

When Beauty Meets Dishes: A Semiotic Study on Indonesian Cuisine-named Palette Shade Colors

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Abstract. Cosmetic industry in Indonesia is a highly competitive landscape. In recent years, Indonesians have been inundated with both international and local cosmetics brands. The fruitful cosmetics business in the country attracts many international brands to distribute their product in this promising market. Consequently, homegrown Indonesia cosmetic brands have to strive in the fierce competition and succeed in seizing their portion in the market. One of its attempts is by constantly innovating their products including launching a unique concept to draw larger consumers as what Reinedoll did in 2021. Accordingly, this paper delves into the associative meanings of Reinedoll's beauty products through its Cita Rasa face and eye palette. The distinctive feature of this product lies on its shades which are named after the Indonesian local delicacies. Specifically, this study aims to reveal associative meaning as reflected in the shade names and color related to the Indonesian local cuisines. Moreover, it tries to investigate the producer's motifs of introducing unusual cross-category blend items to embrace consumers. This is descriptive qualitative research by taking Cita Rasa face and eye palette along with shade names. Applying Peirce semiotic model, the data were descriptively analyzed and interpreted to disclose the symbolic associations between the shade colors and the popular traditional cuisines. The findings show that the convergence of names of local cuisine and the shade colors for these products strongly articulates the characters of Indonesian women. The color palettes that Reinedoll launched attempt to foster the local prominence through the selection of the popular traditional delicacies around the country. Accordingly, these shade colors by its embedded symbolism speak on behalf of Indonesian women who are amiable, calm, cheerful, modest, modern, warm, exotic and dependent. In other words, these warm spectrums of colors are able to articulate the unique and authentic Indonesian women. Meanwhile, commercially speaking, it reaches potential consumers to be part of bigger safe community namely Indonesia, boosting the sense of inclusiveness. Being familiar with Indonesian food and their names, the consumers are said to like the food as well as feel satisfied when consuming and finally to feel safe in using 'the food' and secure to the community where they socially belong.

Keywords: Cosmetic Innovation, Reinedoll, Associative Meaning, Semiotics, Persuasive Strategies

1 Introduction

Indonesia is a growing market for cosmetics and personal care products. The demand for the international and local beauty products has been on the rise in recent years. This was demonstrated in the escalating revenue trend of the beauty and personal care market in the country [1]. Further, it apparently becomes one of the promising mainstay industries of the country [2]. It is manifested from the rapid industry growth around 7.5% in 2021-2027 according to CAGR that leads Indonesia the fastest growing cosmetic market in Asia [3].

Evidently, COVID-19 pandemic affected the consumer purchase behavior negatively. [4] reported that the use of cosmetics was already declining before 2020, but a survey of 10,000 British women by market research firm Kantar has revealed big changes to post-lockdown beauty routines. This may have been caused by a shift of purchase priorities especially dealing with personal health care. Nevertheless, the post pandemic era seemingly brings back the positive attitude towards the beauty products.

The cosmetic industry in the country is stiffly competitive. Lately, it has been inundated with both international and local cosmetics brands. The fruitful cosmetics business in the country attracts many international brands to distribute their product in this promising market. Consequently, homegrown Indonesian makeup brands such as *Dear me, BLP, Reinedoll, Looké*, and many more have to strive in the fierce battle and succeed in seizing their portion in the market. One of its attempts is by constantly innovating their products including launching a unique concept to captivate larger consumers.

Makeup producers refresh or launch their products by displaying new packaging or theme. One of the out-of-the box breakthroughs is *Reinedoll*. *Reinedoll* is a cosmetic brand that is known for its brush products. Its famous product is *Rose Gold Brush Set* which is claimed as the perfect latest makeup brush set. This makeup brush set has soft fibers which helps people to apply makeup. On January 21 2021, Reinedoll began to innovate by releasing *Cita Rasa* face and eye palette with various shades using names of Indonesian local culinary, such as *gado-gado*, *rawon*, *arum manis*, and *martabak*. *Cita Rasa* face and eye Palette is here to represent Indonesian culture as well as present natural colors that are adjusted to the skin tone of Indonesian women.

