

Consumers' Perceptions on Semantic Opacity of J.CO Donuts & Coffee Menu

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ABSTRACT

Consumers' perception plays a noteworthy role in determining a menu. Without a doubt, the first thing that the consumers will look at before deciding on their food choices is that menus and the menus are closely related to consumers' perceptions. Therefore, lots of culinary businesses such as cafes and restaurants utilize strategy by creating unique food names in their menu list in order to attract more consumers. However, in opting for unique and appealing food names, the menu planning should consider the compatibility between the meaning and the food name. This study focuses on consumers' perception on semantic opacity of J.CO Donuts & Coffee menu. The purpose of the study is to depict the perception of consumers towards semantic opacity menu name as well as the relation of food names, personal reference of food appearance, and meaning. This study applies a descriptive qualitative method by using an interview instrument and uses several theories, namely visual appearance of food by Kramer (1973) and a value triangle, an adaptation theory from semantic triangle by Ogden & Richards (1946). The result shows that the meaning of food is indirectly related to food name since the meaning is not clearly stated to the food.

Keywords: consumers' perception, semantic opacity, food name, culinary business.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, naming food and beverages menu becomes noteworthy in the culinary business. This happens since menu as the main part of the marketing strategy plays a role in influencing consumer preferences towards food and beverages to be purchased. Without a doubt, the first thing that consumers will look at before deciding on their food choices is that menus, and the menus are closely related to consumers' perceptions. According to Hanna & Wozniak (2013), perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensations into a meaningful whole. In this case, consumers' perceptions can be interpreted as a key for culinary businessman since it can be a measure of the success or failure of the product being offered. Therefore, lots of culinary businesses such as cafes and restaurants utilize strategy by creating unique food names in their menu list in order to attract more consumers. Generally, these unique names can be formed either by combining words or forming a new word of English. In this regard, English is used as a means of naming menus since it can be a representation of today's modernization. The use of unique food names in English does not only exist in cafes and restaurants in abroad but also in cafes and restaurants in Indonesia such as in Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, Burger King, J.CO Donuts & Coffee, and many more.

In addition, opting for unique and appealing food names is quite essential indeed, but considering the compatibility between the meaning and the food name itself is equally

important. In such a case, the relationship between food names and their meanings becomes one of the factors for consumers to determine what food they will buy. In the matter of meaning, a branch of linguistics called semantics has existed to face this phenomenon. According to Kreidler (2002), semantics is the study of the words meaning that is also the main study of the human mind-thought process, cognition, and conceptualization. Hence, people are able to grasp the sentences more easily and better in identifying the language meaning through interpreting the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences by using semantics. In relation to a degree, semantics can be divided into two, namely semantic transparency and semantic opacity. Semantic transparency is the degree to which the meaning of a compound word or an idiom can be inferred from its elements (or morphemes) and conversely, semantic opacity is the degree to which the meaning of a compound word or an idiom that is not transparent in meaning (Cruse, 1986 as cited in Saputra, 2018).

According to Astiandani (2020), most of the food names in one of the local brand cafes are considered to have transparent meanings, whereas there are only a few food names that have an opaque meaning. It denotes that in most cases, semantic transparency is used in the menu list due to their clear meaning that can describe the intended food. For example, the food name *triple burger with cheese* can be easily known its meaning by identifying each morpheme of the compound words so that it can be well understood that it is a kind of burger that is made of three slices of beef with cheese added. On the contrary, there are very few food names with opaque meanings. This occurrence happens since it is hard to find the meaning seeing from each part such as in the food name *twisty* which means that it is a roll containing fried chicken pieces and topped with lettuce and tomato slices, wrapped in a piece of skin with a soft texture. The example of this food name cannot be easily known its meaning since each component does not show a clear meaning.

