

Study of Church Name in Kupang City: Linguistic Landscape Approach

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ABSTRACT

This article is an ecclesionomatic study in the framework of linguistics landscape discussing the categories and language of church names in Kupang city, Indonesia. Data were obtained from signboards in Kupang City through photographic techniques in September 2021. The results showed that the names of churches in the city of Kupang were divided into 7 categories, namely biblical terms, names of people, names of places, churches as residences, topographic, names of plants and animals. From the language used, there are 7 languages in the church name, namely Indonesian, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, Aramaic, and Dawan languages. The use of a foreign language other than English in church names is not related to literacy or congregational culture but has a symbolic function that contains values and ideology because these names are taken from the Bible and have meaning. Meanwhile, English follows developments and shows the internationality of the church. In addition, the Dawan language is the only language used in the name of the church to show the locality of culture and as a marker of identity in the area.

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1. Introduction

According to Kupang City statistics in 2020, there are 307 Christian churches followed by 69 mosques and 46 Catholic churches (<https://kupangkota.bps.go.id>). A large number of churches can be easily found everywhere and of course are easily found in the public spaces of the city of Kupang. The existence of a church in the public space of Kupang city shows a sign of the existence and representation of the Christian community. Mulyawan (2020) said that the existence of a sign in a public space is not only a representation of the existence of a group of humans but more than that it is an image, a symbol, even the voice of those who cannot speak. The symbol of the presence of the church is not only the building but the name. Each church in the city of Kupang has a name to indicate its identity and to distinguish it from churches in other areas. Therefore, this study focused on the name of the church in Kupang city, which was taken from the name board of each church.

The church in this writing is referred to a group of people who believe or are called (*ecclesia*), to Jesus Christ. So the name of the church that is meant in this paper is the name of the congregation in a church in a certain area. Thus, the term church is more used as the equivalent of the term *ummah* as in Islam (Fitriyana, 2016). This information about the name of the church is the focus of the analysis in this article. Thus, a church is the same as a congregation or vice versa, so in the Christian understanding a church is not a building but a collection of people (Mannion & Mudge, 2008). The name as seen in the name board is preceded by the word *jemaat* (congregation) not *gereja* (church), for example, *Jemaat Ebenhaezer Oeba* or *Jemaat Galed Kelapa Lima*.

There have been many studies related to language and church or religious signs, especially churches. Studies that has been carried out includes linguistic expressions related to ideology and religious identity (Kamalu & Tamunobelega, 2013; Inya, 2019); language in places of worship (Coluzzi, & Kitade. 2015; Wafa & Wijayanti. 2018; Ardian, et.al. 2021). The name of the church has also become an interesting topic in research with a topic of study called *ecclesionomatics* (Pan, 2018; Akoto & Afful, 2021). (Karim, et.al, 2022). The word *ecclesionomatics* is a combination of ecclesiology, namely the study of the church (Mannion & Mudge, 2008) and onomastics which is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the investigation of the origin, form, and meaning of self-names (Hough, 2016:22; Jatmiko, 2020). According to Pusey (2016: 437), this onomastics study can be carried out using a linguistic landscape (LL) approach, which is a field study related to names in public spaces, besides that it can be used to study names in relation to language policy. The LL approach in this paper refers to Gorter's (2018) and (Yulismayanti, et, al, 2022) statement

that LL can be used as an object of research to understand motives, uses, ideologies, language variations, and the contestation of various forms of language in the public spaces.

This study aims to analyze the name of the church (*ecclesionomastic*) in the city of Kupang, in the framework of linguistics. The analysis will be focused on the category and the language used in naming the church in the city of Kupang.

2. Method

This research is conducted using a qualitative approach describe linguistic phenomena of the church's name in Kupang city. In this qualitative research, the emphasis is on observation-participation and documentation. The types of data in this study are all primary data, namely data obtained from primary sources (Benu, et.al, 2022; Dalyan, et al, 2022)). The source of this research are church's name written in the nameboard of the church. The location for data collection is Kupang City on August 2022.

