

# Sign Elements of International Food and Beverage Logos

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**Abstract.** This research entitled Sign Element of International Food and Beverage Logos. This research analyses the sign elements of food and beverage logos and the interpretation of the sign. The company want to promote and inform their product by creating the logo. This research applies the semiotic theory by Charles Sanders Peirce to analyse the sign elements and its interpretation in the logos. This research use qualitative descriptive method in analysing the data. The data is 7 food and beverage logos which goes international. Those 7 food and beverage logos are McDonald's, Starbucks, Domino's, Pizza Hut, KFC, Coca-Cola, and Pepsi. The data source in this research were logo images that collected from the logo's official website and Wikipedia. This research will analyse the icon, index, and symbol of the logos as the sign elements by using Peirce's triadic theory. Then the interpretation of the sign will analyze by relating the representment, object and interpretant. The result of this research shows that there are 6 icons, 5 indexes, and 7 symbols sign used in 7 food and beverage logos. There is 1 logo that has no icon sign, 2 logos have no index sign, and all logos have a symbol sign. The meaning of the sign elements that found in the logos was represented by relating the representment, object, and interpretant.

**Keywords:** Semiotic, Peirce's Triadic Theory, Symbol, Interpretation, Logos.

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## 1 Introduction

Semiotics is one of linguistic branches which deal with sign and symbol; it is about the relationship between a sign, object and its meaning. Semiotics is everywhere and it is greatly important, because it helps people to realize the meaning or information which not contained in computers, books or codes. Semiotics concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign (Eco, 1976 , p. 7). Simply, semiotics can be said as the study of sign. Sign can be seen in all aspects such as word, image, and sound, which every sign communicate a meaning, but the meaning of sign is arbitrary, it depends to the interpreter. As Peirce (1931 , p. 58) in Chandler (2002) states that anything can be a sign as long as someone interpret it as having meaning. Human tend to look for meaning to easily understand everything happens around him. The whole thing around is called a sign, which can be expressed using the theory of semiotics.

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The development of digital age makes people wants to live uniquely in all life aspects. This era is constantly changing and creating new ways to share and spread messages. The messages itself can be sent by a sign. Human use their creativity and interpretation signs to create a meaning. Signs is anything that communicate meaning and the meaning of a sign is arbitrary and variable, it can be differently depending to the concept of thinking. A sign can be interpreted by a logo. Logo is a kind of sign which can easier to convey messages. Logo is one of the most popular and trendy thing nowadays, as logo is the face of what you are going to show the world. Big companies have created a logo in order to get an effective branding for their product. They try to influence the consumer by represent the values of their product.

As pointed out in Merriam-Webster Dictionary logo is a letter or an image which has meaning and usually used as symbol. It is a graphical symbol that used to aid a means of an intuition, food companies, and even a means of country. As a graphical design, logo including a name, symbol, one or more other separate elements to representing, promote, or branding a product. A logo is generally involving color, text, visual and shape. Such as food logos which commonly found today. There are many of food companies can communicate their brand through the logo.

Logos is a Greek word means logic, it appeals to logic and reason. Logos use reasoned and logical arguments to convey point of view and win an audience or customer. Broadly speaking, logos are something that makes your product wide spread, and goes international. People seems to remember the logo of some company because logos are more creative, colorful and powerful in delivering their company's mission so that their product can goes international. In food industries, a good logo is a needs. It such a great way to inform their food, the company can hint the story and history behind the brand. People will eat with their eyes first, it means that presentation such as the use of colors, fonts, and symbols play an important role in the food industry. Rustan (2009) states that logo is not only seen in terms of its physical appearance but also in terms of its meaning. It can be said that the main purpose of logo is to identify, the logo easily conveys the meaning of the brands or the logo works as a symbol sign which has icon to express the information and index to indicate the object with this information pertains. People will remember the iconic, index and symbolic feature of the logo in the same degree.

Food is a primary need, and human beings eat to grow and survive. The food industry is one that expand and develop with good progressive in each year. The food companies have such an effective branding by creating a unique logo for their brands. The food logos play a big role in developing the food companies. Food logos is a tool to identify the food itself, by designing a juicy and recognizable logo, it will give the companies a chance to express their brand, helps customers to understand who they are and what are they offering to the customers.

