Participants' dynamic orientation to folder navigation when using a VOCA with a touch screen in talk-in-interaction
Niklas Norén, Department of Education, Eva Svensson & Jeanette Telford, Speech and Language Pathology
ISAAC 2014, Lisbon

niklas.noren@edu.uu.se

UPPSALA UNIVERSITET

Background and aims

AAC devices are becoming indreasingly high tech and provide users and their surround with resorsces for participating in shared communicative projects and activities. However, technology not only supports commmunication and interaction, but also changes the conditions for its basic organisation.

This study investigates the interactional implications of **navigating through a folder system on a VOCA**, when the navigating process is visibly available for the conversational partner.

It also investigates the **sequential aspects of using an AAC device** - how the sequential position of a VOCA mediated turn in relation to preceding actions may contribute to shape the production and contents of the turn.

Data and method

Video recording by Eva Svensson & Jeanette Telford (2009).
Participants: Emil (E), 13 year old boy with Cerebral Palsy interacting with a male teacher (T) at school.
Activity: Conversation in the morning before lectures, partly to get acquainted with Eva and Jeanette.
Emil's competencies:
No speech, but some vocalisations (eg. for 'yes').
Left hand: Pincer grasp and sign language.
Using left index finger to control his AAC aids.
Communication board attached to wheelchair.
Using a computer based VOCA device.
Method: Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis (EMCA).
Published in a Special Issue of the AAC journal, *AAC Practices in Everyday Interaction*, Clarke & Bloch (eds.), 2013; 29(1): 20-36.

Sequence demonstrating participant's orientation to folder navigation

E=Emil (13 year old boy, pupil), T=Teacher (male teacher)
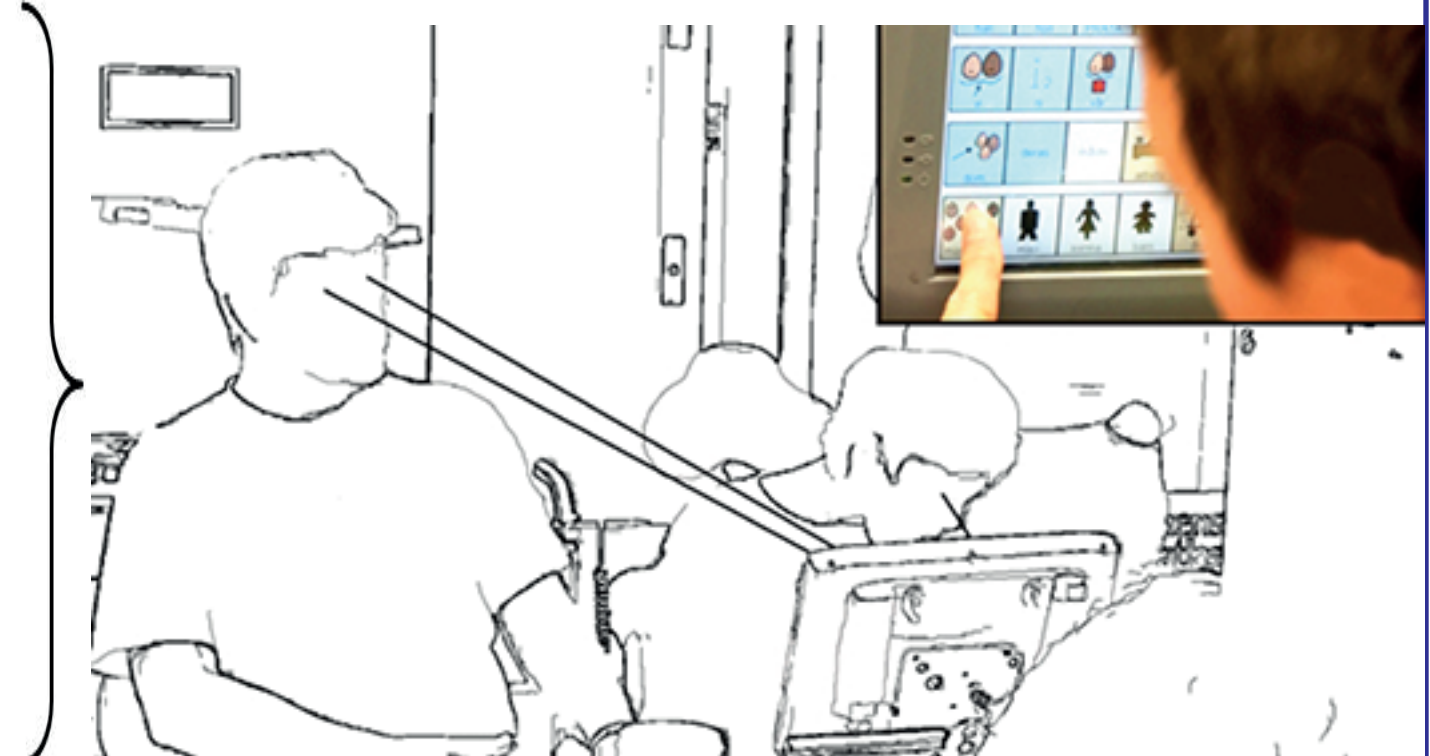
11   E   ((moves finger towards screen > >)) ((stops over PLACES, 1.0))

