

Semiotics of Seven-Colors Lodeh Vegetable

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ABSTRACT

When the COVID-19 pandemic spread throughout Indonesia, an appeal was made for the community to cook Lodeh vegetables again. This appeal circulated through *WhatsApp* groups among the people of Yogyakarta. The appeal for cooking the Seven Colors Lodeh vegetable certainly has a connotative meaning that is inherent to the substance, practices, habits that are part of the difference marker system [1]. Using semiotic analysis which sets out three basic questions "What does it mean? How to interpret it? Why does it mean that?" (Danesi, 2007: 141) There are findings that since the Dutch colonial era Lodeh vegetables have been known to the public. Vegetable Lodeh Seven Colors has a sign that people are careful and alert for disasters. Vegetable Lodeh has the meaning of gratitude as well as repellent reinforcements. The Symbolic meaning of Lodeh Vegetables are parts of Indonesian local wisdom respond to the pandemic.

Keywords: *Semiotic, Lodeh, vegetables*

1. INTRODUCTION

In human life, food is a primary need. From birth, food is sought, made, and stored so that humans survive, grow, move, and develop. However, food needs are very structured and involve substances, practices, habits, and preparation and consumption techniques that are part of a system of differences in signification [2]. As a system, what is edible and that cannot differ according to the community. West Java people are accustomed to eating raw leaves as their daily lives. In the North Sulawesi Tomohon market, a variety of animals ranging from quadrupeds (cats, dogs, pigs, monitor lizards), reptiles (snakes) to flying mammals (bats) are available for consumption. While the people of Gunung Kidul serve fried grasshoppers as a typical comestible of their region. Food becomes a part of a community's cultural identity.

Food as a practice of cultural identity also occur at certain moments such as birthdays (tarts, yellow rice), births (red and white porridge), religious holidays (rhombic, gunungan, etc.) and marriage (crocodile bread, kincuk, jenang, vegetable besan, madumingso, etc.). Food can also be a medium with magical entities. At Surakarta Palace, there is a Ubarampe ceremony [3] in the form of providing food offerings to the ancestral spirits of the Surakarta palace during a wedding ceremony. Mumulen fibers that explain Ubarampe describe the food that is made offerings are:

apem goreng, apem kocor, ayam pethak mulus, bakaran (balenyik, dhendheng gepukan, gereh sela, trasi),

bekakak menda, boreh kunir, bubuk dhele, bumbu mentahan, ciyu bumbon, dhaharan (jeram pacitan, lempur sekul, pelem bala, tengkuweh), dhendheng (gorengan, kenthil, klopokan), dupa, enten-enten, gecok ganggang ganggang, gedhang, gereh (juwi, layur, pethek), godhong (medinah, ranti, senting), dhele gorengan, gorengan tempe, gorengan ulam mahesa, gudhang warni-warni, jagung, janggan (dhokohan, gule, kalamuncang, krukut, lodheh, loncom, lotho, manggul katul, menir, sop), jenang (cocoh, curba, kukus), jeram keprok, duren ingkang alit, klengkeng, kurma, nongka, juwi, kecambah krupuk, kembengan gendhis batu, ketan biru, ketan kolak, ketan kumbu, ketan salak, kimpul, konyoh ganten, krecek, kupat, lalaban (brambang, godhong kapas, godhong katu, kacang, lombok, tempe mentah), lemengan ketan, lombok ijem, lotis, panggang lele, panggang pitik, panggang wader, pangunjukan (anggur coret, beras kencur, toya asrep), parem, pecel lele, pecel pitik, pecel semanggi, pecel wader, pepesan ulam tambra, pepesan wuku, petis, pindhang banyak, pindhang mahesa, roti kabalen, roti martega, rujak leni, rujak pecel, sambel (brambang, dhele tanpa trasi, goreng petis, jele, lethok, plelek, uleg) sami binakar, sangsangan (kopok mongkrong, sekar cundhuk, sekar kalung), sareng kamper, sate penthul, sekar mlathi, sekul (abrit, anget, liwet, golong, kabuli, pera, pethak, pulen, punar, tumpeng, wadhang, wuduk), ses wangi wiru, tales, tela, tim pitik, timun, toya ingkang asrep, tumtuman kapri, ukel sekar campur bawur, ulam dhendheng klopokan, ulam lembaran, ulam pindhang mahesa, ulam raji terik, uncit, wos, warni woh-wohan

pepak, wedang bugendhis, wedang kopi presan, dan woh kudhu.

