



The **PRAGMATICS**
PROFILE of Everyday
Communication Skills in
Adults

Manual

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Manual

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The Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Adults

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The Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Adults: Self-Report Version

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The basic inspiration for developing the *Pragmatics Profile* was our belief that an adequate picture of a person's language functioning cannot be gained without some insight into that person's communication in everyday life. We feel strongly that such a perspective can help enrich the findings of other language assessments and guide intervention towards goals that will have a meaningful impact on people's experience as communicators.

Such a perspective is often difficult to gain in typical clinical approaches to assessment, such as standardized testing and observations of interactions in clinical settings. Observations in home settings can be valuable but are costly in time and resources and may still not provide a picture of a person's communication in a broad range of situations.

The increased focus in linguistics (Levinson, 1983; Sperber and Wilson, 1986) and in the study of speech and language pathology on *pragmatics*, the study of the use of language in context, was a major influence on the development of the *Profile*. Pragmatics is concerned with the purposes for which utterances are being used, the assumptions made by speakers and listeners and with how communication is achieved. A pragmatic approach is influencing theory, research and, to an increasing degree, practice in the area of speech and language pathology (Prutting, 1982; Gallagher and Prutting, 1983; Smith and Leinonen, 1992; Lesser and Milroy, 1993; Craig, 1995). Some authors have talked of a 'pragmatics revolution' (Lund and Duchan, 1983).

Some years ago we attempted to contribute to this 'revolution' by developing a method of exploring communication that would provide a practitioner with a picture of communication *outside* the clinical context and *within* the context of everyday life. Our original work was directed towards the communication of young preschool children with their families and other carers (Dewart and Summers, 1988). Later we extended this work to include an older age group – children of primary school age (*The Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Children*, Dewart and Summers, 1995).

Our approach attempted to involve parents, teachers and other carers as active partners in exploring the child's communication by providing them with a means of sharing their knowledge about the child in a structured way that would be useful for the practitioner. Central to the approach was a structured interview through which typical communicative behaviours could be described.

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We became aware that this approach was not just applicable to children and that similar means might be devised for investigating communication in adults. A number of professionals involved with adults with communication difficulties encouraged us to think about this possibility. As a result we began the development of the *Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Adults*.

As before, we intended to try to capture some of the quality of a person's day-to-day interactions through descriptions provided in an informal interview conducted with a family member or someone who knows that person well. However, as we began to develop and to pilot the interview, we became aware that for many, if not most people, it was inappropriate to ask for an account of their communication from others without giving them the opportunity to provide their own account and impressions. We decided we would have to devise two versions of the interview, one for a family member, friend, spouse or other close associate of the person and one for the person him or herself. We determined that the two versions should parallel one another so that client and associate were asked about the same situations and experiences. We had, therefore, to devise questions which would allow one person to be interviewed about another but also, in a slightly reworded form, which could allow a person to reflect on his or her own communication.

It was also important to us that the focus of the questions should be on communication, not on communication difficulties. We intended that they could be applied to *anyone*, not just people with impairments affecting communication. Where the person in question does have such an impairment, the questions should be applicable, regardless of the type of impairment or its cause. These requirements for the questions and their wording proved at times to be a tall order. However, we hope that we have been able to go some way towards realising these aims. We welcome feedback from users on how aspects of the *Profile* work in practice and with different client groups.

CHAPTER 2

Pragmatic Aspects of Language

We set out to provide a way of investigating a person's typical use of language in everyday situations and to do so within a framework derived from the field of pragmatics. Pragmatics can be broadly defined as referring to 'the use of language in context, by real speakers and hearers in real situations' (Bates, 1974). It is this broad perspective of a person's use of language in real situations to which the *Pragmatics Profile* is directed.

The ability to communicate successfully involves knowing more than the meaning of words and how to combine them in sentences. It involves knowing how to use language to interact with others by giving them messages that are informative, to the point and fitting to the occasion. It also involves relating our use of language to that of other people. We relate to the knowledge, understanding and style of communication of each person with whom we communicate so that we can participate effectively in conversations. Pragmatics is seen by linguists as involving a set of rules that underlie the appropriate use of language in specific social contexts and that underlie our ability to infer from what people say the meaning that they intended.

The precise formulation of these rules and even a precise definition of the scope of pragmatics are complex and controversial issues (Levinson, 1983). The range of pragmatic topics may be seen as extending from ones that relate to language structure (such as the way cohesion between utterances can affect choice of pronoun and syntactic structure) through to aspects of language usage that are relatively independent of language structure (such as the effect of context or conversational partner on what it is appropriate to say). We have adopted a broad interpretation of the scope of pragmatics that includes how communicative intentions are expressed and how other people's communicative intentions are understood, how conversations are conducted and how communication is affected by aspects of situational context.

Approaches to pragmatics

The main concepts from pragmatics which have influenced applications to the study of everyday communication and communication impairment, cannot be reviewed in detail here (see Smith and Leinonen, 1992; Lesser and Milroy, 1993). They include the notion of intentionality, based on speech act theory (Searle, 1969): the study of the intentions a speaker aims to convey and the listener's perception of these intentions. Other major concepts include the notion of conversational implicature (Grice, 1975), the idea that in conversation people constantly make inferences about what the speaker meant, based on information that is not actually encoded in what was said.

Linked with this point is the importance of cooperation between participants in a conversation so that each can assume that the others are adhering to certain conventions (or conversational maxims, see Grice, 1975). These conventions might include making what they say as short, clear and to the point as possible. Listeners have to make subtle judgements about which, of all the possible implications they could draw, are those intended by the speaker. Relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986) argues that these judgements are based on the degree of relevance to the listener's previously held assumptions and the degree of cognitive effort involved. Appropriateness is another important concept, whereby people have to know when it is appropriate or inappropriate to use a particular expression, depending on sociolinguistic variables such as cultural or subcultural norms, the communicative situation and the status of the participants.

While these theoretical concepts from the area of pragmatics have influenced our development of questions for the *Profile*, there is no close dependence on any theoretical model. Rather, insights from a number of models and approaches have guided our choice of questions. Some aspects of pragmatics are not readily available to what can be termed 'meta-pragmatic' or 'meta-communicative' awareness and this had implications for the topics which could be covered in the *Profile*.

Pragmatics and communication difficulties

There has been a growing interest in the relevance of pragmatics to speech and language pathology (Gallagher and Prutting, 1983; Gallagher, 1991a; McTear and Conti-Ramsden, 1992; Smith and Leinonen, 1992). Characterisations of a client's language that are based on phonology, syntax and semantics do not capture the impact that difficulties in these areas may have on the person's ability to use language to communicate with others. In addition, aspects of pragmatic function may themselves be impaired.

Approaches to the study of communicative impairments reflect two different ways of thinking of the relationship between pragmatic aspects of language and other language components (Craig, 1983; 1995; McTear and Conti-Ramsden, 1992). One way is to consider pragmatics as a separate component alongside others such as syntax, morphology and phonology, known as a modular approach. The other way is to treat pragmatics as an integral element of an interactive system that interlinks linguistic forms and functions. This can be termed an integral approach. From the modular viewpoint, impairments in pragmatic aspects of language may occur, just as syntax or phonology might be impaired. From the integral viewpoint, impairments in other aspects of language will interact with pragmatics so that, for example, problems with language form, such as syntactic difficulties, will interact with and have an impact on pragmatic function. It is this integral model which is closest to our thinking in developing the *Pragmatics Profile*. The *Profile* is not aimed at investigating problems specific to the area of pragmatics but rather at investigating how pragmatic functions are achieved

and how they may be influenced by any communicative impairments a person may have.

There is a close link between pragmatics and the area of social competence, the abilities that underlie participation in social interactions. The boundaries between these two domains have been hard to draw both conceptually (Levinson, 1983), and in relation to the study of communication impairment (Craig, 1995). We have not held to any rigid definitions of these two areas in determining the scope of the *Profile*, but have tried to make the focus of our questions the *use of language* in social situations, rather than dealing with social interactions more generally.

It is important to consider the distinction between actual communicative behaviour (performance) and underlying knowledge (competence). This distinction is discussed in relation to pragmatic difficulties by Smith and Leinonen (1992). An impairment in underlying pragmatic knowledge may be thought to characterise the language of some people with severe problems in communication such as those associated with autism. Other people with learning disabilities, where communication problems may be less severe, may still lack some aspects of pragmatic knowledge. In other people communicative difficulties may arise, not because of a basic impairment in pragmatic knowledge, but because of problems in putting that knowledge to use. Such problems might arise, for example, where a brain injury had impaired a person's ability to understand talk at the usual speed or to produce utterances of any complexity. While these problems might not necessarily affect pragmatics directly, they certainly would have indirect effects on the person's ability to mobilise that knowledge in communicative situations. Other people may have difficulties in putting their competence to use because of problems associated with lack of confidence, anxiety or a disinclination to participate in communication.

In practice, it is very difficult to determine whether difficulties occur at the level of competence or of performance. Competence cannot be assessed directly but can only be inferred from information obtained about performance. Our approach has been to focus on performance by asking people to describe a person's typical communicative behaviours.