There are 213 photo of churches' name board used as data in this study. Those data were obtained using observation and documentation. Photographic techniques were applied to obtain data using digital camera. These data were taken based on the following criteria:

- a. The church signboard is large enough to be seen from a certain distance,
- b. Easy to see and read from the road,
- c. Being on the side of the road or entrance that can be seen by many people
- d. The writing on the name board is clear and easy to be read.



Figure 1. Sample of church's name

A list of church names was collected from all churches regardless of denomination, including Catholics. Data analysis in this study followed the following criteria:

1. The name of the church referred to in this study and counted as data is the name of the church. For example, **Jemaat Zaitun Tenau**, then **Zaitun** is the name of the church, not the **Jamaat** or **Tenau**.
2. Proper names such as the name of a place or people are not counted as one of the languages. For example, **Jemaat Benyamin Oebufu** or **Gereja Santu Andreas Lasiana**. **Benjamin** and **Santu Andreas** are church names but are not counted as any language.
3. A term that appears more than once as a church name is counted as one language.

The data that has been collected is classified into the category and the language used as the name of the church. Furthermore, it is analyzed to find the naming category and the dominant language in naming churches in Kupang City.

3. Result

The nameboard of each church contain information about the main organization of the church, name of the church, address of the church and worship schedule. The name of the church is always written more prominently, with a larger font size and a more striking color.

There is no policy or regulation from local government regarding the use of language in the public space of Kupang city, especially information on the name board of an institution. Regarding church names, one of the rules for Protestant churches in Kupang is found in the Principal Regulation of GMT, No: 05/TAP/SS-GMT/XXXIII/2015, article 2 which stated that naming a congregation must follow the following rules: a). the name of the congregation is determined by taking into account the universal nature and mission of the church and the local identity of each congregation; b). the name of the congregation is determined in the congregational meeting in coordination synod assembly; and c). the name of the congregation is determined in the congregational meeting and ratified by the decision of the synod assembly.

The regulation clearly does not regulate specifically about church names, such as font size, color, or language. Due to the freedom of naming churches, various variations of church names have been found, although the structure of the information contained on the name board is generally the same. Writing the name of the church in Protestant churches and other denominations is always preceded by the word *jemaat* (congregation) followed by the name of the church and the address of the church in one line. So, the pattern is *congregation – church name – address*, for example *Jemaat Talitakumi Pasir Panjang*. *Talitakumi* is the name of the church that must be preceded by the word *Jemaat* while the word *Pasir Panjang* is the address of the place where the *Jemaat Talitakumi* is located. Based on the data collected, the analysis of church names is divided into two parts, namely the name category and the language used.

3.1 Categories of Church Name

The names of the congregations in the churches of the city of Kupang consist of six categories, namely terms with certain meanings, names of places, names of people, natural conditions (topography) and names of plants or animals. One name can be used by more than one church except for church names which only consist of local place names or local people's names because they only exist in that certain place. Therefore, it is the name of the place or location of the church that always accompanies the writing or the name of the congregation that can distinguish it, for example, *Jemaat Immanuel Oepura* and *Jemaat Immanuel Petuk* and others. Following are the categories of church names and their numbers.

Table 1. categories of church name in Kupang

No	Category	No of sign
1	BiblicalTerm	101
2	Place	72
3	Name of person	21
4	Church as camp or palace	11
5	Topographic	5
6	Plants	2
7	Animal	1
TOTAL		213

The names of the churches are the convention of the local congregation based on value, ideology, or story behind it. Whatever the value, ideology, or story behind the naming, but according to the results of the analysis of the data obtained, it was found that these names have reference meanings from the bible or at least have religious meanings according to the Christian's faith.

a. Biblical term

The research data shows that the name of the church in Kupang city is dominated by terms that refer to a certain meaning. These terms are generally taken from the Bible or Christian religious terms. The church name data for this category is 64 biblical terms used by 101 churches. The most and dominant term is *Immanuel* that used by 9 church, followed by the word *Hosanna* is in the second place with 5 churches, and *Ebenhaezer* with 5 churches, *El Shadai* with 4 churches and *Zion* with 3 churches. Other terms are used by two or one church.

