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Symbolic Language Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Preservation Policy of Surabaya City

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ABSTRACT
This study explores the symbolic use of language in Surabaya's cultural heritage preservation policies using the Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) approach. It analyzes policy documents and interviews with stakeholders and communities related to Hotel Majapahit, Tugu Pahlawan, and Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building. The findings highlight how language in policy is not merely communicative but symbolic, reflecting community values, beliefs, and emotional ties to heritage. The paradigm shift in policy, from conservative to progressive and localistic approaches, is reflected in the change from "object" to "area", which expands the meaning of cultural heritage from physical aspects to social and environmental contexts. This study contributes theoretically to public policy and practically recommends inclusive language strategies for heritage policy.

A. INTRODUCTION

In the context of public policy, language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol that reflects values, ideologies, and power (Chang-Bacon, 2022). Language symbolism is essential because it can frame the meaning that policymakers want to convey and influence public perception (Paterson & O'Hanlon, 2015a). The use of specific terminology in policy often carries substantial ideological implications and shapes how the public understands an issue (Straus, 2011). For example, research conducted by Wright (2005) demonstrates how language symbols are used in education policy to shape public perceptions of immigrants in Arizona, USA. In contrast, research by Paterson and O'Hanlon (2015) in Scotland reveals that language symbolism can either strengthen or weaken social unity and community identity. Therefore, an Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) framework is essential to understand how narratives and symbols in policy texts shape stakeholder interpretations and actions. In the context of cultural preservation, such symbolism helps determine whether a policy is viewed as a genuine cultural representation or merely administrative (Barbieri, 2015). Using IPA as a scientific framework, this research analyses how the language used in cultural preservation policies in Surabaya functions as a symbol that influences people's perceptions of values, beliefs, and feelings (Yanow, 2000).

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Law No. 11/2010 on Cultural Heritage is the primary legal basis for the management, preservation, and protection of cultural heritage in Indonesia, but its implementation faces various obstacles such as conflicts of interest, differences in understanding of cultural heritage values, and limited resources (Hendro & Nirmala, 2021; Herawati, 2016; Prasetyo, 2018; Sasauw et al., 2021; Setiawan & Sulistianingsih, 2013). These problems generally stem from different policy interpretations at the government, community, and cultural preservation community levels (Wang & Bramwell, 2012), both at the government, community, and cultural preservation community levels (Hajura, 2022; Hiswara et al., 2023), depending on their background, interests, and social context (Colebatch, 2014). In Surabaya, a city with rich historical and cultural heritage, preservation policies such as Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2005 and Mayor Regulation No. 17 of 2014 are still top-down and do not consider the diversity of local communities' interpretations of cultural heritage (Basundoro & Madyan, 2018; Colombijn, 2022; Perdana, 2020; Syaifudin & Murtini, 2017) such as Majapahit Hotel, Tugu Pahlawan Monument, Tanjung Perak Main Harbor Master Building etc (Cantika & Kurniawan, 2022; Colombijn, 2022; Richard & Roosandriantini, 2023; Ritiduian & Megawati, 2021). This is relevant to Chang-Bacon's (2022) findings, which suggest that monolingual language ideology in education policy often serves as a barrier to the involvement of diverse communities. In the context of preservation, language plays a symbolic role that shapes people's understanding and acceptance of policies (Straus, 2011); therefore, it is essential to examine how symbolic language can encourage community participation and support for cultural preservation.

This research aims to fill a gap in the literature on the symbolism of policy language in Indonesia, which has highlighted technical and administrative aspects rather than the symbolic meanings that inform public interpretation (Lubis et al., 2024; W. Ariffin et al., 2023). By applying a case study in Surabaya, this research offers new insights into how policies can be designed and communicated more inclusively and effectively. Drawing on a case study in Surabaya, this research examines language in policy documents, stakeholder interviews, and public responses to cultural preservation policies, employing an interpretive approach to identify key narratives and symbols that shape policy implementation. The uniqueness of this research lies in its connection between language symbolism and the level of community acceptance of cultural preservation policies. This dimension has rarely been discussed in the Indonesian context, providing both theoretical contributions to policy analysis and practical recommendations for policymakers to design more inclusive and responsive communication strategies that align with local values and community needs.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Symbolic Interpretations

Policy analysis has undergone significant development with the emergence of various theoretical approaches, including positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory (Ryan, 2018). Interpretivism, as outlined by Bevir and Rhodes (2003), provides a framework that emphasises understanding meaning and intention in policy through dialogue and interpretation. Wagenaar (2011) notes that this approach enables the examination of the symbolic and narrative aspects embedded in public policy. Meanwhile, the positivist approach tends to emphasise empirical and quantitative methods, as described by Saunders et al. (2012).

Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) offers an approach that focuses on understanding the meaning behind policy language (Barbieri, 2015). Through this method, researchers can examine how the language used in policies conveys meanings that may not always be explicitly stated. This approach enables a more in-depth analysis of how policymakers frame issues and convey messages through the language they use. Gao (2020), in his research on the Belt and

Road Initiative policy in China, demonstrates that the language used in the policy not only conveys strategic messages but also instils certain ideologies that the government aims to promote. In other words, IPA enables us to examine how language can serve as a tool to convey the more complex meanings underlying policies.

The interpretive approach, as described by Yanow (2000), McBeth et al. (2007), and Bevir and Rhodes (2016), allows for in-depth analysis of the non-material elements of policy, including narratives, symbols, and meanings. Wagenaar (2007) asserts that policy interpretation should be based on a dialogical understanding between various policy actors to ensure the policy's relevance and acceptability. Symbols and meanings play an essential role in shaping perceptions of public policy. Yanow (2000) emphasises the importance of interpretation in policy analysis, where symbols are used to create narratives that link policies to social values. This is supported by Jørgensen and Bozeman's (2007) research that inventoried public values in policy, revealing that policy language often reflects the government's normative priorities. Lowndes and Polat (2022) highlight how local actors use symbols and policy narratives to tailor policies to community needs.

The contribution of this research to the public policy literature lies in revealing the role of language as a symbol that can frame policy meaning and build collective identity, supporting the Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) approach. This research provides insight that language symbols in policy can be used strategically to gain public support and foster public awareness of cultural heritage preservation.

Changes in Cultural Heritage Preservation Policies

The regulation of cultural heritage preservation in Indonesia dates back to the Dutch colonial era through the Monumenten Ordonnantie (MO) No. 19 of 1931 (Staatsblad No. 238), which regulated the protection of objects of prehistory, history, art, and paleoanthropology by emphasising ancient buildings, although non-monumental historical relics received less attention (Sasauw et al., 2021b). Revisions to the MO were made in 1934 (Staatsblad No. 515) to address the need for specialised expertise in the preservation of historic buildings, while also emphasising the importance of technical and scientific understanding in conservation (Arifin, 2018). Along with the development of national needs, Law No. 5/1992 regulated all aspects of the preservation of cultural heritage objects. However, the centralised process for determining the status of cultural heritage, under the minister's control, caused delays and made many objects that deserved protection inaccessible. The dynamics of regional autonomy post-2000 prompted a major revision through Law No. 11/2010 that expanded the definition of cultural heritage, gave more authority to the regions, and regulated community participation in preservation, as well as strengthening aspects of protection and utilisation scientifically and sustainably (Arifin, 2018; Suartina, 2022).

Regulatory changes at the regional level show the dynamics of adaptation to national policies after the issuance of Government Regulation (PP) No. 1/2022 on National Registration and Preservation of Cultural Heritage. Before the enactment of this Government Regulation, East Java Governor Regulation No. 66/2015 on Cultural Heritage Preservation in East Java became the main guideline for the provincial government in implementing the mandate of Law No. 11/2010 on Cultural Heritage. However, because this regulation was issued earlier, its substance has not accommodated the new provisions in Government Regulation No. 1/2022, such as the obligation of integrated national registration, strengthening economic incentives for cultural heritage owners, and preservation financing mechanisms sourced from non-government budget funds (Tahiru et al., 2023). This creates a policy gap between provincial and national regulations, particularly in community engagement and area-based management.
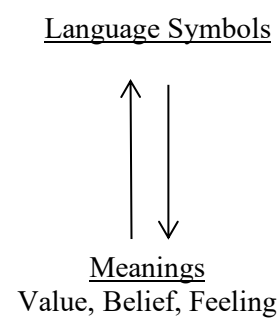
The enactment of Law No. 11/2010 on Cultural Heritage has caused discrepancies with Surabaya City Regional Regulation No. 5/2005 on the preservation of cultural heritage sites

