

Oral Form Discrimination Skill as a Function of Age and Sex in Children *

SHALINI

Oral form discrimination skill in 'even-age' group children ranging in age from 6 to 12 years was tested to determine the developmental trend and sex difference in them. Forty-eight school-going children with Kannada as mother-tongue were chosen after administering the screening tests. Children were grouped under four age groups, 6, 8, 10 and 12, with each group consisting equal number of boys and girls.

Oral form discrimination test developed by Ringel *et al.* (1968) was administered to these children. Eight plastic forms from the 4 geometric categories (oval, rectangle, triangle and biconcave) were selected and paired to form thirty two 'between-class' pairs. The children were instructed to say 'same' or 'different' when the pairs of forms were presented successively in the mouth. Children's responses were noted on the data sheet and their total number of errors were calculated. The total number of errors formed the raw scores.

These error scores were statistically analyzed and the following conclusions were arrived at :

- (1) Oral form discrimination skills increase in 'even-age' group children

as a function of age. The improvement is found to be uniformly gradual improvement except with a slight reduction in ability at 12 years of age which is not statistically significant ;

- (2) Sex differences in the oral form discrimination skill is not present in the age groups studied ; and
- (3) There is no significant interaction effect of age and sex in the development of oral form discrimination ability in 'even-age' group children.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further information regarding oral form discrimination can be obtained by conducting studies in the areas mentioned below :

- (1) Oral form discrimination skill can be tested beyond the age ranges studied till now, *i.e.*, below 5 years and above 13 years ;
- (2) Correlational studies can be conducted to test correlation between oral form discrimination and auditory discrimination as a function of age ;
- (3) Subject variables, such as, linguistic factors—bilingualism or multilingualism, intelligence, socio-economic status, motivation and learning aspects can be studied ;

* Master's Dissertation, University of Mysore, 1979.

- (4) Oral form discrimination may be evaluated in various clinical population by giving the test used in the present study and comparing with the normative data ;
- (5) The test may be made more complex by varying the shapes, so as to make

it more sensitive test for older age group ; and

- (6) Oral form discrimination test may be administered to children of 'even-age' group in school set up and see if the children's performance varies.