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**A Dialogic Reading Intervention Incorporating AAC  
Modelling and Increased Communication Partner Responsiveness  
During Shared Storybook Reading with Children with Complex  
Physical, Cognitive, and Sensory Needs Who Use Partner Assisted  
Scanning.**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
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## Abstract

Children with complex physical, cognitive and sensory needs (CPCSN) who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) may use partner assisted scanning (PAS) as their access method. This access method is not well understood and rarely features in existing literature. Children with CPCSN also seldom appear in the literature on aided language. Children who use AAC require significant intervention to build their receptive and expressive language skills and develop communicative competence.

This research examined an evidence based dialogic shared reading strategy which incorporated aided language modelling and increased communication partner responsiveness with two children with CPCSN who use PAS to access a Pragmatic Organised Dynamic Display (PODD; Porter, 2012) communication book. The dialogic reading strategy prompted the communication partner to comment on the story, invite a communication turn, and respond contingently to the child. Aided language modelling and increased responsiveness are widely recognised as strategies which support language development in children who use AAC.

Data were collected via communication frequency measures, field notes, and observations throughout the intervention process and an interview with the children's teacher was conducted after the intervention was complete. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and graphs, while the qualitative data were analysed using a general inductive approach. In an effort to integrate all of the data sources, the quantitative communication frequency measures were treated as deductive codes and embedded within the qualitative analysis.

Two major themes emerged from the data. One theme described the practical challenges associated with the health and physical needs of the children that required consideration when providing intervention, as well as the changes to the clinical protocol that became necessary in response. In addition, the second theme outlined the effects of the intervention on the children's communication skills. This included positive outcomes in skill areas such as turn taking, efficiency

and conveying meaning. Recommendations for further research and clinical practice as a result of the research are presented.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Figures and Tables .....	x
List of Figures.....	x
List of Tables .....	x
AAC Conventions .....	xi
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Complex Communication Needs .....	1
Children with Complex Physical, Cognitive and Sensory Needs .....	1
Augmentative and Alternative Communication .....	3
Partner Assisted Scanning .....	4
Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD; Porter, 2012) .....	4
New Zealand Context .....	6
Rationale for the Present Study .....	6
Research Aim .....	7
Researcher’s Perspective.....	7
Thesis Structure.....	8
Chapter Two: Literature Review .....	9
Theory of Language Development .....	9
Language Development and AAC.....	11
Beginning communicators.....	11
AAC competence.....	11
Linguistic competence.....	12
Operational competence.....	13
Social competence.....	13
Strategic competence.....	15
Rationale for using PAS.....	15
Barriers to Language Development in AAC .....	16
Experience barriers.....	16
Asymmetry of input and output.....	17

Interaction styles.....	18
Attitude barriers. ....	18
Intervention Context .....	19
Intervention Strategies.....	20
Aided language modelling. ....	20
Expectant pause/wait time.....	21
Increasing responsivity. ....	22
Dialogic reading. ....	24
Dialogic reading to support language acquisition of children with CPCS	
who use AAC and PAS. ....	25
Limitations of Current Research.....	26
Theoretical Justification for the Current Study .....	26
Summary.....	27
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	29
Research Design .....	29
Participants.....	31
Eligibility.....	31
Characteristics.....	32
Setting.....	32
Positionality. ....	33
Storybook Reading Protocol.....	33
Materials.....	34
Clinical procedures.....	34
Baseline phase.....	34
Intervention phase. ....	35
Comment.....	35
Ask. ....	36
Respond.....	36
Aided language simulation.....	37
Researcher responsiveness.....	38
Data Collection Methods.....	38
Communication frequency measures.....	39

Aided communication.....	39
Unaided communication.....	39
Communication partner responsiveness .....	40
Field notes and observations.....	40
Interview.....	40
Data Analysis .....	41
Quantitative data.....	41
Inter-observer agreement.....	41
Qualitative data.....	42
Trustworthiness.....	43
Data integration.....	44
Ethical Considerations .....	44
Conflict of interest.....	44
Informed consent.....	44
Tikanga Māori.....	45
Privacy.....	45
Potential for harm.....	45
Summary.....	46
Chapter Four: Results.....	47
Intervention Context .....	49
Practical Challenges.....	52
Health.....	52
Seizures.....	52
Medications.....	53
Other health issues.....	53
Physical needs.....	53
Equipment, positioning and comfort.....	54
Personal care.....	55
Protocol changes.....	55
Length of sessions.....	55
Wait time.....	57
Effect on Communication Skills.....	58