Moreover, the consumers' perceptions on semantic opacity in food names can be investigated by connecting the relation between food names and its appearances. According to Kramer (1973 as cited in Hutchings, 1977), there are three parts of appearance namely optical properties (color and visual flavor including ingredient), physical form (visual texture including shape, size, texture), and mode of presentation (properties of the marketed product). Moreover, the thematic category of unique food names can be determined by using referential theory by Ogden & Richards (1946). The referential theory is the words or phrases of meaning of things (or behaviors, qualities) while semantic triangle is used to show the relation of name, reference, and referent of things. Those theories link to Rosenblatt's theory (1994) of transactional reader response which distinguished between aesthetic stance (focus on perception) and efferent stance (focus on the information of the text).

Due to its difficulty in grasping the meaning, the semantic opacity is less appropriate for culinary business that requires transparency in food names. However, several cafes and restaurants in Indonesia still name their food with semantic opacity; one of them is a local brand cafe named J.CO Donuts & Coffee. As a cafe originating from Indonesia, J.CO Donuts & Coffee creates an English unique name in their food menu list. This cafe is a local indeed but it serves international menu names. Furthermore, this local brand is chosen due to its rapid development in the culinary business which is marked by the number of outlets opened overseas. From these phenomena, the consumers' perceptions on semantic opacity of the food names at J.CO Donuts & Coffee appeals to be investigated. As stated by Astiandani (2020), the semantic opacity at J.CO Donuts & Coffee exists in *forest glam* and *glazzy* food names which are considered to have opaque meaning.

Several studies of the meaning of food names have been held in the prior research. The first is the research done by Tešanović et al. in 2016 which investigated how the names of dishes that are associated with health, sentimentality, and ethnic origin have an effect on the guest's choice of food. The results of the study show that the names of dishes have significant effects on the guest's choice of food since most consumers choose the food based on the name that has ecological and healthy attributes in front of it (Tešanović et al., 2016). The second research has been done by Saputra in 2018 which examines the semantic transparency and opacity of Mc Donalds product's names. The results indicate that there are a big number of transparent product's names compared to the opaque product's names (Saputra, 2018). With reference to the previous study, this study examines the research related to consumers' perceptions on semantic opacity of J.CO Donuts & Coffee menu. There are several distinctions between this study and some previous studies. Teseanovic et al. conduct the research in Serbia with the main focus on the impact of the dish names on the guest's choice of food. Besides, Saputra who conducts research in Indonesia has the major focus on the transparency and opacity of Mc Donalds product's names. In this case, the previous studies have not analyzed more about the consumers' perceptions of the opacity in food names. With those previous studies, the study intends to figure out: 1) what mental image do consumers form for *forest glam* and *glazzy* food menus in J.CO Donuts & Coffee? 2) How is the relation of food names, personal reference of food appearance, and meaning?

CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION AND FOOD APPEARANCE

Consumers become part of the key to the success of a business; without consumers, no business organization can succeed (Pathak, 2016). Thus, the consumers' perception towards products has always become a great concern to the business owner. According to Solomon (1995 as cited in Pathak, 2016), consumer is concerned with the processes by which individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or determine products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. Besides, Kotler and Armstrong (2001 as cited in Phanthong & Settanaranon, 2011) defined perception as the process by which people select, organize, and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world. Therefore, perception is the initial step in consumer purchasing decision process to choose the stimuli from their atmosphere. Stimuli are any units of inputs from objects that are perceived by anyone of the five senses-sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell (Wells & Prenskey, 1996 as cited in Phanthong & Settanaranon, 2011). These five senses of human will be unique to each individual depending on the quality of humans' sensory receptors (e.g. eyesight or hearing) and the intensity of the stimuli to which ones are exposed (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000).

The process of perception consists of three elements namely exposure, attention, and interpretation within four steps: begin with receiving information from outside, selecting information, organizing information, and end with interpreting (Kotler, 2005 as cited in Phanthong & Settanaranon, 2011). First, receiving information (exposure) includes a number of variables that influence the consumers' perception such as the nature of product, its physical attributes, the brand name, the packaging design, and the advertisements. Second, selecting information (attention) is closely related to how individuals will perceive information differently according to their needs, expectations and past experiences. Third, organizing information regards the process of how the ones organize information in physical configuration; thus, they can interpret into a rational overview. Last, interpreting information (interpretation) is the process by which the consumer will interpret the selected stimuli after

the selection and organization process has been accomplished. This process is also uniquely individual since it serves as a basis of consumers' expectations and previous experiences (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000).

