UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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YOUNG ADULTS' ASSOCIATIONS WITH MINSPEAK™ ICONS

by

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Inspired by and dedicated to

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ABSTRACT

Although the Minspeak™ approach is used on communication devices worldwide, little research has been conducted on its applicability within specific cultural contexts. The impact that users' familiarity of symbols and associations can have on learnability necessitates more systematic research on these issues.

This study was an investigation into the associations South African young adults made with selected Minspeak™ icons, used in Unity™ software. Associations were elicited from 480 able-bodied tertiary education students, using a cueing questionnaire. Words describing the associations were compared with the current Unity™ vocabulary to make preliminary suggestions as to the appropriateness of these icons and their associated meanings.

The results indicated that some of the icons and their encoded vocabulary items might be used successfully in the South African context, while others need to be adapted to be locally relevant. The results emphasised that iconic encoding systems based on commercially available graphic representational systems cannot merely be imported to South Africa due to the multicultural and multilingual nature of the context. Finally, a critical evaluation is done and recommendations for further studies are made.

KEY WORDS:

augmentative and alternative communication, iconic encoding, rate enhancement, associations, Minspeak™, Unity™, icons, vocabulary, rate enhancement

OPSOMMING

Die Minspeak™ benadering word wêreldwyd gebruik, maar daar bestaan min navorsing oor die toepaslikheid van hierdie benadering binne spesifieke kulturele kontekste. Daar is meer navorsing nodig oor die impak van AAK-gebruikers se bekendheid met simbole en assosiasies, op die aanleer van simboolsisteme.

Hierdie navorsingsprojek was 'n ondersoek na die assosiasies wat jong volwasse Suid-Afrikaners maak, met geselekteerde Minspeak™ ikone, wat gebruik word in Unity™ sagteware. 480 tersiêre studente het assosiasies gemaak na aanleiding van vraelyste. Woorde wat gebruik is om geassosiasieerde betekenisse te beskryf, is vergelyk met die woordeskat wat tans in Unity™ sagteware opgeneem is, om voorstelle te maak oor die toepaslikheid van hierdie ikone en die geassosieerde betekenisse wat daaraan geheg word.

Die resultate het aangedui dat sommige ikone en hul geassosieerde betekenisse moontlik suksesvol in Suid-Afrika gebruik kan word, terwyl ander aangepas moet word om relevant vir die plaaslike konteks te wees. Die resultate het beklemtoon dat enkodering sisteme wat gebaseer is op grafiese voorstellings nie bloot na Suid-Afrika ingevoer kan word nie, as gevolg van die multikulturele en meertalige aard van die populasie. Laastens, is 'n kritiese evaluasie van die studie gedoen en voorstelle vir verdere navorsing word verskaf.

SLEUTELWOORDE:
aanvullende en alternatiewe kommunikasie, enkodering, spoed verbetering, assosiasies, Minspeak™, Unity™, ikone, woordeskat, spoed verbetering

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