(Pudjiastuti, 2018), among others because (1) the regulation does not accommodate the dynamics of the city so that cultural heritage preservation is not always in line with the concept of urban cultural heritage, and (2) this regulation has not fulfilled the provisions for the formation and requirements of the Cultural Heritage Team according to Law No. 11/2010, because it was formulated before the law and still refers to Law No. 5/1992. The dynamics of cultural heritage management are strongly influenced by policies formulated on the basis of political, economic, and social factors, as well as by local governments' attention to their identity and historical heritage. Inventory, naming, maintenance, and restoration of cultural heritage need to be carried out appropriately and sustainably by all parties, including the community. However, in practice, a lack of understanding and concern for cultural heritage persists in these regions. Therefore, cultural heritage policies play a crucial role in shaping official management and should be accompanied by technical provisions that serve as a basis for protection and preservation at the local level.

In line with these national policy dynamics, the Surabaya City Government updated its regulatory framework through Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2024 on Cultural Heritage Preservation and Management, which emphasises the importance of community participation, cross-sector collaboration, and integrating preservation into the city's development plan. As a follow-up, Surabaya Mayor Regulation No. 5 Year 2025 was issued as an implementing regulation of Regional Regulation No. 1 Year 2024, further operationalizing the mechanisms for registration, classification, and management of cultural heritage at the city level. The Perwali also introduces a geospatial-based cultural heritage data digitisation system to facilitate monitoring and supervision, as well as to expand the community's role in reporting and advocating for preservation. This regulation explicitly refers to Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage and Government Regulation No. 1 of 2022, thereby aligning local policies with national standards of cultural heritage protection and management.

C. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. This approach was chosen to gain an understanding of how language symbolism is used in the city of Surabaya's cultural preservation policies. An Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) approach, designed to explore the symbolic meaning in the language of public policy, is illustrated in Figure 1.

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Language Symbols

Meanings
Value, Belief, Feeling

Source: Yanow (2000)
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Figure 1. Language Symbols in Interpretive Policy Analysis

The Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) approach was chosen because it enables researchers to understand the hidden and ideological meanings behind the use of language in policies (Barbieri, 2015), by emphasising the policy context and the public's interpretation of the symbolic language contained therein. This research aims to identify, analyse, and interpret language symbolism in public policies, particularly in cultural heritage preservation policies (Lubis et al., 2024), which are considered to contain strong symbolic language elements and

have a direct impact on society (Chang-Bacon, 2022; Gao, 2020). The three primary variables analyzed include: (1) value meaning, i.e. people's understanding of the cultural values contained in the policy such as history, tradition, and cultural heritage in Surabaya and how the policy language articulates these values; (2) belief meaning, i.e. people's views and attitudes towards the preservation policy and how the language symbolism shapes their perception of the relevance and authenticity of cultural heritage; and (3) feeling meaning, i.e. emotions such as pride, love of history, and nostalgia arising from the preservation policy, which play an essential role in shaping people's level of engagement and participation towards cultural preservation efforts.

Data collected through policy text analysis and in-depth interviews. The informants in this study were 18 people (Shown in Table 1) including Surabaya City Culture Youth Sports and Tourism Office (Disbudporapar), Founder of Roode Brug Soerabaia Community, General Manager and Staf Majapahit Hotel, Tugu Pahlawan Monument Staf, Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building Staf, visitors and society around Majapahit Hotel, Tugu Pahlawan Monument, and Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building.

