

li322

Linguistic Insights

Studies in Language and Communication

Daniela Cesiri (ed.)

Adapting Food-Related Communication to Children

Interdisciplinary
and Multicultural Insights

Peter Lang

li322

This collection of essays examines the multifaceted nature of food-related communication for children, an area that has become increasingly significant within the digital age. Beyond its nutritional value, food has always served as a powerful social and cultural connector, with traditions and rituals transmitted across generations. In addition, the contemporary media landscape, characterized by the excessive visibility of both children and food on social media, has given rise to the concept of the 'consumer-child'. This has led to concerns about the negative health impacts of marketing that often promotes unhealthy dietary options.

While other fields, such as marketing, media studies, and literary and cultural studies, have explored the symbolic and socio-political dimensions of food representation for children, the volume identifies a significant gap in linguistics and communication studies. To address this gap, the chapters included in the volume aim to shed light on how food is represented, narrated, promoted, and translated for younger audiences across various genres, including corporate communication, digital media, and translation. Finally, the volume also presents the results of the two-year SPIN2023 research project funded by "Ca' Foscari" University of Venice.

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Adapting Food-Related Communication to Children

Linguistic Insights

Studies in Language and Communication

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“Chip Chip Hurray”. How Food Is Described to Children: A Case Study

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1. Introduction

This chapter investigates how food is linguistically framed and represented in *Snack Time Around the World* (Lonely Planet), an educational tourism book for children, by analysing the linguistic strategies used to engage child readers and stimulate curiosity towards diverse culinary traditions. The broader objective is to reveal how language acts as a cultural pedagogy, shaping attitudes towards food, identity and global exploration. The study is guided by the overarching research question (RQ):

How does language scaffold intercultural curiosity, consumption behaviours and positive travel associations?

which can be divided into the following sub-RQs.

1. How is food linguistically framed to children in terms of identity, fun and cultural significance?
2. What lexical and rhetorical strategies are used to promote curiosity, emotional engagement and consumption behaviours?
3. How does food discourse in this book intersect with tourism promotion and interculturality?

Drawing on a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective supported by a triangulated corpus linguistic methodology (WMatrix, CorpusSense and LancsBox), the study explores how language promotes intercultural curiosity, encourages specific consumption behaviours and fosters favourable associations with travel. We will move through some analytic dimensions found in the text under scrutiny to show the following:

- How food is represented to children – the ways snack time is framed as fun, cultural storytelling, identity work, etc.
- What linguistic strategies are employed – the key moves the text makes, from direct address to metaphor and enumeration. These may include lexical choices

that foreground sensory appeal and positive valence; evaluative language patterns, such as exclamative and wordplay, all working to heighten excitement and approval.

- How semantic prosody shows snack names are always surrounded by glowing collocates, ensuring an overall upbeat tone.
- How the overall tone of the book utilizes family-friendly tourism discourse and intercultural curiosity, which turns eating into a kind of “armchair travel”, primes openness to other cultures and even nudges consumption behaviours.

The findings suggest that the book under examination constructs food not only as sustenance but as a culturally rich and emotionally charged experience, functioning as a form of armchair tourism for its young readers.

For this purpose, this chapter is developed as follows: after this introductory paragraph, Section 2 offers the literature background supporting the investigation and Section 3 offers the methodological approach. Data analysis can be found in Section 4, while the discussion and concluding paragraphs are in Section 5.

2. Literature Review

The study of discourse surrounding food offers a fertile ground for applied linguistic inquiry, revealing how language and other semiotic resources construct, represent and mediate our experience of it. From infancy, food is central to socialization, initiating children into cultural norms and values through shared meals in various settings, from family dinners to school lunches and celebratory feasts. These procedural acts are fundamental to building social connections and transmitting cultural identity across generations (Marshall 2005).

While the symbolic and social functions of food are well-documented in anthropology and sociology (Lévi-Strauss 1965 [2004]; Douglas 1972), applied linguistics specifically examines the discursive practices through which these functions are enacted. Drawing on social learning theory (Bandura 2002), research shows that children acquire eating habits and associated language through observation and imitation. Communication about food is a primary site of language socialization, where novices learn socio-cultural competence (Schieffelin & Ochs 1984; Szatrowski 2014). Mealtime interactions, for instance, are crucial for socializing children into cultural worldviews through discourse (Szatrowski 2014; Karrebæk 2020). This extends beyond vocabulary to encompass performing social actions and identities. Through conversations about food – such as praising, refusing or negotiating – children learn and enact familial roles, gender norms and cultural dispositions (Szatrowski 2014). In these moments, they actively construct their own

linguistic and cultural identities, using multilingual and multimodal resources to assert knowledge and preferences (Ward 2024). Therefore, the discourse of food is not merely a reflection of culture but is actively involved in constituting it, shaping identities through everyday verbal and non-verbal interaction (Szatrowski 2014).

