RICE, NOODLES AND BREAD IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY: REVISITING NASI LEMAK, CHAR KUEY TEOW AND ROTI CANAI IN AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PERSPECTIVE

Kavitha Subaramaniam*
Department of General Studies, Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Sungai Long Campus), Jalan Sungai Long, Bandar Sungai Long, Cheras 43000 Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
kavitha@utar.edu.my

Abstract: Malaysia is a heterogenous society that is rich with its historical heritage. It encompasses diverse ethnic groups, religious faith and cultural background. As such, it is not surprising to come across various cuisines that originates from the Malay Archipelago, mainland China and Indian subcontinent in our nation. Hence, the present research intends to explore the typical mainstream entrées in Peninsular Malaysia. It comprises the notable nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai that primarily represents the staple food of the Malay, Chinese and Indian community. On that note, this study will focus into two research questions: i) why nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai are interchangeable menu for the Malaysians? and ii) how the three distinct ethnic food are welcomed in a multicultural society? Autoethnography method is utilized to examine the conventional rice, noodles and bread that have become the all-time favourites to most of our citizens. Therefore, the personal lived experiences of the author will be analyzed via self-reflection process. It will scrutinize the details and interpret the subject in concern. The findings showcases that the tangible heritage food is a classic example that transcends the boundaries specifically in a multicultural landscape. It signifies that food is able to foster harmony and unity despite our divergent tradition.

Keywords: Autoethnography, Char kuey teow, Multicultural, Nasi lemak, Roti canai

1. Introduction

Makanan, *shíwù* and *unavu*. What are these expressions? These terms are literal translation for food which derives from the Malay, Mandarin and Tamil languages that is widely spoken by the Malaysians. In distinction to that, man and food is inseparable. Therefore, food is sine qua non for human survival. Besides, the variation of cuisines around the world are unimaginable. A destination such as Malaysia is distinguished for its food galore paradise. By its very nature, Malaysia is a pluralistic nation that consists of numerous ethnicities. Intrinsically, it is due to the migration during the Melaka Empire in the 15th century for its international trading port status. Furthermore, the arrival of the foreign manpower into Malaya (now known as Malaysia) is to assist the development of the colonial's economy during the 19th century (Andaya & Andaya: 1982). Hence, these unanticipated circumstances culminated the contemporary Malaysian fabric. As such, we can agree to the slogan "Malaysia, Truly Asia". This scenario is obvious where there are varied fares of not only Asian food but also across other continents that could be attained from our land. In essence, the Peninsular Malaysia comprises three significant races which are the Malay, Chinese and Indian ancestry. As such, in terms of food there would be a plethora of delicacies from these ethnic groups. Moreover, its culinary techniques will definitely be infused to prepare and cook the dishes according to our desirable palates. On that account, the prominent main course from these ethnics involves the nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai. Fundamentally, these iconic meals symbolize our nation's food heritage. It is also acknowledged and recognized by most of the citizens.

Along with that, the concept of multiculturalism plays a crucial role in determining the acceptance of foreign culture to co-exist as a part of our livelihood. Customarily, a multicultural society are forced to interact with each other as they live in the same territory or boundary. By and of itself, it teaches them to value the differences of the contrasting tradition and rituals (Thio, 2009). This triggers them to be culture-sensitive person (Samovar et al., 2007). Moreover, in the context of Malaysia it had been more than three generations of various races existing side-by-side that formed a peaceful and harmony environment. In addition, with regard to food the society have adopted and adapted to the new flavours that are not against their religious principles. Thus, the present research aims to explore the prevalent

ethnic dishes namely nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai that are practically the favourites for most of the public. It raises two objectives that are pertinent to this study: i) to examine nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai that are interchangeable menu for the Malaysians and ii) to identify the three distinct ethnic food that are welcomed in a multicultural society. Likewise, the rice, noodles and bread are not merely representing the particular fragment of society instead it channels the identity of one's existence. In essence, food functions as a bridge that connects between the distinct races, spiritual beliefs and cultural manifestation.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 *Food & Multiculturalism*

Food and multiculturalism spectrum are intertwined especially when one hails from a diverse cultural atmosphere. As such, a number of literatures have discussed this matter in understanding the unique relationship of food with people from all walks of life.