Table 1. Informants Criteria

Location	Number of informants	Description	Inclution Criteria
Surabaya City Culture Youth Sports and Tourism Office (Disbudporapar)	2	Cultural heritage supervisor in Surabaya	This government agency has a key role in formulating and implementing policies related to cultural heritage.
Founder of Roode Brug Soerabaia Community	1	Non-governmental organization in the field of cultural heritage in Surabaya	It provides insights into community dynamics and how they interact with existing policies, as well as how cultural heritage policies are received, understood, and implemented at the community level.
General manager and staff Majapahit Hotel	2	Majapahit hotel management	The hotel management provided insights into how the building's historical and cultural values are integrated into its operational practices, as well as how policies shape its management.
Tugu Pahlawan Monument Staff	1	Tugu Pahlawan Monument management	The informant has knowledge about the management, maintenance, and policies implemented to preserve the Tugu Pahlawan Monument.
Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building	1	Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Staff	This informant provided perspectives on heritage preservation policies involving the transportation and logistics sectors, as well as the challenges of preserving historical sites located in highly developed port areas.
Majapahit Hotel, Tugu Pahlawan Monument and Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building visitors	6	Visitor	Visitors to the site are a group that provides a perspective on the general public's acceptance of the cultural heritage policy.
Society around the Majapahit Hotel, the Tugu Pahlawan Monument, and the Tanjung	5	Society	People who live and work around these cultural heritage sites have

Location	Number of informants	Description	Inclution Criteria
Perak Main Harbormaster Building			a direct relationship with the sites' existence.
Total	18		

Source: Processed by Researchers 2024

Document analysis was conducted to examine the language symbolism in cultural heritage preservation policies in Surabaya that refer to Law No. 5/1992 on Cultural Heritage Objects, Law No. 11/2010 on Cultural Heritage, Surabaya City Regional Regulation No. 5/2005 on the Preservation of Cultural Heritage Buildings and/or Environments, and Mayor Regulation No. 17 of 2014 on Procedures for Reduction, Elimination, and Exemption of Retribution for the Use of Cultural Heritage Sites. In-depth interviews were also conducted with representatives from the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism, cultural site owners, and affected communities to explore their interpretations of the language symbolism in these policies, using an interview guide prepared based on the Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) framework. Data were analysed using a thematic approach to identify patterns and themes related to language symbolism, which were then coded and further examined to understand the symbolic meaning intended by policymakers (Paterson et al., 2014), including the socio-political context behind the policy (Song, 2022).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Heritage Policy in Indonesia

The preservation of cultural heritage in Indonesia is a crucial issue in national development, as it reflects efforts to maintain the nation's identity by protecting and utilising cultural heritage for present and future generations. This preservation policy has undergone various changes in response to social, economic, political, and technological developments. In the early days (before 1990), the policy focus emphasised physical conservation without considering the social context of the surrounding community. The period from 1990 to 2010 was marked by the birth of Law No. 5/1992, which began to open up space for community participation. This was followed by the emergence of Surabaya City Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2005, which, although more structured, still had a conservative paradigm, emphasising the physical preservation of historic buildings.

Since 2010, through Law No. 11/2010, the preservation policy has evolved into a more holistic approach, integrating social, economic, and environmental sustainability while also strengthening local cultural identity. This change not only affects the management of cultural heritage objects, but also the communities living around them. However, challenges such as development pressure, urbanisation, ownership uncertainty, and an imbalance between economic and preservation interests remain barriers to implementation that need to be addressed systematically through inclusive and adaptive policies.

Regulative transformation in Surabaya is evident in the issuance of Surabaya Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2024 and Surabaya Mayor Regulation No. 5 of 2025, which emphasize the synergy between preservation and management, with a focus on public participation and the use of digital technology. These two regulations reflect the concrete implementation of Law No. 11/2010 and Government Regulation No. 1/2022, emphasising collaborative aspects, geospatial considerations, and economic incentives for preservation actors.

