

Indexing Geopolitical World; Code Preference and Inscription at Old Town Semarang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Public sign at old town Semarang represents many variations of language. Besides, the history of old town Semarang offers something fresh perspective on Linguistic landscape due to Dutch colonialism. This study aims to analyze the signs and its relation with geopolitical world by considering government regulation and the purpose of the sign. This study used descriptive qualitative method. The study is phenomenological which is combinatorial, explanatory, and synchronic because the code preference and inscription used in public area (Bungin, 2017). The data were obtained through observation and documentation methods involving photography techniques. The data was analyzed using Scollon & Wong Scollon (2003). The result reveals three types of language used; mono/bi/multilingual form in 63 signs around old town Semarang with 15 different languages. All signs divided into four preferences. Among those signs, geopolitical effect was found through government's regulation and it is indexing a power to set the public sign. Therefore, other signs were built by the sign maker for a commercial strategy. Despite the fact that the old town has Dutch history, English appeared as the most prominent language in the signs, indicating that language is not always in line with language protection and preservation goals.

KEYWORDS

Linguistic Landscape; geopolitical world; code preference; old town

INTRODUCTION

In today's global context, cities develop throughout time, incorporating political, social, cultural, technological, economic, and physical aspects (Yunus, 1999: 40), leaving elements as evidence of the development. The elements in question are various historical relics or assets that can be in the form of historical buildings, monuments or other historical objects. Widayati (2000: 88) describes historical relics or assets are irreplaceable wealth and will provide an image for each city or area, for instance, Old Town of Semarang. Old Town Semarang known locally as 'Kota Lama Semarang' is a historical place in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. It is a well-preserved area that showcases colonial-era architecture, reflecting the influence of Dutch rule in the region since mid-17th century. The area has become a popular tourist destination for its unique charm, cultural heritage, and photo-worthy spots (Santosa et al., 2023). Old Town Semarang stands as a testament to Indonesia's colonial past and its enduring cultural legacy. It reflects the interaction between local traditions and European influences, making it a key site for understanding the historical dynamics of trade, power, and culture in Java.

In order to protect and maintenance the area, regional government released laws and regulation about building and environmental planning of Kota Lama number 2-year 2020 (Jawa Tengah, 2020). The regulation stated that old town Semarang is a cultural heritage

that is a historical legacy of the growth of the City of Semarang that has high architectural, aesthetic, scientific and cultural values and has economic and tourism potential; Old town Semarang needs to be reorganized so that its sustainability is maintained and supports the improvement of people's welfare. This regulation is consistent with Noor Azizu et al.'s (2011) opinion that preserving historic buildings, a popular regional tourist attraction, requires extensive maintenance and restoration, protective treatments, and continuing preservation are required to keep the institution operational while preserving its authenticity and historic character, as well as attracting both local and international tourists.

Karmilah et al., (2024) indicate that the current situation in old town Semarang is frequently related with rehabilitation, revitalisation, and improvement of the area's quality. The buildings in Semarang's old town have been turned into a variety of restaurants, hotels, parking lots, and residential areas (Karmilah et al., 2024). Mulyawan (2017) believes that improving environmental quality leads to investments, such as commercial activity. However, everything the retail and commercial industry depend primarily on passionate marketing methods to attract visitors. (Denil et al., 2024). The case refers to geopolitical world where government is involved in preserving the old town.

Behind the beauty of old town's building architecture, there is language in a public sign that integral to this dynamic and plays a vital role in tourism as it serves as a guide for tourist and also identity of the building itself (Kimambo & Mdukula, 2024). Benu et al., (2025) explain that one of this diversity's most visible markers is in public spaces, mainly through signage. The placement and language of all signs and symbols contribute significantly to their meaning (Scollon & Wong Scollon, 2003). We quickly discovered that it was more than just signs and writing in public places; it also included code preference, inscription, and multilingualism. This is appropriate for investigating the language landscape.

Landry and Bourhis (1997) established the term linguistic landscape (LL), which relates to the visibility and presence of written language in public spaces, especially how languages are displayed in signs, advertisements, street names, and other textual element in public area. Furthermore, the explanation of Landry & Bourhis (1997) showed key dimensions of Linguistic landscape related to signs convey practical information to the public and signs represents the language and cultural identity of an ethnicity or region. This is reinforced by the opinion of Prasetyo et al., (2024) that linguistic landscape implemented to analyze the use of textual language in the form of lingual and non-lingual public signs.

