

«We research with you, not about you»

Researchers' and Co-researchers' Reflections on Communication in Inclusive Research Projects

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Abstract

Inclusive research comprises partnerships among researchers with neurodiversity, with the aim of conduct research together. Some elements are essential to address issues important to people with neurodiversity and to conduct research respectfully, while considering their views and experiences. Achieving balanced power sharing between academics and co-researchers during a research project is challenging, and more research is needed. The aim of this study was to investigate what researchers and co-researchers identified as important elements for establishing efficient communication in a research project on mathematics and technology in early childhood education (ECE), using inclusive research as a method to clearly reach the goal of researching with co-researchers and not about them. This study builds on both Vygotsky's theoretical framework and his understanding of linguistic community as a tool, and Skjervheim's theoretical framework, which defines symmetrical communication as a key aspect in relation to the perspective behind special education and inclusive research. Data from a written interview compiled by researchers, co-researchers and contact persons was analysed through thematic analysis and is presented in this article, written in partnership among researchers and co-researchers. The results identify common elements indicated by the participants to be important for establishing efficient communication, independent of their neurodiversity. Since the literature also clearly presents a relationship between inclusive research and inclusive education, both in schools and in ECE institutions, this study's results can be considered an important contribution to research, practice and society on the subject of inclusion.

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Accessible abstract

- *Inclusive research is a partnership between researchers with neurodiversity who undertake research together.*
- *The present study presents the results of a written interview about communication. Both researchers and co-researchers responded. Contact persons involved in order to follow the rules of inclusive research, also responded, and independently of researchers and co-researchers.*
- *The aim was to increase researchers' and co-researchers' competence in relation to building efficient communication in inclusive research, to reach the goal of researching with co-researchers and not about them.*
- *Good organisation, an inclusive approach, the importance of time and the relevance of seeing diversity as a source of enrichment are key elements identified as important by both researchers and co-researchers.*

Keywords: inclusive research; neurodiversity; early childhood education; communication; mathematics, technology

Introduction

The term inclusive research is used to indicate a research approach whereby people with neurodiversity are involved as more than just research subjects or respondents¹. This means that people with neurodiversity (neurotypical and neurodivergent) contribute actively during the research process².

Among different terms used to describe people taking part in inclusive research, such as “participant researcher” or “co-researcher”, we chose “co-researcher” because it indicates that each person involved in the research can contribute, cooperating according to their own circumstances³. We also chose to use the term “neurodiversity” because other terms, such as “intellectual disability” or “learning difficulties”, do not seem inclusive

¹ K. Johnson - J. Walmsley, *Inclusive research with people with learning disabilities: Past, present and futures*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London and New York 2003.

² Ibidem. J. Walmsley - I. Strnadová - K. Johnson, *The added value of inclusive research*, in «Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities», 5 (31/2018), pp. 751-759.

³ J. Walmsley -Team, C. E. P. F. H. P., *Telling the history of self-advocacy: A challenge for inclusive research*, in «Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities», 1 (27/2014), pp. 34-43.

enough⁴. The term “neurodiversity” was introduced with the aim of developing *«a paradigm shift in how we think about kids in special education. Instead of regarding these students as suffering from deficit, disease, or dysfunction, neurodiversity suggests that we speak about their strengths. [...] The term neurodiversity has gathered momentum in the autistic community and is spreading beyond it to include groups identified with other disability categories, including learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, ADD/ADHD, and mood disorders»*⁵. This term is starting to appear in the literature⁶. Literature also presents the distinctions between neurotypical persons and neurodivergent persons, but we prefer avoid distinctions and use neurodiverse persons for indicating both neurotypical and neurodivergent.

The importance of conducting inclusive research is presented in the literature, not only for co-researchers⁷, but also for people with neurodiversity, who can be supported with more effective pedagogical methods⁸. This relates to the fact that inclusive research can enhance inclusive prac-

⁴ R. Chapman, *Neurodiversity, disability, wellbeing*, in «Neurodiversity studies: A new critical paradigm», 1 (2020). S. K. Kapp - K. Gillespie-Lynch - L. E. Sherman - T. Hutman, *Deficit, difference, or both? Autism and neurodiversity*, in «Developmental psychology», 1 (49/2013), p. 59. J. Walmsley - I. Strnadová - K. Johnson, *The added value of inclusive research*, cit. 751-759.

⁵ T. Armstrong, *The myth of the normal brain: Embracing neurodiversity*, in «AMA journal of ethics», 4 (17/2015), pp. 348-352, pp. 9-10.

