

## How Do Dessert Names Reflect Cultural Values? A Semiotic and Ethnolinguistic Study of Bugis and Western Traditions

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### ABSTRACT

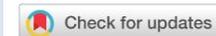
*This study explores the semiotic and ethnolinguistic dimensions of dessert naming in Bugis and Western cultures. Drawing on Saussure's theory of the sign and Barthes' concept of food as a system of meaning, the research analyzes how ingredients, forms, and linguistic structures reflect distinct cultural values and worldviews. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method, focusing on five traditional Bugis desserts—barongko, baje, tetu, onde-onde, and katarisallang—and four Western desserts—pudding, cheesecake, brownie, and pie. Findings reveal that Bugis desserts, characterized by natural ingredients and verb-based naming, symbolize social harmony, cooperation, and ecological balance. In contrast, Western desserts, with refined ingredients and noun-based naming, emphasize individualism, luxury, and aesthetic refinement. The study concludes that food naming and form are not merely culinary phenomena but linguistic and cultural signifiers that embody collective identity, social structure, and historical development. By interpreting desserts as cultural texts, this research contributes to a broader understanding of how language, food, and identity intersect in shaping both local and global culinary narratives.*

**Keywords:** *Semiotics; Ethnolinguistics; Bugis Culture; Western Desserts; Food Naming; Cultural Identity.*

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## 1. Introduction

Food is not only a basic human necessity but also a cultural text that encodes social identity, worldview, and values. In many societies, culinary traditions serve as semiotic systems that communicate meanings beyond nutrition—reflecting history, collective memory, and social relationships. The way a culture names, prepares, and serves its food reveals how it perceives the world and positions itself within it (Stalmirska, 2024; Dalyan et al., 2025; Suheri et al., 2025; Tahir et al., 2020). Desserts, in particular, often hold symbolic significance, as they are deeply connected to rituals, celebrations, and expressions of hospitality (Yadav et al., 2025; Ananda et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2023). However, despite their rich cultural meaning, traditional desserts have rarely been studied as linguistic or semiotic representations of cultural identity, especially within the Bugis community of South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

This research arises from the problem that existing studies on Bugis food culture have focused primarily on culinary heritage, recipes, or economic value, but have seldom examined the ethnolinguistic and semiotic dimensions embedded in dessert naming and symbolism. Similarly, Western desserts are widely recognized globally but are often interpreted only in terms of their ingredients or aesthetic qualities rather than as cultural signs reflecting Western values of individualism, refinement, and class. The lack of comparative studies between Bugis and Western dessert naming systems leaves a gap in understanding how linguistic forms and material culture interact to construct cultural meaning. This research addresses the question: *How do the naming, ingredients, and serving traditions of Bugis and Western desserts reflect distinct cultural worldviews through ethnolinguistic and semiotic perspectives?*

The aim of this study is to explore and compare the linguistic and semiotic features of Bugis and Western desserts in order to uncover how each culture encodes social values, worldview, and identity through food. Specifically, the research analyzes (1) the naming patterns and their linguistic origins, (2) the semiotic meanings of ingredients and forms, and (3) the cultural contexts of serving and symbolism associated with each dessert. By applying ethnolinguistic and semiotic analysis, the study seeks to demonstrate how food naming and representation function as forms of cultural communication and identity construction.

This research is important because it provides new insights into the intersection between language, culture, and gastronomy. Understanding dessert naming from a semiotic and ethnolinguistic perspective helps reveal how communities embed philosophy, values, and collective memory into everyday practices. In the context of globalization, where culinary traditions are rapidly changing, such research contributes to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and enriches cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, by comparing Bugis and Western desserts, the study highlights the contrast between collective and individual worldviews—between agrarian communalism and industrial individualism—thus offering a broader reflection on how food and language serve as mirrors of civilization.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Food as a Semiotic System and Cultural Structure

The study of food as a cultural and linguistic symbol has gained increasing attention in anthropological and semiotic research. Food, as Barthes (1961) argues, is a “system of communication” that expresses not only nutritional value but also cultural identity and social relationships. Every ingredient, form, and name associated with food functions as a signifier of deeper cultural meanings. Lévi-Strauss (1969) in *The Raw and the Cooked* views food preparation as a form of cultural language that reflects a society’s structure of thought; for instance, the transition from raw to cooked symbolizes the transformation from nature to culture. This perspective highlights how the process of making food—such as wrapping, steaming, or mixing—can represent harmony, balance, and moral order in traditional societies. Similarly, Mary Douglas (1972) emphasizes that the organization of meals mirrors a society’s social structure and moral codes. Food practices, therefore, not only nourish the body but also sustain cultural coherence and shared identity.

