

Semiotic Signs on Indian Food in Medan

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ABSTRACT

This study focusses to describe the depiction of the kinds of Indian food in Medan and to analyze the meaning of Indian food in Medan based on the semiotic approach. India is a developing country and has a very large population of cuisines from various regions of the Asian subcontinent among which a distinctive feature of Indian cuisine is the use of a variety of spices and vegetables native to India, and the variety of Indian vegetarian dishes also reflects the diversity of religions and cultures. Data analysis in this study uses Ferdinand de Saussure's theory. This research uses qualitative research methods. The data is collected by analyzing the types of Indian food. The researcher chose Indian food in Medan because there were only a few who researched Indian food in Medan in the village of Madras. In this way, it is hope that it will be useful for readers to more easily understand the meaning of the description of the types of Indian food in Medan. The results of the research analysis, the researcher found several Indian foods containing semiotics, totaling five, each of which has its own meaning, Samosa; from the results found that Samosa is also a symbol of hospitality and is often use as a welcome gift for guests is also an important part of daily life and eaten as a snack or supplement, Biryani; in indian culture itself, biryani rice is a food that shows prosperity because it can be consumed by all indians, Curry; according to the indian community, curry is not only a term used by the british to describe an unknown indian stew or ragout, but also a new dish invented for the british in India.

Keywords : Semiotics, Indian Foods, Meaning

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multicultural country characterized by diverse ethnic groups, traditions, and cultural practices, including cultural influences originating from outside the country. One of these influences is Indian culture, which has existed in Indonesia for a long time and has developed in several regions, including Medan, North Sumatra. Indian cultural influences in Medan can be found in various aspects of social life, particularly through food and the use of spices. Indian cuisine has distinctive characteristics in terms of taste, ingredients, cooking techniques, and cultural values. In Indian traditions, food does not merely function as a means of fulfilling nutritional needs but also represents social relationships and togetherness in various cultural activities (Chandler, 2007).

The diversity of Indian cuisine is influenced by geographical conditions, history, religion, and cultural traditions. Different regions of India have distinctive culinary characteristics, particularly through the use of spices, vegetables, and local ingredients. The variety of vegetarian dishes also reflects the religious and cultural diversity of Indian society. Furthermore, cultural interactions with neighboring regions, such as the Middle East and Central Asia, have contributed to the development of Indian cuisine as a unique combination of different culinary traditions. In Medan, particularly in the Kampung Madras area, Indian food has become one of the forms through which the cultural identity of the Indian community continues to be maintained. However, studies examining Indian food in Medan, particularly its symbolic and semiotic meanings, remain relatively limited.

The presence of Indian cultural elements in Indonesia cannot be separated from the historical relationship between India and the Indonesian archipelago, which initially developed through trade. These relationships subsequently expanded through religious and cultural exchanges. Interactions between Indonesian communities and Indian religious figures also contributed to the dissemination of Indian cultural elements in Indonesia (Irfani, 2015). This historical process demonstrates that food, as one of the products of culture, can represent the history, identity, and values of the community that preserves it.

Culture generally consists of systems of values, beliefs, norms, and symbols that are transmitted from one generation to another (Hofstede, 2001). These elements are expressed through various forms, including artifacts, social institutions, rituals, symbols, and everyday practices. Therefore, food can be understood not only as a product consumed to fulfill biological needs but also as part of a cultural system containing particular meanings. In Indian culture, food is associated with symbols and meanings related to social life, religion, traditions, and community identity (Sinha & Kumar, 2004).

The meanings contained in food can be examined through a semiotic approach. Semiotics is the study of signs and the processes through which meaning is constructed in social life. Ferdinand de Saussure views a sign as a relationship between the *signifier* and the *signified*. The meaning of a sign is not determined solely by its visible form but also by its relationship with other signs within a particular system. The principle of difference is one of the fundamental concepts in Saussure's approach to understanding how meaning is constructed (Budiman, 2002, p. 30). Therefore, the form, ingredients, color, presentation, and cultural use of food can be understood as signs that produce particular meanings.

Based on this background, examining semiotic signs in Indian food in Medan is important to understand Indian cuisine not merely as culinary products but also as cultural representations containing symbolic meanings. This study aims to describe the types of Indian food found in Medan and analyze the semiotic meanings contained in these foods based on Ferdinand de Saussure's theory. This study is expected to contribute to the development of cultural semiotics studies and provide a deeper understanding of Indian culinary traditions as part of the cultural diversity of Medan.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach to describe and analyze the semiotic meanings contained in Indian food in Medan. A qualitative approach produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken information and observable behavior, emphasizing natural settings and the meaning of phenomena rather than numerical results (Moleong, 2006). According to Sugiyono (2008), qualitative research examines objects in natural settings without manipulation. In this study, the researcher acts as the main instrument in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data related to Indian food based on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory.