Furthermore, it is important for businessmen to grasp the nature of perception in order to communicate their messages efficiently to consumers since the way people perceive and interpret may vary depending on their perspective. In this case, according to Kramer (1973 as cited in Hutchings, 1977), consumers' perception can be seen from the appearance of the product which is divided into three parts, namely optical properties, physical form, and mode of presentation. Optical properties include color, gloss, translucency, and visual flavor of the product. Perception of color (and of appearance in general) is a unique phenomenon to individuals where color must imply on the definition of the product. Gloss and translucency is about glint and light reflection, while visual flavor can be seen from the appearance, particularly color. Thus, color and visual flavor are the only attributes that are used in this study. Moreover, physical form includes the visual texture of the product such as shape, size, and texture. Product shape and size are obviously basic attributes and surface texture is an important quality of food appearance. Whereas, mode of presentation is related to the way the product is presented that includes product name, wrap, and price. These three parts may create an image that leads directly to the key decisions of "buy or not to buy". However, this study will only use optical properties (color and visual flavor) and physical form since they are considered suitable for identifying the food menu displayed on the restaurant website, not in a storefront at a restaurant. These three attributes are also used in Hutchings' study (1977) which investigates the way these attributes are influenced by time and order of perception.

SEMANTIC TRANSPARENCY AND OPACITY IN MENU

Semantic transparency is widely believed to affect the processing of compound words. It has been described as the degree to which the meaning of the constituent is retained in the meaning of the whole compound, but also as the degree to which the meaning of the compound is predictable from the meaning of the constituents. Furthermore, semantic transparency has been operationalized in various ways (Libben, Gagné, & Dressler, 2020). For example, since semantic transparency is a part of linguistics communication, it can be applied either in written text or in spoken (oral). On the contrary, opacity has been understood firstly as a failure of the application of substitution of identical principle and later as accessibility relations holding between possible words. However, opacity in the semantics of natural languages ought to be characterized truth-functional (Marmo, 2005). It means that opacity has been shown that propositional attitudes contribute to the meaning of expressions by affecting inference.

The compound words cannot be separated from their meanings since they are relevant to each other. Ullmann (1972) as stated in Noumianty (2016) that each compound consists of arbitrary and opaque words, without any relation to sound and sense. Seeing from those statements, the type of meaning in compounds is divided into transparent meaning and opaque meaning. Transparent meaning defines that it has predicted meaning seeing from the elements or explicitly expressed such as *cool bag* which means a kind of bag that is used to keep food cool. Meanwhile, opaque meaning cannot be predicted from its components. For instance, *greengage* is neither a kind of gage nor a kind of green, but rather depicts a small greenish-yellow plum.

REFERENTIAL THEORY ON FOOD NAMES

The referential theory is the meaning of word that lies in what it shows in the world (Lycan, 2019). Certain kinds of marks and noises have meanings which mean that every meaning is referring to something. It mostly refers to the expression. In this case, Lycan (2019) argued that words are similar to labels; they are signs that symbolize, label, signify, or indicate to objects. For example, teaspoon denotes (the thing) spoon. In the world, the same word can have different meanings, like mentioned that two expressions can have dissimilar meanings but have the same referent. For instance, the word *cake* can be a noun that the meaning is a sweet food made with a mixture of flour, eggs, fat, and sugar and it also can be a verb and the meaning is to cover something or someone thickly with a substance that then dries out. Therefore, it relates to the symbol (name) and the object.

The meaning and the name of an object can be related or not related to each other. With the intention to grasp the connection between name, meaning, and an object, a semantic triangle by Ogden and Richards (1946) can be used to analyze as follows.

