AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT: POTENTIALITIES, DILEMMAS, AND TEACHER MEDIATION IN THE INCLUSION OF A NONVERBAL AUTISTIC CHILD

COMUNICAÇÃO AUMENTATIVA E ALTERNATIVA NO CONTEXTO ESCOLAR: POTENCIALIDADES, DILEMAS E MEDIAÇÃO DOCENTE NA INCLUSÃO DE UMA CRIANÇA AUTISTA NÃO VERBAL

COMUNICACIÓN AUMENTATIVA Y ALTERNATIVA EN EL CONTEXTO ESCOLAR: POTENCIALIDADES, DILEMAS Y MEDIACIÓN DOCENTE EN LA INCLUSIÓN DE UN NIÑO AUTISTA NO VERBAL

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in Early Childhood Education, analyzing how teacher mediation and communicative planning influence the balance between technological support and encouragement of oral communication with a nonverbal autistic child. Methodologically, the study articulates a critical literature review with an experience report developed in 2024 in the educational care of a four-year-old child, using modeling, systematic observation, and analysis of communicative interactions. The results indicate that AAC expanded functional communication, reduced dysregulated behaviors, and favored participation in school routines. However, risks related to communicative convenience and the prioritization of the device in situations of greater cognitive demand were evident, limiting attempts at vocalization. The study concludes that the effectiveness of AAC depends on teacher intentionality, monitoring of its use, and pragmatic diversification, offering recommendations for school practices and teacher training. When correctly mediated, AAC enhances inclusion and autonomy, thus preserving the protagonism of the attempt at verbalization.

Keywords: Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Autism. Inclusive Education. Assistive Technologies. Teacher Mediation.

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RESUMO

Este artigo narra o uso da Comunicação Aumentativa e Alternativa (CAA) na Educação Infantil, analisando como a mediação docente e o planejamento comunicativo influenciam o equilíbrio entre apoio tecnológico e incentivo à oralidade com uma criança autista não verbal. Metodologicamente, o estudo articula uma revisão crítica da literatura com um relato de experiência desenvolvido em 2024 no atendimento educacional de uma criança de quatro anos, utilizando modelagem, observação sistemática e análise das interações comunicativas. Os resultados indicam que a CAA ampliou a comunicação funcional, reduziu comportamentos desregulados e favoreceu a participação nas rotinas escolares. Contudo, evidenciaram-se riscos relacionados à comodidade comunicativa e à priorização do dispositivo em situações de maior demanda cognitiva, limitando tentativas de vocalização. O estudo conclui que a eficácia da CAA depende da intencionalidade docente, do monitoramento de seu uso e da diversificação pragmática, oferecendo recomendações para práticas escolares e formação docente. Quando corretamente mediada a CAA potencializa a inclusão e a autonomia, preservando assim o protagonismo da tentativa de verbalização.

Palavras-chave: Comunicação Aumentativa e Alternativa. Autismo. Educação Inclusiva. Tecnologias Assistivas. Mediação Docente.

RESUMEN

Este artículo describe el uso de la Comunicación Aumentativa y Alternativa (CAA) en Educación Infantil, analizando cómo la mediación docente y la planificación comunicativa influyen en el equilibrio entre el apoyo tecnológico y el fomento de la comunicación oral con un niño autista no verbal. Metodológicamente, el estudio articula una revisión crítica de la literatura con un relato de experiencia desarrollado en 2024 en la atención educativa de un niño de cuatro años, mediante modelado, observación sistemática y análisis de interacciones comunicativas. Los resultados indican que la CAA amplió la comunicación funcional, redujo las conductas desreguladas y favoreció la participación en las rutinas escolares. Sin embargo, se evidenciaron riesgos relacionados con la conveniencia comunicativa y la priorización del dispositivo en situaciones de mayor demanda cognitiva, lo que limitó los intentos de vocalización. El estudio concluye que la eficacia de la CAA depende de la intencionalidad docente, la monitorización de su uso y la diversificación pragmática, ofreciendo recomendaciones para las prácticas escolares y la formación docente. Cuando se media correctamente, la CAA potencia la inclusión y la autonomía, preservando así el protagonismo del intento de verbalización.

Palabras clave: Comunicación Aumentativa y Alternativa. Autismo. Educación Inclusiva. Tecnologías de Asistencia. Mediación Docente.