During the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) information spread in the WhatsApp group. It contained King Ngayogyakarta's order that its citizens make 7-color Lodeh vegetables to avoid disaster [4]. The contents of the message that spreads are *Pageblug. Wayahe rakyat Mataram nyayur Lodeh 7 warna: Kluwih, Cang Gleyor, Terong, Kulit Mlinjo, Waluh, Godong So, Tempe. Mugi Sedaya tansah widodo nir ing Sambekala*

Explosion. At the moment the people of Mataram offer the Lodeh 7 colors: Cumin, Cang Gleyor, Eggplant, Red Leather, Pumpkin, Godong So, Tempe. Hope All is always at zero in Sambekala



Figure 1 Lodeh Vegetable [5]

The Seven Color Lodeh Vegetable is a symbol of food which is a cultural practice when a disaster (pagebluk) comes. The Seven Color Lodeh Vegetable is part of the structure and involves the substance, practices, habits, and preparation and consumption techniques that are part of the different marking systems. Food is not just a substance and nutrients for survival (survival) but also part of a sign system that is strictly involved in the process of signification and interpretation [6]. This study wanted to examine the problem of vegetables Seven Color Lodeh with semiotic analysis. Semiotics tries to answer three basic questions "What does it mean? How to interpret it? Why does it mean by that?" [7] Thus the problem that will be elaborated in this study is: What does the Seven Color Lodeh vegetable mean? How do you interpret the Seven Color Lodeh Vegetable? Why does it mean by that?

1.1. Our Contribution

This study uses an interpretive paradigm that focuses on investigations on how humans interpret their social life and how humans express their understanding through

language, sound, parables, personal style, and social rituals [8]. Semiotic study means to study why a sign or text has meaning. Semiotic studies always involve two forms of analysis, namely [9]:

- Historical analysis (historical). Cultural products must be examined historically.

The aim is to get the truth to understand what something means, need to reveal how it appeared in the first place, to whom the code rests, and how the code is displayed. Thus this study will analyze the history of Lodeh vegetables. As a product of vegetable culture, Lodeh will be reviewed historically. The goal is to get the truth to understand what the true meaning of vegetable Lodeh, when the term first appeared, to whom the name of the vegetable Lodeh was terminated and how it was displayed.

- Connotative analysis. Finding out what something means culturally means exploring the connotation. If the meaning of denotation is the real meaning or meaning of the dictionary, the meaning of connotation is an additional meaning or meaning related to the value of taste. certain meaning which by a person or group of people is given to a word or group of words [10].

1.2. Paper Structure

Judging from the corpus of research, this research is a media text research that appears in the form of a collection of sentences in a communication application (WhatsApp) which becomes news in cyber media. The discussion of this research begins by presenting a literature review relating to food research. After that, a historical Lodeh vegetable will be continued, followed by a connotative analysis of the seven-color Lodeh vegetable that appears during a pandemic. The writing will end with a conclusion and discussion.

2. BACKGROUND

Food in the last decade has become a study that has attracted the attention of many scientists. Cultural anthropology as the basis of food and culture studies (food and culture studies) becomes an interdisciplinary study that explores philosophy, psychology, geography, film studies, and semiotics [11]. Roland Barthes, Pierre Bourdieu, and Claude Levi-Strauss explain the ability of food to convey meaning with different approaches. Barthes explains the symbolic and semiotic powers of food while Bourdieu explains the ethnographic details of food in a French family. Bourdieu's ethnographic context about food is indeed not as prominent as the concepts of lifestyle (lifestyles) and habitus. While the French structuralist Claude Levi-Strauss described the

culinary triangle as part of the classical structuralist statement [12].