Reinedoll released eight shades of eyeshadow: *gulai, liwet, gado-gado, soto, balado, rendang, rawon,* and *gudeg*. Each food represents the color of eyeshadow, for instance, *soto* represents light gold color, *balado* represents matte teracotta, and *rawon* describes matte cool dark brown color. In addition, this product contains 3 kinds of shades: *serabi, arum manis,* and *martabak* functioning as highlighter, blush, and bronzer. Those shades suit Indonesian skin tone.

The choices of the producer in selecting these traditional cuisines is intriguing to investigate. Exploring how cross-category strategy which is materialized in the context of beauty industry would be explained in this study. In short, the study aims to examine the associative meaning as reflected in the shade names and colors related to the Indonesian traditional cuisines. It also reveals the producer's motifs of introducing unusual cross-category blend items to embrace consumers.

Phenomena of cosmetics and beauty products have been investigated in various realms. [5] and [6] examine the language of cosmetics advertising which show that scientific or scientised lexes are deliberately selected by the producers as marketing strategies. The first study explored the scientific language of English and France cosmetic advertisements. Similarly, the second study further investigated scientific-sound lexes in the top five Indonesian cosmetic brands. It demonstrated that these scientised lexes improve the customer assurance in buying the products. Another study [7] investigated verbal and visual signs in Revlon cosmetics advertisements. The study explained the connotative and hidden message to be conveyed to the customers. More specifically, [8], [9], and [10] concentrated their study on the co-branding as part of marketing strategies to be added value to the promotion and wide market share. Those existing researches deliberate the phenomena of cosmetic language as well as the strategies to increase the market. It also involves co-branding which allows the cosmetic company to do collaboration with other brands. However, converging cosmetics and traditional cuisines especially in terms of make-up and color palette seems overlooked. Naming the shade colors with the traditional cuisines would be challenging issue to discuss. To fill the gap, this current research aims to investigate more on this area. Based on these premises, this study proposes two research questions: (1) how the shades the Reinedoll interplay with the color of popular traditional cuisines and (2) it also reveals the reasons of launching this cross-category products in the market. Accordingly, the objectives of the research are to describe the interplay of shades and the color of Indonesian traditional cuisines and to disclose the reasons of implementing cross-category products in the market. It is pivotal to explore this unique strategy to provide a new insight for both other cosmetic companies and potential consumers.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Semiotics

Etymologically, semiotics comes from the Greek word semeion or sign, which is often interpreted as the science of signs. Semiotics is a branch of science that deals with the study of signs and everything related to signs, such as sign systems, how they function, their relationship with other signs, and their transmission and reception by those who use them. Semiotics studies systems, rules, conventions that allow these signs to have meaning. Eco states that semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign [11]. It involves the study not only of what we refer to as signs in everyday speech, but also of anything which stands for something else. In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects. Further, semiotics refers to the study of how meanings are made and how reality is represented.

Some experts see semiotics only as a theoretical device to study signs, however, there are also those who regard it as a science because (1) it is independent as a study field, (2) it already has a methodological set derived from its theory, (3) it can produce a number of hypotheses, (4) it can already be used to make predictions, and (5) the

findings provide the possibility to change views about the objective world [12]. Thus, semiotics can be categorized as a science that examines signs in human life.

Peirce proposed the term semiotic. The main principles containing Peirce's theory is the three-dimensional system or known as triadic model consisting of what is represented (object), how it is represented (representamen) and how it is interpreted (interpretant). To qualify as a sign, all those three elements are essential. Furthermore, Pierce divides signs into three typologies or taxonomies of signs: icon, in which the signifier is perceived as resembling or imitating the signified; index which is defined as a mode in which the signifier is directly connected physically or causally in some way to the signified, and symbol [13].

2.2 Cosmetics Ads

Advertisements which are aired either through visual or print media contain certain messages to the public. It combines verbal and nonverbal techniques to make its messages as persuasive as possible. The study of ads has become a hugely popular one in various disciplines, including psychology, semiotics, anthropology, culture studies, communication science, and sociology. In analyzing ads or commercials, semiotics addresses how signs and texts generate meaning to persuade potential consumers.

