Using narrative and conversation analysis to explore interaction in semantic dementia

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With thanks to:
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Shaping foundations to research and practice*

Advocacy EDUCATE
Lived experience

Life story work

Dementia services
SLT 1992+

2001-2009 Manager MDT models

Improving MDT dementia care

Fronto-temporal dementia

HV: context Interaction at home

Activity creative practice

Semantic dementia

- Is a type of frontotemporal dementia:
  - Communication: expressive skills and understanding
    - Semantic variant of primary progressive aphasia
  - Relative preservation recent memory, ? long term
  - Changes in personality, emotional responses and behaviour

- Strong biomedical representation in literature:
  - Differential diagnosis & tests (e.g. Gorno-Tempini et al 2011)
  - Lack of exploration of everyday life with semantic dementia
Explore, develop, refine ... an intervention

Ethical approval
MCA 2005, Lack capacity ‘appropriate body’
NHS, Trust, University Video
Why conversation analysis (CA) and narrative....

- SLT group – ‘back story’ big in dementia
- Observe and understand interactions
- Also understand broader context of life
- In turn feed in CA – significance of behaviours
- To facilitate life story
- Topic – literature personal relevance
  - ‘Empty garrulous speech with thematic perseverations’ Kertesz (2010)
  - Maintenance of personally relevant concepts - Snowden
- If limited repertoire of knowledge how influences talk
Life story work - Products to support participation in conversation

Draws on relative preservation of long term memory in dementia
BUT

- Life story literature – general agreement positive:
  - Not without challenges (McKeown et al 2015, 2006)
  - Potentially different tasks, goals, outcomes: different disciplines (Kindell et al 2014)
  - Measurement of in-the-moment effects elusive (Gridley et al 2016)

- Different kinds of dementia...FTD/PPA?

- Could the process be uses for learning, as well as the product

- Interactional focus.....
Conversational Storytelling

Hydén et al (2011, 2013)
• Identity in storytelling
• Driving license story to 3 audiences
• Support of listener
• Not so much details but moral point

Hamilton (2008)
• Snap shots
• Identity work even in late stages
Today

- Share some data:
- Masters in Clinical Research
- PhD
- Longitudinal data
- Therapeutic implications

Doug & Karina

- Both 71
- Doug – diagnosed with SD 5 years and follow up 9 years
- Retired engineer
- Karina still working
- Thank you to them
- In mid/later stages and then late stage
  - MMSE=7/30
  - Naming test=0 ‘empty responses – this thing, one of those’
Video data – First set

- **Taken at home – 44:05 mins**
  - with wife and son (no researcher)
  - with researcher

- **Analysis:**
  - ‘Acting’ out scenes
  - Use of gaze
  - Pointing
  - Body movement within scenes
  - Intonation
  - Coordination of these

- **Collection:** ‘Enactment’ – transcribe talk and nonvocal features
Enactment

- Enactment = employment of **direct reported speech (DRS)** and/or other behaviour such as **gesture/body movement** and/or **prosody** to **depict** some aspects of reported scenes or events (Goodwin 1990, Streeck & Knapp 1992)

- Noted in aphasia post stroke – useful interactional resource to formulate actions & events in talk despite limited linguistic abilities (Wilkinson, Beeke and Maxim 2010)

- Across data set - utterances containing enactment with DRS
  - Doug = 54
  - Researcher = 1
  - Son and Wife = 0
Interventions and Field Notes

- Increase in use of hands when talking since the start of the dementia

- K: If you are talking about a walk I get all the, you know all this (Karina gestures pointing and moving arms about).

- Noted within field notes e.g. comedian
Data – 2 striking patterns

- Use of intact indexical abilities
  - Use of proforms - *this, that one, do*
  - Pointing
  - Enactment allows listener to recover meaning

- Dialogic enactment
  - *Depicting* speakers in a scene in conversation
Clip One: Indexical Abilities

- 1a) Searching the house
- 1b) In the shops

IRAS, R & D, Consent to share video data
video
Creating the Scene – filling up empty

- running around saying *where’s this and where’s the other*  
  ((eyes darting about))

  Searching the house – ‘this’ ‘the other’ items in house

- an say *oh yeah we need to get those*  
  ((two handed ‘picking up’ in front))

  and then *we’ve got to go and get the other ones*  
  ((left hand point to left side))

  and *we got to go on that ways*  
  ((right hand point to right side))

  ‘those’ ‘the other ones’ items in the shop
Change in fluency

- 018-021 = dysfluent, word finding difficulties, formulation

- 021+ = increase in fluency
See transcript Example TWO

Scene created – “that” “those” – *shirts*

Effective use of resources – Karina’s summary: “you can chose”
video
Interviews – son’s comment - “Making Connections”:
S: You start getting the hand gestures and he’ll be almost instead of using the word he’ll be describing the action of what he’d be doing if he was doing that thing
Clip Three – Acting out conversations

Acting out...Chatting to others:

Starts with 2 speakers...

you say *oh where are we going*
((left hand up gaining attention))
some would say *de de de*
((left hand pointing beats ))
say *oh right thanks*
((right hand up, acknowledgement))
Clip 3 continued - 3 others

Usually its not....you talk

you just say *yeah it’s I’ve had a brilliant day*

*(hand and eye point to left side)*

*Did you have a good night’*

*(hand and eye point to front)*

*Yeah that was brilliant*

*(hand and eye point to right side)*

*what de de*

*(point to front again)*
Example Three
Why?

- Language disorder compromised ‘standard’ response
- A way/strategy to enable him to use resources he still has
  Simmons-Mackie and Damico (1997)
- Enables him to show rather than tell - Show conversations
- Clearly hold scene – sequences
  - Memory
  - Visuospatial skills
- Response of other person scaffold abilities
  - Positive listening
  - ‘Summaries’
  - Get the general gist
  - ‘on topic’ but not ‘on answer’
3 years later....
Changes

- Further decline in language skills
- More difficult to get gist
- But still respond to fragments
  - Is that what you tell ‘em

- Still enactments
- Singing, rhythm, clapping
- Posh voice.....
video
Interviews

- Can you have a conversation?
Therapy

- Wife very expert – focus on interaction not transaction
  - Can teach us more than we can teach her....
- Life story book
- Life story interactional information

- Making Connections with me
  - Social connections
  - Posh voice
  - Music
Next Steps

• Mix of interaction-focused therapy + life story work

• Interaction focused life story work

• An approach to working with a person and/or their family to find out about their biographical life storylines (past, present and future), documenting such material in a meaningful way and using the products to enhance everyday social interaction and relationship
Next Steps

- Life story process – learn about and enhance adaptation to interaction
- Product – leave a resource behind
Thank you for listening – Questions?