

EXPLORING ENGLISH LEXICONS IN FOOD AND BEVERAGE MENUS: A CASE STUDY OF RESTAURANTS AND CAFES IN KUDUS

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze lexicon choices, word formation, and reference in English culinary lexicon on food and beverage menus in restaurants and cafes in Kudus City. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, collecting data from 25 establishments, focusing on lexical choices, word formation processes, and references. Semantic theory and morphological analysis were used to interpret the data. The results show that the lexicon contained in the beverage menu is more diverse than the food menu, as beverage variants are used more on menus than food. In addition, compounding is the dominant word formation process found in the menu. The findings illustrate the influence of local culture in the choice of words used on food and beverage menus, as well as showing creative trends in word formation through compounding. This research contributes to the understanding of how the English culinary lexicon is adapted in local cultural contexts and how word formation processes reflect communication needs in the culinary industry, so that people can mention menu names without changing the pronunciation.

Keywords: *Lexicons; Culinary; word formation; reference*

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INTRODUCTION

Fast food has supplanted traditional cuisine in this day and age. Numerous regions of Indonesia, including Central Java, experience this occurrence. Numerous fast foods are now available in Kudus City's restaurants and cafés, and they're worth trying because they're really tasty. Every café and restaurant have a signature dish that is unique to the establishment. Additionally, most Indonesians are unaware of the unusual names given to fast food, such as European cuisine names. The naming of meals in Indonesia that is similar to the naming of foods in Europe is closely linked to the spread of foreign languages and cultures in Indonesia. In actuality, the nomenclature of foods in Europe is primarily determined by the lexicon or vocabulary that is prevalent there, which differs from the lexicon or vocabulary utilized by Indonesians in general. Because of this, Indonesians find it challenging to pronounce and comprehend food titles in cafés and



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restaurants when the names are in foreign languages. Food examples include *Barbeque Strip*, *Flamin' Hot Wingers*, *The Cheeseyard*, etc. While examples of beverages such as *Bananut*, *Kiwi Wave*, *Lady Rose*, *Limelight*, *Strawberry Swing*, etc.

It is common knowledge that language acquisition is crucial for community members. Language is the pronunciation of sounds made by humans that people use to communicate with one another. Essentially, one of the key components of understanding human meaning is language. Empirical studies confirm that language acquisition — whether first or second language — plays an indispensable role in enabling individuals to participate meaningfully in social interactions and community life (Bustan, et al., 2024). Thus, language is used by humans to describe objects (Yulianti, 2022).

One term that is crucial to understand in this area of language study is vocabulary, or lexicon. This is due to the fact that vocabulary and lexicon development are inextricably linked to language development (Nation, 2013). Vocabulary is widely acknowledged as one of the fundamental elements of language, without an adequate vocabulary, expressing thoughts becomes impossible (Zheng, 2024). The abundance of words in a language can be thought of as its vocabulary or lexicon in this context (Hendra, 2021). In summary, a language's lexicon consists of a variety of actively and passively used terms that are dispersed across the community or have been collected into a dictionary. It's clear from the lexicon definition above that food and drink names are part of the vocabulary or lexicon.

Researchers are prompted to investigate the usage of lexicons in food and beverages in Kudus City restaurants and cafes due to the abundance of lexicons used in food and beverage names. Therefore, the researcher was able to provide research questions such as how is the structure of word formation on food and beverage menus in restaurants and cafes in Kudus City? and what are the references used in naming food and beverages in restaurants and cafes in Kudus City? From these questions, the researcher found the purpose of the study, which is to provide an explanation to readers regarding terminology, word construction, and sources used to name food and drinks in cafes and restaurants. This research is expected to provide insight into the language patterns used in the culinary industry in Kudus City as well as the factors that influence the formation of food and beverage menu names.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A language's lexicon is more than just its word list. According to Boas, Sapir, and Whorf cited by Mathiot (1977), Boas highlighted the cultural environment in which language is entrenched, considering lexicon to be a mirror of the distinct social structure, values, and experiences of a community. Building on Boas's views, Sapir claimed that the vocabulary both forms and reflects mind. According to Sapir, a person's lexicon shapes their cultural beliefs and affects their cognitive processes by serving as a lens through which they see and interpret the world. Whorf expanded on this notion by suggesting that language limits and shapes cognitive processes by organizing and classifying experience.