As semiotics is the theory and study that describes signs and the mechanisms by means of which a sign system produces meaning. The meaning that produced by a sign itself can also

carry dual meanings, as well as logo that has direct and indirect meaning, as can be seen in the logo of ice cream brand, “Baskin Robbins” below.



**Figure 1.** The logo of Baskin Robbins

Based of the data that taken from the official website of Baskin Robbins company on [baskinrobbins.com.sg](http://baskinrobbins.com.sg), the abbreviation, words, and colors are the icon, index, and symbol that found in the logo as the sign elements. As the abbreviation BR that represent their name also known as number 31 that signifies the ice cream flavors that Baskin and Robbins has, the founder of this products wants people to be able to try all the flavor for free by using the pink spoon which inspired the pink color that used in their logo.

Nowadays, a quick-service restaurant or fast food has become a trend. In food business, a great brand will have customers lining up for a taste. To create a brand that triggers customer's appetites, it need to start with well-designed food logo. There are a lot of international fast food and beverage brands that enter Indonesia and people become excited, but not many people are familiar with the logo of the brand itself. Some of them will familiar with the logo but not the meaning. People will recognize those logos because they are noticeable, work to remind people of the great or modern meals they have ate, the color used on the logo can triggers appetite or happiness, and the logo helped to described what the brand was about, what they sell, a burger, chicken, ice cream, and etc.

Hariani (2018) has analysed logo through her research on semiotic analysis of type of sign and meaning of Korean Idol group's logo. She chooses 24 K-pop group logos by applying purposive sampling technique to collect the data of the study. Those 24 K-pop group logos are the logo which contained English name. Her research was find out the type of sign of idol group's logo also the meaning behind the logo based on Peirce's theory of semiotics. Peirce's theory of type of sign applied to find out what type of sign of the logo, iconic, symbolic, or both iconic-symbolic also Peirce triadic semiotics used to analyzed the meaning of the logo. Through the research, from the 24 K-pop group logo, there are 8 symbolic modes, 1 iconic mode, and 15

symbolic modes. This study gives the writer a depiction in analyzing the iconic indexes and symbolic modes to analyze the type of sign of food logos.

Vijaya (2014) in her research analyse logos in Japanese Car Companies. The study is aimed to analyse the signifier and signified also the relation between the interpretation of the logo and the history, marketing or the goal of the company. This research used the theory of semiotics of Saussure the answer the research problems. Through the research, he concludes that 4 of the car logos used the first letter of their name as the logo, 2 car logos of companies used their whole name and 1 car logo company used symbol. Vijaya's research contributes to the analysis logo and the relation between the company and its logo, as the logo can represent the company itself.

Based on the explanation above, it can be said that the sign elements and its interpretation should be analyse as the problems of the logo by using the semiotic theory to find out the elements of sign; icon, index, and symbol on the international food and beverage logos as it will explain the meaning behind the sign and interpret what is a sign want to tell. The objectives of the study are to find out the elements of sign, and the interpretant of the sign elements in the international food and beverage logos.

## **2 Research Method**

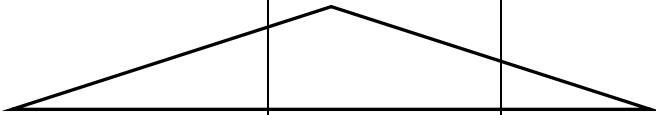
This research used qualitative descriptive method in the writing process of this research. Qualitative data usually in the words form rather than numbers, and it is a rich description and explanation of phenomena as it is. Qualitative descriptive study is the method use to find the straight descriptions of phenomena which desired, such study is especially useful to know who, what and where of events (Sandelowski, 2000). This research is to identify the elements of sign and interpret the meaning of sign in the logos, the writer use the theory of Peirce to analysis the data, and qualitative descriptive method is appropriate with this research.

