

## **Lexical choices in French Instagram captions of Indonesian traditional cuisine: A study of Djakarta Bali Restaurant**

*Icha Prilliskha Yunisty<sup>1</sup>, Fitri Ervina Tarigan<sup>1</sup>*

*<sup>1</sup>Language and Arts Faculty, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia  
Corresponding author: fitritarigan@unimed.ac.id*

### **ABSTRACT**

This research investigated how lexical choices are constructed in French captions promoting Indonesian traditional cuisine on Instagram. The purpose of this study is to explore how the French language functions as a medium for cultural branding and the internationalization of traditional Indonesian cuisine. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method. The data consisted of 24 captions explicitly describing traditional Indonesian cuisine, taken from the Djakarta Bali Instagram account up to December 2025. These captions were selected because they provide a representative and manageable corpus of Instagram promotional discourse for examining recurring lexical choices. Data were collected using documentation and note-taking techniques. The results show that lexical choices in French captions promoting Indonesian cuisine are constructed through language that emphasize luxury, rarity, sensory intensity, and cultural rootedness. The analysis identified four types of lexical choices used in Djakarta Bali Restaurant's French Instagram captions: sensory intensity, with 19 lexemes (44.18%), cultural rootedness, with 14 lexemes (32.55%), and luxury and rarity, which were the least dominant, each with five lexemes (11.62%). Thus, sensory intensity was the most dominant type of lexical choice that existed in the captions. This indicates that the captions strategically emphasize taste, aroma, and overall experience to engage readers emotionally and vividly. It also suggests that the restaurant foregrounds authenticity and experiential enjoyment rather than luxury or exclusivity in presenting Indonesian traditional cuisine. Academically, this study contributes to lexical semantics, discourse analysis, and digital linguistics. Practically, the findings offer insights for restaurants and marketers on crafting more effective, sensory-rich captions to enhance audience engagement. This study also provides a foundation for comparative interdisciplinary and corpus-based studies on lexical strategies across languages, cultures, and digital promotional platforms.

**Keywords:** French Instagram captions; lexical choices; traditional cuisine

### **INTRODUCTION**

The intersection of language, culture, and digital media offers a compelling lens through which to examine how identity and meaning are constructed in the global circulation of cuisine. As restaurants increasingly use social media platforms, particularly Instagram, these platforms have become essential tools with their audiences and promote their product. For restaurants, especially those serving culturally rich cuisines, Instagram offers a unique opportunity to showcase their dishes and connect with a global audience. This is particularly evident in the case of Indonesian cuisine, which, with its rich flavours and diverse ingredients, has gained popularity internationally. Instagram captions, as a part of the broader digital marketing strategy, are crucial in determining how a product or cultural experience

is framed. In the context of culinary marketing, the word chosen to describe a dish can significantly impact the audience's perception and understanding of the food. One restaurant that exemplifies this trend is Djakarta Bali Restaurant, a prominent establishment that offers traditional Indonesian dishes to a French-speaking clientele. The restaurant's use of French Instagram captions serves not only as a marketing tool but also as a medium for cultural exchange, shaping how Indonesian food is perceived by foreign audiences.

In linguistics, lexical choices are more than vocabulary selection. It is a form of social and cultural positioning. Each word carries semantic, pragmatic, and cultural weight, enabling speakers to frame narratives, evoke sensory imagery, and construct a value identity. In the context of culinary discourse, every word functions as a cultural and persuasive marker, shaping how readers perceive authenticity, taste, and prestige. In the French Instagram caption, lexical items such as *authentique*, *épicé*, or *raffiné* signal not only flavor or quality but also cultural stances toward Indonesian heritage and French culinary expectations

French, being one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, plays a critical role in this dynamic, especially in regions like Europe where the restaurant's clientele is predominantly French-speaking. By examining the lexical choices in French Instagram Captions at Djakarta Bali Restaurant, this research seeks to explore how those choices influence the representation of Indonesian cuisine in a foreign cultural context. Maharani et al. (2025) explain that strategies such as loan, literal translation, and lexical recreation are used to convey cultural references across language, indicating the word selected plays an important role in transferring cultural identity to foreign audiences.

