

## SLANG AS A WHORFIAN LINGUISTIC STRATEGY TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS IN SURAKARTA'S CULINARY BUSINESS

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### Abstract

The naming of culinary businesses in urban settings, particularly in Surakarta, Indonesia, utilizes slang and acronyms as a strategic linguistic tool. This practice acts as a phonetic gateway that shapes consumer perception and market positioning, resonating strongly with your urban audiences. Building on the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which suggests language actively structures how people perceive reality, this study investigates how slang-infused names influence consumers' cognitive and emotional framing of culinary products. The primary goal is to illuminate the intersection of sociolinguistics, onomastics (the study of names), and the Whorfian system within Indonesia's booming culinary sector. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a sociolinguistic perspective. Data collection involved three stages: (1) online observation (Google Maps, GoFood) to document slang and acronyms names, (2) semi-structured interviews with selected sellers to explore naming motivations, and (3) questionnaires distributed to consumers to understand their perceptions. Triangulation of these methods was used to ensure validity. The main findings indicate two strategic naming categories: acronyms-based names (e.g., Warmindo, Burjo) for communication efficiency and memorability, and slang-based names (e.g., "Bakso Mblenger", "Mie Gacor") for high expressiveness and emotional resonance. Consumers confirmed that slang names influence their expectations about product characteristics, such as extreme spiciness (*Mercon*) or large portions (*Mblenger*), indicating a clear Whorfian effect where the language cues structure the initial product perception. The selection of these names is a deliberate branding strategy driven by the desire for uniqueness and to attract the Gen Z market. Ultimately, the use of non-formal language in Surakarta's culinary naming is a strategic phenomenon reflecting linguistic shifts towards casual, emotionally appealing communication.

**Keywords:** Slang; Culinary Naming; Whorfian Hypothesis; Sociolinguistics

### Abstrak

*Penamaan usaha kuliner di lingkungan perkotaan, khususnya di Surakarta, Indonesia, memanfaatkan slang dan akronim sebagai alat linguistik strategis. Praktik ini berfungsi sebagai gerbang fonetik yang membentuk persepsi konsumen dan posisi pasar, serta sangat resonan dengan audiens perkotaan Anda. Berdasarkan Hipotesis Sapir-Whorf, yang menyatakan bahwa bahasa secara aktif membentuk cara orang memandang realitas, penelitian ini menyelidiki bagaimana nama-nama yang dipenuhi slang memengaruhi kerangka kognitif dan emosional konsumen terhadap produk kuliner. Tujuan utama adalah untuk menerangi persimpangan antara sosiolinguistik, onomastik (studi tentang nama), dan sistem Whorfian dalam sektor kuliner Indonesia yang sedang berkembang pesat. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan perspektif sosiolinguistik. Pengumpulan data melibatkan tiga tahap: (1) pengamatan online (Google Maps, GoFood) untuk mendokumentasikan nama-nama slang dan akronim, (2) wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan penjual terpilih untuk mengeksplorasi motivasi penamaan, dan (3) kuesioner yang dibagikan kepada konsumen untuk memahami persepsi mereka. Triangulasi metode ini digunakan untuk memastikan validitas. Temuan utama menunjukkan dua kategori penamaan strategis: nama berbasis akronim (misalnya, Warmindo, Burjo) untuk efisiensi komunikasi dan kemudahan diingat, serta nama berbasis slang (misalnya, Bakso Mblenger, Mie Gacor) untuk ekspresivitas tinggi dan resonansi emosional. Konsumen mengonfirmasi bahwa nama-nama slang memengaruhi ekspektasi mereka tentang karakteristik produk, seperti kepedasan ekstrem (Mercon) atau porsi besar (Mblenger), menunjukkan efek Whorfian yang jelas di mana petunjuk bahasa*

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*membentuk persepsi awal produk. Pemilihan nama-nama ini merupakan strategi branding yang disengaja, didorong oleh keinginan untuk keunikan dan menarik pasar Gen Z. Pada akhirnya, penggunaan bahasa informal dalam penamaan kuliner di Surakarta merupakan fenomena strategis yang mencerminkan pergeseran linguistik menuju komunikasi yang santai dan menarik secara emosional..*