[14] argues that to sell a product effectively, advertisers should promote it as something other than what it is—a simple product. Advertisers should consider brand name, logo, language technique to create persuasive message. Without naming the product, the ads would be ineffectual. Because of advertising, products are now perceived both as physical objects and as mental objects, or, in semiotic terms, denotatively and connotatively. This is in line with [15] who stated that ads sell ideas not products - they sell freedom, masculinity, seduction- not cigarettes, cars, or perfume. Further, ads can influence society positively and help to bring about social change. The same goes for cosmetic ads. The rapid development of the cosmetic business has led to the emergence of cosmetic advertisements in various media.

The development of the growth of the cosmetic business can be seen from the many new cosmetic brands and beauty product innovations that are increasingly appearing on the market, both local and international. Increasingly fierce market competition encourages business company to be more creative in attracting their customers. One of them is by using attractive cosmetic ads to increase brand awareness in the cosmetics business.

[16] explains that the majority of cosmetics are marketed using the message that the female appearance can be improved with the aid of products: one has the opportunity to look younger, slimmer, prettier, and so on. Here, woman's bodies tend to be viewed as commodities. A dynamic interplay between advertising and beauty trends has emerged whereby one influences the other synergistically.

3 Research Method

This study employed descriptive qualitative method. This method was used in social science research to gain in-depth understanding of a particular subject of topic [17]. In this research, content analysis through Peirce's semiotic model was used in order to investigate the verbal and visual signed depicted in Reinedoll's palette. The signs in this context included the name, color and display of the product. Peirce triadic model was used since it concentrated on the characteristics of signs which point out the sense making in the process of interaction among representamen, object and interpretant [18]. The analysis involved analyzing verbal signs realized by names of shade palette, visual signs which include color and display of the palette then symbolic message (interpretation). Through the analysis, the study expected to understand how Reinedoll which launched this unusual cross-category products as decoded elements to represent their values to grasp wider consumer to achieve better marketing.

4 Discussion

This section explains the findings of the shades color and the names of traditional cuisines. After that, the discussion is presented on how the meanings are constructed and conveyed through the naming particularly when it comes to marketing strategies.

Names of Indonesian cuisines	Shades Equivalence
Liwet	Warm ivory
Gulai	Shimmer medium rose gold
Soto	Shimmer light gold with yellow undertones
Gado-gado	Matte caramel brown
Balado	Matte terracotta orange
Rendang	Shimmer warm bronze
Gudeg	Shimmer taupe with purple undertone
Rawon	Matte cool dark brown
Serabi	Champagne highlighter with pink and gold re-
	flex
Arum manis	Fresh matte coral pink blush
Martabak	Warm matte sunkissed bronzer

Table 1. Names of Indonesian cuisines and their equivalent shade colors

The table displays the name of shades of Citarasa face and eye palette of Reinedoll launched in 2021. The name of each shade is represented by the name of traditional cuisines which are popular among Indonesian people. A more detailed explanation about the interplay of the popular cuisine names and shades colors is presented below.

4.1 The Associative Meanings of Traditional Cuisine Names and Shade Colors of Citarasa Face and Eye Palette

Reinedoll selected top eleven Indonesian cuisines as the name of their new product named Citarasa face and eye palette. From its name "citarasa" meaning "taste", the brand wants to tell the consumers that they offer their 'taste' that is suitable or fit the consumers. The product consists of eight shades of eye shadow, one shade of highlighter, one shade of blush, and one shade of bronzer. To reveal the symbolic meaning of each shade color, [19] proposes the concept of color symbolism by which the analysis and interpretation are carried out.

Liwet

This cuisine is applied to represent the color of warm ivory. The color of the shade represents how nasi liwet is presented. Ivory entails the color of rice cooked in coconut milk, chicken broth, salam leaves and lemongrass. This shade is the most common color cosmetic with which companies provide. For instance, ivory color is mostly used for both compact and loose powder, foundation and cushion since it fits the complexion of most customers. Putting this color shade and the appearance of the dish side by side would represents the common complexion of Indonesian women.