The meanings of these names are in accordance with the references obtained from the Bible so that they underlie the values and ideology of the congregation. For example, the word *Immanuel* which means God with us refers to Jesus Christ as found in the gospels of Matthew 1:23 and Isaiah 7:14 and 8:8. Other terms such as *Hosanna* are found in Matthew 21:9, 15; Mark 11:9 and John 12:13. This word is a shout of joy by the congregation when welcoming Jesus at the gates of Jerusalem. The words *Immanuel* and *Hosanna* are two examples of meaningful terms and have written references in the Bible.

There are also terms or words that are used but do not have a written reference in the bible but are common words in religious terms such as Indonesian word “Anugerah” (blessing) or Greek word “Koinonia” which can be translated as fellowship, sharing, community, or solidarity. There is also a term in the Dawan language such as *Tilon Aknino* which means seeing perfection or observing what is right.

b. Place name

Place names is the second category that mostly used as church names and divided into two subcategories, namely place names in biblical stories and local places. Place names in biblical stories that are used as church names in Kupang are places that have religious historical significance in the Bible, either the Old Testament or the New Testament. For example, *Kanaan* (Canaan) is the land that God promised Abraham as written in the book of Genesis 12:1.



Figure 3. Samples of the use of place name in bible as the name of church in Kupang

The word *Kanaan* is written in Genesis 12:5; 47:4; Exodus 6:4; Numbers 13:2; Deuteronomy 32:49; Joshua 24:3; Judges 4:2, 23; Psalm 105:11; Ezekial 16:3. Another example is *Filipi* (Philippi), which is a place where the early Christian church was founded. So, it can be said that *Filipi* is the city or the first place where the Gospel was preached in Europe. Philippians is also one of the books in the New Testament which is a letter sent by the Apostle Paul to the Christian congregation in that city.

These place names have been adapted into Indonesian from foreign languages. Changes or adaptations of names in the bible are, of course, carried out carefully by taking into account the linguistic elements without compromising the purpose, and always trying to be understood by the readers. Jatmiko (2020) said that various methods and approaches are used to translate these names such as transliteration, translation, Absorption – Hellenization, equivalence, and others. However, the absence of rules or comprehensive socialization from the main institution of the church regarding the writing procedure, especially in the name of this church, creates differences in writing such as *Bethel*, *Beth'el*, *Bethel* and *Bait'el*. The Indonesian bible translated by the Indonesian Bible Institute (LIA, 2015) as in Genesis 28:19 it is written *Bethel* and in the English version of the King James Version it is written *Bethel* (<http://thekingsbible.com/Bible/1/28>). Both of these names are written in Indonesian and English without an apostrophe (') as shown in the following picture. The use of the apostrophe (') seems to adapt the orthography of writing the names in Hebrew *beth'-el* which means the house of God. (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/bethel/>). This word is also written *bait'el*, *bet'el* and *bethel*.



Figure 4. Samples of the same name but different writing

Other examples of different writing but the same name are *Shalom* and *Syalom* or *Bethani* and *Betania*. This difference in writing the name causes misunderstanding or misinformation. The existence of provisions or policy regarding the writing of names or biblical terms will be very helpful in reducing these misunderstandings. However, the use of place names in a building or church name can create an emotional bond between the congregation and the place (Jordan, 2016:213).

Some churches use the name of the place where the church is located as well as the name of the church, such as *Jemaat Kota Baru* or *Jemaat Airnona*.