The data consist of information regarding the types, characteristics, presentation, and meanings of Indian food in Medan. The primary data were obtained directly from informants at Cahaya Baru Restaurant, Kampung Madras, Medan, while secondary data were obtained from relevant books, articles, and journals concerning semiotics, Indian culture, and Indian food. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2008). Observation was conducted to identify the characteristics, preparation, presentation, and cultural context of Indian food (Syaodih, 2013). Interviews were conducted with informants who had knowledge of Indian food and culture to obtain information about the types and meanings of the food (Moleong, 2005; Kusuma & Nurhayati, 2019). Documentation was used to complement the observation and interview data through photographs, notes, and other relevant documents (Syaodih, 2013).

The data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis through four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data collection involved gathering information from observations, interviews, and documentation. Data reduction was conducted by selecting and grouping relevant information related to the research objectives (Moleong, 2002). The selected data were then presented descriptively and interpreted using Ferdinand de Saussure's concepts of *signifier* and *signified*. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified by comparing the results obtained from different data sources to ensure the credibility and consistency of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected to answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives. The analysis is based on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, particularly the relationship between *signifier* and *signified*.

Analysis

Types of Indian Food

Indian cuisine is characterized by the use of various spices, locally grown vegetables, and diverse vegetarian dishes. Its characteristics are also influenced by India's climate, demographics, and religious diversity. Strong aromas, distinctive flavors, and attractive colors are common features of Indian food. In addition, the spices used in Indian cuisine contain phytonutrients that may provide health benefits (Beru Ginting, 2017). For people unfamiliar with Indian cuisine, its strong flavors and distinctive spices may initially seem unusual. Nevertheless, Indian food represents an important part of Indian cultural identity and provides a cultural experience through its ingredients, preparation, and presentation. The following section presents the analysis of several Indian foods found in Medan.

Data 1

Samosa



Signified : *Snack Pastry.*

(Food originating from India which is triangular in shape and golden brown in color with sauce as a taste enhancer.)

Signifier : Samosa has a semiotic meaning as a symbol of hospitality and is often use as a welcome gift for guests is also an important part of daily life and eaten as a snack or supplement. The form of samosa has the meaning of hospitality because of its simple shape and also has a color that is not too flashy. In semiotic theory, colors and simple shapes symbolize hospitality in Indian culture. that researcher can conclude the value of the value of semiotics in the samosa which can interpret as a form of hospitality

Samosa is a typical indian snack which has a tringular shape with a crunchy skin texture and a filling with the nuances of curry spices.samosa come from hindi, namely samusa and persian namely sanbosag.not only these two languages, samosa actually has many names in difference region. However,in general samosa is a type of triangular snack filled with potatoes.samosas are also an important part of daily life in india.many people buy samosas are often sold by street vendors on the street of indian. Lukhmi is the name for a variation of samosas in Hyderabad, India.

The size is smaller than usual, but the pastry skin is thicker.In Goa as well as Portugal, samosas are spelled as chamuças. It contains chicken, beef, pork, or vegetables, and is seasoned until it tastes spicy.Samosas are widely known in Kazakhstan as samsa. It contains beef, chicken, or cheese.

This food also usually appears during the diwali celebration as a snack to fill the celebration event. Indian vegetarian samosas are made with flour (maida flour), potatoes, onions, spices and green chilies. Onions prohibit asafetida (hing) for people who abstain from onions. Samosa is eaten with dipping sauce in the form of chutney, such as mint leaf chutney, coriander leaf chutney, or tamarind chutney. Samosa is a favorite food for the people of India. And in Medan itself, samosas are made with a variety of fillings. Some traders even sell them at prices that vary depending on the filling.

Data 2

Biryani rice



Signified : Rice

(The rice originating from India where this rice has a yellow texture with a mixture of mutton and red chilies)

Signifier : Biryani has a semiotic signifier in it, in Indian culture itself, Biryani rice is a food that shows prosperity because it can be consumed by all Indians. It has a savory taste because it uses various kinds of spices, such as meat broth which is no less delicious. Biryani is made from basmati rice, originating from India and Pakistan. Biryani rice is a dish in which rice is usually made from basmati rice and cooked with spices, added with vegetables and meat, chicken, goat, beef, fish or shrimp. so that researchers can conclude the value of the semiotics value in Biryani rice that can interpret as a form Biryani rice is a food that shows good prosperity because it can be consumed by all Indians.

