

PREVERBAL COMMUNICATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN

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This preliminary study aimed to discuss the preverbal communicative development, i.e., the use of actions and gestures among Malaysian Chinese infants aged between 8 months and 18 months of age. Data was collected through parental report based on *Children Early Communicative Skills Checklist (Mandarin)*. This Mandarin checklist was adapted from the *MacArthur Communicative Developmental Inventory (CDI): Words and Gestures - Part II: Actions and Gestures* (Fenson et al. 1993). Parents of 82 infants (44 males and 38 females) were interviewed in four health clinics in Kuala Lumpur. The research findings revealed that the Mandarin adapted checklist has high content validity and test-retest reliability ($\alpha > 0.75$). The results showed that infants used more communicative gestures with the increase of age. Twenty-three most frequently used actions and gestures among local Chinese infants were identified as a means to provide some early data for further normative study and clinical use purposes. The gender differences were not significant ($p > 0.05$). The gestural development of local Chinese infants was also compared with American infants (Fenson et al. 1994). The results showed that infants experienced similar gestural developmental stages across cultures. However, the potential influencing factors were also discussed.

Low, H.M. 2004. Preverbal Communicative Development in Children. Bachelor of Speech Science Thesis. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.