



# Role of AAC on quality of evidence elicited

with use of Alternative and Augmentative Communication in  
police investigative interviews – a case study



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# Outline

- Research Questions
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- Conversation breakdown
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- Analysis
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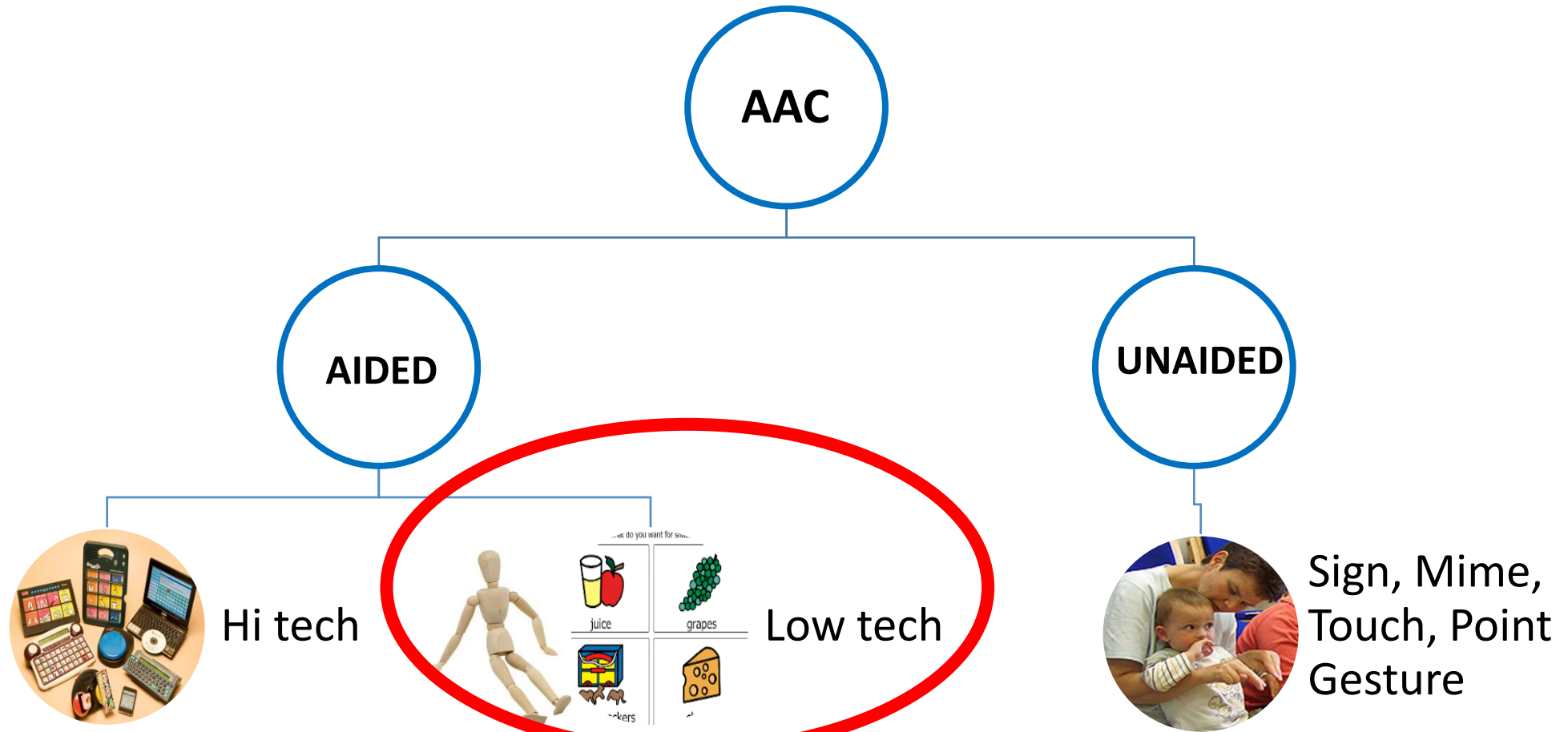
# Research Questions

To what extent does the use of communication aids impact quality of evidence in a witness with an LD in ABE interviews?

1. To what extent does the use of communication aids **increase the number of successful repairs** after a conversation breakdown in a police interview of a witness with a Learning Disability (LD)?
2. To what extent does the use of communication aids elicit a **varied range of investigation-relevant detail** when AAC is used in a police interview with a witness with a LD?

# Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC)

Any additional means of communication that supplements spoken language (Hazell and Cockerill 2001)



# Participant

- 55 year old woman with a Learning Disability (LD): 2-3 word understanding of spoken language; uses gesture, mime and some single words; unclear speech sounds; strength in visual processing; more able to 'show' than tell
- LD defined as (Department\_of\_Health 2001):
  - A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with
  - A reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning)
  - which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.
- Allegation: rape

# Method

- Data:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> police interview: using spoken language plus unaided AAC
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> police interview: using spoken language plus aided and unaided AAC with an RI
- Data Sharing Agreement between Police Force and Cardiff University
- Videos cannot be copied; they need to be immediately anonymised and used only for purpose of this PhD research (consent received by witness and her Appropriate Adult)
- CU Ethics approval
- Interviews transcribed and conversation breakdowns identified

# Conversation breakdowns identified by

- Silence in next speaker's turn
- Next speaker's response does not semantically relate to previous speaker's utterance
- Next speaker directly indicates miscommunication or is unable to provide follow-up communication

# Repair Initiator Techniques

- Breakdowns result in use of Repair Initiator Techniques (RIT)
- RIT used by any participant were coded
- Coding based on Carlsson's (2014) 3 themes
  - No active participation in repair
  - Request for Clarification or Modification
  - Providing Candidate Solutions
- 4<sup>th</sup> theme added: AAC
- All 4 themes comprised of further sub-themes



# Analysis - 1

## 1. Number of successful repairs

→ Each RIT coded

→ Outcome of each RIT identified

i.e. what was result of using each RIT? Was each RIT completely successful, partially successful or unsuccessful?

### Criteria:

**Completely successful** – New, previously unknown information elicited + conversation progresses

**Partially successful** – Conversation progresses but no new previously unknown information elicited

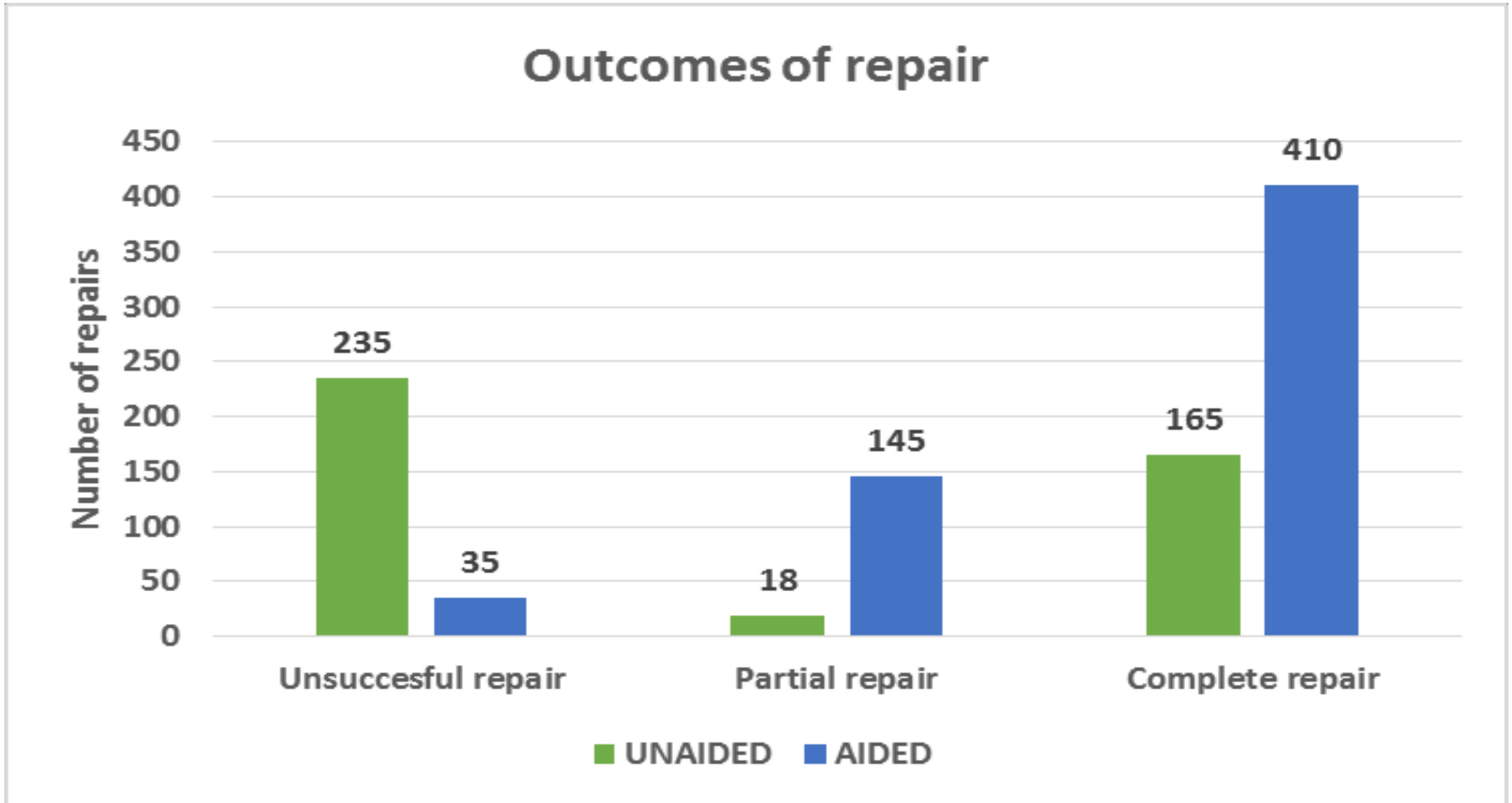
**Unsuccessful** – No new previously unknown information elicited and conversation halts/conversation breakdown persists

