

Summary of PhD thesis¹

The acquisition of stylistic variation by Jakarta Indonesian Children

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This study² deals with the acquisition of Indonesian varieties used in Jakarta – the standard variety of Indonesian, the Bahasa Indonesia (BI) and the non-standard one, the Colloquial Jakarta Indonesian (CJI) – by children of middle class families. Many today's Jakarta Indonesian children learn Indonesian as their first language in informal settings, and generally they learn the informal variety first, namely Colloquial Jakarta Indonesian (CJI) (see also Wouk 1989, 1999). Yet, at very early age, before formal schooling, they are also confronted with the formal variety of Indonesian, the Bahasa Indonesia (BI) as they learned from children program in television or story-telling by parents. Children are also encouraged to speak BI as a means of politeness.

The focus in this study is on factors that influence choice of the language variety, capability of style-shifting, and morphological variation. The main research questions concern the following.

¹ The original summary of this thesis has already been translated in Dutch by Anne-France Pinget (see Kushartanti 2014: 309-316). Some references are added to the present summary. The online publication of the thesis can be found at: http://www.lotpublications.nl/Documents/334_fulltext.pdf.

² Bernadette Kushartanti (2014, Utrecht: LOT).

1. To what extent do middle-class Jakarta children use Bahasa Indonesia and Colloquial Jakarta Indonesian features?
2. To what extent are middle-class Jakarta children capable to distinguish BI and CJI and use both varieties appropriately?
3. Do these children acquire grammatical and sociolinguistic competence simultaneously?

The main data in this study is the children's utterances, which is obtained from the formal and the informal conditioned situation interviews. Sixty three children were selected from three private schools: Catholic school, Islamic school, and public school. To obtain children's utterances, they were interviewed within two periods with a six-month interval. These children were stratified for gender (boys-girls) and three birth cohorts (2006-2; 2006-1 and 2005-2). They were between 3;0 and 4;5 in the first period and between 3;6 and 4;11 in the second period.

The hypotheses tested in this dissertation are dealing with situation, period, age cohort, and gender as in the following.

- Hypothesis 1a : *Younger children will be more CJI dominant than older children both in situations triggering BI (formal situation) as in situations triggering CJI (informal situation). [cohort effect]*
- Hypothesis 1b : *Children will become less CJI dominant in both situations over a time period of 6 months. [period effect]*
- Hypothesis 1c : *There are no differences between boys and girls in the development of CJI and BI. [no gender effect]*
- Hypothesis 2a : *Older children will use more BI in the formal situation than younger children. [interaction of cohort and situation]*
- Hypothesis 2b : *The use of BI will increase over time in the formal situation. [interaction of period and situation]*
- Hypothesis 2c : *Older children will use more CJI in the informal situation than younger children. [interaction of cohort and situation]*
- Hypothesis 3 : *Children will acquire Indonesian grammatical and sociolinguistic competence simultaneously.*

The background of this study is presented in the Chapter 1. It is including an overview of approaches to stylistic variation, research on the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, and studies on the colloquial variety of Indonesian and the acquisition of Indonesian. This chapter shows that these studies are still an unexplored area (see Nardy, Chevrot, and Barbu 2013).

Children's social environment is described in the Chapter 2. The chapter presents the socio-cultural situation in Jakarta – a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual city – which affects the linguistic situation. Besides BI and CJI – the Indonesian varieties that have respective functions in Jakarta, there

are regional languages brought by ethnic groups that are still used by some of Jakarta inhabitants in certain occasion and foreign languages which is also used by certain people. It is also discussed in this chapter, that both BI and CJI are regarded as prestigious varieties by the speakers (see also Oetomo 1990). The chapter shows how complex situation Jakarta people have to deal with, and in such situation, younger generation – including these very young children – also have to learn practicing social interaction through languages used in the city.

