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ABSTRACT

Sharing personal stories with others is essential to human interaction and language development. To communicate, individuals use a variety of semiotic resources, including images, symbols, and written and spoken language. These modes are deployed in the co-construction of a daily face-to-face conversation. A self-created film can serve as a valuable resource to facilitate a deeper understanding of a personal experience, especially where spoken or written language may present a challenge, for example, for people who rely on augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Although the AAC literature indicates that using videos delivers benefits for aided communicators, guidelines on how to self-create, use, and transcribe them are rare. The present paper, a tutorial, describes how people who use AAC can develop a personal-video-scene (PVS) via the Film as Observable Communication (FaOC) method to utilize self-created films in sharing their stories. The first part of this paper, the theoretical framework, describes theories, methods, and practices from the fields of AAC, social semiotics, and visual anthropology, on which the FaOC method is based. The second part provides a step-by-step tutorial delivering practical guidance on how to create, use, and transcribe the PVS as a resource in conversations.

Sharing a personal experience is one of the basic functions of everyday face-to-face conversations and a cornerstone of narrative skills and language development (Ochs & Capps, 2001). A conversation is based upon a collaboration between narrators, each actively participating and contributing to co-constructing a narrative (Grove, 2014; Norrick, 2000). People with communication support needs often encounter difficulties in sustaining these dialogues, constructing utterances to make meaning, and sharing their personal experiences (Soto et al., 2006). The field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) has always recognized the relevance of utilizing diverse modalities, selecting from a constellation of resources such as objects, images, and spoken/signed/written language (Fulcher-Rood & Higginbotham, 2019). Various graphic communication systems, such as communication boards and high-tech AAC devices (e.g., speech-generating devices (SGD)), have been developed to exploit the utility of recognition (Fuller & Lloyd, 1991). Today, photography and film are increasingly used in AAC solutions, often to capture real-world settings, provide contextual meaning, and/or bring a past event more vividly to life (Babb et al., 2020; Blackstone, 2005).

Talk-in-interaction research investigates how people use multimodal combinations such as eye or finger-pointing, touch, language resources, and gestures in their daily social interactions in real-world situations (Higginbotham & Engelke, 2013). Narrators, particularly those who rely on AAC, alongside their conversation partners, utilize their surroundings and any available resource therein to improve the efficiency of their communication and sustain a conversation (Fulcher-Rood & Higginbotham, 2019). According to Clark and Brennan (1991), face-to-face conversations are the most suitable setting for establishing common ground, a mutual understanding, between interlocutors. They can see and hear each other and can refer to a nearby physical object to identify items of interest and confirm that their intentions are understood. Objects then become referents, based on their (co-) referential identity and mutual identification by interlocutors (Clark & Brennan, 1991). Establishing mutual understanding is critical for story-sharing, and with suitable resources, errors arising from constraints such as time pressure can be overcome.

The use of digital imagery is increasingly being adopted within daily storytelling, both in real life and on social media

This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

platforms, creating opportunities in the practice of AAC (Grace et al., 2019; Grace & Raghavendra, 2019). Using modern audiovisual technologies such as mobile phones, or in combination with high-tech AAC devices, almost anyone can capture and frame moments of interest onto film from their perspective for discussion with others. Today, self-created film is not unique and is often utilized to share personal memories of experiences, such as a holiday. However, narrators integrate, often intuitively, the audiovisual information from the images with (spoken) words during a conversation. It is in their reflexive repertoire of actions: picking up their phone to share a video. These images are often taken for granted and do not gain acceptance as a resource equal to others, such as spoken or written language.

To make this activity of capturing and using self-created film as a resource in conversations more transparent, deliberate, and explicit, this paper references theories, methods, and concepts from three fields of study: AAC, social semiotics, and visual anthropology (Fulcher-Rood & Higginbotham, 2019; Kress, 2015; Pink, 2020). A project "My Film, My Story" was initiated to investigate the use of self-created film in the field of AAC. A method called Film as Observable Communication (FaOC) was developed, to enable children, teens, and adults who rely on AAC to create their personal-video-scenes (PVSs) for use as a semiotic resource in conversations. A FaOC transcription format was also developed. To observe, describe, and study story-sharing with a PVS, it is recommended to video-record and transcribe a conversation, which could be for educational, therapy, or research purposes (Legel, 2012, 2016, 2023). The project is briefly referenced throughout the paper for contextual and practical information (Legel, 2024; see Appendix A for project information).

Any tutorial that focuses on teaching a novel approach must make clear the underlying rationale and principles: hence the two are inseparable. Therefore, this paper consists of two sections, (a) a theoretical FaOC framework of methods, concepts, and scientific validation related to shared storytelling and meaning-making, utilizing self-created film, and, (b) a tutorial with the description of the FaOC method and its application in preparing, creating, using, and transcribing the PVS as a complementary resource within aided film-elicitation conversations.

Theoretical FaOC framework

The fields of AAC, social semiotics, and visual anthropology are related. All conceptualize communication more broadly than spoken or written language alone, and consider how each extant resource should be made available, and acknowledged as such. All are concerned with how communicative resources assist people in making meaning (Fulcher-Rood & Higginbotham, 2019; Grove, 2014; Kress, 2015; Pink, 2020). By applying these three fields, we portray the person who uses AAC as a film/sign-maker who (a) creates independently personal films (AAC) that (b) can be used as a semiotic resource to construct meaning (social semiotics) and share their stories, (c) using the methods of participatory

film-making and film-elicitation conversation (visual anthropology). The focus here is on the use of self-created film as a resource within an aided conversation, rather than the content of the film, since meaning-making and story-sharing are interactive activities.

