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A hand is shown holding a single smooth, white, oval-shaped stone. Below it, a stack of seven similar stones is balanced on a beach of small, multi-colored pebbles. The background is a soft-focus view of the ocean and sky.

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Let's kecek!

Oleh Che Nooryohana Zulkifli



In Malaysia, states such as Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, and Penang are famous for their unique dialects. Despite all falling under the Malay language umbrella, their distinctive words can sometimes leave newcomers scratching their heads in confusion. These dialects are more than just linguistic curiosities; they reflect their respective regions' history, culture, and identity. They are living proof of the diversity within Malaysia, showcasing how a single language can evolve in various ways across different geographical and cultural landscapes. Understanding these dialects not only enhances one's grasp of the Malay language but also offers more profound insights into the rich cultural fabric of Malaysia.



Hailing from the land of Cik Siti Wan Kembang, I've been on a quest to unravel some words that seem to defy conventional Malay language roots. Nevertheless, many words still follow specific linguistic rules. For instance, words that end with an 'a' are usually replaced with an 'o'. For example, 'suka' (to like) becomes 'suko' and 'muka' (face) becomes 'muko'. Another rule is that words ending with 'an' are normally changed to 'ei', which is why 'tangan' (hand) becomes 'tangei' and 'makan' becomes 'makei'. Therefore, if this pattern occurs consistently throughout the dialect, I believe it makes it simpler for non-Kelantanese to grasp what's happening when they find themselves amidst it. Ultimately, everything is still fundamentally Malay.

However, I've stumbled upon words that seem unrelated to Malay language, making it tricky for non-speakers to understand the dialect. I'm not sure if they come from languages like Arabic or Thai, but I'm still pondering their origins.

Here are twelve examples, along with their contexts:

Ghoyak means tell. In a sentence: *Nati keno ghoyak ko ayah pasal bendo ni*. Meaning: You must tell father about this.

Tulo means same. In a sentence: *Malah doh aku dok ngadap masalah tulo ni*. Meaning: I'm so tired facing this same issue again.

Gelewak means wandering around. In a sentence: *Budok-budok sekoloh tu pakat dok gelewak depei stesen bas.* Meaning: The school kids are wandering around the bus station.

Tohok means throw. In a sentence: *Tulong ambik tohok sapoh ni.* Meaning: Please throw this rubbish away.

Metto means stubborn. It is commonly used for kids or teenagers. In a sentence: *Aku tokleh nok ngadap doh budok metto supo Ashraf tu.* Meaning: I can no longer deal with a stubborn kid like Asyraf.

Gocoh means punch. It is normally used to describe a fight that involves fists. In a sentence: *Budok tu keno tehei ko polis lepas dio gocoh adik dio.* Meaning: That boy has been detained by the police after he punched his brother.

Kugha means scribbling/doodling. In a sentence: *Abis dinding rumoh ni nyo kugha ko Maisarah.* Meaning: Maisarah has been doodling the walls and is now all over the place.

Tei means hit/smack. In a sentence: *Jangan dok buas la, nanti nyo tei ko mok nanti.* Meaning: Don't be naughty if you don't want your mom to smack you.



Supik means plastic bag. In a sentence: *Gi tulong amik supik dapu nak bukus bendo ni.* Meaning: Please grab a plastic bag in the kitchen to wrap this thing up.

Do'oh lalu means doing things excessively. In a sentence: *Jangelaa do'oh lalu beci ko dio, namo nok ko dio.* Meaning: You shouldn't hate him excessively because you never know, you might end up falling for him.

Sokmo means always. In a sentence: *Jangei dok minum air manis sokmo, takutlaa mari nyakik gapo-gapo.* Meaning: Don't always drink sweet drinks because they might affect your health.

Anok kei means doll. In a sentence: *Mira brehi bena main dengan anak kei dio tu.* Meaning: Mira loves to play with her doll.

So folks, I believe this sharing is both informative and entertaining, helping us appreciate the richness of our culture. Even though I haven't found the origin of these words yet, tracing their linguistic roots is like solving a mystery, adding an exciting element to my exploration. So, next time you find yourself watching a TV show or any videos on social media featuring Sabri Yunus or Dato' Sri Vida, you won't feel completely lost.

Bo la dulu, kito kecek smula deh! (I shall stop right here, and we'll talk later, yeah!)