

Writing Geographical Names in Indonesian

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Introduction

- In order to identify and name all geographical features across the entirety of Indonesia, it is necessary to have basic information about the language situation in Indonesia
- This presentation will deal with
 - Stages in the process of geographical naming
 - Basic concepts
 - Creating generic place names
 - Standardization of geographical names
 - Principles for naming
 - Procedures for naming
 - The creation of the National Gazetteer

Steps in Geographical Naming

- Step 1:
 - Obtain basic information about the history, language and culture of the local community
- Step 2:
 - Do field work to collect the geographical names used by the local community and attempt to identify the generic place names in the local language
- Step 3:
 - Make accurate notes of place names, place name spellings and their pronunciations from local language speaker informants
- Step 4:
 - Investigate the origins (etymology) of geographical names in order to understand the history and culture of the local community

Basic concepts (1)

- Standardization is the process of deciding on standard geographical names by authorized International or National institutions
- Geographical names (toponyms) refer to features on land, and on or under the sea, which identify these features
- Two types of toponyms are distinguished: those referring to natural geographical features and those that refer to human habitation features such as towns or roads, and administrative areas such as provinces or states
- Geographic names are given to identify specific geographic features

Basic concepts (2)

- A Gazetteer is a list of toponyms which provides detailed information for each on their type, location (geographical coordinates), location (administrative area), and other necessary information
- The National Gazetteer is a reference publication containing a list of toponyms which are the national standard
- A principle is a fundamental concept that is the foundation for the creation of names of geographical features

Basic concepts (3)

- A procedure is a series of stages in the activity of naming geographical features
- The National Team is the Team for the Standardization of geographic names established by the President of Indonesia
- The Provincial Committees are the Provincial Committees for the Standardization of Geographical Names established by the Governor
- The District or City Committees are the District or City Committees for the Standardization of Geographical Names established by the Regent or Mayor

Generic toponyms in local languages

Example: words for *pulau* (island)

- Languages in Bali & Lombok
 - gili, nusa
- Languages in North Sulawesi
 - toade, towade
- Languages in Gorontalo
 - lihuto, libuton
- Languages in Halmahera (Moluccas)
 - meos, mios
- Languages in the capital, Jakarta
 - pulo

Standardization of toponyms

- The purpose of standardizing toponyms is:
 - to improve the efficiency of geographical name standardization in Indonesia
 - to guarantee the efficiency of regional administration of the Indonesian state
 - to promote the National Gazetteer in order to move towards agreement on single, authorized standard names for all geographical features in Indonesia
 - to create a database containing accurate information describing all geographical features throughout the entirety of the Indonesian archipelago (the territory of the Indonesian state) in the interests of national development

Geographical features

- Geographical features consist of:
 - Natural features:
 - islands, archipelagos, mountains, highlands, hills, plateaus, caves, valleys, capes (heads, promontories), peninsulas, oceans, seas, undersea mountains, troughs, straits (passages, sounds), bays (gulfs, bights), lakes (lochs, meres), rivers (streams), and estuaries
 - Built features:
 - airport (aerodrome, airfield), dam (weirs, dyke, levee), reservoir, bridge, toll road, tunnel, lighthouse, housing estate, industrial parks, and monument
 - Administrative divisions or areas
 - province, district, sub-district, village (Indonesia); state, county, municipalities (USA); region, county/authority, district, parish/town (UK); region, department, arrondissement, commune (France); borough, city, duchy, emirate, prefecture, rural district, shire, sub-prefecture, town, township

Generic elements and specific elements

- Generic elements are elements which explain or describe the general form or nature of a geographical feature. They can be in Indonesian or in a regional language.
 - Example:
 - *sungai* → *kali* in Betawi, *krueng* in Acehnese
 - *gunung* → *bulu* in Buginese, *dolok* in Batak
- Specific elements are elements which describe the proper name from generic elements which have been previously mentioned
 - Example:
 - *Gunung Merapi* → *Merapi* is a specific element, a proper name which comes from a generic element meaning mountain
 - *Kota Surabaya* → *Surabaya* is a specific element, a proper name which comes from a generic element meaning city administrative area

Tracking major elements

- The National Gazetteer of Geographical Names plays a crucial role because it is the sole reference source for names
- In particular, an understanding of generic names helps us to decide on the correct spelling

Standardizing written forms

- Example: PENIDA
- Name of an island: Nusa Penida
- Name of a town: Nusapenida

- Example : GADUNG
- Name of an island: Pulo Gadung
- Name of an urban district: Pulogadung

Standardizing names

- Standardizing geographical names is based on the principles and procedures for naming topographic features
- The standardization of topographic features includes the process for determining and approving geographical names, their spelling, writing, and pronunciation

Naming principles

1. Use the Roman script
2. Decide on one name per geographic feature
3. Use local names
4. Comply with government legislation
5. Respect the existence of ethnicity, religion, race and class
6. Do not use proper personal names of people who are still alive
7. Use Indonesian and/or the regional languages, and
8. Limit names to a maximum of three words

Principle 1: Use the Roman script

- There are three main kinds of script: ideographic (Chinese), syllabic (Japanese hiragana); and alphabetic (Roman, Greek)
- UNGEGN advises that the Roman script is used without additional distinguishing marks (diacritics); this is in order to make international communication simpler
- Geographical names in the form of a symbol, formula, sign or emblem should be written in roman letters
- Geographical names which are written in a distinctive, unfamiliar script or have an unfamiliar pronunciation, should be described using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
- Names of topographic features which consist of two words should be written as a single word

