke with a Chinese accent she described how she had found his accent difficult to understand and how she quickly became disinterested in the interaction: *“there was a Chinese guy up there and he was a pain in the ass and in the end I just couldn’t be bothered, couldn’t be bothered talking to him”*. Roslyn’s attitude towards the man with the Chinese accent is of interest in terms of how this may have impacted on the interaction. Many people with aphasia report that foreign accents can be a barrier to understanding within the interaction. However,

although Roslyn's communication competency would suggest that she had the capacity to either request that he slowed his rate of speech (which she had previously reported as a helpful strategy used by others) or that she spoke to someone else, she does not report using either strategy. Being prepared to take responsibility in using strategies to promote communication access is recognised as a key theme which helps people with aphasia regain autonomy and independence (Brown et al., 2012; Hinckley, 2006). Instead, of reporting constructive suggestions, when asked what might have helped in this situation, she comments that for him to "*stop talking...would be nice*" and goes on to say she "*just didn't like him in the end*", perpetuating the often negative experience within this particular social field.

The potential influence of power relations within the interaction is also of interest. It could be that as a result of her aphasia she feels in a less powerful position to negotiate the often risky business of challenging her communication partner's face or line by highlighting that there is an aspect of their communication that is causing difficulty. Her aphasia may make it difficult to participate in what Goffman (1972) outlines as a fundamental aspect of social control in conversation; the tendency for both participants to alter their communication behaviours in light of each other's capacities and demands to "form the bridge that people build to one another, allowing them to meet for a moment of talk in a communion of reciprocally sustained involvement" (p.116). Equally, her desire to *maintain face*, which was prevalent at other parts of the interview, may signify that she does not want to draw attention to the fact that she is the one having difficulty as this may damage her reputation as an equal participant, leaving her feeling disempowered, embarrassed or inferior.

Alternately, another possibility is that Roslyn adopts the more powerful position of dominant language speaker who is either unable or unwilling to legitimise her communication partner's attempt to speak English with an accent. When asked what she found difficult about the encounter she said:

“he was Chinese, his accent I thought was quite, well for me I found it very difficult to understand what he was saying as well, I suppose then I became disinterested as well, so in the end I was just (shrugs shoulders), whatever! And out the door I went”

Roslyn PWA

On further questioning she was asked if her communication difficulty was the source of the problem she initially said:

“I suppose I didn’t like him (pause) em well I can communicate but I know that I get confused and it’s quite obvious that I’m confused and I suppose he knew I was confused but he didn’t know what to do about this confusion that I was having”

Roslyn PWA

Her initial reaction was *“I didn’t like him”* followed by the recognition that her *“confusion”*, his lack of awareness and understanding and her difficulty explaining it all contributed to the unsuccessful outcome. Later when asked why she thought he was disinterested she suggested that: *“it was just, maybe it was him”*.

It could be argued that Roslyn’s communication competency and agency throughout the interview with the researcher would suggest that she had options in how she responded to the difficulty of understanding the Chinese employee’s accent. In a sense, even although she herself has a communication difficulty, there appeared to be a lack of empathy or attempt on her behalf to help facilitate the interaction by asking him to slow his speech. Whether this is related to her aphasia or cognitive status, her lack of reflexivity or her attitude towards Centrelink or to speaking to people with a foreign accent is not clear. More likely, a number of complex attitudes were underscoring her behaviour. However, the impact of the person with aphasia’s interactional style, their

agency and capacity to be reflexive, are all important features which should be investigated more fully in future studies of communication access.

As highlighted recently, PWA can increase their likelihood of living successfully with aphasia if they take some responsibility for improving their own communication competency which may involve using a range of strategies (Hinckley, 2006). Simmons-Mackie and Damico (2007) draw attention to the fact that communication partners and PWA need to learn a range of approaches to facilitate communication access and develop an understanding of the supporting values which underpin access and inclusion. However, to date, there is a dearth of research which provide speech pathologists with frameworks on how to address PWA's values and beliefs regarding communication access and inclusion which enhance their understanding of their role as an interactant.

In contrast to what appeared to be the more pessimistic presentation of Roslyn's, in the next section, Gwen (PWA) seemed to have used her agency to be proactive in gaining social capital within interactions and thus promoting communication access and inclusion.

Gwen (PWA)

Gwen is 63 years and has mild aphasia and a right hemiparesis affecting her arm and leg, following a stroke ten years previously. Like Roslyn, she presented with a relatively mild aphasia characterised by semantic word choice and occasional sound choice errors. Given time, Gwen could usually select the appropriate or a related word, thus minimising the effect of her word finding difficulty on the flow of the conversation. At the time of her stroke she was working as a practice manager in a health care setting. Although Gwen had not been able to return to work since her aphasia, she had forged a new direction in her life. She now lived independently in a retirement village and was active in various self help groups and craft programmes, as well as having a role on the retirement village committee. She described a positive attitude to her social interaction within the retirement village: "*social interaction with the....em....people round here is....just....magnificent*".

She displayed a proactive approach to promoting awareness of aphasia in the community which included featuring in a local newspaper. She talked about what she hoped this would achieve in the future:

*“em...that all people understood what we’re on about, but that’s not very, not very em....not very dear em I think you have to **put your nose to the grindstone and work and work and work and work** until you have no practically everyone saying “Oh that’s it”*

Gwen PWA

She described how her nature was *“to find a way to solve a problem”* and gave a hypothetical example that if she was experiencing difficulty communicating with bus drivers, she would enlist the help of a speech pathologist to look at providing training about stroke and aphasia. She explained how before aphasia, she used to talk a lot, especially with her sisters, but now she has adapted to the changes, suggesting that she still retains a sense of empowerment in spite of her difficulties:

Gwen presented with a friendly, up beat manner. She seemed to have constructed a positive self representation, revealed in the following extract when she described how the librarians in her local library know her as *“the girl who had a stroke and can’t speak”*. Her comment *“that is the one way I always do it”* and her other reports that she takes a proactive stance to increase awareness of aphasia in her community, suggested that in doing so she positions herself as a capable agent and subsequently may be rewarded with social and symbolic capital to be able to influence the power relations within a service interaction:

*“no, they’re really good, they know me now, em as the I, I think they all know me (laughs) **as the girl who had a stroke and can’t speak, because that is the one way I always do it”***

Gwen PWA

Gwen described how using the strategy of ‘calming down’ helped her to maintain her poise and dignity when interacting with the unhelpful GP and receptionist. This suggests that she was not willing to be complicit in any attempts (intentional or not) of the service provider to disempower her. Even though Gwen eventually walked out of the GP surgery without having her full medical, this action in itself communicated a degree of power in that she was able to exert some control within the situation. It is possible that in doing so, she was rewarded with the capital required to maintain her agentic position and seek out a new GP.

Gwen also seemed aware of her own strategic competence through her reflection of the strategies she could employ to facilitate communication access. Subsequently, she described most of her government service interactions as positive and she was able to identify only one negative experience within a service encounter. In the following extract, her strategic competence was highlighted in a general discussion, when she talked about how she likes to tell people she has aphasia at the start of the interaction, “*at the front end*” and how this has a positive impact on the rest of the encounter:

*“I haven’t tried it with not giving that speech....I just find em....**that if you say it at the front end, you get a positive experience all the way down”***

Gwen PWA

Gwen’s communication and strategic competency, along with her up beat, friendly presentation and her resilience may help her maintain a positive self representation, further nurturing her agency, capital and symbolic power. She presented with many positive adaptive features which have been highlighted as

contributing to living successfully with aphasia (Brown et al., 2010; Brown et al., 2012; Holland, 2006). Some of these included: ongoing participation in community events, maintaining meaningful relationships with friends and family, positivity, autonomy, independence, and developing a positive self image as a stroke survivor with aphasia over time. All of these aspects are likely to influence the construct of communication access.

Summary

This chapter has explored how four of the participants used their own personal capital to influence communication access. This finding is thought to partly account for the fact that all the participants reported mainly positive experiences in government services. It suggests that at an interactional level they had been able to achieve, along with their communication partner, what Goffman termed as “universal human nature” referring to each interactant’s ability to maintain a “ritual equilibrium” (1972, p.45). Through their transactional and interactional communication skills the participants appeared to achieve a self representation that promoted face saving and favourable impression management, culminating in a satisfying service encounter.

In this chapter, particularly through the stories of Winston, Farah and Gwen we can see how through their agency, they did not buy into any feelings of stigma or rejection and had instead retained a positive social identity. Although they reported times when they felt less competent, their resilient attitudes, positive self representation and reflexivity helped them mobilise their strategic competence to refuse to become complicit with any attempt on behalf of the communication partner to assign stigma. Furthermore, they appeared to describe how these interactional skills had consequently helped them draw resources from the other person to help empower themselves.

For instance, when Winston described how he responded with a calm and smiling face to those who seemed to be discrediting him, he usually found that they were more willing to help him in the interaction, rewarding him with a degree of social capital and feelings of inclusion. Meanwhile over time, Farah appeared to have developed her ability to use her apparent belligerent attitude, resilience and reflexivity to deny any attempt to discredit her. Similarly, Gwen’s

assertive, and self assured approach also helped her to manage the interactional aspects of an encounter, increasing her opportunities for access and inclusion.

