



South Korean Modern Culture in the Drama Series “Just One Bite” (Semiotics Analysis by Charles Sanders Peirce)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze and describe the modern cultural values of South Korea which are represented in the drama series "Just One Bite". This drama series is a South Korean drama series that airs on the official PLAYLIST Global YouTube channel and was released in two seasons. The focus of this research is the representation of South Korean cultural values in the modern era. The object of this study is the drama series "Just One Bite" where the writer takes screenshots of various scenes in the drama series. The method used in this study is an inductive qualitative approach with a type of content analysis. Content analysis is used to study storage data in the form of symbols, text, images and so on. The theory used is Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, namely that signs are divided into symbols, objects, and interpretants. Based on data analysis using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach, various data were found that represent South Korean cultural values in the modern era in the drama series "Just One Bite". These cultural values include language in the form of naming food, family culture in the form of sharing food, technological advances in the form of instant food, and preserving culture in the form of serving traditional food with modern food.

Keywords: *C.S Peirce; Drama Series, Semiotics,*

Introduction

Series is several events or things that are similar or related ('SERIES | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary', n.d.). A drama series is a series that is delivered in a dramatic way. Its distinctive feature is that the story can continue for several episodes within a period of weeks, months and even years. In general, drama series

are aired on television. Over time, in the modern era, drama series are not only broadcast on television, but are also broadcast via social media such as YouTube. However, drama series broadcast via YouTube are usually of short duration and are called web series. Usually, the episodes that are broadcast are also not as many as the drama series that are broadcast on television, so the storyline is denser and quite fast.

Drama series are usually created based on inspiration from true stories. Therefore, drama series are quite popular with various groups, ranging from teenagers, adults to the elderly. There are various messages presented in the drama series that can give a distinct impression to the audience. The messages conveyed can also influence and inspire the thoughts and actions of the audience in their daily lives. In addition, the themes that are made into drama series are also diverse and quite related to the daily lives of the audience. For example, telling stories about school students, college students, office employees, family relationships, or friendship. One of the drama series with the theme of friendship is Just One Bite.

Just One Bite is a drama series that airs on one of the social media, namely YouTube. This drama series can also be called a web series because it is broadcast via internet, not through television. The series airs on the PLAYLIST Global YouTube channel. The first season aired on October 4th 2018 to October 27th 2018. The second season aired April 27th 2019 to May 29th 2019. The total episodes in the first season were eight episodes with a duration of 9-13 minutes each. Whereas in the second season the total episodes were ten episodes with a duration of each episode of 6-16 minutes.

This drama series tells the story of three girls who have been friends since they were in high school until they were in their 20s. Even though they have different characteristics and backgrounds, they are still good friends and always find time to meet. Through the activities of each character every day and meetings between figures, the audience can witness various customs or culture of South Korean society in the modern era. Through every scene in the drama series, various messages can be found conveyed through modern South Korean culture. According to Koentjaraningrat, culture is the ideas and works of humans as a whole which must be made into habits by learning, as well as the whole of the habits and results of these works (Puspitasari, 2021).

Culture according to Koentjaraningrat (in Puspitasari, 2021 : 11) contains several general elements consisting of seven elements, namely (1) language, (2) social organization, (3) knowledge systems, (4) livelihood systems, (5) living equipment systems, (6) religious systems, and (7) art. In living the life of society, a culture is formed. The formation of this culture is a form of work based on the will of the community. Through the culture that is formed, various related socio-cultural values can be seen. Not only in everyday life, these values can also be seen from various scenes shown in a drama series. Therefore, the writer is interested in analyzing these values with a semiotic approach. Semiotics is something that represents or describes something else, in this case in the minds of those who think about it (Asfar, 2019). According to Hjemlev (in Asfar, 2019 : 20) signs consist of two

basic materials, namely expression (which includes words, sounds, symbols and so on) and content (meaning or content). The drama series includes signs in the form of words, sounds, symbols, and contents.