Communication about food, especially when directed at children, is profoundly multimodal. Advertisements, packaging and digital media combine language, images, sound and colour to create meaning and persuade consumers (Yong & Mei 2018; Dania & Sari 2020). These semiotic choices are not accidental but are carefully orchestrated to appeal to young audiences and their caregivers, often constructing a narrative of health, happiness or convenience (Yong & Mei 2018; Nuryanti 2024). In advertisements for nutritionally poor foods, for instance, vibrant colours, cartoon characters (gestural mode) and upbeat music (audio mode) are systematically deployed alongside persuasive linguistic choices to foster positive associations and drive consumption (Brear et al. 2024; Nuryanti 2024). This goes side by side with persuasive language (Schlosser 2002), characterized by the use of hyperbole, repetition and simple, catchy slogans to entice children, and which can lead to unhealthy dietary habits (Taras 2006).

Food representations are never neutral, as in children's media, they can perpetuate cultural values and norms (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001) and can reinforce stereotypes and socio-cultural beliefs about food items and eating practices. CDA provides a powerful framework for interrogating the relationship between discourse, power and ideology in food-related communication (O'Sullivan 2007; Susanti 2022; Younes 2023). This critical lens reveals how marketing discourse can exert power by shaping children's desires and influencing family consumption patterns (Gilbert 2014; Younes 2023). This implies that the development of food literacy in children needs to involve a linguistic component that goes beyond vocabulary: children need to be equipped with language skills to understand and communicate about food, including its origins, nutritional value and cultural significance (Bell & Marshall 2003).

Research at the intersection of food discourse, child-focused communication and tourism has grown in recent years, especially as destinations and food-based attractions recognize children not only as consumers but also as influential co-travellers and cultural learners (Canosa & Schänzel 2021; Zhu & Liu 2024). For instance, tourism perceptions and behaviours are influenced by the way food and travel are constructed in children's TV shows such as *Peppa Pig* and *Thomas the Tank Engine*, which, by using humour and anthropomorphism, construct positive attitudes towards travel and eating. In certain child-targeted websites, the role of children as food-centred consumers is constructed through linguistic strategies interplaying with visual and interactive contents (Dolón 2014): food

plays an emotionally resonant role in shaping children's tourism memories and contributes to family bonding (Zhu & Liu 2024).

While prior literature has emphasized how food discourse in media and websites engages young audiences through humour, sensory appeal and cultural cues, fewer studies have been conducted on in-depth linguistic analyses of how such strategies operate within print tourism media targeted specifically at children. This chapter addresses that gap by investigating how language in *Snack Time Around the World* functions as a scaffold for intercultural curiosity, consumption behaviours and the development of positive associations with global travel. Guided by the RQs delineated in Section 1, the analysis explores: 1) how food is framed in terms of identity, fun and cultural significance; 2) what lexical and rhetorical strategies are deployed to stimulate emotional and cognitive engagement; and 3) how these discursive patterns intersect with broader objectives of tourism promotion and cultural pedagogy. In doing so, the chapter contributes to a growing conversation about the role of language in shaping how children imagine, desire and relate to diverse food cultures within the context of global mobility.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method approach that combines manual reading with corpus-assisted discourse analysis. The dataset consists of the entire text of *Snack Time Around the World* (Lonely Planet), a children's educational tourism book which deals with food, snacks and desserts; it contains a diverse range of snack and dessert recipes, together with descriptions and cultural references from various countries around the world. In addition, it also covers a variety of ingredients used in these snacks and desserts, such as fruits (strawberries and bananas), dairy products (milk cream and sour cream) and various sweeteners (sugar and honey). This is realized through the inclusion of keywords related to: 1) specific types of snacks such as chocolate milk, jelly beans, fried dough, ice cream and various candies like chewing gum and caramel; 2) specific dishes and their preparation methods (like omelettes and cakes); and 3) popular snacks in different regions, including McDonald's, Samgak Kimbap from South Korea and Gozinaki from Georgia.

The book was scanned, converted via OCR, cleaned and then uploaded to three open-access corpus tools: WMatrix and #LancsBox for quantitative analysis and CorpusSense for semantic prosody computation.⁸

⁸ Semantic prosody refers to the consistent aura of positive, negative or neutral meaning that a word or phrase acquires through its typical collocates, that is, words that frequently appear near it (McEnery & Hardie 2011; Brookes & McEnery 2019).

WMatrix (Rayson 2008) is a software tool for corpus analysis and comparison. It provides a web interface to natural language processing (NLP) tools such as the USAS⁹ and CLAWS¹⁰ corpus annotation tools for English, plus the multilingual semantic tagger PyMUSAS,¹¹ and standard corpus linguistic methodologies such as frequency lists, keyness statistics, n-grams, collocations and concordances, extending the keywords method to key grammatical categories and key semantic domains.¹²

#LancsBox (Brezina et al. 2020) is a new-generation software package for the analysis of language data and corpora developed at Lancaster University. It automatically performs part-of-speech tagging and lemmatization using TreeTagger. Furthermore, it scales to millions or even billions of words using Lucene for efficient indexing¹³ and integrates R¹⁴ for advanced statistical scripting. It offers standard corpus linguistic methodologies such as frequency lists, keyness statistics, n-grams, collocations and concordances, but also visually offers a frequency and dispersion analyser (called *Whelk*) and collocation network visualizer (*GraphColl*).¹⁵

