

Van de Merwe, E. (2000). *Young adults' associations with Minspeak™ icons*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa. Erna Alant (Advisor): 75 pages of text, 119 references, 7 appendices, 30 tables, and 0 figures.

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 emphasized that iconic encoding systems based on commercially available graphic representational systems cannot merely be imported from 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.