1 INTRODUCTION

The school inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) requires pedagogical practices capable of recognizing the heterogeneity of developmental profiles and the centrality of functional communication for participation and learning. In nonverbal children, the absence of oral speech intensifies barriers to social interaction, self-regulation and access to the curriculum, making assistive resources that ensure real-time communication indispensable. In this context, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) represents a set of strategies and technologies aimed at supplementing or replacing speech, allowing the immediate expression of needs, emotions, and communicative intentions and reducing frustrations often associated with dysregulated behaviors (Gardiner et al., 2025; Aftab et al., 2023).

The implementation of AAC in the school environment involves pedagogical challenges related to the balance between promoting functional communication and stimulating the development of vocalization. Everyday practice evidences tensions between theoretical assumptions and concrete uses of technology. Children with high problem-solving skills can quickly perceive the efficiency of the device in situations of greater cognitive demand and for this reason, choose to use it instead of making vocalization attempts, which require greater effort and have less predictable results. These phenomena, widely discussed in the literature on adoption and use of AAC, highlight the need for interventions conducted by qualified professionals who are consistent with the communicative objectives of the child and his family (Gardiner et al., 2025; Aftab et al., 2023).

The expansion of the use of AAC in Early Childhood Education also highlights the importance of understanding how different vocabulary configurations, modeling modes, and usage criteria influence the engagement, self-regulation, and linguistic development of non-verbal children with autism spectrum disorder. More than guaranteeing access to the resource, it is essential to analyze how the device is integrated into pedagogical routines, how adults mediate its use and what conditions favor or limit communicative advancement. This broader view allows us to situate AAC not only as an assistive technology, but as a relational practice that demands teaching intentionality, planning, and alignment with the language objectives established for each child (Beukelman; Mirenda, 2013).

The article addresses a critical review of the literature with an experience report developed in 2024, regarding the introduction of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) resources in the educational service of a four-year-old non-verbal

autistic child enrolled in Early Childhood Education. From this experience, the dual role of AAC as a device to promote inclusion and, simultaneously, as a potential inducer of communicative comfort behaviors is problematized. The objective of this study is to reframe teacher mediation, pedagogical planning and the balance between technological support and encouragement of orality can guide an ethically responsible and pedagogically effective use of AAC. It seeks to build a theoretical-practical framework in order to support recommendations for the implementation of the AAC, the training of education professionals and the formulation of school policies aimed at functional communication and the participation of children with ASD.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The theoretical foundation was based on specialized literature on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), linguistic development in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and pedagogical mediation in inclusive contexts. Classical and contemporary authors in the area were considered, including Kanner (1943), Light and McNaughton (2014), Schlosser and Wendt (2008), Beukelman and Mirenda (2013), Romski and Sevcik (2005), as well as references in inclusive education, such as Mantoan (2003) and Bersch (2017). The review favors empirical evidence and conceptual foundations that support the understanding of the role of AAC as an assistive technology and as a tool for promoting functional communication in the school environment.

2.1 AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) comprises low-tech systems, such as boards with symbols, cards, and structured gestures, and high-tech systems, such as tablet applications, voice synthesizers, and software with expandable vocabularies. Such resources enable linguistic expression at different levels of complexity and aim to promote functional communicative competence, understood as the individual's ability to be understood with clarity, predictability and efficiency in different interactional contexts. The literature indicates that AAC does not necessarily replace speech, but constitutes a communicational foundation that reduces barriers and can favor linguistic development, including vocal emergence trajectories (Light; McNaughton, 2014).

The theoretical framework on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) shows that immediate access to communication sustains social participation, self-regulation,

and academic involvement, expanding opportunities for vocalization, imitation of sounds, establishment of grapheme-phoneme correspondences, and prosody emergence (Light; McNaughton, 2014; Schlosser; Wendt, 2008).

This principle, often described as "AAC as a bridge," reinforces that assistive technology does not replace speech, but creates conditions for it to emerge in meaningful contexts. Another structuring principle is the "communicative andamiaje", by which communication partners model the use of AAC, expand statements, validate communicative intentions, and introduce semantic and pragmatic variations, favoring progression to broader communicative functions, such as narrating, arguing, maintaining conversation, and managing turns (Beukelman; Mirenda, 2013; Romski; Sevcik, 2005). This pedagogical mediation, articulated with inclusive education references (Mantoan, 2003; Bersch, 2017), prevents the child from remaining restricted to instrumental utterances and proves to be decisive for the qualitative advancement of communication, according to practical experiences reported in inclusive school contexts.