. This rice is cooked with spices and then mixed with vegetables and meat. Most of the meat used is mutton, but it can also be varied using beef, chicken, shrimp, and fish. Intense aroma and deep taste are the hallmarks of typical Indian food. Coupled with fresh ingredients will give an attractive color when served. Indian food also plays an important role in providing anti-inflammatory phytonutrients. This function is affected by the hot soil and weather conditions in India. The effect is that Indians need food that can prevent inflammation.

For people who have never tasted Indian specialties, it will feel strange, especially for cooking. If want to find souvenirs from typical Indian food, should choose sweets that have a taste well known to the Indonesian tongue. But there's nothing wrong with trying some Indian dishes which have a very strong taste. Biryani rice is known to have existed since the 18th and 19th centuries.

Historically, this dish was create by Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of Shah Jahan, the 5th king of the Mughal dynasty in India. So happy with the world of cooking, it is said that Mumtaz was the first to create briyani. The story of the briyani itself begins when the Mughals ruled the Lucknow area or what was formerly called Awadh. At that time, Wajid Ali Shah, the Nawab of Awadh, added potato wedges to the biryani rice. The result was surprises , biryani rice became richer as it turns out that potatoes are the perfect accompaniment to be serve with meat and rice.

Apart from the creations of biryani rice, which are now varied, ranging from Sindhi Biryani with potato wedges, Memoni Biryani with tez masala, to Kachay Gosht ki Biryani which is prepare with spices

without tomatoes, Lucknow is claimed to be the birthplace of this culinary specialty. literally, briyani is a traditional dish that is cooke on special occasions such as holiday celebrations. the specialty of briyani lie in the aroma of spices, masala and its unique spicy taste. Each region or region in India and Pakistan has a different cooking style. There is no use of rose water or kewra, as they are used in most Mughlai dishes. However, Awadhi Dum Biryani is predicted to be the forerunner of biryani rice which is still often found today.

The dish was invented during the Shuja-ud-Daula period.his successor Asaf-ud-Daula ruled in the 1750s. He is said to have spent a lot of money preparing various delicious dishes because he was fascinated by the delicacy of biryani rice. At least more than 12 dozen kitchens in the kingdom and hundreds of chefs are required to prepare hundreds of meals. It is here that the Awadhi Biryani variety was created from the long experimentation of experienced chefs.

A century later, Wajid Ali Shah abdicated from his throne and was sent to Calcutta by the imperialists. His entourage brought along the Awadhi Biryani recipe, which resulted in the creation of Calcutta Biryani, which is character by large pieces of potato as the main ingredient. There is no authentic evidence that the use of potatoes here was use to offset the increase in the price of meat. The reason is at that time, processed Calcutta Biryani was indeed dominated by potato pieces rather than mutton.

In indonesia, biryani rice is almost the same as kebuli rice, its just the difference the kebuli rice has a curry-like taste and a strong cardamon aroma, while the biryani rice has a more pronounced turmeric flavour. biryani rice is a food that developed in the kitchens of the mughal empire in 1526-1857, in indian culture itself, biryani rice is a food that shows prosperity because it can be consumed by all indians. Biryani rice is not a food that is quite common. In Indonesia, especially in Medan. Biryani rice from India is not necessarily easy to find. If want to buy it, it's only available in Special Indian restaurants.

Data 3 Curry



Signified : *Soupy food*

(soupy food mixed with meat and potatoes as a filling. has an orange color texture placed in a cistern)

Signifier : kare is a variety of soupy dishes cooked with spices until it has a sharp and spicy taste. Curry originated in South Asia, especially India, and has expanded to all countries in the Asia Pacific and Europe regions. In some South Indian languages, curry literally means a side dish (a variety of vegetable and meat dishes) eaten with rice or bread. The spices and spices used to make curry are very diverse and are not limited to coriander, turmeric, pepper, chili, paprika powder, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom, Lawang flowers, claret, anise, bay leaf koji, and cloves. Curry has an orange texture.

