



Learning Local Cultural Values through the Tauco Monument: A Semiotic Study in the Context of Cianjur Society

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ABSTRACT

Traditional food can be used as a culinary tour that can elevate the image of a region. One of Indonesia's regions with a variety of conventional foods is Cianjur Regency. In Cianjur Regency, there is a tauco monument as a marker. This study explores the meaning of the signs on the Tauco monument. Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotic Theory is used to analyze and interpret the signs on the monument. This article examines the meaning of the Tauco Monument through the lens of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics. It connects it with project-based learning that involves direct observation, discussion, and creation of works, encouraging students to understand and express symbolic meanings through narrative, descriptive, and expository texts, as well as relevant educational media to shape the character and language skills of the younger generation. The monument was created to present the characteristics of Cianjur Regency, especially in the culinary field, tauco, which is the identity of Cianjur that is already known in Indonesia. To be used as a self-identity of the Cianjur community, the monument is rich in various superior regional potentials manifested in the form of a memorial. All of them are a self-identity or identity of the community that has been forgotten in achieving and realizing and being grateful for the provision of sufficient natural resource potential from Allah SWT to the Cianjur community; of course, it must be managed optimally to fulfil the rights of the Cianjur community fully.

Keywords: learning, local culture values, Tauco Monument, semiotics study

Pembelajaran Nilai Budaya Lokal melalui Tugu Tauco: Kajian Semiotika dalam Konteks Masyarakat Cianjur

ABSTRAK

Makanan tradisional dapat dijadikan sebagai suatu wisata kuliner yang dapat mengangkat citra suatu daerah. Salah satu daerah di Indonesia yang memiliki ragam jenis makanan tradisional yaitu Kabupaten Cianjur, Jawa Barat. Di kabupaten ini ada sebuah Tugu Tauco sebagai penanda. Penelitian ini bertujuan menggali makna tanda-tanda yang terdapat pada Tugu Tauco. Teori Semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce digunakan untuk menganalisis dan memaknai tanda-tanda yang terdapat pada tugu tersebut. Artikel ini mengkaji makna Tugu Tauco melalui lensa semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce dan menghubungkannya dengan pembelajaran berbasis proyek yang melibatkan pengamatan langsung, diskusi, dan pembuatan karya, mendorong mahasiswa untuk memahami dan mengekspresikan makna simbolik melalui teks naratif, deskriptif, dan eksposisi juga sebagai sarana edukatif yang relevan untuk membentuk karakter dan kecakapan berbahasa generasi muda. Tugu Tauco dibuat untuk mempresentasikan ciri khas dari Kabupaten Cianjur khususnya di bidang kuliner; tauco yang menjadi identitas dari Cianjur yang sudah dikenal di Indonesia. Tugu Tauco dijadikan sebagai suatu identitas diri masyarakat Cianjur yang kaya akan aneka potensi unggul daerah yang dimanifestasikan dalam bentuk suatu tugu. Semuanya merupakan suatu identitas diri atau jati diri masyarakat yang selama ini terlupakan dalam mencapai dan mewujudkan serta mensyukuri atas pemberian potensi sumber daya alam yang cukup dari Allah Taala kepada masyarakat Cianjur, tentunya harus dikelola dengan optimal untuk memenuhi sepenuhnya hak hajat hidup masyarakat Cianjur.

Kata kunci: pembelajaran, nilai budaya lokal, Tugu Tauco, kajian semiotika

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, which consists of diverse cultures and customs, also has various traditional arts, crafts, and foods that are developed according to the culture of the community. Traditional food has long developed in a region or Indonesian society. Traditional food can be used as a tourist attraction that can raise the image of an area. This tourism is better known as Culinary Tourism.

The superior products of Cianjur Regency, which are already well-known throughout the archipelago and even in the world, such as Beras Pandan Wangi, Tauco Cianjur and Lampu Gentur, are now being used as a monument to form a work ethic and commitment to building self-potential that has regional characteristics, in increasing community income from their agricultural products and raising the various potentials owned by Cianjur Regency as a form of gratitude for the blessings of natural wealth given by Allah Taala, which grows and develops according to the existence of society and the diversity of potential it has so that a qualified work ethic from a region or its culture. It will continue to be used as an added value in fulfilling the lives of its people. This continues to be published in various forms, both through the internet (Instagram, YouTube, Facebook), radio, newspapers, television and monuments, to be used as a self-identity of the Cianjur community, which is rich in various superior regional potentials manifested in the form of a memorial. The tauco monument built by the Regent of Cianjur H. Irvan Rivano Muchtar in 2019 is a marker for the identity of the people of Cianjur Regency.



