The Sixth Cornell Modern Indonesia Project Conference on Languages and Linguistics Held in Indonesia

The study of Indonesia has been an integral part of the Southeast Asia Program (SEAP) since its founding in 1950. That year, the Ford Foundation awarded SEAP a grant to build US scholarly expertise on Indonesia, and the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project (CMIP) was born. Under the directorship of George Kahin and associate director John Echols, CMIP supported a wide range of studies on Indonesian politics and government in the rapidly changing context of the post-independence years. In later years CMIP expanded its focus to include Indonesian culture, history, and international relations, launching the journal *Indonesia* in 1966. The project also supported the translation of critical monographs and reports from Indonesian and Dutch into English. This collection is freely available on [Hathi Trust](http://collections.library.cornell.edu/cmip/browse.html).

In 2011 CMIP held the “State of Indonesian Studies Conference,” its first conference and an opportunity to revitalize the project in a new millennium. The conference brought eighteen scholars from around the world to Cornell to participate in six panel discussions on Indonesian anthropology, art history, history, language and literature, government and political science, and ethnomusicology. In the years that followed, SEAP faculty organized a series of conferences stemming from each of those six panels to explore Indonesian studies across a variety of disciplines.

Building on this legacy of scholarship, the sixth conference of CMIP entitled “Indonesian Languages and Linguistics: State of the Field” ([https://indoling.com/](https://indoling.com/)) convened in Jakarta February 16-18, 2020. The conference was organized by SEAP Director Abby Cohn and co-hosted by Atma Jaya Catholic University, making this the first conference of CMIP to be held in Indonesia – a critical step to ensure the conference for Indonesian participants. It also drew participants from Japan, Europe, and the UK to Jakarta, making this a truly international affair built on a strong tradition of the annual International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics (SIMIL) and the biennial International Symposium on the Languages of Java (ISLOJ). The conference also received generous support from a Wenner-Gren Foundation grant through the University of Maryland.

This dynamic scholarly event highlighted the various fields of Indonesian language studies by bringing into conversation scholars focusing on description analysis and documentation (describing how language is used by a speech community), language endangerment, and sociolinguistics (language in relation to social factors). By incorporating these subfields into a single event, the conference offered an opportunity to address intersecting issues. Linguistics is a key field in the broader context of Indonesia studies given the incredible language diversity of the country along with the complex national trends of multilingualism, language shift, and widespread language endangerment.

Bambang Kurniawan on right.

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use in vocational secondary schools, research on sign language in Indonesia, and multilingualism in Southwest Sumatra. This panel connected back to the theme of Bambang Kaswanti Purwanto’s opening lecture, emphasizing the different repertoires of language people use (formal language and informal varieties of language) as different varieties of language.

After parallel sessions on the description, analysis, and documentation of languages in Indonesia, Multiamita RMT Laufer and Allan F. Laufer (Universitas Indonesia), Eri Kurniaswan (Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia), presented on the third panel on language endangerment and language vitality, with Marian Klamer (Leiden University) serving as a discussant. This panel offered an examination of endangered languages from East Nusa Tenggara to Moluccas, and offered a hopeful perspective on the vitality of endangered languages, along with a call to action to create an endangered language fund for Indonesia by Joseph Lovestrand (Yayasan Suluh Insan Lesati).

The Tuesday morning panel delib- erated emerging varieties of spoken Indonesian, with presentations from Asako Shiohara (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) and Yanti (Atma Jaya Catholic University), and Dwi Noverni Djanar (University of Sydney), with Michael Ewing serving as a discussant.

The panel similarly offered a hopeful outlook, building on the opening lecture to discuss the new and innovative twists and turns in Indonesian languages. After parallel sessions on a variety of case studies, David Gil (Max Planck Institute) offered words as a final dis- cussion.

As with previous conferences, Abby Cohn and Yanti together with Tom Connors are working on the production of an edited volume stemming from this event. They are also working on a repository of online resources to facili- tate increased scholarship on Indonesian linguistics, which will be hosted on the Indoling website (https://indoling.com/homepage/resources/).

There has now been a separate conference as an extension of four of the six panels of the first 2011 “State of Indo- nesia Studies Conference.” Art history, language and literature, government and political science, and ethnomusi- cology have all been represented, and anthropology and history may be pur- sued at a later date. CMIP continues to expand through outreach to Cornell faculty in the sciences conducting research in Indonesia on coral reefs, biodiversi- ty, and soil erosion specifically. CMIP hopes to expand this outreach, and to foster close connections between faculty in the sciences and other faculty mem- bers who work on Indonesia.

 Talks marked * will begin at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time Zone. All other talks will begin at 12:40 p.m. Eastern Time Zone. All talks will take place over Zoom — click the speaker’s name or contact seapgatty@cornell.edu to register.

September
17 Tom Pepinsky, Cornell/Department of Government
Pandemic Politics in Southeast Asia: Society, Governance, and the State

24 Sophen Chann, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia/Department of Natural Resource Management
Frontier Construction and Place-Making in Cambodia Post-Conflict Resource Landscapes

October
1 Darin Sanders Self, Cornell/Department of Government
Binding Contestation: How Party-Military Relations Influenced Democratization in Indonesia and Paraguay

November
5 Kathryn Sweet, Social Development Advisor and Independent Scholar/
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Health Sector Confrontation in Cold War Laos, 1950-1975

12 Sarah Grant, California State University/Department of Anthropology
Dirty Coffee: Scandal, Scrutiny, and Food Safety in Vietnam

19 Sittithep Eaksittipong, Chiang Mai University/Department of History

December
3 Anissa Rahadiningsiyas, Cornell/History of Art and Visual Studies Department
Tulisan Jawi: Decolonizing the ‘Modern’ and the ‘Islamic’ in Indonesian Art

10 Roger Nelson, National Gallery Singapore
Realism as an Attitude as an

Accommodation requests: seap@cornell.edu

http://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/

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