**Kata Kunci:** Bahasa gaul; Penamaan kuliner; Hipotesis Whorfian; Sociolinguistik

## INTRODUCTION

In the world of urban business enterprise, the naming of culinary businesses rises above insignificant labeling. It capacities as a phonetic door that shapes shopper recognition, social affiliations, and showcase positioning. The use of slang in these names, especially in dynamic locations like the Surakarta area of Indonesia, adds a casual, playful dimension that resonates with young urban audiences. Slang, as a flexible and context-bound frame of language, not as it were, captures generational vibes but also represents the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, commonly known as the Whorfian theory. Building on (Society, 2016) the idea that language serves as a guide to social reality and (Tremblay et al., 2016) claim that linguistic structures shape how people perceive and interpret the world, this theory emphasizes that language does not merely reflect experience but actively constructs it. Understanding the linguistic structure and sociolinguistic motivation behind shop naming practices is also essential because, as (Sari et al., 2024) emphasize, understanding the linguistic structure and sociolinguistic motivations behind shop naming practices reveals how language embodies local culture and identity. In this think about, we investigate how slang-infused names in Surakarta's culinary businesses form recognitions of genuineness, taste, and social belonging. By analyzing these naming practices, this inquiry is about the intersection of sociolinguistics, onomastics (the study of names), and the Whorfian system.

The significance of this thing lies in its potential to light up the crossing point of language, commerce, and cognition inside Indonesia's booming culinary division. In the setting of Indonesia's fast urbanization, slang in commerce naming serves as an imperative instrument for micro-enterprises to explore competitive markets, as proven by its part in improving brand review among youthful demographics. As observed by (Silviyanti et al., 2024) Shop names serve as symbolic linguistic markers that communicate identity, creativity, and social aspirations. Similarly, (Rachmad, 2025) found that coffee shop naming in Surabaya reflects how urban entrepreneurs use language to build identity and cultural branding. In Surakarta, a dynamic neighborhood mixing Javanese conventions with present-day urban impacts, culinary businesses such as food stalls and carts compete fiercely for consideration at advanced stages and temporal populations. Slang names, like "Es Kobar" (bringing out a "cool blast" in frosted drinks), "Markobar" (brief for urban combination martabak), "Bakso Mblenger" (inferring madly addictive meatballs), "Bocita" (acronym of Bakso Aci Kita), "Warkopmie" (Warung Kopi Mie), and "Taichan Machan" (recommending tiger-like furious barbecued sticks), use casual vernacular to inspire energy and relatability. From a Whorfian viewpoint, these names do more than describe. They prime consumers' desires and possibly modify how they see flavor profiles, cleanliness, or social genuineness. For example, slang might flag "cool" and "congenial," affecting choices toward imaginative combinations over conventional passages. For partners, including business visionaries and language specialists, the consideration provides insights into how Whorfian phonetic relativity can advise branding. Besides, in a socially assorted area like Surakarta, slang naming not as it were boosts financial reasonability but also strengthens social cohesion, as it reflects the mixing of local conventions with worldwide impacts in everyday language use. Slang names may boost memorability and virality on social media, boosting money-related reasonability for small merchants. In Surakarta, a center of Javanese heritage confronting urban relocation pressures, this subject highlights slang's part in shaping social personality. It advances etymological differences as an instrument for economic improvement in casual economies, where small-scale operations are the backbone of local livelihoods.