Another important consideration is the essentially interactive nature of pragmatic aspects of language. In order for even a short conversation to occur, two or more people must take roles of both speaker and listener and collaborate in ensuring that what is said is meaningful to the other person, that turns are taken with little gap or overlap and that misunderstandings are sorted out (Sacks *et al.*, 1974). Utterances can only be judged as appropriate given particular communicative partners and in relation to what that partner has just said or done. Conversational interaction, therefore, requires a process of adjustment on a moment by moment basis to the other person's verbal and nonverbal communication. Subtle cognitive processes are involved in tailoring what is said to the knowledge of the conversational partner (Grice, 1975; Clark and Marshall, 1981; Sperber and Wilson, 1986). Communicative

partners tend to modify their style of interaction in accommodating to the person with communication disabilities. Sometimes these accommodations may facilitate communication but sometimes they may inhibit or limit it (Smith and Leinonen, 1992; Lesser and Milroy, 1993). The *Profile* provides the opportunity for both partners to contribute their perspectives and may provide some insight into this process.

Development of pragmatics through the lifespan

A developmental perspective is relevant even when adults are being considered. Most developmental accounts of pragmatics concentrate on early and later childhood (for a review, see McTear and Conti-Ramsden, 1992). During these years children expand the range of communicative intentions that they express and increase the sophistication of the forms they use to express them. In adolescence and into adult life, new social groups and new occupational and family roles all place demands on people to extend their range of communicative styles and to develop ways of using language that are appropriate for different settings. With ageing, alongside cognitive and physical changes, the way people are viewed by others can lead to modifications in communicative styles. It is intended that the *Profile* can provide a way of exploring communication at stages in the lifespan from adolescent through to elderly person.

Assessing pragmatic aspects of language

The development of suitable assessments for pragmatic aspects of language has proved to be a challenge for a number of reasons which link with our previous discussion of pragmatics. Lesser and Milroy (1993) comment on the lack of adequate instruments of assessment geared to examine pragmatics and say that this is largely because of the diverse and contentious nature of the knowledge base in pragmatics on which they draw. A number of authors have pointed out that a change in way of thinking is involved in adopting a pragmatic perspective on the study of language impairments (Lund and Duchan, 1983; Prutting and Kirchner, 1983; Gallagher, 1991b). Gallagher comments that initial expectations may have been that tests and sets of norms for pragmatic skills would emerge, similar in form to those available for assessing language structure. 'Thinking in new ways has been difficult, and the degree of change that was needed in order to implement pragmatic models was not fully anticipated' (Gallagher, 1991a, p.6)

A number of problems emerge when approaches to assessment traditionally used in other areas of language assessment are applied to pragmatics. It cannot be assumed that a person's use of language in the clinic will be the same as their use of language elsewhere. Psychometric techniques, such as standardised testing do not readily lend themselves to the investigation of pragmatics. The ways in which a person's language varies with person, place and ongoing activity is at the heart of this investigation and cannot be captured by attempts to study language in a relatively context-free testing

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situation. The interactive nature of communication means that a person's use of language is influenced continuously by what other people say and do. This dynamic quality is difficult to capture in a testing paradigm. In a test situation the other person involved, the tester, is in a position of relative power, being the one to set the agenda, initiate interactions and to control changes of topic, typically asking 'known answer' questions (Searle, 1969), ones to which he or she already holds the answer.

In attempting to measure pragmatic behaviours the notion of a 'correct' response cannot easily be sustained since pragmatic behaviours are affected by so many interactional, situational, cultural and other variables. 'Appropriate' has usually been used instead of 'correct' but here subjective judgements come into play in relation to what is appropriate in different social situations. Such judgements need to take account of cultural differences and differences in individuals' styles of communication, particularly so when someone has an impairment that influences their participation in communicative interactions.

Despite the difficulties which have been outlined, a number of procedures have been devised for assessing pragmatic aspects of language in adults. Most of these have been developed for particular clinical groups, mainly for adults with aphasia. People with learning disabilities have also been the focus of some assessments (van der Gaag, 1988; see also van der Gaag and Dormandy, 1993; Calculator and Bedrosian, 1988). Assessment approaches for adults with aphasia have been reviewed by Smith and Leinonen (1992) and by Lesser and Milroy (1993) and will not be discussed in detail here. Manochiopinig and colleagues categorise the assessments into five approaches:

- observing communicative interactions for the presence of a range of verbal and nonverbal communicative acts and rating them for appropriateness (Skinner *et al.*, 1984; Prutting and Kirchner, 1987);
- observing and coding the efficiency of a person's communication in various situations (Sarno, 1965; Lomas *et al.*, 1989);
- measuring communicative success in a standardised procedure involving role-playing tasks (Holland, 1980);
- investigation involving the family concerning the person's communicative style and needs (Florance, 1981; Holland, 1982; Webster *et al.*, 1982);
- composite approaches that use several of the above techniques (Penn, 1988; Gerber and Gurland, 1989; Wirz *et al.*, 1990).

The strengths and limitations of the approaches and specific assessments are discussed by Ball *et al.*, (1991), Manochiopinig *et al.*, (1992) and Lesser and Milroy (1993). Since Manochiopinig *et al.*'s (1992) review, Lesser and Milroy (1993) have presented an approach to the investigation of conversations which offers a method of analysing in depth how conversation is managed between two individuals where at least one is aphasic.

While falling into the category that considers the perspective of the family on the person's communication, the *Pragmatics Profile* takes a quite different

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methodological approach. It does not attempt to impose ratings or other forms of measurement but takes a qualitative, descriptive approach to data collection and also considers the perspective of the individual concerned, as described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

The Approach Adopted in the *Profile*

The main features of the *Pragmatics Profile's* approach are:

- it consists of an informal interview with an open form of questioning;
- it focuses on a person's communication in daily life rather than in clinical interactions;
- it facilitates a way of working with families and carers in which their insights and knowledge are valued, encouraging them to feel that they can make a contribution to intervention and to monitoring progress;
- it provides a way of establishing a client's own perceptions, placing value on people's own insights into their experiences as communicators;
- it yields qualitative, descriptive data which can provide an added dimension to other quantitative assessments;
- it can help plan intervention that is relevant to the everyday communicative needs of clients and of those who live with or care for them.

Focus on everyday use of language

The *Profile* is concerned with how language is used in day-to-day communicative interactions. Issues of 'ecological validity' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) have often been raised in relation to assessments of language, as in many areas of neuropsychological assessment and rehabilitation. Scores from standardised tests of language carried out in typical clinical situations provide little or no insight into everyday use of language for communication (Holland, 1980). In the clinic only a small range of communicative functions are typically elicited, largely because one person holds the balance of power and is in control of the interaction. This situation can be compared with day-to-day interactions such as shopping, chatting with friends, telephoning for a doctor's appointment, buying a bus ticket, where there is a wide range of communicative partners and the person is more in control, able to make choices about the way he or she interacts, or even whether to interact at all. The *Profile* is not an assessment of success in such situations, that is it is not a test of functional communication. However, its questions about how a person uses language are grounded in concrete situations typical of day-to-day life. Through responses to these questions a picture of everyday communication is built up.

The *Profile* aims to provide a broad perspective on a person's use of language for communication in day-to-day interactions. The information is obtained indirectly through interview. The information gained is therefore always from the experience of one individual. It may be followed up with more direct observation where more detailed investigation is thought to be necessary.

Working with families and carers

One of the most important features of the *Profile* is that it places value upon the knowledge and insights provided by family members or other carers. It can establish a relationship with family members involved in caring and with care staff that respects their contribution and enhances their status. By being invited to share their experience of a client through the *Profile* interview, they can come to feel that they have an input into the impression of the client that is gained by the professional and have a role in any further work to be carried out.

In considering the questions, respondents may become more aware of aspects of the client's communication. For example, where a person has lost facility with spoken language through a stroke, a family member or carer may come to focus less on the limitations of the person's speech and more on the strategies by which he or she is managing to communicate. Similarly, someone close to a person with learning disabilities may realise that certain aspects of the person's behaviour are being used communicatively, even though they had not previously been considered in that light.

Using the information gained from the *Profile* to plan targets for intervention can encourage carers to feel that they can contribute to the work with the client and can help monitor progress.

Valuing a person's own insights

In many cases a person will have information and perceptions about their experiences of communication from which the professional practitioner can learn. We wished to provide a way for this information to be shared and thus the parallel self-report version of the *Profile* was developed.

Clients' rights to have their say and put forward their perceptions are thus enhanced. These rights are particularly important in the area of communication impairments where such opportunities may be limited and others may tend to 'speak for' the client. We therefore encourage users to make efforts to obtain the client's own perceptions through the use of the self-report interview. Even where a client's language abilities are limited, it is worth considering whether he or she might be able to respond to some of the questions.

Qualitative approach

In our experience, qualitative, descriptive information can play an important role alongside quantitative data in investigating language impairment (Dewart and Summers, 1993). As discussed above, traditional psychometric techniques and other forms of measurement are particularly problematic for pragmatic aspects of language where it is difficult to establish what is 'correct' performance and where behaviour varies on a wide range of variables depending on the situation, the partner and the purpose of the interaction.

