Developing a new procedure for assessing communication in severe aphasia: The Famous People Protocol

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Background

Only the Boston Assessment of Severe Aphasia (BASA, Helm-Estabrooks et al.,1989l) measures its extent and variation in performances in people with severe aphasia

No systematic measure looks beyond limitations on language to describe how   individuals with aphasia convey their knowledge and competence

The Famous People Protocol (FPP) is our attempt to provide such a measure

Goals

1) To determine what an individual knows about a topic and how he or she communicates that knowledge when speech is moderately to severely impaired

2) To provide clinicians with a tool for observing how their clients both use-- and can be encouraged to use--strategies to communicate their knowledge.via Supported Conversation (Kagan, 1998) and Conversational Coaching (Hopper, Holland & Rewega, 2002.).

Developing FPP

Approximately 30 speakers with aphasia, and 15 comparison persons participated in pilot testing, to choose a group of photographs of famous people that were recognized by a majority of them

These individuals represented a spectrum of ages and education levels.

Final stimuli comprised photographs of 24 famous people:
     easily recognized entertainers.
     world and sports figures
     a selection US Presidents
          &
     28 related questions answerable by one or two words.

Scoring uses a 4-point system--total possible score 100
     3 points= obtained by naming or by providing cues very clearly specificy the person pictured
     2 points= responding to first names with correct last names, or providing at least 2 related but insufficient cues
     1 point= answering 3 yes/ not questions correctly
     0 points= no recognition, or failure to communicate it

EXAMPLE:
Photo of Elizabeth Taylor (answers from aphasic

participants)
     3 points.. saying name, or providing cues:
     "movie star, husbands...many....WhiteShoulders....Diamonds"

     2 points a) finishing experimenter cue "Elizabeth"-----
     with "Taylor"
          b)providing inexact but relevant cues..."star, friend Michael....."
     1 point   answering 3 relevant questions correctly
          Did she star in Cleopatra?
          Did she have a lot of husbands?
          Is she Elizabeth Taylor?

EXAMPLE
          Photo for related information questions
Concerns:

     Q   Will FPP work across the aphasia age span?

     A   The 2 youngest aphasic subjects (1 pilot, 1 in current database, scored 99.

     Q   Will FPP too steeped in US pop culture?

     A   Yes, but it is easy to translate to others, AND in addition
     The single person to score 100 was a comparison Canadian native
     A Spanish-English aphasic speaker,living in the US for only 5 years, scored 99

RESULTS

Current Database comprises 50 aphasic speakers and 10 comparison non-aphasic speakers who meet AphasiaBank criteria

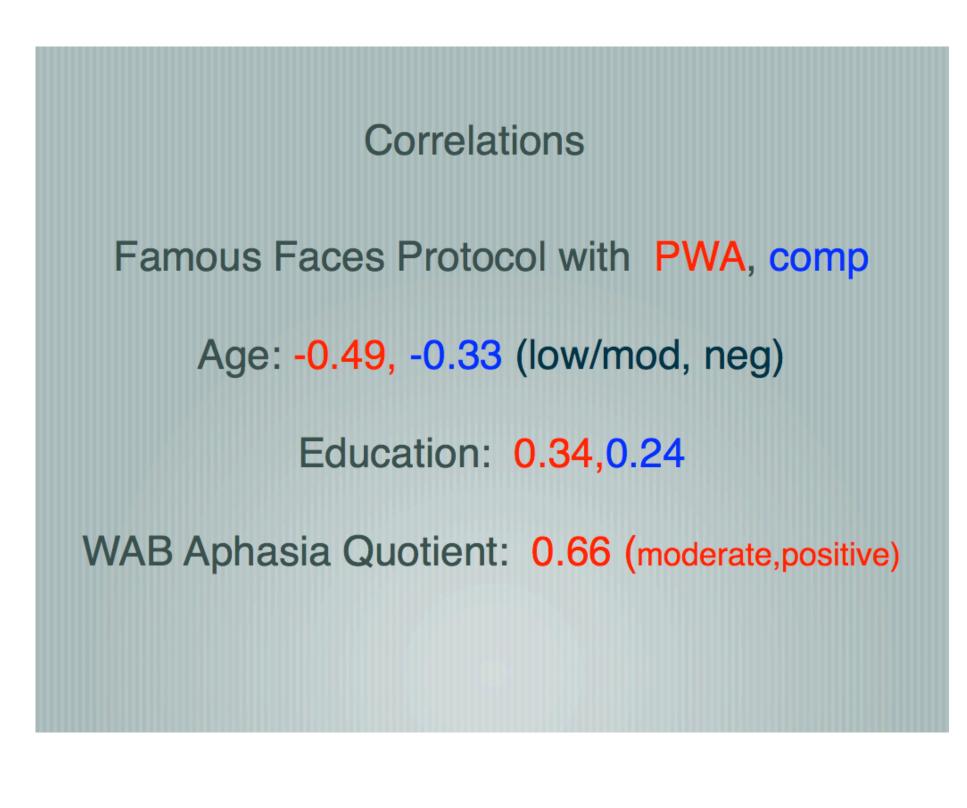Videotapes of some pilot PWA and the current final database are available on AphasiaBank