Within this semiotic framework, the ingredients and preparation of traditional Bugis desserts can be interpreted as symbolic representations of social harmony and ecological balance. Natural elements like banana, coconut, and glutinous rice signify connection to the land and collective participation. Lévi-Strauss’s (1969) concept of culinary codes aligns with this idea, as the use of natural ingredients and simple preparation methods express equilibrium between human beings and their environment. Rozin (1982) further argues that food traditions in non-Western societies serve as expressions of ethnic identity and local spirituality, making cuisine an essential marker of belonging and continuity. In contrast, Western desserts—often characterized by refined ingredients such as butter, cheese, and chocolate—reflect industrialization, individuality, and aesthetic refinement. Bourdieu (1984) in *Distinction* explains that taste and food preferences operate as indicators of class and social hierarchy, where the sophistication of food symbolizes economic and cultural capital.

### 2.2 Ethnolinguistic Perspectives on Dessert Naming and Cultural Worldviews

Ethnolinguistic studies complement these semiotic interpretations by showing how language reflects cultural perception and social behavior. According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021), linguistic naming reveals collective cultural experiences and worldviews. In traditional communities, verb-based or process-oriented naming structures indicate collective participation and shared labor. This resonates with Duranti’s (1997) assertion that language embodies cultural practices and modes of social interaction. The naming of Bugis desserts such as *barongko* (“to wrap”) and *katarisallang* (“to mix and stir”) illustrates how linguistic forms encode the communal and participatory nature of Bugis culture. Meanwhile, Western dessert names such as *cheesecake* or *brownie* are noun-based, reflecting an emphasis on material composition and final product. Berlin (1992) notes that Western naming systems often prioritize

object-oriented categorization, corresponding to analytical thinking and individual focus typical of industrialized societies.

Several scholars have highlighted that culinary terminology can reveal how communities perceive themselves and their relationship with nature and others. Barthes (1972) in *Mythologies* suggests that everyday objects, including food, become “myths” that carry cultural ideologies. Applying this to desserts, *barongko* may function as a myth of simplicity and familial unity, while *cheesecake* can symbolize modern luxury and success. These meanings are not inherent but socially constructed through collective interpretation and repetition. In summary, previous studies by Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Douglas, Bourdieu, Duranti, and Wardhaugh establish that both food and language operate as systems of meaning that reflect a society’s structure and ideology. However, few comparative studies have examined how these systems manifest in non-Western versus Western dessert naming and symbolism. This research fills that gap by analyzing Bugis and Western desserts through the lenses of semiotics and ethnolinguistics.

### 3. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive-comparative design using ethnolinguistic and semiotic approaches to explore how Bugis and Western desserts embody different cultural worldviews through their naming systems, ingredients, and serving traditions. The research aimed to analyze linguistic forms, culinary symbols, and cultural meanings that emerge from the intersection between language, food, and identity.

The research was conducted through both field observation and documentary analysis. Fieldwork focused on Bugis communities in South Sulawesi, where traditional desserts such as *Barongko*, *Baje*, *Tetu*, *Onde-onde*, and *Katarisallang* are still actively prepared and consumed in family and ceremonial contexts. Complementary data on Western desserts—*Pudding*, *Cheesecake*, *Brownie*, and *Pie*—were collected through literature reviews, culinary archives, and observation in cafés and restaurants representing Western culinary traditions. Data collection was carried out over a period of approximately three to six months.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with traditional dessert makers, community elders, and culinary practitioners, as well as through participatory observation of the preparation and serving processes. Secondary data were obtained from ethnographic literature, culinary books, linguistic sources, and historical records of traditional foods. Each dessert’s name, ingredients, shape, preparation method, and serving context were treated as analytical units reflecting cultural semiotics and linguistic encoding.

Purposive sampling was used to select the dessert samples based on their representativeness, symbolic significance, and availability of data. The key informants included at least eight to twelve individuals from each cultural group, selected through

purposive and snowball techniques to ensure rich and authentic perspectives. Data were collected through observation sheets, interview guides, and documentation, including photographs, field notes, and audio recordings.

