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A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Brand Naming: Word-Formation and Social Meaning in Indonesian F&B Brand Names

Annisa Zahrani[1], Cinta Amaliah[2], Ivana Jaliona Nur Salam[3], Nur Aqila Ramadhani Gultom[4]

[1,2,3,4] Universitas Sumatera Utara, Jl. Tri Dharma No.9, Kota Medan, Sumatera Utara 20222

[1]annisazahrani@students.usu.ac.id, [2]camaliah04@gmail.com,
[3]ivanajalionansss@gmail.com, [4]aqilagltm@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: Annisa Zahrani, e-mail: annisazahrani@students.usu.ac.id

Abstrak

Purpose. This study aims to examine the word-formation processes, semantic and cultural associations, and social meanings reflected in five well-known Indonesian food and beverage (F&B) brand names: TUKU, Kopi Kenangan, Janji Jiwa, Menantea, and HAUS!. It explores how linguistic choices contribute to the construction of brand identity in the Indonesian F&B market.

Materials and methods. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, word-formation processes were identified using Plag's (2003) framework. Second, the conceptual and connotative meanings of the brand names were examined based on Leech's (1981) theory. Third, their sociolinguistic meanings were interpreted in relation to brand identity, considering relevant cultural contexts and brand-related expressions, including slogans, product names, and marketing language.

Results. The findings reveal various naming strategies, including the use of existing lexical items in TUKU and HAUS!, meaningful word combinations in Kopi Kenangan and Janji Jiwa, and wordplay combining *menanti* and *tea* in Menantea. These names evoke different associations, such as local identity and familiarity, nostalgia, commitment, playfulness, and accessibility. These associations are further reinforced by the brands' slogans, product names, and marketing expressions.

Conclusions. Indonesian F&B brand naming involves more than the selection of words. It reflects linguistic choices that communicate cultural associations, convey social meanings, and contribute to distinctive brand identities. The findings highlight the relationship between word formation, meaning, and branding practices in the Indonesian F&B industry.
Keywords: brand naming; word formation; sociolinguistics; social meaning; Indonesian F&B brands

LATAR BELAKANG

A brand name is rarely an arbitrary label; it is a linguistic unit deliberately constructed to carry meaning, evoke associations, and evoke associations and contribute to brand identity. Panić (2015) argues that brand name creation is both a scientific and a creative linguistic process, drawing on morphological, phonological, and semantic principles to produce names that are memorable and psychologically meaningful. This can be observed in Indonesia's contemporary food and beverage (F&B) industry, where brand names such as TUKU, Kopi Kenangan, Janji Jiwa, Menantea, and HAUS! are more than commercial identifiers. These names draw on everyday Indonesian and Javanese vocabulary, including a verb associated with buying, a noun referring to memory, a phrase combining the concepts of a promise and the soul, wordplay combining *menanti* and *tea*, and an adjective associated with thirst. Through these linguistic choices, familiar words acquire brand-specific meanings. This raises an important linguistic question: how are ordinary lexical items selected, combined, or creatively modified through naming practices and semantic interpretation into distinctive commercial identities in Indonesia's competitive F&B market? These naming choices not only reflect cultural familiarity and authenticity but also convey social meanings that contribute to the construction of brand identity.

This phenomenon can be understood through onomastics, the study of proper names, which views names as linguistic elements that acquire meaning through their formation and use in social communication. Blanár (2009) explains that names serve both

identifying and social functions rather than operating as neutral labels. In marketing, Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism conceptualizes brand identity through six interrelated facets: physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image. From this perspective, a brand name forms part of a broader system through which a brand communicates its characteristics and values. Similarly, Aaker (1996) argues that a brand's core identity represents its enduring essence, values, and associations. The naming process therefore offers an opportunity to express aspects of that identity through a concise linguistic form. In the Indonesian context, Nugroho (2022) demonstrates that naming strategies can function as marketing communication tools through which brands establish product relevance and cultural resonance among target consumers. These perspectives suggest that Indonesian F&B brand names should be examined not merely as product labels but as linguistic and semiotic constructions that connect language, cultural associations, and brand identity.

