



澳門大學
UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU
UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

**Effects of a signing intervention on
language and social development:
A case study conducted in Macao**



A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

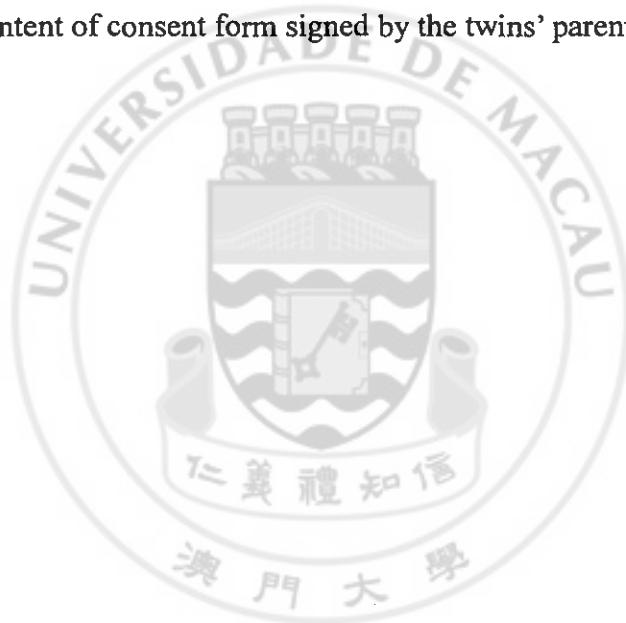
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Submitted by Lo Ka Pou Lucia (M-A6-5512-5) for the degree of

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Thesis Supervisor: Professor Kim Hughes Wilhelm

Abstract

This research investigation utilized a case study approach to examine the use of signing in first-word acquisition by a pair of two-year-old Cambodian twin girls with Australian adoptive parents. Being purely exploratory, this study is not a replication of any study done before. The literature review mainly covers studies done on signing with hearing children, which form the theoretical foundation of the study. Materials on sign language and acquisition of first words are also reviewed. This research aimed to introduce the twins to the use of signs, and to find out which signs were acquired most easily, and which were retained after the intervention had ended. Intervention sessions (included teaching and review sessions) and follow-up assessments were videotaped for data analysis. Results of the study indicated that signing was beneficial to the twins in their acquisition of first words. Signing also acted as a tool for the twins to communicate with each other and with people around

them, even when they did not yet know the words or when they were unable to speak due to emotional stress. Despite the success of the intervention, there were a number of unexpected problems and some limitations in regard to methodology which arose during the course of the study and which are also discussed. Nevertheless, findings from this pilot study confirm the advantage of signing with hearing children in their language and social development, and serve as a foundation for future research.