AAC and personal story-sharing

In a conversational narrative, people can share their past personal experiences. When these are shared, there are dynamic role shifts between tellers and listeners and both take part in the co-narration (Norrick, 2000). Sharing personal experiences can prove difficult for anyone when the event, environment, and moment have passed, and is even more challenging for aided narrators, who cannot easily exploit the setting and its object, actions, or persons as referents, as they might do in a contemporaneous topic of conversation (Fulcher-Rood & Higginbotham, 2019; Solomon-Rice & Soto, 2011). To conjure the past, the aided narrator must rely upon resources such as symbols, signed, spoken, written language, and low- or high-tech AAC (Soto & Starowicz, 2016). Finding, selecting, or typing the most contextually accurate word(s) with the most suitable resource available consumes time and energy due to linguistic, grammatical, motor and/or technological constraints (Von Tetzchner, 2015). Commercially available AAC symbols are often too generic, literally (meaning-) specific with high iconicity, a trait that may be efficient for timely use due to ease of recognition and visual similarity. However, they may not accurately support the personal story an aided narrator wishes to express (Von Tetzchner, 2015).

Personalized images from an event, such as photographs and videos, may offer assistance and have become more common in the field of AAC because they are rapidly recognized by any narrator (Babb et al., 2020). These images are typically captured by individuals other than the aided narrators themselves (e.g., parents, staff, or relevant professionals) and are often presented in the form of pre-programmed personal stories in combination with spoken or written text or symbols (Babb et al., 2020). While such presentations offer a visual insight into an event and assist observers in understanding the setting, they seem less conducive to a spontaneous conversation about a personal experience. The prepared images and texts by others could direct the course of the conversation in a direction divergent from that intended by the aided narrator (Waller, 2019). The images may contain the context of a historical experience but may not convey the specific details the aided narrator would like to share. When a resource is not available, or suitable to faithfully evoke a personal experience, it can lead to less detailed stories, obstacles in the grounding process and the risk of communication breakdowns, potentially resulting in a passive interaction between interlocutors (Waller, 2019). Conversation partners of aided narrators may ask extra yes/no questions or other questions for which they know the answers.

Aided narrators seldom create their own personal resources to use in story-sharing, often because of sensory and physical constraints, or unfamiliarity in using it in that way

(Grove, 2014). Several studies show how this could boost their aided personal story-sharing (Grove & Harwood, 2022; McCormack et al., 2022). Current technologies have made it easier to create digital resources such as drawings and films, using mobile devices or in combination with high-tech AAC devices (Shane et al., 2012). In creating their own films, aided narrators can pre-select details such as objects, persons, and actions themselves. During story-sharing, these observable story elements can act as referents, identified and confirmed through (eye) pointing and facial expressions, which may assist in creating joint attention, to establish common ground between interlocutors (Clark & Brennan, 1991; Clarke, 2014; Grove, 2014). As explained by Fulcher-Rood and Higginbotham (2019), aided narrators are often creative in exploiting resources within their surroundings, or within a film. Any conversation about the contents of self-created artifacts represents an opportunity to utilize them as a resource, although there is still a demand on each narrator's creative and co-constructive skills to identify relevant and engaging details.

Social semiotics is a discipline that studies the nature of these semiotic resources for making meaning, through a co-constructive process between narrators, thereby providing insights for exploring the authorship and use of self-created film by aided narrators themselves, within AAC (Higginbotham & Engelke, 2013; Kress, 2015; Pink, 2020; Soto & Olmstead, 1993).

Social semiotics and multimodality

Semiotics is the study of signs, and communicative acts, using a range of subtle and/or sophisticated forms of communication to construct meaning about personal experiences and thoughts (Halliday, 1978). A sign is a combination of meaning and form, the signified and signifier, created through any potential multimodal resources. Semiotics is a broad field of study. This paper focuses on social semiotics and images as semiotic resources (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Barthes (1973) was among the first to consider semiotics and meaning-making related to photography and film and observed that this is not simply a natural extension of what we see. According to Barthes, images are not universal in their interpretation, and it is difficult to understand the intended meaning without an accompanying description. Social semiotics focuses on the sign-maker and the act of sign production, which takes place between people within a sociocultural context. In this approach signs are made, and not only used. These signs are neither static nor standalone, but establish meaning through social interaction, culturally influenced by time and the environment. Social semiotics focuses particularly on visual modes, and how they can be prepared to assist in making meaning. Images may be abstract, static, or dynamic, such as interactive storybooks; or be naturalistic, signifying a real-life scene (Djonov et al., 2021).

Framing is an essential component in the process of meaning-making (Kress, 2015). Sign-makers frame by including and excluding elements, as a filmmaker might form a square with their fingers to emulate a viewfinder and select a focus. Films or photographs of real-life events are a form of resource intended to be interpreted literally, referred to as scientific images, but even these remain only a captured approximation of the reality they intend to depict, as framed by the sign-maker. A film or photograph on its own does not make meaning. The coherent meaning that constitutes a story is informed by the narrator's memories of their experiences, including how they interact with and interpret the employed resources, as a film (Cohn & Magliano, 2020; Van Balkom et al., 2010). During a conversation, a film frame may function as a resource, to which other resources may be added, such as (eye) pointing, touch, gesture, facial expression, vocalizations, spoken, written, or signed languages. These multiple modes together create a so-called multimodal whole, forging multiplication of meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). This process of adopting the most suitable resources and integrating them as referents relates to the grounding process identified by Clark and Brennan (1991). Social semiotics provides a theory to make the creation and use of self-created film as a semiotic resource understandable, interpretable, and analyzable for adoption in AAC solutions.