According to Barthes food will lose its substance and increase its function; this function will be general and point to activities (such as business lunches) or breaks (such as coffee); but because there is a very striking conflict between work and relaxation, the lively traditional food functions tend to disappear gradually, and the community will regulate its food marking system around two main focal points: on the one hand, activities (and no longer working), and in the other hand, recreation (no longer a celebration). All this shows if indeed it needs to be shown, to what extent food is an organic system, organically integrated into specific types of civilization [13]. This explanation of Barthes confirms to us that the function of food which traditionally is as a daily practice day as primary needs become symbolic practices that require interpretation.

Meanwhile Bourdieu [14] emphasizes the way food is served and consumed, food arrangements and place arrangements, are strictly distinguished according to the order of dishes and arranged to please the eyes, the presentation of dishes, are considered part in terms of shape and color (such as works of art) as their consumption material, etiquette governing posture and cues, ways of serving oneself and others, using different equipment, seating plans, strictly but secretly hierarchical, censorship of all bodily manifestations of actions or pleasure in eating (such as noise or haste), perfecting those things consumed, with quality more important than quantity - all of these commitments to style (stylization) tends to shift the emphasis from substance and function to form and manner, and to deny the gross material reality of the act of eating and things consumed, or, which is equivalent to the same thing, the fundamental material vulgarity of those who enjoy immediate satisfaction from food and drink. In line with Barthes using the analysis of eating procedures in the French family, Pierre Bourdieu underlined that the arrangement of the way to eat, the order of the provision of dishes, and the use of eating utensils that are different from the seating position that has been arranged to shift the substance of food and drink in the direction he called stylization.

According to Levi-Strauss [15] cooking in a society is a language in which it unconsciously translates its structure - or else resigns, still unconsciously, to reveal its contradictions.

In a food semiotic study, Alfredo Tenoch Cid Jurado [16] analyzed the culinary and social-semiotic spicy foods and their significance in Mexico, Italy, and Texas. The study continues on the use and meaning of chili ("chili") and spicy food in Mexico,

Texas and Italian cuisine. Describing the observations of several recipes and narrative structures, this Mexican scholar emphasizes the cultural role and symbolic dimensions of food. While Classen [17] proves his thesis that food preparation and consumption can uncover culture and society specifically. By analyzing food in the Middle Ages when rituals, appearance, and the great pressure of public life the Palace played a significant role in food and supplies which influenced the complexity of culture.

This is because food must be treated with tomatoes. After all, it represents life, and how food is prepared and served reflects the important value system of a society [18] These two previous studies underline to us that food represents the life and value system of a society. That food is a cultural symbol of society. In this research, the Lodeh vegetable is a representation of life and the value system of society, especially the Javanese community.

From the side of the history of vegetables, Seven Color Lodeh appeared at a time when the social-environmental situation was experiencing a disaster. When the 2006 earthquake hit Yogyakarta and its surroundings a message was that the community cook Lodeh vegetables also circulated. Citing the goodnewsfromindonesia.id page historically, Lodeh vegetables appeared since the 16-17th century. At that time in Indonesia, local food variants were being promoted such as corn or long beans. The seeds are carried by the Spaniards and Portuguese. These materials are consumed by local people, becoming daily food. Over time, the creativity of the community appears by creating creative foods from the archipelago, one of which is Lodeh vegetables. The material is from a combination of various agricultural products that grow in Indonesia. Coconut milk in Lodeh vegetables, including the form of creativity of the people in Java at that time.

Still from goodnewsfromindonesia.id sources another historical source states, Lodeh vegetables are also evidence of people's creativity when the Mataram kingdom led by Sultan Agung was at war with the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) in Batavia. One of the VOC's strategies was to destroy the food barns belonging to the Kingdom of Mataram. As a result, Mataram soldiers starved because they ran out of food. The situation was compounded by threats from the VOC for the cooks who helped the Mataram soldiers. That made the Mataram soldiers rack their brains and make dishes from whatever ingredients were left. After the food was finished, it turned out to taste good and be a helper for the starving soldiers. It is said, who cooked the food was one of the soldiers of Sultan Agung who came from Tanah Betawi. When asked by his friends what the name of the food. Not knowing what to say, the Betawi soldier then answered, "it's up to you". It is said that due to accident, Mataram soldiers who came

from various other regions in Java, thought the name of the food: vegetable Lodeh. Though the intention of the Betawi soldier is 'whatever you want to be called'.