CorpusSense (Moreno-Ortiz 2024) is a corpus query tool that incorporates advanced functionalities not available in existing applications and is specifically designed for content and discourse analysis. Built on spaCy¹⁶ for core NLP tasks, it employs Transformers¹⁷ for word embedding, enabling semantic search and graph-based keyword extraction sans reference corpus. It thus combines

⁹ USAS is the UCREL Semantic Analysis System, a framework for undertaking the automatic semantic analysis of text developed at the University of Lancaster (cf. <https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/>)

¹⁰ The Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System (CLAWS) is the commonest form of corpus annotation developed at the University of Lancaster (<https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/>)

¹¹ PyMusas, the *Python Multilingual UCREL Semantic Analysis System*, is an open-source version of the semantic tagger under development from 2021 onwards at the University of Lancaster (cf. <https://pypi.org/project/pymusas/>).

¹² <https://ucrel-wmatrix7.lancaster.ac.uk/wmatrix7.html>

¹³ Lucene is a free and open-source search engine software library, powering the search capabilities of numerous applications, providing efficient indexing and retrieval of textual data (see <https://lucene.apache.org/>).

¹⁴ R is a programming language and environment specifically designed for statistical computing and data visualization. Available at <https://www.r-project.org/>.

¹⁵ Available at <https://lancsbox.lancs.ac.uk/>

¹⁶ spaCy is an open-source Python library for Natural Language Processing (NLP). Available at <https://spacy.io/usage>

¹⁷ A Transformer is a type of deep learning architecture introduced by Vaswani et al. (2017). It revolutionized the field of NLP by allowing models to process and understand language more efficiently and effectively than previous architectures like RNNs or LSTMs.

quantitative, qualitative and AI features to offer users a unique set of tools that can easily obtain useful insights of a corpus with minimal effort.¹⁸

The adoption of the three open-access software facilitates data triangulation to gain a more comprehensive and robust understanding of the findings.

The resulting 19,867-word corpus was tagged for parts of speech, lexical and narrative patterns, as summarized in Table 1, where in the last column can be seen the total count of tokens and types¹⁹ split in substantive (second column), adjective (third column), verbs (fourth column) and adverbs (fifth column).

Table 1. Corpus breakdown.

Frequency	Substantives	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverbs	Total
Tokens	5,474 (27.48 %)	1,652 (8.3 %)	2,455 (12.35 %)	706 (3.55 %)	19,867
Types	2,098	653	687	162	8,617

The analysis is framed within a CDA perspective (Fairclough 1995; Bourdieu 1984), with specific attention to affective language, metaphor and narrative structures.

4. Linguistic Analysis and Results

In contemporary educational tourism discourse targeted at children, food is not merely presented as sustenance but is framed as an exciting, playful and culturally enriching experience. Snack time often becomes a narrative space where eating is transformed into an act of discovery, fun and identity formation. The representation of food to children often aligns with broader goals of edutainment: combining enjoyment with learning and fostering a sense of global citizenship through everyday activities like eating. In particular, the representation of food to children in tourism-oriented texts such as *Snacks around the World* is a multimodal and multilayered effort. It blends linguistic creativity, sensory appeal and cultural storytelling to produce a discourse that is not only appetizing but ideologically resonant – one that promotes joy in difference and cultivates both gustatory and cultural literacy.

¹⁸ <https://corpus-sense.uma.es/>

¹⁹ While *tokens* represent the total number of words included in a corpus, *types* are the unique words contained in a corpus (McEnery & Hardie 2011).

The following paragraphs explore how these themes are articulated across some key analytical dimensions observed in the text. Specifically, we will examine the following:

- the representation of food to children;
- the linguistic strategies employed;
- the role of semantic prosody;
- the power of discourse as interculturally framing tourism.

4.1. The Representation of Food to Children

The book under examination positions snack time as a joyful and culturally meaningful experience. This is reinforced by multimodal cues – bright colours, playful fonts and cartoon illustrations of anthropomorphized food – which contribute to a visually engaging experience tailored for younger readers. These multimodal elements seem to serve as cultural signifiers, reinforcing the geographic and ethnic origins of the featured foods through visual motifs, attire, settings and symbolic cues. In doing so, the book communicates cultural context in ways that are intuitive and accessible to children.

From the outset, *Snack Time Around the World* frames food as a source of delight and cultural richness and presents snack time as a joyful, almost celebratory experience, positioning food as emotionally rewarding rather than merely functional or nutritional, as can be seen in example 1).

1. Whether you call it a tasty treat, a midday munchie or an afternoon snack, a nibble of something sweet (or salty or savoury) between meals is one of the great delights in life! (p. 6).

This rhetoric evokes sensory pleasure, inviting readers to embrace snack culture as part of everyday joy: the text constructs snacking as an act of cultural participation, embedding identity and curiosity within a playful framework.

The narrative explicitly links food with personal and collective identity. Early on, the text states:

2. The food we eat tells an important story about who we are. Our culture, where we live, where we come from [...] can be shared in the meals and snacks we eat (p. 6).