The concept of indexing geopolitical world was analyzing the multilingualism in the signs along with the politics, status of languages in public, power relation, regulation, and colonial and postcolonial influence. Language use can be divided as monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual forms; multilingualism refers to humans' capability to speak more than two languages (Gorter, 2006). Besides, language decision for public signage for specific goals or commercial orientation does not necessarily align with language selection for language preservation and protection (Artawa et al., 2023). The inconsistency adapting to the needs in the field, in this case the old town Semarang.

Linguistic landscape research related to place semiotic was conducted by Mulyawan et al., (2022) discussing language contestation in Batukau Temple Bali, Denil et al., (2024) examine the motif of language dominance that used on coffee shop signboard in Padang city, and Prasetyo et al., (2024) describe Linguistic landscape of identity representation at Watugong Buddhist Monastery Semarang, and a code preference Analysis conducted by Jamil et al., (2021) related to forensic approach to the top – down signboards in Pakistan.

The three studies have not yet revealed in depth the place semiotic analysis of code preference and inscription. This study comes to fill the gap. Scollon & Wong Scollon (2003) explain public space has three main point; code preference, inscription, and emplacement and it can either indexing community and represents anything about an item or company that has nothing to do with the place where it is located. Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) emphasize the role of symbols and signs in meaning communication and offer light on how language choices affect the semiotics of public spaces by stressing the semiotic character of language landscapes (Guo & Zhao, 2021). Linguistic landscape in the context of code preference and inscription are still relatively minimal, especially old town Semarang.

In fact, code preference and inscription at old town Semarang that approach semiotically are through language that appears on public space sign. Code preference is extremely important in recognizing the distinction between symbol and index. Code preference and inscription in old town Semarang refers to standard language, dialect, mix codes used in signage, advertisement, and other textual elements in public. The preference reflects social, cultural, economic, politic, and influence community. Furthermore, the code preference of a sign includes center-margin, top-bottom, left-right, and earlier-later. The system of inscription would contain everything that manufacturers know about the meanings of making and establishing a typeface for a book or what designers know about applying a certain typeface a scheme of colors for an advertisement, including fonts, material, layering, and state changes(Scollon & Wong Scollon, 2003). Furthermore, by extending the scope of Linguistic landscape research, this work presents an interesting addition to the field. Landscape indexing geopolitical world through code preference and inscription on old town Semarang.

This study aims to uncover the variety of code preference and inscription on old town Semarang which reflects interaction between local traditions and European influences through signs, making it a key site for understanding the historical dynamics of trade, power, and culture in Java.

RESEARCH METHODS

This is a qualitative study that is used to index the geopolitical world related to code preference and inscription on old town Semarang, Central Java. The study is phenomenological which is combinatorial, explanatory, and synchronic because the code preference and inscription used in public area of old town Semarang (Bungin, 2017). The relationship between signs, buildings, and meaning with qualitative research lies in how the qualitative approach attempts to explain standard language, dialect, mix codes used in signage, advertisement, and other textual elements in public. In-depth observation and documentation are given higher weight in this qualitative study reflects social, cultural, economic, politic, and influence community (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creating Gorter's (2006) framework, which considers Linguistic Landscape as a way of describing language issues in a public area, defining the wide range of code preference and inscription, also language policy implementation at old town Semarang based on government rules number 2-year 2020.

Research Location

This study took place in old town Semarang known as ‘*ꦏꦶꦛꦏꦼꦭꦩꦩ*’ means *kitha lama* which is located in North Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. an area that became a center of trade in the 19th-20th centuries. At that time, a fort was built in the area for security,

named *Vijfhoek*. The main route in old town named *Heerenstraat* or Letjen Soeprapto street (Karmilah et al., 2024). The area is about thirty-one hectares and there are about fifty ancient building that still stand firmly after colonialism. Based on research conducted by Karmilah et al., (2024) old town Semarang is divided into five segments with several building functions after revitalization, such as; warehouse, office and factory, parking land, commercial area, housing, abandoned area, education and religion facility, hotel, and public park. Judging from it condition old town was called ‘*Little Netherland*’ and automatically attracts visitors. In addition, a website *nativeindonesia.com* explain there are ten of the fifty buildings that have been converted. The following is a figure of research location.