Roslyn's scenario on the other hand, appeared slightly different to some of the others. Although she described many positive experiences and reflected similar attributes as described by some of the other participants, she appeared to be at more risk of negative communication encounters impacting on her identity and ability to achieve self representation. Although previous chapters have acknowledged that this risk could potentially be mediated through improving the other person's understanding of aphasia, this chapter has highlighted how factors such as low mood, other health issues and reduced social support could potentially impact on Roslyn's interactional skills and may contribute to the co construction of an unsatisfying encounter.

This explanation is reinforced by Goffman's work on stigma where he discusses how a person's defensive attitude regarding his situation, may act as a reinforcement of his defect and a justification of the way the person assigning stigma treats them. This interconnectedness of each agent's attitudes, beliefs, values, power, empathy and presentation highlights the complex social processes which underpin communication access.

Focusing attention on the communication partner's skills may not improve communication access for some people. Instead, new approaches need to be considered which help people operating with reduced communication competency to consider the values and beliefs which underpin their self presentation and their performance as an interactant. Just as the communication partner influences the negotiation, maintenance and development of identity in the PWA/ESL speaker, the PWA/ESL speaker's response will have a similar impact on the other person. Although for ESL speakers there may be some cultural differences to interactional skills, Simmons-Mackie highlights how PWA's interactional skills are usually considered to be intact (2000, p. 173). However, just as Parr recognises that "fleeting moments and subtle aspects of communication and behaviour can make a profound difference" (2007, p.117) in referring to the communication

partner, further research is required to develop new approaches which help PWA/ESL speakers to recognise the power of their own presentation. For instance, increasing their understanding of how subtle nuances of their non verbal and verbal behaviour can influence the underlying power dynamics within any interaction may be a valuable approach.

Although some studies have recognised the need to enhance interactional strategies, this tends to be in relation to conversational management strategies such as turn taking, managing repairs, using circumlocution (talking round difficult words by providing associated words) etc. In aphasia for example, few studies have examined the interactional role of the PWA as a communication partner. Although Kagan et al. (2004) recognise this anomaly, the main focus of their description of “observational measures for rating support and participation in conversation between adults with aphasia and their conversational partners” continues to be the communication partner.

Recently, Holland (2007) has advocated for a move towards a life coaching approach in aphasia which promotes useful change through problem solving and focusing on strengths to overcome challenges. In her article, Holland provides a summary of positive psychology theory which is used to practise and develop the important characteristics of resilience and optimism, which many studies have highlighted as crucial for satisfying adaptation to life after aphasia (Hinckley, 2006) and life as a migrant (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008). A more recent study (Worrall, Brown, Cruice, Davidson, & Hersh, 2010) concurred with Holland in recognising the value in promoting this approach within aphasia management to support the development of positive adaptive features to living successfully with aphasia. As well as using this approach to increase PWA’s ability to manage the transactional aspects of conversations, this may be a useful method for addressing interactional strengths and goal setting to improve areas which have been identified as potentially impacting negatively on the communicative accessibility of an encounter. A similar approach may be useful for ESL speakers.

The findings of this chapter would suggest that central to access and inclusion is the person’s own ability to negotiate a positive identity and achieve a

competent self representation as an interactant. This can help the PWA or ESL speaker to accrue important social and symbolic capital that can then be used as a resource to position themselves as influential agents in service interactions. This is an important point as capital can be accumulated in order to improve the position of an agent within the social field. Future research on communication access needs to re-address the balance between recognising the role of the person with communication support needs as well as a continued focus on the influence of the communication partner.

As discussed in the literature review, this emphasises that whether an encounter is accessible or not, very much depends on a holistic approach which looks beyond the aphasia or ESL issues as the defining factor and explores the contribution of personal attributes such as gender, race, age, culture, values, beliefs, identity, past experiences, coping mechanisms and other characteristics of the person's personality. As highlighted by Threats (2007), further research into the relationship between personal and environmental factors is crucial to developing a deeper understanding of access issues for people with aphasia.

This chapter has provided a unique insight into how aspects other than just the linguistic skills of the PWA/ESL speaker may influence communication access. So far, this thesis has focused on how communication access is co constructed through the intersecting behaviours and attitudes of the PWA/ ESL speaker and their communication partner. However, all interactions take place within a particular social field which will also influence how the encounter is played out. The next chapter will explore how the social field of government services can impact on the accessibility of an encounter.

Chapter Eight

The influence of the social field

Introduction

When individuals act, they do so in specific social contexts or settings. Bourdieu describes these social contexts of social action as *the field* or *the market* (1991). This can be considered as a structured space in which positions and interpersonal relations are determined by the distribution of different kind of resources or capital. This chapter will explore how the structures in place within the social field of government services can have an impact on whether face-to-face interactions are accessible. In particular, this chapter will focus on two government services; Centrelink and university education. Both PWA and ESL speakers appeared to have constructed a predominantly negative impression of their face-to-face interactions within Centrelink. University education was selected as an interesting contrast to the social welfare services offered by Centrelink to demonstrate the multifaceted aspect of communication access.

This chapter will begin by exploring some of the theoretical underpinnings of how the social field operates and influences interactions which take place between the agents acting within it. The remaining sections will explore the two services in more detail, in particular the need for improved training and education to ensure accessible interactions and processes and a discussion exploring institutional discrimination. In relation to Centrelink, the chapter will explore participants' suggestions of the need for more time within service encounters along with a more flexible and responsive approach which facilitates access and inclusion. The interpretative themes of power and empathy will be apparent throughout the course of the results and discussion presented.

Defining the social field

Bourdieu's use of the metaphor of 'a game' can explain the concept of the social field:

We can indeed, with caution, compare a field to a game...although, unlike the latter, a field is not the product of a deliberate act of creation,

and it follows rules or, better, regularities, that are not explicit and codified. Thus we have *stakes*...which are for the most part the product of the competition between players. We have an *investment in the game*...: players are taken in by the game, they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity....We also have *trump cards*, that is, master cards whose force varies depending on the game: just as the relative value of the cards changes with each game, the hierarchy of the different species of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic) varies across the various fields. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98)

The social field is therefore the site where people are competing within the interpersonal relationships for the different forms of capital associated with the field and are consequently positioned as agential (able to draw on the different forms of capital) or disempowered. However, the outcome of the interaction is as Thompson suggests in his introduction to *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 14), not the product of the intersecting habitus of each agent, but the relationship between the habitus on the one hand and the specific values and attributes of the social field on the other hand. It is this relationship between the field and the individual agents that is crucial in producing an effect. In terms of communication access and inclusion, it is therefore essential to understand this relationship between PWA/ESL speakers, their communication partner and in the context of this study, the effect of the particular government institution under discussion.

This study has explored the interactions that take place within the field of government services, which included healthcare, Centrelink, university education, police services, TAFE, the post office and public transport. These social fields can be considered 'institutions', which Thompson (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 8) describes as being "any durable set of social relations which *endows* individuals with power, status and resources of various kinds". Within these settings, the communication experience of the participants can therefore be influenced by the hierarchical structures and properties of the institution itself as well as the potential for the service personnel to position themselves in the more dominant role.

The issue of linguistic power has been well documented in both aphasia and ESL literatures (Damico, Simmons-Mackie, & Hawley, 2008; Lippi-Green, 1997). Within the more formal linguistic market of government services, the incongruence between the PWA/ESL user's communication competence and the linguistic demands of the field can put them at a disadvantage as they may not hold a 'trump card', thus often relying on the linguistically dominant government personnel to authorise and accept their language use. Bourdieu (1991) and Giddens (1984, pp. 82-84) both talk about how a person is socially positioned during encounters and how, depending on the structure of the social field, some may demand a higher level of linguistic competence than others before legitimising the speaker. The service encounter is therefore underscored by the social relations inherent in the institution.

Although Bourdieu's theory of practise proposes there is a class determinant associated with the socio-cultural positioning of the individual agent within each social field, he also suggests that at any moment in time the field is open for a power struggle. This means that there is the opportunity for agents within the field to tacitly negotiate different forms of capital and to potentially use the strength of the different forms of capital they may have been rewarded with in other fields to help them achieve a positive self representation across the different fields. The implication is that the reverse may also hold true, where an individual who is operating with reduced forms of capital, may find it difficult to rally the resources required to present themselves in a confident and competent manner, thus running the risk of not being authorised as a member of the social group. Having access to the interactional rewards of a communication encounter is therefore essential if the PWA or ESL speaker is to avoid constructing a negative identity and self representation which can impact both in the short and long term.

In this study, two institutions in particular, Centrelink and an Australian university stood out as worthy of a closer examination. This partly reflected the regularity with which they were mentioned by certain participants as well as the fact that both are large institutions whose structures are probably replicated throughout Australia. This chapter will take a closer look at some of the issues raised by both PWA and ESL speakers in relation to these particular

government organisations. However, it is recognised that many of the points discussed are not distinct to these particular social fields, but connect with broad principles that could equally be applied across many government institutions.

Centrelink

The Department of Human Services is responsible for the Centrelink programme which delivers a range of social and welfare payment and services to retirees, the unemployed, families, carers, parents, people with disabilities, Indigenous Australians and people from a CaLD background (<http://www.centrelink.gov.au>). 16.7% of the Australian Public Service workforce is employed by Centrelink, making it the largest employer of all the public services (Whelan, 2011). This size is likely to reflect the 'frontline' service delivery function and gives some indication of the impact the organisation has on the lives of many Australian citizens.