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However, the considerate utilization of slang in culinary commerce remains under-scrutinized, especially through a Whorfian focal point, which may clarify perceptual crevices between aiming branding and buyer reception. Still, the intentional use of slang in food industries is still insufficiently researched, particularly from a Whorfian perspective. This perspective might clarify the distinctions between planned branding and consumer understanding. Entrepreneurs, frequently young locals or migrants, use slang to stand out in the competition against apps such as GoFood and Grab. This approach corresponds with the Whorfian hypothesis by illustrating how language shapes experience. For example, names such as "Bakso Mblenger", "Bocita", "Warkopmie", and "Taichan Machan" present products as highly flavorful and daring, subtly altering diners' sensory and social perceptions in contrast to more formal options. In a time of digital expansion, where Instagram reels can elevate or ruin a brand, such naming nurtures community connections and cultural blending. It combines Javanese expressions with international slang impacts. As noted by (Junaidi, 2022), Language choice in culinary branding carries symbolic meaning that links culture and consumer attraction, showing that verbal elements can shape brand identity and perception. In expansion, this paper addresses the require for more profound investigation into how slang, as a marker of youth culture, impacts financial survival in casual divisions, building on the thought that language is not fair an instrument but a vital resource in competitive markets. Nonetheless, the pondering of slang in food-related businesses remains insufficiently considered, particularly from a Whorfian perspective. This lens could shed light on the differences between intended branding and consumer perception. This research, therefore, adds to urban linguistics by examining how slang terminology affects mental mapping of food environments. It supports entrepreneurship in non-elite, non-urban settings such as Surakarta. The research goals are: (1) to pinpoint slang characteristics in Manahan's food names; (2) to analyze their Whorfian perceptual effects; and (3) to combine consumer perspectives for branding significance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Studies on Slang and Social Functions

Recent studies on slang emphasize its evolving social roles in modern Indonesian contexts, establishing a foundation for understanding its use in naming. (Wijana & Yoga, 2025) in the *Journal Arbitrer*, explain that the creative manipulation of language, often manifested through plesetan or playful word alterations, represents not only humor but also social expression tied to identity and subtle resistance against linguistic norms. Similarly, (Hisaan et al., 2025) in *Journal Pendidikan Tambusai* found that the incorporation of slang and borrowed terms in culinary promotion reflects modern communication trends and effectively attracts younger consumers. These findings indicate that slang serves multiple purposes beyond informal communication, embodying cultural creativity, social positioning, and linguistic adaptation to contemporary urban life.

### Linguistic Landscape and Regional Naming Practices

Research on linguistic landscapes reveals how naming practices construct identity across diverse urban spaces. (Tremblay et al., 2016) in *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, investigated the linguistic environment of culinary businesses in Kupang City, Indonesia. They found that multilingual signboards help preserve ethnic identity while adapting to urban development. Their study connects to Whorfian relativity by showing that language shapes people's perspectives, though their focus remains on formal signboards rather than on informal or slang-based expressions. Meanwhile (Sya'adah et al., 2025), in *Ghancaran*, explored menu naming in Indonesian restaurants in Kuala Lumpur using a socio-onomastic approach. They revealed that combining local and foreign words can strengthen a sense of authenticity and market competitiveness. Although these studies highlight the commercial importance of naming, they rarely consider how slang itself influences perception and decision-making in informal, non-diasporic business contexts. Likewise, (Haryati & Himmawati,

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2014) found that Indonesian food and drink names often use creative word formation, such as blending and compounding, to make them sound catchy and memorable. Her study shows that playful language can attract consumers, similar to how slang builds identity and appeal in modern branding. Similarly, (Hasim et al., 2021) analyzed Sundanese food names on Instagram and discovered that social media users often employ morphological creativity, such as blending and clipping, to make food names visually appealing and trendy. This shows that digital linguistic innovation also contributes to modern culinary identity, reinforcing the dynamic link between language, culture, and marketing.

### **Local and Cultural Naming in Indonesian Contexts**

Local research highlights how naming is deeply rooted in culture and culinary heritage across Indonesia. (Elita Ulfiana et al., 2025) In Tabasa, studied the culinary vocabulary of Banyuwangi and showed that local food terms encode regional identity through layered semantic meanings. (Suntoko et al., 2024), in the *Journal of English and Indonesian Linguistics and Literature*, explored how names of natural and cultural tourism objects in Medalsari Village blend environmental and traditional elements to attract visitors. (Ekawati & Ayuningtiyas, 2024), in *MozaiK: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, investigated slang's influence on street food naming and found its playful appeal for youth, though their analysis remained descriptive without deeper Whorfian insight. Similarly, (Ekawati & Ayuningtiyas, 2024) studied Madurese culinary naming and showed that names often come from ingredients, origin, or uniqueness. They also found that branding focuses on authenticity and cultural heritage, reflecting how language expresses local identity.