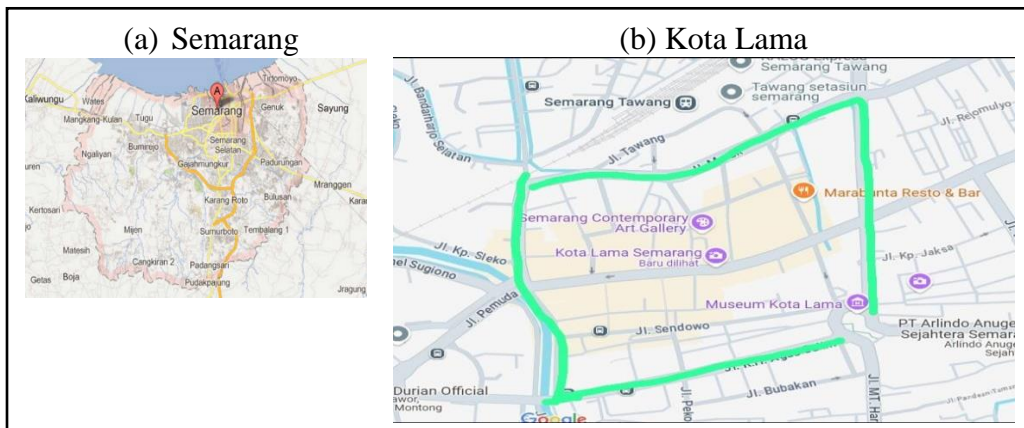


Figure 1. Research location map, old town Semarang (<https://mapcarta.com/>)

The image above is an illustration of the research location in old town Semarang, image a is a map of the city of Semarang and (b) the green line on the map shows the location of the old city from which data was taken and analyzed to find variations in code preference and inscription on signs in public spaces.

Data Source

This study's data came from public signage in old town Semarang, Indonesia's. The signs were taken based on green line in the map (figure 1) from Letjend Suprapto street (*Heerenstraat*) to Cendrawasih street (*Komedi-Straat*) to Sendowo street (*Zuider-Walstraat*). The signs used as data sources were not only limited to restaurant, café, and hotel, but public signs that exist in all segments of the old town. The location was chosen because it refers to the signs that have standard language, dialect, mix codes used in signage, advertisement, and other textual elements in public. Therefore, the signs must include social, cultural, economic, and politic.

Data Collection

The public signage all through Old Town were acquired by observation and documentation with an iPhone XS camera. Since there are numerous public signs, photographed and gathered protocol signs in any form, such as advertisements, boards, street name, and everything related to shop signs, restaurants, hotels, roads, religious facilities, etc. The photos were taken in Januari 19th, 2025 through from Letjend Suprapto street (*Heerenstraat*) to Cendrawasih street (*Komedi-Straat*) to Sendowo street (*Zuider-Walstraat*). The total photos were 92 which related to code preference and inscription.

Data Analysis

The data was examined qualitatively using semiotics theory to extract the representation of place semiotics, which include code preference and inscription (Scollon & Wong Scollon,

2003). In addition, to determine linguistic dominance percentages, data were divided into monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual categories in old town Semarang (Gorter, 2006). Analysis delved into how geopolitical world effected the use of language, mix codes preference of a sign includes center-margin, top-bottom, left-right, and earlier-later. Then, system of inscription regarding using a specific typeface and colour scheme for an advertisement including fonts, material, layering, and state changes(Scollon & Wong Scollon, 2003). Besides, analysis up to the discussion of how place semiotics reflects social, cultural, economic, politic, and influence community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained through observation and documentation at old town Semarang discover 92 signage, but only 63 data were included in code preferences and inscriptions. Basen on Gorter's theory (2006), total data that have been analyzed were categorized into monolingualism, bilingual, and multilingual. The 63 photographs were described quantitatively to reveal variety of languages in Linguistic landscapes. The calculation is presented in table 1.