In the past five years, several studies have investigated the role of language in food marketing on social media. Amalia and Sujatna (2024). Instagram effectively promotes Sundanese culinary diversity as a tourist attraction in Bandung, using interrogative sentences, declarative sentences, and diverse lexical choices to engage followers and attract new visitors. Singh et al. (2025) Language and visuals in Instagram posts reflect power dynamics in the food world, focusing on three American foods: burgers, hot dogs, and chicken wings as they are deeply ingrained in American culture, reflecting cultural values and preferences. While these studies have provided valuable insight into the role of language in food branding, they have primarily focused on how the food reflects the diversity and cultural values and have not specifically addressed the use of French as a marketing language.

Further researchers have examined the role of lexical choices in food and culinary discourse on social media platforms, collectively demonstrating that language selection is a deliberate and strategic act rather than an incidental one. Wan and Salim (2023) reveal that word choice and stylistic strategies across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter serve as primary vehicles for promoting culinary tourism in Indonesia, with visual elements such as modality, participant representation, and salience reinforcing the linguistic construction of desirability. Their findings underscore that social media platforms depend heavily on exaggerated language and imagery to attract tourist engagement with Indonesian culinary culture. This aligns with Hafu's (2023) investigation into English restaurant captions on Instagram, which demonstrates that the consistent deployment of positive evaluative adjective functions cognitively to activate taste

imagination and emotional appeal, ultimately framing food as both desirable and trustworthy and shaping brand image alongside consumer perception.

Extending this discussion to a multilingual context, Gudova and Litinova (2020) reveal that Instagram advertisements for bars, cafes, and restaurants deliberately incorporate foreign languages, loanwords, and code-mixing as branding instruments. Rather than reflecting organic linguistic diversity, these choices are strategically employed to project prestige, modernity, and international appeal to target audiences. This strategic multilingualism resonates with the findings of Meluzi and Balsamo (2021), who demonstrate that food and wine promotion on websites and Instagram relies on a customized culinary lexicon composed of authenticity markers, geographic references, and cultural descriptors—such lexical resources to construct a sense of exclusivity and cultural value around the promoted cuisine.

Despite the growing number of studies on food and language, there is a notable lack of research focusing on the lexical choices used in foreign language marketing of Indonesian traditional cuisine, particularly in French. While much of the literature has explored the role of English in food marketing, few studies have analyzed how French, a language with its own set of cultural and linguistic nuances, can shape the perception of Indonesian food. Most food-related linguistic studies focus on menu analysis or food blogs, but social media, especially Instagram, remains an underexplored discussion. This study, therefore, fills this gap by focusing on French lexical choices in Instagram captions and their impact on the global marketing of Indonesian cuisine.

Based on the research result conducted by Liu (2021), which investigated how multilingual users choose language and vocabulary based on audience design. The findings indicate that users carefully adjust lexical choices and code-switching patterns to target specific audiences. Lexical selection reflects communicative intention rather than linguistic habit. According to McLellan (2022), they explored language contact and code-mixing in Southeast Asian social media. The study found that code-mixing and lexical borrowing are normal and unmarked practices in social media communication, especially in food-related content. Another research conducted by Tam and Tsang (2023) examined how culinary terms move across languages in social media contexts. This is exposed culinary terms are often retained in original language forms to preserve authenticity; while spelling and adaptation reflect audience familiarity. Supporting this perspective, Wiharto and Dewi (2022) argue that lexical choices as euphemism and dysphemism are not neutral but also carry semantic and ideological meaning, reinforcing the idea that word selected then contributes significantly to discourse construction and audience interpretation.

Despite extensive research on food discourse and Instagram language use, several gaps remained, including a lack of focus on French-language Instagram captions. Most of the studies analyzed English, local, or mixed language captions, while French, as a promotional language for non-French cuisine, remains underexplored. On the same site, there are limited studies on Indonesian cuisine promoted abroad, which means that existing studies primarily focus on Indonesian culinary discourse within Indonesia, not on Indonesian restaurants operating in foreign cultural and linguistic contexts. There are limited articles discussing insufficient attention to lexical choice at the micro-linguistic level; many studies

emphasize discourse, ideology, or multimodality, but fewer provide detailed lexical analysis related to luxury, sensory, and culturally rootedness. There is a lack of in-depth case studies examining a single restaurant's Instagram captions as a consistent branding and linguistic practice.

