SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT FOR MALAY CHILDREN AGED 3;0 to 6;11: OPERATION OF REFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

This pioneer study aims to discuss the semantic development in operation of references among Malay children aged 3;0 to 6;11. The objective of this study is to probe whether there is any significant difference of frequency of each category in operation of references between genders across the age groups. This study involves 64 subjects from different day care centres and kindergartens around the area of Setapak and Kuala Lumpur. Subjects were 32 boys and 32 girls divided across 4 age groups, which are 3;0 to 3;11, 4;0 to 4;11, 5;0 to 5;11 and 6;0 to 6;11 old respectively. The number of subjects were equally distributed in different age groups. Language samples were collected (100 utterances for each subject). These language samples were elicited through play activities (cooking set) and conversation (favourite cartoon). The mean frequency of types of nominals used increased as children were older. There are significant differences of mean frequency of type of nominals across different age groups ($p < 0.05$) Overall, the mean frequency of type of nominals for girls is higher than boys in all different age groups. The mean frequency of nominalization, recurrence and negation increased as the age of children increased. However, there are significant differences for the mean frequency of nominalization and negation across age groups,($p<0.05$). There is no significant difference for the mean of recurrence across the age groups ($p>0.05$). There are no significant differences for nominalization, recurrence and negation between genders across the age groups ($p>0.05$) Overall, the mean of frequency for each category increased as the age of groups increased. This means that pre-school children acquire more lexicon and use these various forms of lexicon except recurrence in their speech production.