Figure 1
Tauco Monument in Cianjur (Photo: Ikbal Selamat/
detikjabar)

According to Roland Barthes in *Mythologies* (1972), food can be seen as a "cultural text" that conveys a particular society's meaning and social values. Tauco, in this context, is not only a culinary product but also a means to understand the local identity and pride of the Cianjur community. Furthermore, tauco is evidence of the interaction between local traditions and external influences, especially from the Chinese community, which introduced soybean fermentation techniques. This shows how culture can develop through assimilation and adaptation, as explained by Edward Said in his concept of "cultural hybridity." Tauco is a real representation of the process of cultural dialogue that creates a unique identity for the Cianjur community.

The Tauco Monument, as a visual symbol, has a complex meaning. In Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, a sign consists of three main elements: representamen (signifier), object (represented), and interpretant (meaning). The Tauco Monument, as a representamen, is a visual marker that directs to the object in the form of tauco as a local product. The interpretation of this sign extends to the identity of the Cianjur community, which is rich in culinary traditions and has a long history of taco processing.

This symbolic meaning is reinforced by Ferdinand de Saussure's view in *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), which states that signs are always arbitrary but acquire their meaning through social conventions. In this context, the Tauco Monument has become a social convention recognized by the people of Cianjur to represent their identity. This symbol is also a communication tool to strengthen the narrative about the uniqueness and potential of the region in the tourism industry.

According to Umberto Eco in *A Theory of Semiotics* (1976), cultural symbols such as the Tauco Monument have a pragmatic function: building a regional image and promoting local values to a broader audience. Thus, the Tauco Monument is a static monument and part of a wider cultural communication strategy.

The construction of a monument must have specific goals. Designing a monument is not an easy matter. Monuments cannot be built carelessly because monuments contain meaning, values, philosophy, spirit, hope, and aesthetics. Monuments exist in a particular cultural universe, and a thorough study of all aspects involved in the construction of a monument is needed so that the public can interpret it correctly. A monument is full of signs whose meaning will be interpreted by many people, from experts to laypeople. The meaning of a monument belongs to the public because the monument is in a public area, and the monument is indeed displayed for the public. Therefore, constructing monuments must consider the public's ability to mark their significance. The general public must easily interpret the meaning of a monument so as not to cause interpretations that are too far from the message to be conveyed. Mistakes in placing a structure can result in misinterpretations and prolonged polemics of meaning in society. Several aspects need to be considered when constructing monuments to avoid misunderstandings and polemics about the existence of monuments. This study aims to reveal the meaning of the monuments in Cianjur Regency.

In this life, humans are constantly faced with signs that are used as a medium of communication. Because signs are essential for humans, special knowledge is needed to study semiotics. In general, it can be stated that semiotics is the science that studies signs and their use. Umberto Eco (1976) stated that "semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign". Semiotics explain everything that is seen as a sign. More broadly, Daniel Chandler (2002) states, "Semiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as 'signs' in everyday speech but of anything which 'stands for' something else. In a semiotic sense, signs are words, images, sounds, gestures and objects". Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) in Berger (1984) divided signs into three categories: icons, indices and symbols.

The relationship between these three types of signs is significant to understanding the sign's meaning in one object. Symbols are related to the system of conventions or agreements in society so that one symbol's meaning in one culture can be different from that of another. Humans deliberately create this convention system as a tool for communication. The icon is related to the relationship of similarity between the sign and the object it refers to. Furthermore, the index is when a sign has a causal relationship with an object it represents. Berger (1984) further stated that Pierce's tri-chotomy is the key to applying semiotic analysis.

