

Three books dedicated to him have also been published. The first was published in 2001 when he and his friends celebrated his nine windu (seventy-two) birthday. Edited by Edi Sedyawati and Susanto Zuhdi, the thick book was nicely titled, *Arung samudra – Persembahan memperingati sembilan windu A.B. Lapien* (Jakarta 2001).

While writing this obituary, my mind travelled to the time when he patiently showed me the way to make myself better acquainted with the strange country, the Netherlands. That was when we worked on our respective research in the late 1960s.

Bon Voyage, Adri.

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*In memoriam Professor Emeritus Anton M. Moeliono  
Bandung, 21 February 1929 – Jakarta, 25 July 2011*



Photograph by JP/Setiono Sugiharto, 2009.<sup>1</sup>

### **Achadiati**

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By many who have known him and his work, Anton Moeliono will always be remembered for his dedication to the cause of promoting our national language and his tireless efforts to mobilize everyone for that cause. His earnest and enthusiastic endeavour to set the right course for the Indonesian language policy earned him the nickname of “the Pope of language”. He also has left his mark on modern Indonesian by the many words he has created: *lugas, canggih, pemirsa*, and many more, which at first were felt awkward, but now are household words.

For the many students who saw him as their mentor in their search for knowledge and truth, he has been a hard taskmaster, but they will not easily forget the lessons of life he has instilled in them and his generosity in their direst needs.

With his demise, the cause of the promotion of Indonesian as a modern national language has lost an ardent champion.

<sup>1</sup> [Http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/10/28/anton-m-moeliono-the-walking-dictionary.html](http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/10/28/anton-m-moeliono-the-walking-dictionary.html).

**Dendy Sugono**

The Agency for Language Development and Cultivation,  
Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia

Anton M. Moeliono was one of the Indonesian linguists of the 66-Generation. As head of the Committee on the Indonesian Language New Spelling System at the Institute of Language and Literature, he was involved in the creation of the new spelling system and the efforts to make it accepted as the common orthography in both Indonesia and Malaysia. In Indonesia, the new common spelling system was inaugurated by the President of the Republic of Indonesia on 16 Augustus 1972 and was called the Indonesian Language Perfected Spelling System.

Anton M. Moeliono became more well-known throughout Indonesia, especially among school teachers and university lecturers, as well as among scholars, government officials, and the general public after his appearance on the national television. Once a week, this outstanding linguist who always took care that he spoke correct Indonesian appeared on the program Developing Indonesian Language for four years from 1973 to 1977. Holding a doctorate in language planning and known to be fluent in some foreign languages, Anton M. Moeliono was very active in the work of creating terminologies in Indonesian by exploring the vocabulary of classical Malay and local languages. More opportunities for his efforts were widely open after his appointment as Head of the National Centre of Language Development and Cultivation (NCLD, 1984). Immediately, he formed a team to compile an Indonesian language dictionary that later produced *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (First edition 1988). He also gathered a team of linguists to write a book on Indonesian grammar that later produced *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia* (First edition 1988). These two monumental works were launched in the Indonesian Language Congress VIII in 1988.

Anton M. Moeliono took advantage of his authority and influence as Head of the NCLD and as a professor at the University of Indonesia to effect changes in the way doctorate students in linguistics and literature were educated in the university. He injected the alumni of the Indonesian Linguistics Development Project, a collaborative program between NCLD and Leiden University, into the doctorate programs. This resulted in more than 30 new doctors in linguistics and literary sciences. In a span of twenty two years and five months after his retirement as Head of NCLD, he ardently continued to observe the development of the Indonesian language and literature. He was also active as a resource person in an interactive program called "I Love the Indonesian Language" on the national broadcasting system. The morning before he was brought to the hospital, a team from the Television of the Republic of Indonesia still recorded his testimony on the Indonesian language. As he lay on his hospital bed, he made the effort of sending me a message asking me to make sure that the program "I Love the Indonesian Language" would continue. Such was Anton M. Moeliono's passion for the development of language in Indonesia. I know that God will bless this true teacher in his next journey.

**Hein Steinhauer**

Leiden University, Radboud University Nijmegen;

**Wim Stokhof**

Founder-Director IIAS, Leiden University, Universiti Sains Malaysia

It will be difficult to undervalue the importance of Anton Moeliono for Indonesia, Indonesian and Indonesian linguistics. Ever since the 1960's he played a key role in the development of Indonesian as the national language of the Indonesian Republic. Without downplaying the role of (many) others, it can safely be said that Indonesian has acquired its present shape and nation binding function largely thanks to Moeliono's creativity, vision, and personality. Major achievements are the monolingual standard dictionary *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* and the standard grammar *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia* (both 1988). Dictionaries by definition do not have the last word and three new editions of the *Kamus Besar* have appeared since. A fourth edition of the *Tata Bahasa Baku* is forthcoming.

But it was not only the study of Indonesian Moeliono left his mark on. Especially in the periods of the Indonesian Linguistics Development Project – initiated in by Hans Teeuw (Leiden University) and Ety Muljadi (Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa) in the seventies and of which he became the thriving force, he stimulated the study of the so-called regional languages as well. The outcome of the Indonesian language mapping project which he initiated is that Indonesia contains around 700 of these local languages, which confirms its position as runner up (after Papua New Guinea) as the nation with the largest number of languages. Moeliono realized the importance of documentation of these languages, but at the same time he stressed the necessity of status and corpus planning for the larger languages among them, since these would have a chance of survival and thriving in the long run and thus contribute substantially to the Indonesian cultural landscape.

These were and still are urgent tasks which exceed the capacities of Indonesia alone, even if the number of Indonesian linguists Moeliono helped to train would multiply exponentially. Moeliono saw the necessity for international cooperation, and stimulated it, to the best of his abilities. Some saw this as a lack of patriotism, but academic disciplines do not stop at borders, and it was to a considerable extent due to Moeliono's more visionary patriotism that Indonesia acquired its rightful place on the international linguistic map. Moeliono may have had moments of impatience towards the slower minds among us who did not immediately grasped his vision, he always remained loyal to those he worked with and wanted to help, even if objectively they may have given reason to disappointment. To the end he lived according to his motto: "... yang suka berkawan, lambat laun tahu bahwa ia akan hidup selalu".

We still remember very well his first words when we met for the first time somewhere in the seventies. On one of those grey and rainy autumn days there was a knock at the door of our cubicle for PhD students at the

University of Amsterdam. Framed in the doorway stood a tall Indonesian man in a blue raincoat dripping wet, his glasses blurred, smiling and he said: "I am Anton Moeliono, Professor Teeuw told me that you are about to leave for fieldwork in my country and that you are learning Indonesian. Can I be of any assistance?" Those words characterize Anton Moeliono in his very essence: with his ardent promoting of the Indonesian language and linguistics, came this other quality – his keen ability to empathise with others, an open-minded readiness to serve his country and his countrymen, and in particular a willingness to help talented young Indonesian scholars in every possible way to reach their (academic) goals, without reservations based on religion, ethnicity or politics.

Not to hear his melodious voice again, ever, musing over language, linguistics, love and life, in this beautifully structured Indonesian of his, or in lightly archaic Dutch makes our hearts shrink; it saddens us more than we care to tell.