The present study also draws on sociolinguistics, which examines the relationship between language and society, including how linguistic choices convey social meanings and contribute to the construction of social identity (Holmes, 2013, p. 1). Holmes (2013, p. 4) further identifies vocabulary and word choice as aspects of linguistic variation through which social information can be communicated. Similarly, Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015, pp. 7, 72) explain that social identity can be constructed through language use, including linguistic forms associated with membership in particular social groups or categories. Applied to Indonesian F&B brand names, this perspective allows the selection of everyday Indonesian and Javanese vocabulary to be examined as a meaningful linguistic choice rather than simply a commercial decision. Such choices may evoke cultural familiarity, shared experiences, and values that resonate with the intended audience. Accordingly, this study investigates how the linguistic characteristics of selected brand names convey social meanings and contribute to the construction of distinctive brand identities.

To examine these linguistic characteristics, the study combines theories of word formation and semantics. Plag (2003) explains word formation as the processes through which new words are created from existing linguistic elements, including compounding, blending, clipping, and affixation. Although Plag's framework primarily addresses English, it is used in this study as an analytical reference, with each Indonesian or Javanese brand name classified according to its actual linguistic structure. At the semantic level, Leech (1981, pp. 9–12) distinguishes conceptual meaning, which concerns the core content of an expression, from connotative meaning, which encompasses additional associations related to psychological, social, and cultural experiences. This distinction is particularly relevant to branding because a name may retain its basic lexical meaning while acquiring further associations through its commercial use. By combining these perspectives with sociolinguistic analysis, this study examines the relationship between word formation, semantic associations, and the social meanings embedded in Indonesian F&B brand names.

Previous studies have investigated the linguistic construction of brand names from several perspectives. Giyatmi et al. (2014) examined English-influenced brand names in Indonesian products and identified eight word-formation processes: compounding, blending, affixation, reduplication, onomatopoeia, abbreviation, acronym formation, and clipping. Their findings demonstrate how linguistic processes can be used to create memorable and appealing brand names. Meanwhile, Viramdani (2017), in a morphosemantic study of electronic product brands, proposed five semantic categories: fruit as brand, place as brand, person as brand, product as brand, and concept as brand. This classification illustrates how brand names can evoke conceptual domains that consumers associate with particular products. However, these studies focus on general consumer products and electronic brands rather than examining the relationship between linguistic structure and social meaning in Indonesian beverage brands.

Research focusing on the coffee and beverage sector has explored naming practices from different perspectives. Rachmad (2025), in a socio-onomastic study of 71 coffee shop

names in Surabaya, found that naming choices reflect negotiations between local cultural identity and global modernity. Names derived from Javanese may evoke cultural familiarity and authenticity, whereas English or French names can suggest cosmopolitan associations. Similarly, Amanda and Tur (2026) examined beverage menu names in cafés in Yogyakarta and introduced the term *culinaronym* to describe names such as Vietnam Drip and Black Citrus. Their findings suggest that menu names can communicate identity, sensory expectations, and customer experiences. However, their focus is on individual menu items rather than the overarching names of beverage brands. Agustin (2021) also observed that Indonesian contemporary coffee brands, including Kopi Kenangan, Janji Jiwa, Kopi Lain Hati, Kopi Sejiwa, and Kopi Bahagia, frequently use emotion-related vocabulary as a naming strategy. Complementing this perspective, Azzahra and Soemardjo (2022) reported that the name Janji Jiwa was intended to represent a promise to provide high-quality coffee products. Although these studies offer insights into branding strategies and cultural associations, they do not systematically connect word-formation processes and semantic meanings with the social meanings conveyed by brand names.

Despite these contributions, several gaps remain in the existing literature. First, linguistic studies of Indonesian brand names, such as Giyatmi et al. (2014) and Viramdani (2017), primarily examine general consumer products and electronic brands rather than the specific naming practices of the beverage industry. Although Harared et al. (2025) investigated word formation in F&B business names in the Margonda area of Depok, their study covered ten names in a particular commercial area and focused primarily on word-formation processes rather than the social meanings associated with those names. Second, research on coffee shop naming tends to focus either on language choices across commercial signage or on the names of individual menu items. These approaches provide valuable insights into linguistic landscapes and culinary naming practices but do not systematically compare the morphological and semantic characteristics of major Indonesian beverage brand names. Third, studies discussing the meanings of specific

brands, such as Kopi Kenangan and Janji Jiwa, have largely approached the subject from marketing and branding perspectives, including interpretations based on management interviews. Consequently, the linguistic mechanisms through which these names acquire conceptual, connotative, and social meanings remain insufficiently explored. More specifically, the relationship between word-formation processes, semantic and cultural associations, and the construction of brand identity has not been adequately examined within a comparative analysis of major Indonesian beverage brands.