The theory of semiotics which is often referred to as the "Grand Theory" is the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce. According to Indiwan (in Sya'dian, 2015 : 52) it is because his views are comprehensive, structural descriptions of all significations, Peirce wanted to determine the basic particles of sign and reassemble the parts in a single structural. Peirce divides signs based on symbols, objects, and interpretants which are commonly referred to as triadic triangles (Puspitasari, 2021). The writer is interested in conducting this research because there has been no previous research that has analyzed the drama series "Just One Bite" from a semiotic perspective. The next reason is because this drama series has a solid plot but quite a lot of scenes that show modern culture in South Korea. In line with that, the writer wants to analyze and describe the values that exist in this drama series, both social values and cultural values. The author hopes that the results of this study can be an additional reference, especially semiotic analysis in drama series and add insight to writers and readers regarding the social values and modern culture of South Korea.

Method

This research focuses on the representation of social and cultural values. The writer has done an analysis on the drama series "Just One Bite", where the writer used several figures taken from the scenes in the drama series. This study used an inductive qualitative approach that develops concepts from existing data. The aim of qualitative research is to understand social phenomena by focusing more on a complete picture of the phenomenon being studied. Qualitative research uses data in the form of written or spoken language from the observed sources. This approach was carried out in order to be able to analyze and describe events, attitudes, perceptions and so on.

The theory used by the author is Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Peirce's semiotic theory divides signs based on symbols, objects, and interpretants which are commonly referred to as triadic triangles. The data sources of this research are primary and secondary data sources. The primary data was obtained from the drama series "Just One Bite" which the author accessed via the PLAYLIST Global YouTube channel. The secondary data sources were obtained from literature such as previous studies, articles and lecture notes.

The data collection technique used by the author was documentation. The documentation method is a data collection method that is carried out by recording documents which are the source of research data. In this study, the writer took several figures of the scenes in the drama series related to this research. First, the author observed every scene in the drama series "Just One Bite" which the author accesses via the PLAYLIST Global YouTube channel. Next, the writer analyzed the data collected by using Peirce's semiotic theory and then describes it.

Result and Discussion

"Just One Bite" is a South Korean drama series directed by director Lee Dong-jun. Played by several characters with three girls who are the main characters. These characters are Ha Eun-seong, Im Suji, and Jeon Hui-suk who have been friends since

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high school. Then the supporting cast are Lee Chan-hyeok, Park Gyeong-chan, Joo Ugyeong, Ha Tae-seong, and Cho Hye-ju. Tells about the daily life of the main characters with other characters. Each scene is shot in various places according to the scene that is currently taking place, for example the setting of the restaurant when they are together, sharing stories and enjoying meals together. Various conflicts between characters are also displayed. One of the most influential conflicts in the relationship between the main characters is when the character Jeon Hui-suk turns out to be in a secret relationship with Ha Tae-seong who is Ha Eun-seong's younger sibling. This made Ha Eun-seong angry because her best friend and sister did not open up to her about their relationship.

Figure 1 (Episode 2 Season 1 Minute 06:18)



Figure 1. Instant Rice Bowl

1. Sign : Instant rice bowl.
2. Object : One of the characters is stirring instant rice bowl.
3. Interpretant This scene shows that the main characters gather at Ha Eun-seong's house and eat instant rice bowls together after eating pizza. This scene means that the people of South Korea are quite familiar with instant food and have even become one of the modern cultures in South Korea. This also shows that South Korea's technology in the culinary field has advanced because instant rice is available which is complete with side dishes and is quite practical because it is only heated in a microwave. The dialogue in this scene states that the instant rice is spicy octopus rice. So the meaning is that in general South Korean people like spicy food.

Figure 2 (Episode 4 Season 1 Minute 02:17)



Figure 2. Picnic in the Park

1. Sign : Picnic in the park.
2. Object : The main characters sit together in the garden and eat snacks.
3. Interpretant: This scene interprets one of the cultures of the South Korean people, namely gathering or having a picnic in the park. Not just sitting or gathering, they also bring snacks to eat together. This culture looks simple but meaningful. By having a picnic in the park, we can breathe fresh air while looking at the scenery. In this scene, there are also people who are cycling and just enjoying their time in the park.