⁶ Ibidem. L. Clouder - M. Karakus - A. Cinotti - M. V. Ferreyra - G. A. Fierros - P. Rojo, *Neurodiversity in higher education: a narrative synthesis*, in «Higher Education», 4 (80/2020), pp. 757-778. J. Den Houting, *Neurodiversity: An insider's perspective*, in (Vol. 23, pp. 271-273), Sage Publications Sage UK: London, England 2019. N. Masataka, *Implications of the idea of neurodiversity for understanding the origins of developmental disorders*, in «Physics of Life Reviews», 20 (2017), pp. 85-108. H. B. Rosqvist - N. Chown - A. Stenning, *Neurodiversity studies: A new critical paradigm*, Routledge 2020.

⁷ G. Grant - P. Ramcharan, *Valuing people and research: Outcomes of the learning disability research initiative*, in «Tizard Learning Disability Review», 2 (14/2009), pp. 25-34. I. Strnadová - T. M. Cumming, *People with intellectual disabilities conducting research: New directions for inclusive research*, in Vol. 27 (2014), pp. 1-2. I. Strnadová - T. M. Cumming - M. Knox - T. Parmenter & Group, W. t. O. C. R., *Building an inclusive research team: The importance of team building and skills training*, in «Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities», 1 (27/2014), pp. 13-22.

⁸ F. Granone - M. Johansen - E. K. L. Reikerås - T. M. Kvalø, «Nothing About Us Without Us»: *the first example of inclusive research in Early Childhood Education in Norway*, in «Consultori Familiari Oggi», 1 (31/2023), pp. 69-82. V. Minogue - S. Hardy *Service user involvement in mental health training, education and research in West Yorkshire*, in *ALPS Research Capacity Final Report (3 of 3)* (2007), pp. 1-31.

tice, as highlighted in the literature⁹. Because all the children (neurotypical and neurodivergent) can learn better if supported through those more effective pedagogical methods, we consider that our choice about the term neurodiverse is then consistent.

Although inclusive research is well-established in England and Australia, the method was only quite recently introduced in Norway¹⁰. In particular, it is quite new in relation to research projects on early childhood education (ECE)¹¹.

The description presented by Johnson and Walmsley¹², as reported by Østby and Haugenes, explains five fundamental characteristics that have to be in place to establish a real inclusive research approach: “ownership”, “interest”, “collaboration”, “control” and “availability”¹³.

Ownership signifies that the research question belongs to the co-researcher, while interest means the research has to be important for persons with neurodiversity. Collaboration underlines the fact that researchers and co-researchers work together, while control highlights that some parts of the project have to be developed mainly by co-researchers. Availability means the entire project has to be understandable for all participants, independent of their neurodiversity.

In accordance with K. Johnson - J. Walmsley's¹⁴ perspective, whereby the added value of inclusive research is identified as co-researchers contributing different and unique views to data definition and analysis, it is easy to see the necessity of creating conditions to allow the co-researchers to participate openly in the discussions. Additionally, the literature has identified a challenge for inclusive research in terms of the ability to share

⁹ M. Nind, *Inclusive research and inclusive education: why connecting them makes sense for teachers' and learners' democratic development of education*, in «Cambridge Journal of education», 4 (44/2014), pp. 525-540. J. Seale - M. Nind - S. Parsons, *Inclusive research in education: Contributions to method and debate*. In (Vol. 37, pp. 347-356): Taylor & Francis (2014).

¹⁰ M. Østby - M. Haugenes, *Inkluderende forskning sammen med personer med utviklingshemming: en metodebok* [Including research with people with learning disabilities: A method book]. In: Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 2019.

¹¹ F. Granone - M. Johansen - E. K. L. Reikerås - T. M. Kvalø, “Nothing About Us Without Us”: *the first example of inclusive research in Early Childhood Education in Norway*, cit., pp. 69-82.

¹² K. Johnson - J. Walmsley, *Inclusive research with people with learning disabilities: Past, present and futures*, cit.

¹³ M. Østby - M. Haugenes, *Inkluderende forskning sammen med personer med utviklingshemming: en metodebok*, cit.

¹⁴ K. Johnson - J. Walmsley, *Inclusive research with people with learning disabilities: Past, present and futures*, cit.

power between academics and co-researchers and has pointed out that more research is needed about methodologies that can support the establishment of real inclusive research¹⁵.