Curry or known in Indonesia as kare is a variety of soupy dishes cooked with spices until it has a sharp and spicy taste. Curry originated in South Asia, especially India, and has expanded to all countries in the Asia Pacific and Europe regions. In Medan Curry is easy to find in various places to eat, such as at the Padang restaurant. According to the Indian community, curry is not only a term used by the British to describe an unknown Indian stew or ragout, but also a new dish invented for the British in India.

From the data above, it shows that curry has a signifier meaning, which has an effect on the Indian community that curry is a gravy containing meat and potatoes as the filling. Curry has an orange color texture which in semiotic meaning that orange color means warmth or enthusiasm. and from Indian culture itself curry has an orange texture because this food is made spicy to give the impression of enthusiasm.

In Dravidian languages, curry means vegetables in a sauce or gravy. The verb *karughi* in Tamil means deep-frying (or burning). In Kannada, curry is also frying or deep-fried dishes. In some South Indian languages, curry literally means a side dish (a variety of vegetable and meat dishes) eaten with rice or bread. In Western countries, curry has become an English vocabulary for kinds South and Southeast Asian specialties cooked with various spices. Curry's popularity has spread from the Indian subcontinent into world cuisine. Each country has a distinctive type of curry to the tastes of the people in that country. Curry can be found at various street vendors such as *martabak* use curry sauce as a complement.

From the meaning of the signifier contained in curry, it can be seen that curry has an orange color texture which is produced from several spices that are put together like The spices and spices used to make curry are very diverse and are not limited to coriander, turmeric, pepper, chili, paprika powder, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom, Lawang flowers, claret, anise, bay leaf koji, and cloves. The type of spice used depends on the type of curry and the country of origin of the dish. Curry powder or *masala* is a mixture of various kinds of herbs and spices that was first made by the British during the British Empire because they missed Indian curry. In Medan, curry is not so difficult to find because it is not so difficult to make, curry is often used as home food by Medan people with various variants.

Data 4 Chapati



Signified : Bread

(Chapati is a food originating from India which has a round shape with a dough that is like bread, chapati has a white texture and can be eaten with curry sauce, chutney and other types of bread. This bread is baked in a basin or pan.)

Signifier : From the data above, it shows that chapati has a signifier meaning contained in it, which has an effect on Indian society. *Nahwa* chapati is a bread food that eaten with curry sauce, chutney and others as a flavor enhancer. Chapati has a white texture, which is where this white color comes from. from flour dough. chapati has a round shape which in semiotic meaning that round shape is defined as simplicity, dynamic impression, and concentration. and from Indian culture itself because the round shape

adjusts easily in a pan which is generally round. In semiotics, round signifier is simplicity, dynamic impression. But in this type of Indian food, the meaning round has a semiotic meaning, namely unity and simplicity.

Chapati is made from a dough consisting of wheat flour, salt and water. Atta flour is made from Indian wheat. The wheat produced is thinner than whole wheat flour in Western countries. Traditionally, both bread and rice are served blandly to be served alongside spicy dishes. Chapati has a white texture which comes from the flour. In Indian culture, chapati is a food that is usually served because it is not so difficult and simple to make.

Chapati (sometimes spelled chapatti, chappati, chapati,), also known as roti (as opposed to bread in Indonesian), safari, shibari, and roshi (in the Maldives), is a type of unleavened and flattened bread of Indian Subcontinental origin and is a common staple food in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Chapati is made from whole wheat flour known as atta, salt, and water, then cooked on a tava (flat pan).

This bread is very flexible because it eaten with curry sauce. In shape, chapati bread is quite thin, similar to tortilla bread. In India, this bread is commonly found in various restaurants. The size of the chapati itself varies from region to region in India. this bread is served with main dishes and dishes with sauces. In Medan, chapatti can be found in several Indian specialty restaurants, such as the "Cahaya Baru" restaurant in Kampung Madras.

It is a common staple in South Asia as well as for South Asian expatriates and immigrants in different parts of the world. It was also introduced by Indian merchants in Central, Southeast, and East Africa, and the Caribbean Islands. Chapati is made from a dough consisting of wheat flour, salt, and water. Atta flour is made from Indian wheat. The wheat produced is finer than whole wheat flour in Western countries. Traditionally, both bread and rice are served blandly to be served alongside spicy dishes. for some Indian people, chappati shows as a friendly food. because it can be eaten all various groups.

Data 5

Chicken Tandoori



Signified : *Chicken*

(red chicken served on a plate with onions and sauce as a complement.)

