JAZYKOVÁ KOMPETENCE I   Session II

Expressing cause and effect

Task 1 Educational attainment and obesity

Read the article on educational attainment and obesity and answer the questions below:

1 Some research suggests that there may be a relationship between obesity and poor educational attainment. It is likely that obesity and poor school performance are elements of a broader picture of inequalities in health and education, whereby disadvantaged socio-economic groups tend to have poorer health and lower levels of education. It is also possible that other factors influence obesity and attainment, such as gender, discrimination, and poor mental and emotional well-being.

2 Twenty-nine studies on the link between obesity and educational attainment were reviewed. While often conflicting, an overall pattern emerges from the research evidence suggesting that there is a weak negative association between obesity and educational attainment in children and young people; i.e. that higher weight is associated with lower educational attainment. However, obesity appears to be associated with other variables, such as socio-economic status, and when these other variables are taken into consideration, the association between obesity and attainment becomes still weaker, and often loses statistical significance. Specifically, place of residence, ethnicity, occupation, gender, religion, education, socio-economic status and social capital were all explored as potential moderating variables in the included research. The most commonly explored moderating variable was socio-economic status, which was tested in 23 of the 29 studies.

3 Most studies explored the influence of obesity upon attainment. Only two studies examined the influence of attainment upon obesity. Many authors suggested multiple causal pathways, many of which remained untested in their studies. The moderating variables used in statistical analyses of the relationship between obesity and attainment were not consistent with the causal pathways proposed, which is probably a reflection of the constraints imposed upon authors conducting secondary analyses of pre-existing datasets (i.e. they made use of existing variables, rather than collecting their own, tailored data). The most frequently cited factors resulting from obesity and impacting upon educational attainment were poor mental health, stigmatisation and discrimination, disordered sleep, decreased time spent in physical activity and socialising, and absenteeism.

4 In sum, various factors appear to be associated with obesity which contribute to low educational attainment to some extent. Given the variation in definitions, analyses and quality of data, it is impossible to point to any causative or definite risk factors.

Are the following statements true or false?

1. The author believes that obesity is the major cause of low school performance. True/ False
2. There was some disagreement in the reviewed studies on the relationship between attainment and obesity. True / False
3. In association with educational attainment, other variables, such as socio-economic status were found more significant than obesity. True / False
4. The author states that the existing studies have not explored all the intervening factors and causal pathways. True / False
5. According to the author there are conclusive results showing that low school performance is caused primarily by obesity. True / False

Find synonyms to the following expressions in the text:

1. probable or expected (par. 1)
2. to be likely to happen (par. 1)
3. examined (par. 2)
4. the regular way in which sth. happens (par. 2)
5. things that limit sth., restrictions (par. 3)
6. made or adapted for a particular purpose (par. 3)
7. mention sth. that is important (par. 4)

Task 2 Speaking

In the previous task we looked at intervening/ moderating variables, that is the variables which affect the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Look at the examples below, suggest which of the two is the dependent and which the independent variable, then think of possible moderating / intervening variable.

1. Leadership skills in basketball – performance
2. Sport preferences - gender

Task 3 Vocabulary

   A) *Find collocations expressing relationships in the above article*
   B) *Fill in the prepositions which normally accompany the verbs. Then use the expressions to fill the gaps in these sentences. You may have to change to form of the verb.*

compare   correlate

react   refer

associate   rely

contribute

   1. The study shows that high eating deviancy _____ high body dissatisfaction.

   2. Some sports _____ stamina and in other sports it is an advantage.

   3. The media representation of sport also _____ the construction of the hegemonic masculine image.

   4. The term reliability _____ whether the statistics are replicable.

   5. The results of the experimental group were significant when _____ the established normative values.

   6. This shows that babies know whether their mother is _____ their actions, and they prefer it when their mothers are being responsive.

   7. Type two diabetes is generally _____ older, overweight individuals and develops when the body cannot use insulin.

   C) *Consider eating dark chocolate and stress levels. Formulate a hypothesis about the effect, suggest an experimental/ descriptive; qualitative/quantitative study and predict the results.*