



# NSW Speech Pathology Evidence Based Practice Interest Group

## Critically Appraised Paper (CAP)

**CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE:** Communication partner training targeting topic initiation via a collaborative approach (involving video-feedback, role-plays and brainstorming), may improve the success and frequency of topic initiation in conversation and may improve the person with aphasia's view of their disability. However, further research is needed due to methodological weaknesses in this study.

**Clinical Question [patient/problem, intervention, (comparison), outcome]:**

1. Which Communication partner training methods are effective in facilitating communication activities and participation in people with aphasia?
2. Which patients and/or communication partner characteristics lead to better outcomes in communication partner training?

**Citation:** Wilkinson, R., Lock, S., Bryan, K. & Sage, K. (2011). Interaction-focused intervention for acquired language disorders: Facilitating mutual adaptation in couples where one partner has aphasia. *International journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 13(1), 74-87

**Design/Method:** Single Case Study (1 couple)- pre and post-measures using videotaping and conversation analysis (using the CA transcription system and comparison to "normal" conversation), and The CAT (Comprehensive Aphasia Test) including the disability questionnaire with the PWA.

**Participants:**

1. 36 y.o. female, 14 months post Left CVA with a non-fluent Broca-type aphasia, mild dysarthria, mild dyspraxia. Agrammatic with WFD and semantic and phonemic paraphasias. Previous therapy 3x weekly for 6/12, then weekly for further 3/12 as outpatient
2. 40 y.o. Husband of above PWA.

**Experimental Group:**

Intervention involved 4 sessions lasting 1-2 hours with the Speech Pathologist in the home setting. Therapy used the interaction therapy from SPPARC with video-feedback and role-plays, and one of the four sessions targeted topic initiation. This session described topic initiation, the PWA's current methods of initiation and brainstormed strategies to improve initiation. PWA taught to use "alerters" in conversation e.g. "anyway" and the communication partner was taught to give the PWA more time and opportunity.

**Control Group:** There was no control.

**Results:**

- Topic initiations were more successful for PWA as she was more frequently alerting communication partner that she was initiating a topic.
- Topic initiations were more collaborative compared to the unilateral technique pre-intervention.
- PWA did not alert partner via the manner suggested by SP, but did use temporal phrases more frequently.
- Noun naming and reading aloud real word subtests of CAT significantly improved, although this was not targeted in therapy.
- Lower scores on the Disability Questionnaire in all areas suggesting PWA viewed the impact of her disability as less than pre-intervention.

May 2002

**Comments – Strengths/weaknesses of paper**

- No control.
- Small sample size (1 dyad / single-case study).
- Difficult to replicate due to insufficient detail provided about the intervention.
- Change in PWA's topic initiation was attributed to collaborative approach of intervention despite the fact that the technique employed by the PWA was not the one taught in therapy.
- PWA improved on other non-treated measures (noun naming and reading aloud), indicating possible influence of spontaneous recovery.

**Level of Evidence (NH&MRC):** Level IV- case study with pre- and post-test**Appraised By:** Adult Language EBP group**Date:** 2011