# Analysis - 2

## 2. Varied range of investigation-relevant detail and overall meaning

- Comparison carried out between topics (e.g. describing sequence, position of suspect and alleged victim, type of clothing etc)
- Conversation Analysis used to micro-analyse type of detail elicited with communication aids compared to without aids.

# Results



# UNAIDED INTERVIEW

			WIT	IO	outcome
127	WIT	[more XXX no more			
128	WIT	[((moves both hands out in front of her))	<b>GES</b>		<b>U</b>
129	WIT	more more (2) my hand	<b>AI</b>		<b>U</b>
130	WIT	((touches upper arm))	<b>PT</b>		<b>P</b>
131	IO	um::		<b>FIL</b>	<b>P</b>
132	WIT	and me. yeh	<b>AI</b>		<b>U</b>
133	IO	((looks at WIT))			
134	IO	(2)			<b>U</b>
135	IO	IO changes topic.			<b>U</b>

- WIT is describing what she did during the allegation
- Outcome of each RIT identified
- NO new previously unknown information conveyed and conversation does not progress (U)
- Or – conversation progresses but no new information elicited (P).
- At end of topic, conversation breakdown remains unresolved.

GES: Gesture; AI: Additional Information, PT: Pointing/touching; FIL: Filler

# UNAIDED INTERVIEW

## Describing allegation: Action, position and sequence

119.	WIT	we walk here we walk here		
120	WIT	((stands up goes towards one wall of the interview room))	MIM	P
121	WIT	my bum here:	AI	C
122	WIT	((holds her bottom))	PT	P
123	WIT	and here	AI	C
124	WIT	[((holds her front between her legs))	PT	C
125	WIT	[me away walk away no	AI	C
126	WIT	((shakes head; moves both hands away from her in outward motion))	MIM	C

- Many kinaesthetic RITs used: Pointing, touching, miming, signing
- Each RIT individually gives new, previously unknown information but topic lacks detail in terms of action, position and sequence
- General gist only: isolated events, poor linkage and connections
- Low coherence
- Reliance on guessing and making assumptions

MIM: Mime; AI: Additional Information; PT: Pointing/touching

# AIDED INTERVIEW

Describing allegation: Action, position and sequence

1062.	IO	Now can you show me where DEF was?	
1063	WIT	he walk here. one. two. three here.	AI
1064	WIT	((Moves DEF puppet across to tissue box))	OBJ
1065	WIT	((places it behind the WIT puppet))	OBJ
1066	WIT	hand here. hand here.	AI
1067	WIT	((places hands of DEF on WIT puppet))	
1068	IO	[ so DEF	CON
1069	WIT	[((moves DEF puppet closer behind WIT))	OBJ
1070	WIT	((Nods))	
1071	IO	was standing behind you	CON
1072	IO	((Points to the objects WIT is manipulating))	OBJ
1073	WIT	yeh	

AI: Additional Information; OBJ: Using object, CON: Confirmation

WIT provides detail on:

- DEF and WIT **positions** during the allegation
- What DEF did with his hands i.e. **actions**
- The fact that she was there first and was then approached by the DEF i.e. **sequence of events**

# New information elicited in COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL repair relates to:

## Within each utterance:

- ✓ Nouns: *Object (thing); Subject (person); Location (place)*
- ✓ Verbs (*an action*)
- ✓ Number (*time/frequency*)
- ✓ Adjective (*description*)
- ✓ Confirmation that the Communication Partner understands the message correctly

## At the end of a topic:

- ✓ Series of actions
- ✓ Preposition (*a position*)
- ✓ Sequence (temporal relation)
- Individual actions are linked to previous: high coherence
- Improved quality from investigators point of view

# Conclusion

- Aided communication showed quality improvement
- Pilot case study will inform main study
- Further work: Greater number of cases
- Another coder - maintain objectivity



# References

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# Questions



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Coventry