Typical qualitative interview approaches involve a skilled interviewer conducting open-ended interviews based around a preplanned agenda, transcribing the interviews and then analysing them to determine the main themes that emerge from the data. In developing the *Profile* we have attempted to adapt these methods to provide a structured tool for the qualitative investigation of pragmatic aspects of language. The *Profile* provides a framework for an interview that can be used with different clients, with the same client over time and by different interviewers. Using the interview schedule means that interviewers do not have to devise their own questions for each client and experience can be built up of the way the questions work in practice. There is still flexibility in the way questions are asked as users become more skilled in the application of the interview.

Adoption of a qualitative approach involves a different attitude in relation to data collection and the collation and analysis of results from that associated with quantitative measures, as outlined in Chapter 5.

The findings of the *Profile* are not summarised numerically but in descriptive form. These descriptions can be used alongside scores from quantitative measures and help provide information concerning the impact of communication difficulties on the person's everyday living. They can enrich the data supplied, providing an added dimension to a set of test scores.

Form of questioning

It is intended that the *Profile* interview should be carried out in an informal style and that respondents should feel at ease while participating. The *Profile* questions are rooted in concrete events and everyday experiences to which people can readily relate. The wording of each question has been carefully selected and tried out in a variety of settings with a range of respondents. Each question had to direct respondents to the particular aspect of communication that was intended. At the same time, questions had to use language that was easily understandable, that avoided academic terminology and that would not sound formal or stilted when spoken by the interviewer.

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We have tried to make the questions relevant to the experience of any individual, irrespective of whether he or she has difficulties with communication. The questions were designed not to ask directly about communication difficulties or problem behaviours but about how communication is achieved. Difficulties and problems emerge in the course of an interviewee's responses. The questions do not seek retrospective information but focus on the person's current communication. Sometimes, however, interviewees will also want to comment on what communication was like at a previous time, perhaps before a communication disorder was acquired.

We avoided 'Yes/no' questions of the form 'Does (*name*) ever...?' or 'Do you ever...?' These may give the impression that a certain behaviour is expected. In addition, such questions may limit the range of information provided by respondents. Instead we have used open-ended questions which allow interviewees to provide their own responses and to describe the communicative behaviour in their own words.

The questions identify a particular communicative situation and ask *how* the person usually acts. The interviewee, therefore, has to provide a short description of how the person usually communicates in that situation. If the interviewee has difficulty in answering, the interviewer may use a number of prompts provided in the form of examples for each question. These can help direct the respondent to the range of behaviours the question is concerned with. The examples are for use as prompts should the interviewer wish to employ them. They are *not* intended to be presented one by one in checklist fashion. Thus the interviewee is not given the impression that a particular behaviour is expected. The emphasis is on the interviewee's own spontaneous responses.

Role in developing intervention strategies

The purpose of the *Pragmatics Profile* is not the investigation of language and communication for its own sake but for helping in developing goals and strategies for intervention and helping monitor progress in an informal way. It is hoped that its use can help empower clients and their carers to be active partners in this process. The role of the *Profile* in intervention is discussed further in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 4

Description and Development of the Profile

The *Profile* consists of two interview schedules. One of these is designed for interviewing someone who knows the client well, for example, a member of the family, a friend or a carer and is referred to as the '*other's report*' version. The second schedule is designed to be conducted with an individual about his or her own communication and is referred to as the '*self-report*' version. The two versions are parallel forms of the same interview with the wording of the questions modified appropriately. The interviews consist of a set of open-ended questions, each designed to elicit descriptions of the client's communication in a particular situation. With each question is a set of examples of possible behaviours that might occur. These examples are available for use as prompts, if the interviewee has difficulty. Responses are noted in a space provided underneath each question.

The interviews are divided into four sections, as follows:

Section A: Communicative functions

This section includes a selection of communicative functions that the person may express, such as requesting and rejecting, giving information and expressing emotion.

Section B: Response to communication

Here, questions deal with the person's reactions to and responses to communication from other people. For example, questions are asked about how the person responds to hints and to conflicting views.

Section C: Interaction and conversation

This section deals with the way the person interacts with other people and participates in conversation. Questions ask about the way conversations are typically initiated and terminated and about how conversation is repaired when breakdown occurs.

Section D: Contextual variation

This section is concerned with the way situational variables can influence a person's communication. Questions include what the person likes to talk about and which situations may cause difficulties in communicating.

The interviews are presented at the end of this manual and permission is given for these pages to be printed for convenience of administration, for recording of responses and, where relevant, for inclusion in case notes. The other's report version is identified by the use of an 'OR' icon and the self-report version by an 'SR' icon.

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The structure of the *Profile* and the topics dealt with in each section are presented at the beginning of each interview. A *record sheet* is provided for noting brief details of the person who is the focus of the interview and, if different, the interviewee. Also included is a *summary form*.

It is important that users familiarise themselves with the full information about use and administration before conducting the interview. This information may be found in Chapter 5.

Development of the *Profile*

The aim in developing the *Profile* was to provide a way of obtaining structured, descriptive information about an individual's communication to supplement other approaches to assessment. Our decision to opt for an essentially descriptive, qualitative approach has coincided with an increasing trend towards the acceptance of qualitative research methods in psychology (Robson, 1993), in speech and language therapy (Eastwood, 1988) and in social science research (Richardson, 1996).

In developing the *Profile* for adults we drew on the approach of the *Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Children* (Dewart and Summers, 1995) and decided to maintain a similar structure and to address similar aspects of communication functioning.

The four main sections remain the same. The selection of areas of pragmatic functioning as topics for the questions was guided by reference to the literature on pragmatics. We also had to take into account whether the topic was one which a person could be expected to have observed and to reflect on in the interview. Many aspects of pragmatics such as presupposition and conversational postulates involve subtle inferencing processes that people are not usually aware of. Our coverage of pragmatics is not intended to be comprehensive, but to cover aspects that are amenable to description in an interview to be carried out with persons from a very wide range of backgrounds but with no particular awareness of language and communication presupposed.

Over the period of development the *Profile* went through a process of evolution. We first set out to devise an interview which could be used with families and carers of adults with learning disabilities. This version was piloted in two studies with clients at day centres¹ (Dewart *et al.*, 1993). While the findings were promising, it was thought that there was no need for the *Profile* to be tailored for and restricted to adults with learning disabilities but could be made to apply more generally to a wide range of client groups and, indeed, to any adult. A modified version was piloted in student projects carried out with

¹ Research projects on the use of the *Profile* with adults with learning disabilities were carried out by Carolyn Dobbie and Sue Sidke, BSc students at Central School of Speech and Drama and Johanne Hitches, MSc student at City University, London.

families of people with aphasia.² Based on the findings a revised version was developed. It was at this stage that it became clear that it was not appropriate to interview a person's family or carer without also giving that person an opportunity to provide his or her own perspective and insights. Thus we set out to devise a parallel version of the interview, worded so that respondents would describe how they typically communicate with someone else, a family member of someone they know well. As not all our original questions could be adapted for self-report, this meant more modifications to the original set of questions.

The two revised versions were then circulated to speech and language therapists working with clients with a wide range of types of communication difficulty. They used the *Profile* and sent back to us completed schedules along with their responses to an evaluation questionnaire devised to determine their reactions to the *Profile* and their experience of its use. The self-report version was also given in a written form to undergraduate students at the University of Westminster so that typical adult responses could be gauged. A continuing process of piloting the interview, collating and sifting responses, refining questions on the basis of feedback and trying them again, has resulted in the two interviews presented here. As with the *Profile* for children, we envisage an ongoing process of development and continue to welcome comments and critical feedback from users.

Reliability and validity

As the *Pragmatics Profile* adopts a descriptive, qualitative approach and is not a *measure*, reliability and validity must be approached differently from typical quantitative methods (Dey, 1993; Robson, 1993). For instance, validity is not established by correlations with scores on other assessments or scales. Reliability and validity may be approached in terms of the use of the *Profile* with an individual client. The reliability in terms of the consistency of an interviewee's responses may be tested out in informal ways, for instance by asking a similar question again at a later time. In relation to validity, since the findings from each interview are based on one person's perceptions, the user may attempt to validate the responses by obtaining information from additional sources. One approach is to interview both a carer and the client him or herself, or two people who know the client may be interviewed. Alternatively, the additional sources can derive from the use of other approaches to assessment in the area of pragmatics, such as naturalistic or structured observation or conversational analysis. The user's own experience of interacting with the client will also be relevant. The process of *triangulation* is an important concept in validation of qualitative research. As Robson (1993, p.383) comments,

² Student projects evaluating use of the *Profile* with adults with aphasia were carried out by Joanna Allen and Janet Gillender, also BSc students at Central School of Speech and Drama.

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'Triangulation in its various guises (for example, using multiple methods, or obtaining information relevant to a topic or issue from several informants), is an indispensable tool in real world enquiry.'

Where two people who know the client are interviewed separately, it is important to be aware that differences between their reports do not necessarily imply that the *Profile* responses are unreliable. Differences may arise because of their different ways of perceiving the client, of responding to the client, or because the client behaves very differently in two different contexts or with two different partners. In fact, differences between interviewees' accounts may be very informative and the ability to demonstrate these differences is one of the strong points of the *Profile*. In relation to this point Robson (1992, p.383) states,

'[Triangulation]...provides a means of testing one source of information against other sources. Both correspondences and discrepancies are of value. If two sources give the same messages then, to some extent, they cross-validate each other. If there is a discrepancy, its investigation may help in explaining the phenomenon of interest.'