Much research experience has been gained in this area of social semiotics from the theoretical and practical approaches of visual anthropology (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Visual anthropology

Visual anthropology is a subdiscipline of anthropology that uses audiovisual media in ethnographic research to glean insights about people as sign-makers and how they construct meaning in their sociocultural context (Pink, 2020). Ethnographic filming and photography involve documenting real-world settings. These images are used as semiotic resources to augment communication to improve understanding between the parties involved since language and cultural differences can prove challenging (Clark, 1999). Originally it was the researcher who filmed, but with today's audiovisual technology, and belief in a participatory way of working, the field and its methodologies have changed. Today, photographs and films are often captured by participants themselves and defined as participatory film-making (Lim & Toh, 2020; Pink, 2020).

Relinquishing control of the camera to participants enables them to create their own semiotic resources, seen and experienced from their perspective (Lim & Toh, 2020; MacDougall, 2006; Potter & Cowan, 2020). To attribute and understand their meaning, additional resources may be required, such as spoken or written language. This relates to another visual anthropological method, known as *film elicitation* (conversations), in which film footage is used as a resource or referent (Collier & Collier, 1986). According to Harper (2002), using participants' films can generate a different kind of information from that provided through spoken or written language bridging the gap between narrators and "breaking the ice" to initiate hidden topics of interest. The use of participants' self-created images to document daily life, and use as a resource in conversations, has been investigated in several ethnographic studies involving persons with

illnesses, hearing impairments, physical and/or intellectual disabilities (e.g., cerebral palsy, spina bifida, acquired brain injury, and dementia) (Clark, 1999; Li & Ho, 2019; Phelan & Kinsella, 2014). Broadly in all these studies, participants expressed that they felt more in control in a film-elicitation conversation with their self-captured photos and videos than without their images (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). Challenges were linked to the energy levels of the participants, related to physical conditions, which requested some assistance in carrying out the tasks of image capturing (Karisalmi et al., 2018). O'Brien's study (2013) described how young deaf adults explained that their photographs assisted in expressing themselves, without having to rely only on language-related resources, which, according to them, they were disfluent.

Although audiovisual technologies are now more available, a potential barrier to their use is financial. If accessible, a basic mobile phone can cover the processes of filming, editing, and sharing. Leveraging film introduces alternative forms of sign-making, but it is not without challenges (Harper, 2002). Recording moments of interest on film requires a camera and cognizance of a particular intent: "I have to capture this because I want to share this with others later." Another issue, as the adage observes, is that "a picture is worth a thousand words"; yet, this can become overwhelming or detract from the intended meaning of the film/sign-maker. Again, a film as a semiotic resource does not stand on its own but requires additional descriptions. Participatory film-making and film-elicitation conversations are used in visual anthropology to augment, improve and study communication and may guide the creation, use and transcription of self-created film in AAC, a topic addressed in the last paragraph of this section.

Transcription in AAC, social semiotics and visual anthropology

Personal films, self-created by film/sign-makers who use AAC, captured and employed as a resource, functioning as a referent, may stimulate the adoption of other resources, such as eye or finger-pointing and/or signed/written language, creating a multimodal whole to enable individuals to share their experiences more fully (Kress, 2015). To observe these multimodal injunctions and the co-construction of the story by all narrators, transcription is necessary (Higginbotham & Engelke, 2013). The inclusion of film as a resource in transcription, however, is rare. The majority of studies focus on the annotations within the image, or how people observe them, rather than interactions with the film as one of the resources during a conversation (Cohn & Magliano, 2020; O'Halloran, 2015).

An interdisciplinary approach, based on the fields of AAC, social semiotics, and visual anthropology, may offer assistance in finding a suitable format to transcribe the use of self-created films in multimodal story-sharing by people who use AAC. AAC professionals and researchers are experts in observing and displaying diverse forms of communication beyond spoken/written language and use a standard extant transcription convention to describe such resources (Von Tetzchner & Basil, 2011). Fulcher-Rood and Higginbotham (2019) transcriptions included both an image of the conversation setting and an image of the focal artifact when used as a resource in a communicative exchange involving eye-pointing. Social semiotics can assist in decoding multi-modally-integrated communicative acts (Kress, 2015). Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) developed a visual grammar model that allowed for the content of images to be annotated. Visual anthropology provides research methods for organizing, recording, and transcribing film-elicitation conversations (Pink, 2020). For example, Nijland (1989) and Mondada (2007) noted the importance of including the content viewed by narrators within the transcription. They achieved this by including still frames extracted from the video recordings of film-elicitation conversations and the viewed film footage.

For people who use AAC, their families, teachers, AAC professionals or researchers to be able to explore the potential of self-created films, we provide a step-by-step tool to create, use and transcribe self-created films as a semiotic resource.

The FaOC method

This section describes the FaOC method, a theoretically grounded, practical tool to produce, use, and transcribe self-created film resources, termed personal-video-scenes (PVSs) by film/sign-makers who use AAC. A PVS may contain single or multiple film scenes, deliberately filmed/selected/edited by the film/sign-maker themselves with the intention of using these personal productions as a resource in conversations (Grove, 2014; Kress, 2015; Legel, 2024; Legel & Van Kleef, 2023).

The FaOC method consists of three stages: preparation, procedure, and transcription. Preparation is the necessary precursor to enable each film/sign-maker to create a PVS (Stage 1). Procedure relates to filming, editing/selecting, and using of self-created film by aided film/sign-makers (Stage 2). Stages 1 and 2 may be sufficient for people with communication support needs and their conversation partners to employ the PVS in daily story-sharing.