Gulai

In this product, gulai represents the color of shimmer medium rose gold. The rose gold shade is inspired by the spicy sauce which is based on coconut milk and various spices that typically include chilis, turmeric, coriander, cumin, and nutmeg, as well as shallots, garlic, and candlenuts. In terms of color symbolism, this shade is closest to light salmon orange which connotes healthy, friendly, cheerful, invigorating, tasty, and warm. These stimulating elements are incorporated in the shades and the taste of gulai that brings effect of energizing in tropical atmosphere.

Soto

Soto is a traditional Indonesian soup mainly composed of broth, meat, and vegetables. It is sometimes considered Indonesia's national dish as it is served from Sumatra to Papua in a wide range of variations. The primary color of this shade, shimmer light gold with yellow undertone, comes from turmeric, one of the main spices of this dish. Symbolically speaking, this shade which is light yellow orange signifies the nature of cheerful, friendly, healthy, invigorating, sunny and warm. Those elements are best described how close this popular dish being enjoyed by Indonesian people at all time. For instance, Javanese people commonly have soto most of the time. In the morning they enjoy it as breakfast, at noon as lunch or even in the evening when they usually gather with the family.

Gado-Gado

Gado-gado is an Indonesian salad of raw, slightly boiled, blanched or steamed vegetables and hard-boiled eggs, boiled potato, fried tofu and tempeh, and lontong, served with a peanut sauce dressing. The color adopted the peanut sauce which is manifested in matte caramel brown color. When it comes to color symbolism, this shade signifies healthy, tasty, earthy, natural, and warm. This is in line with the ingredients of this dish which is mostly dominated by green vegetables. Presumably, this color is introduced to bring effect of warmth, health and close to nature for the customers.

Balado

The reddish orange color of this shade is adopted from the color of sambal balado (hot chili paste/sauce) The sauce is made by stir frying ground red hot chili pepper with other spices including garlic, shallot, tomato, and kaffir lime (leaves, fruit, or both) in coconut or palm oil. This shade belongs to orange swatch namely terracotta orange. It connotes the psychological symbolism including cheer, energy, excitement, activity and warmth. Putting together this color with the appearance of balado brings up the excitement and positive energy.

Rendang

Rendang is a rich dish of meat that has been slow cooked and braised in a coconut milk seasoned with herb and spice mixture until the liquids evaporate and the meat turns dark brown and tender, becoming caramelized and infused with rich flavors. This cuisine is materialized into the shade of shimmer warm bronze color. According to the color symbolism, this dark brown articulates homeyness, reliability, strong, dependable, and sturdy. The application of this bold shade accentuates independent and tough women look.

Gudeg

Gudeg is made from raw young jack fruit and cooked with palm sugar, coconut milk and additional spices including garlic, onion, hazelnut, coriander seeds, galangal, bay leaves, and teak leaves, which give the dish a reddish-brown color. With the various mixtures of these spices, it becomes delicious and has a distinctive taste according to the palate of the Javanese people in general. The brown color is usually produced by teak leaves that are cooked together. Gudeg is usually eaten with rice and served with thick coconut milk (areh), free-range chicken, eggs, tempeh, tofu and krecek fried chili sauce. This brand adopted this dish to produce the shade of shimmer taupe with purple undertone which is believed to resemble gudeg color. This shade symbolizes the elements of creative, philosophical, sophisticated, spiritual and peaceful. This soothing yet determined effect is presented by this variant expecting to share the vibe to the users.

Rawon

The dark brown color of this shade precisely represents East Java traditional meat soup called Rawon. The soup is made from traditional spices known as kluwek, which produces natural dark brown color. Rawon is usually served with rice, bean sprouts, salted egg, empal (fried beef), and prawn crackers. As within the spectrum of brown color, it manifests nature, durability, reliability, strong robust, friendly and warm. Needless to say, looking from its origin of the dish namely East Java. Socio culturally, the East Javanese are familiar with the characteristics of bold, outspoken, tough yet friendly and

warm. Apparently, this cosmetic brand tries to materialize these traits into this brown-based shade color to bring effect of bold yet amiable women look.

Serabi

Serabi is a traditional food from Java. The main ingredients are rice flour, coconut milk, and salt. Nowadays, modern serabi has various flavors like chocolate, pandan, or vanilla. This highlighter is inspired from the color of serabi, very pale yellowish-orange shades that are close to beige. The color name comes from the distinctive color of the Champagne drink. Beige color represents simplicity and comfort. In modern times, this color symbolizes work, modernism and tranquility. The sense of simplicity and modernism undoubtedly fit modern and career women as part of Reindoll's market share.