Nonetheless, the current research is exclusively concentrated on investigating the types of lexical choices used in French Instagram captions to represent Indonesian traditional cuisine. This study specifically analysed captions posted by Djakarta Bali Restaurant on Instagram, which can be categorized as a form of digital written discourse used for culinary promotion. In social media marketing, lexical choices play an essential role in shaping how food is perceived by audiences, as language can highlight certain qualities such as exclusivity, authenticity, sensory appeal, and cultural value. Through strategic lexical selection, promotional captions are able to construct a particular image of cuisine and influence consumers' perceptions and expectations.

Therefore, the research questions posed in this study are to investigate the types of lexical choices used in the French Instagram captions of @djakartabali restaurant in promoting Indonesian traditional cuisine. The analysis focuses on identifying lexical items that represent luxury, rarity, sensory intensity, and cultural rootedness, as well as examining the percentage distribution of each category to determine the most dominant lexical representation used in the captions. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the study of culinary discourse and digital promotion, while also providing insight into how Indonesian traditional cuisine is linguistically framed in a foreign language context on social media platforms.

Furthermore, the findings of this study have significant practical implications for language learners, teachers, food service businesses, and tourism professionals. For language learners, especially those learning French as a foreign language, the analysis of Instagram post captions reveals how vocabulary is strategically used to convey evaluation, persuasion, cultural connotations, and sensory descriptions, thereby enhancing vocabulary competence, pragmatic awareness, and intercultural communication skills. For teachers, the results can serve as real-world material for teaching vocabulary, discourse analysis, and intercultural communication. Meanwhile, for culinary businesses and tourism practitioners, this study emphasizes how effective vocabulary selection can strengthen brand image, attract international audiences, and promote local culture through persuasive multilingual content. More broadly, the findings elucidate the crucial role language plays in enhancing the position of Indonesian traditional cuisine in the global digital market.

### **Instagram Caption**

In the book "Creative Advertising" by Charles Whittier, he writes: "A tagline/ caption must be a statement about a product or service worthy of constant advertising; worthy of public memory, and worded in such a way that the public may remember it." Leech (1972) argued that an advertising slogan is a phrase created by a company for advertising to receive recognition. The slogan/caption must express the main idea of the advertisement, so it must be easy to understand and concise. Rein (1982) defines an advertising slogan commonly used as an Instagram caption as a unique phrase that identifies the company. In the view of

Clow and Baack (2012), advertising slogans are known to be catchy words that highlight the company's image to customers. In short, based on many definitions of advertising slogans, this article is consistent with the definition of advertising slogans as short, attractive phrases containing information related to a brand to introduce and make customers notice that brand in a certain advertising campaign.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) considers discourse not only as an object of study within language (the traditional linguistic approach), but also as a tool serving certain ends and practices, particularly ideological ones. Van Dijk's (1987) analytical model is based on three levels: the text, social cognition, and the social context. Eriyanto (2001) emphasizes the essence of van Dijk's discourse analysis: unifying these three dimensions into a coherent analysis. The textual dimension analyzes the structure of the text and the discursive strategies employed to highlight the themes addressed. The social cognitive dimension, for its part, examines the information production process, taking into account the individual cognition of journalists. Finally, the social context dimension analyzes the construction of discourse within the community in response to a given problem. In research, the choice of the analytical level depends on the specific research objectives and questions. In this case, the main objective of the study is to examine language use in texts and how discursive practices are manifested within them (Mocini, 2005). This allows the researcher to explore linguistic features and textual structures in depth. Textual analysis focuses on how past events are described through language. It involves understanding the chain that links memories to spoken words and then to written text (Ifversen, 2003). Textual analysis includes the analysis of vocabulary, semantics (or meaning), structure, and the most basic elements of each sentence.

### **Lexical Choices**

From Halliday and functional linguistics perspective, lexical choice is not neutral; it is a meaning-making resource shaped by social context, ideology, and communicative purpose. In food and lifestyle discourse such as cuisine Instagram captions lexical choices often function to construct value, identity, and desire. Hall (1997) argues that language operates as a semiotic system through which cultural meanings are produced and circulated. Within this framework, certain lexical patterns foreground luxury, rarity, sensory intensity, and cultural rootedness as symbolic meanings rather than mere descriptions.

### **Lexical Choices Emphasizing Luxury**

Lexical items associated with luxury encode social prestige and exclusivity. Words such as *premium*, *signature*, *artisanal*, *exquisite*, and *gourmet* function ideationally to represent high quality while interpersonally positioning the product as superior. According to Hall (1997), such lexical choices are ideological, as they naturalize social distinctions through language. In culinary discourse, luxury lexicon elevates food from a basic necessity to a status symbol, aligning consumption with elite identity.

