

DEVELOPMENT OF MEAN LENGTH OF UTTERANCE AMONG MALAY PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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This study was designed to expound the development of Mean Length of Utterance in morphemes (MLU) among Malay preschool children. The relation between age and MLU was also evaluated in this study. The sampling was done randomly by following certain criteria. Ten Malay preschool children aged between 28 to 47 months whose mother tongue is Malay were selected for this study. Data collections were derived from 40 minutes of researcher-child conversation as the dyad engaged in free play. Data were analyzed using descriptive and statistical analysis. Results showed that age and MLU were significantly correlated ($r = 0.940$, $p < 0.001$). The findings also showed that child between 28 to 47 months can be placed in Stage II (morphological development), Stage III (sentence form development), and Stage IV (embedding of sentence) according to Brown's (1973) stages of language development. This study shows that there are differences of morphological development, sentence form development, and embedding of sentences according to MLU stages. It is also found that MLU stages of Malay children can give description on the development of language, which happens at different stages. This study also indicates that is not impossible to measure the morphological and syntactical complexity of Malay language based on MLU stages.

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