

**A COMPARISON OF MEAN LENGTH OF UTTERANCES (MLU) ON MANDARIN  
CHILD LANGUAGE DATA OF CHINESE CHILDREN WITHIN THE AGE RANGES  
OF 1;0 – 6;11 YEARS OLD: MLU-S(SYLLABLE) AND MLU-W(WORD)**

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The mean length of utterances (MLU) is a valuable estimate of children's early language acquisition. In Malaysia, the available normative data lack documentation of mean length utterances of words and mean length utterances of syllables in language data. This study would calculate age or gender-referenced mean length of utterance (MLU) data based on the Mandarin language data. 130 children from Klang Valley were selected and divided into three main age interval ranges; three months interval (1;0-1;2, 1;3-1;5, 1;6-1;8, 1;9-1;11, 2;0-2;2, 2;3-2;5, 2;6-2;8) six months interval (2;9-2;11, 3;0-3;5, 3;6-3;11) and 12 months interval (4;0-4;11, 5;0-5;11 and 6;0-6;11). Data were taken from studies done by previous researchers. Language sampling was done in free conversation settings and 50 utterances were analyzed for each sample. The transcription of the samples were coded and analyzed by using CHILDES (*Child Language Data Exchange System*) program in term of the mean length utterances. The result revealed that both MLU measurements show similar trend of increasing with the age. Besides, there seems to be a strong correlation between the MLU-s and MLU-w and the age groups. The correlation suggests that MLU-w could be used as effectively as MLU-s. Meanwhile, there is no significance difference between the MLU-s and MLU-w values and gender. At the same time, the MLU-w value obtained was able to be mapped into each stage in adapted LARSP Mandarin. Besides that, children were showing the different pattern of code mixing in different language and dialects Chinese when at different stages of adapted LARSP Mandarin. The findings of this study can be used as a guide in the development of Mandarin assessment batteries for Malaysian children.

Kok, L.T. 2011. A Comparison of Mean Length of Utterances (MLU) on Mandarin Child Language Data of Chinese Children Within the Age Ranges of 1;0 – 6;11 Years Old: MLU-S(Syllable) and MLU-W(Word). Bachelor of Speech Science Thesis. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.