Regarding the distribution of multilingualism, the signs showed 15 groups of languages, including Indonesian, English, Javanese, Japanese, Greek, Dutch, Haitian, Italian, French, Chinese, Cantonese, Spanish, Swedish, Somali, and Hindi (see diagram 1). Surprisingly, as foreign/international language, English take dominant place across the old town Semarang, followed by Indonesian language, other languages are rarely used. Further details relating to percentage of multilingualism are breakdown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Quantification of Language Use at Old Town Semarang

Total	Language Category	Language	Amount	Percentage
38 Signs	Monolingual	Indonesian	10	15.8%
		English	13	20.6%
		Javanese	1	1.5%
		Japanese	4	6.3%
		Haitian	1	1.5%
		Dutch	3	4.7%
		Italia	1	1.5%
		Cantonese	1	1.5%
		Spanish	1	1.5%
		Swedish	1	1.5%
			Somali	1
23 Signs	Bilingual	English – Indonesian	6	9.5%
		Indonesian - English	7	11.1%
		Indonesian-Javanese	2	3.1%
		Greek – English	1	1.5%
		Dutch - English	2	3.1%
		Italian – English	1	1.5%
		Indonesian - French	1	1.5%
		Spanish - English	1	1.5%
		Chinese - English	1	1.5%
		Dutch - Indonesian	1	1.5%
		Hindi - English	1	1.5%
2 Signs	Multilingualism	Javanese – Indonesian - English	2	3.1%
			63	100%

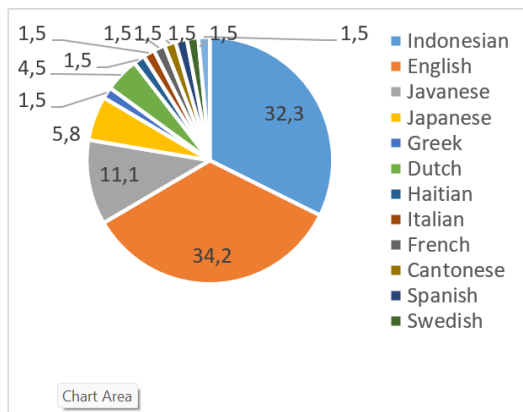


Diagram 1. Quantification of Language Use at Old Town Semarang

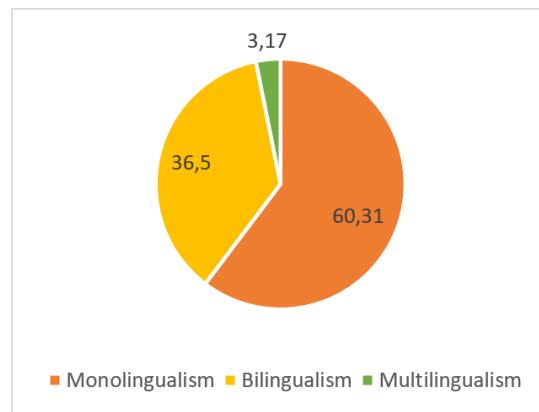


Diagram 2. Quantification of Language Use in Monolingual, Bilingual, and Multilingual

Table 1 illustrates that 38 monolingual signs in 10 languages as English represent the highest percentage 20.6%, following closely behind is Indonesia at 15.8%, the third highest percentage is Japanese in total 6.3%, and Dutch monolingual sign showed 4.7%, while the regional language Javanese only 1.5%. These finding affirm English and Indonesian as the dominant language featured on old town Semarang signboards. It is in line with Artawa et al.,'s opinion (2023) that the language is not necessarily corresponding to the language chosen for language protection and preservation.

Diagram 1 displays the total percentage of language used in old town Semarang, Indonesian and English language signs dominate the percentage which are 32.2% for Indonesian and 34.2% for English. Following with the regional language, Javanese 4.5%. The overall percentage proves that in tourism area the international language dominantly used rather than the national and regional language. There is a business tendency in those signs, such a trend for commercial activities.

Regarding to diagram 2 monolingual signs are most often found in old town Semarang with total percentage (60.31%), slightly lower than monolingual, bilingual signs have total (36.50%), multilingual signs are the least often found with percentage (3.17%). In Sudarmanto's et al., (2023) finding stated that the most generally used is monolingual. Therefore, language selection of public signboards for certain purposes or commercial orientation in old town Semarang were very diverse. Here's the photograph of each sign in figure 2 below.