Aided turn taking. ....	58
Aided communication measures. ....	59
CAR-prompted aided turns.....	59
Number of symbols communicated.....	61
Spontaneous initiations. ....	64
Unaided communication measures. ....	64
Total number of unaided communication acts.....	64
Number of unaided communication acts which converted to an aided turn.....	66
Researcher responsiveness.....	68
Efficiency.....	69
Intelligibility of yes/no responses. ....	70
Scan speed.....	70
Conveying Meaning. ....	71
Functions/Intents.....	72
Imitation.....	72
Word order.....	73
Summary.....	73
Chapter Five: Discussion .....	74
Practical Considerations .....	74
Health.....	74
Physical needs.....	75
Protocol changes. ....	76
Communication Skills .....	76
Aided turn taking. ....	77
Spontaneous initiations. ....	80
Efficiency.....	82
Conveying meaning.....	82
Summary.....	83
Chapter Six: Conclusion.....	84
Purpose, Design and Rationale.....	84
Quality of Research .....	85

Inter-observer agreement.....	85
Trustworthiness.....	86
Limitations .....	87
Social validity. ....	87
Methods and design. ....	88
Maintenance data.....	89
Competence.....	89
Directions for Future Research.....	89
Clinical Implications.....	90
Context.....	90
Communication partner actions. ....	91
Team approach. ....	91
Final Thoughts .....	91
References.....	93
Appendices.....	107
Appendix A: PODD Image Permission .....	107
Appendix B: Parent Information Sheet .....	108
Appendix C: Revised Book List.....	111
Appendix D: Lesson Plan Baseline .....	113
Appendix E: Lesson Plan Intervention.....	114
Appendix F: Storybook 9 Transcription .....	116
Appendix G: Transcription Template .....	122
Appendix H: Code Book.....	123
Appendix I: Expanded Code Book .....	125
Appendix K: Additional Ethics Approval .....	128
Appendix L: Principal Information Letter .....	129
Appendix M: Parent Consent Form .....	131
Appendix N: Parent Consent Form Field Notes.....	132
Appendix O: Cultural Consultation Letter .....	133
Appendix O: Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement.....	134

## List of Figures and Tables

### List of Figures

Figure 1:	Page 1a 20 PAVS PODD expanded functions.....	5
Figure 2:	Example of initial coding process for inductive data analysis.....	43
Figure 3:	The number of storybooks read in each session by type (new or familiar) for each child.....	51
Figure 4:	The number of CAR opportunities and CAR-prompted aided turns, per storybook, by child.....	60
Figure 5:	The number and average number of aided turns taken per new and familiar storybook during the intervention phase, per child.....	61
Figure 6:	The average number of symbols communicated (NSC) per aided turn with the total number of aided turns taken per storybook.....	62
Figure 7:	The percentage of potential initiations made by the child and were recognized by the researcher, that converted to an aided turn during intervention storybooks.....	67
Figure 8:	The number of potential initiations made by each child and the number of responses made by the researcher per storybook, along with the mean for potential initiations per phase.....	69

### List of Tables

Table 1:	<i>Participant Characteristics.</i> .....	32
Table 2:	<i>The Data Type for Each Code.</i> .....	48
Table 3:	<i>Global Themes, Organising Themes and Codes.</i> .....	49
Table 4:	<i>Total Time Analysed, by Phase, and Child (hr: mins).</i> .....	51
Table 5:	<i>Average Time to Read a Storybook per Session (in mins: sec) by Child.....</i>	56
Table 6:	<i>The Number of Single and Multi-Symbol Messages Expressed by Each Child.</i> .....	63
Table 7:	<i>Average Time Taken by Each Child to Express a Single Symbol During Early and Later Intervention Sessions (Mins:Secs).</i> .....	71

## AAC Conventions

When describing or transcribing interactions which include spoken language, aided language and gestures or body movements, the following conventions are used:

- Spoken language: plain text, quotation marks, e.g., “I have something to say”.
- Aided language accompanied by spoken language: plain text, underlined, / between symbols, quotation marks, e.g., “want/help/that is all I have to say”.
- Aided language with no accompanying spoken language: plain text, underlined, / between symbols, no quotations marks, e.g., more to say/I think it's/gross/that's all I have to say.
- Gestures or body movements: italicised, no quotation marks, e.g., *head shake*.