Chapter 2 also describes how children from middle class families learn the languages at home and in larger social environments, namely at school and social activities. An example on how they learn both BI and CJI from storytelling shows that children are confronted with both BI and CJI simultaneously and how they are to learn to distinguish the differences. The example also shows that several aspects are acquired at the same time; for example, the presence or absence of certain prefixes (*berjalan~jalan* [BI] and *jalan~jalan* [CJI] ‘to stroll’), expression that is only found in one of the varieties (*nih* [FOC.] in CJI), or a lexical difference (*sama* [CJI] ‘with’, which is in BI *dengan*).

The comparison between BI and CJI from the phonological to pragmatic level, which is used by adult speakers is described in Chapter 3. This chapter shows that distinguishing both BI and CJI is sometimes difficult since at some points both share certain features. On the other hand, both are also marked off by certain conditions, in which CJI seems more flexible and more context-dependent. While BI in general requires well-formed construction, CJI constructions in daily conversation occur in truncated sentences, which require shared knowledge between interlocutors. Ellipsis and omission are also common in CJI. The differences (and similarities) of BI and CJI is presented in this chapter.

The method in this study is presented in Chapter 4, in which we discuss how we obtained, interpreted and analysed the data. The chapter begins with an overview of sociolinguistic approach to language acquisition, followed by discussion on stages of selecting and approaching the children. The very first stage to obtain the data was approaching the schools that meet the following criteria:

- Indonesian as the main media of instructions
- Playgroup and kindergarten under the same management and in the same school building
- Children from middle-class families
- The affiliation of the schools representing the social demographics of Jakarta
- Situated in Jabodetabek, an acronym of Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi, the area bordering Jakarta, West Java, and Banten.

After receiving permission from school, we approached and selected the children whose characteristics as in the following.

- Aged between 3;0 and 4;5 at the moment of first data collection
- Second generation acquirers of Indonesian as a first language
- From middle-class family
- Talkative
- Cooperative with other people.

We also approached the selected children's parents to have their consent.

To have an overall understanding about the children, this study is supported by information on interaction between children and those around them, including the language(s) they used in all activities at school. The supporting data are obtained from participant observation – conducted at schools as well – and parental questionnaires. This study used two kinds of parental questionnaires. The first one is on the selected children's personal information, while the other is on parents' language use and attitude. The chapter also presents procedures of administering the parental questionnaires and the pilot study, from which we learn to construct the research design.

We adapted Labov's sociolinguistic interview (1966 and 1984) to obtain children's utterances. Pictures, composed as four scenarios (Scenario A, B, C, and D), were used to elicit the examined variables. A pilot study in the public school helped us to make a better design of this study. In this study, we found that children were confused with the puppets we used in the pilot study and with the instructions we had constructed. We learned how to handle individual children in the interview.

To elicit the examined variables, questions, which were posed in both BI and CJI construction in the formal and informal situation respectively, were used as in the following.³

BI		CJI	
'What is she/he doing?' / 'What are they doing?'			
<i>Dia sedang apa?</i>		<i>Dia lagi ng-apa-in?</i>	
3SG PROG what		3SG PROG ACT-what-ACT	
'What is s/he doing?'		'What is s/he doing?'	
<i>Mereka sedang apa?</i>		<i>Mereka lagi ng-apa-in</i>	
3PL PROG what?		3PL PROG ACT-what-ACT	
'What are they doing?'		'What are they doing?'	

In each period, each child was individually interviewed in a formal and informal setting by different interviewer: a forty-year-old female who always spoke BI in the formal situation and a twenty-two-year-old female who always spoke CJI in the informal situation. Setting for each situation was also different: classroom, library, lab, or prayer room for the formal situation; playground, playroom, corridors, or playhouse for the informal situation. Each session

³ 3SG: third person singular, PROG: progressive; act: active.

of interview has an interval of at least two days. In the first session, half of each cohort had Scenario A and was interviewed in the formal session (in BI), while the other was interviewed in the informal session (in CJI). In the second session, the order of situation for each sub-cohort was reversed, using Scenario B. Each sub-cohort used the same scenario. Six months later, with the same scheme, the children were interviewed for a second time in both situations using Scenario C and D.

