SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT AMONG 3;00 TO 4;11 YEAR OLD MALAY CHILDREN

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This study aims to determine the development of semantics among Malay children aged between 3;00 to 4;11 years old. This study used 18 language samples from 10 children aged between 3;00 to 3;11 years old and 8 children aged between 4;00 to 4;11 years old. 50 utterances from each language sample were used in profiling the data using the profiling tool *Profile in Semantics* (PRISM). This study focused on two aspects; the lexical inventory used and the development of meaning in children's utterance. Overall, this study showed that there is a high percentage of content words and low frequency of function words. The high frequency function words were the pronominals and social category words. The content words used most frequently were action words and object words. In addition, quantity and temporal words were mostly used by children aged between 4;00 to 4;11 years old. These reflected the diversity of lexical use with the increase in age through language learning and exposure to their environment. The development of meaning can be viewed from the production of various word categories and the possible combinations of semantic elements in their utterances. It was found that most children's utterance consists of two semantic element combinations but three and four semantic element combinations were also found. The use of specifications in utterance decreases as the children's age increases. This study also showed that the semantic relationships highly used were the semantic concept of 'temporal' and 'addition'. Dynamic verbs were used more than static verbs. The findings from this study can be used as a guide in assessing lexical diversity and the semantic ability of preschool Malay children. This information could also be incorporated in the planning of language intervention for children with language delay or disorders.

Mohd. Adli, N. 2011. Semantic Development Among 3;00 To 4;11 Year Old Malay Children. Bachelor of Speech Science Thesis. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.