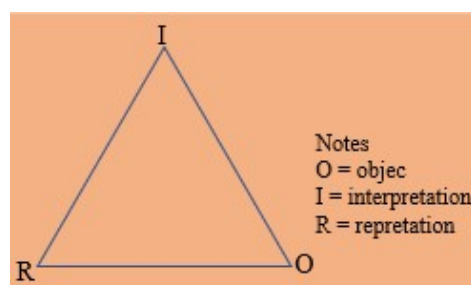


Figure 2
Semiotic Conceptual Framework

Relevant articles are found in online journals. The relevant articles include:

- 1) Aisy, Rihadatul, Tasya Fauziyah, Wildan Akmal Hakim. (2024). Representation of Local Wisdom in the Leil Ninn Hat Siing Folktale Sociological Approach. *Literature Research Journal* 2 (2), 1 - 13. <https://jurnal.ppjbsip.org/index.php/dlrj/index>
- 2) Uniawati. (2016). Local Color and Representation of Bugis-Makassar Culture in the Short Story "The Parakang Murderer": A Sociological Study of Literature. *Kandai* 12 (1), 102 – 115.
- 3) Amos, J, Yani, I. E, & Dwiyantri, D. (2018). Analisis Potensi Randai Untuk Merubah Perilaku Masyarakat tentang Gizi Seimbang Berbasis Makanan Lokal.

Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Promosi Kesehatan ke-7: Promosi Kesehatan dalam Pencapaian Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan. 420–7.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach: icons, indexes, and symbols. These three elements are found in the monument, which is the object of the study. Furthermore, the reading of icons, indexes, and symbols will be linked to local cultural figures' opinions regarding symbols' existence in Cianjur Regency. The stages in this study are reading, recording and interpreting the deepest signs in the research object. Furthermore, the results will be presented and linked to the informants' opinions, and conclusions will be drawn.

The reading data of the icons, indexes, and symbols of the Tauco Monument were validated internally. The validation instrument was a checklist (Razak, 2020).

FINDINGS

1. Tauco Cianjur

Tauco is a food seasoning made from soybeans that have been boiled, mashed and stirred with wheat flour and then left to grow mould (fermentation). In Indonesia, Tauco was introduced by Chinese traders, and one of them was named Tan Kei Yan in 1880, pioneering it in the Cianjur area. Then, this Tauco business was inherited by his son Tan Kei Hian, better known by the local community as Babah Tasma and his wife Tjoa Kim Nio, called Mrs. Tasma. This Tauco business was also run on a small scale or as a home industry. However, there was something that.



Figure 3
Processing of boiled soybeans (Photo: Kompas.com/Gabriella Wijaya)



Figure 4
Tauco that has been packaged in bottles“(Photo: Kompas.com/Gabriella Wijaya)

Initially, they ran the Tauco business together. However, in its development, the Tauco produced by the two couples produced different flavours. Of course, the Tauco produced by Babah Tasma tastes sweet, while Mrs Tasma's Tauco tastes salty because it is adjusted to local tastes, which needs to be known from the past until now. The cooking process still uses firewood to maintain quality, taste, and hereditary traditions, even though, nowadays, gas fuel is easy to obtain. It is undeniable that Tauco, as a cooking spice, has given a new colour to the culinary field both in Cianjur Regency and as a taste of the archipelago. It has become an icon of Cianjur Regency, and now there is a Tauco Monument at the intersection of Jl. HOS. Cokroaminoto, Cianjur Regency, West Java, In-



donesia.

Cianjur's signature taco goes through a manufacturing process that begins with the fermentation of selected soybeans soaked in salt water for several days. After reaching the expected fermentation level, the soybeans are dried in the sun to dry excess water and produce a distinctive texture. During this fermentation process, the soybeans make a unique aroma and complex taste that characterizes the Cianjur taco (Ayo Bandung.com, 2024). This process requires careful monitoring and knowledge of the local weather to produce quality tauco. After that, the fermented soybeans are ground or mashed into a thick paste, which is then added with a mixture of salt and spices such as garlic, galangal, and coriander to enhance the taste and aroma of the sauce. After all the ingredients are mixed well, the taco is stored in a closed container and left for further secondary fermentation. This process allows the taste of the taco to become more profound and complex. Over several weeks or months, the taco will undergo transformation and flavour enhancement caused by the ongoing fermentation process. This makes Cianjur tauco have different characteristics from other traditional taucos in Indonesia.