One of Lodeh's vegetable ingredients is eggplant, it turns out it has its history. Described by Denker [19] the eggplant was originally called the mad apple (mad apple) which for centuries had been a luxury vegetable. Eggplants become centers of processing that can be fried, baked, mashed, roasted, boiled, filled, used as pickles. In India, eggplant was once called a vatingana or windy room because it could be driving people crazy. Besides eggplants are associated with the Kama Sutra. Eggplant history changed after the Arabs spread it to all their colonies. They found it in 7th-century Persia and spread it in Spain as a gateway to Europe. Andalusian society breeds it until it arrived in Italy. The Italians named it melanzane from the Latin word mala insane or mad apple. When the Saracen nation ruled Sicily for two hundred years the local people were accustomed to cultivating eggplants. One of the Sicilian foods that use eggplant as a basic ingredient is Caponata, spicy eggplant which is served summer mixed with toman and onion.

The question "What does the Lodeh vegetable mean with its history has been explained. Next explanation How to interpret the Lodeh vegetable? Why does it mean by that? [20]

The mass media also spread the meaning of 7 color lodeh vegetables [21]

1. Kluwih: kluwargo luwihono anggone gulowentah gatekne. (Families need to be more taken care of and cared for)
2. Cang gleyor: cancel your crew ojo lungu-lungu. (Tie yourself, don't go away)
3. Eggplant: continue to anggone olehe manambah Gusti ojo datnyeng (Continue worshipping the Almighty)
4. Melinjo skin: ojo might understand njobone, ning kudu understands njerone babakan face. (Don't just look at it from the outside, but must know what's inside related to the disaster)
5. Waluh: uwalono ilangono complained gersulo. (Eliminate complaining)
6. Godong so: golong gilig donga gather wong sholeh sugeh kaweruh (gather with pious and smart people)
7. Tempe: temenono olehe dedepe nyuwun pitulungane Gusti Allah. (Be confident in asking for God's help)

In the Semiotics perspective, kluwih, gleyor cang, eggplant, melinjo skin, pumpkin, godong so and tempeh as Lodeh vegetable ingredients are signs. While what

should be understood and understood is the sign. The meaning of kluwih is: that during pagebluk (disaster) the family must be number one to be considered. All difficulties experienced by families should be assisted and resolved first before helping others. The family in this case is mainly the nuclear family, namely the father, mother, and children. In a broad sense, the family is also a neighbor. Neighbors are people or families who live around our residence. They are the first to help and be helped in everyday social life.

While cang gleyor or long beans means that in times of disaster should not travel. Especially if there is an outbreak like the coronavirus. Traveling outside the city allows COVID-19 to spread everywhere while opening up the possibility to be infected as well. The terms are physical distancing and social distancing. Maintain physical distance and social distance. Provision of this distance must become a new habit in the life of Indonesian people. Including doing social distancing with false information that abounds in social media. This false information is also called demic info. This condition indeed makes it very uncomfortable in social practice. Nevertheless with a heavy heart must be done so that normal social conditions can be present again in the midst of Indonesian society.

Eggplant is a sign that we all continue to pray to draw closer to the Almighty. In conditions only at home alone mental stress is likely to increase. The house which is usually only for sleeping and breakfast is now an office, a place to play and gather with family. What can we do to survive mental stress while living in a pandemic? According to Zizek [22], there is no time to seek spiritual authenticity, to face the gap in our existence. Borrowing the term Jaques Lacan, identification of the disease itself, without having to be ashamed, perform any ritual that helps stabilize daily life. All that is useful is welcome / done if it can overcome mental disorders, even the form of plagiarism of fetishism like ... I know very well (how serious the situation is), even so, don't think for a long time, just focus on today. Suppose you are cast in the film *Life is Beautiful*. Suppose quarantine is just a game that makes you and your family free to join the possibility of getting a prize if you win. In the context of film and tv relieve all guilty pleasures: catastrophic dystopia.

