

## High-Context Images: Comprehension of Main, Background, and Inferential Information by People with Aphasia

Articles at a Glance · Pathways for Aphasia

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### Background Information

Professionals often recommend using high-context images as expressive and receptive communication supports, even though researchers know little about the information people with aphasia can extract from these images.

This study's purposes were to compare the accuracy and speed with which people with and without aphasia derive main action, background, and inferential information from high-context images.

As defined by Wallace et al. (2012),

- **No-context, low context, and high context images defined in detail:**
  - **No-context images** are ones in which a person or object appears in front of a plain background, as is typical of portraits
  - **Low-context images** also depict a person or object posed for the camera, but differ from no-context images in that they have a background that provides at least some location information.

\*Both image types convey little more than identification or physical descriptive information.

- **High-context images** are photographs or drawings depicting people or objects in relation to one another, the natural environment, and the central action of a scene (Dietz, McKelvey, & Beukelman, 2006).
  - In addition to identification and location information, these images have the potential to convey content about situations, activities, experiences, and relationships relating to main or background characters, objects, or actions. As such, high-context images may be the most ideal for communicating.

## Key Findings

### Outcomes & Results:

- Task performance by participants without aphasia was more accurate and faster than that of participants with aphasia regardless of sentence condition.
- Both groups were most accurate and fastest when given sentences conveying main actions.
- The participants with aphasia were significantly slower and less accurate when selecting high-context images to match sentences relaying background and inferential information than ones relaying main action information. This pattern differed from that of participants without aphasia who demonstrated a significant decrease in accuracy only for inferential sentences; they demonstrated significantly different response speeds among all sentence conditions.
- No significant correlations emerged between Western Aphasia Battery-Revised Aphasia Quotient scores or Cognitive Linguistic Quick Test Executive Functioning or Visual Spatial Domain scores and participants' accuracy or speed of experimental task performance. However, accuracy and speed in some of the sentence stimulus conditions correlated significantly with auditory comprehension.

## Applying the Findings with Tobii Dynavox Aphasia Pages

- **Visual Scenes/Topics/Topic Words:** Clear, contextualized visual scenes are used to support successful communication. High context images were chosen to represent the various visual scene topics.
- **PCS Symbols:** The symbols in the Aphasia Pages are simple and adult oriented. Contextual symbols are included and provide detailed content or background to encourage understanding of the actual intent of the message rather than only one key word of it. For example, "I'm going to bed" shows a person walking into a bedroom with a bed visible. It shows a person performing the action of the intended message rather than just an icon of a bed on the button.

- **Personalization:** Individuals can easily edit the Topic images in the Aphasia Pages or replace them with personal photographs or images.

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