2. Contextual Learning Process of Tauco Monument in Sundanese Art and Culture Learning in the World of Education and Cultural Literacy

The learning stage plan guides students in studying the discussion of cultural concepts and objects of cultural advancement, explaining the relationship between ideas and theories about objects of artistic advancement, conducting research on Sundanese art and culture, and also being skilled in applying Sundanese art and culture as a field of study in the world of education.

- 1) Students can describe and understand the nature of Sundanese art and culture.
- 2) Introduction to the local cultural context
- 3) Conducting direct observation
- 4) Discussion and reflection

5) Local cultural projects

6) Presentation and Appreciation

2.1 Core Learning Activities

The student learning program can demonstrate independent, quality, and measurable performance, critical thinking in developing science, technology, local, national, and international culture and caring about preserving the environment, art, and socio-cultural values that develop in society. Among them are:

- 1) Lecturers introduce the history of the Tauco monument and its meaning through narratives, reading texts and discussions.
- 2) Visits to the location of the Tauco monument and record observation results in a notebook.
- 3) Group discussions and interpretation of symbols (icons, indexes, symbols) through semiotic approaches.
- 4) Creating essays, posters, vlogs, or poems with the theme of the Tauco monument as a cultural identity.
- 5) Presentation of Project Results and providing open feedback.

2.2 Learning Analysis

The process of analyzing the Tauco monument is given to students in the following stages:

- 1) Developing an initial understanding of cultural symbols through local texts and stories.
- 2) Contextual learning by recording experiences as a basis for text development.
- 3) Improving analytical skills and expressing opinions orally and in writing.
- 4) Building self-expression and cultural appreciation in the form of language works.
- 5) Cultivating courage and skills in conveying messages in public forums.

2.3 Learning Outcomes

Conducting research on the Cianjur Tauco monument as the identity of Cianjur Regency and understanding the nature of art and culture also

applying local cultural values and encouraging students to understand and express symbolic meanings through narrative, descriptive, and expository texts as well as relevant educational media to shape the character and language skills of the younger generation which then become studies in the field of education and cultural literacy which include:

- 1) Students can explain orally and in writing about the history and meaning of the Tuko monument as a form of nationalism, local history, and cultural appreciation.
- 2) Students write the results of observations using a good and correct descriptive structure, such as cultural sensitivity and critical observation, by writing descriptive texts using standard and coherent language.
- 3) Students convey ideas with logical and structured arguments with critical thinking, cooperation, politeness in discussions, speaking skills and conveying opinions
- 4) Students can produce written or visual language works with cultural values and foster creativity by writing expository texts, poetry, and media presentations.
- 5) Students are confident in speaking in public and effectively conveying the work's contents.

Table 1
Assessment Instrument

| Value description | | | Aability Level |
|-------------------|--------|-------------------|----------------|
| Letter | Number | Degree of Quality | Percent |
| A | 4 | Special | 90 – 100 |
| A- | 3,7 | Almost Special | 85 – 89 |
| B+ | 3,4 | Best | 80 – 84 |
| B | 3 | Better | 75 – 79 |
| B- | 2,7 | Good | 70 – 74 |
| C+ | 2,4 | More than enough | 65 – 69 |
| C+ | 2 | Enough | 60 – 64 |
| D | 1 | Not Enough | 55 – 59 |
| E | < 1,0 | Fail | < 55 |

Table 2
Main Assessment Criteria

| No. | Types of Assessment | Description | Weight |
|-------|----------------------|----------------|--------|
| 1 | Task | Mean of Task | 15% |
| 2 | Presence | Presentation | 10% |
| | | Argumentation | 10% |
| 3 | Practice | Involvement | 5% |
| | | Order | 20% |
| 4 | Summative Assessment | Special Rubric | 40% |
| Total | | | 100% |