This overt framing supports a storytelling approach to food discourse, where snacks are treated not only as consumables but also as cultural narratives, markers

of place, heritage and belonging. Such framing encourages children to consider both in-group pride (recognizing familiar foods) and out-group curiosity (exploring unfamiliar ones). For example, on p. 27, *popcorn* is presented as a longstanding North American snack with dual cultural roots: indigenous culinary tradition and its rise as a mainstream treat during WWII due to sugar shortages. This dual framing elevates popcorn as a distinctly American cultural icon; *seaweed*, meanwhile, is introduced as a staple in East Asian cuisine, particularly Japanese (p. 24), whose globalization is acknowledged without erasing its cultural specificity. Its treatment maintains a balance between accessibility and cultural authenticity. It seems the text uses micro-narratives of origin to build intercultural understanding while affirming the symbolic role of snacks in shaping both local identities and global connections.

The titles and subheadings throughout *Snack Time Around the World* reveal a strong reliance on wordplay, idioms, portmanteaus or blending, rhyme and alliteration – linguistic devices known to stimulate emotional engagement, mnemonic retention and reader amusement, particularly among children [see Table 3 in the *Appendix*, where the heading and the titles (first column) are checked for such linguistic devices listed above (second column) and the explanation of their real meaning (last column)]. This playful language not only creates a sense of fun and approachability but also subtly conveys messages about food’s cultural and social significance, aligning directly with the book’s pedagogical aims.

From a discursive perspective, such linguistic strategies scaffold intercultural curiosity (RQ1), shape consumption behaviours (RQ2) and support positive associations with global food cultures and travel (RQ3), as emphasized in recent literature (Dolón 2014; Azariah 2024; Zhu & Liu 2024). For instance, titles and subheadings are characterized by idiomatic play and cultural puns, blending and music and rhyme and repetition.

3. Chip, Chip Hooray.
4. Well, Fry Not?
5. Veg Out!
6. Toast-tacular.
7. Choc-o-licious.
8. Rice, Rice Baby!
9. Fruit-Scootin’ Boogie.
10. Yummy Gummies, Ooey, Gooley and Very Chewy.

As can be seen in excerpts 3)–5), cultural puns activate prior knowledge and recontextualize familiar phrases in culinary settings. This aligns with Azariah’s (2024)

findings on carnivalesque humour and child media, where humour operates as a tool for cultural engagement. Examples 6) and 7), on the other hand, offer examples of blending, while excerpts 9) and 10) are examples of musical parodies used to blend sensory and emotional registers. In addition, excerpt 8) is the perfect example of the use of rhyme and repetition, which increases phonological playfulness. At the same time, recurring alliterative titles, such as *Snack Spotlight: Seaweed*, *Tasty Timeline: Pizza* or *Perfect Pastries*, serve as structural cues, reinforcing rhythm and clarity while maintaining an accessible tone. Though not always idiomatic, they contribute to a cohesive and stimulating reading environment – an important component in engaging young readers in cultural narratives (Canosa & Schänzel 2021). In total, forty-seven out of forty-nine headings include some form of linguistic play, with idioms, songs and puns being particularly frequent in sections focused on more culturally diverse or “exotic” foods (e.g. seaweed, hawthorn berries and Turkish delight). This seems to indicate that linguistic creativity is strategically used to normalize unfamiliar foods through humour and fun, an act of subtle intercultural scaffolding.

4.2. Linguistic Strategies

4.2.1. Direct Address and Reader Engagement

The text makes extensive use of second-person pronouns and the imperative mood to construct an inviting and participatory reading experience. With over seventy-five instances of “you” and twenty-four imperative constructions, the book actively interacts with the child reader, creating a conversational tone that encourages exploration, decision-making and sensory imagination.

Phrases like *Check out these far-out flavours!* (p. 6) and *Raise a glass to these yummy drinks!* (p. 94) are directives, inviting the reader to engage cognitively and emotionally with the content. The imperative mood is most commonly realized through the verb *check (out)* (18 occurrences), used to direct attention and stimulate curiosity. Other imperatives such as *go*, *try*, *choose*, *get*, *let* and *raise* expand the repertoire of reader actions, ranging from imaginative tasting (*Let these sweets dissolve in your mouth*, p. 104) to performative excitement (*Raise a glass*, p. 94). These forms align with persuasive rhetorical strategies found in tourism discourse, emphasizing ego-targeting, sensory involvement and agency (Tenca in press; Dann 1995; Maci 2020).

Additionally, the book frequently poses questions (16 in total), such as *Fry not?* (p. 66) and *What to dip?* (p. 44), which are designed to prompt personal reflection and playful speculation. These rhetorical questions function dialogically, simulating conversation and encouraging children to position themselves as active participants in global snacking cultures.