### **Gaps and Contributions of This Study**

The study by (Sya'adah et al., 2025) on Menu Naming as a Branding Strategy of Indonesian Restaurants in Kuala Lumpur offers a strong socio-onomastic foundation for understanding how linguistic creativity functions in culinary branding. Their research demonstrates that menu naming conveys identity, authenticity, and cultural symbolism that shape consumer attraction. However, the study remains limited to social and cultural interpretation and does not explore the cognitive and perceptual dimensions through which language influences consumer thought. This gap relates to the Whorfian Hypothesis, which argues that language structures shape how individuals perceive and experience reality. Building on this limitation, the present study integrates Whorfian linguistic relativity to examine how slang-based naming in Surakarta's culinary businesses affects consumer cognition, emotion, and social belonging. By combining socio-onomastic and cognitive perspectives, this research highlights that slang functions not only as a marker of youth identity but also as a linguistic tool that constructs perception, experience, and branding effectiveness within Indonesia's dynamic urban food culture.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a sociolinguistic perspective, examining the relationship between slang-rich food business names and consumer views in the region of Surakarta. According to (Sudha, 2017) in Creswell, a descriptive research design involves administering a questionnaire to a small group of participants (referred to as a sample) in order to find patterns in the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or other characteristics of a large group of people (called the population). This design enables the researcher to investigate linguistic forms as they occur organically in the urban foodscape while also understanding the symbolic and cultural significance that these names represent.

Data collection was conducted digitally and directly using three main methods: (1) online observation through Google Maps, GoFood, and ShopeeFood to document food business names that contain slang or acronyms, (2) semi-structured interviews with several selected sellers to explore their

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reasons and strategies in choosing the names, and (3) questionnaires distributed to consumers to understand their perspectives and interpretations of those slang-based names.

During digital observation, slang and acronym-based names were identified and documented through screenshots, notes, and contextual descriptions of signage and menus. After the data on slang and acronym names were fully collected, semi-structured interviews lasting around 15 to 20 minutes were conducted with selected business owners to gain insight into their branding motivations. After that, questionnaires were distributed to customers both in person and through Google Forms to collect consumer perspectives and perceptions.

The analysis of slang in titles such as “Es Kobar” or “Bakso Mblenger” is explored not only through linguistic constructions but also within the semiotic and discourse context that describes how these terms shape perceptions. Interviews with sellers provide insight into deliberate strategies, while consumer surveys confirm agreements or differences. Data analysis follows the sequence of the data collection process, starting from identifying linguistic features through digital observation, interpreting the meanings using seller insights from interviews, and validating the findings through consumer questionnaires. To maintain validity, triangulation is utilized by merging observation, interviews, and surveys, while rich description enhances the cultural transferability of the result.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

#### Data Representation and Initial Analysis

This study collected various business names from culinary sellers in Surakarta through observation and interviews. Because the full dataset contains a wide range of slang, acronym-based, and creatively formed names, only several representative examples are presented in the main text to illustrate the key naming patterns observed in the field. The complete dataset is included in the appendix.

**Table 1. Acronym-Based: Culinary Business Names**

No.	Business Name	Acronym	Full Form
1.	Timlo Sastro	Timlo	Timbel Lothek Sastro
2.	Titik Temu Warmindo	Warmindo	Titik Temu Warung Makan Indomie
3.	Bocita	Bocita	Baso Aci Kita
4.	Warkopmie Ali Baba	Warkopmie	Warung Kopi dan Indomie Ali Baba
5.	Burjo Point UNS	Burjo	Bubur Kacang Ijo Point UNS

The full list of acronym-based names shows that culinary businesses in Surakarta value simplicity and memorability when shaping their brand identities, with forms like Cireng, Cilok, and Piscok shortening longer terms into casual expressions suited to young consumers and digital platforms. These names work well in fast communication settings and help products stand out in online environments where clarity matters. Acronyms also display linguistic creativity that refreshes traditional foods, as seen in Donies, Kopidangan, and HIK, which transform familiar items into more modern and marketable identities. This practice keeps local dishes relevant within contemporary urban culture. This dataset indicates that naming based on acronyms meets both practical communication requirements and strategic branding goals. It also showcases the vibrant and youth-focused nature of Surakarta's food culture.