However, to glean deeper insights into the employment of a PVS, it is worthwhile to video-record, transcribe, and study the film-elicitation conversations of Stage 2. Researchers and practitioners, such as teachers and speech-language pathologists, may want to document the effects of using self-created film on several communication and language outcomes. Current transcription formats in the field of AAC do not account for the use of PVSs (see Von Tetzchner & Basil, 2011). Therefore, Stage 3 is included in the FaOC method, providing a transcription format to describe, display, and analyze the conversation to allow subsequent study of the sign production and story-sharing, observed during the film-elicitation conversation.

Stage 1: preparation

To support each film/sign-maker in creating their PVSs, preparation is vital in securing the most effective technical solutions and ethical considerations to meet their respective needs.

Technical solutions

For filming, film/sign-makers can use any device available that suits their needs, such as a handheld camera, tablet/iPad[1], or mobile phone, mounted on a wheelchair or walker if required. To enable film creation, technical solutions may need to be assessed and customized for aided film/sign-makers. An interprofessional team of filmmakers/students, assistive technologists, and clinicians could assist in identifying solutions at this preparatory stage, but they do not take part in the filming or editing (Legel, 2024).

Today's assistive technologies make it possible to use eye-gaze or a light-touch button operated by hand, feet, or head, to control a digital camera, tablet, or mobile phone in combination with an AAC device, to film and edit (Norrie, 2021). Some high-tech AAC devices allow filming, editing, and displaying of the film footage on their screens. There are a small number of individuals with more complex motor impairments, who need higher levels of support. People with severe motor and/or intellectual disabilities may still require assistance in operating cameras and post-production software packages, but it is imperative that they take the lead in making content and editorial choices. Film/sign-makers without such challenges can often undertake the process of filming and editing on a mobile phone, tablet device, or computer, just as their typical peers do.

Ethical considerations

Ethics in film-making is critical to delivering freedom for the filmmaker to use their material (Pink, 2020). Before commencing filming, the aided filmmakers (or their assistants) should request permission from any person in the vicinity whose image may be captured for their PVS, by explaining the purpose of their activity. For example, they can prepare and carry a small card or video link to share information that explains their purpose (i.e., capturing moments on film to use later as a resource in personal story-sharing).

For researchers who are going to capture film data from the PVS production and film-elicitation conversations, it should be a standard procedure to obtain signed consent forms from all participants, families, and schools before filming commences (ethical consent).

Stage 2: procedure

The FaOC procedure, mapped to Grove's model for Storysharing® (Grove, 2014), describes three steps: find the story; build the story; and, share the story. For film/sign-makers the sequence of tasks is: capturing/filming user-identified story elements through participatory filming (Step 1); selecting, editing, and preparing the captured film/story resources (Step 2); and finally, sharing the story using the self-created films as a multimodal semiotic resource during a film-elicitation conversation (Step 3). The creation and use of a PVS is not scripted, delivering freedom of choice for the film/sign-maker, and is always filmed, selected/edited by (or under the direction of) the aided film/sign-maker themselves (MacDougall, 2006). Grove's model was adopted to underpin and structure the FaOC procedure and demonstrate the parallel procedures of film-making, meaning-making (sign production), and story-sharing.

We will now expand upon each of these steps, with guidance on useful techniques.

Step 1: story collection and filming

Collecting the story involves the aided film/sign-maker selecting and capturing an experience on film (Grove, 2014). This relates to the first step of meaning-making by gathering audiovisual story elements to create a semiotic resource. The intention is to film deliberately and consciously, with the notion: "I have to capture this now to use later in my story-sharing." This will help the filmmakers to be more cogently selective, which will improve the quality of the film footage (Pink, 2020). The clarity of the captured footage may influence the effectiveness of the resource, and its value as a referent in the process of meaning-making and story-sharing later (Clark & Brennan, 1991; Kress, 2015). The film/sign-maker can be offered support as required but must maintain control over what, when, and how they capture the image.

Useful techniques. It is recommended that the images be captured from the aided film/sign-maker's perspective. For example, from their eye level, with a handheld camera, an iPad/tablet, or a mobile phone. They can film events ethnographically, which means in real-world settings, placing the details in context, such as the people, activities, and objects in their setting (physical location). A larger viewfinder/screen size makes it easier to focus/frame subjects during the filming, therefore influencing the quality of the footage obtained. Filmmakers who wish to appear in the film themselves can direct someone else to control the camera or change the perspective on their phone or tablet. Filmmakers can control what and when they want to film by turning the camera on or off. Framing scenes can be achieved by moving backwards/forwards, changing height and angles (frog and bird perspectives), to capture close-ups (details), or wide-angle shots (context). The captured scenes should avoid brevity (e.g., not fewer than 10 s), or they risk becoming more challenging to watch. Filmmakers free from motor impairments often have more flexibility and can opt for more unique angles and positions in filming. For example, they can climb onto a table or lie on the ground, constructing unique personal scenes.

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[1] iPad: An IOS-based tablet computer developed by Apple Inc.

Step 2: story preparation and editing

Having captured their film story elements, the filmmakers need to consider how and what will be shared. This stage equates to Grove's suggested period of story preparation and relates to meaning-making in preparing the PVS as a resource to make it understandable for others. The impending film-elicitation conversation, where and when this happens, and with whom, can influence how the resource will be prepared. The film/sign-makers work out what contributions they will make to the story, what to select, and what to omit. For example, the selection of scenes may differ depending on the intended audience (e.g., friends, parents, teachers). The goal of the conversation might be to share a school trip upon returning home, deliver a presentation in school, or a job assignment. Through selecting and editing film/sign-makers can specify, frame/focus, and place a spotlight on the story elements or potential referents (a person, object, or action) they wish to make explicit to their conversation partner(s) later.