The methodical process of combining and changing morphemes to make new words in a language is known as word formation (Bauer, 1983). According to Bauer, there are a variety of word formation processes, including compounding, clipping, blending, and acronyms, that are connected to the

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development of new words and may be relevant to the analysis of the formation of food and beverage names.

In his latest book, Bauer (2021) emphasizes that composition is a morphological process that combines two or more lexemes to form a new word with a different meaning from its constituents. Bauer explains that word formation through composition is highly productive in various languages, including English, German and Indonesian. He highlighted how the internal structure of compound words differs from one language to another (Snyder, William, 2016).

According to Ogden-Richard (2013), the central tenet of the Semantic Triangle Theory is that a word's meaning is composed of three components: symbol, referent, and meaning. A term or symbol that is used to denote an idea or thing is called a symbol. It is an expression of anything to be said or written as a sign. The actual item, idea, or thing in the world that the symbol symbolizes is known as the referent.

METHOD

This study focuses on the lexicon used in food and beverage menus at restaurants and cafes in Kudus, employing a qualitative research methodology with descriptive analysis techniques. According to Creswell (2014), the goal of qualitative research is to gain a thorough understanding of social processes. This method focuses on comprehending how individuals perceive, interpret, and give meaning to the phenomenon being studied. According to Creswell, qualitative research enables investigators to delve into the intricacy of subjects and situations that cannot be elucidated by numerical or statistical data.

The researcher employed observation and documentation as instruments for data collection, whereby the researcher observed the English food menu's vocabulary firsthand. According to Creswell (2014), the main technique in qualitative research for gathering firsthand data on acts, exchanges, or events in context is observation. Generally speaking, a document is any instrument or method used to gather data for a study. Tests, questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observation protocols, and more can all be considered instruments. These tools are used to collect data that is either quantitative or qualitative, depending on the type of research being done (Creswell, 2014).

Methods of observational data collecting were employed to identify food and beverage names in English. The names of the food and drinks are taken from several cafes and restaurants that use English on their menus. Some of these cafes and restaurants are The Blust, Holymoon Social Space, Walkingbite Burger, Kopi Seneng, Balena Resto & Cafe, Ikki.co, Steaky Steak, Fresto, Its. Kava, Halu Coffee, General Coffee & Tea, Anak Panah Coffee, Notarich Cafe, Terrace Lounge Café, Seperdua, Blackstone, Wipsy Coffee & Meet, Selaras Coffee and Space, Traffa Coffee & Eatery, Moon Pastry, Sounds Meal, SUJU, Connect Coffee, Loemento Café & Resto, Fala Coffee. There are various phases involved in data collection. Initially, the investigator conducts firsthand observations at the predetermined restaurants and cafes. The researcher then requested permission from the owners of the cafes and restaurants. The researcher recorded all English-language food and beverage menus after gaining permission. The researcher then arranged the menu items into a table.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Lexicon of Food and Beverage

419 names were listed on food and beverage menus, according to data gathered from 25 Kudus City cafes and restaurants. Tables utilizing the data were constructed by classifying all of the names from the food and beverage menus. This is the table that was utilized.