Figure 5. Sample of the use of local place as the church's name as well as the address

In the names of the two churches above, it can be seen that there is no specific name to mark the identity of the congregation, but only the location where the congregation or the worship building is located, namely *Kota Baru* and *Airnona*. Article 2 of the 2015 GMIT main regulation does not clearly regulate names but only emphasizes that every church name must also include the name of the place where the church is located. Thus, *Kota Baru* and *Airnona* are the names of the congregation as well as the names of places.

c. Personal name

Taking a name of a certain person as church's name, of course, has a purpose behind the use of that name, namely as a form of respect or appreciation for the works or services. It is also used as a source of inspiration. There are three categories of people whose names are used as church names in the city of Kupang, namely names of saints, names of figures in the Bible, and names of local figures.

Names of saints used as church names are found in Catholic churches such as *Santu Andreas*, *St Fransiskus Xaverius*, *St Maria Fatima* and others. Saints in Catholicism are all people who believe and follow and live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. These saints are people, whether male or female, very devout in the Christian faith and living extraordinary lives of virtue. The appointment of a person to become a saint or saint in Catholicism must go through a long process and research.

There are two names of characters in the bible that are used as church names, namely Paulus and Kefas who are the names of the Protestant church. Paul was an Apostle of Jesus Christ formerly Saul (Acts 7:58) who repented and was called to be an apostle, especially among the Gentiles (Acts 9:1-43; Galatians 1:13-16). He made many trips to spread the gospel and found churches. To care for the churches he wrote his letters as found in the New Testament Bible. While Cephas is another name for Peter, the disciple of Jesus (John 1:42). He was the first in the line of disciples of Jesus and is famously closer to recognizing Jesus as the Messiah (Mathew 16:16-17) than any of Jesus' other disciples. Peter's confession of the divinity of Jesus in Matthew 16:18 is a picture of the Christian faith.



Figure 6. Samples of the use of the personal name as church's name

The name of the Protestant church, especially GMIT also uses the names of local people where the church located as the name of the church, for example, *Jemaat Marthomas Manulai II* and *Jemaat Benjamin Oebufu*. The name of the person as the name of the church within the scope of GMIT is the person who is considered to have contributed to the building or development of the congregation in terms of faith services or contributed to the physical development such as donating land for the construction site or pioneering any congregation service.

GMIT's main regulations only provide clear signs that the name of the congregation is determined by taking into account the universal nature and mission of the church and the local identity of each congregation. In the case of naming a church with local people who are not saints as in the Catholic Church is something debatable.

d. Church as a dwelling

It is found 9 churches whose names use the words *Pondok*, *Kemah* and a *Dawan* word, namely *Sonaf* which means *palace*. These names appear in the form of compound words such as *Kemah Pujian*, *Pondok Pengharapan*, or *Sonaf Manekan*. The words *kemah*, *Pondok*, and *Sonaf* are common words in the Bible that refer to a place of residence, for example *Kemah Kesaksian* in Acts 7:44. The word *Kemah* is translated from the word "tabernacle", so the tabernacle of witness is the tabernacle of witness. The word *kemah* in Indonesian seems to have been translated from the Latin *tabernaculum*.

In Indonesian according to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the word *kemah* means emergency shelter, usually in the form of a tent whose ends almost touch the ground made of tarpaulin and so on. While the word *pondok* is a building for temporary residence, while the *Sonaf* (palace) in *Dawan* language is the official residence of the king, head of state, or president and his family (<https://kbbi.web.id/>). The use of these three words both have religious meanings, especially in the Christian faith to build the congregation's understanding and perception of the world as a temporary place or a church like a palace where all joy and peace resides.

e. Topographic

In addition, several church names are taken from natural forms (topography) such as *Bukit Sion* 'The Hill of Sion', *Bukit Karang* 'Rocky Hill', and *Batu Karang* 'Rock'. The name of the church only uses the word hill and not a mountain

which etymologically, a hill is a pile of land or an area that is higher than other areas around it or lower than a mountain. Some texts seem to equate hills and mountains.