To address these gaps, this study examines five Indonesian F&B brand names: TUKU, Kopi Kenangan, Janji Jiwa, Menantea, and HAUS!. It aims to identify the word-formation processes underlying these names, explore their semantic and cultural associations, and interpret the social meanings they convey within the Indonesian speech community. Rather than treating brand names merely as commercial labels, this study approaches them as linguistic choices through which familiar vocabulary may acquire new associations and contribute to the construction of brand identity. By integrating word-formation analysis, semantic interpretation, and a sociolinguistic perspective, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how linguistic forms and culturally embedded meanings intersect in Indonesian F&B branding.

Based on this background, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What word-formation processes underlie the five brand names TUKU, Kopi Kenangan, Janji Jiwa, Menantea, and HAUS!?
2. What semantic and cultural associations does each brand name carry within the Indonesian speech community?
3. How are the social meanings embedded in these brand names connected to the construction of distinctive brand identities?

METHOD

Students Participants

This study did not involve human participants, as it analysed brand names rather than collecting data from informants. The data consisted of five Indonesian F&B brand names: Tuku, Kopi Kenangan, Janji Jiwa, Menantea, and Haus! The brands were selected purposively because they represent recognizable Indonesian beverage businesses and provide different linguistic forms for analysis. The selection also follows the focus of previous studies on Indonesian brand naming, particularly Giyatmi et al. (2014), who examined word-formation processes in Indonesian product brand names, and Harared et al. (2025), who specifically investigated word formation in F&B business names. Unlike those studies, the present research focuses on connecting word formation with semantic and sociolinguistic meanings in selected Indonesian beverage brands. In addition, supporting data were taken from publicly available brand materials, including naming explanations, slogans, product names, customer labels, and other recurring brand expressions.

Students Organization

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyse the linguistic construction and social meaning of selected Indonesian F&B brand names. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study focuses on describing and interpreting word-formation processes, semantic meanings, and social meanings rather than using numerical measurements. The analysis was based primarily on Plag's (2003) theory of word formation, which provides a framework for identifying how words are constructed, and Leech's (1981) theory of meaning, particularly the distinction between conceptual and connotative meaning. The sociolinguistic interpretation was further supported by Holmes (2013) and Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015), who explain how linguistic choices can convey social information and contribute to the construction of social identity.

Statistical analysis

No statistical procedures were applied in this study. The analysis was conducted qualitatively in three stages. First, each brand name was examined to identify the word-formation process involved, referring to the categories discussed by Plag (2003) and the findings of previous Indonesian brand-name studies such as Giyatmi et al. (2014) and Harared et al. (2025). Second, the meanings of the names were analysed using Leech's (1981) distinction between conceptual and connotative meaning. The conceptual meaning refers to the basic or literal meaning of the linguistic elements, while the connotative meaning concerns the additional cultural, emotional, and social associations attached to the names. Third, the findings were interpreted sociolinguistically using Holmes (2013) and Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) to explain how the use of Indonesian and Javanese lexical forms may communicate cultural familiarity, social identity, and other social meanings. The interpretation of brand identity was also supported by Aaker (1996) and Kapferer (2008), particularly in understanding how linguistic associations can contribute to the construction of a distinctive brand identity.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Word Formation as a Strategy of Brand Naming

The findings demonstrate that the five selected Indonesian F&B brand names employ different naming strategies, including the use of existing lexical items, lexical combinations, and cross-linguistic wordplay. TUKU and HAUS! use existing lexical items, while Kopi Kenangan and Janji Jiwa combine familiar lexical elements. Menantea, in contrast, employs Indonesian-English wordplay by modifying the form of *menanti* through the incorporation of the English word *tea*. These patterns indicate that brand naming can involve both conventional lexical resources and creative linguistic manipulation.