Figure 2. Monolingual, Bilingual, and Multilingual sign at old town Semarang
 (Source: the authors)

Figure 2 above contains three photograph of monolingual (a), bilingual (b), and multilingual (c) signs in old town Semarang. The (a) photo was taken from a restaurant

named ‘Sego Bancakan, Pawone Simbah’ which all word written in Javanese language. Sego bancakan is served food placed on a banana leaf with rice, boiled eggs, crackers, vegetable, tempeh, tofu, and salted fish. The meaning of the sign is Photo (b) is the name of an old building previously used as a warehouse for clove and spice. Currently, this building was taken over by the government and used for events only. The signboard of the building was written in bilingual ‘Gedung Oudetrapp’ which is Indonesian – Dutch. The example of multilingual sign in photo (c) was the name of local restaurant called *Angkringan* providing *nasi kucing* menu, a traditional Javanese menu. Surprisingly, the phrase of sign was written ‘Sepur Bioskop Dimensi, Angkringan & Coffee Shop Cinema 9D’ contains three languages ‘Sepur’ indicate as Javanese language means train, ‘Bioskop Dimensi’ and ‘Angkringan’ as Indonesian language, while coffee shop and Cinema 9D are English language. The name of (c) local restaurant influenced by the position of the restaurant which is close to Tawang Bank Jateng Semarang station.

From the data above, it stated that English, Javanese, and Dutch represent the diversity of purposes, such as commercial, economic, and history. The use of English often symbolizes modernity, global connectivity, and professionalism. Photo (a) and (c) contains economic and commercial purpose, while photo (b) contains historical value from the building itself. It is in line with government’s regulation number 2-year 2020 which aims to protect and maintenance the area of old town Semarang.

Code Preference and inscription in Old Town Semarang

Analyzing signs along the old town street from Letjend Suprpto street (*Heerenstraat*) to Cendrawasih street (*Komedie-straat*) to Sendowo street (*Zuider-Wal-straat*), knowing government’s regulation, and understanding trend and history are the most accurate ways we locate ourselves in geopolitical world. From example of figure 2 (a), (b), and (c) we can either index the community or business within old town Semarang or it can symbolize something about the business, history, people, etc. Code preference analysis conducted by the choice of typeface or even preferred visual semiotic systems of construction (Scollon & Wong Scollon, 2003 : 119). In this finding, the code preference from signs found in old town Semarang reflect priorities, target tourist, and history of the building. There are four various styles of code, namely center-margin, top-bottom, left-right, and earlier-later.

Furthermore, the data analysis found that from 92 photograph there are 63 signs contains code preference. Further details regarding total code preference signs are breakdown in table 2 below.

Table 2. Code Preference in Percentage in Old Town Semarang

Total	Code Preference	Amount	Percentage
42 Signs	Center – Margin	42	66.6%
12 Signs	Top - Bottom	10	15.8%
8 Signs	Left – Right	6	9.5%
1 Sign	Earlier - Later	5	7.9%
	63		100%

Table 2 displays code preference in old town Semarang, all the data focuses on restaurant, coffee shop, building, hotels, parking area, and residential areas. Based on the table, the dominant code used in old town Semarang is center – margin with (66.6%) especially café, restaurant, and hotels, following with total percentage (15.8) the top – bottom signs which are mostly found in old buildings, factories, and places of worship, left – right code showed with overall (9.5%) which usually used for café, restaurant, and bank,

while earlier - later code the least often found with percentage (7.9%). Whether the Concerns about code choice based on geopolitical indexing or symbolization based on sociocultural linkages need the use of evidence from sources other than the signs. Therefore, code preference behave much like construction system, there are privileges contained in a sign, but it cannot be assumed to be an ideology of the owner of the sign. As an illustration, the signs analysis of code preference can be seen in figures 3 below.



Figure 3. Center – Margin Signs at old town Semarang
(Source: the authors)

The first layer of analysis figure 3 is name of café and restaurant which has the sign in center-margin model. The first one (a) is ‘Bloomery cake & Patisserie’ which written in bold letter in the center and round, the word ‘Bloomery’ was on the top of the flower symbol which means this café want to show the atmosphere of cozy and cheerful like the blooming flowers. Under the flower symbol, there is a description 'cake & patisserie' which indicates that the menu being sold is cakes. Therefore, the sign appears in purple color showing a luxury and elegance, indirectly the owner wants to show signify exclusivity, high-quality products, or premium services.

The (b) sign was written in Dutch-English language, the center word is ‘Oud & Nieuw’ originally Dutch word means old and new and the margin word is ‘Ice Cream Palace’ from English language. The sign was made to build an impression that the ice cream palace located in the middle of old town Semarang. This also indicate that the building used are old buildings left over from the Dutch colonialism. This case shows the geopolitics in a building besides its commercial purpose. Furthermore, the Indonesian local restaurant (c) ‘Warmiendok Serambi Merak’ was display in center – margin model. The sign contains a symbol of peacock wings in the center. Warmiendok is abbreviation of ‘Warung Makan Indomie’ as a famous instant noodle restaurant. It is well known because Indomie is the most popular instant noodle in Indonesia.