3. Semiotic Analysis of Taucu Monument

The Taucu Monument is located at the roundabout of Jl. Hos. Cokroaminoto Cianjur. This monument can be called a welcome monument when entering the Cianjur Regency Urban Area. Visually, this monument displays three bottles of taucu. The Taucu Monument, as a visual symbol, has a complex meaning. In Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, a sign consists of three main elements: representamen (signifier), object (represented), and interpretant (meaning). The Taucu Monument, as a representamen, becomes a visual marker that directs to the object in the form of taucu as a local product. The interpretation of this sign extends to the identity of the Cianjur community, which is rich in culinary traditions and has a long history of taucu processing. This symbolic meaning is reinforced by Ferdinand de Saussure's view in Course in General Linguistics (1916), which states that signs are always arbitrary but gain their meaning through social conventions. In this context, the Taucu Monument has become a social convention recognized by the Cianjur community as representing their identity. This symbol also becomes a communication tool to strengthen the narrative about the uniqueness and potential of the region in the tourism industry.

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to a broader audience. Thus, the Tauco Monument is a static monument and part of a broader cultural communication strategy.



Figure 5
Taucu monument seen from above (Photo: Instagram.com/hendimulyana)

Icon

Three bottles of Taucu Monument are visible

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When we go to Bogor via Puncak, then pass through Cianjur Regency, we will see the Taucu Monument (O) spilled; the following process is Taucu Cianjur, a typical food from Cianjur Regency that is delicious and must be purchased (I)

Symbol

Symbol of the Taucu Monument. During the day or night, when passing the Taucu Monument (O) and seeing the spilled bottles resembling processed beans from Taucu, we can imagine the deliciousness of the Taucu dance and the sweet or salty taste of Taucu (R). Taucu is a traditional food from Cianjur that is already famous (I).

DISCUSSION

The Taucu monument is a symbol of Cianjur's local cultural heritage. This can be seen from the history of tacos, which originated in China and were then introduced and developed in Cianjur by Mrs Tasma (the pioneer of the taco). In addition, the semiotics that emerge from the icon of the taco

monument, which is represented in three brown bottles with a slightly visible texture of soybeans (in a state of spilling the contents of the taco), which is indexical when passing through Bogor via Puncak and seeing the spilt taco monument, then Cianjur taco as a delicious typical food of the city of Cianjur must be purchased as a souvenir. With the symbol on the memorial, as if seeing soybeans, the spilt taco illustrates the deliciousness of taco; Cianjur taco is also a famous traditional food of Cianjur. Before its current form, the Tuco monument underwent one change. In 2017, the taco monument (initial construction was in the form of three bottles spilling water and a circle filled with water, then changed into an overflowing chocolate (taco) spill.

CONCLUSION

Based on a semiotic reading of the Taucu Monument, it is concluded that the monument was made to present the characteristics of Cianjur Regency, especially in the culinary field, taco which is the identity of Cianjur which is already known in Indonesia and is one of the attractions for tourists to visit Cianjur Regency. In addition, to form a work ethic and commitment to building self-potential that has regional characteristics competitively, in increasing community income from their agricultural products and raising the various potentials owned by Cianjur Regency as a form of gratitude for the blessings of natural wealth given by Allah Taala, which grows and develops according to the existence of society and the diversity of potential it has, so that a qualified work ethic from a region or its people. It will continue to be used as an added value in fulfilling the lives of its people and as a self-identity of the Cianjur community, which is rich in various superior regional potentials that are manifested in the form of a monument.

Learning through the Taucu monument as a cultural icon not only strengthens the identity of the Cianjur community but also becomes an effective means to enrich the learning of local cul-

tural values and cultural literacy through a contextual and project-based approach; students are invited to develop literacy skills, reading, writing, listening, and speaking integrated with local cultural materials. Through academic texts, students also learn to interpret symbols, the meaning of symbols and cultural meanings in oral and written forms. Direct experiences such as observation and cultural projects become a strong foundation for forming meaningful language competencies. Thus, the Tauco monument acts as a bridge between cultural and language literacy, in line with the independent curriculum's objectives, which emphasise context-based learning and national character.

The Tauco Monument recognises the community's right to manage and utilize its cultural wealth and natural resources. With optimal management and cross-sector collaboration, the Tauco Monument can be more than just a symbolic monument; it can become a centre for cultural-based economic development that elevates Cianjur's image at the national and international levels. As a cultural heritage, the Tauco Monument teaches the importance of appreciating and being grateful for the gifts of Allah Taala through sustainable management of local potential.

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