### **Lexical Choices Emphasizing Rarity**

Rarity is constructed through lexis that highlights limited availability and uniqueness, such as *limited edition*, *seasonal*, *handpicked*, *heritage*, *single-origin*, or *only available today*. Hall (1997) explains that meaning is produced through difference; rare lexicons create symbolic value by contrasting scarcity with mass production. In cuisine captions, rarity-oriented lexical choices encourage urgency and exclusivity, reinforcing the cultural narrative that scarcity increases desirability.

### **Lexical Choices Emphasizing Sensory Intensity**

Sensory intensity is realized through highly evaluative and descriptive lexis, engaging taste, texture, aroma, and visual appeal, such as *velvety*, *melt-in-your-mouth*, *rich*, *smoky*, *fragrant*, and *crispy*. From a functional perspective, these lexical choices enact the experiential meta function, allowing audiences to imaginatively experience food through language. Hall (1997) views such sensory language as culturally constructed, shaping how pleasure and indulgence are socially understood and communicated.

### **Lexical Choices Emphasizing Cultural Rootedness**

Cultural rootedness is encoded through lexicon referencing tradition, locality, and heritage, such as *authentic*, *traditional*, *grandma's recipe*, *local spices*, *indigenous*, *Nusantara*, or *heritage cuisine*. Hall (1997) emphasizes that language constructs cultural identity by linking meaning to shared history and collective memory. In culinary discourse, culturally rooted lexical choices legitimize food authenticity and reinforce cultural continuity in a globalized digital space.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach using document analysis as the main method of research. The data were obtained from captions posted on the Instagram account @djakartabali. All posts published on the account, starting from the first uploaded post until December 2025, were initially reviewed in order to identify relevant data for the study. From the overall posts available on the account, 24 captions were chosen because they contained linguistic elements relevant to the analysis of lexical choices in Indonesian traditional cuisine captions. The researchers excluded the other language captions and also the captions that were related to the events that happened in the Restaurant. The data were collected using documentation and note-taking techniques. The researchers gather Instagram captions related to Indonesian traditional cuisine manually and record lexical items that represent luxury, rarity, sensory intensity, and cultural rootedness.

After the data were collected, the lexical categories employed in this study were operationalized by establishing explicit definitional criteria for each category prior to the coding process. Drawing on Leech's (1972) framework of semantic fields and Hall's (1997) conception of representational meaning, each lexical item extracted from the Instagram captions was evaluated against predetermined indicators. The analysis focused on identifying patterns in word selection and understanding how these lexical elements contribute to the overall message conveyed in the captions. Through this process, the study aims to reveal how language is strategically used in the Instagram captions to construct meaning and communication with the audience.

The analysis in this study was conducted through the following steps:

1. All selected captions were compiled and read carefully to obtain a general understanding of the content and context. At this stage, the researcher familiarized themselves with the language used in the captions.
2. The captions were examined to identify words or expressions that reflected particular lexical choices. These lexical items were highlighted and noted as preliminary data for further analysis.
3. The identified lexical items were grouped into categories based on their linguistic characteristics and communicative functions. This categorization allowed the researcher to observe patterns in the use of vocabulary within the captions.
4. The researcher revisited each assignment independently to confirm or revise the classification. (verification process). Any items that produced inconsistent categorization across the two rounds were subjected to further deliberation against the definitional criteria before a final decision was recorded.
5. Finding the majority of lexical choices existed in the captions of @djakartabali Instagram account
6. Counting the percentage of lexical choices that existed there. The frequency of each category was then divided by this total and multiplied by one hundred to yield the percentage share of each category within the overall lexical distribution
7. The categorized data were interpreted to understand how these lexical choices contribute to the meaning, tone, and message conveyed in the Instagram captions.

In this research, the researcher used member checking for proof validation. Member checking is a method of enhancing the credibility of research findings and explanations. Then, after categorizing the types of lexical choices, the researcher validated with one of the experts of discourse analysis, who is one of the lecturers of the postgraduate school with a background in *Français du tourisme, de l'hôtellerie, et de la restauration*, to check that each analyzed item was of the types of lexical choices.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Sensory-intensity dominates the Instagram captions because they tend to align with the communicative norms of food discourse as digital marketing. Sensory adjectives such as those describing aroma, taste and texture, create vivid mental imagery and evoke embodied experiences that effectively attract consumer attention on a visual platform, in this term Instagram. Additionally, when promoting Indonesian cuisine to a French audience, sensory descriptions are more accessible and universally understood than luxury or exclusivity. They help bridge cultural distance and allow unfamiliar dishes to be perceived through relatable sensory cues, making them linguistically and pragmatically more effective.

