

ABSTRACT

Understanding of Selected Connective Relationships among Pupils aged 10 - 12 years

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This study seeks to investigate the understanding upper primary pupils aged 10 - 12 years have of 13 connectives which occur frequently in reading materials used by them. The connectives under investigation are causal because, as, for, since and so; concessive although, except, but, however, whereas and yet; and conditional if and unless.

It is the opinion of several teachers, at both the primary and secondary levels of the education system in Trinidad that lack of understanding of relationships signalled by particular connectives contributes to reading difficulty experienced by a large percentage of the school population.

The study was conducted at the primary level since the relevant research indicates that pupils aged 10 - 12 years - who are nearing the end of

primary education - are expected to have adequate understanding of most connective relationships. In order to test the pupils' understanding of the connective relationships under study, two instruments were constructed - a Connectives Reading Test and a Written Connectives Test. These were administered to a sample of 90 pupils comprising an equal number of boys and girls who were selected from five schools in the St. George East Educational Division. Since the sample was classified into "high", "middle" and "lower" achievement groups their selection was based on performance in the Language Arts subjects over a 12-month period.

The study investigates four hypotheses: (1) there is no significant relationship between understanding of connectives and ability; (2) there is no significant relationship between understanding of connectives and sex; (3) there is no significant relationship between understanding of connectives and age; and (4) there is no significant relationship between understanding of connectives and connective class. All four hypotheses have been rejected at $p < .001$ level of significance. Significant interactions were noted between "ability"

and age; "ability" and connective class; and "ability", sex and age. The study presents a detailed analysis of the pupils' performance on each of the 13 connectives under study.

Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations include systematic teaching of comprehension and a reading curriculum which is closely integrated with the rest of the Language Arts curriculum.

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