Useful techniques. The PVS footage can be kept unedited (raw) or it may be edited by the film/sign-maker. Unedited footage is efficient for prompt use, but it is advised to make a selection of scenes before using them in a conversation. Without selection, the film can become overwhelming, and the focus of what it intends to communicate might be lost. Film editing is more time-consuming but allows the film/sign-maker to curate a more in-depth selection of narrative elements placed within a chosen timeline. Editing can be accomplished using apps on a mobile phone, high-tech AAC devices, or a computer with software such as Final Cut X[2], Adobe Premiere Pro[3], iMovie[4], or Windows Movie Maker.[5] Nevertheless, it remains important to remember that the PVS is not only a "cool" end product but a resource to stimulate and assist self-expression in conversations.

The aim is to create a lucid reflection of a past event, similar to ethnographic filming, with basic editing techniques such as cutting, pasting, and deleting, but without special effects or added (textual) elements. To stimulate spontaneity in the story-sharing phase, there are no (spoken or written) text or symbols included within the PVS. However, these resources are essential later during the conversation, to clarify and support the story behind the PVS imagery.

Step 3: sharing the story

The final step in sign production, and the FaOC method, is to share the story in a film-elicitation conversation. The PVS does not need to be perfectly filmed or edited, although it would assist if the created images are clear. The PVS is utilized as a resource to enable joint attention and establish a focus on the story elements, to spawn mutual understanding about a personal experience. The aided narrator must confirm that their intentions, also related to referents in the PVS, are well understood by their conversation partner(s). The ethical stance of a good narrator and conversation partner is to listen and give space and time to others, without attempting to dominate the conversation (Grove & Harwood, 2022; Heim et al., 2008).

Useful techniques. Interlocutors sit in front of a computer, TV, tablet, or phone screen where the PVS film is displayed and viewable for all, and in such a way that they can also observe each other. On a bigger screen, such as a TV, it is easier to view details within the film footage than on a phone, particularly if participants are living with limited vision or are easily distracted. However, for prompt access to the PVS, a phone, tablet or SGD can prove useful. An interactive school board is practical to utilize the PVS in a classroom-setting. Film-elicitation conversations can take place in a variety of settings, with consideration of factors such as screen-size, the location, and the moment, matched to each narrator's preferences (Legel, 2024).

It is important to take the time to watch the film and make additional (AAC) semiotic resources and support available where required, as with any aided conversation. No script is provided, only guidance that the video should be paused when someone indicates that they wish to contribute. The narrators must be informed that, instead of watching the film in silence as people typically do when watching a movie, they are in a position to interact with the PVS by pausing, rewinding, and augmenting the images with their comments and questions. The goal is to stimulate a conversation that is spontaneous and unplanned, influenced by the respective contributions from interlocutors.

Stage 3: transcription

The last stage of the practical application of the FaOC method provides a guideline to document and study the employment of self-created film as a resource in story-sharing. As described in the introduction of the tutorial section; the FaOC method can be applied to create and use personal films in daily story-sharing (stages 1 and 2), without study-research intent. Still, when using self-created film in education programs, speech-language therapy, or research it is valuable to explore in more detail how aided film/sign-makers utilize their PVSs. To facilitate this exploration, Stage 3 provides a practical procedure and transcription format for researchers, practitioners, such as teachers, speech-language pathologists, and other interested parties.

To study the employment of self-created film in story-sharing and sign production, film-elicitation conversations need to be video-recorded, to make transcription and observations possible, since many spoken and non-spoken resources, and interactions with the PVS, can easily be overlooked if not recorded. Recordings and transcriptions offer a chance, at a later time, to display, observe, describe, and study the use of the PVS by narrators, and capture the aided film/sign-

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[2]Final Cut X: post-production video editing and motion graphics for Apple computers.

[3]Adobe premiere Pro: post-production video editing software developed by Adobe Creative Cloud.

[4]iMovie: iMovie is a free video editing program for Apple users.

[5]Windows Movie Maker: free video editing program that allows users to create, edit and share videos.

makers' multimodal resource use. A transcription format was developed to describe a film-elicitation conversation, by including images of the self-created film (PVS) and conversation setting. This means that there are two categories of film footage required to carry out the transcription procedure: (1) PVS film footage captured by aided film/sign-makers; and (2) video recordings of participants' conversations utilizing the PVS, as captured by the researcher/practitioners.

Recording

It is recommended that the recording camera be placed at an angle that allows capture of both the interlocutors and the PVS, displayed on a screen. In practice, even with the most effective visual positioning of the recording camera lens, and later during transcription, interactions will typically be missed. A second camera is optional but could also make it more of a sterile laboratory setting. In visual anthropological (ethnographic) research, it is advised to film and log comprehensive descriptions of the setting and include the researcher by making them visible in the film and the data, to break the "invisible wall" (MacDougall, 2006).

FaOC transcription

The design of a transcription format is influenced by the frame/focus of the investigation, which here involves the employment and interaction of the self-created film (a PVS) during a film-elicitation conversation (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011). The purpose of the FaOC transcription is to document story-sharing and sign production with the PVS, to make this process observable. To do this, each interlocutor's contributions and actions should be transcribed, in parallel with what they may view of the PVS (Kress, 2015). The transcription includes narrators: (a) employed semiotic resources (e.g., eye or finger-pointing, spoken/typed/signed words), (b) actions such as starting/stopping playback, fast forwarding/rewinding the PVS, and (c) the observed audiovisual information of the PVS. To address the paucity of dynamic film (moving images) transcription formats, a compromise solution was adopted to use still frames, from both the researchers' film-elicitation conversation recordings, and the aided film/sign-makers' PVSs.

