



Semiotics in Gastrodiplomacy of Nusa Gastronomi Restaurant in Jakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract: Diplomacy is one of a country's strategies for conveying political messages between countries in regional and global areas. Indonesia is a country that has a variety of cultural resources, including a variety of traditional culinary delights. However, there is no research that explores semiotics in Indonesian culinary gastrodiplomacy. This study aims to explore the semiotic process in gastrodiplomacy carried out by Nusa Gastronomy Restaurant. Qualitative methods are used with Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) in analyzing data obtained in the field. The findings of this study state that icons, index, and symbols in gastrodiplomacy carried out by Nusa Gastronomy Restaurant are a translation of traditional Indonesian culinary products into modern culinary products.

Keyword: Gastrodiplomacy, Traditional Culinary, Semiotics.

1. Introduction

Food has been used for cultural communication between countries (Mayer-Heft & Samuel-Azran, 2017). Food & beverage products and services play an important role in an event of diplomacy (Suntikul, 2019). Food & beverages even consumed by people between two countries, in the case of *Saprahan* (eating tradition that developed in the Malaysia and Indonesia community) in the Sambas area, Kalimantan Island (Karyana, 2021).

Indonesian traditional food diplomacy has been held since the era of kingdom, for example *Megibung* gastrodiplomacy of Karangasem Kingdom in Bali (Sulistiyawati, 2019). Indonesian diplomacy used a traditional culinary as a soft tool in political communication (Karyana, 2021). The term of gastrodiplomacy occurred while there is a study of sign (Naghizadeh, 2021) on translation from traditional culinary into modern and innovative food & beverage products and services in tourism (Naim et al., 2022).

However, since there is no research that explores semiotics in Indonesian culinary gastrodiplomacy, the semiotic approach, fundamentally using postmodernism paradigm, is the novelty of the research. This paper aims to explore the semiotics on icon, index, and symbol on the Indonesian culinary gastrodiplomacy of Nusa Gastronomi Restaurant Jakarta, Indonesia.

In the semiotics analysis, Nusa Gastronomi Restaurant is a technical actors (van der Duim et al., 2017) that symbolized a place producing special menu of gastrodiplomacy. The restaurant related to gastronomy chef (research participant) as a social actor (Rachman et al., 2022) in making food & beverage production and services using molecular science and technology in gastrodiplomacy.

2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach based on the postmodernism paradigm (Creswell, 2014), using double hermeneutics (phenomenology, hermeneutic, and idiographic), known as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Alase, 2017). This method is able to collect findings symbol, index, and symbol of semiotics in the making process and services of gastrodiplomacy.

The researchers had observed Nusa Gastronomi Restaurant as a research object (Smith, 2017). The restaurant is located in Jakarta, which is specialized in gastronomy culinary. Food and beverage (F&B) production and services are the two main objects observed in this paper (See Table 1). Data collection had interviewed the Gastronomy Chef (P1) as the owner of the restaurant.

Table 1. Observation of Food & Beverage Product and Service

No.	Media	Symbol
1	Food & Beverage Production	Icon, index, and
2	Food & Beverage Service	symbol

Source: Researchers (2023)

Purposive and snowball samplings were employed to select the participants. The participants are the social (Beard et al., 2016). Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observation, supported by the field notes, audio visual, photos, and secondary information. Interviews and observation are deemed valuable for this type of study built upon the constructivism paradigm (Creswell, 2014). IPA underpins data analysis to the philosophical process of Food & Beverage Product and Service in Gastrodiplomacy. Trustworthiness in this study considers credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Elo et al., 2014).

3. Results and Discussion

The study of semiotic in gastrodiplomacy represents a triadic thing: (1) the sign, (2) the form, and (3) the interpreter (Bonarou, 2021). The sign in this research is Indonesian culinary, then culinary produced and served at the table of diplomatic events, and finally, it translated as a representation of political approach of Indonesian country and national identity (See Figure 1).

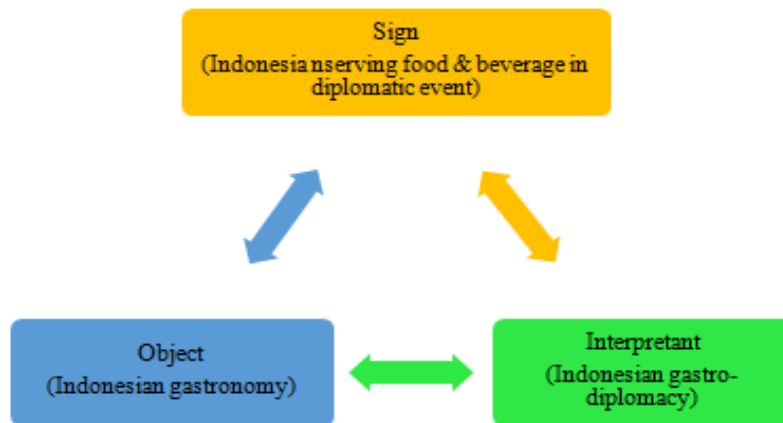


Fig 1. Sign in Indonesia culinary gastrodiplomacy
Source: Researchers (2023)