We therefore decided to focus on the conditions that can allow the establishment of efficient communication among researchers and co-researchers. By efficient communication we mean exchanges of ideas, knowledge and data between senders and recipients that are clearly understood to satisfy both sides¹⁶.

Our research question was: “*What are researchers’ and co-researchers’ opinions about what is needed to build efficient communication in a research project using inclusive research as a method?*”

Theoretical framework

The philosopher Hans Skjervheim¹⁷ highlighted the importance of people in conversations seeking to understand each other more than superficially, so that they do not live in separate realities. This is made possible by meeting the other as a subject with their own lifeworld of experience. H. Skjervheim further emphasised the importance of communication, which should not be used to achieve something with the other, but as a tool for understanding the other. To succeed in this, Skjervheim highlighted the importance of symmetry in the power relationship between the subjects¹⁸.

By meeting the other as a subject, one avoids the danger of committing the objective mistake whereby the other is made objective and unequal in the meeting, as Skjervheim stated. Through this materialisation, no insight will be gained into the other’s world of experience, as the other’s

¹⁵ J. Walmsley - I. Strnadová - K. Johnson, *The added value of inclusive research*, cit., pp. 751-759. J. Walmsley, & Team, C. E. P. F. H. P., *Telling the history of self-advocacy: A challenge for inclusive research*, cit., pp. 34-43.

¹⁶ M. Onyesom - A. E. Onyesom, *Dimensions of Communication in the 21st Century Organizations: A Conceptual Review*, in «Journal of Language and Communication», 1 (2/2015), pp. 7-20.

¹⁷ K. Ragnheiður - Ø. Kvello - I. D. Hybertsen, (2022). *Grunnbok i pedagogisk psykologi : utvikling, sosialisering, læring og motivasjon* (1. utgave. ed.). Fagbokforlaget. H. Skjervheim, *Deltakar og tilskodar*, Instituttet for sosiologi, Universitetet i Oslo 1976.

¹⁸ M. Skivenes - A. Strandbu, *A child perspective and children’s participation*, in «Children, youth and environments», 2 (16/2006), pp. 10-27.

experience is not brought to the surface. In this relationship, there is a clearly skewed power relationship.

Skjervheim further argued that an equal encounter between two subjects depends on a third point in the conversation, which arises through taking part in the other's world of experience and gaining insight into their point of view.

In relation to conversation and language, it is important to refer to Vygotsky's understanding of linguistic community as a tool¹⁹.

Lev Vygotsky, a renowned Russian psychologist and educator, introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), a central idea in his theory of learning and development. The ZPD represents the space between a child's independent capabilities and what they can achieve with the assistance of others, particularly those who are more proficient. In Vygotsky's theoretical framework, the linguistic community emerges as a pivotal tool. He proposed that through interaction with others within one's cultural context, especially through language, a child internalises knowledge and cultural norms. Language, in this context, acts as a catalyst for cognitive development. Social interaction, particularly through linguistic communication, plays a crucial role in this developmental process. Conversations and interactions with others expose a child to essential concepts, perspectives and cultural practices, shaping their cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, linguistic community functions as a tool for cognitive development by facilitating learning through interaction with others, and the internalisation of cultural knowledge through linguistic communication²⁰.

Materials and methods

Participants and data collection

The study is based on a qualitative method, because the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of participants' opinions.

The study participants were two researchers, two co-researchers and two contact persons, one male and one female for each category. In inclusive research a contact person is available as a support to help research-

¹⁹ L. Vygotsky, (1962). *Thought and language* [doi:10.1037/11193-000]. MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.1037/11193-000>.

²⁰ Ibidem.

ers and co-researchers better understand each other²¹. All the participants were already involved in at least one research project developed through inclusive research in Norway in relation to ECE. Two research projects led by the University of Stavanger (DiCoTe: “Increasing professional Digital Competence in early childhood Teacher Education with a focus on enriching and supporting children’s play with coding toys” and “Utvikling av ressurser for å forstå hverdagen gjennom inkluderende forskning”) were developed through inclusive research founded on the guidelines described by Østby and Haugenes regarding this practice²². The limited number of participants is because there are just two co-researchers in Norway working on research projects about this topic.