In line with that, this scenario is also depicted in the literary studies such as novels and short stories. Perry (2017) explored this issue on food and its function in a multicultural context of the Malaysian community. The two written works that were examined for the research involves a novel titled "This End of the Rainbow" authored by Adibah Amin and a short story entitled "Deep Fried Devils" written by Shih-Li Kow. Besides that, the pre-independence and post-independence setting of Malaysia in these texts were divided into two perspectives: individual and communal. The individual degree views food as a positive outcome towards the significant others as it creates a feel-good moment, healthy relationship and to cherish the fond memories. Food functions as a family tradition legacy in preparing, cooking and presenting the specific dishes during the occasions. In addition, it also indicates a person's gratitude, hospitality and reunion. Apart from that, the communal degree pointed out the food identity and the cultural ethos of the multiethnic society in our nation. Intrinsically, each ethnicity carries its own food heritage and shares its distinct cuisines with the other ethnics. This generates the understanding and tolerance of different races when come together to celebrate the religious or cultural festivals. However, on the same time food can also cause rift among the races due to their belief system despite most of the time it strengthens the bond among the Malaysians. These literary studies comprise limitations due to the secondary analysis method compared to the present study that involves fieldwork activities in gathering data.

Furthermore, Jaafar et al. (2022) analysed the relationship of food and communal cultural identity marker among the Malaysian community. The novel that was utilized to examine the issue is the "The Sum of Our Follies" that was penned by Shih-Li Kow. In essence, the published text illustrates our Malaysian panorama in a multicultural dimension. It portrays a fictional setting named Lubok Sayong and its engaging community. The drama revolves around on the common man plights and the confrontations faced in everyday life. These imaginary characteristics and scenes can be associated with our present reality. As such, food is interpreted as the primary influence in eating together by sharing the communal spaces. Hence, it reflects the genuineness of our true Malaysian identity. Moreover, it is prevalent to encounter citizens socializing across divergent racial background, religious faith and cultural tradition. They congregate and establish networking by forming a healthy and comprehending community towards nation-building. These values that are depicted in the novel teaches us on how the food narratives shapes our cultural identity despite sharing it with the larger society that encompasses the multicultural landscape. In essence, the representation of food is vital as it plays the marker of one's existence in the realm of identity. This study utilized textual analysis approach where it lacks the practical data collection that differs from the present qualitative methodology investigation.

Besides that, Suhaimi and Zahari (2014) examined the common food that are typically accepted in a multicultural society. This showcases the give and take policy among the individuals and also from the different ethnic groups. Thus, the concept of sharing is internalized towards the citizens that built the stability of the nationhood. In addition, the adaptation of the specific cuisines coming from each ethnic is essential in strengthening the bond and solidarity of the people themselves. On that account, the

adaption that is spoken here involves the food category, cooking technique, raw ingredient and dining etiquette that are not conflicting with the religious teachings. This research was conducted in a quantitative approach. It seeks to find out the adaptation level of the other ethnic culinary chefs: Malay, Chinese and Indian that leads to the acceptable common food that constitutes the national food identity. The results indicated positive outcome of the adaptation process that is contributed towards the common acceptable cuisines of each other's ethnic food in our country. Along with that, these chefs have also supported by cooking and serving these dishes according to the public's flavour. It managed to influence the mind-set and encourage the citizens to adapt and accept the ethnic potpourri's cuisines. In other words, these significant changes to the ethnic food would uplift the national food identity's image locally and globally. This research was conducted in a quantitative technique that limits the explanation of adapting other ethnic cuisines which contrasts with the current study that adopts qualitative method in illustrating the ethnic food quest.

Meanwhile, Noriza et al. (2012) presented a conceptual paper on the acculturation idea of the foodways in developing the Malaysian food identity. The acculturation process acquires an individual to learn the new culture and practices that are encountered in a multiethnic society. Simultaneously, it also ensures that the individuals will not sacrifice or compromise their authentic culture but to preserve and conserve it to their best knowledge. Moreover, it is also essential for the individuals to grasp and function in the dominant group culture. In line with that, the conventional foodways includes the preparation and consumption process. As we navigate from the past to the present moment, obviously various changes will occur due to the innovation in the culinary skills. This automatically will bring tremendous transformation to the ethnic food to accommodate the needs for almost all the races in a multicultural community in our country. Intrinsically, the Chinese and Indian ethnic authentic cuisines will be modified to be adapted into the Malay fusion due to the religious restrictions and vice versa. Hence, the food identity construction among the different races 'borrows' each other's unique recipes to be blended in their cooking. It enables them to enjoy the food regardless of the original ethnics' ingredients that transpires the Malaysian food identity. This paper brings forth a conceptual idea that highlights the acculturation process that is probed in the current research in understanding the multiethnic food phenomenon among the citizens.