Semiotic character in gastrodiplomacy on Indonesian culinary which is described into icon, index, and symbol. The icon is a general representation in Indonesian culinary that later transformed into gastrodiplomacy phenomenon. Indonesian culinary icon represented a variety spicy food and sweetened beverage. The index is the making process in re-design, re-packaging, and re-model on appetizers, main course, and dessert translated into gastrodiplomacy by a professional chef. The chef, as a social actor, uses science and technology to create a transformation of a common Indonesian culinary into Indonesia gastrodiplomacy.

The symbol is a description of Geography Indication (GI) of food materials where planted and harvested. The people (farmers) have their own culture to grow the crops and other food ingredients; for example they grow organic and original rice planting as a tradition. The semiotic appeared in the innovative new Indonesian food productions, and food services that introduced to state guest within diplomatic process by Indonesia government. Indonesian gastrodiplomacy as a representation of archipelago country, where natural resources from mountain to sea is explored by professional chef (See Figure 2).

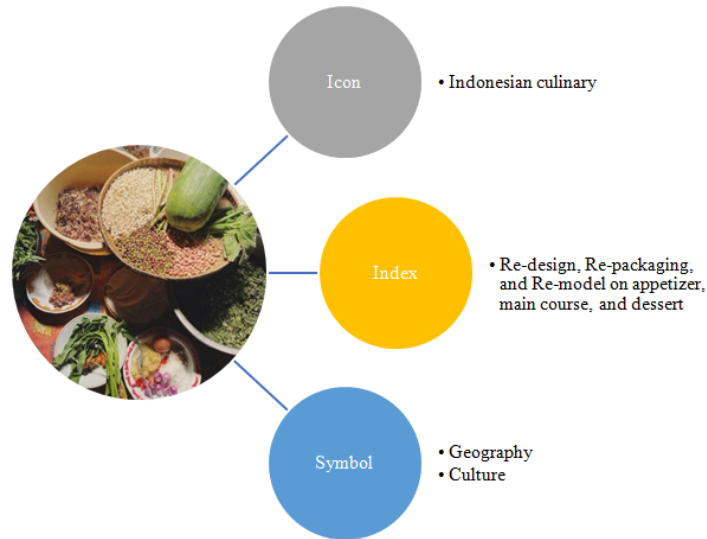


Fig 2. Semiotics in Indonesia culinary gastrodiplomacy
Source: Researchers (2023)

Icon in Indonesia gastrodiplomacy

Indonesia has started to look and try to carry out Indonesian culinary to implement as a soft diplomacy as a whole and optimally, One type of soft diplomacy and cultural diplomacy is currently the most frequent and widely used is gastrodiplomacy (Pompongmetta, 2019).

Participant 1 stated that traditional Indonesian culinary is an icon in semiotic study. Traditional culinary is food made with traditional ingredients and methods, in which the habit or way of eating a food also has a certain way or a unique (traditional) way that has become a habit of a society, as follows.

“Indonesia has a variety of foods in different production, packaging, services, and even for special occasion, thus a basic in gastrodiplomacy (P1)”

Icon of traditional food is also a form of expression of culture, identity, heritage, and lifestyle of a society. Apart from being made with traditional ingredients or methods, traditional food is also only obtained from certain local regions of a country, which are only found in that area (Arefieva et al., 2021). Development of traditional food itself, proceed into an index (in semiotic study) is a cultural identity, history, and a form of geographical representation of the area itself, which is usually eaten every day or quite often, and very seasonally or consumed on special occasions according to the culture of the region (Mustonen, 2006) (See Figure 3a, 3b, and 3c)



Fig 3a. Appetizer of otak-otak (fish cake), Pandeglang, Banten as icon of appetizer
Source: Researchers (2023)



Fig 3b. Tongsen kambing (lamb curry), icon from Solo, Central Java
Source: Researchers (2023)



Fig 3c. Klepon cake as a dessert, icon from Pasuruan, East Java
Source: Researchers (2023)

Index in Indonesia gastrodiplomacy

Gastrodiplomacy has its basic in the phenomenon of culinary presence in a country, including Indonesia. The basic of Indonesian gastrodiplomacy come from the diverse and traditional nature of Indonesian culinary delights (Yayusman et al., 2023). Indonesian culinary gastrodiplomacy is a process of transformation from various traditional dishes to dishes that have a modern style (Kurniawan et al., 2019).

Participant 1 stated that there is a process of translation and transformation into appetizer, main course, and dessert from variety Indonesian traditional food from different geographical indication, as follow: / *“Our gastronomy product always referred to geography and cultural entities in Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (unity in diversity), then transform and translate into gastronomy in the shape of meals course (P1)”*.