Many of the participants across both groups spoke about the mainly negative experiences they had encountered at Centrelink. This section will explore the main features which appeared to contribute to this negative impression. Similar to the field of education, within the context of Centrelink, a particular or higher value may be placed on communication competence by the service provider who is positioned in the dominant role as government worker upholding the values of the institution. Service users may have to be able to communicate highly specific information within the often rushed and busy approach adopted by many services. Consequently, there is a higher risk of miscommunication and feelings of inadequacy as service users who are ESL speakers or PWA may not have the communication competence to interact in a way that is valued by these institutions.

Chapters Five and Six of this thesis explored PWA and ESL speakers' reports of how an empathetic service provider who was willing and able to use communication strategies could promote the construction of a more positive identity, contributing to increasing agency, social capital and ultimately social inclusion. However, within government services, it is important to consider how some aspects, for instance, time available for service encounters or training and

education of staff or the availability of transparent service processes and accessible information are all constrained or enabled by features of the structure and organisation of the social field and not simply representative of the individual agents interacting within it. The following section will consider some of these features of the service which appeared to impact on communication access.

The need for extra time

In the next extract, Winston talked about how services are often governed by time and that some service providers can become impatient about communication difficulties because “*he is thinking that you are wasting his time*”. By implication, therefore, service providers who were able and willing to take the time to talk people through the various written forms and the different steps in the process are likely to benefit the PWA/ESL speaker:

*“everything here is going by the time so when you are speaking to someone and he is not understanding **he is thinking that you are wasting his time** so he can organise or he can fix another appointment or....he can refer to another service so to keep you away from him”*

Winston PWA

Many government services are in high demand and consequently there can be a time constraint involved. However, we now rely on a wide range of service interactions to support our day to day life which have been shown to have a significant impact on our overall quality of life (Adelman et al., 1993; Gutek, 1995). It is therefore important that people who are at risk of marginalisation experience good quality service interactions. In an article on general customer expectations for interactions with service providers, Ford (2001) proposes that some customers require a personalised approach where the service provider tailors the needs to suit the requirements of the individual. This type of individualised approach has been highlighted within the aphasia literature as contributing to a more satisfactory service for PWA (Howe et al., 2007). It would seem logical that ESL speakers could also benefit from a more flexible and

responsive approach which affords them the necessary time within these transactions to promote success and satisfaction.

The need for accessible interactions, information and processes

Several people spoke generally about the difficulty following either the written paperwork or the complex processes inherent in Centrelink's organisation. For Roslyn (PWA), this centred on the service provider trying to encourage her to report her earnings using the computerised system. Roslyn explained how she finds it difficult to understand this process:

*“they keep asking whether I want to em eh register on the computer and I said **way to complicated** so she started explaining all this to me I said look (waves hand in a dismissive gesture) fantastic, I'll just ring you every fortnight which is easier for me”*

Roslyn PWA

Winston (ESL) recounted how he had attended Centrelink to inform them of his new accommodation lease details and to request that his rent was increased to cover the new costs. He left the encounter slightly confused as he was unsure if the service provider had understood his request. In fact, it turned out the service provider had not understood as one month later, Winston received a call from his landlord warning him of arrears in his rent. Only then did it transpire that his allowance from Centrelink had not been increased as Winston had thought. In this scenario it would perhaps have been useful if a written summary of the encounter was produced for the ESL speaker or PWA to take home for future reference. Jacqui (PWA) also suggested that either a written summary or the opportunity to record the encounter would be helpful so that she could listen to it again for clarification.

At another point in the interview Winston spoke about the potential cultural differences in how services are organised. Pauwels (1995) outlines the vastly different needs and views on health care in culturally diverse groups in Australia. For instance, Winston highlighted the differences between going to see a doctor in Africa compared with Australia. In Africa it would appear that the

patient has more responsibility in determining the diagnosis and buying medicine, compared to the role of the professional in Australia who is responsible for the assessment and diagnose. Information on how the service actually operates is therefore crucial to enable migrants to fully engage with services

The complex processes often inherent in many government institutions have also been highlighted by several authors as a barrier to PWA participating and engaging in services (Parr et al., 1997; Pound et al., 2007; Simmons-Mackie et al., 2007). Pound et al. describe an inclusionary approach to involving PWA at the heart of designing new service approaches at an organisational level. The need for clear, comprehensive information on the different service options available and processes required to access the services was highlighted as one of the key features to successful engagement and inclusion.

Service relationships/individualised approaches

Gutek (1999) also talks about *service relationships* where the service user returns to the same service provider each time they need to access the service and in this way they can get to know each other and develop a shared history. Within this service relationship, Gutek recognises that the service provider can often develop real empathy for the service user and usually have an increased range of knowledge and skills acquired through education and training. Ford recognises that “as the relational structure of service transactions varies, so do the communication practises of the service providers” (2001, p. 4). She identifies the interactional aspects of personalised services; information sharing and social support which she defines as service providers who are engaged cognitively and behaviourally by displaying what Cegala (1981) explains as communication behaviours which display attentiveness, perceptiveness and responsiveness to others. These attributes are communicated via the verbal and non verbal behaviours discussed in Chapter Five. However, in situations where the ‘customer’ is experiencing communication issues either due to aphasia or speaking English as a second language, the service provider is likely to require specific training to enable their perceptiveness, so they can respond appropriately.

The need for education and training

Participants from both groups recognised that the key to future success in Centrelink encounters came down to the need for more service provider education and training. In the following extract, Anita (ESL) talked about how it would help if:

“those people learn how to speak to other people”

and went on to suggest:

“I think the office could have someone behind...if there is someone who don't speak well English, they call him, they sit in a room, slowly, then they solve the problem that could be better”

Anita ESL speaker

Anita's statement *“learn how to speak to other people”* and *“the office could have someone behind”* highlights the need for further knowledge and skills training of key communication champions within large organisations such as Centrelink. These employees could offer different levels of communication support than an untrained employee, to engage people who are functioning with reduced communication competency. User focused training as described by Pound et al. (2007) which advocate supported communication type approaches (Kagan, 1998) gives service providers the opportunity to explore the relationships between empathy, power and competency and how these can impact on access and inclusion. Involving PWA/ESL speakers in training is also a powerful way to communicate the 'insiders' view to service providers.

However, Roslyn (PWA) reported that although this approach of training a core group of service providers to facilitate individualised interactions would be *“fabulous”*, she didn't feel this was realistic, particularly in a large institution like Centrelink. In her discussions about her interaction with the service user who spoke with a Chinese accent, she demonstrated some empathy for how he must feel, working in such a large organisation and hinting at his possible dissatisfaction with his job:

“I suppose for some of it potentially I’m one of 50 million who are up there at the the office, em....you know, for him I’m just another one, (pause), it had nothing to do with my aphasia, I think he’s not interested generally in people up there”

Roslyn PWA

In the above extract she suggested that part of the problem with the interaction that was described in detail in the previous chapter, was not just a reflection of her aphasia. Instead, her comments “for him I’m just another one”, “I think he’s not interested generally in people up there” and later she said he behaved “like a Centrelink person you know”, all suggested that in these type of transactions, there is little time or opportunity for the service provider to engage in the social supports that the PWA/ESL speaker may require. However, if we consider the potential impact of these encounters as discussed in Chapter Six, then developing a service relationship approach might be more satisfying as well as promoting access and inclusionary practices. Whether this is feasible or practical within the structures of Centrelink would need further exploration.

Institutional discrimination within Centrelink

PWA/ESL speakers who may already be functioning with reduced social capital can be further discriminated against by what Bourdieu refers to as unequal access to institutional resources such as policies, procedures and protocols. Within Centrelink, the whole range of government policies outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 are in place to communicate how government service workers should conduct their daily business. As discussed in Chapter Two there is laudable recognition of the needs of people who require interpreting and translation services, Auslan and AAC support. The value of the interpreting and translation services was highlighted by Farah, Winston and Anita who had used this service in the early days of their migration to Perth and found it very helpful. However, it is interesting that although there is recognition of the communication needs of certain groups, there remains a significant gap in recognising that for many people with communication support needs, the current services are not suitable. This supports the finding of other studies

(Law, van der Gaag, et al., 2007; McPake et al., 2002; Perez et al., 2006) which suggest the need for more research to determine the needs of the full spectrum of those requiring communication supports. The findings could inform the key directions for future policy development in Australia.

In failing to provide adequate communication access, government policy may be considered complicit in failing to recognise the wider needs of this group. It could be argued that this unequal access to policies which support access and inclusion for all contributes to institutional discrimination. In doing so, there is a risk of the PWA/ESL speaker's social capital not being recognised which can influence their capacity to have an impact within the service encounter, potentially positioning them as disempowered. For some PWA/ESL speakers there is the risk that the quality of their interactions does not assist them with accumulating the resources (capital) required to negotiate and maintain a positive self identity. This discrimination reflects the power of the service provider to act as a gatekeeper (Gee, 1996) to those who they are prepared to accept as an 'insider' with the implication that there are also those who are not accepted and therefore are in effect not legitimised or authorised as group members. In order to avoid this potential practise of exclusion, there needs to be a top down approach which recognises the central importance of communication access within policy.