Apart from that, Ramli et al. (2014) discussed the Malaysian food heritage subject matter. It raised various unforeseen circumstances in gazetting our heritage food. As we are aware, Malaysia comprises multiple ethnics from the Malay islands, China and India where people travelled across the sea to our land. Thus, they did not only carry along their basic essential items but also their food recipes. It is to allow them to cook a similar food from their home country in the new territory. However, due to the geographical and climate reasons certain ingredients could not be obtained in Malaysia that led them to incorporate other substance in the cooking technique. By its very nature, this adoption had to be adapted in order to emulate almost a similar flavour that reminds them of their villages back home. Nevertheless, the certification process to acknowledge and recognize the food heritage will indeed face obstacles due to the authenticity of the cuisines. Meanwhile, the neighbouring countries claimed possession of these foods that caused dispute towards the tangible heritage rights ownership. In reality, the typical ethnic dishes had been modified in accordance with our Malaysian palate. As such, the aroma of the cuisines would differ from the original countries. Therefore, the gastronomic treasures certification is a major concern that needs to be addressed as it involves our nation's food identity pride. This study emphasizes the heritage food in general but did not acknowledge the specific cuisines as highlighted in the present research.

Overall, the Malaysian food and multiculturalism's past scholarly articles had limitations as it comprises literary studies, quantitative method and conceptual papers. Hence, the present study will fill the gap by focusing on the menus that are interchangeable within the ethnic and the notable ethnic food that are being welcomed by our multicultural society namely nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai. It will utilize qualitative approach based on the autoethnographic technique that provides the rich description of the phenomenon in concern.

3. Methodology

Autoethnography is an unconventional form of practice in a qualitative methodology. However, this technique is an imperative design that contributes to scholarly works. Moreover, it is presently accepted as a credible and trustworthy approach by the academic fraternity (Bochner & Ellis, 2022). Besides that, this term has a combination of three perspectives as illustrated in the following hyphenated word: auto-ethno-graphy (Adams & Herrmann, 2023). First, "auto". It depicts a character in reference to the researcher's perspicacity and of the wisdom that is obtained throughout his or her life. In other words, it is the researcher's encounter that matters the most in the study. Next, "ethno". This portrays the thick description concept. In literal version, it describes the extensive narration that grasps the values by being attentive to the details. Further, it emphasizes the cultural assumptions, rituals and belief structure in society. Lastly, "graphy". Here, it manifests the form of practice that undertakes to generate the particular account. As such, this concludes that autoethnography symbolizes an individual's memoirs with respect to the cultural anticipation, belief system and rites.

Apart from that, the data collection process becomes mysterious to the readers due to the nature of autoethnography. Intrinsically, hard-hitting questions in terms of authenticity will shake the core of the research. By and of itself, triangulation approach (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022) will be employed to avoid any controversial issues arising from this unique qualitative branch. On that note, three basic methods were utilized in carrying out the study on nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai in a multiculturalist society. First, self-observation. This action engages the researcher to not just observe as an outsider but to participate in ethnic food consumption. As such, it involves the note taking process to produce the in-depth and rich description of the Malaysian cuisines. These jottings will be analyzed by the researcher in relevance to the multiculturalism food matter. By its very nature, the self-reflection process will transpire in understanding the logic and rationale behind the subject in concern. It provides the thematic sequence of each ethnic dish to be evaluated for the write-up of the study. Second, interview. This involves 30 participants including family members and friends who are directly in contact with the researcher. It consists of informal interviews in a casual manner until it hits the saturation thrust in regard to our nation's food heritage. This is to cross-check the recollection of the researcher's personal memories that need to be aligned to reflect the rice, noodles and bread menu with the participants' response. Third, documentation. This generally will investigate the literature materials such as journals and newspapers' articles on food perspectives of our pluralistic community. It is to corroborate the stories of the researcher's self-observation and to substantiate with the participants' feedback of these iconic dishes in concern. Moreover, these documents are able to support the objectivity of the gathered information on the multiculturalism of ethnic food in Malaysia.