The data of this research is 7 food and beverage logos. The source of data for this research is the image of 7 international food and beverage logos downloaded from the official website of the company and Wikipedia on internet. Pizza Hut, Coca-Cola, Pepsi are collected by downloading the logo from their official websites, they are: <https://www.pizzahut.com>, <https://www.coca-cola.com>, <https://www.pepsi.co>. The other logos such as McDonald's, Starbucks, Domino's, and KFC logos are collected by downloading the logo from Wikipedia <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>.

In analysing the data, the writer used interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) with three steps; data condensation, data display, and conclusion: drawing and verification. The data condensation of this research is divided into selecting the international food and beverage logos as the data, focusing on the sign elements and the interpretation of the sign, simplifying the data into icon, index and symbol, and transforming the data by putting the



data into the table. Then the analysis of the sign elements and its interpretation are using model analysis based on Peirce's triadic model.




**Table 1.** Model analysis based on Peirce's Triadic model



NO	Representament	Object	Interpretant
			
1.			

### 3 Results and Discussion

**Table 2.** Sign element found in the data

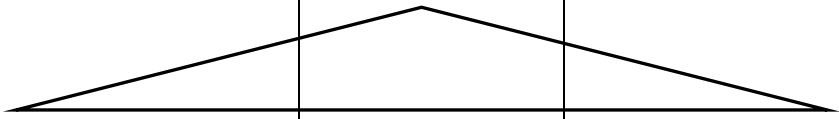
Data	Sign Elements
	<p>Icon: the rounded letter M.</p> <p>Index: the use of McDonald's font on the logo.</p> <p>Symbol: the used of red, golden yellow and white colors.</p>
	<p>Icon: the figure of women in a crown.</p> <p>Index: -</p> <p>Symbol: the used of green color.</p>

	<p>Icon: the two shapes like cube with three dots</p> <p>Index: the word domino written in the logo.</p> <p>Symbol: the blue and red colors.</p>
	<p>Icon: the picture of roof.</p> <p>Index: the written word Pizza Hut.</p> <p>Symbol: the used of red and white colors.</p>
	<p>Icon: the circle and swirling shape of the logo.</p> <p>Index: -</p> <p>Symbol: the red, white, and blue colors.</p>

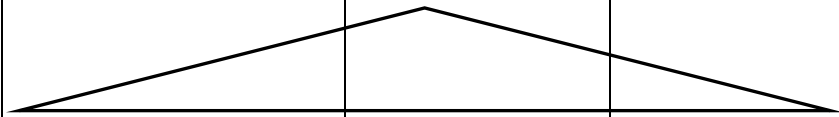
	<p>Icon: the figure of old man with sunglasses and a bow tie.</p> <p>Index: the word KFC.</p> <p>Symbol: the red, black, and white colors.</p>
	<p>Icon: -</p> <p>Index: the logo is the font that used in Coca-Cola word.</p> <p>Symbol: the red and white colors.</p>

The sign elements that found in the 7 international food and beverage logos are icon, index, and symbol. There are 6 iconic signs, 5 indexes signs, and 7 symbolic signs. There are 1 logo that has no icon in the logo. Then there are 2 logos that have no index, and all logos have symbol. This indicates that the logos of food and beverage company are symbolic, which each logos have or use color for their logo. The food and beverages company prefers to used color as their symbol which is more attractive to represent the identity of the company itself, because they logo can be more colorful and meaningful in order to attract the customer's attention. The color is a symbol that conventionally made by the company for the logo. Those icon sign is missing because there is no iconic object that represent something similarly. The index sign can't be found in two logos as the logos has no verbal text that represent or signify the name of the company itself.

**Table 3.** The Interpretation of sign elements in McDonald's logo

No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
			
1.	Iconic rounded letter M	Rounded letter M as the symbol of the company	The rounded letter M in this logo is known as a golden arches which is the first shape used on their restaurant building which next it used as the representation of McDonald's as the name of the company
2.	The word McDonald's	The word of McDonald's written below of the rounded M	The word McDonald's is the name of the founder, Dick and Mac McDonald which then it used as the name of their company
3.	The color of the logo	Red and golden yellow colors	The used of red and golden yellow color in this logo as the basic color and also the color of their restaurant building

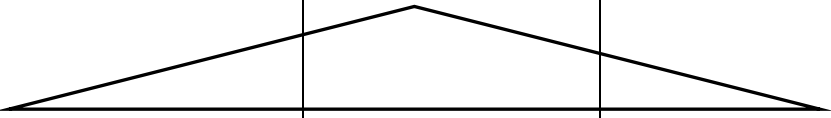
**Table 4.** The interpretation of sign meaning in Starbucks logo

No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
			
1.	The figure of Siren as a mythological mermaid from Greek	The figure is shown as a woman wearing a crown with two tails.	The figure is a representation of their purpose as the same with Siren, a creature that usually seduces sailors.