These findings can be discussed in relation to Plag's (2003) account of word formation, while also recognizing that commercial naming may involve the selection and

combination of existing lexical items. However, the present findings also suggest that commercial naming does not always require the creation of an entirely new lexical item. Existing words can be selected and placed in a branding context in ways that give them additional social and commercial significance. This can be observed in TUKU and HAUS!, where ordinary lexical items become distinctive brand names through their association with particular products, slogans, and brand practices.

This finding also corresponds with previous research on Indonesian brand naming. Giyatmi et al. (2014) found that Indonesian commercial brand names can involve several word-formation processes, while Harared et al. (2025) similarly identified various linguistic formations in food and beverage business names. The present study extends these observations by showing that the linguistic form of a brand name is not only a structural feature but also provides a basis for the meanings associated with the brand.

Menantea provides a particularly distinctive example because its name depends on cross-linguistic wordplay. The similarity between *menanti* and *Menantea* allows the name to retain an Indonesian linguistic familiarity while introducing *tea* as an explicit reference to the product. The finding suggests that bilingual elements can function creatively in Indonesian commercial naming. Rather than simply indicating the use of English, the English element participates directly in the construction of the brand's playful identity.

Thus, the results suggest that word formation in F&B brand naming operates at two interconnected levels. At the linguistic level, names are formed through lexical selection, combination, or modification. At the branding level, these linguistic choices provide resources for creating recognizable associations. This relationship is important because the linguistic form of a brand name becomes the starting point from which consumers can interpret its meaning.

From Literal Meaning to Social Meaning

The findings further show that the meanings of the five brand names extend beyond their literal or conceptual meanings. Following Leech's (1981) distinction between conceptual and connotative meaning, the conceptual meanings of the names provide a literal

semantic foundation, while their connotative meanings emerge through cultural associations and the brands' broader communicative practices.

For example, the conceptual meaning of TUKU is associated with the Javanese word meaning "buy." On its own, the word refers to an ordinary purchasing activity. However, within the branding context, the use of a Javanese lexical item can also evoke localness, familiarity, and everyday interaction. This interpretation is reinforced by TUKU's use of the "Kopi Susu Tetangga" concept and its emphasis on neighborhood relationships. Similarly, HAUS! uses an everyday Indonesian word referring to thirst. Its direct connection to a basic physical need contributes to an accessible and immediately recognizable meaning, which is consistent with the brand's emphasis on making contemporary drinks accessible to a broad public.

Kopi Kenangan and Janji Jiwa demonstrate a different pattern. Both names rely on emotionally loaded lexical items. *Kenangan* refers to memory or remembrance, while *janji* and *jiwa* refer respectively to commitment and the inner self or soul. Their conceptual meanings therefore provide a basis for associations with nostalgia, emotional attachment, sincerity, and commitment. These associations can be interpreted through the lexical meanings of the names and are further supported by the brands' additional naming and communicative practices. For instance, Kopi Kenangan's relationship-oriented menu names reinforce the association between the brand and memories of past relationships, while Janji Jiwa's use of expressions such as "Kopi dari Hati" and "Teman Sejiwa" extends the emotional meanings contained in its name.

This finding supports the sociolinguistic perspective proposed by Holmes (2013) and Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015), in which language carries information about social relationships, identity, and cultural context. In the present study, lexical choices become meaningful because they are interpreted within a particular Indonesian social and cultural environment. A Javanese word such as *tuku*, for example, does not merely provide a dictionary meaning. Its linguistic origin can also contribute to the perception of local cultural identity.

The findings are also compatible with previous research on Indonesian coffee shop and beverage naming. Rachmad (2025) demonstrates that coffee shop names can contain socio-onomastic meanings related to social and cultural contexts, while Agustin (2021) identifies emotional vocabulary as a meaningful resource in coffee shop naming. The present study similarly finds that emotional and culturally familiar vocabulary can contribute to the social meanings associated with F&B brands. However, the five cases also demonstrate that these meanings emerge through different linguistic routes, including local lexical selection, emotional lexical combinations, and bilingual wordplay.

