CHAPTER 5

EFFICACY OF NO-TECHNOLOGY-BASED AAC INTERVENTION APPROACHES

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INTRODUCTION

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) is often discussed in terms of the amount and type of technology involved. Garrett and Lasker (2005) promoted assessing a person with aphasia for his or her potential to employ various AAC tools by asking which of the following means of communication the person typically uses: unaided strategies, partner-dependent (also known as partner-assisted) strategies, use of external stored information, and/or use of self-formulated/self-generated messages. When these forms of communication are used without electronic technology that results in synthetic or digitized speech output, they are termed no-technology AAC options. These no-technology forms of AAC are described in the following paragraphs.

STRATEGY TYPES

Unaided Strategies

Unaided AAC strategies include those which involve only the person’s own body (without external aids), such as hand gestures, body position, prosody,
facial expression, pointing, pantomiming, stereotypic utterances, and head nodding/shaking. When used in a discernible manner, these strategies allow the person with aphasia to successfully convey messages, especially responses to simple questions. These strategies are somewhat dependent on the communication partner’s ability to correctly interpret the intended meaning of the person with aphasia. Communication partners who have a close relationship and/or are more familiar with the person who has aphasia may experience more success in correctly interpreting alternative, unaided forms of communication than communication partners who are less close and/or less familiar. Examples of the use of unaided AAC strategies by a person with aphasia are provided below.

**Communication partner:** “What do you want?”
**Person with aphasia:** [Strokes cheek with left hand.]

**Communication partner:** “A washcloth?”
**Person with aphasia:** [Shakes head no.]

**Communication partner:** “Does your face itch?”
**Person with aphasia:** [Shakes head no; slowly strokes bent index finger along one cheek and then the other.]

**Communication partner:** “Oh, your razor?”
**Person with aphasia:** [Nods affirmatively; smiles.]

### Partner-Dependent/Partner-Assisted Strategies

Partner-dependent or partner-assisted strategies include the communication partner’s use of augmented input and/or written-choice communication (Garrett & Beukelman, 1995, 1998; Garrett & Lasker, 2005). Augmented input serves to enhance comprehension of the topic/message by the person with aphasia. The communication partner uses all available visual modalities to accompany a spoken message, including written words, sketches, gestures, and pointing to or manipulating actual objects (e.g., calendars and clocks). The communication partner selects simple and familiar contexts, identifies communication topics of interest, and initiates interaction (Garrett & Beukelman, 1995, 1998). In written-choice communication, the partner provides the person with aphasia with written word