University education

This section primarily reflects the experiences of Katrina, an ESL speaker who was in her second year of a Bachelor of Nursing degree. However, it's not hard to imagine that her experiences are likely to be representative of many ESL international students in Australian universities. Although none of the participants with aphasia were attending university, the obvious lack of acknowledgment of the broad principles of communication access within this setting allow the reader to easily draw conclusions on how difficult it would be for people with aphasia to participate in university education.

Relevance

Recently the Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG), in a laudable attempt to increase the well being of international students produced the

International Students Strategy for Australia 2010-2014 (2010a). It highlights that the industry supports over 125000 jobs and is Australia's third largest export, generating \$18.6 billion in 2009. There are now more than 1200 education providers offering education services to international students in Australia with international competition for this lucrative market on the increase. However, although they recognised that many overseas students may be ESL speakers and advocate for access to ESL courses, there is no recognition of the collaborative aspect of communication support which implicates the dominant speakers in helping to promote participation and engagement. This lack of awareness echoes the growing evidence of the failure of schools to adequately support the ESL speaker's social inclusion. This can be achieved through access to satisfying social encounters which promote positive identity construction enabling students to achieve a positive self representation and ultimately emotional well being (Lippi-Green, 1997; Miller, 1999, 2000, 2003; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Toohey, 2000; Yoon, 2007).

Institutional discrimination within university education

International students entering University in Australia must demonstrate a recognised competency in English language (e.g. International English Language Testing System (ILETS) <http://www.ielts.org>). ESL courses are also provided to students who require further support throughout their university education. However, there is little evidence of recognition of the receiver's role in promoting communication access and social inclusion. For instance, the university Katrina attended did not offer any training or education to university staff on communication strategies that could be employed to assist the ESL speaker. It's unlikely that they stand alone in this respect. As highlighted by Miller (2003), within the second language acquisition research, some consider that the onus is predominantly on the ESL learner to take responsibility for improving their linguistic skills with little or no recognition of the interactional aspects of encounters within this environment (Nunan, 1995).

Consequently, discrimination, marginalisation and disempowerment can result if institutions such as universities do not have policies which address the broader concept of communication access and how it is co-constructed. Although there is a raft of policies which are applicable to this particular social field, none of

them appear to recognise the broad concept of communication access. As Katrina highlighted, there needs to be more recognition of what service providers can do to improve the lived experience of ESL speakers.

Training and education

Training and education of university staff was highlighted as a key feature of improving the interactions in this setting. Katrina's perception of the various verbal and non verbal behaviours of different service personnel which appeared to enable or constrain access and inclusion was also highlighted in Chapter Five (also see Appendices 10 and 11). Sometimes Katrina talked specifically about the face-to-face interactions between herself and university staff during individual discussions or small group tutorials, while at other times she referred to participating in a large lecture type scenario. The results reported here will largely focus on the first two types of encounter. Although it is interesting to note in respect of lectures, she talked about how she "*barely understood*" a lot of the lectures because of her difficulty understanding the accent, the complex words sometimes used, the colloquialisms and the rate of speech. The potential impact on the ease with which she can complete a degree in a second language when she is struggling to grasp the learning opportunities is apparent.

When Katrina was asked what could be done to improve the situation, she highlighted that the university should recognise the difficulty some ESL international students have keeping up with the demands of the language within the teaching environment. She talked about the need to "*consider other international student*" and referred to her friend who is also an ESL speaker who struggles to understand the lecturers. She goes on to suggest that university staff should also learn communication techniques which facilitate understanding, for instance they could speak at a slower rate and avoid the use of "*slang words*":

In *Audible Difference*, Miller (2003) highlights the powerful case proposed by Lippi-Green (1997) that in the field of education, those who do not use the dominant discourse style have the odds stacked against them as their diverse social and linguistic backgrounds are not valued by the educational authorities. Although the literature focuses on mainstream classroom settings, similarities

may be transferable to university education. As mentioned earlier, the hierarchical power relations within the social field of government services places the service provider in the dominant role as they have the authority to legitimise the PWA or ESL speakers communication attempts and decide whether they will regard their communication competence as acceptable in the circumstances.

Consequently, within the university setting, university staff are socially positioned in the more dominant role. As identities are negotiated in the everyday interactions that we are involved in, the relationships that are formed between university staff and ESL students will contribute to emotional responses, identity construction and feelings of inclusion. In terms of well being and social inclusion, it is therefore crucial for international students who are ESL speakers to be authorised as social group members by the university staff through the use of communication strategies that assist with their inclusion within the lectures and within the social group membership of the classroom environment. For many students, this may be the main opportunity they have to speak English and establish a positive identity as a competent ESL speaker.

By not being aware of this power of reception, the university staff may be inadvertently reducing the chances of some international students to negotiate a positive identity and feel part of the culture and society within Australia. Dooley (2009) for example discusses a programme to improve awareness of the communication partner's social responsibility to include ESL speakers in valuable classroom interactions through 'showing the way' to the class as a whole. The same concepts could be extended to university staff to help facilitate participation and engagement of the ESL students. Katrina's comments in Chapter Six demonstrated that when this happened it lead to a positive emotional response, increased her self confidence, self esteem and encouraged her to keep speaking in English.

Another point to note was Katrina's apparent lack of confidence to address the issue of misunderstanding during lectures, tutorials and some face-to-face encounters. She appeared aware of a power differential between herself and lecturers that she described as having the ability to use "*lots of complicated*

words". Dooley (2009) highlights how face work is only likely if the ESL speaker feels that the risk of losing face is not too great. Institutions which primarily place the emphasis on the ESL speaker to improve their ESL skills without recognising the collaborative effort required, fail to recognise that engagement and inclusion is more likely if all speakers are deeply invested in co constructing a satisfying encounter (Goldstein, 2003; Lippi-Green, 1997).

As well as focusing attention on university staff, ESL courses need to build "students' resources for managing the problems of understanding intrinsic to intercultural conversation" (Dooley, 2009, p. 504). This will help them develop the strategic competence to contribute to the management of conversational repair, increasing their opportunities to be rewarded with valuable social capital which increases inclusion.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted how the lack of a broad understanding of the principles of communication access within the field of government services can impact on the engagement and inclusion of PWA and ESL speakers. These discriminatory practises can reduce the person's opportunities to participate within a service interaction. Earlier in this thesis a comparison was made with the ubiquitous and commendable physical access legislation that is gradually permeating through all aspects of society to ensure easier physical access for those with physical disabilities. There is now a growing recognition of the need for further research to investigate the potential of a universal approach to communication access to create interactions and environments that are easy for a wide range of people with communication support needs to reach.

The links between communication access and social inclusion have been documented throughout this thesis and this chapter provides further evidence of the role of the social field in influencing whether access and inclusion is achieved. As was highlighted in the introduction, communication is at the core of a person's involvement in the society in which they live. It is the principal method of our everyday interactions and lies at the heart of how services interact with their consumers. If services are to ensure inclusion of all citizens which is a fundamental human right, then there will need to be a paradigm shift

in the relationship between service providers and service users in how these organisations include ESL speakers (Dooley, 2009; Miller, 2003; Yoon, 2007). and PWA (Pound et al., 2007; Simmons-Mackie et al., 2007).

Chapter Nine

Discussion

Introduction

This in depth, small scale study of how PWA and ESL speakers conceptualised their face-to-face interactions with government services, highlights the multidimensional nature of communication access. Although situated in ordinary, everyday behaviour, when we peel back the layers of how access is constructed, we reveal a complex web of interacting agents, operating within a specific social field that brings its own tacit rules and influences. In a move away from the cause and effect linearity of some social model studies of access, this study offers new insights into the relationship of power in the dynamic patterns of interaction that underpin access and inclusion.

This study focused specifically on government service interactions which are governed by policies to support the inclusion of people from non English speaking backgrounds and those with a disability (See Appendices 1 and 2). However, although communication difficulties are often recognised as presenting a barrier to access and inclusion, there appears to be limited recognition of the role of supported communication techniques which can promote the engagement of PWA and ESL speakers in services. Although many of the people in this study were able to draw on personal strengths such as resilience and the ability to reflect on their own contribution, the risk of marginalisation and disempowerment was apparent. The results presented here have suggested that even these sometimes short and sporadic encounters with public services are important contributors to the construction of identity and self representation, especially for these at risk groups who often have increased contact with service providers.

The findings suggest that two very different groups of people, one with an acquired disability and the other functioning outside the realms of disability, experience some similarities in how they are heard within public service interactions. The evidence also highlights the connections between some of the deeper principles that underpin the interactions of both groups. Although there

has been anecdotal information about communication access principles being applicable to ESL speakers, to the author's knowledge, this is the first study to examine the experiences of both groups together. The results appear to support the suggestion that a wider cohort of people could potentially benefit from the development of organisational policy which promotes universal communication access in every day service encounters. However, a further large scale study would be required to explore whether the experiences reported by this small group of PWA/ESL speakers actually represent their wider communities. Nevertheless, the similarities in the results between both groups appeared to suggest some common ground in the meanings they attached to the experiences described.