The data analysis followed two integrated approaches: semiotic and ethnolinguistic. In the semiotic analysis, Ferdinand de Saussure’s concept of the signifier (the form, such as ingredients and shape) and the signified (the cultural meaning attached to the form) served as the foundation, while Roland Barthes’s theory of denotation and connotation guided the interpretation of deeper symbolic meanings. Each dessert was analyzed as a semiotic sign reflecting both material and ideological dimensions. Meanwhile, the ethnolinguistic analysis focused on the morphological, lexical, and etymological aspects of dessert names to reveal how linguistic forms embody collective cognition and social experience. Verb-oriented Bugis naming (e.g., *tari-sallang*, “to mix and stir together”) was compared with noun-oriented Western naming (e.g., *Cheesecake*, “a cake made of cheese”), illustrating contrasting worldviews between process and product orientation.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Findings

Before analyzing the ethnolinguistic aspects of food naming, it is important to identify the types and characteristics of the selected Bugis and Western desserts. These desserts were chosen based on their cultural significance, linguistic richness, and symbolic representation within each culinary tradition. The selection also reflects the contrast between traditional, community-based food practices and modern, individualized culinary expressions.

**Table 1.** Types of Bugis and Western Desserts

| No | Culture | Dessert Name     | Main Ingredients                        | Characteristics / Shape                    | Dominant Color |
|----|---------|------------------|---|--|----------------|
| 1  | Bugis   | <b>Barongko</b>  | Banana, coconut sugar                   | egg, milk, Steamed, wrapped in banana leaf | Light green    |
| 2  | Bugis   | <b>Baje</b>      | Glutinous rice, palm sugar              | Solid, wrapped in corn husk                | Dark brown     |
| 3  | Bugis   | <b>Tetu</b>      | Rice flour, coconut milk, sugar         | Steamed, soft, wrapped in pandan leaf      | Green / white  |
| 4  | Bugis   | <b>Onde-onde</b> | Glutinous rice flour, sesame, mung bean | Round, fried                               | Golden yellow  |

|   |         |                      |   |  |                     |
|---|---------|----------------------|---|--|---------------------|
| 5 | Bugis   | <b>Katarisallang</b> | Rice flour, coconut milk, sugar, grated coconut | Cooked in a pan, soft and oily texture | Light brown         |
| 6 | Western | <b>Pudding</b>       | Milk, egg, sugar, cornstarch                    | Soft, served cold                      | Yellow / cream      |
| 7 | Western | <b>Cheesecake</b>    | Cream cheese, egg, sugar, biscuit               | Dense and creamy                       | White / pale yellow |
| 8 | Western | <b>Brownie</b>       | Flour, chocolate, butter, egg                   | Dense and sweet                        | Dark brown          |
| 9 | Western | <b>Pie</b>           | Flour, butter, sugar, fruit                     | Layered, crispy                        | Golden brown        |

Table 1 presents a comparative overview of Bugis and Western desserts, outlining their main ingredients, physical characteristics, and dominant colors. This table serves as the foundation for subsequent analysis, illustrating how visual and material aspects of food correspond to deeper cultural meanings and naming patterns within each tradition.

#### 4.1.1 Semiotic Analysis Based on Ingredients and Form

**Table 2.** Semiotic Analysis Based on Ingredients and Form

| Dessert Name         | Signifier   | Cultural Meaning (Signified)  |
|----------------------|---|---|
| <b>Barongko</b>      | Banana wrapped in banana leaf, steamed                  | Symbol of simplicity, greenness, and family warmth; the wrapping represents harmony and protection. |
| <b>Baje</b>          | Glutinous rice and palm sugar                           | Social closeness and solidarity; sticky texture symbolizes strong interpersonal bonds.              |
| <b>Tetu</b>          | Rice flour and coconut milk                             | Purity and balance; white and green colors represent spiritual harmony and natural equilibrium.     |
| <b>Onde-onde</b>     | Round, coated with sesame seeds                         | Luck and prosperity; round shape symbolizes completeness and continuity of life.                    |
| <b>Katarisallang</b> | Mixed rice flour, coconut milk, sugar, stirred together | Harmony and cooperation; reflects the Bugis philosophy of unity in diversity.                       |
| <b>Pudding</b>       | Soft mixture of milk and                                | Symbol of luxury and refinement,  |

|                   |                                   |   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
|                   | egg                               | representing modern Western lifestyle.  |
| <b>Cheesecake</b> | Layer of cheese and biscuit       | Social status and affluence; cheese signifies prosperity in European culture.               |
| <b>Brownie</b>    | Chocolate and butter              | Warmth, pleasure, and comfort — associated with emotional satisfaction in Western families. |
| <b>Pie</b>        | Layered pastry with fruit filling | Gratitude and seasonal balance; often linked to harvest seasons and thanksgiving.           |