It is suggested that contexts – which are supported by gestures, pictures, and previous utterances – are very important to interpret children's meaning of utterance. Context also plays an important role in the transcription process (see also Ochs 1979). From children's answers, we categorize four kinds of utterances, namely BI utterances, CJI utterances, mixed utterances, and unmarked utterances. These kinds of utterance were coded for further analyses: to examine children's stylistic competence and use of BI and CJI verbs, and to examine the development of morphological variation and children's mastery of grammatical and social competence.

Report of the observation at school and the results of the parental questionnaires are presented in Chapter 5. From the observation, we describe the schools, including the patterns of interaction between children and the teachers, daily activities, and the language(s) they used in certain activities. Except for special activities which relate with their own affiliation (public, Islamic, and Catholic), it shows that these schools shows almost similar patterns in terms of the interaction between children and other persons at school (teachers, friends, helpers, and caretakers). It is found that CJI is the language they used more frequently at school. Nevertheless, BI is also used, even among children's peer, especially when they were role-playing. The variety is also used by teachers for teaching and warning. BI is the variety the children and teachers use for praying as well. Questionnaire on children's personal information reveals that in majority children were raised by more than one caretaker, and in general, they are female. From the parental questionnaires, parents claimed that they used BI in many situations and conditions with their children, suggesting that children's main linguistic input was in BI. It is also indicated that parents have very positive attitude towards BI. The findings from the observation suggests that children were more exposed in CJI, as those around them at school used the variety more frequent in daily conversation. However, as parents claimed that they used BI more frequent than CJI, we consider that children were also familiar with BI at very young age as well.

The analysis of children's stylistic competence and how they used BI and CJI verbs in the appropriate situation is presented in Chapter 6. This chapter analysed (1) all speech produced by children, classified in 4 types of utterances – CJI utterance, BI utterance, mixed utterance, and unmarked utterance; and (2) CJI verb and BI verb forms in the elicitation task. In order to test the Hypotheses 1a-2c, we conducted Repeated Measures Mixed Models Analysis with school and child as the random factors; for the fixed factors,

there are situation, period, age cohort and gender.

From the first analysis, it is indicated that children's individual number of utterances were influenced by situation – they were more talkative in the informal situation. There are tendencies that children used BI utterance more frequently in the formal situation and CJI utterance in the informal situation. Children tended to use mixed utterance more frequently in the formal situation. It is also shown that children were able to join turn-taking and could pay attention to the interviewers as indicated by the use of the unmarked utterances in both situations.

Several findings are found in the second analysis. First, as also found in the previous analyses, the use of BI verbs was more frequent in the formal situation, and CJI was more frequent in the informal situation. It is indicated that children in this study were still predominantly CJI users. They were still struggling to learn using BI verbs in the formal situation. However, it is also found that there were children already bi-stylistic, and even there are children becoming BI-dominant speakers. There are some exceptional children, in terms of their individual changes on using BI and CJI. Findings indicated that the use of BI and CJI verbs was influenced by situation. Over time, the use of BI verbs significantly increased.

Results from the statistical analysis indicated that only Hypothesis 1c, which is dealing with gender factor, was confirmed. In this study it is found that there is no gender effect on the use of BI and CJI. Other hypotheses are rejected. Child as the random factor has significant effect for all variables, (except for the mixed utterances, as the least variable used by the children), indicating that the variance was high. The result also indicates that there is no big variation in school as the random effect, indicating that the schools in this study have more or less similar characteristics, despite their different affiliations.

The analyses on the use of the morphological variation and the extent to which children apply the morphological rule are presented in Chapter 7. The first part of this chapter is a description of the morphological variables, namely BI verbal prefixes *meN-* and *ber-*, and their counterparts in CJI, namely \emptyset -*meN-*, \emptyset -*ber-*, nasal prefix, and *nge-*. Their allomorphs respectively are described as well. The second part of this chapter presents the analysis on the use of the aforementioned morphological variables. It focuses on the variables which are appropriate to the situation and morphological rules.