The data was collected using an anonymous written interview with open-ended questions (Appendix A). The questions were devised to investigate all the elements described as necessary for conducting inclusive research: ownership (*What is important to you when we collaborate?*), interest (*How can you tell if the project is relevant or not?*), collaboration (*What can make communication in the project good? What can make communication in the project difficult? What is important to be able to talk together? What are you concerned about when you have to talk to others on the project?*), control (*How can you tell if something in the project is not working? Do you have ideas on how to avoid misunderstandings in the collaboration?*) and availability (*If we misunderstand each other or something is unclear, what do you do?*).

To ensure anonymity, all participants were asked to answer the questions using only keywords and short sentences, without including their names.

Analysis

Thematic analysis was carried out by two researchers involved in the research projects conducted through inclusive research, but who were not participants in this specific study about communication. These researchers independently conducted a thematic analysis of the participants’

²¹ M. Østby - M. Haugenes, *Inkluderende forskning sammen med personer med utviklingshemming: en metodebok*, cit.

²² Ibidem.

anonymous responses²³. The first step of the analysis involved familiarisation with the data. Each researcher took notes during multiple readings. The data was then analysed through data coding. An inductive approach was used; and it is also important to underline that a purely inductive approach is not really possible because researchers to some extent always bring their own notions to data analyses²⁴.

The two researchers had discussions and identified common keywords or content. Then, they classified the common keywords into main themes. They discussed the main themes with the participants to identify the definitive main themes by general consensus. To maintain anonymity, avoid asymmetry among the researchers and co-researchers, and allow the co-researchers to interpret the data²⁵, all participants were asked to express their opinion on each identified theme, with the aim of inviting comments on the choices or suggestions for elements that could have been underestimated. This procedure is in accordance with the following statement: «*The authors thus suggest that inclusive research adds value when academic researchers learn from co-researchers ways to frame the research for maximum benefit as well as academic researchers sharing their skills when needed*»²⁶. Finally, the main themes were identified.

Full cooperation was also achieved in writing this article. A draft was written in Norwegian and used, together with notes taken during the meetings, as a source element for writing the article. The co-researchers read through the Norwegian version of the most relevant parts of the article before the content was validated, and it was then translated into English.

Ethics

The data was anonymised on receipt. The project was registered with the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt), which confirmed that no ethical issues applied. It was requested that each participant receive an explanation of the data collection process.

²³ V. Braun - V. Clarke, *Using thematic analysis in psychology*, in «Qualitative research in psychology», 2 (3/2006), pp. 77-101.

²⁴ V. Braun - V. Clarke, *Using thematic analysis in psychology*, cit. 77-101.

²⁵ K. Johnson - J. Walmsley, *Inclusive research with people with learning disabilities: Past, present and futures*, cit.

²⁶ J. Walmsley - I. Strnadová - K. Johnson, *The added value of inclusive research*, cit. 751-759, p. 755

Since some participants involved in the project had neurodiversity, a specific information sheet was prepared in Norwegian, in which a graphical explanation supported the written text. This document was read by the co-researchers in the presence of their contact persons and explained in detail. The anonymised data collected was saved on a pen drive and locked in a cabinet. No codes or information enabled the linkage of answers to the person who provided them.

Results and discussion

This section reports the data collected, organised into the final main themes identified.

“We are all different. This is me”

All the participants highlighted the importance of understanding their own roles. Sentences such as “My role is clear” (Participant 5), “Each one should feel included” (Participant 4) and “An inclusive attitude is needed” (Participant 3) were classified under this theme. The importance of understanding one’s own role can be related to what is called a “symmetrical relationship” in Skjervheim’s theory²⁷. The term symmetrical relationship indicates that the participant position should move from a peripheral participant position to full participation (i.e. membership) in a project or, even more, in a community.

The participants also described the importance of being acknowledged as an added asset for the project and thereby being viewed as a subject, rather than an object: “I am confident in the others in the project and what they think of me” (Participant 1). The importance of seeing differences as an enrichment of the project is clearly recognised: “Everyone participates with their own expertise, their own point of view. [...] Not every child understands mathematics or coding” (Participant 1), “Each of us is unique here” (Participant 1) and “We are all different” (Participant 2). This is in accordance with the participant position²⁸ whereby everyone needs to be considered as a subject, with their own lifeworld of experi-

²⁷ K. Ragnheiður - Ø. Kvellø - I. D. Hybertsen, *Grunnbok i pedagogisk psykologi : utvikling, sosialisering, læring og motivasjon*, cit. H. Skjervheim, *Deltakar og tilskodar*, cit.