The (d) sign in figure 3 is the center sign of a café shop named ‘Miles café’ which located in the center of old town, precisely next to Srigunting Park. The atmosphere of the café is very cozy and offer affordable price while it’s not only for hanging out but also suitable for working. Miles Cafe serves delicious Asian, Western and Indonesian fusion menu.

The second layer analysis shows the inscription in the sign which shows that the signboard fonts in figure 3 is entirely printed using tools professionally and the material of the sign is made. In every restaurant, especially figures 3 there is a permanent layering

showing open/close signs. Perhaps in a special occasion, such as Christmas, Idul Fitri, or café anniversary there would be removable layering from the sign.

The third layer analysis concentrates on the commercial purposes in signs. Reported from *bps.go.id* page, the number of foreign tourists in 2022 was 4,918 people and increased in 2023 to 13,992. In contrast to the number of domestic tourists, which is greater, in 2022 there were 5,338,233 and increased in 2023 to 6,478,883 visitors. Even though number of foreign tourists is not as many as domestic tourists, the implementation of English or foreign languages on signs in public spaces has another purpose, to attract visitors (BPS Jawa Tengah, 2024).

English or other language is used to represent foreign taste and traditions; it does not index an English-speaking society (Artawa et al., 2023). It refers to how different languages (or codes) are positioned in public signage, reflecting sociolinguistic hierarchies, cultural priorities, and target audiences. This framework distinguishes between center codes (dominant, widely understood languages) and margin codes (less dominant or localized languages), and their roles in constructing meaning and accessibility.

When a text was written in multiple languages there is a system preference that dominant. The upper position in signs is the preferred position, the lower position is secondary; this is defined by law and is in agreement (Scollon & Wong Scollon, 2003: 121). The analysis found in old town Semarang, the top – bottom model appears in street name, office, café, and restaurant. The illustration of top – bottom preference system can be seen in figure 4.



Figure 4. Top – Bottom Signs at old town Semarang
(Source: the authors)

Figure 4 contains the example of top-bottom model, it is consisting of restaurant, shop board, and office board. The signage placed on the pavement in front of shop, office, and street with information details about bilingual language appears in sign. The placement of a sign was very considerate, it is reflected to geosemiotics where the signs take place and it appears naturally. Based on Sheng & Buchanan, (2022) the position of text in this preference model governed by some factors, it can be laws, community, originality, or history.

The first layer analysis views (a) sign bilingual, which is Dutch – English, the top position of language is Dutch ‘Sigaren’ means cigars, while the bottom position is English

‘Bar & Cigar Lounge’. In fact, this sign appears because there is a colonial influence left behind, it makes the position of this bar authentic to the old town Semarang. Sigaren bar offers the best collection of cigarettes from all over the world. This bar's signboard appears with a tobacco plant icon.

The next top – bottom model was display in figure 4 (b), a souvenir shop with a sign ‘Wingko Babad’ in the top and Cap Kereta Api in the bottom, besides the symbol of train used as branding for the product. Wingko babad is traditional food from Babat, Lamongan, East Java which made primarily of glutinous rice flour, coconut, and sugar. Therefore, Cap Kereta Api is a brand written in Indonesian language. Reported from the *bangga.semarang.id* page Wingko babat have been popularized by Chinese-Indonesian traders in Babat, as the city became connecting route between Surabaya and Semarang making it a convenient place for travelers to stop. Over time, Wingko Babat became a signature treat for visitors to take home as a souvenir. Figure 4 (b) contain Javanese – Indonesian language showing the prefer language which is Javanese in a specific purpose, while the bottom Indonesian Language used as branding due to the strategic location.

An office sign in photograph (c) is an Indonesian state-owned enterprise engaged in shipping and logistics. As written on the sign, Indonesian name of the company on the upper position written in old Indonesian spelling 'Djakarta' while English words 'branch office' is below. The use of the English bottom sign as a sign that shipping has international standards in international trade.

The second layer of analysis were related to inscription of the sign, the fonts and its component. These three signs in figure 4 make it clear that permanence and durability are important by using heavier, more durable, and more expensive sign materials. These materials take longer to prepare and cost more to make, shows that who made the sign wants it to last for a long time.

