Rudeness, Strangeness, and Verbosity: Complex communicative deficits in acquired communication disorders

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Speech pathologists need valid and reliable ways of measuring communication. The complexity of spontaneous communication is difficult to succinctly and comprehensively capture, which has encouraged speech pathologists to use indirect measures of communication (e.g., tests, rating scales, surveys) in clinical practice with people with who have communication disorders. Although broadly valuable, these measurement strategies are removed from the details of people's everyday communication, diluting their usefulness for important clinical tasks. This talk will examine features of conversations involving people with (what has often been termed as) "cognitive communication disorders". Cognitive communication disorders are associated with traumatic brain injury and damage to the right hemisphere of the brain, and often manifest in unusual communication behaviours (e.g., rudeness, inappropriateness, verbosity, tangentiality). I will present some preliminary findings on turn-taking in conversations involving people with verbosity following traumatic brain injury, and conversations involving people with conversational problems following right hemisphere stroke. I will also discuss the methodological challenges associated with measuring communication for these populations, and highlight directions for the development of speech pathology assessment tools.