²⁸ H. Skjervheim, *Deltakar og tilskodar*, cit.

ences. Different experiences and diverse premises should be taken into account in order to understand that dissimilar perspectives can come into a discussion and that each participant has to listen to and reflect on other perspectives²⁹. This was clear to the participants who expressed their opinions: “Although we have the same task, we can think differently. And this is good” (Participant 6) or “We need to respect each other [...]. We don’t see the world in the same way. [...] You see first numbers, he sees first patterns, I see space, another sees quantities” (Participant 6). This freedom to express one’s own ideas is possible if every participant feels included, as was stated by Participant 4: “Everyone needs to feel included” and Participant 5: “Everyone needs to understand the value of their contribution”. This can be understood even better if we remember that, in practical settings, both physical and intellectual tools shape how people perceive reality. In accordance with Vygotsky’s theoretical framework, linguistic community emerges as a mediational tool³⁰. When we talk about “mediation”, we mean that we understand the world around us through the tools we use, and these tools are connected to different social practices. To study human thinking, we cannot look at it in isolation; we must consider the social activities of which it is part³¹.

The importance of time

The second theme had “Time” as the main element. Time has been described as a relevant element for understanding a task, question or problem: “If I have time for understanding the problem, I believe that my contribution can have a meaning” (Participant 1) and “Time is important for understanding the project” (Participant 3). Time is also relevant for identifying unclear elements that need an explanation: “I need time for formulating both questions and answers” (Participant 1) and “Time is important to be able to express my opinion” (Participant 4). The interesting element is that every participant agreed on the relevance of the time element, and it was considered important not just for understanding the problem or gaining the confidence to ask questions, but also for understanding each other:

²⁹ K. Ragnheiður - Ø. Kvælo - I. D. Hybertsen, *Grunnbok i pedagogisk psykologi : utvikling, sosialisering, læring og motivasjon*, cit. M., Skivenes - A. Strandbu, *A child perspective and children’s participation*, cit. pp. 10-27.

³⁰ L. Vygotsky, *Thought and language*, cit.

³¹ R. Säljö, *Læring i praksis: et sosiokulturelt perspektiv*. Cappelen akademisk, 2001.

“Each one of us needs time for understanding the others” (Participant 4) and “We need time, we need to give time to others” (Participant 5). Time was also indicated as important for reaching agreement: “It takes time to agree on all the terms used in the project” (Participant 3). These thoughts are in accordance with H. Skjervheim’s theory, which underlines the importance of understanding each other on more than a superficial level and then creating an intersubjective community among the participants³². In accordance with the inclusive research method, this theme is a fundamental aspect of allowing co-researchers to collaborate and own the research question, which should be relevant³³. This can be seen from the following sentences: “I understand the problem” (Participant 1) and “The problem is relevant, and it should contribute to something useful” (Participant 2).

Honesty

Another theme that could be identified was “Honesty”. The participants pointed to the importance of feeling free to share their thoughts: “There is a value in sharing my thoughts” (Participant 1), and especially their doubts: “We need to be honest, especially when something is difficult. [...] We need to feel free to say, ‘I don’t understand, can you repeat?’” (Participant 2) or “It is important to be honest about what I understand. [...] Embarrassment must not exist” (Participant 6). Participant 3 named honesty as an important element that allows the participant to ask if everything has been understood: “I have to feel free to ask if you have understood what I said”, while Participant 4 said “I have to feel free to ask about everything”.

Honesty and freedom can be considered key elements for talking clearly and avoiding misunderstandings. When two subjects seek to understand each other’s life worlds, it is important to have clear communication whereby it is sought to clear up any misunderstandings. M. Røkenes and M. Hanssen³⁴ build on H. Skjervheim’s ideas and describe how metacommunication can be a useful tool. Through metacommunication, the subjects in a meeting talk about the communication itself, the purpose of which is to clear up misunderstandings or reflect on the interaction. This is often done

³² H. Skjervheim, *Deltakar og tilskodar*, cit.

³³ M. Østby - M. Haugenes, *Inkluderende forskning sammen med personer med utviklingshemming: en metodebok*, cit.

³⁴ O. H. Røkenes - P.-H. Hanssen, *Bære eller bryte: kommunikasjon og relasjon i arbeid med mennesker*, Fagbokforl 2002.

through paraphrasing or by asking questions such as, “Could it be that I have misunderstood you now, in that...?”³⁵. For L. Vygotsky, conceptual understanding is closely tied to social interaction and cultural tools. Through meaningful social situations and the utilisation of cultural resources, individuals develop their cognitive abilities and conceptual understanding³⁶.