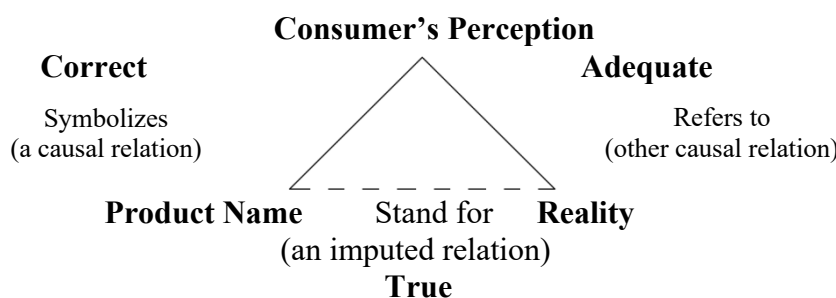


Figure 1. A value triangle by Widyastuti & Astiandani (2020) (adapted from Ogden & Richards, 1946)

Symbol refers to the word that invokes the referent throughout the reference mental processes, while reference shows the memory realm where recollection of late occurrence and context happens. Those two components are incomplete without the last component which is called the referent. Referent refers to an object which is believed and that generates the opinion stored on the area of thought (Ogden & Richards, 1946). There is no relevant connection between the symbol and the referent (Ogden & Richards, 1946). Besides, according to Ogden & Richards (in Maulana, 2016), there is a relationship, whether it is direct or indirect, between the reference and the referent. It implies that to find out why something has a certain name, we have to grasp the information pertaining to it.

In addition, a noun or noun phrase that indicates a certain thing, whether it is a person, a place or an object is called as proper name. The examples are Barrack Obama, Mississippi River, and the National Monument. In this case, food names are included in the branch of proper name since the noun or noun phrase denotes to a particular object. Food as a basic part of human life which produces energy and nutrient cannot be separated especially in culinary business (Jacobs, Mursu, & Meyer, 2012). Opting for food names in the menu list becomes a main part of the marketing strategy since the name is a concise representation of the food. For instance, in beverage name *avocado cake*. This is simply the name of the ingredient used which is followed by the specific types of food (Ojugo, 2010). Moreover, food name can also be taken from the brand such as in *richicken* and *richoco* (Ojugo, 2010). Both examples use a small part of their brand name as the first element, that is *ri* taken from *Richeese Factory*.

TRANSACTIONAL READER RESPONSE THEORY

The reader response theory is grounded upon the assumption that a literary work occurs in a reciprocal relationship between reader and text (Mart, 2019). This occurs when the reader uncovers literary work and relates it to individual experiences. However, the reader response theory is not only applied to literary texts but also to a broader context, namely literature. In this case, factual texts such as recipes, news reports, and menus are also called literature so that they can be a part of reader response theory. Since the theory is based on the assumption, the reader's experience plays a role as much as the text for making interpretations. Tyson (2006) outlined the components of reader response theory into 2 parts, namely: (1) the reader's role cannot be eliminated from our conceiving of literature and (2) readers actively consume the meaning delivered to them by an objective literary text; rather they passively create the meaning they discover in literature. It is in line with Rosenblatt (1994 as cited in Mart, 2019) that in reader response theory, there is an aesthetic or efferent point of view that is the made by reader related the meaning form the text. The word aesthetic is picked since it suggests on perceptions, feelings, attitudes generated by the word in the text while efferent stance focuses on information in the text. In this point of view, clear answer related to the meaning of the text is expected to be given by the reader. For instance, people read novels and poems to create the aesthetic stance while people read manual and recipes to create the efferent viewpoint.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method to examine the data. This type is employed since the way to gain the data requires the application of this approach. This study focused on consumers' perceptions on semantic opacity of J.CO Donuts & Coffee menu. The qualitative data are entailed since the main data is not numeric but in the form of words or sentences. Moreover, the data will not use statistical analysis, and this study does not prove any hypothesis. This is in line with Miles, Huberman, Saldaña (2014) which argued that the types of qualitative data are in the form of handwritten, audio or video recordings, and documents. Moreover, the subject of the research is the consumers of J.CO Donuts & Coffee with the criteria that they have tasted some food from J.CO Donuts & Coffee. The object of this research is two opaque food names in J.CO Donuts & Coffee, namely *forest glam* and *glazzy*. These opaque food names are taken from Astiandani (2020). In addition, the setting of food names covers in one location that is Indonesia.