Principle 2: Use one name per geographic feature

- Having one name for one topographic feature helps avoid confusion that would arise if different people used same name for the different places
- In cases where a single place has multiple names, a single one should be chosen as the recognized name with the others recorded in the National Gazetteer as variants
- Where a single name is found to be used for more than one geographical feature, then a new element should be added to each so that they can be differentiated; e.g. Pulau Batu (1 & 2) → Pulau Batu Kecil & Pulau Batu Besar

Principle 3: Use local names

- Local names are preferred for naming geographical features in order to preserve and respect the communities who live where those features are found
- UNGEGN advises that local names should be used because they reflect and preserve the local community's history, their upheavals, settlement and migrations

Principle 4: Comply with government legislation

- This principle means that naming should respect and comply with government regulation on naming
- These regulations and laws are those produced by the relevant authorities

Principle 5: Respect the existence of ethnicity, religion, race and class

- The principle of respecting the existence of ethnicity, religion, race and class is intended to promote harmony.
- This means that geographical names should not be used which have the potential to cause offense or stir up conflict between groups, understanding that Indonesia is a very heterogeneous society

Principle 6: Do not use personal names of people who are still alive

- Proper personal names of living people are not used for naming geographical features because doing so has the potential to make that individual into a cult figure
- Meanwhile proper names of existing private or public organizations are not used for naming geographical features because doing so has the potential to give that organization unfair publicity
- Proper personal names may be used to name geographical features if the person has been dead for at least five years, and they have made a significant contribution to the state or the local community

Principle 7: Use Indonesian and/or the regional languages

- The use of Indonesian or one of the regional languages is advised because this supports the intended functions of each, namely national unity and the preservation of and support for cultural diversity in Indonesia

Principle 8: Limit names to a maximum of three words

- Keeping place names short or restricting the number of words in the name has the advantage of making them easier to remember and use in daily communication while, on maps, they take up less space
- Try memorizing the following name of a train station in North Wales, Great Britain:
 - Gorsafawddacha’idraigodanheddogleddolonpenrhynareurdraet hceredigion
- Most people would approve that the name *Los Angeles* is used for the US city rather than the much longer version which it is abbreviated from:
 - *El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de los Angeles de Porciuncula dipendekkan menjadi Los Angeles*

Crystal (1987: 115)

Procedure for naming (1)

- The head of the district (*camat*) or other administrative area should perform an inventory of geographical names in their area
- The inventory of geographical names should cover all the geographical features whether they do not yet have names or already do
- Where it is found that an existing name violates the principles for geographical naming, then a new name should be suggested by the senior government official their (village head, district head, or other official in charge) after taking into consideration name(s) submitted by the local community
- The resulting inventory of names of geographical features should be delivered by the local government head to the District or City Committee

Procedure for naming (2)

- The District or City Committee should conduct an inventory and review of the proposed standardization of the names of the topographic features submitted by all the sub-districts (or other subdivisions) in the region
- The completed review should be reported to the Provincial Committee
- The Provincial Committee should inventorize and review these submissions from the District or City level Committees in their area
- These completed reviews should in turn be reported to the National Team
- The National Team should review the names of geographical features suggested for standardization by the Provincial Committees

Deciding on and Standardizing Names

- The National Team sets the standards for the names of topographical features, their spelling, how they are written and their pronunciation, in the National Gazetteer, taking into consideration the suggestions from the Provincial level Committees
- The National Gazetteer is compiled from databases which have been verified
- The National Team performs its verification of data and compilation of a national database with the help of an Acting Committee (Implementation Team) and a Secretariat
- The resulting database of standardized names is officially established with a government regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah*)

The National Gazetteer

- The National Gazetteer is an exhaustive and comprehensive reference for topographical names, officially approved as the sole reference and standard for geographical names, their spelling and pronunciation, which must be used in all formal (official) documents or spoken communication by everyone, government officials, the general public, the mass media, in school textbooks, and on all official maps.
- The naming of Indonesia – especially the outer islands – should be done with great care to support Indonesia’s territorial integrity
 - The naming of islands in Indonesia – especially the outer islands – is especially sensitive and should be done with the greatest care because territorial claims to some of these islands may be made by neighboring countries and ambiguity in naming can be a cause of losing a case in international courts
- The naming of topographical features, whether natural, man-made, or administrative should be done with the understanding of their importance to the smooth functioning of government administration

Realization

- Topographical features which have not yet been named shall be given names following the principles of geographical naming; this task of creating many new names can be carried out in stages
- For topographical features whose existing names do not conform to the principles of naming, these names shall be modified or changed to be in conformance with the principles

Function and role of the National Gazetteer

- The National Gazetteer plays a central role because the topographic name information in it is to be used as the sole approved standard
- In particular, the manner in which generic names based on the many regional languages are written will have an important impact on our knowledge of ourselves

Conclusion

- It is a top priority that naming policy prioritizes the creation and preservation of place names that reflect Indonesia's regional linguistic and cultural diversity so these can become the standard for local and national use
- Research into generic place names in as many of the hundreds of indigenous languages is needed as the basis for writing topographic names. In the interests of history and culture, we need to recheck the meaning, history (etymology) and cultural significance of proper (specific) names which have been given by the local people
- The important national scale task of reviewing and standardizing geographical names should be performed by a team that includes experts in the scientific study of language (linguists) who have specialist knowledge of toponymy or geographical linguistics