Therefore, the findings suggest that the social meaning of a brand name cannot be understood solely from its dictionary definition. Its interpretation depends on how the lexical form interacts with cultural knowledge, surrounding brand discourse, and recurring expressions associated with the brand.

Linguistic Choices and Brand Identity

The third major finding concerns the relationship between linguistic choices and brand identity. Across the five cases, the linguistic form of each name is accompanied by recurring expressions, slogans, menu names, or customer labels that reinforce particular social meanings. This pattern indicates that a brand name functions as one component of a broader identity system rather than as an isolated lexical expression.

This finding is consistent with Aaker's (1996) concept of brand identity as a set of associations that an organization seeks to create and maintain. It also corresponds with Kapferer's (2008) view that brand identity involves multiple dimensions through which a brand communicates who it is and how it relates to its audience. In the present study, the names themselves provide an initial linguistic association, while other brand elements repeatedly reinforce that association.

For TUKU, the use of the Javanese word *tuku* is consistent with expressions such as "Kopi Susu Tetangga," "Tetangga Tuku," and *#BertetanggaBaik*. Together, these elements construct a linguistic pattern centered on local familiarity and neighborhood relationships. In Kopi Kenangan, the association between *kenangan* and memory is

strengthened by relationship-oriented menu names, creating an identity strongly connected with emotional and nostalgic experiences.

Janji Jiwa similarly extends its name through "Kopi dari Hati" and "Teman Sejiwa." These expressions reinforce the meanings of sincerity, emotional connection, and commitment already suggested by *janji* and *jiwa*. Menantea takes another approach by extending its playful linguistic pattern through names such as MatheteaKa, Integratea, and Irrational Tea, as well as the customer label Neteazen. These expressions create a consistent pattern of linguistic playfulness that can be associated with contemporary youth and digital culture.

HAUS! presents a more direct pattern. The lexical meaning of *haus* is closely related to the product category itself, while "Semua Orang Berhak Minum Enak" and "Warga HAUS!" extend the meaning toward accessibility and community. The relationship between the simple lexical form and these recurring expressions supports an identity based on everyday familiarity and broad accessibility.

These findings support previous studies that have examined the relationship between linguistic choices and branding in Indonesian F&B contexts. Azzahra and Soemardjo (2022), for example, discuss the role of naming and branding in the identity construction of Janji Jiwa, while Rachmad (2025) highlights the relationship between naming practices and social meaning in coffee shop contexts. The current findings contribute to this body of research by comparing several major F&B brands and showing that different linguistic strategies can lead to different types of social associations.

Overall, the findings support the theoretical expectation that language can function as a resource for constructing social meaning and identity. However, they also demonstrate that brand identity is not contained entirely within the name itself. Instead, identity emerges through the interaction between the lexical form of the name and the wider discourse surrounding the brand. In this sense, a brand name serves as an entry point to a broader network of meanings that is repeatedly reinforced through slogans, product names, customer labels, and other communicative practices.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the linguistic strategies used in the naming of five Indonesian food and beverage brands: TUKU, Kopi Kenangan, Janji Jiwa, Menantea, and HAUS!. The findings show that these brands employ different naming strategies, including the use of existing lexical items, lexical combinations, and bilingual wordplay. These differences demonstrate that brand naming involves more than the selection of words, as linguistic forms can also carry cultural and emotional associations.

The analysis further reveals that the meanings of brand names extend beyond their literal definitions. Through their interaction with cultural context, slogans, menu names, customer labels, and other communicative practices, the names can be associated with local identity, nostalgia, emotional connection, playfulness, and accessibility. These associations also contribute to how each brand presents its identity within the Indonesian F&B market. Therefore, brand identity is not constructed through the name alone but through the wider linguistic expressions associated with it.

This study contributes to the understanding of naming practices in Indonesian F&B branding by examining the relationship between word formation, conceptual and connotative meaning, and brand identity across five brands. However, the analysis is limited to selected brand names and publicly available brand-related expressions. It does not examine consumer responses or establish how audiences actually interpret these names. Future research could include consumer interviews or audience-based analysis to investigate how these linguistic choices are understood and interpreted by consumers.

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