“It’s not just talking”

The fourth theme is related to preparing a structure that can support both organisation and metacognition. The importance of working in a defined structure was highlighted by all the participants. For example, Participant 3 said, “Regular meetings are important”, while Participant 1 underlined the fact that “The group needs regular reports”.

In accordance with the element described as fundamental to achieving an inclusive research method, all information has to be available to all participants, which Participant 1 agreed with, stating, “Everyone needs to understand the whole project”, while Participant 5 stated, “We all need to be updated about the development of the project”. The other key element related to the inclusive research method is connected to the fact that it is the group that leads the project, and not just the researchers³⁷. This was stated clearly in the following answers: “Improvisation is not a good way to work in a group” (Participant 1) and “The plans should be done together” (Participant 3).

Through the answers, it was also possible to collect suggestions about how to reach a common understanding and symmetrical communication³⁸: “All the information has to be available for everyone” (Participant 3), “Step-by-step explanations can help” (Participant 4), “The information should be organised; no one needs too much information at the same time” (Participant 2) and “A common understanding is important” (Participant 6). The importance of reaching a common understanding is also presented by L. Vygotsky³⁹. For him, language is not just a tool for expressing thoughts; it is a means by which individuals internalise knowledge

³⁵ Ibidem

³⁶ L. Vygotsky, *Thought and language*, cit.

³⁷ M. Østby - M. Haugen, *Inkluderende forskning sammen med personer med utviklingshemming: en metodebok*, cit.

³⁸ H. Skjervheim, *Deltakar og tilskodar*, Instituttet for sosiologi, cit.

³⁹ L. Vygotsky, *Thought and language*, cit.

from the social environment. A common understanding is facilitated using a shared language and communication system within a community.

Time came up again as an important organisational element, because it was identified as key to allowing everyone to achieve good metacognition: “It is important to stop and have time for summarising, maybe in writing” (Participant 1) and “We should stop and think about what we have learned [...] We need time for working together”. (Participant 3).

The participants identified several attitudes as relevant for achieving the goal of efficient communication: a positive attitude, a listening attitude and an attitude open to welcoming different methods of communication, which are clearly in line with treating the other participants as equal subjects⁴⁰. A positive attitude was, for example, requested by Participant 1: “Everyone must learn to listen to each other with positivity”. Participant 3 said, “Each of us should have a positive attitude”. A listening attitude was expressed by Participant 3: “We need to listen to the others’ ideas” and by Participant 2: “We all need to ‘connect the brain’ during the meetings”. Regarding the attitude of being open to welcoming different methods of communication, the answers referred to body language in particular: “We can communicate verbally, bodily, through facial expressions, through physical objects, visually, [...] it’s not just speech!” (Participant 3) and “When I say a sentence, I should check others’ body reactions” (Participant 4). These attitudes are necessary for taking part in the other’s world of experience and gaining insight into the other’s point of view⁴¹.

Conclusions

This article, which was written cooperatively by the researchers and co-researchers, investigated the main elements identified as relevant for building efficient communication when inclusive research is chosen as the method.

In this study, we presented how shared comprehension and a common understanding are essential for establishing efficient communication in a research project. Since our aim was to investigate mediating artifacts that could support communication among individuals, we identified a good organisation, an inclusive approach, the importance of time and the rel-

⁴⁰ H. Skjervheim, *Deltakar og tilskodar*. Instituttet for sosiologi, cit.

⁴¹ Ibidem.

evance of seeing diversity as a source of enrichment as key elements. It is particularly interesting that these factors were all identified as significant individually by each participant: researchers, co-researchers and contact persons. Since the literature has also clearly presented a relationship between inclusive research and inclusive education, both in schools and in ECE institutions, the results of this study should be considered when planning research and education in a way that can be accessible for everyone.

The study presents two important limitations, however. The first is linked to the small number of participants. It would be interesting to collect answers from a larger number of researchers and co-researchers, to identify whether the themes highlighted are the most important. The second relates to the choice of participants. All the participants had already worked together in the same research group on two different research projects for about six months. The fact that the answers, even if given independently, in practice only highlighted common aspects could be a consequence of having already reached a common understanding through a mediational process. However, the fact that the elements emphasised as pillars for building efficient communication by both the researchers and the co-researchers can be related to H. Skjervheim's theory of the symmetrical relationship remains relevant. Even more important is the fact that this study about communication in a research project with focus on mathematics and technology was co-led, co-conducted and co-presented by neurodiverse persons.

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