80 speakers with aphasia have been involved in project to date

30 PWA furnished pilot data

50 PWA in current final database
10 comparison non aphasic individuals

Although designed to furnish a task in which persons with severe aphasias/AOS can participate, the database includes
PWAs with anomic, Broca, Wernicke, Conduction, and Global, as determined by WAB

Demographic characteristics

	Comparison	PWA
Age -mean (range)	56.3 (18-79)	59.1(31-79)
Gender	40% F	36% F
Education mean (sd)	16.7 (3.3)	15.0 (3.1)

Correlations

Famous Faces Protocol with PWA, comp

Age: -0.49, -0.33 (low/mod, neg)

Education: 0.34,0.24

WAB Aphasia Quotient: 0.66 (moderate,positive)

Stem and Leaf Display – FP Scores
Aphasia FP Score Range = 20-99
Comparison FP Score Range = 91-100

Comparison Scores	20-100	Aphasia Scores
	2	0779
	3	78
	4	8
	5	222
	6	1333558
	7	022233666679
	8	012356777888
999876541	9	000223489
0	10	

DISCUSSION

We have developed, modified and finalized a simple and by all reports, pleasant to experience, measure to allow individuals with severe aphasia to demonstrate   their (quite possibly) minimal competency in conveying their real-world   knowledge.

Clinical implications include
:
          Demonstrating to clinicians and families what strategies aphasic individuals use to communicate their knowledge,

          Suggesting effective approaches to enhance the use of such strategies

Research implications include:

          Providing researchers with a tool for studying severe aphasia

          Providing normative data for studies that, until recently, have excluded those with severe aphasia.

CONCLUSIONS

          Individuals with severe output problems, as well as those who
          have global aphasia have not been well studied, possibly because   of the difficulties in describing their (possibly minimal) strengths .

The FPP is a potential tool that will permit further exploration of the neuroanatomy of these strengths.

Clinicians and supportive others might use approaches such as these to find useful way to exploit strength of PWAs, however minimal.

References

Gefen, T, Weinecke, C., Whitney, K., Weintraub, S, Mesulum, M-M., & Rogalski,   E., (2013) Naming vs knowing faces in primary progressive aphasia: A tale of 2   hemispheres Neurology, 13,7 658-664,

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     Boston Assessment of Severe Aphasia. (Austin TX: Pro-Ed).

Kagan, A. (1998). Supported Conversation for adults with aphasia: Methods and   resources for training conversation partners. Aphasiology, 12, 1998 816-830.

Hopper, T., Holland, A. & Rewega, M. (2002). Conversational coaching: Treatment outcomes and future directions. Aphasiology, 16, 745-762.

Appendix

FPP is available for downloading as follows:
     Go to TalkBank.org
     Follow link to AphasiaBank
     Follow link to Browsable Database
     Follow link to English
     Follow link to Famous
     Websites SCALE, Whiteside, & Wozniak contain videos of a majority of the finalized protocol. Others are pilot versions.
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The videotapes with the designations dated 2013 represent the final version of   FPP. Previous FPPs are to be considered exploratory.

WE WELCOME CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS AND ARE AVAILABLE FOR ADVICE CONCERNING OUR EXPERIENCES AT MAKING IT "UNITED STATES FRIENDLY"ACROSS A WIDE AGE SPAN.

The finalized version of FPP was put on on the AphasiaBank website in June, 2013.

It includes photographs in both Keynote (Mac) and Powerpoint presentation modes, along with scoring instructions and guidelines.

The immediate goal of AphasiaBank is construction of a shared database of multimedia interactions for the study of communication in aphasia. The ultimate goal of this work is the improvement of evidence-based therapy for aphasia.