Table 1. 1 Lexicon of Food and Beverage Menus Total

| | Menu | |
|--------------|------|----------|
| | Food | Beverage |
| Total | 194 | 225 |

Based on the data in Table 1.1, 194 food menus are known to exist at restaurants and cafes. Some examples are *American Risoles*, *Banana Choco Roll*, *Beef Burger*, *Calamary Rings*, *Chicken Fried Rice*, *Deep Down Onion*, *Egg Hotdog*, *French Fries*, *Grilled Chicken*, and *Honey Banana Fritter*. Meanwhile, the beverages menu is known to have a total of 225. Some examples are *Almond Honey*, *Berry Smoothies Bull*, *Black Citrus*, *Caramel Cream*, *Dragon Smoothies*, *Earl Grey Tea*, *Fruit Punch*, *Green Passion*, *Kiwi Wave*, and *Lemon Blue*.

The information above led to the discovery that several names for foods and beverages—like *barbecue*, *mashroom*, *blackpaper*, and *lightsabre*—use incorrect spelling. Additionally, the survey showed that drinks have more English names than foods. The menus were categorized and examined based on the process of word formation and references discovered in the food and beverage menus.

Word Formation of Food and Beverage

Because Kudus's food and beverage menus employ English, the researcher looked at the word formation process there. Based on the results of data analysis, researchers found the process of developing food and beverage menus based on Bauer's theory (1983) which includes compounding, clipping, blending, and acronyms. The menus for food and drink that were made with some of these techniques are displayed below.

Compounding

There are a total of 387 food and beverage menus that use the compounding word construction technique, according to the study. The information is arranged in the following table.

Table 1. 2 Compounding Found in Food and Beverage Menus

| | Menu | |
|--------------|------|----------|
| | Food | Beverage |
| Total | 190 | 197 |

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Based on Table 1.2, it is known that compounding or combining words into one sentence using the patterns "Noun-Noun Combination", "Adjective-Noun Combination", "Verb-Noun Combination", and "Verb-Noun Combination" are used in word construction on food and beverage menus. *American* (adjective) + *Risoles* (noun), *Apple* (noun) + *Pie* (noun), *Beef* (noun) + *Burger* (noun), *Beef* (noun) + *Sandwich* (noun), and *Grilled* (verb) + *Chicken* (noun) are some examples of food. Also, consider the following beverage combinations: *Better* (adjective) + *Lemon* (noun), *Fresh* (adjective) + *Milk* (noun), *Fruit* (noun) + *Punch* (verb), *Almond* (noun) + *Honey* (noun), and *Berry* (noun) + *Cheer Up* (verb).

Clipping

Furthermore, the researchers discovered the phenomenon of word clipping, or word shortening. 22 menus for food and drink were located and categorized into Table 1.3 that follows.

Table 1. 3 Clipping Found in Food and Beverage Menus

| | Menu | |
|--------------|------|----------|
| | Food | Beverage |
| Total | 17 | 15 |

We can identify the word clipping process in a number of foods and beverages based on the table above. Among them are *Choco* (chocolate), *Chic* (chicken), *n* (and), *Mush* (mushroom), *Mayo* (mayonnaise), *Flamin'* (flaming), *It's* (it is), *Croff* (croffle), *Mac* (macaroni), *Thai* (Thailand), *Bickie's Gal* (regal biscuit), *Hazel* (hazelnut), *Coco* (coconut), *Da* (the), *Straw* (strawberry), and *Vocado* (avocado).

Blending

Furthermore, the researchers discovered that blending—that is, integrating two or more words into a single word—occurs in a total of six food and beverage menus. The Table 1.4 below has been categorized into the corresponding tabular format.

Table 1. 4 Blending Found in Food and Beverage Menus

| | Menu | |
|--------------|------|----------|
| | Food | Beverage |
| Total | 2 | 4 |

The aforementioned information enabled the experts to ascertain the origin of the word blending. Among them are *Croffle* (from the words croissant and waffle), *Welcame* (from the words welcome and came), *Liquigreens* (from the words liquid and greens), *Banberry* (from the words banana and strawberry), *Bananut* (from the words banana and nut), and *Revel* (from the word red velvet).

Acronym

Furthermore, the researchers were able to ascertain the appearance of the word acronym, also known as word abbreviation. There were seven options for food and beverages that could be found. The following Table 1.5 lists the data's classifications.

Table 1. 5 Acronym Found in Food and Beverage Menus

| | Menu | |
|--------------|------|----------|
| | Food | Beverage |
| Total | 3 | 4 |

Based on the previously mentioned facts, acronyms are utilized in many menus as distinctive name constructions. Acronyms from food and beverage menus have a hierarchy of their own. *BBQ* (Barbeque), *Joker A.O.* (Joker Arkham Origins), *Mr.* (Mister), *O Brew* (Orange Brew), and *R&P* (Red and Purple) are some of them.

According to Setiawan (2021), it has been discovered that compounding has a more involved word generation process than others. It is known from the statistics that greater compounding is used in word creation when naming food and beverage menus. The researcher can then draw the conclusion that since compounding keeps the word's primary element intact, it is a simpler word development procedure to employ.

Reference of Food and Beverage

Referential and non-referential words are the two categories into which words in language can be divided based on whether or not they include a reference (Hurford, Heasley, & Smith, 2007). Terms with meanings closely connected to the references they allude to are known as referential terms. Referential words are sometimes called primary words since they serve the purpose of filling syntactic sentences with nouns, adverbs, adjectives, and other words. On the other hand, non-referential words are those without a reference meaning. Non-referential words, also known as task words, serve only to assist other words, such as interjections, conjunctions, and prepositions, in carrying out their respective functions.

With the exception of the words *the*, *and*, and *on*, nearly all food and beverage menu names are referential, according to this study's findings. The English food and beverage menu name system can be divided into different categories based on the reference. *Food*, *adjective*, *item*, *fruit*, *location*, *people*, *verb*, *animal*, and *color* are a few of them. The explanation that follows shows where references came from.

Food

It is impossible to refer to a culinary item on a menu without using its name. A person's knowledge of a dish is typically dependent on the menu, which uses the dish's name directly. Food is divided into two categories in this instance. First, hearty fare like *steak*, *toast*, and *burgers*. Second, a variety of foods such *potato*, *sausage*, and *risoles*. Here are a few illustrations.

1. Beef Burger
2. Beef Toast

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3. Black Mushroom Beef *Steak*
4. American *Risoles*
5. *Potato* Wedges
6. Grilled *Sausage*

Adjective

Generally speaking, adjectives are employed to describe or further define something. As a result, menu names for food and beverages now include adjectives. The adjectives used are also common such as *Bloomy*, *Bloody*, *Chill*, *Sexy*, and *Creamy*. Here's an illustration.

1. *Bloomy* Hawaiian
2. *Bloody* Pome
3. *Chill* Night
4. Chicken *Sexy* Red
5. Chicken *Creamy* Mushroom

Object

Menu names for food and beverages also frequently refer to objects. Four categories can be used to classify the items based on the data discovered. The words that refer to the kind of dish are first, tools including *bowls*, *shortplates*, and *plates*. Second, items that are parts of the body, like the *finger*, *wing*, and *bone*. The words with connotative meaning are first, explosive items like *flare*, *dynamite*, and *bombs*. Second, items like *doors*, *rings*, and *balls*, and so on that aren't utilized as materials. An example of the food and beverage menu is provided below.

1. Barbeque Chicken Rice *Bowl*
2. Beef *Shortplate* Noodle
3. Easy Bite *Plate*
4. Chicken *Finger*
5. BBQ Chicken *Wings*
6. Chicken Rice *Boneless*
7. Potato *Dynamite*
8. Red *Flare*
9. Onion *Ring*
10. Blue *Doors*
11. Crispy Potato *Ball*

Fruit

Fruit is a common element used to impart a fresh flavor. Fruit names are frequently used as references in food and beverage menus. The fruits utilized are also widely available. *Avocado*, *Citrus*, *Grape*, and *Kiwi*. Here are some samples of menus that include food and beverages.

1. *Avocado* Chocolate
2. Black *Citrus*
3. *Grape* Yakult
4. *Kiwi* Wave

Place

Food and beverage menu names frequently use terms that are specific to an area or location. All of the locations are divided into three categories. They begin by mentioning nations or islands such the *America*, *Indonesia*, and

Java. Secondly, it alludes to the moniker of a cafe or restaurant, like *Holymoon*. Thirdly, it alludes to natural areas like *beach*, and *sea*. The following menu examples for food and beverages include the word.

1. *American* Risoles
2. *Indonesian* Noodle Dish
3. *Java* Chip Coffee Blended
4. *Holymoon* Fried Rice
5. *Pink Beach*
6. *Schoties Sea* Salt

Person

Words that refer to persons are also used on food and beverage menus. Person in this context can refer to any gender or nickname, including *Boy*, *Lady*, and *Guy*. Here are a few illustrations.

1. *Lover Boy*
2. *Lady* Rose
3. *Hangover Guy*

Verb

Typically, verbs serve as the predicate in a phrase and express an activity. In this instance, menu names for food and beverages can be derived from verb. Verb like *cheer up*. Here's an illustration.

1. *Berry Cheer Up*

Animal

Menu items for food and beverage are named after animals. In this instance, food menus frequently use animal names in the list of ingredients. *Dory* is an example. Some of them, meanwhile, do not appear as components in these food and beverages. *Flamingo* and *Dalmatian* are a few examples. The buyer is given a proper impression of the shape or flavor of the food and beverage that will be served thanks to the usage of animals on the menu. These are some instances of used menus for food and beverage.

1. *Finding Dory*
2. *Flamingo*
3. *Dalmatian*

Color

Generally speaking, color is a certain spectrum that the human eye can perceive when it is in ideal lighting conditions. Colors including *Black*, *Brown*, *Red*, *Blue*, and *Green* are frequently used as references on food and drink menus. This is an illustration of the menu.

1. *Black* Tea
2. *Brown* Original Beef Steak
3. *Red* Delight
4. *Blaze Blue*

Based on the example above, color can also be used as a noun with the condition that it needs a clause before the noun. For example, in *Blaze Blue*, blue (noun) comes after blaze (verb).

A reference is a pre-established, fundamental pattern of understanding. Since a word's translation also yields its reference, one may argue that reference and translation are nearly synonymous. According to Li

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(2018), the study examined how visual cues like pictures, colors, and designs impact how customers comprehend and perceive the food that is being served. This also holds true for the reference wherever prospective customers are asked to visualize or make educated guesses about the food's color, taste, or form.

The results of the findings and discussion are almost the same as the previous research, but what distinguishes this research is its location in Kudus City while the previous research was in another city. The previous study also discussed the impact of traditional culinary lexicon on the culture in the community, while this study discusses more about the vocabulary or naming of food and drinks using English.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study found that the use of English in naming food and beverage items in the city of Kudus cafés and restaurants is widespread and influenced by both linguistic creativity and marketing strategies. This reflects the lexicon as not only a repository of words but also a representation of cultural and cognitive elements, as suggested by Boas, Sapir, and Whorf (in Mathiot, 1977). The dominant process identified in word formation is compounding, with 387 of the 419 menu items falling into this category. This supports Bauer's (1983, 2021) assertion that compounding is a productive and flexible morphological strategy. The data shows various patterns of compounding, such as *noun + noun* (e.g., "Beef Burger"), *adjective + noun* (e.g., "Fresh Milk"), and *verb + noun* (e.g., "Grilled Chicken"). These patterns contribute to the semantic richness and commercial appeal of the menu items. Compounding allows food providers to create memorable, descriptive names while retaining semantic clarity, this fact is supporting Setiawan's (2021) idea that compounding is straightforward yet effective.

In addition to compounding, the processes of clipping, blending, and acronyms were also observed, though to a lesser extent. Clipped words like *Choco* (from *chocolate*) or *Croff* (from *croffle*) reflect linguistic economy and informal tone, often aiming to sound catchy or trendy, especially to younger audiences. Blending demonstrates greater linguistic creativity, with items like *Banberry* (banana + strawberry) and *Revel* (red velvet) showing how novel lexical forms can emerge from existing ones to capture attention or imply flavor fusion. Acronyms, though less frequent, suggest branding efforts and playful linguistic stylization (e.g., *BBQ*, *R&P*), resonating with Bauer's (1983, 2021) description of morphological innovation in language.

The reference analysis further supports the theory that language reflects perception and categorization of the world, consistent with Whorf's linguistic relativity hypothesis. Most menu items were referential, pointing to tangible objects, qualities, or concepts—such as food items (e.g., *Burger*, *Sausage*), adjectives (e.g., *Creamy*, *Spicy*), places (*American*, *Java*), fruits (*Citrus*, *Kiwi*), and even animals (*Dory*, *Flamingo*). These lexical choices not only inform the consumer about the menu item but also evoke specific imagery, taste expectations, and cultural associations. This reflects Ogden-Richards' Semantic Triangle theory where the symbol (e.g., *Black Citrus*)

relates to both the referent (a drink) and the meaning (its taste, appearance, or origin).

Furthermore, the use of English—even with some spelling inaccuracies (*blackpaper*, *mashroom*)—demonstrates a sociolinguistic phenomenon: English is used not merely as a language but as a symbol of modernity, internationalism, and commercial appeal. This suggests a socio-cultural motivation for lexical borrowing and creative naming, especially in urban centers like Kudus aiming to attract younger, trend-aware customers. This local application of global linguistic forms highlights how language serves not just communicative but also aesthetic and ideological purposes.

While these findings align with previous research on food and beverage naming (e.g., Li, 2018), this study adds a localized contribution by focusing on Kudus City, where English usage in menus is increasing despite its status as a second or foreign language. Unlike previous studies that emphasized traditional culinary terms or cultural transmission, this study emphasizes linguistic adaptation and innovation in the realm of food branding and marketing.

The results of this research reaffirm the role of lexicon as a culturally and cognitively embedded system, illustrate the productivity of various word formation processes, and highlight how reference choices in food and beverage naming serve both descriptive and symbolic functions. The findings also contribute to understanding how global linguistic trends are locally recontextualized in commercial domains.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher came to a conclusion to address the research topic based on the aforementioned findings. Menus for food and drink contain a wide variety of terms. Menus featuring food and beverages may appear ostentatious and costly when written in English. As a result, prospective customers can calculate the cost of these food and beverages. Foods and beverages with English names are therefore targeted towards middle-class and upper-class consumers.

In order to assign names to menu items, word formation structures must be considered. The word construction structures utilized in the aforementioned research include acronyms, blending, compounding, and clipping. The names given to food and drink menus inside these arrangements might impact their existence and distinctiveness.

There is a reference in a phrase or sentence on the food and beverage menu. The source of the reference can vary according to what is utilized. Potential customers can quickly recall the food and beverage menu by using references. Additionally, every reference has a meaning that is multilingual. Therefore, potential customers may come from overseas in addition to the nearby community.

Based on the above conclusions, the researcher can provide suggestions as follows. The titles of food and beverage items on menus at Kudus City cafes and restaurants can be more familiar to readers. Additionally, readers will learn about the word construction and references utilized in the

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names of food and beverage menus at Kudus's cafés and restaurants. Readers will also have an idea of the appearance of what the menu name says, such as *Blaze Blue* in the name of the drink gives an idea that the drink is blue. Also, by paying attention to innovation in subsequent study, the researcher expects that this thesis can serve as a helpful reference for carrying out comparable research. It is also expected of other scholars to focus on features that do not share commonalities.

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