The findings concur with many of the sociological theoretical influences discussed throughout this thesis: what is important is not so much the individual component parts, but the interactional aspects of communication between the two interactants, in this case the PWA, the ESL speaker and the service provider, within a specific context, in this study the social field of government service interactions in Australia. Although an analysis and understanding of the component parts is crucial, future studies on communication access should also consider the actual relationship between the intersecting agents.

In particular, there needs to be an increased understanding of the interconnectedness of each agent's verbal and non verbal behaviours which act as a signal for how they achieve self representation. Although the service provider as the communication partner, often cast in the role of the dominant speaker, holds the power to receive and authorise the PWA/ESL speakers' spoken words, this study has also offered an interpretation of the PWA/ESL speaker's influence. In a move away from the focus on the transactional aspects of communication access, the findings suggest an account of how most of the participants were able to draw from their deeply personal habitus to use characteristics, such as resilience, reflexivity and their own interactional styles to position themselves as agential and consequently facilitate access to social capital and power. This interconnectedness of each agent's attitudes, beliefs, values, power, empathy and presentation highlights the complex social and individualised processes which underpin communication access.

Under the surface of all transactions lie the intersections of power where both agents will consciously or unconsciously be involved in the quest for power in the form of symbolic capital. This study has highlighted how the structural influences within the social field of government services can position the service provider in the more dominant role which may impact on how each agent mutually constructs the communication accessibility of the encounter. Specifically, participants highlighted the strong influence of the service provider's non verbal communication which either acted as a signal that they were empathetic, in which case participants experienced a positive impact on their emotions and construction of identity or the opposite, which at times culminated in some participants actually removing themselves from the interaction.

It appeared that these often subtle non verbal nuances such as facial expressions, nods of the head, movements of the eye, tone of the voice, had the power to communicate whether the communication partner in effect authorised their spoken attempts and indirectly legitimised their inclusion as a functioning social group member. This highlights how interpersonal attitudes, values and beliefs are not just expressed through the linguistic content of what someone says, but very importantly, how it is said, which is supported by the paralinguistic features of communication. Communication access is therefore not just about improving the transactional aspect of interactions which is sometimes the focus of supported conversation techniques. The participants in this study have emphasised the considerable impact of the non verbal, interactional aspects. Indeed, for some, the success of an encounter seemed to be as much in relation to their social acceptability as signalled through the interactional rituals played out between themselves and the service provider, than the transaction of information.

The findings add another dimension to previous research which has explored access to written information, access to services and access to life's opportunities as outlined by Cruice (2007). Importantly, communication access appears to be centrally about promoting access to power and agency. Social inclusion is facilitated if the PWA or ESL speaker can increase their agency through the accumulation of capital in the form of important resources such as

increased self esteem, a more positive identity and self representation, social group membership, negotiated in the emergent patterns of interactions in every day encounters.

One of the principal objectives of this study was to consider a sociological conceptual model to scaffold the links between communication access and social inclusion. Using a sociological model has provided a different perspective on how communication access and social inclusion are co-constructed in the areas of aphasia and ESL usage through the relationship between each agent and the social field. It would appear that the sociological framework presented, underpinned by the philosophy of symbolic interactionism and the theories of social constructivist, Bourdieu, Goffman and Giddens, is a useful template for researchers to explore the interactions of people with a range of communication difficulties with the structures and agents of communication access within different social fields. This work could enhance the understanding of the relationship between personal and structural factors and promote the development of new practice innovations as well as facilitating the direction of policy change.

This study has highlighted that in Australia, despite an acknowledgement that discrimination of disabled people or those from CaLD backgrounds is unlawful, the current documents which support access and inclusion for these groups do not appear to recognise the importance of creating communicatively accessible environments which promote accumulation of social capital, empowerment and positive emotions to strengthen individuals resources, capabilities and opportunities. The following section will explore the potential application of the findings with regards to the policy context.

Potential implications for government policy

This small scale study has suggested how PWA/ESL speakers' reduced communication competency may place them at a disadvantage and can contribute to their social exclusion. In terms of government policy, in particular around social inclusion which advocates for social justice for all and recognises that society has an individual and collective responsibility for the delivery of organised, just and proper processes that enhance the lives of every citizen,

this study has highlighted some potential gaps in the recognition given to those who require communication support within face-to-face interactions. As highlighted in Chapter Two, in the context of disability policy, current thinking in Australia, tends to interpret communication access as access to written information, or related mainly to the needs of people with hearing loss, visual impairments and intellectual or psychiatric illness. Similarly, within the CaLD policy context, promoting access and inclusion is mainly interpreted as providing interpreting and translation services, with little recognition of the potential need to provide collaborative communication support to promote satisfying interactions for those who are able to communicate in English.

There appears to be limited evidence that policy makers recognise the broader concept of communication access and how it may apply to a wide range of people for whom face-to-face interactions may be challenging. As this is likely to be the principal method of how the public interface with many government services, this gap could result in inequitable opportunities for those who require communication support to facilitate access and inclusion.

As outlined in the Australian Government report, *A Stronger Fairer Australia* (2009b), one of the aims of social inclusion is to improve the opportunities of people who are facing the greatest disadvantage to participate in the full range of community services. The aim is to; strengthen resilience, identity, respect for others and pride for all cultures and communities; to help develop each individual's potential to shape their own social inclusion and to ensure that all sectors contribute to tackling the social issues connected to social inclusion. To achieve this, a multi-pronged approach to social inclusion at a national level, community level and personal level is required. However, if this vision of social inclusion is to become a reality for those who are functioning with reduced communication competency, then government policy and supporting documents need to recognise the importance of face-to-face communication access. This could be a step towards facilitating change in the structural aspects of government services alluded to in Chapter Eight of this study.

The report, *A Stronger Fairer Australia*, highlights the proposed vision for increasing participation and defines inclusion as meaning that individuals have

the resources, opportunities and capabilities to learn, work, engage and have a voice. In this report, resources refer to the different forms of capital, capabilities refer to the individual's ability to use these resources, while opportunities refer to the social field in which people interact. Resources relate to three areas: individual, family and community resources. Community resources include such things as organisational infrastructures, services, environments, culture and norms. The remainder of this discussion chapter will focus on exploring the findings of this study in relation to the potential implications of the individual resource needs and community resource needs in terms of the Australian Public Service.

Individual resources

As discussed by Threats (2007), the social model of disability with its predominant focus on the responsibility of society to remove the disabling factors that influence access and inclusion, needs to give more guidance on the role of people with disabling conditions in using and developing their own personal resources to manage their own situation. In discussing an interpretation of how Farah, Winston, Jacqui and Gwen used their own individual resources to contribute to the accessibility of an encounter, this thesis has highlighted that some of the issues relating to access and inclusion are as much to do with personal choice, self reflection and who you are than whether you have aphasia or use ESL. Removing the negative environmental factors may not always create a facilitative environment as so many personal factors come into play as have been outlined in this study.

A key aim of the social inclusion strategy for Australia is to help develop each individual's potential to shape their own social inclusion through strengthening their resilience and identity. Both these aspects were highlighted within this study in relation to how people can use their own embodied capital to increase their agency to negotiate communication access and inclusion. For instance, Chapter Seven highlighted how the PWA/ESL speakers' capacity to act within a service encounter may have been influenced by their past experiences, in particular their resilience. Developing resilience is also recognised as a key to helping people to break the cycle of discrimination. The Australian Government publication, *Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage* (Commonwealth of Australia.

Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2010) highlights the crucial question of the role of personal choice in developing and maintaining strategies to deflect the potentially negative effects of discrimination. Within the aphasia literature there has been a move towards research which promotes a better understanding of how people develop and maintain the cognitive and emotional skills required to live successfully with aphasia (Brown et al., 2012; Holland, 2008). Such methods may encourage the person to take a holistic view to empower them to recognise the different forms of capital they possess which can support their agency in situations where their reduced linguistic capital puts them at risk of marginalisation.

In Chapter Six of this thesis, the significant impact a supported and unsupported service encounter could have on the negotiation and maintenance of identity was discussed. In terms of identity construction, Shadden (Shadden, 2005; Shadden & Agan, 2004) for example advocates for increased understanding of how PWA had constructed their sense of self, for instance, how much they relied on others to define this, what was their usual response to change and how much value did they place on relationships. However, within these suggestions, there is no recognition of the importance of pre and post morbid interactional styles. For people with communication difficulties to increase their social capital and social inclusion, it is not only about *who* they speak to or the number of social connections, there needs to be increased understanding of the dynamic impact of their own presentation skills, not only in relation to the aphasia. In Goffman's terms, this refers to working with people to increase their understanding of the impression they *give off*. This concept concerns the range of verbal and non verbal behaviours which may communicate something different to the actual content of the interaction, revealing the person's internal attitudes, values, beliefs, and knowledge as well as their socio cultural experiences.

A person's interactional style is an important part of how they achieve self representation of who they are. Although the interactional features of communication competence are recognised as a learning outcome of ESL courses, for PWA who are dominant language speakers, these behaviours are often implicit and difficult to recognise or influence as they are deeply engrained

in the person's habitus. As discussed in Chapter Seven, some people have better self awareness and the capacity for reflection than others and in aphasia, the potential for reflexivity may be reduced by neurological damage. This is a complex area and there is a need for more research to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between personal factors and self presentation. However, the potential impact of how the person's paralinguistic signals position them within the interaction and consequently influences the response of the communication partner is an area that is worthy of more attention. This could see the development of new approaches which help to increase the PWA/ESL speakers self awareness of the impact, particularly of their own non verbal communication skills on how the communication partner receives them.