2.2 AUTISM, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

2.2.1 ASD, Speech, Language, and AAC

Autism Spectrum Disorder is characterized by wide variability in language acquisition trajectories. Some children develop delayed speech; others remain nonverbal, although with preserved levels of comprehension. The distinction between "speech" and "language" is conceptually central: the absence of speech does not imply absence of internal language, communicative intention, or symbolic understanding (Kanner, 1943; Schlosser; Wendt, 2008). In this scenario, AAC represents an effective means of externalizing language and reducing disruptive behaviors resulting from communication failures (Light; McNaughton, 2014).

The motivation for vocalization, however, is sensitive to the contingencies of the environment. When an efficient and immediate response channel is available, such as an AAC device, it tends to be preferred by the child, especially in tasks that require greater cognitive or self-regulatory effort (Light; McNaughton, 2014; Schlosser; Wendt, 2008). This phenomenon, widely recognized in the literature, shows that AAC can become the most functional communicative medium in certain contexts, which highlights the need for teaching practices that balance the use of assistive technology with the encouragement of emergent vocalization (Beukelman; Mirenda, 2013; Romski; Sevcik, 2005). Such a balance is

consistent with the principles of inclusive education, which advocate pedagogical mediation aimed at expanding communicative opportunities and valuing the diversity of profiles (Mantoan, 2003; Bersch, 2017)

2.3 RISKS AND CRITICISMS OF THE USE OF CAA

Critical studies warn of the risk of a "narrow use" of AAC, limited to the request function, as well as the risk of "dependence on ready response", when the activation of pre-programmed buttons starts to replace vocal articulation attempts. Beukelman and Mirenda (2013) recommend inclusive practices that integrate speech modeling concomitant with the use of AAC, encouragement of vocal co-production, opportunities for interaction without devices, and clear criteria to define when AAC should function as a primary resource (crisis situations or immediate need) and when it should act as secondary support for language development.

This balance is also defended by Romski and Sevcik (2005), who conceive AAC as support for the emergence of language, and not as a substitute for speech. Thus, the effectiveness of AAC depends on both the characteristics of the system used and the quality of the human mediation involved.

2.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND TEACHER MEDIATION

Inclusive education, in its most robust conception, presupposes communicational and curricular accessibility, as well as teacher training to mediate assistive technologies with clear pedagogical intentionality. As Mantoan (2003) argues, the use of technology does not automatically translate into innovation; Innovation lies in the educational purpose, in ethical alignment and in responsiveness to the real needs of students.

In this sense, teacher mediation in CAA operates in three interdependent dimensions (Bersch, 2017):

1. **Technique**: vocabulary selection, organization of screens and continuous updating of the repertoire;
2. **Pedagogical**: planning of activities that promote pragmatic diversity and encourage vocalization;
3. **Relational**: establishment of a climate of trust, validation of communicative intent, and appropriate crisis management.

2.5 POSSIBILITY CONDITIONS FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AAC

In order for the AAC to fulfill its role of promoting functional communication, institutional conditions are needed that involve continuing education, communities of practice, and school protocols that guide the responsible use of the devices. These protocols include guidelines to prevent AAC from being used as a task avoidance strategy, as well as criteria for granting breaks and managing emotional demands. Such conditions ensure that AAC functions as a communicative bridge, preserving the child's protagonism in his or her language construction process and favoring the emergence of vocal attempts and interactions of greater complexity (Schlosser, 2003).

3 METHODOLOGY

This study integrates a critical narrative review and a report of teacher experience. The narrative review systematizes central concepts related to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), Autism Spectrum Disorder, assistive technologies and inclusive education, organizing analytical categories relevant to school practice, such as functional communicative competence, AAC as a bridge or barrier, communicative andamiaje, technological dependence and teacher mediation. The experience report characterizes the implementation of AAC with a four-year-old non-verbal autistic child, in 2024, in an Early Childhood Education class, describing representative episodes, pedagogical decisions, criteria for using the device and observed results.

