



Brief

SAAC as a special education didactic tool in preschool education

Linda Palla

Malmö university, Sweden

Contact corresponding author: Linda Palla, E-mail: linda.palla@mau.se

There is a limited body of research regarding special education didactics in early childhood education (ECE). Swedish early childhood education can be viewed as an arena for encounters between different cultures, children, and family constellations. The preschool must be equitable, and offer all children high-quality early childhood education (SFS 2010:800). Issues concerning special education didactics, and special education didactic tools could beneficially be studied more closely. The purpose of this study is to increase knowledge about how signing as augmentative and alternative communication (SAAC) is said to be used in preschool education, and to shed light on how SAAC can be understood in the light of special education didactics. Didactic questions were employed to guide the analysis: Where and when is SAAC said to be used? Whom is SAAC said to be used with and for? How and why is SAAC said to be used? Data were drawn from statements posted by 32 professionals to an internet forum; specifically, the Facebook group “Förskolan.se”. A netnographic approach was chosen, and the data were analysed qualitatively on the basis of special education didactic modelling. Usage of material published on the internet has become more frequent in research, and netnography is part of this framework. Berg (2015) suggests that regardless of the theme of the research project, netnography involves humans who interact with each other on the internet. This makes the phenomena no different from other research conditions where the aim is to gain knowledge regarding people’s communicative interactions. The benefit of using internet sources when exploring human communication and interaction is that they offer authentic material. The study took ethical research guidelines into consideration, and the Research Council’s (2002, 2017) directives were followed. The results show that descriptions of the use of SAAC can be likened to a multivocal

approach. SAAC was described as being used in preschool education in several different ways, in several different situations, and in several different environments — with everyone and for everyone. From this, I conclude that with special education didactic modelling, SAAC can become a tool broad enough to provide support in an inclusive way.

Keywords: *Didactic modelling; early childhood; netnography; preschool education; special education didactics; signing as augmentative and alternative communication (SAAC); teaching*