Cultural Rootedness types are less dominantly found over sensory intensity on the French Instagram captions posted by the Djakarta Bali restaurant. Luxury and rarity are the least dominant types of lexical choices found in the captions. It is indicated that most of the captions index authenticity, achieve pragmatic felicity, and provide essential referential information. From a discourse analysis perspective, the global food marketing landscape has shifted toward authenticity as



From the perspective of Teun A. van Dijk, the construction of meaning in both excerpts can be understood through the interaction of microstructural linguistic choices and broader ideological framing. The phrase *a été élu* implies Rendang has a “selection and distinction” sense, suggesting that Rendang has been singled out from a global field of culinary traditions. The use of the passive construction *a été élu* contributes to an impression of objectivity and neutrality, while simultaneously obscuring the agentive process behind the evaluation. The expression *l’un des meilleurs* places the dish at the top of an international hierarchy, while *au monde* amplifies this status by framing the recognition on a global scale. These elements do not restrict access to Rendang, but they elevate its symbolic value.

The reference to CNN functions as external validation, transforming cultural appreciation into internationally recognized prestige. As a result, luxury is constructed not through exclusivity or cost, but through honor, recognition, and collective pride.



Figure 2. Picture and Instagram caption of Tea

« *La nature luxuriante de ce magnifique archipel* »

A similar mechanism can be observed in the expression « *la nature luxuriante de ce magnifique archipel* » illustrates luxury does not present an aesthetic richness nor economic exclusivity. The word *luxuriante* brings to mind a sense of fullness, vitality, and life overflowing in every direction, presenting nature as a source of richness in its own way. In this context, luxury is not something to be purchased or bought, it is something that can be felt and experienced through visual and sense. Within van Dijk (2019) framework, this reflects a strategy of semantic redefinition, in which luxury is rearticulated as an experiential and sensorial quality rather than a marker of exclusivity or scarcity. At the level of social cognition, such representations guide the audience to interpret Indonesia as a site of natural richness and shared abundance.

Meanwhile, the word of *magnifique* strengthens admiration and elevates the view to an exceptional status. Instead of pointing to rarity or limited access, the phrase encourages a sense of appreciation and wonder. Here, luxury in this term shows the experiences grounded in vivid sensory impressions and the beauty of nature. The archipelago is presented not as a private or exclusive space, but as a place whose richness comes from its abundance and generosity.

Overall, the phrase constructs symbolic luxury by associating the archipelago with aesthetic pleasure and natural generosity. This expression shifts luxury away from material possession toward shared appreciation of nature, where value is measured by beauty and emotional impact rather than scarcity or price.



The phrase “*cette infusion unique*” constructs rarity by showing uniqueness. The adjective *unique* directly signals that the infusion is unlike any other, they want to show that it cannot be easily reproduced or found elsewhere. This immediately creates a sense of exception and distinction.

Taken together, both examples demonstrate how rarity is redefined within contemporary food discourse as a symbolic and experiential construct. In line with Johnston and Baumann’s analysis, rarity emerges through narratives of secrecy, uniqueness, and authenticity, allowing everyday food items to be elevated into objects of distinction. This reflects a broader shift in the cultural economy of food, where value is increasingly produced through meaning, storytelling, and perceived singularity rather than through material limitation or exclusivity.

### Sensory Intensity



Figure 5. Picture and Instagram Caption of Lumpia

#### « Ultra croustillant »

The phrase “*ultra croustillant*” strongly conveys sensory intensity, particularly through texture. The word “*croustillant*” directly appeals to the senses of touch and hearing, with its combination of a crisp bite and the sound crunch of the food. The word “*ultra*” amplifies this sensation, suggesting the highest level of crunchiness.

This phrase serves to direct attention to texture and sound. It invites the reader to imagine how the food tastes and sounds, making sensory pleasure the center of its appeal. Another phrase “*fondant et savoureux*” shows the sensory concern from crispness to softness and the richness of flavor. The word “*fondant*” gives the stimulation a melting, tender sensation that appeals to the sense of touch in the mouth, suggesting a smooth and delicate texture. Meanwhile, “*savoureux*” emphasizes the depth of taste, implying a well-balanced taste and flavorful experience. This aligns with Johnston and Baumann (2019)’s argument that modern food discourse often relies on heightened sensory descriptors to construct distinction and desirability, transforming ordinary culinary attributes into markers of elevated experience. By directing the audience’s attention to the imagined sound and texture of the food, the phrase situates sensory pleasure as the central axis of value.