The approach adopted is qualitative, with a descriptive and analytical character. The empirical source consists of systematic observations and pedagogical records produced by the teacher in charge, author of this study. The unit of analysis corresponds to the interaction between child, AAC and teacher throughout routine activities, communicative demands and crisis management situations.

The analytical procedures include thematic coding of the observed episodes, organized into three axes: potentialities of the use of AAC, dilemmas inherent to the implementation process and teacher mediation strategies. Triangulation processes between theoretical references and empirical records were also employed, as well as the elaboration of recommendations arising from the analytical synthesis.

The limitations of the study involve the absence of standardized measures of speech and language and the nature of a single case study, which does not allow for statistical

generalizations. Despite this, the study has high heuristic value and potential for transfer to similar educational contexts.

3.1 REPORT OF EXPERIENCE

The implementation of Augmentative and Alternative Communication took place in an Early Childhood Education class, involving a four-year-old nonverbal autistic child, described by the teacher as astute, creative and skilled in circumventing rules. The child quickly demonstrated operational competence in the use of the tablet and understanding that the device produced immediate communicative effects, such as being heard, understood and having her needs met quickly.

3.2 EPISODES OF ESCAPE AND CONVENIENCE

During structured activities, such as desk assignments, games with rules and pre-reading proposals, the child activated pre-programmed messages, for example "I'm hungry" or "I want soda", in order to interrupt or avoid the task in progress. These episodes showed a pattern of functional comfort, since the device offered an efficient communicative alternative and reduced the need to attempt verbalization. The teacher observed that quick access to ready-made messages competed with vocal initiatives, especially in situations with greater cognitive demand.

Based on these observations, pedagogical safeguards were established, including visual routines with defined times for feeding and breaks, differentiation between plausible requests and requests identified as escape markers, encouragement of minimal vocal co-production before the validation of certain requests, and the use of low-tech boards in language training activities, minimizing the effect of button pressing.

3.3 CAA IN CRISES AND FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION

In crisis episodes related to sensory overload or frustration resulting from transitions, Augmentative and Alternative Communication played a fundamental role in reducing emotional escalation. The child used messages such as "leave now" or "I need a break" to clearly communicate a need for regulation. The team's immediate response, such as enabling a brief break or moving to a calmer environment, contributed to reducing both the intensity and duration of the crises. It was observed that functional communication mediated by the

device increased the predictability of interactions and increased the child's sense of control over the environment, factors associated with the decrease of disruptive behaviors.

In these situations, AAC was used as the main resource, prioritizing communication and emotional regulation over any vocalization exercise, since orality was not an immediate objective during crisis episodes.

3.4 TEACHER MEDIATION STRATEGIES

Teacher mediation focused on transforming Augmentative and Alternative Communication into a support for language development, preserving the possibility of emerging vocalizations. The strategies involved simultaneous modeling, in which the teacher orally repeated the messages emitted by the device, with an emphasis on prosody and syllabic segmentation, favoring sound imitations. Pragmatic expansions were also introduced, including categories such as comments, simple narratives, questions, and social markers, with the aim of diversifying the communicative repertoire beyond basic requests.

The situational criteria for use were made explicit to the child, differentiating moments in which the tablet should be prioritized, such as crises or basic needs, and moments in which it would function as secondary support in vocal training activities. Visual cards were used to indicate these conditions, avoiding the perception of punitive withdrawal from the device. In addition, graded andamiaje was adopted, requesting minimal vocal attempts, such as approximate sounds or articulatory movements, before the validation of certain requests in language activities, ensuring, however, unrestricted access to the device in regulatory contexts.

Responsive observation also integrated mediation, with daily adjustments to the app's vocabulary and the creation of more specific icons, such as distinctions between short and long breaks or between thirst for water and occasional soda requests, reducing the inadvertent reinforcement of escape behaviors. The results included greater participation in conversation circles with the support of the tablet, a decrease in the frequency and intensity of seizures, an expansion of the pragmatic repertoire and the occurrence of brief vocalizations in co-production situations, such as repetition of initial syllables and the use of prolonged vowels.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 POTENTIAL OF THE ACC

The results indicate that Augmentative and Alternative Communication immediately expanded the child's communicative capacity, ensuring the right to be understood and participate functionally in school routines. This finding is consistent with Light and McNaughton (2014), who define "functional communicative competence" as the possibility for the individual to express intentions with clarity, predictability, and efficiency. In the observed context, AAC reduced frustrations resulting from communicative failures and increased the predictability of interactions, favoring autonomy and emotional regulation, converging with the evidence highlighted by Gardiner et al. (2025).