Index as a process of semiotic revealed the transformation from traditional culinary into modern delight includes re-design, re-packaging, and re-model (Rockower, 2012), and then so called as a semiotic of sign (signifier-signified), and index (Papadima & Kourdis, 2022). Indonesian gastronomy played as a signified (concept) of the semiotic.

The index is not only in food production, but also expands into food service. It is usually served with more than one type of food at one opportunity, where the various kinds of food will be served simultaneously or in sequence for consumption by consumers (Golinvaux & Evagelou, 2017; Stalmirska, 2021), and course meals served into an appetizer, main course, and dessert (Rockower, 2014).

Index in Re-design, Re-packaging, and Re-model of Appetizer

Appetizers are usually made as attractive as possible but simple in the form of small portions with the main aim of arousing consumers' appetite before the main course is served. The appetizer is also a determinant of the success of course later. It means that if the appetizer served has good taste and quality, the main course that will be served later will also taste more delicious.



Fig 4. Appetizer *otak-otak* (fish cake) from Pandeglang , Banten Transform into modern gastrodiplomacy in Re-design, Re-packaging, and Re-model Source: Researchers (2023)

Index in Re-design, Re-packaging, and Re-model of Main course

The modernization has made traditional Indonesian food more valuable, both in terms of beauty, nutrition and taste, as evidenced by the fact that more and more people, including the international community (Papadima& Kourdis, 2022), are increasingly interested in and amazed by traditional Indonesian food(Yayusman et al., 2023).There is a simulacra process in semiotics that is carried out in the re-design of gastrodiplomacy because it is able to produce the same product in terms of name and taste of food but differs in the form of display presentation (See Figure 4).



Fig 5. Main course of *Tongseng kambing* (lamb curry) from Solo, Central Java Transform into modern gastrodiplomacy in Re-design, Re-packaging, and Re-model Source: Researchers (2023)

Index in Re-design, Re-packaging, and Re-model of Dessert

The final order of the sequence of this dish is dessert, where this dessert is the dessert as well as the climax of the sequence of dishes that have been served (Lahne & Zelliner, 2015). Dessert is made in the form of a sweet dish as a refresher after the two main dishes, namely the appetizer and main course which are savory dishes, where the sweet given from the dessert also gives a feeling of pleasure and happiness after having meals (Khan, 2020).

A visual communication after transformation from traditional culinary into modern product and services is due to the use of science and technology in the making process of gastronomy (Carral et al., 2020). Figure 6 shows that a translation in dessert services, where visual has transformed in shape, size, and color.



Fig 6. *Klepon* cake as dessert, from Pasuruan, East Java
After transform into modern gastrodiplomacy in Re-design, Re-packaging, and Re-model
Source: Researchers (2023)

Symbol

Geography

Gastrodiplomacy is how we can tell about Indonesian food to non-Indonesian people outside and can invite other people to try Indonesian food not only in their country, but also attract them to visit Indonesia as tourist (Stalmirska, 2021). This food and its agriculture production shaped a social construction of Indonesian tourism destination. The destination is constructed by tourist attraction that correlated to visual in semiotic. Visual of the Indonesia agriculture shows a main staple food of rice, spices, fish, and meat (Naim et al., 2022), and a symbol of Indonesia geography (Indarto, 2013; Rachman et al., 2022) (See Figure 7)



Fig 7. Visual of Indonesian agriculture and food geography
Source: Researchers (2023)

Culture

With an interest in the origins and originality of traditional Indonesian food, people will be motivated to come to Indonesia, to the areas where the traditional food originates to learn more, explore, and experience the true authentic taste (Nair, 2021)(See Figure 8). According to finding in interview to participant 1, symbols of Indonesia country delivered in food geography and culture, are as follow:

"We produce gastronomy and present food culture to foreign diplomats in Indonesia, as well as road shows visiting several countries abroad (P1).



Fig 8. Visual of Indonesian food and local culture, Mollo tribe, East Nusa Tenggara
Source: Researchers (2023)

Food represents diverse ethnics in Indonesia. Starting from different geography indicators that implicate different agriculture and staple food, food and beverage production, different taste (spicy or not), and type of services on the table (Trihartono et al., 2020).

4. Conclusion

Gastrodiplomacy studies with a semiotic approach found that signs are created through the process of meaning by correlating icons, indexes, and symbols. The icons in this semiotic process are the existence of various Indonesian traditional culinary delights from different regions. Indexes in semiotics reflect the existence of traditional Indonesian culinary, which has been transformed into modern culinary which is produced and served using molecular science and cooking technology. Symbols in semiotics in this study reinforce Indonesian geography and culture which diplomats from other countries understand.

Future research on the semiotics in gastrodiplomacy should be held broader in food science and technology development in Indonesia than only in food taste in one restaurant. Nevertheless, Indonesian traditional foods provided main resources to create the symbol of variety gastrodiplomacy.

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