Melinjo skin is the meaning of disaster and the cause must be understood. This means that the development of information about the Covid-19 disaster must continue to be followed, how to avoid it, and what steps to take must be understood. Every day the Covid-19 Task Force Team presents the latest developments in the spread of the disease through the news media. Indonesian people must understand that Covid-19 is a disease caused by a virus that spreads through droplets (residual sneezing or coughing droplets) that stick and enter the body through the mouth, nostrils, and eyes. Therefore it is

recommended that everyone wash their hands frequently with soap and avoid touching their nose, eyes, and mouth. If you leave the house then the community must use a mask. To use a mask is to avoid being prone to splashing on other people's droplets and also avoiding others getting droplets from ourselves.

Do not complain (meaning *waluh*), Complaining in Javanese culture is not a laudable attitude. People who like to complain (*sambat*) are categorized as weak people. Complaining in the corona pandemic era is truly useless. Complaining into the category of not having mental toughness is symbolized by Aja Kagetan's proverb (don't be easily surprised) [23]. If you want to complain, it is none other than conveying to God [24].

Get together with people *sholeh* (meaning *godong so*). It means to be close to credible, trustworthy people/institutions to obtain accurate and reliable information. The pious people can also be interpreted as people who know so that it can be a reference. In the era of social media where everyone can be a source of information, the credibility of the source of information becomes absolute. By being careful in receiving and disseminating information, we avoid infusing infodemic information. The whole thing is an endeavor and perfected with *tempeh* as a sure sign that the help of the Almighty will come. Seven colors are colorful symbols of life. The number seven in Javanese is *pitu* which means *pitulungan* or help [25]

By elaborating on the meanings of the seven colors of the *Lodeh* vegetable, it can be underlined how Indonesian people, especially Javanese people, have local wisdom in responding to disasters (*pagebluk*). This is by the Javanese cosmology's understanding that illness is not only in what causes pain but also how and why a person becomes sick. Pain is a result of a series of relationships between individuals and the environment [26] Besides that the Seven Color *Lodeh* vegetable means that food in the Javanese view not only functions as a biological physiological need but also the spiritual needs that are embedded in the Seven Color *Lodeh* vegetable semiotics.

3. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Since time immemorial food has been a concern. Plato wrote a proper diet in Book two of the Republic. Epicurus, Seneca to enlightenment philosophers such as Locke, Rousseau, Voltaire, Marx, and Nietzsche discussed various aspects of food production and consumption [27]. No less Javanese ancestors who saw food not only as a primary need but also as a symbol various activities. Marriage ceremonies, circumcision, baby birth have their symbols that are full of meaning and are preserved. *Ubarampe* ceremony displays food as

a symbol of devotion to the previous ancestors in the Surakarta Palace. Another Surakarta Kraton was also the Ngayogyakarta Palace. The events of the 2006 earthquake and now the Covid-19 pandemic became a moment of encouragement to the general public to cook the Seven Color *Lodeh* vegetables. Vegetable *Lodeh* is believed to have existed during the Dutch colonial era and even believed to appear when Sultan Agung attacked Batavia. Not only Javanese who love *Lodeh* vegetables, but many ethnic groups in Indonesia are also fond of these coconut milk vegetables. But behind the recommendation of cooking vegetables *Lodeh* Seven residents actually, other markers have deep philosophical values. These philosophical values invite people when the plague (*pagebluk*) takes care of the family; stay home when the plague; continue to pray to God Almighty, care and understand the disaster that occurred; invite not to complain; gathering with *sholeh* (smart) people; surrender to the Almighty. These values certainly do not only apply to Javanese people but actually, remain actual in the 21st century. The Seven Color *Lodeh* Vegetable Values are local health protocols, which can be globalized, in response to environmental changes that are detrimental to health. The Seven Color *Lodeh* Vegetable is an example of how food is related to culture. How to make it simple with ingredients that are easily bought in the market into a symbol of food called vegetable *Lodeh* is the food of all classes of people. It must be understood that it is not the Seven Color *Lodeh* vegetables that can avoid being covered but the philosophical values (markers) of the Seven Color *Lodeh* vegetables should be kept in mind and used as a health protocol for dealing with disease outbreaks.

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