Assistive technology also worked as an instrument of inclusion. With access to structured vocabulary, the child began to make choices, comments and requests with greater intelligibility, inserting himself in interactions with peers and adults. This change is in line with the argument of Beukelman and Mirenda (2013) that AAC allows the subject to be repositioned as an active participant in the social group, moving him from a position of dependence to a communicative autonomy.

Another relevant aspect was the potential of AAC to favor emergent vocalizations when associated with teacher modeling and co-production, a phenomenon already described by Romski and Sevcik (2005), who understand AAC as a support for linguistic development and not as a substitute for speech. Reduced anxiety for not being understood (Schlosser; Wendt, 2008), the child showed greater openness to sound imitations and vowel productions, especially when the teacher established a pairing between the device's message and the oral production.

4.2 DILEMMAS OF THE CAA

The data also highlighted important dilemmas. In tasks with greater cognitive demand, the child often resorted to pre-programmed messages as a means of interrupting the activity. The preference for the most efficient channel, from the child's point of view, is compatible with the literature that recognizes the risk of "dependence on ready-made response" (Beukelman; Mirenda, 2013) and predominantly instrumental use of communication (Light; McNaughton, 2014). These episodes do not invalidate the AAC, but reveal the need for teacher mediation that balances the incentive to vocalization and the preservation of the communicative function.

Technological dependence is a potential risk when the communicative repertoire remains restricted to requests and when the use of AAC is not guided by clear pedagogical guidelines. The specialized literature emphasizes that effective AAC practices require pragmatic diversification, systematic vocabulary expansion, and planned alternation between interactions with and without device, in order to favor the emergence of multiple communicative functions (Schlosser & Wendt, 2008; Romski & Sevcik, 2005). The reported experience corroborates these findings, showing that, in the absence of such care, AAC tends to crystallize predominantly instrumental patterns and limit the development of more complex linguistic behaviors.

Another dilemma refers to teacher training. Without preparation in assistive technologies, pragmatics and crisis management, there is a risk of inadvertently reinforcing task avoidance behaviors or, on the contrary, of removing the device at times when it is indispensable for emotional regulation. This problem confirms the centrality of the role of the teacher defended by Mantoan (2003) and Bersch (2017), for whom technology only becomes a pedagogical power when mediated by intentionality, criteria and ethics in use.

Table 1 highlights the potentialities and dilemmas facing AAC and makes clear important points to be observed.

Table 1

Comparative – Potentialities and Dilemmas of the introduction of the AAC

POTENTIAL	DILEMMAS
It immediately expands communicative possibilities, ensuring the right to be understood and participate.	The device's quick response can compete with vocal development, reducing the effort to vocalize.
It reduces frustration, increases predictability and promotes autonomy in daily school life.	In activities with greater cognitive demand, the child tends to choose the most efficient channel (AAC), reducing attempts at oralization.
It enables functional communication mediated by technology, transforming conflicts into more regulated interactions.	Risk of technological dependence when the device becomes the only expressive channel.
It fosters inclusion by allowing comments, choices, and requests with clarity and intelligibility.	Reduced repertoires (only requests) can crystallize instrumental communication and limit intentionality.
It increases interactions with peers and adults, strengthening bonding and social participation.	Without pedagogical planning, there can be use of AAC without clear linguistic objectives, restricting communicative evolution.
It favors engagement and learning by positioning the child as a competent speaker in the group.	The absence of teacher training can generate inadequate management, such as reinforcing task avoidance or withdrawing resources at critical moments.
It can serve as a basis for the development of vocalizations when associated with oral modeling and co-production.	It needs institutional protocols, supervision and pragmatic diversification so as not to limit communicative progress.

It reduces anxiety about not being understood and makes room for positive experiences with sounds and words.	Use without qualified mediation can limit the evolution of communicational autonomy and the advancement of language functions.