Access is therefore also about the capacity of the PWA and ESL speaker to use their embodied capital to help position themselves within the interaction and to produce appropriate facilitative communication strategies and positive interactional rituals. As well as approaches to improve resilience, identity and interactional skills, a focus on exploring the person's self awareness of their strategic competence is also crucial. Taking responsibility for the success of your own communication is recognised as a key indicator to living successfully with aphasia (Hinckley, 2006). Threat touches on the difficulty in asserting the use of facilitative communication strategies without some understanding the complex interactional issues that may be underpinning the relationship between service users and service providers. It may be important for some PWA/ESL speakers to consider their attitudes towards using repair strategies that may increase the opportunities for access and inclusion.

Current thinking on communication access tends to limit the discussion regarding the communication partner's response to how they receive the linguistic skills of the person. Similar to Threats (2007), this thesis suggests that there should be a rebalance in terms of developing a greater understanding of the PWA's role in enabling or constraining communication access which moves beyond characteristics of the aphasia and considers notions such as resilience, reflexivity and self representation. Attending to the interactional issues is crucial

to develop a more nuanced understanding of how communication access is mutually constructed.

Community resources: The Australian Public Service

Community resources for social inclusion cover a broad area, however the focus of this study is the APS face-to-face service encounter. In the last few years there has been increased recognition of a strength based approach to service delivery. The release of the document *Strengths-based Approaches to Service Delivery* (Commonwealth of Australia. DPMC, 2011) which recognises the need for service providers to use language that the client can understand, is an excellent platform to scaffold discussion on the broader principles of communication access.

However, in spite of these developments, it would appear that there is still limited recognition given to establishing communication access within service encounters to promote access to opportunities and resources. The findings of this study have suggested how the social inclusion of PWA and ESL speakers can be improved through promoting more positive communication encounters with government services, supported by legislation and policies which recognise the diverse needs of people who require communication support. In order for service providers to develop a strength based approach, the findings of this study would suggest that there is a need for government training programmes which recognise the key role of communication access in promoting the social inclusion of people with a disability or those from CaLD backgrounds.

Training and education of service providers

Like many other studies, this thesis has highlighted the role of the communication partner in promoting access. Specifically, it recognised the need for future training to focus not only on the transactional aspects of communication, but on the relationships of power and how this is negotiated in the face-to-face service encounter. The importance of the relationship between professional staff and clients is highlighted through out the recent government documents on social inclusion, with recommendations that services delivery becomes more person centred, respectful and addresses human rights and cultural awareness.

This study has suggested that enabling practises used by the service provider can be considered as a form social capital which when deployed, can promote a more positive self representation and reinforce or develop resilient behaviours and feelings of self worth and inclusion for the PWA and ESL speaker. However, although there is some evidence emerging that current practise in communication access training at a large organisational level can change certain features of the environment, including communication partners' behaviour, there is still a lack of evidence of what actually constitutes access across the full range of people with communication support needs.

A number of training programmes are already developed to promote communication access (Kagan & LeBlanc, 2002; Parr et al., 2008; Scope, 2011; Simmons-Mackie et al., 2007). This study has highlighted the PWA/ESL speaker's perception that often it is the subtle non verbal aspects of the interaction which are the most powerful in affecting the power equilibrium. It is not clear whether current training packages provide the necessary support for service providers to adequately address the often implicit and deeply personal features of their interactional skills which reflect their socio-cultural attitudes, beliefs and values. However, these verbal and non verbal behaviours are key to communicating the highly valued interactional rituals such empathy and face saving repertoires which promote the equal distribution of power.

Further research needs to establish the level of training that is required to effect worthwhile change at an organisational level. A study by Mowles van der Gaag and Fox (2010) which focused on the relationships of power between speech pathologists to effect organisational change in a large speech pathology department in the UK, provides interesting insights that could be applicable to future communication access training for government service providers. Their study reported on complexity theory and complex responsive processes which also capitalised on the sociological theories of Bourdieu, Mead and others, to recognise the complex and paradoxical relationships between interactants. These theories suggests that organisational change can occur through subject and object (in this case PWA/ESL speakers with service providers) working together to develop a reflexive understanding of the often tacit emerging patterns interaction. This would promote a more meaningful understanding of

not only *how* they react but what motivates service providers to act in certain ways and the potential impact of this. Without this level of understanding of the relationship of power which underpins most social acts and how it may influence participation and inclusion, it's questionable whether change can occur at an individual and organisational level (Stacey, Griffin, & Shaw, 2000).

Promoting the role of people who require extra communication support to include the education and training of others, empowers them to draw on their own strengths and resilience to work with service providers to help shape their own social inclusion and lies at the heart of government policy in this area (*A Stronger Fairer Australia, 2009b*). Further research is therefore required to develop training programmes which focus on reflexive approaches between service users and service providers to encourage both individual and social change. As discussed in Pound et al. (2007), if organisations are to become more socially inclusive, the people who represent the organisation need to act more as facilitators and collaborators as opposed to the more powerful position of 'service provider'. This power shift will help change how people interact with those who have communication access needs and by providing a more successful outcome, may help the person to develop and maintain a more positive self identity. In turn, this support will ultimately make it more appealing for someone with communication difficulty to revisit the service or feel more competent in other service provider encounters. As suggested by McPake et al.:

A focus on enhancing communication skills to enable staff in public sector employment to do their job more effectively is a more meaningful rationale [for training], in which specialist skills in other languages or modes of communication clearly have their place. This focus is more in keeping with the spirit of social inclusion. (2002, p.16)

Service Delivery

There are now a number of Australian government publications which support a relationship approach to service delivery which was highlighted in Chapter Eight of this thesis. The aim of this approach is to build and sustain supportive relationships between service providers and service users. The main ethos supporting this approach is for services to recognise "*the way you treat people*

matters” (Commonwealth of Australia. Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2010). In this report, *Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, a key recommendation focuses on the Centrelink case coordination model which reflects the importance of the continuity of the relationship, hiring skilled staff, the benefits of a strength based approach and a model which holistically addresses a service user’s needs. This type of approach may suit many people who require additional communication support which this study has suggested links with social capital and social inclusion. However, there is a need for the relevant stakeholder groups representing the range of people who require the communication support alluded to in this study, to lobby for further research to address how policies translate into practises which support the development of flexible, individually tailored plans and different models of service delivery, to help people achieve their goals within service encounters.

Limitations

The findings of this study are presented within the context of a very small sample size which therefore limits the capacity for generalisation. The scope of the study was also restricted to include people who were able to take part in an in-depth interview and consequently many of them presented with milder communication issues. This was part of the purposeful sampling strategy to target a more defined level of communication difficulty across two very diverse groups. This strategy also targeted people who attended self help groups or Migrant Resource Centres, therefore potentially selecting people who were more motivated than others. All of the participants were a considerable time post onset of aphasia and post migration, which meant they had time to adapt to their communication difficulties or ESL skills. Whether the findings in this study would generalise to those whose communication competency was more compromised or who had more recently acquired aphasia or migrated to Australia is not clear.

This study did not address how PWA and ESL speakers conceptualised the underlying motivation of the communication partner to act in a certain way. This may be a potential difference between the two groups that was not considered, for instance ESL speakers may conceptualise certain behaviours as reflecting the service providers values and beliefs towards racial difference. Either way,

communication access training needs to explore what these underlying motives are and how power is implicated and played out.

Another potential limiting factor was the disparity between the researcher's knowledge of aphasia compared with English as a second language usage. This meant that the researcher did not start from the same point in terms of understanding the lived experiences of the ESL participants who were from a different cultural group. In order to increase awareness of this, the researcher used a research journal which documented the potential influences of the researcher's own cultural conditioning.

However, despite these limitations, the study provides an innovative examination of the interactional aspects of the face-to-face government service encounters as perceived through the accounts of PWA and ESL speakers.

Summary

Through our communication we develop ways of existing alongside each other and in an era in which people with disability are being encouraged to have a voice and people from different cultures are being encouraged to settle into Australian society, it is essential to understand the lived experience of communication access. Communication access may have more significant implications for well-being, social integration and social inclusion than is currently recognised within government legislation. This project has facilitated a more in-depth theoretical understanding of the multidimensional concept of communication access within face-to-face government service encounters as experienced by two diverse groups of people and offers insights for the development of government policy and training and service delivery. In the words of Appiah "each person you know and can affect is someone to whom you have responsibilities" (2007, p. xi).

Communication lies at the heart of how we interact with our fellow human beings and there is a need to advance our understanding of how we can improve the experiences of a large group of people who find communication a challenge.

