**INTEGRATION OF AUGMENTATIVE AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR BOOSTING LINGUISTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF BI/MULTILINGUAL AUTISTIC CHILDREN IN NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Abstract**

The use of augmentative and assistive technology (AAT) in teaching and learning towards enhancing the linguistic and communicative acts of children with autism cannot be underestimated in both formal and informal education when systematically done. Literature has indicated that linguistic and communicative competence level of many monolingual and bilingual autistic children are not different at level of pragmatics among others, so AAT can be used to improve them. The aim of this study was to explore teachers’ perspectives on integration of augmentative and assistive technology to boost linguistic and communicative competency of autistic children in the course of teaching them L1 and/or L2 at school. Qualitative research design was adopted, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews of 10 educators comprising 6 language educators and 4 general subject educators, and responses were subjected to content analysis based on the generated themes. The findings revealed that despite these educators’ level of education and teaching experiences, only few of them have awareness about the importance of augmentative and assistive technological tools. We also found that the majority of the educators have no knowledge of how to integrate AAT into the teaching of children with autism for enhancing cognitive capability, language learning, and social communication. The study recommends the use of assistive technology in collaboration with traditional means of boosting language and communication competence of learners with autism in Nigeria and South Africa as these two multilingual countries have a number of certified children with autism as well as huge number of computer and smartphone users in Africa.

**Keywords:** *Autism spectrum disorder, Bi/multilingualism, Teachers’ perspectives, Language teaching and learning, Augmentative and assistive technology*