The data in this research are the text interview of twelve consumers of J.CO Donuts & Coffee consisting of 3 males and 9 females. The source of the data was taken from the consumers' responses towards the opacity in food names. In addition, the text interview and documentation methods are primarily used in this study. This study utilizes those two methods as data collection techniques since the data for the first research question is collected from the consumers' response and the data for the second research question is from taking note the opaque food names in J.CO Donuts & Coffee that is related to consumers' response. There are some steps of how the data are collected, that are: (1) creating the questions for interview. The questions of the text interview were as follows (a) why did you choose *forest glam* and *glazzy* menus?; and (b) do those two foods match with your perception?; (2) doing text interview to the J.CO Donuts & Coffee's consumers through personal chat in WhatsApp; (3) analyzing the data obtained based on the appearances, namely optical properties, physical form, and mode of presentation; and (4) classifying the consumers' response into specified categories.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers used self-developed questionnaire as an instrument for this study. It was adapted from Kramer's theory about consumers' perception on foods involving three parts, namely optical properties, physical form, and mode of presentation. The first part covers color and visual flavor, the second one is texture, and the last encompasses the food names (in this study, *forest glam* and *glazzy*). How Opaque names contribute to the consumers' decision of buying the selected menus and satisfying them will be the matters of the study.

CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION ABOUT *FOREST GLAM*

Understanding perception determines how consumers choose the product intertwine the relationship between product name and its value. Table 1 presents the consumers' reason of choosing the *forest glam* menu.

Table 1. Reason of choosing the *forest glam*

Motivation	Number	Percent
Exotic name and taste	4	29%
Attractiveness of name and appearance	1	7%
Curiosity in its opaque names	4	29%
Names represent the flavor	2	14%
Ingredient	1	7%
Unusual name	1	7%
Usual name	1	7%
Total	14	100%

Based on the research findings, 7 categories are found. The exotic name and taste as well as curiosity in its opaque names are the most influential motivation that determines most of the consumers in choosing *forest glam*, followed by names that represent the flavor as the third influential motivation. Nevertheless, consumers are also motivated by several factors such as the attractiveness of name and appearance, ingredient that is used to make *forest glam*, its unusual name, and its usual name. For the last four motivations, they receive the same percentage that is 7%.

Table 2. The reference of *forest glam*

Interpretation	Number	Percent
Taste like eating a coco crunch	3	21%
The evolution of black forest	5	36%
Chocolate dominance	3	21%
Green and lush like a forest	2	14%
Colorful	1	7%
Total	14	100%

From the consumers' interpretation, the evolution of black forest has the highest percentage (36%) while the taste like eating a coco crunch and chocolate dominance position in the second-order with 21%. Moreover, 14% of consumers are interpreted *forest glam* as green and lush like a forest due to the fact that there is the word 'forest' place in the initial of the

menu name. Then, for the colorful interpretation, it gains only 7%.

Table 3. The value of *forest glam*

Reality	Number	Percent
Name is mismatch with the taste	6	50%
Name match with the taste	6	50%
Total	12	100%

The collected data showed that reality is balanced. For the first category, ‘name is mismatch with the taste’ category gains 50% and for the second category, ‘name match with the taste’ also obtains 50%. In order to make a clear depiction, below is the value triangle that represents the consumers’ perception towards *forest glam*.

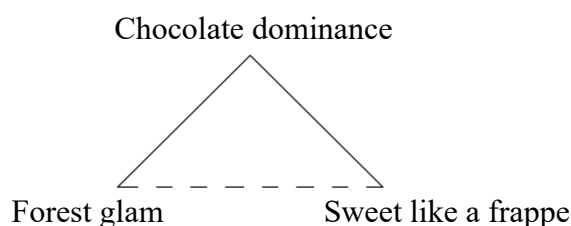


Figure 2. A value triangle of *forest glam*

Figure 2 shows that the reality of *forest glam* describes donut that is sweet like a frappe. It interprets from the consumers’ perception that is donut with chocolate dominance. In this case, the meaning is indirectly related to food since the meaning is not clearly stated to the donut.

CONSUMERS’ PERCEPTION ABOUT *GLAZZY*

Conceiving the perception specifies how consumers select the product as well as in relation to the product name and its value. Table 4 displays the consumers’ reason of choosing the *glazzy* menu.

Table 4. Reason of choosing *glazzy*

Motivation	Number	Percent
Exotic name and taste	4	31%
Attractiveness of name and appearance	1	8%
Curiosity in its opaque names	4	31%
Popularity	2	15%
Unusual name	1	8%
Usual name	1	8%
Total	13	100%

From Table 4, it can be concluded that exotic name and taste as well as curiosity in its opaque names are more motivating for most of consumers (31%). It can be seen from their statements regarding the *glazzy* menu choices, that they pick *glazzy* since it has an exotic name and taste so that they curious about its opaque names. *Glazzy* is also chosen due to its high popularity (15%) among other menus such as *avocado dicaprio* and *caviar chocolate*. However, the last

three factors, namely attractiveness of name and appearance, unusual name, and usual name receive a similar percentage, that is 8%.

Table 5. The reference of *glazzy*

Interpretation	Number	Percent
It represents the flavor of soft sugar	3	25%
Honey taste (glaze)	2	17%
Tone of 'glossy' or 'glassy'	3	25%
It satisfies the curiosity	1	8%
The ingredient was supposed butter or margarine	2	17%
It tasted sweet and light	1	8%
Total	12	100%

For the reference of *glazzy*, there are found 6 interpretations with it represents the flavor of soft sugar and tone of 'glossy' or 'glassy' as the most common interpretation (25%). Another interpretation such as honey taste (glaze) and the ingredient was supposed butter or margarine positions in the second-order with 17%. Some consumers also interpret that *glazzy* satisfies curiosity and it tasted sweet and light (8%).

Table 6. The value of *glazzy*

Reality	Number	Percent
Name is mismatch with the taste	1	8%
Name match with the taste	4	33%
Name represents the flavor	1	8%
Name represents the appearance	3	25%
Name represents the ingredient	1	8%
Misconception of name	2	17%
Total	12	100%

The data showed that there are 6 realities on the value of *glazzy* with 33% of the consumers rate *glazzy* with 'name match with the taste'. For the 'name represents the appearance' reality, it obtains 25% and for the 'misconception of name', it gains 17%. The last 3 values, namely name is mismatch with the taste, name represents the flavor, and name represents the ingredient are rated in equal (8%). In order to make a clear depiction, below is the value triangle that represents the consumers' perception towards *glazzy*.

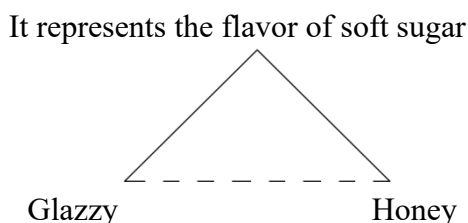


Figure 3. A value triangle of *glazzy*

Figure 3 denotes that the reality of *glazzy* describes donut that has a sweet taste from honey. It interprets from the consumers' perception that is donut that represents the flavor of soft sugar. In such a case, the meaning is indirectly related to food since the meaning is not clearly stated to the donut.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, customers' perception is extremely dominant in determining a menu. By applying reader response theory in consumer interviews, the reason of choosing the menu can be discovered. In case of *forest glam* and *glazzy*, seven reasons of choosing the menu are found. The reasons found are then associated with references and values of the menu so that consumers' perceptions are revealed. In the meaning of *forest glam* and *glazzy*, it is indirectly related to food name since the meaning is not clearly stated to the food. By discovering the consumers' perceptions, the manager of culinary business is able to decide what steps will be done next (in case of naming menu) to attract more consumers. Nowadays, consumers are requiring a value of product. If the value does not fulfill the consumers' perception, there is no guarantee that the culinary business will be success. Therefore, the customers' perception data provide a very fundamental key in creating the menu names.

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