CHAPTER 5

Use and Administration

Who will find the *Profile* useful?

The *Profile* has been devised for use by all those with a professional interest in language and communication. Users may include speech and language therapists, clinical psychologists, clinical neuropsychologists, educational psychologists, occupational therapists, hearing therapists and social workers in psychiatric settings. It can also be used in research where qualitative data derived from the *Profile* can provide a 'human dimension' to scores derived from quantitative approaches.

With whom can the *Profile* be used?

A major feature of the *Profile* is that it can be used to investigate communication in a very wide range of individuals. The questions are relevant to the lives of most adults, whether or not they have any history of language or communication problems. It can be used over a wide age range, from teenagers and young adults to elderly people. It is applicable to people who have difficulties that derive from neuropsychological, psychological, physical, sensory and learning impairments. (See Chapter 6 for further discussion of this point).

Use of different versions of the *Profile*

Whether the 'other's report' or the 'self-report' version of the interview is carried out will depend very much on the particular circumstances and the aim of conducting the interview. In clinical work, use of the self-report version will depend on the person's ability to understand the questions and respond. Use of the self-report version also requires a willingness and ability to reflect on one's communication and social interactions. However, even where communication skills are limited, it is worth attempting to give a client the chance, through the self-report interview, to give his or her own perceptions.

It may be valuable on many occasions to interview both the target person and someone who knows him or her well. Having both perspectives may help the user gain a picture of what communication between the client and the other person is like and what difficulties may arise. However, if one interviewee's perceptions are to be shared with the other, then it should be made clear from the beginning that this will be done as sensitive issues of confidentiality may be involved.

At what stage should the *Profile* be used?

The *Profile* may be used at any stage of work with a client: early, as part of ongoing work or during follow-up. As the interview is carried out in a relaxed atmosphere with the respondent feeling at ease and able to talk freely and openly, it can be a good vehicle for establishing rapport at an early stage. It can help establish a relationship in which the client, family or friend feels that their contribution is of interest to the professional. It can be administered again at intervals to evaluate progress.

Planning the interview

In preparing for the interview, users should ensure that they make themselves familiar with the questions so that in the interview they can ask questions and offer examples in a natural and relaxed manner. In planning the interview it is useful to bear in mind that there is an element of flexibility in the use of the *Profile*. It need not be completed in one session but can be administered over a number of occasions. Not all questions will be relevant to every client and the user should feel free to omit those judged to be inappropriate. Some people who have difficulty understanding the spoken questions may be better able to respond to them in written form. We have tried as far as possible to avoid cultural bias or cultural expectations in the wording of questions but the user may wish to adapt certain questions to make the content more relevant to a particular cultural group. Similarly, we attempted to word questions and examples so that they could relate to the lives and experience of anyone, from people with no history of communication problems through people with a range of difficulties. Nevertheless, the user may sometimes wish to change the way a question is phrased to make it more relevant for a particular clinical group and should feel free to do so, provided the modified question is directed to the same aspect of communication.

It is often preferable for the interview to be carried out on a one-to-one basis, so that the person whose language is being described is not present when the close associate is being interviewed and that the other individual is not present when the person in question is being interviewed. In the case of a person with a communication disability, this may not always be easy to arrange (for example, on a domiciliary visit). However, those close to the person with the communication disability may not wish to share information or to say things that they consider might hurt his or her feelings or might raise his or her awareness of difficulties that arise. Similarly, the person with the disability may not wish to comment on a carer's communicative style in case the comments should be taken as criticisms. Issues of confidentiality should be considered before information is shared between informants. There may, however, be instances where a client has very limited expressive ability when it may be helpful to work together with a family member or friend to facilitate interpretation and verification of responses.

Preparing for the interview

Before the interview the user should print a copy of the complete *Profile*. Space has been provided on the *Profile* for the interviewer to write down the respondent's answer to each question.

Conducting the interview

In introducing the 'other's report' version of the interview, the user tells the interviewee that it would be of value to find out about his or her knowledge of how (*name*) communicates in ordinary everyday situations and that the interviewer would like to ask some questions about this. Where the self-report version is to be used, the interviewee is told that it would be of value to find out about his or her own experience of communicating in ordinary everyday situations and that the interviewer would like to ask some questions about this. The interviewee is told that 'Some of the questions ask you to think about a particular person, someone you spend time with, a friend or a member of your family.' He or she is then asked to provide the first name of this person so that it can be used at the relevant points in the questions.

The interview should be conducted in an informal manner, at a pace which allows respondents time to elaborate on an answer should they so wish. The questions have been worded to sound natural and to avoid complex constructions, formalities and jargon. The informality is maintained by using the appropriate name at each point where (*name*) appears in the *Profile*.

In responding to questions about a person's typical communicative behaviour, respondents may say that 'it depends' on the situation, on who is present or on other variables. Such a response can be a worthwhile and informative one, if respondents are encouraged to explain and elaborate on it.

The questions focus on how the person typically communicates now, not at a previous time or before communication became impaired. However, sometimes respondents want to describe and make comparisons with their previous level of ability of style of communication and may be allowed to discuss this. The interview touches on sensitive issues concerning how the person relates to others, which may not usually be talked about and which he or she may want to discuss in depth during the interview. The interviewer may have to decide whether to provide the interviewee with the opportunity to explore these areas during the interview, or at a later time, or with another professional such as a counsellor.

Recording responses

The interviewer should write down responses on the printed sheets on which space has been provided for the respondent's answer to each question. It is preferable to make a verbatim record of the response, even when it corresponds to one of the examples listed, so that the person's own wording

is not lost. Where answers have been prompted by providing an example this should be noted. Some users have found it helpful to use the same form when a client is re-evaluated and to note the responses in a different coloured ink from that used for the original responses so that comparisons can readily be made.

Use of examples

Under each question in the *Profile* a set of examples of communicative behaviours has been provided. Where the interview is being used for research purposes, it is usually important that each interviewee receives exactly the same input so that responses can be collated or compared. It is therefore recommended that for research purposes the examples are *not* used. However, in clinical interviewing experience with the *Profile* has shown that it is sometimes helpful to have examples of possible communicative behaviours which can help respondents relate to the questions. Respondents should always first be encouraged to describe the communicative behaviours which can help respondents relate to the questions. Respondents should always first be encouraged to describe the communicative behaviours *in their own words*. Interviewers should only use the list of examples if the interviewee has difficulty thinking of a response to the question. These lists of examples are provided to help interviewees think about what is being looked for in the question and answer in a relevant way. It must be stressed that the examples are *not* to be used as a checklist but *only as prompts* when the person being interviewed fails to think spontaneously of an answer to the question. There is an element of skill on the part of interviewers in deciding when to come in with a prompt and deciding which example to choose. If the interviewer thinks that the interviewee is simply agreeing with whatever examples are being offered, examples that are at a different level of functioning can be suggested which may stimulate a strong negation and perhaps a more informative response.

When the interviewees have described the typical behaviour for each question, the interviewer may decide to probe further, perhaps by asking for an instance of a recent occasion when such a behaviour occurred, especially if the answer seems unexpected, that is, it does not match with what has already been said or what the interviewer already knows about the client. Observations may also be carried out of particular situations identified by the interview to be of interest or in need of corroboration. The more the interview can focus on real incidents from the respondent's experience, the more concrete will be the picture that emerges.

We are aware that some users may wish to give the *Profile* to respondents to take away to fill in in their own time. It is important that anyone using the *Profile* in this way makes it clear that the main focus is on respondents' *spontaneous* answers to the questions and emphasizes that the prompts are not intended to be used as a checklist. There is a danger that unusual or atypical behaviours would be missed if the *Profile* examples were being used in checklist fashion. If people are filling in the *Profile* on their own, it is

essential that the content of their responses is subsequently discussed in detail so that the information is shared fully.

Summarising the *Profile* responses

The summary form which appears at the beginning of the *Profile* can be used to help encapsulate the main findings from each section of the interview. The form allows space for each section of the *Profile* to be summarised by recording a brief synopsis of the relevant aspect of the person's communication.

It should be stressed again that, as a qualitative procedure, the *Profile* does not yield ratings or other types of numerical score. Rather, the main themes that are judged to emerge from the interview are recorded in the summary statement. Aspects of communication that are coped with well should be recorded as well as areas that are problematic. It is important not to over-summarise or rely too heavily on summary statements as important detail or variability may be lost.

Section A: Communicative functions

The person's main mode or modes of expressing communicative functions can be recorded here. It is important to know whether a person has access to the full range of ways of communicating or whether these are restricted. For example, a person may have access only to nonverbal means such as eye movements, gesture, vocalisation, or may use writing as the main vehicle of communication. Another person may express communicative functions largely through single-word utterances. If the person uses alternative/augmentative communication (such as a sign system, a communication board or book or computer-generated speech) then it may be important to record whether this is reported to be used for all or only some communicative functions. Where a person does have access to a full range of ways of expressing communicative functions, then what is recorded is likely to be the person's *preferred* style of communication and it should be made clear that this is the case. Some functions may tend to cause particular difficulties for an individual. For example, some functions such as asking for assistance, expressing emotion or giving information might seldom be expressed or be expressed in a form different from the one more generally used by that person.