These names have meanings, both denotative and connotative meanings and all of them are biblical terms or refer to Christian terms in the bible. For example, Mount Zion in the Bible is also often referred to as Mount Zion which seems to no longer be a topographical name, but is associated with the abode of God. Therefore the use of the name Mount Zion as a church name refers to Isaiah 8:18; Joel 3:17. Likewise, the Rock is equated with the Rock, referring to Peter's faith in the gospel of Matthew 16:18, which is a very strong faith that is the basis of evangelism in Christianity. In addition, some biblical texts such as Psalms 18, 27, 40, and 62 use the word rock as a place of refuge.

f. Plants and Animal's name

There are 4 churches using plant names, namely *Tamariska* 'tamarisk', *Mawar Sharon* 'rose of Sharon', *Sesawi* 'mustard', and *Zaitun* 'olive'. Meanwhile, there is one church using the name of an animal, namely *Rajawali* 'eagle'.



Figur 7. Samples of Plants as Chuch's Name

There is not a single local plant or animal in Timor such as *Cendana* 'sandalwood' or Komodo that is used as a church name. The names used as church names are names found in biblical stories and have spiritual meanings. The tamarisk tree, for example, illustrates goodness whose value is eternal because the tamarisk tree grows and lives for hundreds or even more than a thousand years. While the mustard 'mustard' is a plant with small seeds. The small size was used by Jesus to measure the measure of faith as in the gospels of Matthew 17:20 and Luke 17:6. Meanwhile, the name Olive 'olive' is a kind of tree that is used as a symbol of a healthy and fruitful spiritual life (<https://alkitab.sabda.org/dictionary.php?word=zaitun>). All these names, both plant and animal have references in the Bible. Thus, the choice to use the names of plants or animals has a religious meaning as well as a picture of the faith of the local congregation.

3.2 Language Used In Church Name

It was found that all information written on the nameboard, except the name of the congregation is in Indonesian. The research data shows that there are seven languages used as church as shown in the table below. Names of congregations that take the names of places, people, plants, or animals are not counted as one of the languages in this discussion.

Table 2. number of languages used in the name of church

No	Language	No of name	No of church
1	Bahasa Indonesia	34	43
2	Hebrew	5	21
3	Greek	8	11
4	Dawan	7	7
5	Aram	3	6
6	Latin	3	5
7	English	5	5
8	Others (person, place, etc)	66	116
TOTAL		130	213

Indonesian is most widely used as the name of the church. The Indonesian language referred to in the data is the language found in the Indonesian dictionary, not a loan word. So, words like *Immanuel*, *Syahom/shalom*, or *Eklesia* are

not counted as Indonesian but are classified according to their original language. The name of the church in Indonesian is generally a word that describes or means something like *Anugerah* 'blessing', *Batu Karang* 'rock', or *Kemah Kesaksian* 'Tabernacle of witness'.

Hebrew is the second most common language used as a church name, with 21 churches such as *Hosanna* and *Immanuel*. These two names are the most widely used as church names, namely *Immanuel*, which means God be with us used by 11 churches and *Hosanna*, which means save us used by 5 churches. The word *Immanuel* is mentioned three times in the Bible, namely Isaiah 7:14; 8:8 and Matthew 1:23. The word *Hosanna* was shouted when Jesus entered Jerusalem, found in Matthew 21:9,15; Mark 11:9; and John 12:13.

In addition to Hebrew, Greek is also the language that is widely used as the name of the church in Kupang, for example *Koinonia* 'fellowship' and *marturia* 'testimony'. There are 12 churches that use Greek names. These Greek names are names or terms found in the bible, especially the New Testament. This is understandable because Greek is the language used in the writing of the New Testament. The word *koinonia* can be translated with fellowship, sharing, community, or solidarity. Another foreign language used in naming churches in Kupang is Aramaic such as *Talitakum*, *Maranatha* and *Efata*. In addition, Latin is also found in church names such as *Ora Et Labora* and *Solideo* with only 5 churches.