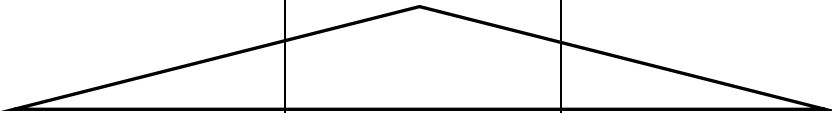
No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
			Their purpose is to seducing people who pass their coffee shop to stop and drink coffee, or in other word Starbucks want to be a modern Siren.
2.	A whole green color of the logo	The green color used as the main color	A green color used in the logo is interprets the natural meaning of green. It symbolizes a life and also calmness.
3.	The shape of the logo	A circle shape as the whole shape of this logo	Actually this circle shape symbolize their stability in selling a coffee even if they also has another menu.

**Table 5.** The interpretation of sign elements in Domino's Logo

No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
			
1.	The figure of domino card	The figure of domino card with three dots at the top of the logo	This figure is a figure of domino card which the dots shown a number of the card. In this logo, the three dots is showing that they have three restaurant in their first year.
2.	The word Domino that represent their purpose	The word Domino at the bottom of the logo	Domino is the name of a game came from China which mean authority. So they choose this name as they want to complete their mission to

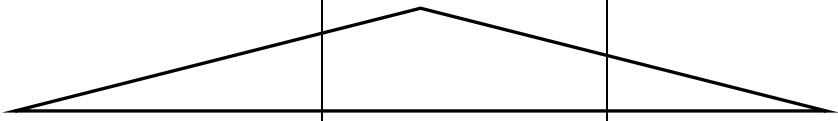
No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
			become the lord of pizza.
3.	The colors used in the logo	The used of blue and red colors in the domino figure at the top of the logo	The blue and red color is their theme or main color that their use for their restaurant; used as the color of their store and their poster.

**Table 6.** The interpretation of sign elements in Pizza Hut logo

No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
			
1.	The figure of white roof as their icon	The figure of white roof at the bottom of the logo	The figure of roof with a white color is shaped like a roof created by Richard D Burke for their first restaurant building.
2.	A circle shape of the logo that represent a pizza	The circle shape at the whole logo	The circle shape used in this logo is actually shaped like a pizza which they want to inform the customers that they are selling pizza.
3.	The word Pizza Hut their name	The word Pizza Hut written in white color at the middle of the logo	The word Pizza Hut used as they first time selling pizza from a small store or a hut.
4.	The color of the logo	The used of red and white colors	The red color used throughout the logo is actually inspired by tomato sauce that identic with pizza, then it represent something hot that related with pizza which serve hot from the oven, it is also as the

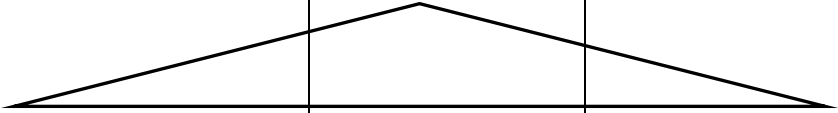
			basic color used by a restaurant to can trigger the appetite of their customers. The used of white color in the written text of Pizza Hut symbolizes the hygiene that they have in serving pizza.
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**Table 7.** The interpretation of sign elements in Pepsi logo

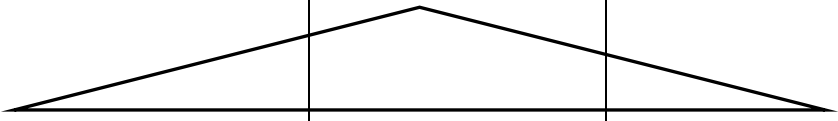
No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
			
