

Leveraging food photography on Instagram: a multimodal analysis of its contribution to sustainable work and social practices

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This study explores how multimodal social media messages encourage sustainable practices, emphasizing visual language. Drawing from anthropological, marketing, and cultural studies literature, it recognizes visual representation's role in preserving cultural practices, capturing and communicating culinary traditions (Liu et al., 2013). The study aims to understand how food photography empowers communities environmentally and economically, particularly through culinary tourism, showcasing local cuisines to attract visitors (Hall & Gössling, 2016; Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Frochot, 2003). Additionally, it investigates how food images influence consumer choices, supporting local sourcing and sustainable farming (Simeone & Scarpato, 2020).

The investigation explores how #africanrestaurant-tagged Instagram posts by employees of selected restaurants featuring African cuisine convey cultural sustainability, community empowerment, and social inclusivity. Using a multimodal social semiotic framework (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress, 2009; Jewitt & Henriksen, 2016), the study analyzes visual and linguistic components, exploring modality markers, framing, layout, metadata tags, captions, and comments. This ethnographic and critical analysis aims to unveil semiotic strategies empowering communities with insights into the visual grammar employed. Thus, it contributes to academic discourse, highlighting technology-enabled food photography's potential to foster sustainable practices.

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