The use of foreign languages as church names is not based on cultural ideology but rather on the meaning of the words used. So the motivation for using any languages such as Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and Latin is not culturally motivated or related to the literacy of the congregation but refers to symbols of faith and liturgical symbols of the church. All the words in these languages that are used as church names have the references in the Bible.

Meanwhile, English is also used as the name of the church in Kupang even though the entire congregation is not English speakers or diaspora. The names of churches that use English are denominational churches such as Bethel or Charismatic churches because the motivation for this church's ministry is to young people such as *Gereja Bethel Indonesia (GBI) Hope Kupang* and *Gereja Bethel Indonesia (GBI) Rock Kupang*.

The use of English in the name of the church shows the ideological and the value of internationality in church institutions. The use of English is contrast to the sociolinguistic situation in Kupang or especially the congregation in that church who is not English speakers or at least is a diaspora congregation. So the existence of English as the name of the church seems to to accommodate the need of globalization and not related to the language needs of the congregation.

It is also interesting to observe the presence of the local language as the name of the church in the city of Kupang. The Dawan language is the only local language used as the name of the church according to the data collected as shown in the following table.

Table 3. Name of churches in Kupang used Dawan language

No	Church' name	English	No of church
1	Usi Apakaet	God the Protector	1
2	Pukan Aknino	Clean community	1
3	Nekaf Mese	One heart	1
4	Tilon Aknino	Seeing the perfection	1
5	Sonaf Amasat	Beautiful palace	1
6	Sonaf Manekan	Palace of love	1
7	Nekmes	Unite /love each other	1

The terms in Dawan language used as the name of church are terms that function to attract and building, or develop the spirit of faith and also unity among congregations. Although the number is small but the presence of the Dawan language as the name of a church which is a public institution and is in the public space is an indicator of the existence of local languages especially the Dawan language in Kupang.

The terms used as church names have educational meanings to teach the importance of unity such as *nekmes*, *sonaf manekan*, or *nekaf mese*. This kind of term does not only have a religious meaning but also has a social meaning, especially in a pluralistic society such as in the city of Kupang. In addition to the meaning of the name, the presence of the Dawan language is an indicator of the maintenance of the Dawan language in the city of Kupang (Benu, 2019; 2021).



Figure 8. Samples of Church's name in Dawan language

These churches are located in locations where the majority of the congregation is Atoin Meto (Timorese tribe) in the municipality of Kupang. The use of Dawan's language in this church can be observed from three things, namely:

1. As an effort to maintain local identity. The choice of Dawan language words is one of the efforts to maintain the language and culture of the Atoin Meto people as the majority in the area or place.
2. As a domination of power in society. This can be observed from the socio-political aspect, namely the dominance of the Atoin Meto culture from other tribes in the region.
3. Economical. Just like the use of Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and Latin, the use of Dawan language will easily remind people of the meaning of the word you want to express. For example, the word *Nekmes* or *Sonaf Manekan* is more economical to write than to write a translation in Indonesian or English. Threfall (2011) suggests that church names should be meaningful, simple, and easy to remember, and create respect.

The church is not a building but is a group or collection of God's people who meet for the purpose of worship together, prayer, fellowship in teaching, and obedience to God's commands. Kamalu & Tamunobelega (2013) say that the use of language in a religious context is ideologically meaningful because it allows individuals and groups to express their beliefs, attitudes, and judgments towards others. Thus whatever the name of the church and what language is used in the name it is not intended to attract attention but an option to create a focus on God. The name of the church can indicate the way individuals and groups use language to construct individual and collective ideologies and identities.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that the name of the church in Kupang City consists of terms that have religious meaning, place names, people's names, and names of plants or animals. The categories of names have references or meanings, values or religious ideologies that aim to build the faith of the congregation. Based on the language used, the name of the church in Kupang is dominated by and followed by foreign languages, namely Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Latin and English. The presence of the Dawan language as a representation of the local language in the city of Kupang is one of the efforts to revitalize the language in the public space of the city of Kupang.

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