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Submission date: 15-Feb-2025 06:07PM (UTC+0900)

Submission ID: 2565189248

File name: RISS_January_2025_Nurul_Khasanah.doc (3.75M) **Word**

count: 7128

Character count: 39725

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

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v5i2.xxx>

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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 from a 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

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