

DEVELOPING SYNTACTIC ELICITATION PROTOCOLS IN MANDARIN AMONG CHINESE CHILDREN AGED 1 to 6 YEARS OLD

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the development of protocols to elicit productive syntax among Mandarin-speaking Chinese children age one to six years old in Malaysia. A total of 24 children with normal language development and one with Specific Language Impairment (SLI) were recruited. Three activities i.e free play (cooking and shopping) and structured interaction (picture description) were carried out. 75 language samples were analysed to determine the Mean Length of Utterance (MLU), frequency of sentence types and the contribution of data towards the adapted Mandarin-LARSP profile chart (Jin et al.2009) The language profile of one child with SLI was constructed to see whether the adapted LARSP profile was also able to detect language impairment. Results showed that one to two year-old children produced longer sentences in free play, while three to six year-old children produced longer and complex sentences in picture description task. Inter-rater agreement of analysis using adapted Mandarin-LARSP (89%) was high and the congruence percentage to the previous adapted Mandarin-LARSP (Jin et al, 2009), which was 77% was found to be approximating high congruence. Productive language of SLI subject was profiled using adapted Mandarin-LARSP and few language characteristics of SLI were identified. This suggested that the adapted Mandarin-LARSP is reliable to be used in developmental Mandarin language analysis and can be incorporated as part of the overall protocols in profiling the syntactic ability of Malaysian Chinese children.

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