Language symbols refer to the use of language or words that have symbolic meaning in this cultural heritage policy in Indonesia. The language symbols in the cultural heritage policy in Indonesia are:

Expansion of Physical Meaning to the Area

Language symbols in the context of expanding the meaning of cultural heritage from the physical to the regional serve to expand the notion of cultural heritage, linking it to broader social, historical and cultural values. The change in policy formulation regarding cultural heritage, from Law No. 5 of 1992 to Law No. 11 of 2010 and Surabaya City Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2005, demonstrates how language reflects a paradigm shift in the understanding of cultural heritage. The change in terms from "objects" in the static Law No. 5/1992 to "areas" in Law No. 11/2010 and Surabaya City Regional Regulation No. 5/2005 reflects a new understanding that culture is a phenomenon integrated with space and social life. If Law No. 5/1992 focuses on the physical preservation of history, then Law No. 11/2010 expands the scope of cultural heritage values to include sites, structures, buildings, and environments that possess historical, cultural, and spiritual significance. Meanwhile, the Surabaya City Regional Regulation emphasizes the city's cultural values by integrating preservation into the context of urban development and local identity.

The expansion of the physical meaning of cultural heritage in Mayor Regulation No. 5/2025 illustrates a shift from a conservative to a contextual and inclusive paradigm. Whereas in the past, Regional Regulation No. 5/2005 viewed cultural heritage as a single, stand-alone object, Regional Regulation No. 5/2025 interprets cultural heritage as part of a broader cultural ecosystem that encompasses the social, economic, and ecological aspects of a city. Mayor Regulation 5/2025 emphasises the importance of an area-based preservation approach by incorporating spatial elements, such as protection zoning, heritage corridors, and the integration of cultural heritage areas into urban spatial plans. This broadens the definition of preservation from simply protecting historic buildings to managing cultural identity areas that are vibrant, dynamic, and productive. Thus, this policy links preservation and economic revitalisation through cultural tourism and the empowerment of communities around the sites.
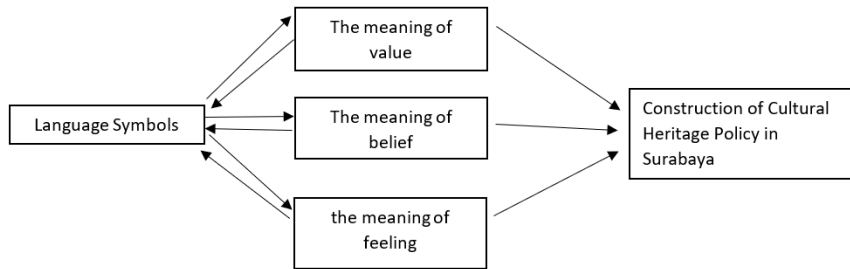
Evolution of the Conservative Paradigm to the Progressive and Localistic

Cultural heritage preservation policy in Indonesia is undergoing a paradigm shift from a conservative approach in Law No. 5/1992 to a progressive approach in Law No. 11/2010, as well as a localistic approach in the Surabaya Regional Regulation. Law No. 5/1992 emphasises language symbols such as "physical protection" that reflect a focus on top-down material conservation, without considering social context or economic use. In contrast, Law No. 11/2010 employs symbols such as "diversity" and "community engagement," demonstrating an awareness of the importance of social, economic, and environmental sustainability in preservation. Surabaya's Perda incorporates symbols such as "spatial planning" and "sustainable development," reflecting the close relationship between cultural preservation and urban development, as well as the strengthening of local identity. This shift in language symbolism reflects a change in values and beliefs from passive protection of physical heritage to active management that involves the community, emphasising economic benefits such as tourism and education, and encouraging preservation that is adaptive, participatory, and appropriate to the needs of the time.

The evolution of the cultural heritage preservation paradigm in Surabaya has shifted from structural conservatism to localistic progressivism. In the past, preservation was primarily focused on protecting the physical building from damage. However, Mayor Regulation No. 5/2025 emphasises the value of adaptive management, co-creation, and the integration of local wisdom. The symbolic language in this regulation, such as multi-stakeholder collaboration, local community involvement, and digital transformation, reveals a new paradigm in which preservation is not just about preserving the past, but also about reviving local identity as a resource for sustainable development.

Stakeholder Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Objects

Language symbolism in Surabaya's cultural heritage policy is exemplified by three historical objects symbolic of Indonesian society: the Majapahit Hotel, the Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building, and the Tugu Pahlawan Monument. These three sites feature distinctive language symbolism that emphasises national values and the history of Indonesia's struggle. The results are organised according to the interpretation of language symbolism in relation to the meanings of values, beliefs, and feelings, as expressed by informants comprising venue managers and interview participants. The dimension of language symbols used in the context of public policy to strengthen the meaning of values, beliefs, and feelings towards historical heritage and cultural identity (Fig. 2).