Section B: Response to communication

The summary can record whether the person is reported to be responsive to all the aspects of communication included in the *Profile* or whether some cause difficulty. It can also record how the person is reported to respond. It may, for example, emerge from the interview that the person tends to ignore others' attempts at communication, appears to misunderstand, frequently asks for repetitions or usually complies with whatever is said. If difficulties with understanding some forms of communication are reported, these should be recorded in the summary.



Section C: Interaction and conversation

Summary of this section can include key points about the person's participation in social interactions: how he or she is reported to initiate and maintain interactions and to repair conversational breakdowns and misunderstandings. Any characteristics of the person's style of interaction that are reported to affect the way the conversation flows or is perceived by others can also be noted.

Section D: Contextual variation

A brief record can be made of the situations, topics and people that are reported to lead to the client being most communicative. Contexts which cause particular difficulties can also be noted. Information in this section may be relevant for decisions about the best contexts in which to obtain representative samples of the person's language.

Note can also be made of the way interviewees deal with the questions and the degree to which there is an awareness of communication issues and insight into any problems. This information is of importance in the planning of intervention strategies.

CHAPTER 6

Using the *Profile* with Particular Client Groups

The questions in the *Profile* were devised with a wide range of adults in mind, including clients with language and communication impairments. As discussed in Chapter 5, there is scope for some flexibility in the questioning so that questions may be omitted or modified if it is judged that this is necessary to suit the circumstances of a particular group of clients.

People with aphasia

The *Profile* can provide a way of gaining insight into the impact of an acquired language disorder on an individual's communication in non-clinical settings, either from the perspective of someone who knows the person well, or from that person's own perspective. It attempts to provide a means of actively involving family and other carers in the process of communicative rehabilitation.

We acknowledge that many people with aphasia will have difficulty in understanding and responding to the questions in the self-report version of the *Profile*. However, there are people with this condition who can cope with the questions and the meta-communicative demands of the interview and it is appropriate that they should be given an opportunity to have a voice and a chance to participate. In piloting the *Profile*, we found that a number of people welcomed this opportunity.

The following are a few of the other key points concerning the use of the *Profile* with people with aphasia:

- It can complement other more language-centred approaches to assessment such as traditional psychometric testing and investigation using cognitive neuropsychological modelling.
- It is intended for use with a wide range of people with aphasia, whether or not pragmatic factors are thought to be a major area of difficulty. Pragmatic factors are sometimes said to be relatively preserved in aphasia (Holland, 1980). However, as pointed out by Lesser and Milroy (1993), conversational interactions are affected by aphasic difficulties such as word finding and syntactic processing which impact on people's ability to understand, plan and express themselves in conversation and to make repairs where necessary.
- It takes into account the two-way, collaborative nature of communication and conversation by investigating the person's communication from the viewpoint of a communicative partner who also has the opportunity to reflect on his or her own communication with that person. It can, therefore,

be a useful basis for indirect approaches to intervention, which actively involve the person's relatives or carers (Green, 1982; Kagan and Gailey, 1993).

- It can have a role in investigating *generalization* of intervention strategies to help determine whether or not they are having an impact in the settings of ordinary life, an important consideration discussed by Muller and Code (1989).
- It does not just focus on communication difficulties and problems but deals with the positive side of how communication is achieved. The questions in the interview can all be applied to people whose communication is not impaired, so could equally be applied to the communicative partner.
- It directs attention to the person's *current* functioning. Sometimes respondents may want to compare this with communicative style and abilities before brain injury and it is for the user to decide how much to pursue this discussion.
- It is most appropriate for use when a level of neurological stability has been reached after stroke or other injury. Relatives and other carers are then in a position to know about what is typical of everyday communication with the client.
- Consideration about whether the client is interviewed separately from the carer may be particularly relevant (see Chapter 5).
- Initial insights gained from the *Profile* may be followed up by more detailed investigation, such as conversational analysis as described by Lesser and Milroy (1993).

Adults with learning disabilities

The use of the *Profile* for this group is in line with an increasing interest in the real-life communicative needs of adults with learning disabilities and in ways of maximising communicative effectiveness (Calculator and Bedrosian, 1988; van der Gaag, 1988). This interest has grown in part from the focus on normalisation and integration into the wider community.

It is intended that the questions in the *Profile* should be applicable to a wide range of severity of learning disability and to people living with their families or in other residential settings.

Many carers of people with learning disabilities spend extensive periods with them on a daily basis and the *Profile* can draw on the carers' knowledge. Carers, whether family or employed, often feel undervalued and being consulted through the interview process may help boost morale and help them to feel that their contribution is valued. This, as with all client groups, can make them more willing to become involved in working in collaboration with the professional.

The interview can elicit descriptions of behaviours, sometimes challenging behaviours, which the carer may not have identified as communicative but which are found on further investigation to have communicative function. Intervention can then be aimed at helping the person learn a different, more

socially acceptable way of expressing that function (Durand, 1990). Sometimes carers have become sensitive to subtle communicative signals which others might miss and this information will emerge from the interview. Sometimes the interview data, when compared with observations, may reveal that certain communicative signals are being missed by the carer or, alternatively, are being overinterpreted.

Where people with learning difficulties are able to talk about their own communication, the 'self-report' version may be used and responses compared with those given by carers (Hitchens, 1996).

People with autism

People with autism have difficulties in social interaction and particular impairments in the area of pragmatics (Eales, 1993; Tager-Flusberg, 1993; Happé, 1994). These include problems in maintaining a topic of conversation, understanding non-literal utterances and adapting their communication to different contexts. Use of the interview may highlight areas causing particular difficulty which could be targeted in future work. More able people with autism may be able to respond to the 'self-report' version of the interview and may be able to provide their own, quite different, perspective on their experiences as communicators.

Hearing impairment

The *Profile* has applications both for people who have developmental deafness and for those who have an acquired hearing impairment, whether of gradual or sudden onset.

With a person with developmental deafness, it may be used, with minor modifications to the wording, to explore use of oral language or of a sign language.

Those who have lost their hearing as adults and who have had to modify their way of interacting with other people as a result, often encounter a number of difficult situations in their everyday communications with their families and in the wider world. For example, a person may avoid seeking clarification and misunderstandings may result. The *Profile* provides an opportunity to reflect on such situations and may help to open discussion about the strategies clients might use to improve matters. In addition, those who interact with the client may be assisted in finding ways in which they can help make communication flow more easily. Use of both versions of the *Profile* may help to explore communication difficulties that are not easy to discuss within the family setting. If the client wishes, the professional may help seek solutions with both the client and the family.

Adults with psychological disorders

The *Profile* may also be used for consideration of communication issues for people with psychological disorders such as unipolar or bipolar depression or schizophrenia. The interview provides an opportunity for them to reflect on the way they relate to others both verbally and nonverbally. Families of people with schizophrenia and other disorders may feel that their experience of living with the client and knowledge of the client is not taken into account by professionals. Their everyday lives often come under considerable strain and the interview may help begin a process of support for coping with day-to-day living with someone with a psychological disorder.

Other groups

There are a number of other client groups with whom it may be worthwhile to consider use of the *Profile*. One of these is the group of *elderly people with dementia*. Families and other carers often experience extreme difficulty in communication with these people and considerable stress can result. Again, through reflecting on the process of communication in the interview, a relative or other carer may help to find ways of managing interactions to make them more effective and less stressful.

Use of the *Profile* can also be considered for *people with traumatic brain injury* which can have an impact on aspects of social and communicative functioning even where language is not the major impairment. People whose social behaviour is affected by this type of injury often have limited insight into how they are seen by others and the effect they have on others. It may be helpful to explore mismatches in perception between responses to the self-report and other's report interviews or between the self-report and observations of the person's social interactions. Families may be supported in finding ways of managing difficult behaviour in everyday situations.

For *people with physical disabilities* which affect their ability to produce expressive language, the interview could help investigate how communication is achieved. It could provide information about the ways in which communication books, boards and computer-based communication systems are actually used and the limitations to the ways they are used so that usage could be facilitated.

Another group of clients for whom the *Profile* can be considered is that of *people who stammer*. In their case, the self-report version may provide a way of exploring how they deal with a range of communicative situations, without the stammer being the focus of the investigation.

Finally, there may be an as yet unexplored role for this approach in *couples therapy* where issues related to the way the couple communicate with one another may be tackled by conducting the interview with each one about their own communication and about that of the partner. The therapist might then collaborate with the couple in finding ways in which their current communication could be enhanced.

Use of the *Profile* in bilingual or multicultural settings

Communication impairment can be difficult to investigate where the client's first language is not the same as that of the professional carrying out the assessment. The *Profile* has potential for use in that situation. The questions can be asked about a speaker of any language and do not depend on the user having in-depth knowledge of the structure and form of that language. If the interviewee does not speak English, the *Profile* may be used in translation, working through an interpreter or bilingual co-worker who is familiar with the aims of the interview but does not require detailed knowledge of linguistic structure or technical terminology. If the client is bilingual, answers to the questions can also help determine which language is used in which circumstances, as aphasia, for example, may have affected the use of one language more than another.

In constructing the questions we have tried not to bias them towards one cultural group. Through answers given to the questions, insights may be gained about the way a person's culture and background influence the way language is used. These insights may be valuable for future work with the client and family.