Figure 3 (Episode 4 Season 1 Minute 08:23)



Figure 3. Instant Steak

1. Sign : Instant steak.
2. Object : Instant steak cooked in the microwave.
3. Interpretant : This scene shows a bowl of instant beefsteak which is simply heated in the microwave before eating. Even though in this scene the process of heating the beefsteak in the microwave is not shown, there is an index of the sound of the microwave when the food is finished heating. This scene further indicates that eating instant food has become the culture of South Korean society in general.

Figure 4 (Episode 1 Season 2 Min 01:26)



Figure 4. Tteok-bokki

1. Sign : *Tteok-bokki*
2. Object : Ha Eun-seong and Im Suji eat tteok-bokki, a typical South Korean rice cake cooked

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with sauce.

3. Interpretant : This scene interprets one of the typical South Korean dishes, namely *tteok-bokki*. This dish is made from rice cakes and cooked with a special South Korean sauce, namely gochujang. It is usually served with accompaniments such as boiled eggs, fish cakes or eomuk, sausages, cheese, a sprinkling of sliced green onions and so on. In this scene, Ha Eun-seong and Im Suji only ordered one menu and shared it because the portion of the tteok-bokki provided was quite large. This means that the culture of South Korean people likes to share food at one table.

Figure 5 (Episode 2 Season 2 Minute 00:25)



Figure 5. Comic Café

1. Sign : Comic café.

2. Object : Jeon Hui-suk and Im Suji read at a comic cafe while eating snacks.

3. Interpretant : This scene shows that even though technology has advanced, comic cafes are still popular among South Korean people. Inside the comic cafe, visitors can read comics comfortably because various facilities are provided such as comfortable chairs or sofas. The scene also shows a canteen to order food and drinks. These facilities can make visitors more comfortable reading comics and spending time at comic cafes.

Figure 6 (Episode 4 Season 2 Minute 00:10)



Figure 6. Kimchi

1. Sign : Kimchi

2. Object : The main characters gather at Ha Eun-seong's house and eat black soybean paste noodles and kimchi.

3. Interpretant: The scene interprets the typical South Korean food, namely kimchi. Kimchi is pickled vegetables and fermented with spicy seasoning. In South Korean

culture, kimchi is always served as a side dish. In this scene, it can be seen that the food served is black soybean paste noodles served with fried eggs. This shows that in modern culture, South Korean people still like kimchi as a side dish for food.

Figure 7 (Episode 7 Season 2 Min 00.36)



Figure 7. Bibimbap

1. Sign : Bibimbap.
2. Object : The main characters meet at Ha Eun-seong's house and eat bibimbap, South Korean mixed rice.
3. Interpretant : This scene shows a bowl filled with white rice, fried eggs, vegetables and red sauce or gochujang sauce. Gochujang sauce is a typical South Korean sauce that is used as a condiment in various food dishes. Gochujang sauce is traditionally fermented. One of the foods seasoned with gochujang is bibimbap, South Korean mixed rice with various additional side dishes such as beef, fried eggs, vegetables and so on. After being put together in a bowl, the rice and side dishes are stirred together before being eaten. Even though gochujang sauce is a traditional sauce, people in the modern era still use it as a food seasoning.

Conclusion

The semiotic analysis of modern South Korean culture shown through the drama series "Just One Bite" using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory concludes that:

- 1) South Korean culture in the modern era still maintains traditional culture such as traditional food which is still popular with the people. This can be seen in the side dishes of kimchi and gochujang sauce;
- 2) The representation of social values is displayed through a culture of sharing food, where one large portion of food is shared by two people;
- 3) One of the staple foods of the South Korean people is rice. This is shown in the scenes where the characters eat instant rice and mixed rice or bibimbap;
- 4) South Koreans like to spend their time picnicking in parks and reading comics while eating snacks at comic cafes.

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