Graphic Design and Graphic Symbols: bridging the gap, exploring preferences

Sorcha Rabbitte

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Introduction

- **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)**
  - Complex communication needs (CCN)
  - Graphic Symbols

- **Adults who use pictures to augment communication**
  - Developmental CCN
  - CCN Acquired in adulthood

- **Age appropriate design & graphic symbols**

  RCSLT (2009), Light & McNaughton (2012), Beukelman & Mirenda (2005)
Commerpially available graphic symbols

- Critically appraised graphic symbols
  - Readability
  - Aesthetics
  - Age appropriateness for adult AAC users
Aim of Study

To investigate the aesthetic preferences of adults who use pictures to augment their communication.

“Which style(s) of graphic symbols do the sample population of adults identify as their individual and overall group favourites?”
Methodology

Figure 5. Refining the design
Methodology

3 new graphic symbol styles varied only by their level of complexity.

Figure 6. **A:** Simple
Figure 7. **B:** Stylized
Figure 8. **C:** Complex
Methodology

Figure 9. Randomised record sheets

Created a unique record sheet for each participant
- Randomised the order of presentation
to counterbalance order and fatigue effects.
Methodology

- Ethically approved by Ability West and Brothers of Charity.
- Recruited 30 adults to participate in the study.
- Participants picked their favourite pictures individually – 20 sets of 3
- 24 participants were included in the final analyses.
- Individual and group analyses were performed using Friedman test.
Results: Individual analyses

Figure 10. Variation in distribution of preferences
# Results: Group analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Results of Friedman rank test across group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Average number of times across the group styles A, B and C were selected as favourite.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Results: Group analyses

Figure 11. distribution of preferences across the group within each set
Aim of Study

To investigate the aesthetic preferences of adults who use pictures to augment their communication.
Discussion: Style A

- 1 participant had statistically significant preference for style A
- Least favoured style across group.
- Simplicity relevant for some AAC users “cleaner...easier to look at”
  - ASD: difficulty processing complex info
    - Thick black outline helps

(Bondy and Frost 1998)
Discussion: Style B

• 4 participants had statistically significant preference for style B
• Equally favoured style across group.
• Visual simplicity of style A combined with maturity of style C
  • Thinner black outline
• “She looks like me”
• “Looks more grown up than her”
Discussion: Style C

• 4 participants had statistically significant preference for style C
• Equally favoured style across group
• Most complex style
• Aesthetically appealing faces
  • “She is the prettiest”
  • “He’s cute” “Hello!”
Future directions
Choice, respect & a more nuanced approach?

Suitable for Adults?

Or

(Alant, 2005)
References


References


References


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Thank you

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