We will now expand in detail upon the transcription procedure, guided by an example.

FaOC transcription format

During the transcription stage, the researcher requires access to both the conversation video recordings and the PVS film footage, in order to observe them in parallel (Legel, 2024). As displayed in Figure 1, the FaOC transcription format consists of an Excel spreadsheet with nine columns. The first column contains a timeline with specific minutes and seconds noted when something occurs in the conversation. This can be very broad, such as any communicative act, or laughter. Column 2 displays a screenshot extracted of the conversational video recordings, captured by the researcher. This is carried out at the commencement of the conversation and

only updated when the setting changes, or to highlight a particular interaction. A screenshot can be made on either PC[6] or Mac[7] computers, and placed within the Excel file.

When one of the interlocutors interacts with or refers to the PVS, such as by (eye) pointing, or includes it in a comment or question making it a potential referent, a screenshot is made of the PVS. This screenshot is included in Column 3. Freezing the frame at the precise intended moment may prove challenging. The still frames can impart some detailed visual insights, and it is therefore advised that they be included. If they appear too small in the transcription format, they may be made available in higher resolution online.
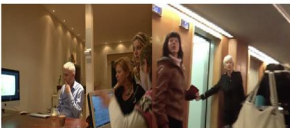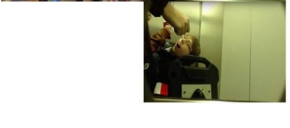
Column 4 identifies who is communicating, or the PVS itself. What is expressed, the discourse unit (DU), is documented in Column 5. A DU can be defined as any communicative act initiated within the context of a conversational narrative - verbal, visual, or otherwise (Light et al., 1985; Müller & Soto, 2002). A short description of the PVS still frame is also written out in this column. DUs are articulated with the terminology and notation defined by Von Tetzchner and Basil (2011). Since none existed for a PVS as an audiovisual resource (avr), the following symbols are introduced: $\ll$ a brief description when the PVS is running $\gg$, and $<$ a brief description of the PVS when it is paused $>$. This relates to Column 6, which displays all the resource modes used by name: for example, gesture (g), and for PVS: the audiovisual resource (avr). Column 7 includes some basic coding of the employed PVS frame, in Column 3, and related DU, in Column 5. This PVS screenshot (roughly) coding is based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) visual grammar model: person (p), action (a), object (o), details (d), or location (l). Column 8 allows a brief description of (sub) topics relevant to gleaning narrative insights. Columns 7 and 8 are very brief descriptions, and essential keywords, providing only limited narrative insight. Column 9 displays maintenance, observed in any (emotional) expression (e.g., exclamations or laughter) from the narrators (Müller & Soto, 2002).

The PVS yields greater audiovisual information than is transcribed, since only at the moment that one of the interlocutors uses it to elaborate on or refer to it, will a screenshot be made, and inclusion in the transcription be activated. When they only observe the PVS, even consciously, but without referring to a specific frame, that frame is not transcribed. This means that much of the observed information is not included. Instead of making screenshots, video scenes would enhance objectivity. FaOC transcriptions should be read as multi-layered narratives, with screenshots and descriptive annotations, to gain a small insight, since they remain a reflection of a real conversation.

Reliability of transcription. Multimodal communication and the use of multiple semiotic resources are highly complex and many aspects are subtle. At least two independent

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[6]A PC is a personal computer with a Windows operating system, developed by Microsoft.

[7]Mac is an abbreviation for Macintosh, the official name for computers produced by the American computer company Apple.

(1) min. s	(2) CS	(3) PVS	(4) Person/PVS	(5) Discourse Unit	(6) Semiotic	(7) PVS code	(8) Topics	(9) Maintenance
(03.24)			PVS:	< Elevator doors>	avr	o, d	Narrow	
(03.25)			M:	*"Those doors are so narrow"*	SGD			
(03.27)			Mo:	*Were the doors narrow?*	ns			
(03.28)			M:	YES *(moving head from left to right)*	g			
(03.28)			Mo:	*I see, really...*	ns			
(03.28)			S:	*But you could get through?*	ns			
(03.33)			M:	YES *(moving head from left to right)*	g			
(03.34)			F:	*It is a very old ship, right hey M?*	ns		Old ship	
(03.38)			Mo:	*Were you worried you could get in?*	ns			
(03.39)			M:	YES *(moving head from left to right)*	g			
(03.42)			M:	*"With fitting and measuring"*	SGD		Fitting in	Laughing
(05.52)			PVS:	<< Elevator doors close, Mike bumps into elevator doors>>	avr	p, a, o, d	Bump/dent	
(05.53)			S:	*O no M....*	ns			
(05.53)			Mo, M, S, F	*All laughing*				Laughing
(06.00)			Mo:	*Were you not quick enough?*	ns			
(06.03)			Mo:	*Such an old, antique ship, and you make a dent in it?*	ns			
(06.04)			M:	YES	g		Bump	
(06.04)			M, Mo, S, F:	*All laughing...*				Laughing

Figure 1. Conversation-transcription example.

Note. M: Mike; Mo: mother; S: sister; F: friend; avr: audiovisual resource; SGD: speech-generating devices; ns: natural speech; g: gesture; o: object; d: detail; p: person; a: action (Legel, 2024; Von Tetzchner & Basil, 2011).

https://faoc.nl/site/assets/files/1352/faoc_transcription-example_figure_1_aac_journal_2024.png

transcribers should transcribe the conversations, and an inter-judge agreement (consensus) should be reached (Kovacs & Hill, 2015; Shriberg et al., 1984). This will be a recursive process, whereby the lead transcriber produces an initial draft, followed by the subsequent transcribers' iterations, leading to a final, agreed document. Following best practice member checking in undertaking qualitative interview research with AAC users, video recordings and transcriptions of conversations should be made available to the participants (Beneteau, 2020). When applying the FaOC method in clinical practice, both recordings and transcripts were made available to the filmmakers, who were asked if they were satisfied with the story-sharing, and whether they wished to clarify or amend any details. They enjoyed and appreciated this opportunity for collaboration/involvement, but no comments or suggestions for edits were received.