In addition, it is paramount to realize that the foundation of autoethnography study lies within the researcher or author or writer itself. It indicates that the researcher is the sole participant in the study. The personal life experiences (Edwards, 2021) narrate the food heritage phenomenon of the researcher that conveys the reserved stories, express countless emotions that moved one's sentiment and motivate the readers to ponder the messages beyond the descriptions. Along with that, the exclusive details of the food adventure will be self-reflected throughout the writing process journey. Furthermore, the researcher functions as a research tool or in other words the instrument for the inquiry. As such, anyone who flips the pages of the researcher's work will experience the unique nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai atmosphere despite not existing in that specified place, time and moment. This allows the readers to step into the writer's unparalleled gastronomy world. Likewise, the investigation touches the significant issues that are meaningful, impactful and close to the researcher's heart. Hence, the possibility of one person's story may open up an array of windows to the assorted insights of the ethnic food potpourri in our country.

4. Findings

4.1 *Ethnic Food and Multiculturalism*

Human body biologically functions in a strange yet complex manner that could not be interpreted by the mankind in the initial stage. However, the advancement of technology championed the breakthrough of the mind-boggling scientific discoveries of our existence. On that note, the gift of having the five senses is crucial for a normal human being to immerse themselves with the surroundings that they live in. Thus, the fundamental sensory here involves sight, smell, taste, touch and sound. By its very nature, these essential elements will facilitate the individuals to select and decide upon the food he or she consumes. As such, the ethnic food that depicts the Malay, Chinese and Indian community will be illustrated based on these features in the following paragraphs.

Unique, heavenly and spicy are a few words from the plethora of vocabulary that describes our nation's notable nasi lemak. The unique appearance of the typical nasi lemak is wrapped in the green banana leaf. It is folded in the form of a triangle dimension that is akin to the shape of the pyramid. Nevertheless, brown paper and containers are utilized to pack but loses its charm that embodies the authentic geometrical model. Thereafter, the unboxing ceremony commences that unveils the glimpse of this anticipated cuisine. On that account, the distinct colourful persona represents the varied substance that make up the dish to be desirable. Thus, the white rice that is cooked with coconut milk and thrown in with a couple of pandan leaves also known as the 'vanilla of Asia' provides the natural fragrance. Moreover, the red sambal generally contains chili, onions and anchovies. It is the primary ingredients that enriches the flavour when eaten simultaneously with the coconut milk rice. Besides that, other side dishes complement the nasi lemak such as the golden-brown crispy anchovies, brown crunchy peanuts, green sliced cucumber and of course the white boiled egg with its yellow yolk. Along with that, these numerous shades provide the heavenly aroma that enables one to enjoy the scrumptious meal. However, the zesty spicy sambal is the salient factor that tantalizes the taste buds in determining the performance of a delectable nasi lemak.

Tempting, yummy and savoury are several remarks that is noted of the legendary char kuey teow. The predominant component constitutes the white flat rice noodles. It has a variation in the context of the noodle's broadness. Intrinsically, it could be thin to a thicker version depending on the province that it originates from. Likewise, the colour of the food ranges from the lighter to a darker brown of shades due to the usage of the soy sauces. Besides that, the crunchy white bean sprouts become off-white as it is smeared with the sauces and eventually loses certain degree of its crunchiness in the course of the cooking process. In spite of that, it still stands out in the meal due to the colour contrast. Another prominent vegetable is the green chives that is added where it showcases the tubular shape presence. In addition, this tempting cuisine is served on the banana leaf which contributes an aromatic scent experience to those who dine on it. Meanwhile, the chili paste can be stirred in the noodles or the sambal can be served separately. Moreover, other ingredients are substantial as it gives oomph to the yummy char kuey teow. It includes the fresh juicy prawns that caters the marine flavour. Along with that, an egg will be smashed into the hot pan until it is semi-fried. During the interval, the noodles are resting on the upper side of the pan and later stirred together once the half-cooked egg is ready. Although, the effect of the dark sauces impacted the dish, the yellow egg yolk managed to retain its appearance meanwhile the white egg had almost lost its complexion. A savoury char kuey teow lies on the art of stirring, frying and controlling the heat in order to offer a palatable noodle.

Astonished, delightful and fluffy are a number of terms that are associated with our beloved roti canai. The key ingredients of the Indian flatbread comprise flour, water and oil. It is as simple as that and there are no hidden secrets to the recipe. Nonetheless, the mastery skill of tossing the dough is paramount in attaining a perfect crispy and soft flatbread. By the same token, the dough must be pressed and pushed outwards until it becomes a large oval shape. Then it needs to be flipped over repeatedly and stretched to make it as thin as possible without tearing or making holes on the dough. Later, it is transferred to the hot pan to be cooked. Besides that, a competent culinary artist has the extensive experience and knowledge to produce such fine thin bread. Further, a couple of talented artists astonished the onlookers

by throwing the thin dough on the air and performing unimaginable stunts without dropping or tearing it. Indeed, they are an expert in their own league and no one could imitate such breathtaking act. The delightfully cooked roti canai is in light golden-brown colour. It is then placed on the banana leaf as it has a pleasing aroma due to its nature sense. Likewise, the mouth-watering flatbread is served with dhal or fish curry to dip with that infuses the spiciness to the meal. In addition, sambal is also provided for the fiery food lovers. The fluffy roti canai can only be achieved with the right tossing and flipping culinary method that contributes to an awesome flatbread.