Signifier : Tandoori chicken is a Punjabi cuisine that originated in Punjab and its existence can be traced to the time of the Mughal Sultanate in South Asia. This food is still popular in the area and also in Central and Southeast Asia. The dishes commonly cooked in Tandoor are meat, chicken, seafood (shrimp, squid fish) and bread, and naan. In Indonesia, tandoori chicken looks like grilled chicken, because the color is similar to grilled chicken.

Tandoori is a way of cooking food ingredients with greased spices until they soak into the ingredients and then bake at a very hot temperature or up to 300 Celsius in the Tandoor oven to bake the food used long skewers made of iron. Typical spices used to cook Indian preparations in the Tandoori way are yogurt, mustard oil, garam masala, salt, chili powder, cumin powder, coriander powder, and kasoori methi. Famous and world-famous dishes cooked in the Tandoori way include Chicken Tandoori, Chicken Tikka, Tandoori Fish, Tandoori Prawn, and others.

From the data above, that tandoori chicken has a signifier meaning contained in it, which has a meaning effect on the community. Nahwa tandoori chicken is a food that has a red texture where the red color comes from spices and chili powder. In terms of semiotics, the color red can be interpreted as brave, hot or careful. but in Indian culture itself the meaning of the red signifier contained in tandoori chicken means having one wish or one thing in common. so that researchers can conclude the value of semiotics in tandoori chickens that can interpret as a form of food that has a significant meaning of one similarity or one desire

India's relationship with Indonesia dates back more than 3,000 years. That relationship leads to a lasting cultural relationship between the two giants, thus helping to foster a close person-to-person relationship. Whether it is political philosophy, culture, cuisine, artwork, or language, the bond between the two countries is currently manifested in the fascinating diversity of India and Indonesia, providing comfort and familiarity with each other. the influx of culture in Sumatra's region as in the terrain, examples of scattered cultures such as its distinctive Indian cuisine.its cuisine which is rich in its spices(Sobur 2003).

Sumatera was the first place to welcome Indians several centuries ago. The influx of Indian culture itself was once hampered by its communication and culture, but over time the barriers have been reduced due to the locals who have become accustomed to its culture.

Indian food dates back thousands of years. Food has become an important symbol in Indian culture. So that Indian cuisine always has a certain meaning behind its making and serving. not all Indian food is eaten for daily use, certain foods can only be cooked while in celebration or other traditional events. So that Indian cuisine always has a certain meaning behind its manufacture and presentation. Indian cuisine has a characteristic that is very strong in taste and even its appearance is like an art. In a semiotic view, the red color in tandoori chicken means courage or firmness. The red color of tandoori chicken comes from spices and chili powder. for Indian society historically. This tandoori chicken shows that people have one thing in common

Because the culinary comes from a mixture of many spices that bring perfection to a dish. Very rich spices are not just to provide flavor but also as a form of treatment. Like turmeric, ginger, garlic and green chili peppers are ingredients that are often used as a treatment and boost immunity. Indian dishes always use new and fresh ingredients. Fresh ingredients are believed to provide good nutrients to the body. This means very little preserved food, especially traditional Indian dishes (Suherman 2021).

Indians themselves cannot eat any food depending on their individual beliefs. like hinduism, In the teachings of Hinduism perhaps we often hear that the animal that is illegitimate to eat is a cow. This is because cows are noble and sacred animals in the teachings of Hinduism. Since ancient times, the cow is an animal that is glorified because it is a symbol of welfare for the earth. the cow is considered a sacred animal by the majority of the Hindu population in India. The mammal was seen as a symbol of the earth and a god. So the Hindus are forbidden to eat cows.

The majority of Indians, who are mostly Hindus, are also unable to eat meat like beef because they believe in karma and reincarnation. india has a diverse and distinct culture that has been developing for

thousands of years and varies from region to region. Here are India's cultural traditions when eating food. In Medan, tandoori chicken is not easy to find, tandoori chicken can only found in Indian restaurants, one of which is the "Cahaya Baru" restaurant in kampung madras Madras. At first glance, tandori chicken is similar to grilled chicken in Indonesia. it is just that the texture and taste are different. Tandoori chicken is not only delicious but also a sign of cultural integration,.

Findings

Samosa

Based on the research findings, Samosa contains semiotic meanings related to Indian culture and everyday life. Samosa is commonly consumed as a snack and is widely sold by street vendors in India. It also symbolizes hospitality, as it is often served to welcome guests. In addition, Samosa is commonly associated with celebrations such as Diwali. In Medan, Samosa is available with various fillings and prices. Thus, Samosa functions not only as food but also as a sign of hospitality, togetherness, and Indian cultural identity.

