

## **SYNTACTIC PROFILE OF MANDARIN AMONGST MANDARIN SPEAKING CHINESE CHILDREN WITHIN AGES 4;0 – 6;11**

**Ng Boon Kheng**

Up till now, the knowledge about Mandarin syntax development is limited. This preliminary study was aimed to describe the pattern of verb phrase and sentences among Chinese children in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Twelve subjects aged 4;0 – 6;11 were chosen to participate in this study. The subjects were divided into three groups which consist of age range 4;0 – 4;11, 5;0 – 5;11 and 6;0 – 6;11. The language sample was obtained through free conversation and narratives (relate experience and story retelling). The data was then analyzed descriptively. The finding showed that the syntax developed with the increase in age. The results showed that the types of verb phrase, number of complex sentence increase with age. Sentence produced by children aged 4;0 – 6;11 were generally at stage VI and VII based on LARSP (Language Assessment, Remediation and Screening Procedure). Besides that, mean MLU, min score of MCUS (Meaningfulness and correctness of structure) and min score of narrative skills also increase with age. Although the sentence of the three groups of subjects were basically at similar stage, which were stage VI and VII based on LARSP, the mean MPU increases. This can be explained by the complexity of the verb phrases and the complexity of sentences increase with age. It is possible that the maturation of cognition and the ability to communicate increase with age. Besides, children at the age of 4-6 may complete the process of acquiring the language and reached the level of adult. Thus, children were able to form complete or complex verb phrases and sentences. Since there were lack of research done on the development of Mandarin syntax among Mandarin speaking Chinese children in Malaysia, this study would be the first step to reach to acquire a normative data regarding the development of syntax of Mandarin among Chinese children.

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