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Legislation

1. The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Person with Disability* (2006): Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150>
2. The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Austl.): Retrieved from http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/dda1992264/
3. The *Equal Opportunity Act (WA) 1984 (amended 1998)*: Retrieved from http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/ea1984250/notes.html
4. The *Disability Services Act (WA) (1993) (amended 2004)*: Retrieved from <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/bill/dsab2004303/>
5. The *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*: Retrieved from http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/ahrca1986373/
6. The *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*: Retrieved from http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/rda1975202/s1.html

Appendix

Appendix 1 The key disability policy context

Policy (Acts or key documents)	Definition
1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (2006):	<p>This document means that Australia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Recognises that communication methods other than speech are part of everyday communication •Calls for removing all discrimination and recognises the rights of people to use technology and human support for communication •Identifies that communication and other forms of access must be provided and barriers must be removed •Calls for freedom of expression, opinion and access to information. This includes providing a range of accessible formats for giving and receiving information (Scope, 2011)
2. The <i>Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)</i>	This Act prevents unlawful discrimination of people with disabilities (including those with a communication disability) for example, in the areas of employment, access to premises, the activities of clubs and associations, sport and the provision of goods and services
3. The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020	This strategy aims to create inclusive communities and equal opportunities for all Australians. The primary goal is to dismantle the physical, social and attitudinal barriers in society which impact on the participation and engagement of people with disability
4. <i>The Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA) (amended 1998)</i>	This Act recognises that people with disabilities are entitled to the same level of service that is available to other members of the community
5. <i>The Disability Services Act (WA) (1993) (amended 2004)</i>	The 2004 amendment to the <i>Disability Services Act 1993</i> states that all public authorities are required to develop and implement Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) to facilitate the independence, opportunities and inclusion of people with a wide range of disabilities
6. Count Me In: Disability Future Directions Strategy (WA) (2009)	This strategy sets out the vision for all people in WA to live in welcoming communities that facilitate citizenship, friendship, mutual support and a fair go for everyone. Three broad priority areas include strengthening: economic and community foundations, participation and contribution and personalised supports and services

Appendix 2 The key CaLD policy context

Policy (Acts or key documents)	Definition
1. Australian Human Rights Commission Act (1986)	These Acts make it unlawful to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person or a group of people because of their race, colour or national or ethnic origin.
2. Racial Discrimination Act (1975)	
3. The Equal Opportunity Act (WA) 1984 (amended 1998)	This Act recognises that people from a CaLD background are entitled to the same level of service that is available to other members of the community.
4. The WA Language Services Policy	This policy aims to ensure that language is not a barrier to services and programs for people who require assistance in English. These people are defined as Indigenous people, migrants and those who are deaf or hearing impaired. The focus is on interpreters and translators and AUSLAN services.
5. The WA Charter of Multiculturalism	This charter presents a vision of creating “A society in which respect for mutual difference is accompanied by equality of opportunity within a framework of democratic citizenship”. The charter reflects the key National and International legislative requirements and aims to promote equal participation and engagement of all people in WA through the recognition of a flexible approach to service provision to reflect the diverse needs of a multicultural society.
6. WA Office of Multicultural Interests Strategic Plan 2009-2013	This plan highlights the three key objectives of encouraging participation, equity and promotion of the cultural and linguistic diversity within WA. One of the actions is to identify the barriers to equal engagement and provide information and advice on their removal.
7. The Policy Framework for Substantive Equality (WA) (2005)	This framework provides the operational structure to deliver the concept of a differentiated citizenship as outlined in the WA Charter of Multiculturalism. The main objective is to achieve public services free from racial discrimination and to promote awareness of the diverse needs of people within WA to reinforce the idea that “If you want to treat me equally, you may have to be prepared to treat me differently”.

Engaging with Public Services

Can you **help** with a research project?

I'd like to find out about **your experience** of **talking to someone** in a Government Service. For example, this might be at:

- A hospital or GP appointment
- The Housing department
- Your local sports centre
- Education services
- Your local community centre
- Centrelink

I'd like to **ask you** about **what it was like** when you were **talking** to someone in this service:

- What was helpful?
- What was **unhelpful**?
- How did it make you feel?
- What would make it better?

Hearing **your experiences** may help us to make **services better** in the future.

The researcher is **Susan Booth** from **Edith Cowan University**

Consent form

Susan Booth, the researcher will visit you **in your home or another convenient place.**

She will **talk to you** to find out about **your experience.**



Susan will **videotape** the interview.

This will take about 90 minutes.

All the **tapes** will be kept in a **safe place** at the University. We'd like to **keep** the tapes so we can use the information **future research.**

The results may be published or used in **teaching** or at **conferences.** **You** can get a **copy of the results** if you want. We **won't show** anyone else the actual videos unless you give your permission.



Your name and personal details will **NOT** be used **at any time**

You can **stop** the interview if you want or pull out at any time. It's your choice.



What are the benefits?



The research will help people to know more about the difficulties you face

It may help us to **improve** services

It may help other people in the same situation as you

Consent

I know about the project and I understand what is involved.

I am willing to take part.

Signed: _____

Appendix 5 People with aphasia: Personal characteristics

Participant	Aetiology	Physical difficulties*	Education	Living situation	Work
Daniel	stroke	Mild right hemiparesis	Left school at 14years	Lives alone in sheltered housing with supportive family nearby	Did not resume work after his stroke. Qualified boilermaker/welder
Gwen	stroke	Mild right hemiparesis	Left school at 16 years	Lives alone in retirement village. Supportive family nearby	Did not resume work after her stroke. Previously was a manager with medicare and in a GP surgery
Roslyn	stroke	Mild right hemiparesis	Left school at 16 years	Lives alone. Daughter and family visit regularly	Studied secretarial studies on leaving school. She was working part time as a secretary for an insurance company and for a law practice at the time of her stroke. Now works part time at a catering company and a law practice
Patricia	stroke	none	Diploma in medical technology (1949)	Lives with daughter	Worked in the medical industry until she migrated to Australia from the USA 50 years ago
Jacqui	encephalitis	none	Left school at 16 years	Lives with husband. Supportive family nearby	Secretarial studies on leaving school. Worked as a co-ordinator for refrigeration company at time of neurological event

*Self-reported severity of physical difficulties

Appendix 6 People with aphasia: Communication characteristics:

Participant	Main communication features	Key communication support strategies used by the researcher
Daniel	Moderate to severe word finding difficulty (WFD), attempted to write but usually this was restricted by his WFD. Used a written communication booklet to indicate personal information. Used gesture, sometimes appropriately but often non specific. Lots of yes/no minimal turns with speech lacking in content. Occasional auditory comprehension breakdown	Required considerable support, especially to facilitate expression. Researcher used specific yes/no style questioning, forced alternative questions (FAQ), verification, time, encouraged use of AAC in the form of using artefacts, encouraging writing or drawing Auditory comprehension facilitated by slowed rate, repetition and rephrasing with emphasis on key words
Gwen	Mild aphasia characterised by slower rate due to mild WFD, although, given time she usually produced the target word. Lots of non specific fillers e.g. em, um. Good auditory comprehension at conversational level	Minimal assistance required with researcher occasionally offering suggestions to aid mild WFD. Occasional clarification of intended meaning was required. Giving time was the main strategy
Roslyn	Mild aphasia characterised by WFD. Generally used circumlocution (giving associated words to convey meaning) successfully. Some low volume unintelligible mumbling at times, occasional word and sound repetition, mild dysarthria (motor speech disorder). Good auditory comprehension at conversational level	Minimal assistance required. Occasional clarification of intended meaning required. Main strategy was to give Roslyn time to respond. Occasional word suggestion to aid WFD
Patricia	Mild aphasia characterised by some hesitancy and repetition of initial sound or syllable, mild WFD, some fillers, em, um used regularly. Slower rate due to WFD. Used circumlocution appropriately. Reported very occasional auditory comp breakdown, although not apparent during interview	Time, verification of intended meaning, occasional suggestion offered to facilitate word finding. Researcher used slower rate of speech to circumvent any potential comprehension breakdown
Jacqui	Mild aphasia characterised by occasional WFD, especially with less common words. Used circumlocution effectively. Described some auditory comprehension breakdown, especially in group situations, watching TV. Not observed during the interview, although slower rate of speech used by researcher throughout. Described some short term memory loss	Time, occasional verification of intended meaning. Researcher used slower rate of speech to circumvent any potential comprehension breakdown.