Family members are involved and can feel that their perspective is valued. This can be particularly important in work with people from minority groups who may feel disempowered in encounters with professionals.

CHAPTER 7

Implications for Intervention

In this chapter we suggest general approaches to working with clients and their families, friends and carers which arise from the underlying rationale of the *Pragmatics Profile*. It is not our purpose here to suggest detailed specific plans for intervention. Pragmatics-based intervention is still developing (Smith and Leinonen, 1992; Lesser and Milroy, 1993) and practitioners can apply their knowledge and experience to further the approach. Intervention aimed at facilitating everyday communication has to be specifically tailored for each individual set of circumstances, so our aim is not to be prescriptive. We will outline some ways of thinking that spring directly from the use of the *Pragmatics Profile* and which may be useful in planning intervention.

Using the *Profile* to plan intervention

Partnership and power sharing are important features of the use of the *Profile*. This is true of both the other's report and the self-report interviews. The principle is established that what respondents have to say is important and from the beginning the process of obtaining information is a joint enterprise. The cooperation that is established leads naturally to working together to plan intervention. Where clients and those closely involved with them are included in decision making about intervention and where the plans are relevant to their perceived needs, there is much more chance that motivation will be high and involvement will be maintained. This involvement is crucial where the focus is on enhancing everyday communication in settings such as the home or day centre. Without this cooperation, practitioners may devise treatment plans to be implemented which do not get carried out, perhaps because the plans are not felt to be relevant to what is practicable and what is needed. The approach of sharing information and planning together is aimed to overcome these barriers to effective intervention.

When both client and family member or carer have been interviewed separately, it may become clear that there are areas where their perceptions differ. For example, a relative may report no difficulty but the client reports that the relative does not give time to respond. Alternatively, the client may not report a difficulty with, say, initiating and terminating conversations but a relative may report that the client launches into topics without preamble and keeps talking without regard to the listener's reactions. Such insights can be important in the discussion about what needs to be worked on. It should be noted, however, that sensitive points may be raised in the interview that each individual would feel unable to raise directly with the other. The practitioner has to consider confidentially issues and discuss them with the individual concerned.

The interview can open up a wider discussion about feelings related to communication, including feelings of frustration and loss. Sometimes it will be clear from the interview how these feelings affect the person's behaviour with others, perhaps appearing morose and uncommunicative or angry and inclined to shout. This provides an opportunity to develop insight which could lead to changes in behaviour that would be more positive for all concerned.

Joint discussions can help form ideas about what the priorities and needs are in terms of making changes and what kinds of changes are realistic. For example,

- in what ways can the *client* make changes?
- what changes can *family, friends and carers* make to enhance communication with the client?
- what modifications can be made in the *wider environment* to facilitate the client's communication?

We will now look at these three areas in turn.

The client

One way of approaching intervention is to encourage the client to consider changing aspects of his or her communicative behaviour.

- The *Profile* can help identify areas of communication which work well and those which can cause difficulties. The client can be encouraged to make the most of communicative strengths that allow him or her to be successful in some interactions.
- Specific areas of difficulty, such as asking for assistance or asking for clarification, may be chosen in collaboration with the client as priorities. Decisions can then be made about whether to work directly on the difficulty, or to develop compensatory strategies, or to consider using alternative methods of communication such as drawing, gesturing or signing.
- Work directly with the client may initially involve role-play of alternative strategies that can then be practised in everyday settings.
- With some clients discussion of pragmatic issues may be undertaken, issues such as aspects of turn taking in conversations, politeness and social acceptability, with the aim of gaining greater conscious monitoring and control of their own communicative skills.
- By being involved in the process of assessment and planning, clients are less likely to develop dependence on the practitioner. The practitioner has to be willing to allow the client to take more control in guiding the process of intervention.
- The client can be helped to develop strategies, for example for getting people's attention, which are more effective and socially acceptable than ones currently being used. Also they may be encouraged to indicate a communicative need such as a need for more time in order to say what they are trying to formulate.

- Since intervention is based around real-life situations as far as possible, generalisation is built into the whole enterprise, rather than being something to be tackled at a late stage of the intervention.
- For some clients it may be worthwhile to help them develop specific communication skills for a defined purpose, which may be job related, such as giving a talk or responding to questions from the public.
- By involving family, friends and carers and using contexts outside the clinic, intervention is not separated from other aspects of daily life.

Families, friends and carers

Another way of approaching intervention is through encouraging close associates of the client to consider modifying some aspects of their own communicative behaviour to facilitate communication between them.

- The interview can raise people's awareness of the joint nature of the process of communication and of how they and the client share in making interactions effective.
- Interviewees may spontaneously identify ways in which their own behaviour or reactions may be aiding or, alternatively, be impeding communication with the client.
- Individuals may decide to try to make modifications to their own way of interacting with the client to see if this improves matters, for example slowing down their speech or giving more time for the client to respond.
- By being involved in assessment and planning, those close to the client are more committed to being actively involved in carrying through the resulting intervention plans.
- By being encouraged to share their experiences of everyday living with the client, families, friends and carers may feel able to disclose some of their frustrations, anxieties and difficulties and may be helped to gain support for these.

The communicative environment

A further way of approaching intervention is to focus on aspects of the wider communicative environment for the client.

- Answers to Section D of the *Profile* may reveal environmental factors which can be modified to promote communication for the client.
- The client may be encouraged to gain access to a wider range of opportunities for social interaction, such as a club or evening class.
- The practitioner can create opportunities for the client to meet others with similar difficulties, for example in a self-help or support group.

- The client can be helped to explore possibilities for work. This may involve talking to employers and potential employers about special communicative

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needs the client may have and ways in which they and co-workers could support the client to work effectively.

- By encouraging self-advocacy or use of an advocate, the practitioner may help clients to gain access to their rightful place in society.
- Campaigning and public relations work can be done to raise awareness of disability issues and to educate the public about communication impairments.

Finally, we hope that the *Pragmatics Profile* will play a role in providing insight into people's own experiences as communicators, in directing attention to the communicative challenges of day-to-day life and in helping to find ways in which people's everyday communication can be enhanced.

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Record Sheet

Summary Form of Main Themes



Record Sheet

Client

Surname:.....

First names:.....

Sex:..... Date of birth:..... Age:.....

Date of interview:.....

Home address:.....

.....

.....

..... Tel:.....

Person Interviewed (if different)

Surname:.....

First names:.....

Relationship to client:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

..... Tel:.....

Interviewer:.....

Where interviewed:..... Date:.....



Summary Form for Main Themes

Name of client:..... Date of Interview:.....

Who was interviewed?:.....

A. COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

Forms in which intentions are expressed

For example: gesture, symbols, talk, sign, writing

Functions which tend to cause difficulties

For example: giving information, requesting assistance, narrative

B. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION

Forms of communication to which person is responsive

For example: gesture, sign, words in context, spoken language, written word..

Aspects of responding to others which tend to cause difficulties

For example: hints, nonliteral language, conflicting views.

Summary Form for Main Themes (continued)

C. INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION

Style of initiating, maintaining and repairing conversations

Disruptions to the flow of conversation

Client's / carer's views on what can make conversation easier

D. CONTEXTUAL VARIATION

How communication varies with person and place

Topics of interest

Particular situations giving rise to difficulties



Interview Schedule

Other's- Report Version Adults



Other's- Report Version

An Outline of the Structure

A. COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

1.	Attention Directing.....	1
2.	Requesting.....	2
3.	Rejecting.....	2
4.	Expression of Emotion.....	3
5.	Self-Assertion.....	3
6.	Giving Information.....	4
7.	Narrative: Telling Stories and Jokes.....	4

B. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION

8.	Gaining Attention.....	5
9.	Understanding the Spoken Word.....	5
10.	Response to Nonliteral Language.....	6
11.	Understanding the Written Word.....	6
12.	Responding with Amusement.....	6
13.	Response to Conflicting Views.....	7
14.	Responding to Hints	7

C. INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION

15.	Initiation.....	7
16.	Maintaining an Interaction or Conversation.....	8
17.	Presupposition and Shared Knowledge.....	8
18.	Conversational Repair.....	9
19.	Overhearing a Conversation.....	9
20.	Joining a Conversation.....	9
21.	Terminating a Conversation.....	10
22.	Compliance with Social Conventions.....	10
23.	Interactant's Reactions.....	10

D. CONTEXTUAL VARIATION

24.	Person.....	11
25.	Place.....	12
26.	Topic.....	12
27.	Situations Causing Particular Difficulty.....	12
28.	Sociolinguistic Awareness.....	12



Name.....

Other's Report Version

Note to the interviewer: throughout the interview use the client's name each time you see (*name*) in the text.

A. COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

1. Attention Directing

a) To Self

If you are busy doing something how does (*name*) usually get your attention?

Examples: Starts talking to you.
Calls out.
Taps you.
Moves closer.
Shows you something.
Makes a noise such as tapping or knocking.

b) To Events, Objects, Other People

If you and (*name*) are out somewhere and he/she sees something interesting, how does he/she point it out to you?

Examples: Says 'look at that' and starts to talk/sign about it.
Points.
Pulls at you and makes sounds.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE

of Everyday Communication Skills in Adults



Name.....

2. Requesting

a) Request for Assistance

If (*name*) needs help with something he / she is doing, how does he / she usually let you know?