Intrinsically, there are two similar features that can be observed explicitly. First, is the usage of banana leaf. This leaf has an aromatic fragrance when the food is wrapped, served or placed on it. It is not to be eaten. Moreover, due to our geographical climate these leaves are easily obtained and primarily used for our cooking. Second, is the consumption of sambal. It is a spicy chili paste that is favoured and without its presence many Malaysians find it difficult to dine their food. In addition, the spiciness has become a part and parcel of our citizens food habit despite from which ethnic group they belong to. Hence, the diverse ethnic cuisines do share specific common values that unite us due to the culinary perspective.

Therefore, this brings forth to the two primary objectives of this research. The first objective examines nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai that are interchangeable menu for the Malaysians. Beyond any doubt, this ethnic food can be substituted as they are easily accessible at any place and time. It is not an exclusive dish where one could only purchase in specific venues. Instead, it could be attained at any outlets from the street vendors (Nation, 2024) to the high-end restaurants. However, the only difference would be in terms of the pricing range. Fundamentally, the hawker stalls are equipped with basic facilities such as tables and chairs laid out in an open space for the customers. In comparison to the posh restaurants that are furnished with cooling air-conditioner, closed environment that is relatively quiet and private for the diners and most importantly the hygiene factor of the surroundings and staffs. However, it is up to the individual's preference where he or she would like to have the meal. This decision could be influenced as a result of various aspects such as financial capacity, location, dining atmosphere and the satisfaction of the food itself. In other respects, these ethnic cuisines are also interchangeable with one another because they are not seasonal menu instead it could be obtained at any time of the day such as for breakfast, branch, lunch, teatime, dinner and supper (Mok, 2014) over 365 days in a year. Moreover, it is not troublesome to satisfy our cravings at any moment in Malaysia as specific shops are open 24 hours daily such as the mamak restaurants. Furthermore, these ethnic cuisines contain substantial amount of carbohydrate from the rice, noodles and bread which satiates our hunger. In line with that, numerous ethnics are exposed to the other ethnic food in a tender age. They often see the roadside stalls selling, smelling its fragrance as they pass by the streets, hearing others talking about the various menus and eventually experiencing it by tasting the dishes (Raccuia, 2021).

Meanwhile, the second objective is to identify the three distinct ethnic food that are welcomed in a multicultural society. Living in a heterogenous environment had exposed us to the plethora of food gastronomy (Loh, 2019). It does not only teach but also makes us to learn the unique dimension of other ethnic heritages specifically in the context of food. In line with that, different ethnic started to experiment other ethnic's dishes by incorporating their cultural flavour into it. By doing so, it is able to market the distinct ethnic's meal into their community. Nonetheless, the adoption and adaption of these contemporary cuisines from diverse races had expanded the authentic ethnic menus. Along with that, it is not surprising to witness the nasi lemak is prepared and even sold by the Chinese and Indians (Chern, 2025). In the same manner, the char kuey teow is made by the Malays and Indians. Additionally, the Malays and Chinese deal with the roti canai. However, the taste would absolutely differ from the original ethnic food considering it incorporates the alternative ingredients and cooking techniques. What is even more amazing is to observe the disparate ethnic groups that are selling and buying from one another. In spite of being raised in a divergent cultural ethos, we share our food heritages that brings us together and live in a harmony environment (Chin, 2023). This is truly a Malaysian trademark. Hence, the multiculturalism concept is apt for the Malaysians. It enables us to accept the unfamiliar culinary boundaries by integrating it as a part of our lives. Although, it differs in terms of values and norms but it develops a sense of tolerance and sensitivity among the citizens.