4.2.2. Lexical Evaluation: Appetizing Enthusiasm

The language of *Snack Time Around the World* is saturated with evaluative adjectives that go beyond description to express attitudes, preferences and affective judgements. A total of 1,652 adjectives were identified (30 % of total tokens), with 653 unique types, including highly frequent terms such as *sweet* (98 hits), *popular* (66 hits), *crispy* (42 hits) and *delicious* (26 hits). These adjectives contribute to a semantic prosody of approval (Hunston 2000), whereby even neutral food items, like “popcorn” or “crackers”, are consistently collocated with positively charged descriptors such as *yummy*, *favourite*, *super* or *great*. This prosodic tendency ensures that nearly every snack is framed as inherently pleasurable, desirable or fun, reinforcing a tone of excitement. Words like *beloved*, *favourite* and *hot item* do more than describe: they encode cultural and emotional legitimacy, especially when attached to traditional or regional foods. For instance, the excerpts below function both referentially and persuasively: they present information while simultaneously shaping affective expectations.

11. Apple strudel has been a beloved dessert in Czechia for hundreds of years (p. 112).
12. Spicy Takoyaki is the hot item at every summer festival in Japan (p. 64).

A striking aspect of the text is the repetition and density of evaluative adjectives. With an average of 5–7 positive descriptors per snack entry, the book constructs a semantic field in which every food is a winner. The lexical field includes flavour terms (*sweet*, *savoury*, *salty* and *tangy*), texture words (*crispy*, *crunchy* and *chewy*) and global popularity markers (*favourite*, *beloved* and *popular*). These reinforce a persuasive ideology of universal tastiness and cultural worth and foreground sensory appeal and emotional reward.

Such repetition contributes to the normalization of excitement: children are encouraged to expect joy and novelty with every bite. This aligns with marketing strategies in tourism discourse, where sustained use of evaluative language is designed to build emotional associations and drive curiosity, desire and consumption behaviours (Zhu & Liu 2024). Such an affective register is further heightened by the presence of intensifiers, which occur 617 times (3.1 % of all tokens), averaging 3–4 per page. Terms like *so*, *such*, *super*, *really* and *absolutely* and phrases like *one of the great delights in life* (p. 6) or *such a hot item* (p. 10) function to amplify the affective charge of evaluative adjectives. They can emphasize exceptional pleasure in eating a snack.

13. One of the great delights in life! (p. 6).

They can also position a snack as trend-worthy and irresistible.

14. Such a hot item (p. 10)

or even push up the sensory appeal with extra emphasis, as in excerpt 15).

15. This snack mixes salted duck egg yolk with crispy salmon skin for a super flavourful – think salty, savoury and spicy – snack! (p. 15).

These constructions not only elevate the sensory appeal but also position certain snacks as trend-worthy, exciting and globally desirable. The cumulative effect is a rhetorical environment in which the child reader is constantly nudged towards anticipation, engagement and appetite, aligning everything with the persuasive aims of tourism discourse.

Terms like *beloved*, *favourite* and *super tasty* are not just sprinkled in; they are woven into nearly every chapter entry. This creates a uniform tone of excitement and approval. When every dish is *beloved* or *favourite*, children learn to approach snack time with high expectations of enjoyment. This contributes to normalizing the idea that every snack is inherently fun and desirable.

16. Apple strudel has been a beloved dessert in the Czechia for hundreds of years (p. 112).
 17. These nuts are popular in Italy and a favourite flavour in many of their beloved desserts (p. 22).

4.2.3. Enumerative and Rhythmic Listing: Mapping the Snackable World

A prominent feature of *Snack Time Around the World* is its systematic use of enumerative listing, a discourse strategy that serves both rhetorical and pedagogical functions. Enumeration (of countries, snack types, ingredients and flavour profiles) constructs a vivid *linguascap*e (Dann 1995; Pennycook 2010): a discursive map that indexes global food diversity through language. These listings help children visualize the vastness of global snack culture, transforming the reading experience into a verbal world tour. For instance, the opening pages include geographically diverse country lists, as in excerpts 18) or a list of snack names across countries, as in excerpt 19).

18. Mexico, Chile, Morocco, Sweden, France, Hong Kong and Australia (p. 6–7).
 19. Carada Cuttlefish Balls (Thailand), Monster Munch, Roast Beef (UK), Przymak Świętokrzyski (Poland) and Vorontsovskie Rusks (Russia) (p. 28–29).

These evoke what may be termed a “global snack atlas”, particularly when they are over-imposed on a world atlas (as on pp. 6–7). Likewise, lists of far-out flavoured chips offer culinary variety while inviting taste-based exploration, as can be seen in example 20).

20. Check out these far-out flavours from across the globe: Honey Soy Chicken Chip · Calbee Honey Butter · Lays Pickle Flavour · Hot Chilli Squid (p. 10–11).

These sequences function as what Appadurai (1996) calls a gastro-national imaginary, where food becomes a metaphorical proxy for intercultural knowledge.

Beyond their referential role, these enumerations also exhibit a rhythmic, phonological quality. This “rhythmic listing” as found in examples 21) (*crispy [...] crunchy [...] crackers*) and 22) (*tasty treat, midday munchie*) employs repetition, parallelism and alliteration to enhance mnemonic retention and cognitive engagement, a technique commonly found in children’s literature (Nikolajeva 2014).