The semiotic framework used in Table 2 draws primarily on Ferdinand de Saussure's (1916) concept of the sign, which consists of the *signifier* (the physical form, such as ingredients, color, or shape) and the *signified* (the cultural meaning or concept it represents). In this context, the ingredients and forms of Bugis and Western desserts function as signifiers that convey deeper cultural signifieds—values, beliefs, and social identities. Saussure emphasizes that meaning arises not from the object itself but from the cultural system in which it operates, meaning that food—like language—communicates social and symbolic values rather than serving as mere sustenance. Supporting this idea, Barthes (1964) extends Saussure's theory in his work *Elements of Semiology*, arguing that food, like language, forms a system of signs that expresses ideology and social structures. Barthes asserts that the way societies prepare and consume food reflects their worldview, traditions, and identity.

Applying this semiotic theory to the data, the ingredients and shapes of Bugis desserts—such as *barongko* wrapped in banana leaf or *baje* made of sticky rice—act as signifiers of communal harmony, simplicity, and unity with nature. Their natural materials and traditional preparation methods signify a close relationship between humans and the environment, aligning with Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1969) argument in *The Raw and the Cooked* that cooking methods and ingredients encode a society's structure of thought. In contrast, the refined ingredients and presentation of Western desserts—like *cheesecake* or *brownie*—serve as signifiers of modernity, individuality, and social prestige. As Barthes (1961) noted in *Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption*, Western food culture transforms eating into a symbolic act of identity and class expression. Thus, the semiotic contrast between Bugis and Western desserts not only represents different culinary traditions but also reveals how language, culture, and food intersect to shape collective and individual meanings within society.

#### 4.1.2 Reasons for Naming, Serving Occasions, and Cultural Meanings

The naming of Bugis desserts is deeply tied to linguistic expression, social context, and cultural symbolism. *Barongko*, derived from *barongkoang* meaning “to wrap,” reflects the preparation process that symbolizes protection, simplicity, and familial warmth, often served during family gatherings, weddings, and festive occasions. *Baje*, referring to its compacted glutinous rice form, emphasizes solidity and unity, making it a

common delicacy in traditional ceremonies and as a gift for guests, where its sticky texture signifies strong kinship bonds. *Tetu*, from the Bugis word meaning “to pour,” highlights a ritualistic act that connects food preparation with purity and spiritual balance, especially during Islamic celebrations. Meanwhile, *Onde-onde*, influenced by ancient Chinese culture, takes its name from the sizzling “onde” sound during frying, symbolizing good fortune and cultural harmony among Bugis, Javanese, and Chinese traditions. *Katarisallang*, literally meaning “mixed by stirring,” encapsulates the philosophy of cooperation and unity in Bugis society through its blended ingredients, typically prepared for traditional feasts and communal events.

In Western contexts, dessert naming reflects material characteristics and historical evolution. *Pudding*, derived from the Old French *boudin* (sausage), signifies the transformation of European cuisine from savory to sweet dishes, commonly served after main meals as a symbol of comfort and refinement. *Cheesecake*, named after its main ingredient, represents modern luxury and prosperity, often featured in formal events and celebrations. *Brownie*, originating from “brown” plus the diminutive suffix “-ie,” carries connotations of affection and domestic warmth, frequently served in casual family gatherings. Lastly, *Pie*, derived from the Latin *pica* meaning “mixture,” is traditionally served during harvest seasons or Thanksgiving, symbolizing gratitude for nature’s abundance. Altogether, these naming traditions reveal that Bugis desserts are shaped by social rituals and collective identity, while Western desserts embody material focus, individual pleasure, and historical adaptation.

#### 4.1.3 Discussion: Semiotic and Ethnolinguistic Interpretations

##### a. Bugis Desserts: Social Values and Harmony

Bugis desserts embody the principles of social cohesion, harmony with nature, and communal life through the use of natural ingredients and traditional preparation methods. As Lévi-Strauss (1969) explains in *The Raw and the Cooked*, traditional cuisine represents a society’s underlying structure of thought, where natural elements and methods such as steaming or wrapping in leaves symbolize the balance between humans and nature. Similarly, Douglas (1972), in *Deciphering a Meal*, argues that communal food practices reflect the moral and social order of a community; desserts such as *barongko* and *baje* exemplify these values by reinforcing togetherness and reciprocity during social gatherings. Rozin (1982) further highlights that in non-Western societies, food traditions serve as expressions of ethnic identity and local spirituality through the use of natural and locally sourced materials. In the Bugis context, ingredients such as banana, coconut milk, and glutinous rice illustrate collectivism, simplicity, and ecological harmony, aligning with Lévi-Strauss’s concept of culinary codes as representations of social and cultural order.

##### b. Western Desserts: Individualism and Luxury

In contrast, Western desserts highlight the values of individual pleasure, modernity, and social distinction through refined ingredients and aesthetically appealing

presentations. Bourdieu (1984), in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, asserts that taste operates as a marker of class and cultural capital, suggesting that Western desserts such as cheesecake and brownie embody social hierarchy and sophistication. Barthes (1961), in *Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption*, interprets food as a system of signs that conveys identity and modernity, while Mintz (1985), in *Sweetness and Power*, connects the consumption of sugar and sweet foods with colonial history, economic power, and social prestige. Within this framework, the use of ingredients such as cheese, butter, and chocolate in Western desserts reflects both economic progress and the influence of industrialized food culture, supporting Barthes's and Bourdieu's notions that food acts as a symbol of lifestyle, individuality, and social aspiration.

### c. Ethnolinguistic Perspective on Naming

From an ethnolinguistic standpoint, the naming of desserts reveals deep cultural contrasts between Bugis and Western societies. Bugis food names tend to be process-oriented, derived from verbs that describe the act of making the food, whereas Western food names are object-oriented, focusing on ingredients or physical characteristics. According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021) in *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, naming reflects shared cultural experience; thus, action-based names indicate collectivism and social activity. Duranti (1997) similarly argues in *Linguistic Anthropology* that language mirrors cultural practice, and process-based naming such as *barongko* ("wrapped") and *katarisallang* ("mixed") demonstrates a communal and procedural worldview centered on cooperation and shared participation. Conversely, Berlin (1992), in *Ethnobiological Classification*, notes that Western naming conventions emphasize material composition and sensory description, consistent with an analytical and object-focused worldview. Hence, while Bugis dessert names embody collective values and the significance of the preparation process, Western dessert names such as *cheesecake* or *brownie* emphasize the product's tangible qualities, reflecting an individualistic and material orientation toward food.

#### 4.1.4 Ethnolinguistic Analysis of Dessert Naming

Ethnolinguistics views language as a mirror of cultural values and collective identity (Duranti, 1997). In the case of Bugis and Western desserts, the linguistic patterns in naming reveal distinct worldviews shaped by each society's environment, history, and social structure.

##### a. Bugis Dessert Naming: Process-Oriented and Collective Identity

Bugis dessert names are predominantly verb-based or derived from actions and processes, reflecting the community's agrarian roots and collective lifestyle. Each name embodies the social and spiritual dimensions of communal food preparation. *Barongko*, derived from *barongkoang* meaning "to wrap," emphasizes the process of making rather than the product itself, symbolizing protection, harmony, and togetherness during communal preparation. Similarly, *katarisallang*, formed from *tari* ("mix") and *sallang*

(“stir”), highlights cooperation and blending as representations of unity among community members. *Tetu*, originating from *tetu* (“to pour”), underscores the ritualistic nature of food-making, linking physical actions to spiritual balance. Meanwhile, *baje*, which refers to compressed glutinous rice, linguistically signifies solidity and togetherness, aligning with Bugis notions of social cohesion. *Onde-onde*, whose name is onomatopoeic—derived from the sizzling sound “onde” while frying—reflects the sensory engagement and close interaction with nature typical of oral and agrarian societies.

According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021), language in traditional societies encodes collective experience. In this sense, Bugis naming patterns emphasize process, cooperation, and shared activity, illustrating that food in Bugis culture is not merely an object of consumption but a social event rooted in collective identity. This interpretation aligns with Duranti’s (1997) assertion that linguistic choices reveal a community’s perception of relationships and social harmony. The Bugis preference for process-based verbs indicates a worldview that values togetherness, participation, and mutual responsibility. Thus, the act of naming itself becomes a form of cultural preservation—an articulation of how communal life and cooperation are woven into everyday practices, including food preparation.

#### **b. Western Dessert Naming: Object-Oriented and Individual Identity**

In contrast, Western dessert names are primarily noun-based, focusing on ingredients, appearance, or the final product—reflecting the analytical and individualistic worldview of Western culture. *Cheesecake*, for instance, directly names the main ingredient, emphasizing a material and object-centered perspective. *Brownie*, derived from “brown” with the diminutive suffix *-ie*, highlights color and size, demonstrating an aesthetic and descriptive approach to categorization. *Pie*, from the Latin *pica* meaning “mixture,” showcases an analytical concern with composition and structure, while *pudding*, from Old French *boudin* meaning “sausage,” reflects historical culinary evolution from savory to sweet, symbolizing innovation and adaptation within Western food culture.

Berlin (1992) argues that Western naming systems rely on categorization and material description—an approach characteristic of societies shaped by scientific reasoning and industrial organization. This linguistic tendency corresponds with Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of “distinction,” where naming practices reinforce aesthetic hierarchy and social differentiation. By focusing on ingredients and final presentation, Western food names express values of individuality, precision, and ownership. Unlike the communal and ritualized meanings in Bugis desserts, Western naming practices represent food as a personal and aesthetic experience, often tied to notions of status, taste, and self-expression.

#### **c. Comparative Ethnolinguistic Insight**

The contrast between Bugis and Western dessert naming reflects deeper cultural orientations and worldviews. Bugis desserts employ verb-based, process-oriented

naming that encapsulates collective participation, agrarian values, and harmony with nature. This naming system emphasizes not only how food is made but also the social meaning embedded in its preparation, where cooperation and shared labor represent the moral and cultural foundation of the community. In Bugis culture, linguistic forms such as *barongko* (“to wrap”) or *tari-sallang* (“mix and stir”) highlight the active engagement of people with their environment, illustrating that food is an extension of communal identity and ecological awareness.

In contrast, Western desserts favor noun-based, product-oriented naming that aligns with individualism, analytical thinking, and industrial modernity. Names like *cheesecake*, *brownie*, and *pie* describe the ingredients, colors, or final forms of the dessert, reflecting a focus on the end product rather than the process of creation. This linguistic pattern mirrors the Western emphasis on precision, ownership, and consumption—where food becomes an expression of individuality, material refinement, and class distinction. The descriptive clarity of Western food names corresponds to a worldview shaped by scientific categorization and capitalist values, emphasizing what is consumed rather than how it is shared.

Ultimately, the linguistic contrast between *tari-sallang* (“mix and stir together”) and *cheesecake* (a product defined by its key ingredient) encapsulates the divergence between communal process and individual product. This ethnolinguistic evidence demonstrates how language encodes cultural cognition—preserving collective memory in Bugis society while expressing personal mastery and material focus in Western contexts. The way food is named, therefore, becomes a reflection of broader sociocultural values, where culinary terminology serves as both a linguistic artifact and a cultural symbol of how communities understand themselves and their relationship to the world.

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that dessert naming and form serve as vital semiotic and ethnolinguistic expressions of cultural worldview. In Bugis society, the use of natural ingredients such as banana, coconut milk, and glutinous rice, along with verb-based naming patterns like *barongko* (“to wrap”) and *katarisallang* (“to mix and stir”), signifies collectivism, social cooperation, and harmony with nature. These culinary and linguistic choices reflect the agrarian roots and communal values of the Bugis people, where food preparation is viewed as a shared ritual that binds individuals within the community. The semiotic analysis demonstrates that these elements are not arbitrary but deeply tied to cultural identity and ecological awareness.

Conversely, Western desserts such as *cheesecake*, *brownie*, and *pie* reveal an individual-centered orientation through their noun-based, product-focused naming and use of refined ingredients like cheese, butter, and chocolate. These choices symbolize social prestige, aesthetic pleasure, and personal fulfillment, aligning with Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of taste as a marker of class and identity. The comparison highlights that

while Bugis cuisine functions as a collective cultural expression, Western cuisine operates as an individualistic and material sign system.

Ultimately, this study underscores that food naming is a form of linguistic heritage and cultural cognition. It bridges semiotics and ethnolinguistics to show that the act of naming and preparing desserts transcends gastronomy—it becomes a reflection of how societies perceive themselves, their environment, and their social relations. Understanding these patterns enriches cross-cultural appreciation and contributes to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, particularly within indigenous culinary traditions like those of the Bugis.

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