Biryani Rice

Biryani rice is prepared using basmati rice cooked with various spices and combined with vegetables and meat. Historically, Biryani developed in the Mughal royal kitchens and became an important part of Indian culinary culture. In Indian society, Biryani can represent prosperity and social togetherness because it can be enjoyed by different groups. Compared with Indonesian kebuli rice, Biryani has a stronger turmeric and spice flavor. In Medan, Biryani is relatively difficult to find and is mainly available at specialized Indian restaurants, such as Cahaya Baru in Kampung Madras. From a semiotic perspective, its ingredients, preparation, and presentation signify Indian culinary traditions and cultural identity.

Curry

Curry is a South Asian dish characterized by a rich combination of spices that produces a strong and spicy flavor. In Medan, curry is relatively easy to find and is commonly prepared with chicken because of its affordability. Curry has spread from India to various parts of Asia and other regions, with each country developing variations according to local tastes. The spices used include turmeric, coriander, cumin, chili, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and other seasonings. From a semiotic perspective, curry represents cultural adaptation and culinary exchange, demonstrating how Indian cuisine has interacted with and adapted to different societies while maintaining its distinctive identity.

Chappati

Chappati is a traditional unleavened flatbread made from whole wheat flour, salt, and water and cooked on a flat pan called *tava*. In Indian culture, its round shape can be interpreted semiotically as a symbol of unity, completeness, and continuity. Chappati is a staple food in India and is commonly served with curry or other dishes. In Medan, however, it is less common and is mainly available at specialized Indian restaurants, including Cahaya Baru in Kampung Madras. Its simple ingredients and ability to be enjoyed with various dishes also represent its accessibility and role as a food shared across different social groups.

Chicken Tandoori

Based on the research findings, Chicken Tandoori contains semiotic meanings related to Indian culture and identity. Tandoori chicken is a traditional Punjabi dish associated with the Mughal period in South Asia and is prepared in a *tandoor* oven at high temperatures. The chicken is marinated with yogurt and various spices such as garam masala, chili, cumin, coriander, and kasoori methi, giving it a distinctive aroma, flavor, and color. In Indonesia, its appearance is often compared to grilled chicken, although its texture and taste are different.

Indian cuisine has a strong cultural connection with the use of spices, which function not only to enhance flavor but are also traditionally associated with health and medicinal benefits. Ingredients such as turmeric, ginger, garlic, and chili are commonly used for this purpose (Suherman, 2021). Food also reflects religious values in Indian society, particularly Hindu beliefs that prohibit the consumption of beef because cows are considered sacred and symbolize prosperity. Thus, food choices can represent religious identity and cultural values.

In Medan, Tandoori Chicken is relatively uncommon and is mainly available at Indian restaurants, including Cahaya Baru Restaurant in Kampung Madras. Its presence represents cultural integration and the preservation of Indian culinary identity in Medan. From a semiotic perspective, the ingredients, cooking process, appearance, and presentation of Tandoori Chicken function as *signifiers*, while its meanings related to Indian identity, tradition, religion, and cultural heritage function as the *signified* (Sobur, 2003). Therefore, Tandoori Chicken is not merely a culinary dish but also a symbol of the cultural diversity and historical presence of the Indian community in Medan.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation at Cahaya Baru Restaurant, Kampung Madras, Medan, it can be concluded that Indian food contains various semiotic signs that represent cultural values and social meanings. Five types of Indian food were identified, namely Samosa, Biryani, Curry, Chappati, and Chicken Tandoori. Samosa symbolizes hospitality and is commonly served to guests and consumed as a daily snack. Biryani represents prosperity because it can be enjoyed by various groups in Indian society. Curry reflects cultural adaptation and culinary exchange, as its meaning and form have developed across different regions and cultures. Chappati represents friendliness and togetherness because it can be consumed by people from various social groups (Fanani et al., 2013).

Meanwhile, Chicken Tandoori is traditionally prepared in a *tandoor* oven at high temperatures. Although no specific symbolic meaning was identified from the Indian community regarding this food, the research findings indicate that Chicken Tandoori can be interpreted as a sign of cultural integration and shared identity. Overall, the findings demonstrate that Indian food in Medan is not merely a means of fulfilling nutritional needs but also functions as a cultural symbol that represents hospitality, prosperity, togetherness, cultural exchange, and Indian identity. These meanings show how Indian culinary traditions continue to exist and adapt within the multicultural society of Medan.

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