

## THE COMPREHENSION OF NON-LITERAL MEANING IN NORMAL MALAY CHILDREN

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Non-literal meaning (NLM) is one aspect of language, which is widely used in the Malay community. However, there is little or few research done on the level of understanding and production of NLM among Malay children. This study is a descriptive and qualitative study, which attempts to look at the understanding and production of NLM among Malay children. The study utilizes play-based method as the tool of analysis. A total of 5 subjects ranging from 7 to 9 who were attending a national primary school were selected. The NLM was selected from the most frequently used Malay idiom specifically referred to as *simpulan bahasa* (SB) and a story was created by 18 built-in SBs with appropriate props. The subjects listened to the story, sentence by sentence. After listening to the sentence, each subject was asked to repeat the sentence and to act out the sentence using the props. A validity test was conducted whereby the subjects were asked to give the meaning of the SB tested. This study revealed that children at 7 years old possess the understanding and are able to produce NLM. The results also suggest that performance of understanding and production of NLM increases with the level of schooling i.e., Standard 1 to Standard 3. This is indicated by the correct responses displayed by the subjects. Each subject also displays strategies in understanding and production namely repetition, memorization, avoidance and production of SBs in inappropriate contexts.

Marhaban, J.A. 2002. The Comprehension of Non-Literal Meaning in Normal Malay Children. Bachelor of Speech Science Thesis. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.