Source: the authors (2025)

4.3 CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

The comparative analysis shows that the transformative potential of Augmentative and Alternative Communication does not lie in the simple availability of devices, but in the pedagogical intentionality and the quality of teacher mediation that guide its use. The AAC becomes a powerful resource when integrated into the curriculum in a planned way, articulated with the group's communicative objectives and accompanied by practices that promote linguistic variety, such as activities involving narratives, turns of speech, comments and multimodal productions, also preserving, simultaneously, its priority function in situations of crisis or high emotional demand.

The tension between understanding AAC as **a bridge** to participation and regulation, or as a possible barrier to vocal development, cannot be resolved by rigid prescriptions. It is a situated balance, which demands sensitive contextual reading, definition of flexible criteria and continuous adjustments. In light of the ethics of care, the priority in critical moments is to ensure communication and emotional regulation; Outside of these situations, it is up to the school to cultivate opportunities for vocalization, pragmatic diversification and exploration of sounds and words, without transforming such practices into punitive devices or performance tests.

Experience also reveals that the qualified use of AAC requires clear institutional policies. This includes ensuring continued access to the resource; promote consistent teacher training; establish protocols that differentiate flight from legitimate communicative manifestations; create systematic recording instruments to monitor communicative evolution (such as pragmatic diversity, vocal attempts and seizures); and involve families in co-modeling practices, ensuring coherence between school and home contexts. In summary, the ethical and effective use of AAC depends on a pedagogical ecosystem that articulates planning, mediation and continuous monitoring, avoiding both uncritical technicality and unintentional technological dependence.

4.4 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

I. **Communicative planning of the curriculum:** integrate language objectives (requests, comments, questions, narratives) into daily routines, with tasks that require the use of AAC and invite playful vocalization.

II. **Modeling and co-production:** adults orally repeat messages from the device, segmenting and exaggerating prosody; encourage approximate sounds before validating requests in workout activities**.**

III. **Transparent situational criteria:** define when the tablet is a priority (crises, basic needs) and when it acts as secondary support (vocal training), with the use of visual cues that guide the child.

IV. **Vocabulary diversification:** expand repertoire beyond requests, incorporating social markers, feelings, preferences, and simple narrative sequences.

V. **Records and monitoring:** monitor indicators of participation, pragmatic diversity, crisis episodes and vocal attempts, adjusting practices on a weekly basis.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The introduction of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in the context of Early Childhood Education, when mediated with pedagogical intentionality and aligned with the child's communicative needs, proved to be an effective resource to reduce barriers, expand participation and favor the self-regulation of a non-verbal autistic child. The results confirm that AAC can act as a bridge to functional communication, allowing the child to express needs, emotions and intentions in a clear and predictable way, while opening space for the emergence of vocalizations in situations of co-production and teacher modeling. These findings dialogue directly with studies that defend AAC as an instrument that enhances language acquisition, as long as it is used in a qualified and contextualized way.

The experience also highlighted important dilemmas that confirm the need for careful mediation. The frequent use of the device at times of greater cognitive demand demonstrated that technology can compete with vocalization effort, favoring paths of less effort and increasing the risk of communicative dependence when the repertoire remains restricted. Such challenges indicate that the effectiveness of AAC depends less on the resource itself and more on the pedagogical decisions that guide its use, especially when it comes to balancing functional communication, vocal development and autonomy. Preserving the protagonism of the attempt at verbalization without transforming technology into an escape

mechanism or a punitive object proved to be essential to ensure linguistic and emotional advances.

The study reaffirms that the successful adoption of AAC requires consistent school policies, continuous teacher training and collaborative practices that involve planning, monitoring and permanent dialogue with the family. When integrated in an ethical and responsive way into the school routine, the CAA not only ensures the right to communication, but also contributes to the construction of a truly inclusive environment, capable of strengthening bonds, promoting social participation and supporting individual trajectories of language development.

Considering the limitations inherent in a single case study, it is recommended that future research comparatively investigate different modalities of AAC, such as high- and low-tech resources, and analyze their effects on varied profiles of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. It is also suggested that longitudinal studies be carried out to evaluate the impact of AAC on pragmatic diversity and the emergence of vocalizations over time, as well as investigations on teacher training programs specifically aimed at the pedagogical use of assistive technology. In addition, it is relevant to explore how the participation of peers in communicative modeling practices can favor language development and expand opportunities for interaction and functional use of AAC in the school environment.

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