12   T   ((looks at Emil's hand))   °pt .hh : : °
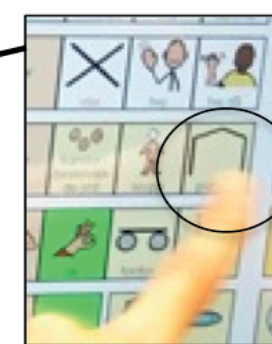
Lip smack + audible inbreath

13   E   ((moves finger left across screen)) ((stops over PERSONS))=

14   T   =mm:::?=

Immediate (confirmation) response by the teacher

15   E   =MF: *PERSONS* ▼

Emil *selects* the subfolder PERSONS

The AAC device: a Tellus VOCA

Main (default) folder

Speak line (words and symbols)

Pronouns:
I, YOU, MINE
YOURS, HE,
SHE, THEY

SPEAK (synthetic voicing of speak line)

DELETE

HELLO, GOODBUY

Topical subfolder: PERSONS   OK   Topical subfolder: PLACES

Menu navigation in Tellus

Top node		Main folder
Sub node	PERSONS	Topical subfolder
Sub node	FAMILY SCHOOL	TV
End node	MOTHER ANNA	NO FAVOURITE SHOW
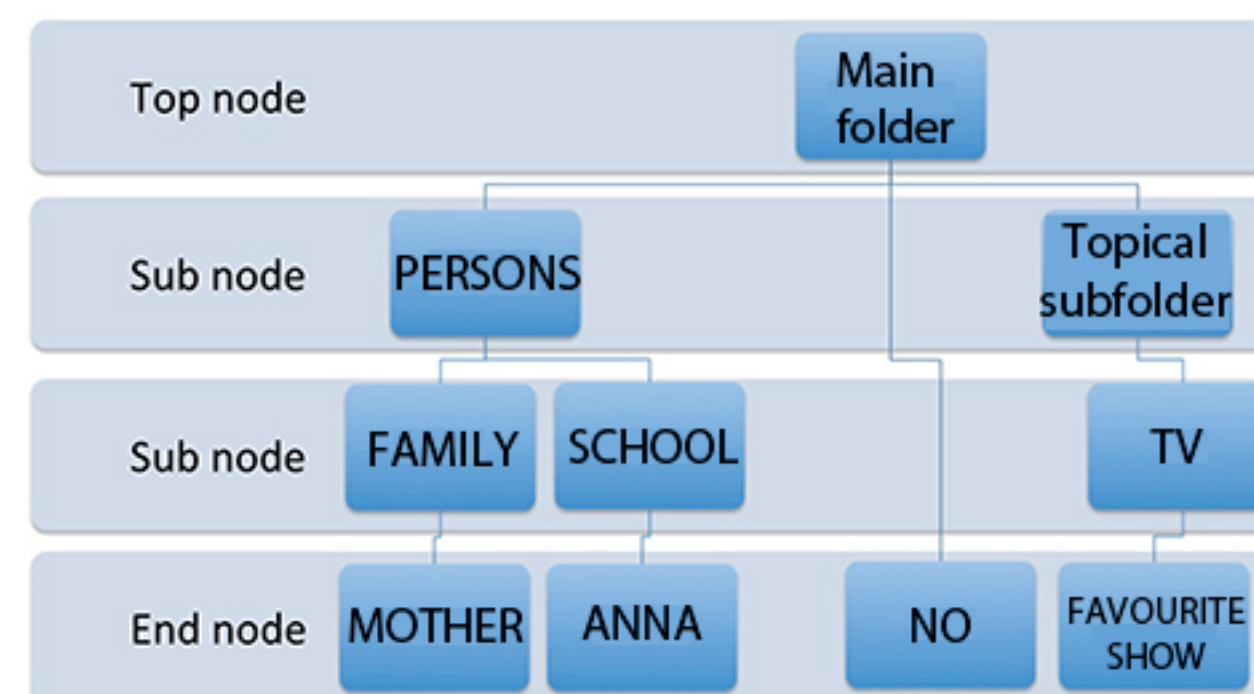
Findings

- The teacher uses the visual information provided by Emil's menu navigation in order to project and contribute to Emil's incipient turn project. The teacher gives subtle directions towards another topical focus of the talk (the **persons** involved in a telling, see lines 12 and 14).
- When contributing to Emil's turn, the teacher supports the selection process, but also indicates his own stance towards the action in the developing turn, here called **involvement**.
- Therefore, symbol selections are found to be not hierarchically but interactively organised processes, **emerging in time on a moment-by-moment basis.**
- These processes are visibly available by co-participants and are therefore **permeable** (vulnerable) for their involvement. The permeabilty seems to increase when the symbol selection is done within a sequential 'first position' - i.e. when the immediate context does not provide support for co-participants' understanding of the action under way (which is the case in the example seq.).
- Collaborative assistance by conversational partners may limit the indendence of the AAC user when formulating their own contributions, but also **support the shared meaning making process.**
- These results has implications for clinical intervention and assessment – to what does an AAC aid or device belong: To the individual (compensatory) or to the activity (enabling shared action)?