Arum manis

Pink blush color inspired from arum manis or cotton candy. Pink blush is primarily a color from the red color family. It is a mixture of pink and red color. This shade embedded the nuance of delicate, sweet, spring-like and feminine. This color for blush is chosen as it is suitable for almost all skin tones, from light, tan, and dark skin tones which can be seen in Indonesian women complexion. It shares a natural fresher appearance regardless the make-up color tone they apply.

Martabak

The basic ingredients for making martabak are flour, eggs, sugar, salt, liquid milk, baking soda and butter. Those ingredients resulted in a delicious yellowish-brown dish. The color of martabak inspired Reinedoll to create Bronzer with a warm impression to the face. Bronzer is used to give a tan effect to the face like exposure to sunlight. This becomes one of the distinctive features of Indonesian women skin tone. They are most well-known by their tanned skin which is closely related to the sense of exotism and sensualism. By applying this bronzer, it accentuates the unique, exotic and warm aura of the users.

To put them altogether, the color palettes that Reinedoll launched attempt to foster the local prominence through the selection of the popular traditional delicacies around the country. It would not be overstatement that these represent Indonesian authenticity and identity to bring up the color palette inspired by the prominent local dishes. Accordingly, these shade colors by its embedded symbolism speak on behalf of Indonesian women who are amiable, calm, cheerful, modest, modern, warm, exotic and dependent. Simply speaking, these warm spectrums of colors are able to articulate the unique and authentic Indonesian women.

4.2 Motifs of Performing Cross-Category Products as Persuasive Strategies

The stiff competition in cosmetic industry forced the producers to keep innovating their product. Reinedoll is one of brands who dare to make unusual breakthrough in the market. In the mid of K-Beauty flooding in Indonesia market, Reinedolls initiate to bring up the local culinary to attract the market.

To blend beauty and dishes into makeup palette is considered unique way. Instead of using foreign culinary names, Reinedolls brings up some names of local delicacies like soto, rendang, and martabak. These names somehow do not only show familiarity of phonetic sounds, but also, offer the concepts of taste and color that Indonesian people have been familiar with. [20] affirms that because of its effect on liking, familiarity plays a role in decisions about all sorts of things, including the beauty face palette we are about to purchase and later to use. Reinedolls smartly highlights this naming choice and understands that there is an unconscious way that familiarity affects liking, safety, and self-belonging.

Furthermore, [21] argues that color sends a subliminal message, one which plays critical role in success or failure. Apparently, Reinedolls has gone through a thorough research to determine what colors to present in front of Indonesian customers. This company is aware that the harmonious color combinations would bring positive impact on their sale.

As Indonesian people have been long and frequently exposed to balado, gudeg, serabi, and arum manis in the past, this local cosmetic company realizes that their consumers' attitude and liking toward certain beauty products carrying certain delicacies' names can be greatly influenced. Through the choice of warm color shades relating to familiar food colors and tastes, Reinedoll's Cita Rasa Face & Eye Palette strongly persuades potential consumers that they are part of bigger safe community namely Indonesia. Being familiar with Indonesian food and their names, the consumers are said to like the food as well as feel satisfied when consuming and finally to feel safe in using 'the food' and secure to the community where they belong socially.

5 Concluding Remarks

The study implies that innovative breakthrough in the highly competitive cosmetic industry is obligatory. Oftentimes, the brand marketers release their product uniquely to attract the buyers. Reinedoll through its Cita Rasa face and eye palette has proved it. By selecting warm color shades relating to familiar food colors and tastes, Reinedoll's Cita Rasa Face & Eye Palette strongly articulates the characters of Indonesian women. Accordingly, these shade colors by its embedded symbolism speak on behalf of Indonesian women who are amiable and calm. Furthermore, it highly persuades potential consumers that they are part of bigger safe community namely Indonesia. Being familiar with Indonesian food and their names, the consumers are said to like the food as well as feel satisfied when consuming and finally to feel safe in using 'the food' and secure to the community where they belong socially.

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