

# Age and Sex as Variables in a Oral Form Discrimination Task \*

MANI RAO

The developmental trends and sex differences in oral form discrimination skill were studied in 60 normal children ranging in age from 5 to 13 years, attending Kannada medium schools. Five age groups were formed with ages 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13 years. Equal number of boys and girls were selected in each group.

The test stimuli consisted of eight plastic forms from four geometric class (triangle, rectangle, biconcave and oval). They were paired to form 32 'between class' pairs. The pair of forms were presented in the mouth successively. The child was required to say whether the pair of forms were same or different. The total number of errors were calculated for each child and they formed the error scores.

Statistical analysis of the error scores revealed significant age trends. However, significant sex difference was not obtained.

## Conclusions

- (1) Oral form discrimination skills increase from age 5 years to 13 years. However, the increase is not a uniform gradual increase but a stepwise increase.
- (2) Sex difference was not present in the development of oral form discrimination across the age levels studied.

## Suggestions for Further Research

The results of the present study have thrown light on possible variables affecting oral form discrimination testing and need for their study.

- (1) Variables such as socio-economic status, motivation, intelligence, practice may be studied.
- (2) The oral form discrimination development may be studied in the even age groups which were not included in the present study so as to complete the oral form discrimination growth curve.
- (3) Sex differences may be studied in younger age groups to determine if such a difference exists in oral form discrimination ability during the articulation development period.
- (4) Development of oral form discrimination skills may be studied using 'within class' stimulus pairs and compared with the results of the present study.
- (5) Oral form discrimination test may be administered to children during the articulation acquisition period to ascertain whether children with poor scores retain their misarticulation after the articulation development period.
- (6) Size as a variable in oral form discrimination development may be studied as a function of age.
- (7) Oral form discrimination test used in this study may be administered to various clinical populations and their scores compared to the scores obtained in the present study.

\* Master's Dissertation, University of Mysore, 1978.