The third layer analysis concentrate on laws, commercial, and geopolitical effect that affected these three signs above. Those three signs represent the reform discourse and the growing trend toward a more globally integrated business and political life. The (a) sign identifies an effort to internationalize the bar by using bilingual sign in Dutch – English, but not to erase history but to restore cultural identity and history. A traditional brand inviting foreign tourists should try the local food. International tourist inexperienced with Indonesian snack may interested in the local names of ‘Wingko Babad’; therefore, the sign makers perfectly design supports the existence of national identity at the international level. In addition, the upper language in sign (b) was written in Javanese language and the lower language was a brand written in Indonesian. This sign and office (c) was protected by the state and regulated in government regulation number 108-year 1961 about Jakarta LLOYD (Putusan Presiden RI, 1961). The Company's objective is to help build the National economy in accordance with directed economy, prioritizing people’s need along with the serenity and pleasure of working in the Company, in order to create a just and prosperous society, both material and spiritual.

When a sign is horizontally in line, the preferred code appears on the left and the peripheral code on the right. Further discussion is related to Left - Right preference model. This percentage of preference is rarely found in old city of Semarang, only around 9.5% and only 6 signs of public space. The illustration of left – right preference system can be seen in figure 5 below.



Figure 5. Left - Right Signs at old town Semarang
(Source: the authors)

According to Scollon & Wong Scollon, (2003: 119 - 120) , the left-right code preference system has similarities with the top-bottom, but the meaning is not. The chosen code is on top, on the left, or in the the middle, while the excluded code is on the bottom, right, or in the margins. In figure 5, three signs display the example of left – right preference model which refers to bank, restaurant, and café. The first layer analysis concentrates on the name of the signs, (a) sign appears in left with Indonesian language ‘atm Mandiri’ in right position is the information about the branch office ‘KCP Semarang mpu tantular’. This is the evidence that the (a) sign saying the phrase occupy the ideal portion of the bank, within a language the left – right. The next (b) sign is a commercial sign in Javanese restaurant named ‘Soto Seger’ means fresh soup which is written in left side, while on the right side the owner of restaurant put an advertisement of ‘teh pucuk harum’ along with the product icon. The position of signs explain indirectly that the main menu in restaurant is soto and tea are available for the drink. A unique name appears on the café (c), in the left sign ‘Dijkstra’ was written, and in the right sign a phrase ‘café and creative space’. Dijkstra is a scientist from Netherlands who created the theory of algorithms, while phrase café and creative space as an attractive slogan and logo to attract customers.

As it turns out, second layer analysis related to inscription found the simplicity among signs above, it is associated with a brand or product. The text of signboards was written using manufactured sign made of durable material with printed fonts, permanent but there is a possibility that it will be replaced or revised someday. As noted in sign (b) and (c), café and restaurant add lighting at night to attract visitors.

The third layer analysis explain purposes of the signs, the sign (a) provides information to the public that Mandiri bank ATM for withdrawing money. Furthermore, an effort to internationalize the local food was identified through sign (b) and (c) that have commercial purpose. Language used in sign (b) was local language, Javanese ‘Soto Seger’, the change of vowel /a/ to /e/ in Indonesian to mark stress of the word. It means that sign maker made

region of Semarang, top code preference which is Indonesia is preferred. This is regulated was stated in decision of Wali Kota Semarang number 621/360-year 2018.

In sign (c) the earlier code is '4U Space' which refers to an eatery and later code is 'Pertjetakan' which refers to a printing house. In the earlier explanation of code preference, we only considered fixed and static relationships between signs. In some circumstances, however, code preferences are displayed in separate signs arranged in relation to each other, as we seen in figure 6, the earlier code position is beside the door, while the later code was in the center of the building.

The second layer of analysis is the inscription within the sources of place semiotics. Materials used to make sign (a) and (b) are permanence and durability are important by using Sign materials are greater in weight, stronger, and more expensive. These materials take longer to prepare and cost more to make, shows that who made the sign wants it to last for a long time. Therefore, the old building in sign (c) which is printing office named '4u Space', the sign maker adds on a new sign using manufactured letter made of durable material but not permanent, they also put some light to make it beautiful at night.

The third layer analysis described the laws, geopolitical issue, commercial, and also historical view. The (a) and (b) signs was stated in decision of Wali Kota Semarang number 621/360-year 2018 which showed that street name around old town Semarang experiencing changes during city development. The purpose of changing not to erase history but to restore cultural identity and history. For that reason, earlier preference placed on the sign is Indonesian and in second place is Dutch.