Examples: Asks for help and explains what is needed.
Hints (says something like 'this is heavy').
Comes up to you and shows what is needed.
Calls out but does not explain the problem.
Gets angry and distressed without asking for help.
Just waits.

b) Request for Information

If (*name*) needs to find out what is planned, for example for the day or for the weekend, how does he / she go about it?

Examples: Asks you directly.
Points to calendar / diary.
Waits to be told.

3. Rejecting

If you offer (*name*) something to eat or drink that he / she doesn't want, what does he / she usually do?

Examples: Says / Signs 'no thanks'.
Asks for something else.
Shakes head / gestures with hand.
Pushes it away / turns head away.

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of Everyday Communication Skills in Adults



Name.....

4. Expression of Emotion

a) Pleasure

If (*name*) is really pleased about something how does he / she let people know?

Examples: Tells them how he / she feels.
Smiles or laughs.
Hugs or claps.
Keeps it to him/herself

b) Upset

If (*name*) is hurt or upset about something, how does he / she usually show it?

Examples: Explains how he / she feels and why.
Cries to let others know he / she is upset.
Becomes withdrawn.
Gets moody and irritable.

5. Self-Assertion

If you offer to help (*name*) to do something but he / she wants to do it without help, how does he / she let you know?

Examples: Says he / she can manage.
Gestures you away.
Gets angry with you.
Puts up with being helped.

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Name.....

6. Giving Information

a) If something happens that you aren't aware of and (*name*) wants to let you know about it, how does he / she go about it? (for instance, if someone visited or something got broken)

Examples: Tells you all about it.
Tries but the message gets muddled.
Indicates with gesture.
Often forgets to tell.
Doesn't attempt to tell.

b) If (*name*) is feeling unwell or uncomfortable, how does he / she let you know?

Examples: Tells you what's wrong.
Responds when questioned.
Indicates by body movements or facial expression.
Becomes quiet and withdrawn.

7. Narrative: Telling Stories and Jokes

If (*name*) wants to tell you a story or a joke, what usually happens?

Examples: Tells it in as interesting a way as possible.
Gives too much detail.
Gives too little information so it is hard to follow.
Forgets the point or the punchline.
Keeps telling the same story.
Doesn't try to tell jokes or stories.



Name.....

B. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION

8. Gaining Attention

If you want to get (*name*) attention, how do you do it?

Examples: Says his / her name.
Speak loudly.
Move so he / she can see you.
Touch him / her.

9. Understanding the Spoken word

a) When does (*name*) have difficulties understanding what is being said?

Examples: When tired.
Background noise.
More than one conversation going on at once.
Speech is fast / complicated / technical.
Unfamiliar speaker.

b) How do you know if (*name*) hasn't understood something that is said?

Examples: Asks you to repeat.
Asks you to explain.
Says or does something that shows he / she has misunderstood.
Changes the topic.
Looks puzzled.
Pretends to understand.



Name.....

10. Response to Nonliteral Language

If someone says something in a roundabout way, such as using an expression like 'That's a bit of a dog's breakfast', does (*name*) ever have difficulties in understanding what is intended? How does he / she respond?

Examples: Asks for clarification.
Tries to follow the literal meaning of the words.
Gets confused / misunderstands.
Gets annoyed.

11. Understanding the Written Word

Does (*name*) ever seem to have difficulty with reading? What kinds of difficulty do you notice?

Examples: Reads the same thing over and over.
Difficulty remembering what was read.
Making sense of what is read.
Has to rely on others to read.

12. Responding with Amusement

What sort of things make (*name*) laugh?

Examples: Someone telling jokes.
Funny things that happened to him / her in the past.
Slapstick and visual jokes.
Laughs because others are laughing or for no obvious reason.



Name.....

13. Response to Conflicting Views

If (*name*) feels strongly about something that should happen and others have a different point of view, how does he / she generally react?

Examples: Tends to go along with what others want.
Gets into an argument.
Will reach a compromise.
Gets sulky and withdrawn.
Goes along with it but makes it clear he / she doesn't approve.

14. Responding to Hints

If you hint at something, rather than saying it directly, how does (*name*) generally respond?

Examples: Responds to what is hinted at.
Often doesn't get it.
Finds it annoying.

C. INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION

15. Initiation

When (*name*) wants to start up a conversation with someone, what does he / she generally do?

Examples: Makes eye contact.
Asks how they are.
Comments on something like the weather.
Asks their opinion on something.
Asks a personal question.
Launches into a topic.
Doesn't start up a conversation.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE

of Everyday Communication Skills in Adults



Name.....

16. Maintaining an Interaction or Conversation

a) When you are chatting with (*name*), how does the conversation flow?

Examples: He / she plays a minimal part.
You take equal shares.
He / she monopolizes.
It jumps from topic to topic.
Conversations are short-lived.
You find it hard to understand one another.

b) When you are chatting with (*name*), are there things he / she does which interfere with the flow of the conversation?

Examples: Takes a long time over saying what he / she wants to say.
Takes a long time to get started on an answer.
Gives very short replies.
Interrupts when other people are talking.
Chatters on without giving the other person a chance.
Shifts from topic to topic.
Keeps on talking about a particular topic.

17. Presupposition and Shared Knowledge

When (*name*) is talking about something you don't know about, how clearly does he / she put you in the picture?

Examples: Explains everything fully.
Doesn't give enough information to help you understand.
Assumes too much about what you know or who you know.
Gives too much detail.



Name.....

18. Conversational Repair

If you ask (*name*) to clarify something he / she has said that you haven't understood, what does he / she usually do?

Examples: Gives information which helps you understand.
Finds it difficult to say more to make it clear.
Responds when questioned.
Repeats it.
Clams up.
Gets cross.

19. Overhearing Conversation

If you are having a conversation with some other person and (*name*) is in the room but not included, how does he / she generally react?

Examples: Asks what you are saying.
Tries to get you to notice and include him / her.
Gets angry or upset.
Doesn't seem to mind.
Seems to think that you are talking about him / her.
Takes no notice.

20. Joining a Conversation

If (*name*) wants to join in a conversation that others are having, how does he / she go about it?

Examples: Waits for a gap and makes a relevant comment.
Signals that he / she has something to say.
Tends to barge in.
Doesn't try to join in.

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of Everyday Communication Skills in Adults



Name.....

21. Terminating a Conversation

How does (*name*) generally bring a conversation to an end?

Examples: Brings it to a mutual conclusion.
Keeps on going till other person ends it.
Gets distracted.
Stops it abruptly, for example, by walking off.

22. Compliance with Social Conventions

Are there things (*name*) sometimes does that are different from the things people usually do when they are talking to other people?

Examples: Talks to him / herself. Speaks too loudly.
Talks overmuch. Makes personal remarks.
Interrupts others. Swears inappropriately.
Asks the same question repeatedly. Asks over-personal questions.
Tends to stand too close. Tends not to look at the other person.

23. Interactant's Reactions

a) When (*name*) is having a conversation, are there particular things the other person can do that make it easier for him / her to keep up the conversation?

Examples: Talk more loudly / slowly.
Use simpler language.
Give prompts.
Make sure he / she can see the speaker.

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Name.....

b) How do you tend to feel when you are having a conversation with
(*name*)?

Examples: Feel comfortable and familiar.
Feel uncomfortable.
Feel unsure how to react.
Get irritated.
Feel uneasy or threatened.

D. CONTEXTUAL VARIATION

24. Person

Are there people whom (*name*) likes to be with or to talk to more than
others?

Examples: Husband, wife or partner.
Other members of the family.
Friend.
Keyworker / carer / other professional.
Work colleagues.
People who share similar difficulties.

25. Place

Where is (*name*) most likely to be relaxed and communicative?

Examples: At home.
At work.
At a social gathering.
At a therapy group.

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Name.....

26. Topic

What does (*name*) like to talk about most?

Examples: Family. Work.
Sport. Relationships.
TV. Holidays.
Current affairs. Other interests.
Things that happened to him / her in the past.

27. Situations Causing Particular Difficulty

Are there situations involving speaking or communicating that cause (*name*) particular difficulty or anxiety? What are these?

Examples: Talking to someone in authority.
Talking to people he / she does not know.
Making phone calls.
Asking for something in a café or shop.
Buying a ticket.

28. Sociolinguistic Awareness

Do you notice (*name*) changing his / her way of talking for particular people or situations?

Examples: Avoids swearing.
Speaks more formally.
Becomes more polite.
Adjusts to children's level.
Avoids over-personal remarks.
Becomes very quiet in certain company.



Interview Schedule

Self- Report Version Adults



Self- Report Version

An Outline of the Structure

A. COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

1.	Attention Directing.....	1
2.	Requesting.....	2
3.	Rejecting.....	2
4.	Expression of Emotion.....	3
5.	Self-Assertion.....	3
6.	Giving Information.....	4
7.	Narrative: Telling Stories and Jokes.....	4

B. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION

8.	Gaining Attention.....	5
9.	Understanding the Spoken Word.....	5
10.	Response to Nonliteral Language.....	6
11.	Understanding the Written Word.....	6
12.	Responding with Amusement.....	6
13.	Response to Conflicting Views.....	7
14.	Responding to Hints	7

C. INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION

15.	Initiation.....	7
16.	Maintaining an Interaction or Conversation.....	8
17.	Presupposition and Shared Knowledge.....	8
18.	Conversational Repair.....	9
19.	Overhearing a Conversation.....	9
20.	Joining a Conversation.....	9
21.	Terminating a Conversation.....	10
22.	Compliance with Social Conventions.....	10
23.	Interactant's Reactions.....	10

D. CONTEXTUAL VARIATION

24.	Person.....	11
25.	Place.....	12
26.	Topic.....	12
27.	Situations Causing Particular Difficulty.....	12
28.	Sociolinguistic Awareness.....	12



Name.....

Self- Report Version

Some of the questions ask you to think about a particular person, someone you spend time with, a friend or a member of your family.

First name of this person.....

Note to the interviewer: throughout the interview, use the first name of the person named by the interviewee each time you see (*name*) in the text.

A. COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

1. Attention Directing

a) To Self

If (*name*) is busy with something, and you want to get his / her attention, how do you usually do it?

Examples: Starts talking to him / her.
Calls out.
Tap him / her.
Moves closer.
Shows him / her something.
Make a noise such as tapping or knocking.

b) To Events, Objects, Other People

If you and (*name*) are out somewhere and you see something interesting, how does he/she point it out to him / her?

Examples: Say 'look at that' and start to talk/sign about it.
Point.
Pull at him / her and make sounds.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE

of Everyday Communication Skills in Adults



Name.....

2. Requesting

a) Request for Assistance

If you need help with something you are doing, how do you usually let (name) know?

Examples: Ask for help and explain what is needed.
Hint (say something like 'this is heavy').
Comes up to him / her and show what is needed.
Call out but don't explain the problem.
Get angry and distressed without asking for help.
Just wait.

b) Request for Information

If you need to find out what is planned, for example for the day or for the weekend, how do you go about it?

Examples: Ask directly.
Point to calendar / diary.
Wait to be told.

3. Rejecting

If you are offered something to eat or drink that you don't want, what do you usually do?

Examples: Says / Sign 'no thanks'.
Ask for something else.
Shake head / gesture with hand.
Push it away / turn your head away.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE

of Everyday Communication Skills in Adults



Name.....

4. Expression of Emotion

a) Pleasure

If you are really pleased about something how do you let people know?

Examples: Tell them how you feel.
Smile or laugh.
Hug or clap.
Keep it to yourself.

b) Upset

If you are hurt or upset about something, how do you show it?

Examples: Explain how you feel and why.
Cry to let others know you are upset.
Become withdrawn.
Get moody and irritable.

5. Self-Assertion

If someone offers to help you to do something but you want to do it yourself, how do you let them know?

Examples: Say you can manage.
Gesture them away.
Get angry with them.
Put up with being helped.

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Name.....

6. Giving Information

a) If something happens that (*name*) isn't aware of and you to tell him / her about it, how do you go about it? (for example, if someone visited or something got broken)

Examples: Tell him / her about it.
Try but message gets muddled.
Indicate with gesture.
Often forget to tell.
Don't attempt to tell.

b) If you are feeling unwell or uncomfortable, how do you let others know?

Examples: Tells them what's wrong.
Respond when questioned.
Indicate by body movements or facial expression.
Become quiet and withdrawn.

7. Narrative: Telling Stories and Jokes

If you want to tell someone a story or a joke, what usually happens?

Examples: Tell it in as interesting a way as possible.
Give too much detail.
Give too little information so it is hard to follow.
Forget the point or the punchline.
Keep telling the same story.
Don't try to tell jokes or stories.



Name.....

B. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION

8. Gaining Attention

If (*name*) wants to get your attention, how does he / she do it?

Examples: Says your name.
Speaks loudly.
Moves so you can see him / her.
Touches you.

9. Understanding the Spoken word

a) When do you have difficulties understanding what is being said?

Examples: When tired.
Background noise.
More than one conversation going on at once.
Speech is fast / complicated / technical.
Unfamiliar speaker.

b) When you haven't understood something someone has said to you, how do you let them know?

Examples: Ask to repeat.
Ask for an explanation.
Change the topic.
Look puzzled.
Pretend to understand.



Name.....

10. Response to Nonliteral Language

If someone says something in a roundabout way, such as using an expression like 'That's a bit of a dog's breakfast', do you ever have difficulties in understanding what is intended? How do you respond?

Examples: Ask for clarification.
Try to follow the literal meaning of the words.
Get confused / misunderstand.
Get annoyed.

11. Understanding the Written Word

Do you ever seem to have difficulty with reading? What kinds of difficulty do you notice?

Examples: Reading the same thing over and over.
Difficulty remembering what was read.
Making sense of what is read.
Have to rely on others to read.

12. Responding with Amusement

What sort of things make you laugh?

Examples: Someone telling jokes.
Funny things that happened to you in the past.
Slapstick and visual jokes.
Laughs because others are laughing.



Name.....

13. Response to Conflicting Views

If you feel strongly about something that should happen and others have a different point of view, how do you generally react?

Examples: Tend to go along with what others want.
Get into an argument.
Will reach a compromise.
Get sulky and withdrawn.
Go along with it but makes but signal disapproval.

14. Responding to Hints

If (*name*) hints at something, rather than saying it directly, how do you generally respond?

Examples: Respond to what is hinted at.
Often don't get it.
Find it annoying.

C. INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION

15. Initiation

When you want to start up a conversation with someone, what do you generally do?

Examples: Make eye contact.
Ask how they are.
Comment on something like the weather.
Ask their opinion on something.
Ask a personal question.
Launch into a topic.
Don't start up a conversation.



Name.....

16. Maintaining an Interaction or Conversation

a) When (*name*) is chatting with you, how does the conversation flow?

Examples: You play a minimal part.
You take an equal share.
You monopolize.
It jumps from topic to topic.
Conversations are short-lived.
You find it hard to understand one another.

b) When you are chatting with someone, are there things you notice yourself doing which interfere with the flow of the conversation?

Examples: Taking a long time to say what you want to say.
Taking a long time to get started on an answer.
Giving very short replies.
Interrupting when other people are talking.
Chattering on without giving the other person a chance.
Shifting from topic to topic.
Keep talking about a particular topic.

17. Presupposition and Shared Knowledge

When you are telling (*name*) about something he / she doesn't know about, how clearly can you put him / her in the picture?

Examples: Explain everything fully.
Don't give enough information to help them understand.
Assume too much about what they know or who they know.
Give too much detail.



Name.....

18. Conversational Repair

When someone asks you to clarify something you have said that they haven't understood, what do you usually do?

Examples: Give information which helps them understand.
Find it difficult to say more to make it clear.
Respond when questioned.
Repeat it.
Clam up.
Get cross.

19. Overhearing Conversation

If other people in the room are having a conversation and you are not included, how do you generally react?

Examples: Ask them what they are saying.
Try to get them to notice and include you.
Get angry or upset.
Don't mind.
Take no notice.
Think they are talking about you.

20. Joining a Conversation

If you want to join in a conversation others are having, how do you go about it?

Examples: Wait for a gap and make a relevant comment.
Signal that you have something to say.
Tend to barge in.
Don't try to join in.

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Name.....

21. Terminating a Conversation

How do you generally bring a conversation to an end?

Examples: Bring it to a mutual conclusion.
Keep on going till other person ends it.
Get distracted.
Stop it abruptly, for example, by walking off.

22. Compliance with Social Conventions

Do you think you sometimes do things that are different from the things people usually do when they are talking to other people? What are these?

Examples: Talk to myself. Speak too loudly.
Talk overmuch. Make personal remarks.
Interrupt others. Swear inappropriately.
Ask the same question repeatedly. Ask over-personal questions.
Tend to stand too close. Tend not to look at the other person.

23. Interactant's Reactions

a) When you are having a conversation, are there particular things the other person can do that make it easier for you to keep up the conversation?

Examples: Talk more loudly / slowly.
Use simpler language.
Give prompts.
Make sure you can see him / her.

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Name.....

b) How do you think (*name*) feels when having a conversation with you?

Examples: Feels comfortable and familiar.
Feels uncomfortable.
Feels unsure how to react.
Gets irritated.
Feels uneasy or threatened.

D. CONTEXTUAL VARIATION

24. Person

Are there people you like to be with or to talk to more than others?

Examples: Husband, wife or partner.
Other members of the family.
Friend.
Keyworker / carer / other professional.
Work colleagues.
People who share similar difficulties.

25. Place

Where are you most likely to be relaxed and communicative?

Examples: At home.
At work.
At a social gathering.
At a therapy group.

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Name.....

26. Topic

What do you like to talk about most?

Examples: Family. Work.
Sport. Relationships.
TV. Holidays.
Current affairs. Other interests.
Things that happened to you in the past.

27. Situations Causing Particular Difficulty

Are there situations involving speaking or communicating that cause you particular difficulty or anxiety? What are these?

Examples: Talking to someone in authority.
Talking to people you do not know.
Making phone calls.
Asking for something in a café or shop.
Buying a ticket.

28. Sociolinguistic Awareness

Do you sometimes change your way of talking for particular people or situations? What changes do you make?

Examples: Avoid swearing.
Speak more formally.
Become more polite.
Adjust to children's level.
Avoid over-personal remarks.
Become very quiet in certain company.