21. They’re crispy, they’re crunchy – they’re crackers! (p. 12).
 22. When you call it a tasty treat, a midday munchie or an afternoon snack, a nibble of something sweet (or salty or savoury) between meals is one of the great delights in life! (p. 6).

They follow a triplet rhythm, as in excerpt 21) (*crispy [...] crunchy [...] crackers*) or paired apposition, as in excerpt 22) (*tasty treat, a midday munchie or an afternoon snack; chips and fries to tots and hash browns*), or even parenthetical flavour contrasts, as in example 22) [*sweet (or salty or savoury)*]. The sing-song cadence not only mimics the auditory patterns of nursery rhymes but also emphasizes the many ways to enjoy snack time. This reinforces learning, enabling children to internalize global food lexicons and cultural contrasts through phonological play.

4.2.4. Metaphors

One of the most ideologically potent rhetorical strategies in *Snack Time Around the World* is its use of conceptual metaphor, specifically the dominant metaphor TASTE IS TRAVEL. This metaphor turns the act of eating into a form of exploration, inviting children to imagine culinary experiences as symbolic journeys across cultures. Example 23) illustrates this clearly.

23. When you try a delicious dish from somewhere else in the world, you are doing more than eating food – you are exploring faraway lands and being introduced to the people who live there (p. 6).

Here, eating is redefined as cultural immersion, and the sensory act of tasting becomes ideologically aligned with tourist exploration, echoing what Dann (1995) and Urry and Larsen (2011) describe as the experiential and aspirational logic of tourism.

The use of metaphors is made especially accessible to children through vivid personification. For instance, example 24) frames *taste buds* as autonomous travellers, capable of embarking on culinary adventures independently of the body.

24. So even when you haven't left your home, your taste buds can travel the world (p. 6).

This trope encourages children to associate tasting unfamiliar foods with experiencing and “visit” foreign places simply by sampling their flavours, creating a sense of symbolic mobility even in static or domestic settings. This metaphor is reinforced with recurring expressions such as example 25).

25. It's a party for the taste buds! (p. 11).

Here, once again, *taste buds* are personified as celebrants, emphasizing pleasure and sociability.

These metaphors serve a deeper ideological function. By aligning food consumption with the language of travel, the book positions children as aspiring global citizens who can participate in multicultural exploration through taste. The framing suggests that even without physical movement, one can gain cultural exposure and knowledge, making the sensory act of eating a proxy for cross-cultural understanding.

4.3. Semantic Prosody

Semantic prosody is the consistent positive or negative “aura” that surrounds a word through its habitual collocates (McEnery & Hardie 2011). As can be seen in Table 2, most neutral terms are collocated almost exclusively with positive adjectives or celebratory contexts, creating an overall positive prosody around snack culture.

Table 2. Examples of positive semantic prosody.

Neutral Terms	Positive Collocates	Example Citation
<i>crackers</i>	<i>crispy, crunchy</i>	They're crispy, they're crunchy – they're crackers! (p. 12)
<i>doughnuts</i>	<i>favourite, savoury, spicy</i>	These O-shaped, fried-dough delights came in a wide range of flavours – from sweet (glazed!) to savoury (maple bacon!) to spicy (hello, hot-spicy doughnuts!) (p. 32)
<i>popcorn</i>	<i>buttery, hot, fun</i>	Go to any movie theatre in the USA and you're sure to find big buckets of salty, buttery popcorn (p. 24)

In this way, the text guarantees that every snack mentioned reinforces enthusiasm. However, this may pose some problems as it is hard for young readers to adopt a critical distance, given that every snack feels inherently exciting and desirable.

In addition, words such as *favourites*, *favourite treat*, *super-popular* and *magic* work to neutralize, or even valorise, methods that might otherwise repel, such as fermentation, pickling and drying, as can be seen in the following.

26. Here are some pickled and fermented favourites from all around the world (p. 58).
27. This super-popular ingredient is fermented soybean paste, and it adds umami magic to pastas, meat marinades and even desserts (p. 59).

4.4. The Power of Discourse as Interculturally Framing Tourism

Snack Time Around the World functions as a cultural tourism primer, transforming food consumption into a form of symbolic travel. By merging culinary storytelling with playful, persuasive discourse, the book aligns closely with the logic of family-friendly tourism. Through metaphor, evaluative language and enumeration, it not only promotes global culinary awareness but also cultivates intercultural curiosity, emotional engagement and aspirational travel associations among child readers.

One of the book's dominant narrative frameworks is what scholars such as Dann (1995) and Urry and Larsen (2011) refer to as "armchair tourism", that is, the idea that travel can occur cognitively or symbolically through *mediated* experiences. We have seen that this is most clearly realized through the TASTE IS TRAVEL metaphor (Section 4.2.4), in which tasting becomes a form of geographic exploration. These metaphors position the act of eating as an entry point into cultural learning, promoting openness to difference while simultaneously enhancing the

child's emotional experience of food. Destinations are thus constructed in the mind of the reader and accessed through language (Dann 1995).