(Source: processed by researchers 2024)
Figure 2. Language symbols in cultural heritage policies in Surabaya from the perspective of Interpretive Policy Analysis

Diction from the results of interviews conducted on informants is found in the following table 2.

Table 2. Interview Diction Language Symbols

Informant	Diction	Main Code
Disbudporapar Staf	a. Cultural heritage is an ancient building that is protected by law because it has historical value and is essential to the identity of the city. b. Surabaya, as the City of Heroes, is a symbol of struggle, and the government strongly supports the preservation of cultural heritage in all forms. c. We hold regular meetings with cultural heritage experts and owners to discuss utilization and restoration. d. Field reviews are conducted when necessary to ensure the condition of the site is maintained. e. We use Instagram to disseminate program information, such as Night Museum and theatrical struggle at Tugu Pahlawan monument. f. Social media is a bridge to connect the younger generation with historical and cultural values.	Cultural heritage, city identity, symbol of struggle, preservation Shared responsibility, maintaining the city's identity, and preserving historic buildings. Digital culture promotion, social media, and education.
Tugu Pahlawan Monument Staf	a. Hotel Majapahit is not just a historic building, but also a gem that combines colonial architecture with modern amenities.	Colonial architecture, nationalism, local pride.

Informant	Diction	Main Code
	b. The history of the flag-tearing incident makes the hotel a symbol of nationalism and local pride.	
Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building Staff	a. This building retains its function as it did during the Dutch colonial era as a port surveillance center.	Colonial function, symbol of resistance, harbor history.
	b. This building once played a role in the underground resistance movement, becoming a symbol of the nation's struggle and resistance.	
	c. Any building renovations or expansions are always reported to the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism and reviewed directly during the process.	Preserving cultural heritage, a collective responsibility, a symbol of historical sustainability.
	d. We ensure that any changes, such as ceiling repairs and wall breaches, remain in accordance with cultural heritage regulations.	
	e. We do not provide education regularly; we only assist when there are visits from the public or tourists.	
	f. Some foreign visitors came to take pictures in front of the building, and we allowed them to enter.	Educational barriers, service restrictions.
Majapahit Hotel Staff	a. Hotel Majapahit is not just a historic building, but also a gem that combines colonial architecture with modern amenities.	Colonial architecture, nationalism, local pride.
	b. The history of the flag-tearing incident makes the hotel a symbol of nationalism and local pride.	
	c. We consistently report every maintenance action, even for painting, to the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism.	Preserving cultural heritage, a collective responsibility, a symbol of historical sustainability.
	d. The major renovation in 1995 was done without changing the original form due to the building's status as a class A cultural heritage.	
	e. We not only focus on lodging services, but also preserve the history of the struggle through Heritage Hotel Tour.	History education, cultural preservation.
	f. Original interiors such as light switches and bath ups are retained, creating a stay that is full of historical education.	
Founder of Roode Brug Soerabaia Community	a. This community was formed to revive the spirit of Surabaya's struggle and connect the past with the present.	Historic preservation, the connection of the past and the present
	b. Through tours and cooperation with Dutch organizations, we keep historical memory relevant for future generations.	
Tugu Pahlawan Monument visitors	a. The monument has an extensive collection of preserved history and reinforces the love for culture and the city.	Love of culture, city identity, and preserved history.