5. Conclusion

Malaysia is a multicultural nation that predominantly consists of the Malays, Chinese and Indians in Peninsular. However, there are numerous other ethnics that exist in the Borneo. However, our religious principles, cultural sentiments and linguistic command will naturally divide us due to our contrasting lifestyle. Nevertheless, food is able to connect and bridge the intercultural communication among the society members. The diverse community comes together and attends specific occasions of other races. By its very nature, food will be served in these events and certain delicacies may not even be from our roots. Although, such circumstances are expected we will take the initiative to sample the new gourmet as long it is permissible by the religion.

Besides that, the classic ethnic food from each race includes the nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai are indispensable due to our familiarity of these dishes. Most of us cannot stay away from it as it is a must have meal once a week. This is because we are accessible towards the outlets via online or physical to purchase these dishes at any time. By and of itself, it is not surprising that our citizens are knowledgeable and savvy when it comes to food matters. It is because they are exposed to the various menus from other countries within Malaysia due to the pluralistic community in nature. Moreover, the willingness of each ethnic to learn and master the other ethnic heritage food is commendable. The modification that is made in rice, noodles and bread are interchangeable in the interest of the cultural preference. It brought new ideas and innovation to the authentic cuisines. This itself reflects the ethnic potpourri that is shared among the multicultural Malaysian society that preserves the unity in a divergent background. Last but not least, the implication of this research is essential for the respective stakeholders in introducing our tangible cultural heritages. On that account, the Visit Malaysia 2026 will be a great platform to promote our iconic heritage cuisines namely nasi lemak, char kuey teow and roti canai to the tourists.

References

Adams, T. E., & Herrmann, A. F. (2023). Good autoethnography. *Journal of Autoethnography*, *4*(1), 1-9.

Andaya, B. W. & Andaya, L. Y. (1982). *A history of Malaysia*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (2022). Why autoethnography? *Social Work & Social Sciences Review*, *23*(2), 8-18.

Chern, L. T. (2025, 6 July). Nasi lemak – a nation's breakfast. *The Star*. https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2025/07/06/nasi-lemak---a-nations-breakfast.

Chin, G. Y. (2023, 22 September). Roti canai symbolises our multiculturalism. *New Straits Times*. https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters/2023/09/958185/roti-canai-symbolises-our-multiculturalism.

Cooper, R., & Lilyea, B. V. (2022). I'm interested in autoethnography, but how do I do it. *The Qualitative Report*, *27*(1), 197-208.

Edwards, J. (2021). Ethical autoethnography: Is it possible? *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *20*, 1-6.

Jaafar, W. P. N., Perry, M. S., Nor, N. F. M., Vengadasamy, R., & Leong, P. P. Y., & Chuang, L. H. (2022). Malaysian food culture as a communal identity marker in Shih-Li Kow's The Sum of Our Follies. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, *22*(4), 308-326.

Loh, Y. J. (2019, 22 May). The Indian roti that became Malaysia's national bread. *Taste*. https://tastecooking.com/indian-roti-became-malaysias-national-bread/#:~:text=Christina%20Arokiasamy%2C%20author%20of%20The,'re%20colloquially%20termed%2C%20mamaks.

Mok, O. (2014, 22 June). Nasi lemak: That all-rounder of Malaysian cuisine. *Malay Mail.* https://www.malaymail.com/news/eat/drink/2014/06/22/nasi-lemak-that-all-rounder-of-malaysian-cuisine/691963.

Nation (2024, 10 October). Do you know…about char kway teow? *The Star*. https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2024/10/10/do-you-know-about-char-kway-teow.

Noriza, I., Zahari, M. S. M., Shazali, M. S., Rosmaliza, M., & Hannita, S. (2012). Acculturation, foodways and Malaysian food identity. *Current Issues in Hospitality and Tourism Research and Innovations*, 1-5.

Perry, M. S. (2017). Feasting on culture and identity: Food functions in a multicultural and transcultural Malaysia. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies Language, Linguistics, Literature*, *23*(4), 184-199.

Raccuia, K. (2021, 20 January). Malaysia's humble 'king of noodles'. *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20210118-why-noodles-are-malaysias-most-famous-street-food.

Ramli, A. M., Zahari, M. S. M., Ishak, N., & Sharif, M. S. M. (2014). Food heritage and nation food identity formation. *Hospitality and Tourism*, 407-411.

Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E. & McDaniel, E. R. (2007). *Communication between cultures* (6th ed.). California, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Suhaimi, M. Z., & Zahari, M. S. M. (2014). Common acceptable cuisine in multicultural countries: Towards building the national food identity. *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic and Management Engineering*, *8*(3), 855-861.

Thio, A. (2009). *Sociology: A brief introduction* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson.