The Unique Names of Traditional Foods in Klaten:

A Semantic Analysis

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Abstract

This article examines the unique names of traditional foods from the past in Klaten, using a semantic analysis perspective. Traditional foods passed down through generations not only possess distinctive flavors but also carry deep meanings within the local cultural context. This research employs a qualitative approach with data collected through interviews with local community members, culinary practitioners, and cultural figures, as well as documentary studies of written records, archives, and previous literature on traditional foods. The focus is on food names such as *Nasi Liwet*, *Gudeg*, and *Klepon*. Semantic analysis is conducted to understand the relationship between names and the characteristics of the foods, as well as the meanings embedded within them. Findings indicate that many food names in Klaten are inspired by ingredients, cooking methods, or social and cultural contexts, reflecting the identity of the community. This article aims to contribute to the preservation of culinary culture and provide deeper insights into the significance of traditional food names.

Keywords: *Naming, Traditional, Semantics*

Introduction

Language is a means of communication used by humans to convey messages, thoughts, intentions, opinions, and feelings. As a medium of communication, language consists of symbols or signs that carry meaning, representing expressions of thoughts and feelings. Without language, humans cannot live life to the fullest. The term 'name' is often understood as a word used to identify a person or an object in order to distinguish it from others. This is where language plays an important role in providing signs for an object as a symbol (Rijal, 2012)

A name is a medium that originates from an idea or concept that carries meaning. This meaning arises from the culture within society. For example, the meaning of a name can be related to nature, objects, places, or notable and intelligent

figures. One example is the names of foods that we commonly encounter. In naming foods, there are various methods of naming. Some include the name of the owner, the place of sale, philosophical meanings, religious significance, or the region of origin of the food. The naming of food is not done arbitrarily; rather, there are specific reasons behind the choices.

"Klaten, located in Central Java, is an area rich in traditions and culture, including a diverse culinary scene. Food is not just for consumption; it also reflects the identity and cultural values of the local community. The names of foods in Klaten serve not only as labels but also carry meanings, stories, and histories that reflect the lives of the people. The naming of a food often reflects the ingredients used, the way it is served, and the socio-cultural context in which it originates. For example, the use of local words, specific terms, or even names related to local mythology and traditions can provide insights into the community's perspective on that food. Dishes such as Kepelan, Legondo, Sompil, Lemper, Klepon, Apem, and Pecok chicken soup are traditional specialties that are closely associated with the Javanese community, particularly in Klaten.

Therefore, a semantic analysis of food names in Klaten is crucial for understanding the meanings contained within them. One branch of linguistics that studies meaning is semantics. Semantics examines symbols or signs that express meaning, the relationships between meanings, and their impact on individuals and society. Thus, semantics involves words, their development, and changes in meaning. (Suhardi, 2015) states, 'When discussing meaning, there are two essential terms: being meaningful and having a meaning.' Meanwhile, (Djajasudarma, 2016) explains that the term 'semantics' in Indonesian is derived from the English word 'semantic,' which comes from the Greek word 'sema' (noun: sign) or the verb 'samaino' (meaning to mark or indicate). This term is used by linguists to refer to the branch of linguistics that studies meaning. Semantics exists at three levels of language: phonology, morphology, and syntax, as well as the lexicon. Here, morphology and syntax fall under grammar or syntax.

In recent years, interest in local cuisine has grown, both among local communities and tourists. This has led to increased attention to the unique foods found in Klaten. However, in-depth research on the meanings and contexts of the naming of these foods remains limited. The article titled "Analisis Semantik Leksikal Kosakata Pada Tenun Ikat Tradisional Suku Dayak Desa" by (Efpriyani, 2014) identifies and describes lexical meanings, components of meaning, types of meaning, and semantic roles associated with tools, motifs, materials, and outcomes in traditional ikat weaving. The analysis results indicate the presence of three types of meaning: lexical meaning, grammatical meaning, and collocational meaning. From the sub-problems studied, 18 vocabulary items related to motifs, 12 related to tools, 8 related to materials, and 8 related to outcomes in traditional Dayak ikat weaving were identified. The authors hope that further research can explore ikat vocabulary from different perspectives, thereby broadening semantic studies, particularly

lexical semantics, with other related issues.

Additionally, another researcher titled "Penerapan Semantik Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Di SMA Negeri 3 Gorontalo" by (Kase, 2019) investigates and evaluates the extent to which semantics is applied in Indonesian language learning at SMA Negeri 3 Gorontalo. This study also aims to provide a specific overview of issues related to semantic learning in schools. Data were obtained from sentences spoken by a teacher regarding semantics. The data sources included semantic textbooks written by experts and interviews with Indonesian language teachers at SMA Negeri 3 Gorontalo.

The findings indicate several types of semantic meanings used in Indonesian language learning, namely affective meaning, denotative meaning, descriptive meaning, emotive meaning, and figurative meaning. Additionally, several steps were identified to address issues related to semantic learning in schools. However, this study presents several limitations. First, the scope of the research is confined to a single school, which limits the generalizability of the findings to broader educational contexts. Second, the data primarily derive from teachers' utterances and textbooks, leaving the students' perspectives—who are the main subjects of learning—underexplored. Third, the study remains largely descriptive in nature and does not provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of semantics application in enhancing students' language competence. Future research should therefore involve more active participation from students and extend its scope across multiple institutions to achieve a more comprehensive understanding.

Another article titled "Kajian Semantik Penamaan Makanan Khas di D.I. Yogyakarta" was researched by (Nurjanah, 2023). This study aims to (1) describe the meanings of words in the names of traditional foods from Yogyakarta and (2) identify the factors that underlie these names. This research is qualitative descriptive, with data sources consisting of documents. The collected data encompasses the semantic aspects underlying and the lexical meanings of traditional food names in D.I. Yogyakarta. Data collection was conducted through interviews and document analysis, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument actively involved in field data collection.

The findings indicate that (1) the types of word meanings in traditional foods from Yogyakarta include denotative, referential, and associative meanings, and (2) the factors influencing the naming of traditional foods in Yogyakarta include names based on sound imitation, place of origin, ingredients, similarity, and abbreviation. Nonetheless, this study also reveals certain limitations. First, while the research successfully categorizes word meanings and naming factors, the reliance on descriptive qualitative methods restricts the analysis to surface-level interpretations, with limited critical evaluation of the cultural or symbolic dimensions embedded in the food names. Second, the study primarily depends on documentary data and selected interviews, which may not capture the full diversity of perspectives from local communities. Third, the absence of comparative analysis with other regions constrains the ability to situate the findings within a broader sociolinguistic or

cultural framework. Future studies could address these gaps by incorporating more diverse data sources, employing comparative approaches, and applying deeper semantic or discourse analysis to uncover richer insights into cultural identity reflected in traditional food names.

Additionally, another semantic study was conducted by (Muldawati, 2021) titled "Analisis Semantik Pada Puisi "Mata Air" by Herwan FR. The objectives of this research are: (1) to describe and explain the lexical meanings in the poem titled 'Mata Air' by Herwan FR; (2) to describe and explain the grammatical meanings in the poem; (3) to describe and explain the referential meanings in the poem; and (4) to describe and explain the non-referential meanings in the same poem. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. Data collection techniques were carried out through literature study and observation.

The analysis results show the presence of lexical, grammatical, referential, and non-referential meanings. The semantic study demonstrates that the analysis of words in the poem 'Mata Air' by Herwan FR can be conducted from basic vocabulary analysis to concluding the meaning of each line of the poem. The poem 'Mata Air' revolves around the feelings of being abandoned by someone who is very important and the longing for that person.

Additionally, another semantic study can be found in the article "Analisis Semantik Idiom Dalam Bahasa Bima Di Desa Melayu Kecamatan Lambu" researched by (Juwita, 2015). This study aims to describe the forms, meanings, and functions of idioms in the Bima language found in Melaju Village, Lambu District. The issues to be discussed include: (1) What are the forms of idioms in the Bima language? (2) What are the meanings of idioms in the Bima language? and (3) What are the functions of idioms in the Bima language? Data collection was carried out using several methods: (1) The observation method with tapping and prompting techniques, followed by engaged listening and note-taking techniques; (2) The speaking method with face-to-face speaking, note-taking, and recording techniques; and (3) The introspection method.

The collected data were then analyzed using two methods: (1) The intralingual matching method, which compares the form of idioms with the language itself, and (2) The extra lingual matching method, which relates the form of idioms to their use outside of language. Data analysis was presented using both informal and formal methods. Based on the analysis results, it can be concluded that: (1) The forms of idioms based on syntactic structure consist of phrases and clauses, while based on morphological structure, there are basic forms and complex words that include affixation idioms and reduplication (sound-changing reduplication, affixed reduplication, and semantic reduplication); (2) The meanings of idioms are generally connotative because the meanings that emerge do not align with their literal meanings, creating different emotional values. Idioms are classified into full and partial idioms based on their constituent elements; and (3) The functions of idioms include softening speech in communication, expressing feelings, providing

nicknames, indicating exaggerated meanings, and conveying cultural concepts, both universal and specific to Bima culture.

The references from the various semantic studies mentioned above are expected to enhance the identification of unique food names in Klaten City and analyze the semantic meanings contained within them. With a deeper understanding of food naming, it is hoped that the community will appreciate their culinary heritage more, and culinary entrepreneurs will be more creative in developing their products. This research aims to contribute to linguistic and cultural studies and to raise awareness of the importance of preserving local cuisine. Therefore, this study will address two main questions: What are the unique food names in Klaten City? And how can we analyze the semantics of these names? Through a qualitative approach, it is hoped that the results of this research will provide a clearer picture of the relationship between food names and the cultural identity of the people of Klaten.

Method

Qualitative methodology is a research approach aimed at understanding social and cultural phenomena through the collection of non-numeric data. The main focus of this research is to explore the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of individuals or groups within their social contexts, as well as to describe the environment in which these phenomena occur. Qualitative data is obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation, where the researcher interacts directly with respondents or observes behavior in a natural context.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method. (Moleong, 2010) explains that qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of words, both written and spoken, from individuals and observable behaviors. This research utilizes a document study approach, with documents as the primary source of data. The data examined includes the semantic aspects that underlie the naming of foods and the meanings of traditional food names in Klaten Regency. Data collection is conducted through documentation methods, with the researcher actively serving as the primary instrument in the data collection process in the field. In addition, interviews were conducted with 10 informants consisting of local community members, culinary practitioners, and cultural figures who possess knowledge of traditional food naming practices.

Result

One focus in the study of semantics involves naming, terminology, and definition. According to (Yanda, 2017), naming is the process of assigning a name to a specific object or reference, which can be either a physical entity or an abstract concept. The name is the result of this process. (Chaer, 2014) states that there are several reasons behind naming, such as: (1) mentioning parts, (2) indicating characteristic traits, (3) referring to origin, (4) noting similarities, (5) abbreviation, and (6) new naming.

Names are used as terms to identify people, places, products, or even ideas and concepts, in order to distinguish them from others. One interesting topic to research is the naming of traditional regional food products. The names of culinary products are often unique, making them intriguing to analyze from a semantic perspective. Traditional or regional foods reflect the identity or distinctive characteristics of a community that are easily recognizable.

Klaten Regency, located between two well-known tourist cities, Solo and Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY), has its own unique image for traditional foods. Klaten offers tourist attractions that are just as interesting as those in neighboring cities or regencies. Culinary tourism is also abundant in Klaten, where traditional foods are well-preserved. Dishes with a savory flavor, such as Pak Min's chicken soup, are famous both within Klaten and beyond. Traditional foods from Klaten include Sompil, Legondo, Klepon, Lemper, Apem, Gathot, and Kepelan.

Klaten Regency has many traditional foods that have endured to this day. One legendary dish from Jogonalan District, Klaten, is *sompil*. *Sompil* is made from rice wrapped in a triangular-shaped bamboo casing, which is then boiled for about two hours. This traditional food is usually served with *opor, sambal goreng krecek*, and accompanied by ducang or a sauce made from soybeans and peanuts. The name *sompil* or *sumpil* is derived from the name of a snail or gastropod commonly found in rivers. The shape used to make this dish is a long, cone-like triangle that resembles that animal. Bamboo leaves are typically used for wrapping.

In celebration of 1 Muharram 1440 H, the *Legondo* Snack Parade is held annually in Dusun Sepi, Barepan Village, Cawas District, Klaten Regency. Local residents parade five piles of *Legondo* snacks around the village. About 2,000 *Legondo* snacks are carried in this procession, culminating at the site of Sunan Kalijaga. This event aims to preserve local culture by reintroducing the traditional *Legondo* snack, which only appears during the 1 Muharram or 1 Suro celebrations. *Legondo* is made from glutinous rice mixed with coconut, wrapped in young coconut leaves, and steamed. To eat it, the bamboo leaf wrapping is simply removed, and it can be enjoyed for its savory flavor. The name *Legondo* comes from the abbreviation of "*lego ing kondo*," which means "relief in conversation" in Indonesian. *Legondo* is also commonly included in wedding gifts.

Another iconic food of Klaten Regency is *Apem*. The residents of Jatinom strongly believe that the tradition of distributing *Apem (Yaa Qowiyyu)* brings blessings to them, and they remain committed to preserving this ancestral tradition. This belief leads to great enthusiasm among the community to compete for the *Apem* being distributed. Those who successfully receive *Apem* have various motivations. For example, traders believe that *Apem* can enhance their fortune and protect them from losses. For students, it is thought to facilitate their studies, and generally, *Apem* is also considered a protector of the home and a ward against misfortune. *Apem* is made from rice flour, sugar, coconut milk, and grated coconut. The word *"apem"* comes from the Arabic word *"Affwan,"* which means forgiveness. Since the Javanese

tongue is not familiar with the term *"affwan,"* they refer to it as *apam* or *apem*.

Traditional foods, often reffered to as market snacks, come with unique names. One example is "*Gatot*", a type of tiwul made from cassava. Gatot is a steamed food made from gaptek (dried cassava) that is cut into small pieces, bolied, mixed with sugar, and served with grated coconut. Gatot can also be interpreted as food made from leftover tiwul that has not been processed. Its texture is chewy and it has a deep black color, resulting from the fermentation of cassava. The name "*Gatot*" originates from the acronoym "gagal total", meaning "total failure". This dish was created as a response to the frequent crop failures experinces by farmers, prompting them to seek alternative food sources.

One must-try snack when visiting Pedan, Klaten, is Kepelan. This savory dish is made from wheat flour mixed with garlic, shallots, salt, water, and seasoning before being fries in a hand-shaped mold. The name "*Kepelan*" comes from the word "*Kepalan*", which referes to the shape of a fist before frying. This food is particulary popular among children due to its savory flavor from the spices mixied into the dough.

Klepon is another fomous culinary treat from Klaten, although it is also known in various regions of Indonesia. This unique snack is made from glutinous rice flour, shaped into small balls, filled with palm sugar, and coated with grated coconut. The combination of sweet and savory flavors creates a delightful experience. The name "Klepon" comes from Javanese, meaning "animal eggs", which refers to its small round shape. Klepon is often served alongside other snacks like *gethuk* and *cenil*.

Sop Ayam Pecok is a legendary soup dish from Klaten. It is named "Sop Ayam Pecok" because the chicken is chopped into pieces along with the bones during the preparation. One unique aspect of Sop Ayam Pecok Klaten is the use of free-range chicken as the main ingredient for broth and the filling. This fresf free-range chicken provides an authentic flavor, creating a more delicious taste and resulting in a clear, appetizing broth. The chicken is seasoned with pepper, nutmeg, garlic, salt, and flavoring. The most famous Sop Ayam Pecok is from Pak Min Klaten, who has been selling it since the 1960s, and the business has been passed down to his children. Branches of Pak Min's Sop Ayam Pecok eatert can now be found in various cities.

The associative meaning is evident in the names of foods such as *sompil, gatot, klepon,* and *kepelan*. According to (Dewi, 2009), associative meaning refers to meanings related to other meanings or things beyond language. *Sompil* does not literally mean snail but refers to its shape resembling a small triangular animal. *Gatot* is linked to the term *"gagal total*," which refers to crop failures in some areas, prompting residents to seek alternative staple foods. Meanwhile, *klepon*, which means "animal eggs," does not literally describe eggs but rather resembles them in appearance when served. *Kepelan* is associated with the shape of a fist during the food's preparation process.

The referential meaning is present in the name of the dish *"sop ayam pecok*." According to Dewi (2009:5), referential meaning refers to meanings that point to something outside of language. For example, the name *"sop ayam pecok"* refers to the

preparation process, where the chicken is chopped along with the bones using a large knife before being cooked into soup. Meanwhile, *Legondo* means *"lego ing kondo,"* which suggests that after eating *Legondo*, there will be relief in every conversation, without any hurt feelings.

Discussion
Factors Behind the Names of Klaten's Traditional Foods

According to Yanda and Ramadhanti (2017:24-28), there are various factors that contribute to the naming process, namely: (1) naming based on sound imitation, (2) naming based on the mention of parts, (3) naming based on distinctive characteristics, (4) naming based on the inventor or creator, (5) naming based on the place of origin, (6) naming based on ingredients, (7) naming based on resemblance, (8) naming based on abbreviation, and (9) naming based on new naming or replacement. The factors behind the naming of traditional foods in Klaten include: (1) naming based on distinctive characteristics, (2) naming based on new naming, (3) naming based on resemblance, and (4) naming based on abbreviation.

Naming based on distinctive characteristics can be seen in *"sop ayam pecok."* The method of cutting the chicken and its bones forcefully with a large knife is referred to as *"pecok."* After being chopped, the chicken is seasoned with garlic, pepper, nutmeg, salt, and flavoring. The new naming is evident in the name *"apem".* The name *"apem"* comes from the Arabic word *"Affwan,"* and this new name is adapted to the Javanese pronunciation, which has difficulty with the consonant "f."

Naming based on resemblance is found in the names *"sompil," "kepelan,"* and *"klepon." Sompil* is derived from its resemblance to a snail that lives in rivers, shaped like a small cone. The rice wrapping with bamboo leaves is formed to resemble that animal. The food from Pedan, Klaten, called *kepelan*, takes its name from the shape of a clenched hand, as it is shaped by hand before frying. *Klepon* is named for its small round shape, resembling animal eggs. *Klepon*, filled with palm sugar, is coated with flour and grated coconut, taking on a round form.

Names like *"legondo"* and *"gatot"* are formed through the process of abbreviation. The word *"legondo"* is a shortening of the phrase *"lego ing kondo,"* which comes from Javanese and means "relief in conversation." Meanwhile, *"gatot"* is an abbreviation of *"gagal total,"* which reflects the name of the food resulting from crop failures. The high price of rice led people to turn to *gaplek*. Yanda and Ramadhanti (2017:27) argue that abbreviation is derived from longer forms and can be classified into two types: acronyms and initialisms.

Conclusion

The traditional foods in Klaten exhibit a variety of naming conventions that reflect cultural and linguistic influences, encompassing both referential and associative meanings. These names often carry cultural significance, highlighting local beliefs, practices, and identities, thereby contributing to the community's

culinary heritage. The naming of these foods is influenced by factors such as resemblance, distinctive characteristics, abbreviation, and new naming practices, showcasing the creativity and adaptability of local culture. Additionally, many names directly reference the ingredients used or the methods of preparation, enhancing the understanding of the dishes and their origins. Ultimately, the unique names and the stories behind them play a crucial role in preserving Klaten's culinary traditions, ensuring they remain relevant and appreciated by future generations. The study illustrates the rich semantic landscape of traditional food names in Klaten, demonstrating how language and culture intertwine in the culinary realm.

The types of meanings in the names of traditional foods from Klaten include referential and associative meanings. Referential meaning is found in names like *"sop ayam pecok Klaten."* Meanwhile, associative meaning is present in names such as *"sompil," "gatot," "klepon,"* and *"kepelan".* Factors influencing the naming of traditional foods in Klaten include naming based on resemblance, distinctive characteristics, abbreviation, and the new naming.

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