Description of Multilingual Participants Who Stutter
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Introduction

Research in the multilingual stuttering population is limited.

- A majority of the literature is restricted to case studies, and comparison of participants across studies is compromised by heterogeneous language profiles.
- The relationship between language and stuttering (Ntouros et al., 2010), and dominance-based theories of stuttering in bilinguals (Lim et al., 2008b) require greater specificity regarding language experiences among participants.
- Using Grosjean’s (2004) guidelines and information gleaned from available language profiles questionnaires (see caption and references in green), an eight-factor framework was constructed to describe language abilities of multilingual participants who stutter.

Method

Method: Systematic review of multilingual participant descriptions in stuttering literature.

PURPOSE I: BREADTH OF DESCRIPTION

Main Finding: Of eight language factors, limited and inconsistent language factors were reported within and across studies.

Frequency of factors:

Three factors were reported with relatively higher frequency:
- History: 41% (14/23 studies)
- Function: 52% (12/23 studies)
- Proficiency: 78% (18/23 studies)

Three primary factors co-occurred in fewer than half of the qualifying studies.

<table>
<thead>
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Results

PURPOSE I: BREADTH OF DESCRIPTION

Main Finding: Of the three primary language factors, dissimilar and non-overlapping descriptors were reported within and across studies.

Frequency of descriptors:

- History: 29 different descriptors
- Function: 13 different descriptors
- Proficiency: 15 different descriptors

Consistency of descriptors:

- History: 9 were reported in >1 study (31%)
- Function: 6 were reported in >1 study (46%)
- Proficiency: 8 were reported in >1 study (52%)

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Discussion

PURPOSE I: BEADTH OF DESCRIPTION

Discussion:
- Due to the promiscuity of language/motor-based theories of stuttering, as well as their combined role when establishing language dominance, proficiency, history, and function data should be considered primary factors in bilingual stuttering research.
- Although infrequently reported, remaining factors (i.e., stability, mode, accent, affect, and covert speech) may be of particular importance in the stuttering literature, given the influence and interaction of affective variables (e.g., Tran et al., 2011), phonotactically/clonetic variables (e.g., Byrne et al., 2007), and differences in language organization (e.g., Cootert et al., 2009) on stuttered speech.

PURPOSE II: DEPTH OF DESCRIPTION

Discussion:
- Although history, function, and proficiency were frequently reported, each factor was determined with a wide range of descriptors which rarely overlapped across studies. Primary factors were described mostly in qualitative terms and often relied on general estimation examiner or self-report of participant.
- Global, qualitative measurements of proficiency do not reflect specific language skills. Both the quantity (e.g., Bedore et al., 2012; Bhatia et al., 2010) and quality (e.g., Je & Aaronson, 2003; Deneen et al., 2007; Hammel et al., 2000) of experiences can uniquely impact vocabulary, phonological, semantic, and morphosyntactic abilities in each language.

Future research should consider language history, function, and proficiency primary information to be provided across studies, with remaining factors considered using available questionnaires (see references in green).

References