Figure 6. Picture and Instagram Caption of Arak Bali

« Des flammes de dragon dans votre gorge »

The expression “*Des flammes de dragon dans votre gorge*” constructs sensory intensity through a vivid and imaginative metaphor. By invoking “*dragon flames*” the phrase exaggerates the sensation of heat, immediately activating bodily experience, particularly the feeling of burning in the throat. This metaphor allows the reader to almost physically anticipate the sensation before tasting the beverage.

Rather than describing flavor in a literal way, the expression relies on imagery to amplify perception. The reference to *flammes* suggests extreme spiciness or warm sensation, while *dans votre gorge* localizes the sensation inside the body, making the experience feel immediate and visceral. In line with Johnston and Baumann’s analysis, this reflects how contemporary food discourse frequently employs dramatic and imaginative language to heighten sensory perception and create memorable consumption experiences.

In this way, the phrase functions as a strong sensory trigger. It transforms taste into a dramatic physical experience, emphasizing impact and intensity rather than evaluation or status. The appeal lies in how powerfully it stimulates the senses and emotions, making sensory intensity the central value conveyed.

### Cultural Rootedness



Figure 7. Picture and Instagram Caption of

« *Feuille de thé indonésien* »

The expression “*feuille de thé indonésien*” constructs cultural rootedness by foregrounding the geographical and cultural origin of the ingredient. By specifying *indonésien*, the phrase anchors the product in a national context, linking it to local agricultural practices and traditional knowledge. Within Hall (1997), such linguistic choices enable audiences to interpret the product as authentic by linking it to culturally shared codes and meanings. Consequently, the value of the tea is derived not from exclusivity or global recognition, but from its strong connection to place and cultural identity.

This reference emphasizes authenticity and connection to place. The value of the ingredient lies not in rarity or prestige, but in its cultural and environmental belonging. As a result, the phrase frames the infusion as culturally grounded, drawing meaning from local resources and identity rather than from globalized or abstract descriptions.



Figure 8. Picture and Instagram Caption of Gado-Gado

« Cacahuète maison »

A comparable representational process appears in the phrase « *cacahuète maison* » associated with Gado-Gado. The word *maison* functions as a culturally meaningful sign that suggests home-based preparation, traditional culinary techniques, and everyday domestic practices. Rather than simply describing how the ingredient is made, it activates broader cultural associations related to familiarity, care, and inherited knowledge. In Hall’s terms, this reflects how meaning is produced through shared cultural references that audiences recognize and interpret collectively. The emphasis on homemade preparation positions the dish within a framework of authenticity grounded in routine practices and tradition, rather than innovation or exclusivity.

Overall, these expressions illustrate how cultural rootedness is constructed through language that ties food to specific cultural contexts, practices, and identities. Consistent with Hall’s theory, such meanings are generated through systems of representation that shape how audiences understand and value cultural products. By emphasizing origin and traditional preparation, the discourse frames authenticity as emerging from locality, continuity, and shared cultural experience rather than from abstract or globalized forms of value.

Table 2. The Analysis of Lexical Choices

No	Types of Lexical Choices	Total Number	Foods’ Name	Beverages’ Name
1	Luxury	5	Rendang, Mie Ayam, Fruits.	Tea, Matahari.
2	Rarity	5	Nasi Ikan (2) Mie Ayam. Rendang	Gingembre citronnelle
3	Sensory Intensity	19	Gado-gado (2) Lumpia (2) Nasi ikan, Sate ayam, Opor ayam (2) Sate ayam, Nasi goreng, Coup de fruit, Chocolate fluff Dadar gulung	Matahari, Gingembre citronnelle, Mojito, Arak, Cocktail Soto ayam

No	Types of Lexical Choices	Total Number	Foods' Name	Beverages' Name
4	Cultural Rootedness	14	Gado-gado, Martabak, Sandwich rendang, Nasi goreng, Rendang, Mie Ayam, Rice, Coup de fruit, Kolak, Fruits.	Tea, Gingembre citronnelle, Wine
<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>		

From the table above, the distribution of lexical choices identified in the food and beverage captions, revealing how language is strategically used to construct meaning and appeal. From 43 lexical choice data points identified across 24 selected captions containing lexical choices, drawn from posts on the account from its first post through December 2025, Sensory Intensity emerges as the most dominant category with 19 occurrences, followed by Cultural Rootedness with 14 occurrences. In contrast, Luxury and Rarity are less frequently employed, each appearing 5 times.