The sign (c) contains Indonesia – English words, the earlier preference is English and the later preference is Indonesia with old spelling 'Pertjetakan'. This is a utilization of old buildings as a form of promotion to get impression from the tourist. The restaurant offers traditional and western cuisine with Japanese concept. Reported from an interview, the owner provides dance performance facilities for anyone who wants to dance but don't know where dance community is, it called Soesmans Dance Society, which is taken from the old name of this building. The image built by the owner is a commercial strategy built through sign.

Likewise, the language used on the signboards in old town Semarang is not based on government laws, but rather promotes the shop owner or business owner. The use of any foreign language in old town Semarang does not appear to be intended to convey factual information, instead chosen for its connotational value. According to Piller (2003), the audience can determine whether the communication is in English or a foreign language. and this activates Values involve international orientation, future orientation, success, sophistication, even pleasant orientation. Therefore, despite it is evident that the objective is for advertising, business, and commercial purposes, the language used in restaurants or cafes is distinct and represents the identity of the business owner, as shown in four Japanese restaurants that take monolingual signs. However, some restaurants carry a traditional Javanese theme which can attract the attention of visitors, especially foreign tourists (see figure 4 (b)). Based on Cenoz & Gorter, (2006: 68), the languages applied on the signs appear to have a positive connotation due to their relative authority and position in a sociolinguistic environment, language policy, and ideology. The illustration of Japanese restaurant can be seen in figure 7 below.



Figure 7. The example of Japanese sign (Monolingual) in old town Semarang
(Source: the authors)

The sign in figure 7 represent identity of Japanese restaurant which come with Japanese letter hiragana as a sign of originality. The figure shows 天の川 read ‘Amanogawa’ derived from ama meaning ‘heaven/sky’ and gawa means river, so the meaning of amanogawa is river of heaven or sky river. It is often used as a metaphor for beauty, romance, and longing. The owner of business put any inscription to make an impression of the rich cultural heritage which embodies Japanese language and culture in old town Semarang.

Thus, Linguistic landscape in old town Semarang found a geopolitical world through code preference and inscription in the signs. It is a well-preserved area that showcases colonial-era architecture from Dutch even though the English language dominate the signs that appear in old town Semarang.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, the geopolitical world in old town Semarang indexing preference code and inscription through the outdoor signs, there are sixty-three signs regarding to restaurants, café, hotels, parking area, residential areas, street name, advertisement, etc. The signs were taken based on green line in the map (figure 1) from Letjend Suprpto street (*Heerenstraat*) to Cendrawasih street (*Komodie-Straat*) to Sendowo street (*Zuider-Wal-straat*). Language choice of public signs have certain purposes or commercial orientation in old town Semarang, there are three types are found in old town Semarang with monolingual as most often found (60.31%), bilingual signs have total (36.50%), and multilingual least often found with percentage (3.17%). Therefore, fifteen groups of languages, including Indonesian, English, Javanese, Japanese, Greek, Dutch, Haitian, Italian, French, Chinese, Cantonese, Spanish, Swedish, Somali, and Hindi (see diagram 1).

The study represents four preference code that appears in old town Semarang contributes many benefits in social, cultural, economic, politic, and influence community. Some signs are regulated by laws and government regulations. The case refers to geopolitical world where government is involved in preserving the old town. From the political point of view, regional government’s law and regulation about building and environmental planning of Kota Lama number 2-year 2020 (Jawa Tengah, 2020) stated that old town Semarang is a cultural heritage that is a historical legacy of the growth of the City of Semarang that has high architectural, aesthetic, scientific and cultural values and has economic and tourism potential; Old town Semarang needs to be reorganized so that its sustainability is maintained and supports the improvement of people’s welfare (see figure 4 (c), figure 6).

Furthermore, many signs did not represent the geopolitical world, but rather promotes the shop owner or business owner. It is in line with Piller, (2003) opinion that The

audience may determine that the communication is in English. or in any foreign language and this activates values such as international orientation. Therefore, despite it is evident that language was used for advertising, business, and commercial purposes, and also represents the identity of the business owner. The old town Semarang was colonial-era architecture from Dutch even but most of the signboard appear in English language. It is in line with Scollon & Wong Scollon's opinion (2003) that language used in a sign cannot be assumed to be an ideology.

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