Informant	Diction	Main Code
	b. The Tugu Pahlawan monument is a reminder of the battle of November 10, 1945, and a symbol of respect for the fallen heroes. c. The monument helps the younger generation to appreciate and understand the historical journey of the Indonesian nation.	A reminder of history, a symbol of nationalism.
Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building visitors	The building is an important symbol of the port, though access is limited due to its location as an office.	Port symbol, limited access
Majapahit Hotel visitors	Hotel Majapahit is mesmerizing with its alluring beauty. The colonial atmosphere is maintained, creating an experience as if guests were back in the Dutch colonial era. The interiors and exteriors are designed with great care, giving the impression of elegance and authenticity.	Colonial experience, architectural beauty.
Students	a. The vlog competition allowed learning history in a new way and experience filming. b. Despite the defeat, we were happy to learn more about the events of November 10, 1945, and to be creative with the video.	Enthusiasm for history, commitment to maintaining the collective memory of the events of November 10, 1945, in Surabaya
Food vendors around the Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building	The Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building functions as a port administration center with limited access. Its strategic location, close to the passenger port, makes it a potential and profitable area for selling activities, both for passengers and office employees.	Economic access, strategic location
Sailors	Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building serves as a processing center for shipping documents at Tanjung Perak Port. It has been in operation for a long time, an essential part of port operations.	Administrative functions are essential for port operations
Street photographer around Tunjungan Street	Hotel Majapahit is a favorite location for pre-wedding due to its classic architectural beauty.	Classic architecture, a favorite location for photos
Hawkers around Tunjungan Street	The crowds on Jalan Tunjungan provide an opportunity, especially on Sunday nights, to sell their wares.	Economic access, strategic location
Wedding Photographer	The garden area and staircase of the Majapahit hotel, with its colonial architecture, became the main pre-wedding venue for the bride and groom.	Classic architecture, a favorite location for photos
Sunday morning, market food vendors around the Tugu Pahlawan Monument	a. I sell meatballs at the morning market every Sunday, attracting visitors from various areas such as Gresik, Lamongan and Sidoarjo. b. Sometimes it's crowded, sometimes it's quiet, but this morning market provides economic opportunities for me and other traders.	Local economic activity, economic dependency.
Visitors to the Sunday morning market around	a. The Sunday morning market around the Tugu Pahlawan monument is a	Local identity, community traditions.

Informant	Diction	Main Code
Tugu Pahlawan Monument	tradition we've known for a long time, a place to find snacks and breakfast. b. A variety of goods are available here, from clothing to accessories and culinary delights, making this place very crowded until 11 am.	

Historical, Social and Local Identity Values

In the context of cultural heritage value, there are three levels of conceptual complexity: first, the term 'heritage' as a social construction that is often associated with culture and tradition although there is no single definition; second, the term 'value' that encompasses individual emotional responses to collective beliefs about how something should be interpreted; and third, a combination of both terms that represent valuable heritage (Reser & Bentrupperbäumer, 2005). At Hotel Majapahit, the symbolism of language in its historical narrative highlights local pride and nationalism, making it more than just a place to stay, but a living monument that represents the nation's identity and struggle. The Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building uses language symbols that combine strategic functions in administration and economics with respect for its historical role in the struggle for independence. Meanwhile, the Tugu Pahlawan Monument reinforces local identity and narratives of struggle through language that emphasises its function as a centre of pride, education, and a reminder of past sacrifices.

History of Struggle, Preservation, and Authenticity of Cultural Heritage

The government's commitment to preserving cultural heritage is crucial to ensure its sustainability for future generations (Subedi & Shrestha, 2024), which is reflected in various policies and actions aimed at protecting sites, buildings, areas, and cultural traditions. At Hotel Majapahit, the language symbolism in the interviews reflects a strong belief in the importance of historical preservation, emphasising authenticity and prestige as a means to reinforce the local image and respect for history. At the Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building, language symbols emphasise compliance and transparency, showing that cultural preservation requires active supervision and cooperation, not just historical memory. Meanwhile, at the Tugu Pahlawan Monument, language symbolism reflects respect, patriotism, and national pride, emphasizing the importance of remembering the nation's struggles as part of a collective understanding of national identity.

Openness, National Honour, and Nostalgia

Language symbols in the context of feelings refer to the emotional or affective relationship formed between individuals or communities and their cultural heritage (Capelos, 2011; Clarke, 2006). The language symbols on the Tugu Pahlawan monument evoke feelings of pride, respect, and a sense of collective responsibility among the people to preserve the memory of the nation's struggle. These feelings indicate a strong emotional connection between the people and the nation's history and identity. At Hotel Majapahit, the use of language fosters a sense of nostalgia and emotional connection to history through the preservation of facilities that retain their historical character. This provides an emotional experience that reinforces the educational and historical aspects for visiting guests. At the Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building, language symbols convey friendliness and openness, signalling a desire to welcome visitors despite the building's primary focus on administrative functions. The use of this language reflects a public policy approach that seeks to maintain a balance between administrative duties and respect for history.