The text subtly frames food not just as nourishment but as a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). By sampling global snacks, such as “Carada Cuttlefish Balls (Thailand), Monster Munch Roast Beef (UK) or Przysmak Świętokrzyski (Poland)” (p. 28), children are positioned as cosmopolitan tasters, engaging in a form of symbolic collecting. These snack lists are often presented in a format that mirrors “mini tour packages”, turning each page into a passport-style curation of global tastes.

Evaluative adjectives like *beloved*, *favourite* and *delicious* transform food into cultural objects of desire that signify both belonging and worldliness. As Bourdieu (1984) notes, the ability to appreciate “refined” or “foreign” tastes reflects one's cultural distinction, a lesson implicitly transmitted here through joyful, affect-rich exposure to difference, as can be seen in the following example.

28. Check out these far-out flavours from across the globe: Honey Soy Chicken Chip · Calbee Honey Butter · Lays Pickle Flavour · Hot Chilli Squid (p. 6–7).

In addition, through carefully constructed evaluative language, the book builds emotional scaffolding that links eating with sensory delight, fun and the thrill of discovery.

29. A nibble of something sweet [...] is one of the great delights in life! (p. 6).
30. Raise a glass to these yummy drinks! (p. 94).
31. Check out a few of these fabulous fruits (p. 76).

This positive emotional framing not only elevates food as a source of joy but also positions travel itself as inherently pleasurable and exciting. Metaphors such as *out of this world* (p. 72) and *adventurous popcorn flavour* (p. 24) confirm this and evoke narratives of global exploration, suggesting that even mundane snacks can offer extraordinary experiences.

In keeping with the language of tourism marketing, the book features several implicit “calls to action” that simulate promotional discourse through the use of directives.

32. Just try saying it three times fast! (p. 25).
33. Choose all the toppings you want and get a hamburger made to order ... (p. 17).

Such directives do not merely invite entertainment; they prime children to respond to persuasive prompts, training them to associate “trying something new” with immediate reward and experiential gain. This anticipatory structure mirrors travel brochures that urge (adult) readers to “book now!” or “don’t miss out!”, and places children in the role of active participants in a sensory and cultural adventure.

Emotional scaffolding and evaluative language (*adventure, cosmic voyage, ongoing discovery* and *migration*) used in the book make both children (and parents) to equate sampling with fun: travel appears as an extension of the already-enjoyable “taste adventure” where you can find *adventurous popcorn* (p. 24). This creates positive expectancies that family holidays will be just as *tasty, yummy* and *delightful* as the snacks they have sampled.

34. These bags of yummy goodies are as unique and full of flavour as the countries they come from! (p. 28).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that *Snack Time Around the World* constructs food as a multimodal pedagogical tool aimed at encouraging emotional, cultural and consumer engagement. The interplay between sensory language and metaphor invites children to view food as both an exciting adventure and a form of cultural exchange. This aligns with Dann’s (2011) notion of tourism discourse as a semiotic system that transforms readers into symbolic travellers. Through its framing of food as both delightful and exotic, the book fosters what Bourdieu (1984) would consider a form of cultural capital, subtly preparing children to participate in global consumer culture. This answers our overarching RQ. Indeed, in this volume for kids, discourse is used to scaffold intercultural curiosity, foster positive emotional engagement and normalize global consumption behaviours in an age-appropriate yet persuasive way. Linguistically, it seems to rely on a repertoire of strategic moves designed to directly engage the young reader. The use of direct address (*You’ll love [...], Imagine tasting [...]*) constructs an inclusive and participatory tone, while metaphor and enumeration serve to enhance the imaginative appeal and provide sensory-rich descriptions. These strategies invite the child to envision themselves as part of the story, making the food experience not just understandable but emotionally engaging.

Lexical choices are particularly telling in this context. Adjectives are overwhelmingly positive and sensory-oriented (*crispy, sweet, gooey* and *zesty*), amplifying the

food's appeal and ensuring it is perceived as desirable. Flavour terms are carefully selected not just for accuracy but for effective impact, foregrounding indulgence and pleasure.

Alongside this, all the chapters in the book deploy a consistent pattern of evaluative language. Intensifiers (e.g. *super tasty* and *incredibly crunchy*), exclamatives (*Yum!* and *Wow!*) and playful expressions contribute to a heightened tone of excitement and approval. These devices do not merely describe the snacks: they celebrate them, creating an affective environment in which trying new foods is framed as thrilling and rewarding.

Semantic prosody further reinforces this positivity. Even when the snack names themselves are neutral or unfamiliar, they are almost always embedded in glowing collocational environments. The surrounding language – adjectives, verbs and adverbial phrases – constructs a positive semantic field that subtly shapes the child reader's expectations and emotional responses.

Beyond language alone, the texts often function as examples of family-friendly tourism discourse, where food is framed as a low-stakes, enjoyable entry point into intercultural exploration. Eating becomes a form of “armchair travel”, that is, a way of experiencing global diversity from the comfort of one's home. This framing encourages intercultural curiosity and even subtly primes children (and, by extension, their parents) towards openness in both taste and attitude, gently nudging consumption behaviours while affirming inclusive, global values.

