

# **ROAD SAFETY: MALAYSIAN CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF SAFE PLACES TO CROSS ROADS**

**Kwame Ampofo-Boateng**

## *ABSTRACT*

Eighty Malaysian children aged 5, 7, 9 and 11 years, were tested near roads to examine their choice of safe routes to cross roads. Each child had to select safe routes at four specific road-sites. Two of the sites had visibility occluded, and the remaining two had traffic emerging from different directions. Children's accidents as pedestrians tended to congregate at these sites (Ampofo-Boateng, Thomson, Grieve, Pitcairn, Lee & Demetre, 1993). The present research was designed to test the range of applicability of the results of Ampofo-Boateng et al., (1993), that found age-related trends in children's choice of safe routes to cross roads at sites where vision was either masked or where traffic could approach from different directions. Their results were confirmed. Five- and 7-year-olds exhibited only a rudimentary understanding, while 9-year-olds, showed some understanding of the full repertoire of referents that are essential for selecting safe routes to cross roads. By age 11, children made adult-like selections of safe routes to cross roads that avoided dangerous road structures, such as, areas with masked vision due to occluding objects and junctions. These routes would have enabled them to cross safely, if they had been employed in actual road crossing situations. The implications of the findings in developing countermeasures for child pedestrians are discussed and suggestions are also made for future research.

**Keywords:** road safety, traffic, pedestrians