1.	The circle shape in the logo signifies the shape of globe	The circle shape in three colors at the logo	This circle shape used in Pepsi logo since symbolized the globe that means Pepsi is now a global brand.
2.	The swirling shape of the logo is signifies the water	The swirling shape at a blue side of the logo	This swirling shape actually symbolizes the water, as they are a company that sell drink.
3.	Blue, white, and red color of Pepsi as represent their country's flag and patriotism	The blue, white, and red color used in the logo	The three colors of the logo are actually the color of US national flag and those three colors is to create the feel of patriotism as their product issued in the market during world war II, so the company came up with this patriotism color to grab the consumer's attention.

**Table 8.** The interpretation of sign elements in KFC logo

No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
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1.	KFC word that represent the name and the mission of the restaurant	The word KFC written in black color at the bottom of the logo	<p>The word KFC is the short name of Kentucky Fried Chicken. Kentucky is the southeastern state of US as the restaurant headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, US.</p> <p>They complete the mission as a healthy restaurant by abbreviated Kentucky Fried Chicken into KFC to get away from the word 'fried' which meant fatty and seem unhealthy.</p>
2.	The image or the stylized face of an old man used a bow tie and sunglasses that signifies Colonel Sanders as the founder	The face image of Colonel Sanders bordered in black at the middle of the logo	The stylized face of an old man at the middle is the icon of Colonel Sanders that made to inform the founder of this food chain. A bow tie used by Colonel is representing professionalism and sunglasses representing knowledge.
3.	The used of red, black and white colors in the logo	Red and white colors as the background color in three vertical lines and black color for Colonel face.	<p>Red color used as its philosophy to increasing the appetite.</p> <p>White color used to represent a hygiene and clean of their restaurant.</p> <p>Black is intended to emphasize the image of the Colonel face as their mascot.</p>

**Table 9.** The interpretation of sign elements in Coca-Cola logo

No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
			
1.	The font used in Coca-Cola word as represent the origin place of the company	The word Coca-Cola in spencerian white color at the middle of the logo	The word Coca-Cola used Spencerian font, which this font is invented in mid 19th century and was the dominant form of official handwriting in America at that time.
2.	The red and white color used represent the history of the company	Red color as the background and white color in the word Coca-Cola	Originally, the red and white colors designed to associate it with Christmas. It used to embody jolliness with red and white colors, that the drink eventually found its way to every merry occasion.

The triadic theory of Peirce used to interpret the meaning of the sign elements by relating the Representament, Object, and Interpretant (ROI). The signs elements in each logos represented the whole meaning of the logos, it represent the brand name, the city, its founder. Based of the analysis, the writer found that in each letter or word that used by the company for their name, each colors used in the logos, and each shapes of every logos show different meaning.

The meaning of the logo can be interpret by connecting the representment, object, and interpretant. The representament that found in the logo is the icon sign, index sign, and symbol sign. The object is the representation of those three sign elements. Then the interpretant is the sense or meaning of the sign elements that found in the logo.

#### 4 Conclusion

Based on the research finding about the sign elements in food and beverage logos, it can be concluded that the sign elements found in the 7 food and beverage logos are based of the object, they are icon, index and symbol. The icon sign shows the similarity of the object used in the logo, such as the figure of siren, a domino card, a roof, an arrow, a globe and water, and beer

mug. The index sign show the identity such the name of the company in the logos, such as the name of McDonald's, Domino's, Pizza Hut, KFC, and Coca-Cola. Then, the symbol sign represents the philosophy of the color used in the logos, which are the used of green color to symbolize a freshness. Red color for tomato sauce and power. Yellow color represent an energy. Blue color represent a professionalism. White color for hygiene and clean. Orange color represent a warmth. Pink color for a cute and funny.

The dominant sign found in the logo is symbol sign because the logo was created by the company with their own perception and meaning, so the logo is conventionally made by the company, and the meaning of the sign found in the logo is arbitrary.

The meaning of the sign found in the logo by connecting the representment, object, and interpretant. The representment is the sign itself, the object is the representation of the sign that found in the logos, then the interpretant is the meaning of the sign found in the logos

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