The last paragraph of the tutorial displays a transcription example of an excerpt from a film-elicitation conversation, captured during the "My Film, My Story" project, to give a detailed insight into how the film footage can be incorporated into records of conversations, and to display the use of a PVS as a resource by all interlocutors. A complete analysis of the conversation is beyond the scope of the current paper.

Conversation-Transcription example

The film-elicitation conversation, displayed in Figure 1, involved M and his family. It took place in their home after a school visit to a steamship. M was a 17-year-old boy living with cerebral palsy and speech impairments. He is literate, and uses a SGD (Tellus 4[8] with Mind Express™) to communicate, but also relies upon gestures and facial expressions. M uses an electric wheelchair equipped with a joystick, used for both locomotion and speech purposes. He utilizes sounds and movement to indicate yes/no and also uses eye-pointing to ask or make comments. His conversation partners were M's mother (Mo), sister, and a family friend - all familiar with M's communication strategies. M filmed, selected, and edited the ship's elevator to share later. This aligns with the first and second steps of the FaOC method, meaning-making and Grove's story-sharing model (2014), creating and preparing a resource (participatory filming). The film-elicitation conversation, Step 3, and the use of the PVS resource to share a story/make meaning through interactions with others is displayed in the transcription example (Figure 1).

At 03.24, a conversational setting screenshot is shown, with the interlocutors sitting in front of a screen. This is parallel to a screenshot of a paused PVS < elevator-doors > since M referred/interacted with the PVS. M initiated, at 03.25, the following utterance on his SGD: *"Those doors are so narrow"* (Von Tetzchner & Basil, 2011) (see Appendix B for Transcription-Notation). This shows how PVS images converge into a multimodal whole with the words M typed on his SGD. The word "*those*" could not be used without observing the PVS. The PVS functioned as a referent to create joint attention and common ground, since Mo included the referent within a question using natural speech (ns): *Were the doors narrow?* M provided a final confirmation related to the referent, with a YES. When M's mother watched the PVS, she agreed that the doors were

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[8]Tellus 4: A multi-faceted high-tech AAC device supplied with software tools installed, such as Mind Express.

indeed narrow. At (03.28) she asked if he was concerned whether he could get through with his wheelchair, which M was able to confirm using gestures (g). At (03.42), he responded with typed words: "*With fitting and measuring*" (SGD). This demonstrates co-construction between interlocutors to reach mutual understanding.

During the filming, M accidentally captured an incident. He bumped into the elevator doors and became anxious. He selected the scene when he was editing, but had some doubts. During the story-sharing activity, this scene triggered laughter and responses from all interlocutors, as displayed in the excerpt at 05.52. The PVS shows ≪ M bumped into the elevator doors ≫, which is coded as: M = person (p); bumped = action (a); elevator = object (o); doors = detail (d). This is described in brief with keywords, as the topic: Bump/Dent. Mo could now make a joke related to the scene M selected: *Such an old ship and you make a dent in it?* After the conversation, M and his conversation partners shared how they gleaned more detailed information using the PVS, making it easier to progress beyond yes/no questions. M's mother stated: *Now I can see the world from your perspective.*

Discussion

This paper describes how self-created film can be used as a resource in face-to-face conversations, by presenting the underlying theoretical FaOC framework, and a tutorial describing the FaOC method. The use of self-created film as a semiotic resource is grounded in the convergence of the three disciplines of AAC, social semiotics, and visual anthropology (Fulcher-Rood & Higginbotham, 2019; Kress, 2015; Pink, 2020). The focus of this paper is not upon the content of the self-created films, the PVSs, but rather how such a resource can be created by aided narrators themselves, and used by them and their conversation partners to establish, and amplify, meaning with the use of additional resources in an integrated, multimodal film-elicitation conversation. The PVS does not in itself tell the story, the story develops through interactions with others (Collier & Collier, 1986; Grove, 2014; Kress, 2015). The coherent meaning that represents a story is informed by memories of experiences and social-emotional impressions. How observers might interpret such resources, including the PVS, is influenced by culture, traditions, and subjective experiences (Cohn & Magliano, 2020). The images elicit memories that are linked to associative experiences (Norrick, 2000; Van Balkom et al., 2010).

A recurring concept in the paper is framing, a pivotal concept relating to participatory film-making, meaning-making, and story-sharing. Film is a representation of the real world, but can only be partially captured through the inclusion/exclusion of elements as defined by the sign-maker. The frame choices made can place a spotlight on an event's details. This is related to another phenomenon that recurs throughout this paper, which is how the PVS (elements) may function as a referent, where all interlocutors can add augmenting resources, such as (eye) gaze/pointing, or spoken/written/signed language, creating a multimodal whole (Kress, 2015). The more conscious framing during the creation of

the PVS may improve the film footage as a resource (as with all film-making), and as a potential referent, aimed at providing the aided film/sign-maker with greater control and authorship (Clark & Brennan, 1991; Pink, 2020).