Appendix 7 ESL speakers: Personal characteristics

Participant	Education	Living situation	Work
Anita	Completed secondary school in Burundi Worked as a secondary school teacher (history and geography)	Lives with her husband and three children. No other immediate family in Australia	Home maker
Farah	Attended secondary school in Australia and left when she was 16 years. Attended TAFE for a Business studies course, although failed to complete	Lives with parents and other siblings	Cashier in an Iraqi grocery store
Winston	Completed secondary school in Africa. Recently completed a Diploma in Community Services at TAFE	Lives with his wife and 4 children.. Other family members also live nearby	At the time of the interview he was completing his Diploma with a view to finding employment in a Migrant Resource Centre. Works part time for the interpreting and translation service in WA
Jin	Second year university student	House shares with other international students. No other family members in Australia	University student
Katrina	Second year university student	Lives in university accommodation with other international students. Has an aunt, uncle and cousins living in Perth, WA	University student

Appendix 8 ESL speakers: Communication characteristics:

Participant	Main communication features	Key communication support strategies used by the researcher
Anita	Functional communication. Some grammatical and word choice errors. English spoken with an African accent. Fully intelligible speech. No obvious auditory comprehension breakdown.	Minimal assistance required. Researcher used slightly slower rate of speech and emphasis of key words. Other strategies included, giving time, occasional verification of intended meaning and offering suggestion to facilitate word finding.
Farah	Functional ESL skills. No evidence of auditory comprehension breakdown. English spoken with a middle eastern accent, but fully intelligible. Some word choice errors which she usually 'talked around'. Grammatical errors noted.	Minimal assistance required. Mainly giving Farah time to express herself. Occasional verification of intended meaning was required (paraphrasing and yes/no styled questions).
Winston	Functional communication competency using ESL. English spoken with an African-French accent, grammatical errors, some word choice errors and tendency to be slightly verbose, probably due to restricted vocabulary. Fully intelligible speech. No specific auditory comprehension difficulty noted.	Minimal assistance required. Occasional clarification of intended meaning required. Main strategy was to give Winston time to respond. Occasional word suggestion to aid WFD.
Jin	Functional communication with occasional breakdown conveying information due to restricted vocabulary and Malay accent. Occasional unintelligibility as a result, accentuated by fast rate of speech. Grammatical errors noted. Occasional auditory comprehension difficulty observed.	Time, verification of intended meaning (paraphrasing, yes/no styled questions), occasional suggestion offered to facilitate word finding. Auditory comprehension facilitated by slowed rate, repetition and rephrasing with emphasis on key words.
Katrina	Functional communication with some restricted vocabulary, especially with more specific descriptions. Fully intelligible speech. English spoken with a Creole accent. Very occasional auditory comprehension breakdown.	Time, occasional verification of intended meaning (paraphrasing), and suggestions offered to promote word finding. Auditory comprehension facilitated by slower rate, clarification, repetition

Interview Guide

Before we start, I'd like you to know that I'm expecting there might be some communication difficulties during the interview. If this happens, we can work together to try and get through any difficulties. You can stop the interview at any time. It's important that we hear about your experiences so we know how to help other people who have experienced similar difficulties.

Tell me about a time you have had a face-to-face encounter with a service where you thought there was some communication difficulty.

What was helpful (facilitator) or unhelpful (barrier) when communicating with someone in this situation?

Possible prompts

- How was it helpful/unhelpful
- How could they have been more helpful
- How did you feel?
- How did it affect what you thought about yourself and of them?
- How did it affect your future interactions with other service providers (any long lasting effects)?
- Anything else? What was helpful (facilitator) when communicating with someone in this situation?
- How do you think your ability to engage with public services is influenced by the behaviour and responses of the people you have to communicate with?

Other possible prompts

- Do you have any thoughts about that
- Do you have any ideas why that might be
- What's your experience of that?
- How would it have been if it wasn't like that?
- How could the service improve to help you communicate and take part in the future?
- Did the interaction leave you feeling like a competent person? (explore Why)

Appendix 10 Examples of verbal codes

Selected examples of the participant perceptions of the service provider's verbal behaviours (*E=enables C= constrains)			
Code	Condensed meaning unit	Participant	Context
Paraphrasing (E)*	1. "student services I understood, they explain clearly and they asked me 'did you understand' after each sentence and they paraphrase what I say"	1. Katrina (ESL)	1. Talking about a positive experience with student services at her university
Verification (E)	2. "he did actually ask me a couple of times and have you taken it in?" 3. "checking after each sentence ...not only at the end of a conversation"	2. Jacqui (PWA) 3. Katrina (ESL)	2. In a discussion about a helpful Centre link manager 3. General discussion about what is helpful in service encounters
Clear explanations (E)	4. "he was actually explaining each line to me"	4. Jacqui (PWA)	4. Talking about the Centrelink manager who helped her with form filling
Complex words and use of 'slang' (C)*(E)	5. "we're like no don't understand...not maybe use slang words"	5. Katrina (ESL)	5. Talking about university lectures often using complex words and Australian slang words
Accent (C)	6. "I don't want to have an Asian doctor..one of the things I have with the stroke is very bad hearing" 7. "it's kind of hard to understand... they're from a different country... so they have their own way of speaking English, I've got my own way of speaking English so there's..that clash"	6. Gwen (PWA) 7. Jin (ESL)	6. A request to approachable receptionist in her GP surgery. 7. Recalling the difficulty he had understanding the English accents of his university lecturers who were ESL speakers
Asking specific yes/no questions (C) (E)	8. "he can say "Oh 3 zones?' probably she'll say yes, that's a better... way than just repeating himself and saying 'what do you want', what do you want"	8. Farah (ESL)	8. Her observations of an interaction between an ESL bus driver and a female passenger who had limited English

Appendix 11 Examples of non verbal codes

Selected examples of the participant perceptions of the service provider's non verbal behaviours			
Code	Condensed meaning unit	Participant	Context
Rate (E) (C)	1. "she talks quite slowly for me to me, yeah she's very good"	1. Jacqui (PWA)	1. Talking about her GP
	2. "if they try to speak faster than me I'll really struggle"	2. Wilson (ESL)	2. General discussion about behaviours which can make understanding difficult
Facial Expression (E) (C)	3. "if somebody smiles at you when you come through the door, you feel so much better"	3. Roslyn (PWA)	3. Talking about how service encounters could be improved at Centrelink
	4 "a smile, one of the few important things... the most important things"	4. Farah (ESL)	4. General discussion
Time (E) (C)	5. "maybe they can just ask...the question again and just give time for that people, to try to reply back"	5. Farah (ESL)	5. Speaking about her interactions with staff at TAFE and other migrant resource agencies
	6. "I felt rushed..I couldn't speak you know"	6. Daniel (PWA)	6. Talking about what was unhelpful with the receptionist in a hospital radiological department
Tone (E) (C)	7. "I walked in and...she said 'uh I know you (in a friendly, welcoming tone) and it was therefore everything"	7. Gwen (PWA).	7. Talking about how the receptionist's positive tone of voice had a favourable impact on how she felt.
	8. "some people go like, "oh you can speak English, hmm (rolls eyes) ok, you know (smiles) and they keep going in that tone of voice which is really not nice, you know"	8. Farah (ESL)	8. General discussion about service encounters

Appendix 11 (continued)

Selected examples of the participant perceptions of the service provider's non verbal behaviours (continued)			
Code	Condensed meaning unit	Participant	Context
Courtesy (includes active listening, eye contact, verbal greetings etc) (E) (C)	9. "thank you would be nice, he wasn't interested in me at all"	9. Roslyn (PWA)	9. In a discussion about an unhelpful Centrelink employee
	10. "when I talk they like.. for example they stay silent and listen and try to understand like and listen"	10. Katrina (ESL)	10. Speaking about how her lecturers try to help
	11. "because neither of the receptionist or the doctor would listen"	11. Gwen (PWA)	11. Speaking about why it was difficult to communicate with her GP and the receptionist
	12. "I believe eye contact is important, some people like, they go like smile but (looks away)"	12. Farah (ESL)	12. General discussion about communication access
	13. "if they are looking away, or just...I have trouble processing the words"	13. Patricia (PWA)	13. General discussion
AAC (E)	14. *D: I'd say that's right, normally that's right.. R: so normally they read what you've written? D: yes R: and use this (pad of paper) D: yes	14. *Daniel (PWA)	14. Talking about the helpful strategies that staff in TAFE use

Appendix 12: Analytic chart

Meaning Unit	Condensed meaning unit Description close to the text	Condensed meaning unit Interpretation of the underlying meaning	Sub theme	Theme
<p>1. Gwen (PWA): “Yeah, em, it was just as if we were talking to one another....em....as if....em....em....as if we were....as if we were....two people talking”</p> <p>2. Farah (ESL): “sometimes they go like oh, “what do you mean?” ((in a patronising tone))....they just want to trick you and make you not really em go on with the communication”</p>	<p>1. Being treated as a normal communicator</p> <p>2. Feeling put down and discouraged</p>	<p>1. Helping to maintain face</p> <p>2. Not willing to engage in face saving work. Discriminatory behaviour</p>	Issues of face work	Interaction as a process of extending or with holding empathy and power.
<p>3. Jin (ESL): “probably she’s not in a good mood or something else like that”</p> <p>4. Patricia (PWA): “she had obviously gotten up on the wrong side of the bed or something or she had a fight....before hand or something’.</p>	<p>3. The communication partner’s bad mood can have an effect. It’s not just about the communication difficulty</p>	<p>3. The service’s providers mood may influence their desire/ability to act in a considerate manner</p>	Service provider’s mood	
<p>5. Winston (ESL): “I think eh, I felt good, I felt well because eh when you are speaking to someone and the first thing is the how he is showing the empathy of what you are saying so he’s forwarding his attachment to your feelings it’s good for the inclusion in Australia that’s what I said, how am I going to live here”</p> <p>6. Jin (ESL): "with a little bit of em....positive let people have a bit of a positive attitude to people who can’t get words out and can’t absorb things properly, yeah”</p>	<p>5. Demonstrating awareness and respect for their difficult past experiences in their home country</p> <p>6. Communication partner displaying a positive approach to those with communication difficulty can help with their confidence</p>	<p>5. Communication partner offering understanding, sympathy and compassion makes the person feel supported and facilitates the flow of symbolic power relations</p> <p>6. Implicitly communicates a willingness to offer help and compassion</p>	Emotional attachment	