While *Snack Time Around the World* offers an engaging and culturally rich introduction to global snacking cultures, its consistently affirmative tone raises important pedagogical questions. The uncritical use of evaluative language, though effective for emotional engagement, risks cultivating an unquestioned positivity around food and cultural representation. This delight saturation may inhibit critical reflection on issues such as nutrition, cultural stereotyping or food inequity. Moreover, the text's pervasive emphasis on choice, novelty and indulgence aligns with a consumer-socialization logic, potentially encouraging children to adopt an “always-on” consumption mindset without interrogation of what is being consumed and why. These concerns open the door for future research. First, comparative studies across multiple children's food-themed texts could reveal whether this model of “edible globalism” is widespread or text-specific. Second, cross-generational comparisons with adult-oriented food and travel guides could help identify shifts in tone, complexity and ideological framing across age groups. Such studies would illuminate how different demographics are positioned in tourism discourse and how intercultural consumption is variously constructed for learning, leisure or lifestyle branding.

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Appendix

Table 3. Analysis of the table of contents.

CRUNCHY SNACKS		
SECTION	Wordplay?	Reason
Chip, Chip Hooray!	Y	Pun on “Hip, hip, hooray!”
What’s Cracking?	Y	Informal idiom meaning “What’s going on?” & play on “crackers”
Crispy Crunchies	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
Snack Spotlight: Vending Machines	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
Belles of the Bars	Y	Pun on “belle of the ball” (beautiful girl at a dance), referring to snack bars
Veg Out!	Y	Idiom meaning “relax” and pun on “vegetables”
Snack Spotlight: Seaweed	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
So Nutty	Y	“Nutty” means both “containing nuts” and “crazy/silly” (idiomatic pun)
Pop Til You Drop!	Y	Pun on “Shop till you drop!”
Tasty Timeline: Popcorn	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
CHEWY SNACKS		
SECTION	Wordplay?	Reason
Dough-licious	Y	Portmanteau of “dough” and “delicious”
Snack Spotlight: Doughnuts	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom

Breads Up!	Y	Pun on “Heads up!”
Toast-tacular	Y	Blend of “toast” and “spectacular”
Say Cheese!	Y	Common idiom when taking photos
Tasty Timeline: Pizza	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
Extras, Extras! Dips, Spreads and Sauces	Y	Reference to “Extra! Extra! Read all about it!” (newsboy shout)
Rice, Rice Baby!	Y	Parody of the song title “ <i>Ice Ice Baby</i> ” by the American rapper Vanilla Ice (1990)
Snack Smorgasbords	Alliteration	Descriptive (no pun, though the word is unusual)
Yum, Yum Chewing Gum	Y	Child-like rhyme and repetition
Snack Spotlight: Gum Ban in Singapore	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
SALTY SNACKS SECTION		
	Wordplay?	Explanation
Fermentation Station	Y	Rhyme; catchy phrase
One Potato, Two Potato ...	Y	Traditional children’s rhyme
Snack Spotlight: Stadium Food	Y	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
Well, Fry Not?	Y	Pun on “Why not?”
It’s a Meat Pie Party!	Y	Informal phrase with alliteration; festive and playful
Snack Spotlight: Street Food	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
Smoked & Dried Meats	NO	Straightforward description
SWEET SNACKS SECTION		
	Wordplay?	Explanation
Fruit-Scootin’ Boogie	Y	Pun on “Boot Scootin’ Boogie” (country song) by Ronnie Dunn (1992)
With Fruit to Boot	Y	“To boot” = in addition (idiomatic)
Snack Spotlight: Hawthorn Berries	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
Piece of Cake!	Y	Idiom meaning “very easy”
Sweet Spreads	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
Ice Cream Party!	Y	Playful, party-themed phrase
Anatomy of a Snack: Ice Cream Sundae!	NO	Informative
Perfect Pastries	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom

(Continued)

Table 3. (Continued).

SWEET SNACKS		
SECTION	Wordplay?	Explanation
Cheers!	Y	Idiomatic toast
Snack Spotlight: South Korean Convenience Shop Drinks	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
It's Biscuit Time!	Y	Playful expression, not idiomatic but energizing tone
CONFECTIONERY SNACKS		
SECTION	Wordplay?	Explanation
Hard Sweets	NO	Descriptive
Lollipop, Lollipop	Y	Pop song by Beverly Ross and Julius Dixson (1958) parodied films (as in The Addams Family)
7 Fun Facts About Sweets	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
Ooey, Gooley and Very Chewy	Y	Child-like rhyme; pun on Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe; sensory language
Yummy Gummies	Y	Rhyming, playful child-style phrase
Fizzy Pop!	Y	"Pop" as slang for soda
Tasty Timeline: Turkish Delight & Jelly Beans	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom
Sweet Treats	Alliteration	Pun on the song "Sweet Dreams" by Eurythmics (1983)
Choco-licious	Y	Portmanteau of "chocolate" and "delicious"
Quirky Confectionery Favourites	Alliteration	Descriptive; playful alliteration but no pun or idiom