The predominance of Sensory Intensity indicates that the discourse primarily focuses on evoking immediate physical and emotional responses. Lexical choices associated with this category frequently describe taste, texture, aroma, heat, and freshness, particularly in food items such as *gado-gado*, *lumpia*, *nasi ikan*, *sate ayam*, and *nasi goreng*, as well as beverages like *gingembre citronnelle*, *mojito*, and *cocktail*. This pattern suggests that sensory appeal is a central persuasive strategy, as it allows audiences to imagine the eating and drinking experience vividly.

The substantial presence of Cultural Rootedness highlights the importance of cultural identity and authenticity in the discourse. References to traditional dishes such as *rendang*, *martabak*, *kolak*, and *mie ayam*, along with beverages like *tea* and *ginger citronella*, anchor the products in specific cultural and geographical contexts. These lexical choices emphasize origin, tradition, and local practices, framing food and beverages as expressions of cultural heritage rather than merely consumable items.

Although luxury appears less frequently, its use remains significant. Luxury-related lexical choices are associated with items such as *rendang*, *mie ayam*, *fruits*, and beverages like *tea* and *matahari*. In this context, luxury is not constructed through exclusivity or high economic value, but rather through symbolic elements such as recognition, signature identity, and aesthetic appreciation. This reflects a form of symbolic luxury, where prestige and distinction are conveyed without distancing the product from everyday accessibility.

Similarly, Rarity is represented through expressions linked to *nasi rendang*, *mie ayam*, and *gingembre citronnelle*. Rather than indicating physical scarcity, rarity is often constructed through notions of uniqueness, secrecy, or special preparation. This suggests that rarity functions at the level of discourse, creating curiosity and perceived uniqueness while maintaining inclusivity.

In some captions of foods and beverages, various lexical choices exist in one caption. As the example caption of *rendang*, there are sensory intensity, cultural rootedness and implicit luxury. The combination of those lexical choices demonstrates a form of hybrid discourse, which merges culinary description, culturally storytelling and promotional language. This hybridization results in what can be termed a digital gastronomic discourse, where food is represented not only as a consumable product but also as a sensory, cultural and symbolic experience. The use of French as the medium further enhances this construction, given its global association with gastronomy and culinary sophistication, thereby reinforcing the perceived value of Indonesian traditional cuisine.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the discourse prioritizes sensory pleasure and cultural authenticity over exclusivity and material luxury. The dominance of sensory and cultural lexical choices indicates an inclusive, experience-oriented approach to food and beverage promotion, where value is derived from taste, tradition, and shared cultural meaning rather than from elitism or restriction.

As a result, markers and caption creators avoid the lexicon associated with prestige or exclusivity and instead prioritize sensory descriptors that support authenticity and enhance audience engagement. The variations in the use of lexical choices (diction), which are light, tempting, and attractive, make readers give lots of 'likes' for the feeds. The pictures of the food and drinks served are also appetizing. The captions are not only packaged in depicting descriptions but also packed with playing games as well to make the visitors more acquainted with the @djakartabalirestaurant account. In addition, it turns out that when compared to other posts with different topics, engagement posts that discuss culinary matters have high engagement, such as likes, comments, and shares.

These findings suggest that lexical choices in social media captions are not merely descriptive but are strategically selected to construct meaning, influence perception, and position cultural products in a global context. Therefore, this result contributes to the understanding of how language functions as a powerful tool in shaping the international representation of local culinary identity.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the types of lexical choices used in food and beverage captions and identified four main categories: Luxury, Rarity, Sensory Intensity, and Cultural Rootedness. The findings show that Sensory Intensity is the most frequently used category, followed by Cultural Rootedness, while Luxury and Rarity appear less often.

The dominance of sensory-related lexical choices suggests that the discourse mainly aims to engage audiences through immediate sensory experience, such as taste, texture, aroma, and intensity. By activating the senses, the captions allow readers to imagine the experience of consuming the food or beverages, thereby enhancing the appeal of the promotion.

