

On the Use of Prefix *nge-* in Jakarta Children's and Young Adult's Speech

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Among the young adult generation in Jakarta, *nge-* [ŋə] is commonly used in casual conversations (Sneddon, 2006). It attaches to one syllabic roots such as *nge-pel* 'to mop' or *nge-pak* 'to pack'. The prefix may attach to voiced initial phoneme of roots, such as in *nge-dorong* 'to push' or *nge-beli-in* 'to buy for s.o', to trill or lateral initial phoneme of roots such as *nge-ramal* 'to tell fortune' or *nge-lirik* 'to look at'. It may also attach to roots that belong originally to foreign words, such as *nge-charge* 'to charge', *nge-bully* 'to bully', or *nge-rap* 'to sing rap'. Finding from Kushartanti (2014) indicates that only a few young children used the prefix, suggesting that this is a prefix that acquired later in the preschool years. This is in line with Dardjowidjojo study (2000), in that this prefix is mastered around 4-5 years of age. A question to be addressed is whether the prefix is really new to these children, and exclusively belongs to young adult speakers.

This study presents a comparison between four age groups (preschooler, pre-adolescent, adolescent, and young adult) in Jakarta on the use of Colloquial Jakarta Indonesian prefixes, namely the zero prefix, the nasal forms /N-/, as well as, *nge-*. Instructions are in Colloquial Jakarta Indonesian. Picture-naming tasks are conducted to elicit verbs that may consist of the aforementioned prefixes. This study is also supported by analyses of spontaneous speech.

It is found that some members of the younger groups already use *nge-*, but it is limited to verbs with one syllabic roots, such as *nge-lap* 'to wipe', *nge-pel* 'to mop' and *nge-cet* 'to paint', or verb with certain borrowing root, namely *nge-rokok*. It is shown that the use of the prefix in other words by these young children is still infrequent. A matter of input is still questionable, yet it is also suggested that *nge-* is still an exclusive prefix that belongs to Jakarta young adult generation.

References

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