Discussion

The findings on the language symbols applied in the context of public policy for historical objects, such as the Majapahit Hotel, Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building, and Tugu Pahlawan Monument, reveal deeper meanings than ordinary function. Language in this public policy becomes an effective tool for framing public perception of these places and strengthening the nation's collective identity. This aligns with the concept of language symbolism in the public policy literature, which posits that language in policy can serve as a meaning-shaping tool, reflecting the community's values, beliefs, and feelings (Chang-Bacon, 2022; Paterson et al., 2014).

Jørgensen & Bozeman (2007) highlight that public values are a key element in policy formation. The language symbols at Hotel Majapahit convey national values by preserving the narrative of the independence struggle. This aligns with Fischer's (1995) perspective that policy evaluation frequently entails interpreting values to establish legitimacy. The Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building illustrates how language symbols integrate historical values with contemporary administrative functions, demonstrating the holistic approach proposed by Wagenaar (2011) in viewing policy as meaning in action. The Tugu Pahlawan monument, on the other hand, highlights how language serves as a reminder of national sacrifice, reinforcing Damasio's (2000) concept of the relationship between emotion, consciousness, and identity formation.

Aslinda et al. (2017) and Jenkins-Smith et al. (2018) emphasise the importance of policy core beliefs in policy change. This research found that the language symbols used at the Majapahit Hotel, Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building, and Tugu Pahlawan Monument served as a medium for conveying this core belief. The nationalist narrative at Hotel Majapahit demonstrates that historical heritage serves as a strategic instrument in articulating national values that resonate with people's collective beliefs.

The emphasis on nostalgia at Hotel Majapahit shows that language symbols not only convey historical facts but also create an emotional connection. This supports Clarke's (2006) view that public policy should understand collective feelings as an element that influences the success of policy implementation. According to Capelos (2011), emotions also play an essential role in motivating community participation. Language symbols that trigger pride and nostalgia, such as those found at Hotel Majapahit and Tugu Pahlawan Monument, can encourage public engagement.

The results of this study have practical implications for policymakers, particularly in the design of policies that account for language symbolism. Language symbols that reflect people's values, beliefs, and feelings can serve as an effective tool for building public support for specific policies. Additionally, the use of language symbolism in public policy can also enhance public awareness of the importance of preserving historical heritage and national identity. In the context of public policy, these results suggest that policymakers need to pay attention to the language they use, as symbols that can influence people's perceptions and emotions towards the policy.

E. CONCLUSION

This research reveals that language symbolism in public policy lends meaning to values, beliefs, and feelings. It also plays a vital role in shaping people's perceptions, collective identity, and emotions towards historical heritage. The findings show that in Majapahit Hotel, Tanjung Perak Main Harbormaster Building, and Tugu Pahlawan Monument, the use of language in policy serves not only as a communication tool but also as a symbol that reflects the values, beliefs, and feelings of nationalism. Additionally, the use of language symbolism in cultural heritage policies can enhance public awareness of the importance of preserving historical heritage and national identity.

As a suggestion, future research could extend this analysis to other public policy contexts, both nationally and internationally, to examine how language symbolism shapes policy across diverse social and cultural environments. In addition, a quantitative approach can be applied to measure the impact of language symbolism on public perception more broadly, yielding more generalizable and comprehensive data. The Surabaya city government needs to consider linguistic symbolism in policy formulation to preserve cultural heritage. Using language that reflects local values and identity can strengthen community support for the policy. Local communities are also involved in the policy design and implementation process, ensuring that the policies implemented align with the needs and values of the local community.

Contributorship

Conceptualisation LL, BW and ES; Methodology LL, BW, and ES; Analysis LL and BW; Draft LL and BW; Review and Editing LL, BW and ES. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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