Clinical implications

Despite the wealth of opportunities for the daily adoption of media provided by today's audiovisual and assistive technologies, there are only very limited studies on the creation, use, and transcription of self-created film as a semiotic resource. Especially rare are studies or protocols detailing how people who rely on AAC can make their own films and use them as a resource in daily conversations. With this paper, and the accompanying FaOC method website (Legel, 2024), we hope to deliver a guide to the practical implementation of the creation and use of self-created film as a resource for aided film/sign-makers and their conversation partners. For teachers, researchers, and clinicians the transcription format may assist in observing and analyzing the conversations. Also, the choice-making in the process of filming, selecting, and editing of the PVS may provide an insight into a film/sign-maker's motivations, interests, and their talents.

The FaOC method can be employed as a tool by people living with diverse disabilities (e.g., cognitive and/or physical impairments). It can be adapted to ensure accessibility and suitability for everyone. Some film/sign-makers may require more support than others, for example, due to motor or cognitive impairments, but they must also remain in control of their film production and conversations. Their explicit confirmations are essential for each choice made, in each step of the film and story production process.

The sensitivity and granularity of content (topic) choice and filming can be adjusted to accommodate the individual needs of the film/sign-makers. For example, wide-angle or close-up shots may be deployed, relating to the filmmaker's preference for more contextual or detailed information, to establish a subjective feel. A topic for the PVS may be simple or more complex, such as snowflakes falling in the garden, or a visit to the fire brigade. Decisions on the extent and duration of single or multiple film scenes may also be personally adjusted. In the "My Film, My Story" project, the film/sign-makers' PVSs became more focused and personal, by repeating the process of filming, selecting, editing, and story-sharing (Legel, 2024).

Limitations and future directions

This paper describes the potential of self-created film within the field of AAC, with certain limitations that are discussed in detail here. First, the theories of the three fields of inquiry considered are presented only briefly. A list of extended literature can be found at the supporting web link provided (Legel, 2024). Second, the rapid and ongoing development of digital film media also represents new challenges. One single film frame provides the opportunity to scrutinize fine details but also carries the risk of information overload. This further relates to how we transcribe today's multimodal communication.

A transcription format is a frame choice of the researcher, who decides what to include or exclude. They remain a

constrained reflection of a conversation, potentially lacking the nuances of the interactions and the content of story-sharing. Including supporting images in an image timeline, is useful in acquiring visual insight and understanding of narrative and sign production by all interlocutors. Incorporating moving images (film) in a transcript would represent greater objectivity, than only static frames since narrators absorb far more information from a PVS than can realistically be included in any written transcription. This is especially true in the field of AAC, where multimodal communication and co-construction are essential, but can prove challenging to observe. Transcripts, including descriptions of (moving) images, are best read as multi-layered storybooks, mindful that they remain a framed selection of the phenomenon, as interpreted by the transcriber, and based upon personal choice despite objective intentions. While this paper introduces a guideline on how to create, use, and transcribe self-created film in a face-to-face conversation, much remains to be discovered; for example, how such new film resources, created in programs for digital visual literacy could enrich language development programs and speech-language therapy. Further research is warranted, including studying the effects of the elaboration of resources such as the PVS on conversational narratives.

Conclusion

To a large extent, the field of AAC is based on visual multimodal communication skills and technologies. However, it could benefit from the practices and established knowledge of social semiotics and visual anthropology regarding self-created film. The goal of this tutorial is to promote the recognition of self-created film, in the form of a PVS, as an acknowledged resource for people who rely upon AAC to communicate. To improve narrative skills and encourage personal story-sharing with the inclusion of audiovisual images, aided communicators require access to diverse resources such as self-created film and language concepts through AAC interventions and technologies, in private, school, community, and/or care settings. A strength of the PVS is the creation and utilization of a resource from the perspective of the aided film/sign-maker, giving them authorship and greater agency as a result, which may stimulate new areas for practice and research. The authors hope that this paper will inspire debate, reflection, and the adoption of self-created film, and thereby recognize the new conversational realities highlighted and explored herein.

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Appendix A

The FaOC method, and a related transcription format/procedure, was developed during the "My Film, My Story" project, which took place between 2012 and 2022, to assist children, teens, and adults who use AAC to become film/sign-makers (Legel, 2012, 2016, 2023). The method, and transcription format were designed and tested in close collaboration with people who use AAC, their families, teachers, speech-language pathologists, and speech-language therapists. Participants of all ages, and their families, expressed pleasure in the process of creating and using their personalized images, and showcasing their film storytelling talents.

More information about the project, FaOC method and transcription procedures, informational videos, technical tips and relevant hardware/software, literature, as well as higher resolution versions of figures, are available online (Legel, 2024; Legel & Van Kleef, 2023). Further tips and advice for implementing/supporting the method with different user groups (age/disability) are also supplied.

We are still exploring what technical support can be informally or formally recruited in order to ensure that the methodology can be applied in everyday life: for example, using a peer with expertise in social media, offering affordable training courses for teachers, family members and siblings, and developing a website that provides flexible and responsive solutions to these problems (Legel, 2024).

* The website of the FaOC method (https://faoc.nl/en/) is freely accessible in multiple language formats (Legel, 2024). The figures, videos and infographics are available in accordance with the AAC Journal protocol for supplemental online material.

Appendix B

Adjusted Transcription-Notation for Aided Conversations (Von Tetzchner & Basil, 2011)

1. Glossary of manual signs and gestures (g): Capital letters MANUAL SIGN
2. Manual spelling (hand alphabet): Capital letters and hyphen B-O-Y
3. Naturally spoken (ns) utterances: Italicization Naturally spoken words
4. Machine-produced digitized or synthesized speech (aided speech) (AAC device):
   Italicization and quotation marks "Words"
5. PVS as an audiovisual resource (avr), the following symbols are introduced:

   ≪ a brief description when the PVS is running ≫, and < a brief description of the PVS when it is paused >.