**Table 2. Slang-Based Names: Culinary Business Names**

No.	Business Name	Slang
1.	Bakmi Jowo Mantul	Mantul

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2.	Soto Hoki	Hoki
3.	Pentol Nyonyor Prindavan	Nyonyor Prindavan
4.	Tahoo Gowerr	Gowerr
5.	Mie Gacor	Gacor

Slang-based names demonstrate high levels of expressiveness, humor, and emotional resonance. Many slang words highlight sensations such as spiciness, fullness, or satisfaction—turning culinary experiences into vivid, playful imagery. This mirrors the Whorfian view that language shapes how individuals perceive and experience reality: before tasting the food, consumers already imagine certain flavors or sensations based on the slang used in the name. These naming practices also reflect youth culture, digital language trends, and the increasing influence of social media on branding. Slang terms like Mantul, Gacor, or Mercon evoke modernity and relatability, making these businesses appear fresh and engaging within the competitive culinary scene.

### Sellers' Motivations in Using Slang or Acronym-Based Names

Brief interviews with selected sellers were conducted to understand the reasoning behind their business names. These explanations provide a brief understanding of the factors influencing their decisions. The subsequent table presents a summary of the motivations.

**Table 3. Sellers' Motivations in Using Slang or Acronym Names**

No.	Business Name	Type	Summary of Naming Motivation
1.	Kopidangan MomDee	Acronym/Blended Word	The name “Kopidangan” is formed from the blend of the words “kopi” (coffee) and “hidangan” (dishes). The seller aims to create a warm, appealing, and comforting impression that makes customers feel at ease, enjoy the atmosphere, and want to return.
2.	Musmid Haha	Slang/ Wordplay	Musmid is created by reversing the letters of the word dimsum. This name is designed to spark curiosity, as customers often ask about “Musmid,” showing that it effectively draws attention.
3.	Cilok Fadil	Acronym	The name “Cilok Fadil” was chosen because it is eye-catching and straightforward. The seller intentionally uses his own name to create an easily recognizable identity.

### Consumers' Perceptions toward Acronym and Slang-Based Names

The analysis shows that sellers in Surakarta rely on two main naming strategies, with some choosing practical names that emphasize simplicity, familiarity, and clarity, as seen in Cilok Fadil and Kopidangan MomDee, and others opting for more playful and creative names, such as Musmid Haha, which uses reversed spelling and humor to spark curiosity. These patterns reveal how sellers shape customer expectations through the language they select for their brands. They also demonstrate that naming is an intentional process influenced by both marketing goals and personal expression. Overall, the findings highlight how culinary sellers balance clarity and creativity to build identity and attract customers in a competitive market.

Based on the findings from the open-ended questionnaire responses, several dominant themes emerged that describe consumers' perceptions of the use of culinary business names based on slang.

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In general, consumers view slang names as creative, unique, contemporary, and close to everyday language, especially among young people. Many respondents revealed that slang names give a positive first impression, such as being funny, trendy, interesting, or anti-mainstream. This is because such names are considered different from typical business names, thereby attracting attention and arousing curiosity. Terms such as *Mercon*, *Mblenger*, or *Dower* are considered capable of evoking certain flavors or experiences even before consumers try the product. Several respondents admitted that they were interested in trying products such as “Bakso Mblenger”, “Ceker Mercon”, “Pentol Dower”, “Mie Gacoan”, and others because the names felt unique and sparked their imagination about the taste or level of spiciness.

In addition to creativity, many respondents felt that slang names were more relevant to youth culture and digital trends, especially for consumers aged 18–25 who dominated survey participation. They stated that slang names felt more relaxed, familiar, and reflected the communication style of the younger generation on social media. This made culinary businesses with slang names appear more accessible, fun, and suitable for markets that like to follow viral trends. However, not all consumers gave positive reviews. Some respondents said that slang names can be less appealing if they are excessive, difficult to understand, have negative connotations, or are not suitable for the product. There were also respondents who felt that a business name does not determine taste, price, or quality; for them, product quality is still more important than brand name. Some consumers also believe that slang that is too common or overused can lose its appeal because it becomes “ordinary.”

Another issue that arises is the perception of professionalism. Some respondents, although not the majority, believe that slang names are not suitable for businesses that want to appear elegant or formal. They believe that slang is more appropriate for businesses that target a casual and young segment, not a premium segment. In terms of memory, the majority of respondents agreed that slang names are easier to remember because they are short, familiar, and have strong characteristics. Many respondents said that funny, quirky, or unique names can “stick” in their memory after just one glance. Their experience shows that slang names serve as a strong identity that helps differentiate a business from its competitors.

Overall, these findings show that consumers do not simply view slang names as labels but as branding elements that can shape expectations, instill emotional impressions, and influence their initial interest in culinary products. The use of slang has proven to be effective in reaching young target markets, although preferences for professionalism or clarity of meaning remain a consideration for some consumers.

## Discussion

### Whorfian Framing in Slang-Based Culinary Naming

This study found that the use of slang in naming culinary businesses in Surakarta serves to build closeness with young consumers, create associations regarding product characteristics, and strengthen brand identity linguistically. Names such as *mblenger*, *kobar*, or other creative acronyms shape expectations about taste, portion size, and emotional nuances before consumption occurs. These results suggest that naming transcends being just a linguistic action; it also serves as a communication and branding tactic that affects consumer perception.

The theory of linguistic relativity claims that language influences how people understand social reality (Society, 2016). In this context, slang terms function as cues that guide consumer interpretation of products. This aligns with Tremblay et al.’s (2016) argument that linguistic habits direct thought patterns and meaning formation. When consumers encounter the word *mblenger*, they do not read it merely as a label; they construct mental imagery of large portions and intense flavours. The activation of such mental schemas demonstrates that linguistic categories serve as cognitive frameworks that structure culinary experience. In cognitive linguistics, this mechanism reflects how linguistic cues guide sensory expectations, reinforcing Whorf’s view that language can both limit and direct perception.

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### **Whorfian Identity Construction through Urban Youth Language**

From a cultural perspective, Sapir's conceptual elaboration through (Silalahi, 2011) emphasizes that language is a cultural product that simultaneously shapes human experience. Culinary names in Surakarta that use slang showcase the inventiveness of urban groups and the connection between casual language and youth identity. Slang usage not only showcases aesthetic language preferences but also serves as a means to create social intimacy through familiar, informal language relevant to daily experiences. This phenomenon demonstrates how language functions as a vehicle of identity expression. Young communities in Surakarta use slang to mark group belonging and to express their dynamic lifestyles. In commercial contexts, the presence of slang also reflects digital culture, humour, and linguistic practices circulating on social media. Through a Whorfian lens, this suggests that habitual language use in public spaces helps shape how young groups conceptualize themselves and their environment.

### **Whorfian Socio-Onomastics and Urban Branding**

This link's name and identity correspond with Rachmad (2025). Socio-onomastic research illustrates that the naming of coffee shops in Surabaya plays a role in shaping urban identity. Like Surabaya, the utilization of slang in Surakarta showcases digital living, humor, and trends in popular culture. The parallel between the two studies suggests that linguistic creativity has become a widespread practice in business naming within Indonesian cities.

The similarity in these patterns indicates that linguistic innovation is an effective urban branding strategy. Both culinary businesses and coffee shops use wordplay, language mixing, and creative forms to convey modernity and urban cultural identity. In Whorfian terms, repeated exposure to specific linguistic styles in commercial contexts contributes to shaping how urban modernity is perceived and socially defined.

### **Linguistic Landscape and Whorfian Symbolism in Public Space**

The findings of this study also intersect with Benu et al. (2025) analysis of the culinary linguistic landscape in Kupang, which demonstrates that signboards contain cultural values, ideologies, and community representations. In that study, signage functions not only as an informational medium but also as a symbolic one. A similar condition is evident in Surakarta, where slang-based naming contributes to shaping the city's image by displaying the linguistic creativity of urban communities.

This suggests that the language scene in Surakarta shows a change towards casual expressions aimed at young people. From a Whorfian viewpoint, the presence of slang in public areas serves as a symbolic framework that affects how both locals and visitors perceive the city's social nature. Frequent encounters with informal linguistic symbols contribute to shaping the view of Surakarta as a vibrant, innovative, and youth-oriented city.

### **Cross-Cultural Branding and Whorfian Market Meaning-Making**

Further relevance of these findings is reinforced by menu-naming strategies in Indonesian restaurants in Kuala Lumpur, as discussed by Sya'adah et al. (2025). The use of creative, hyperbolic, and slang-based menu names effectively evokes specific images and enhances consumer appeal. This similarity across contexts demonstrates that language plays a strategic role in persuasion and product image formation.

Research on MSMEs in Kotakulon Village by Nurhasanah et al. (2024) also supports this study's conclusions. Product naming in their findings is shaped by local identity, linguistic creativity, and cultural values expressed through language. A comparable event happens in Surakarta, where slang-inspired naming blends inventive language use with Javanese cultural identity contextualized within urban communication styles. Collectively, these results not only support the linguistic relativity theory suggested by Society (2016) and Tremblay et al. (2016) but also correspond with earlier studies that view language as a key factor in shaping identity, branding, and the construction

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of cultural landscapes. Culinary names using slang in Surakarta therefore arise as a complex tactic, and intertwined cognitive processes.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusion

The naming of culinary businesses in Surakarta demonstrates a strong trend in the use of non-formal language, reflected through two main categories: acronym-based names and slang-based names.

The use of acronym-based names, such as Warmindo, Burjo, and Markobar, focuses on communication efficiency and memory. These names simplify common terms and create linguistic closeness with the target consumers, especially the youth (Gen Z) and students. The emotional and cognitive appeal of slang-based names such as “Bakso Mblenger”, “Ceker Mercon”, and “Mie Gacor” successfully attracts consumer attention due to their unique, creative, funny, and trendy nature. The use of slang functions not only as a label but also as an effective branding strategy. Consumers admit that slang names influence their expectations of the product, such as extreme spiciness or large portions, indicating the cognitive impact of language on initial product perception, aligning with the Whorfian view. Name selection by sellers is driven by the desire to create uniqueness, memorability, and curiosity in customers' minds, as revealed in the interviews with Musmid Haha. This indicates that naming using acronyms and slang is a deliberate step to build a distinct brand identity.

Overall, the use of acronyms and slang in culinary business naming in Surakarta is a sociological phenomenon reflecting linguistic shifts and marketing strategies oriented towards Gen Z, prioritizing casual, straightforward, and emotionally appealing communication.

### Suggestions

This section includes recommendations for business practitioners and guidelines for future research. Business owners must ensure that the chosen slang name has high consistency with the product (e.g., a name implying spiciness must indeed be spicy). Avoid using overly excessive slang that could lead to negative connotations among consumers seeking a more formal or elegant impression. When choosing slang, consider the terms' potential longevity. Slang that is overly trendy “hype” risks becoming quickly outdated; thus, it is advisable to choose more unique and timeless terms to maintain brand sustainability.

Future research needs to delve into the lifespan and evolution of slang terms in culinary branding. The analysis should identify the sociolinguistic factors that cause certain slang terms like *Mblenger* to endure while others quickly disappear from the linguistic landscape. Another suggestion is conducting a comparative study with other cities in Indonesia with different demographic or cultural characteristics. The goal is to see the extent to which slang-based naming patterns and their Whorfian effects are a local phenomenon or a national marketing trend. The final suggestion is conducting quantitative research to test the direct correlation between the level of creativity and uniqueness of the slang-based name and the financial performance (sales value or profit) of micro-culinary businesses. This will provide more concrete empirical evidence of the economic value of this linguistic branding strategy.

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