The frequent use of culturally rooted lexical choices highlights the importance of authenticity and cultural identity. References to traditional dishes, local ingredients, and regional origins frame food and beverages as cultural expressions rather than purely commercial products. This reinforces a sense of

heritage and belonging that adds meaning beyond physical consumption. Although less dominant, Luxury and Rarity still play a meaningful role.

Overall, the findings suggest that the promotional discourse prioritizes sensory pleasure and cultural authenticity over elitism or exclusivity. This approach reflects an inclusive strategy in which food and beverages are presented as enjoyable, culturally meaningful experiences that can be shared by a wide audience.

However, this study has several limitations, including a relatively small dataset, and a focus on a single account. Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the dataset across multiple accounts or platforms to improve generalizability. Additionally, exploring audience reception or engagement metrics could provide deeper insights into how different lexical strategies influence consumer perception and behaviour.

## REFERENCES

- Amalia, R. M., Sujatna, E. T. S., Krisnawati, E., & Pamungkas, K. (2024). Savoring Sundanese food: A discourse analysis of Instagram's powerful promotion of Bandung's culture and culinary. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 11(1), 474–490.
- Clow, K. E., & Baack, D. (2012). *Integrated advertising, promotion, and marketing communications* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Eriyanto. (2001). *Analisis wacana: Pengantar analisis teks media* [Discourse analysis: An introduction to media text analysis]. LKiS Yogyakarta.
- Gudova, M., & Litvinova, A. (2020). Language diversity in business communication in the social network Instagram (On the example of bars, cafes, and restaurants ads). In *Communication trends in the post-literacy era: Polylingualism, multimodality, and multiculturalism as preconditions for new creativity*. <https://doi.org/10.15826/b978-5-7996-3081-2.23>
- Hafu, T. (2023). Cognitive dimension of modern English restaurant discourse in the Instagram social network. *Advanced Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.20535/2617-5339.2023.11.277876>
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Sage Publications.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1984). *Cohesion in English*. Longman.
- Ifversen, J. (2003). Text, discourse, concept: Approaches to textual analysis. *Kontur*, 7, 60–69.
- Johnston, J., & Baumann, S. (2010). *Foodies: Democracy and distinction in the gourmet foodscape*. Routledge.
- Leech, G. N. (1972). *English in advertising: A linguistic study of advertising in Great Britain*. Longman.
- Liu, K.-Y. (2021). Language choices as audience design strategies in Chinese multilingual speakers' WeChat posts. *Global Media and China*, 6(4), 391–415. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20594364211035201>
- Maharani, A. V. W., Iswandari, A., & Merrita, D. (2025). Strategies and ideology in the subtitle translation of cultural references in the TV series Mixed-ish Season 2 from English to Indonesian. *Lingua: Jurnal Ilmiah*, 21(2), 17–35.

- McLellan, S. (2022). Language contact and code-mixing in Southeast Asian social media. *Southeast Asian Journal of Language and Social Communication*, 25(2), 78–94.
- Meluzi, F., & Balsamo, M. (2021). Exploring specialized language used to promote food and wine in tourism contexts on websites and Instagram. *Journal of Tourism and Culinary Studies*, 15(3), 121–135.
- Mocini, R. (2005). The verbal discourse of tourist brochures. *Annals*, 5, 153–162.
- Rein, I. J. (1982). *The great American communication catalogue*. Prentice-Hall.
- Singh, M., & Lunyal, V. (2025). Decoding culinary power: Discourse historical analysis of Instagram food trends in the United States. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*. <https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels>
- Tam, H. C., & Tsang, Y. L. (2023). Culinary terms moving across languages in social media contexts. *Journal of Linguistic and Cultural Studies*, 10(1), 112–129.
- Van Dijk, T. (2019). *Macrostructures: An interdisciplinary study of global structures in discourse, interaction, and cognition*. Routledge.
- Wan Fakhruddin, W. F. W., & Salim, M. A. M. (2023). Fostering the Indonesian culinary through language and visual on social media: Tourism discourse perspective. *PUSAKA: Journal of Tourism, Hospitality, Travel and Business Event*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.33649/pusaka.v5i2.25>
- Wiharto, W., & Dewi, N. (2022). Eufemisme dan disfemisme pada teks terjemahan berita: Analisis wacana kritis berbasis korpus. *Lingua: Jurnal Ilmiah*, 18(2), 100–118.