The analyses of morphological variables mainly examine the influencing factors which support or do not support the Hypotheses 1a–2c. Except the nasal prefix, all variables were influenced by situation: *meN-* and *ber-* were used more frequently in the formal situation, while \emptyset -*meN-*, \emptyset -*ber-*, and *nge-* in the informal situation. Over time the use of *ber-*, \emptyset -*ber-*, and *nge-* increased, while \emptyset -*meN-* decreased. It is also found that the older the children are, the more frequent they used the nasal prefix. The findings indicate that while children still learn BI which is acquired later, they are still learning CJI as well. It is also indicated that results of the analyses on \emptyset -*meN-* and nasal prefix support the

Hypothesis 1b (*Children will become less CJI dominant in both situations over a time period of 6 months*), while on Ø-ber-, and nge- do not. The results of analyses on all of the variables indicate no gender effect, which are support the Hypothesis 1c (*There are no differences between boys and girls in the development of CJI and BI*). No interaction was significant, therefore other hypotheses were not supported.

The third part of Chapter 7 tests the Hypothesis 3: *Children will acquire Indonesian grammatical and sociolinguistic competence simultaneously*. In order to test the hypothesis, we examine how children use the morphological variables over time in two criteria: 1) the appropriateness of situation, to examine children's ability to assess the situation; and 2) the application of morphological rule, to examine the mastery of morphological rule. Data analysed in this section comes from the same data we used to analyse the morphological variables.

In order to examine how children apply the morphological rule in the appropriate situation, new codes for the same data are made, as shown in the following criteria. The criterion (1) is coded as "sit"; and criterion (2) as "rul". There are four variables, namely: (+sit+rul) for words that appropriate to the situation and correct morphological rule in the formation; (-sit+rul) for words that not appropriate to the situation but correct morphological rule in the formation; (+sit-rul) for words that appropriate to the situation but the formation is inappropriate; and (-sit-rul) for words that not appropriate to the situation and the formation is inappropriate.

It is found that only a few children applied incorrect morphological rule; in other words, these children were already capable to apply the morphological rule of BI and CJI. However, the extent they used in appropriate situation still need to be examined. The focus, therefore is on the variables (+sit+rul) and (-sit+rul). In order to examine the influencing factors on the use of these variables, we conducted Repeated Measures General Linear Models with situation and period as within-subject factors and age cohort and gender as between-subject factors. Results indicated that situation has significant effect on both (+sit+rul) and (-sit+rul). The use of (+sit+rul) was more frequent in the informal situation while (-sit+rul) in the formal situation. In other words, children were more capable to assess the informal situation and applying the correct morphological rule; and they were still learning to assess the formal situation, but already capable to apply the correct morphological rule. In other words, these children were better language users in the informal situation.

Analyses on the use of words which are appropriate to situation and correct in morphological rule indicated that children already acquired grammatical constraint in both BI and CJI. However, while they in general already showed their capacity to assess the informal situation, it is indicated that not all children acquired the social constraint in the formal situation. The findings are in line with Roberts (1994, on *-t/d* deletion in English), Kerswill (1996), and Smith, Durham, and Fortune (2007, on *-s* in Scottish dialect), in that not all linguistic (level) variables are acquired at the same time and at the same way.

Chapter 8 recapitulates all of the previous chapters and findings in this

study. As the conclusion, this study answers the three main research questions as follows:

1. Middle-class Jakarta children in our study still use CJI more frequently than BI. These children tended to opt for the former than the latter, as they were still more exposed to the former. They were still learning BI, and also develop their skill to use CJI.
2. Children tended to distinguish BI and CJI according to a given situation, and use BI more frequently in the formal situation and CJI in the informal situation. Over time, children showed that this capability is increasing.
3. Children do acquire grammatical and social competence at the same time, in the informal situation.

This study provided a better understanding of the learning process by Indonesian children who have not yet attended elementary school, which is an important part of language education, planning and policies in Indonesia. However, considerable empirical research on this area still has to be conducted to have an overall understanding of how the children learn to be competent Indonesian speakers and how children acquire variation in general.

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