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Malay Cooking Method Terminologies: Understanding and Usage

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Abstract—There are numerous methods of cooking terminologies that are used in Malay cooking that consist of dry and moist methods. However, Although Malay culinary is very rich in terminologies but some of them are disappearing. The probability of these terminologies will become extinct when the older generation dies and it will no longer be spoken or known by anyone. However, this phenomenon occurs not only among the ordinary youngsters but it also goes to young professional chefs and culinarians. Therefore, this study empirically investigates the level of understanding of Malay cooking methods terminologies and its impact to the usage among the young Malay culinarians in their daily cooking activities. This study used a quantitative approach and respondents were among the young Malay culinarians who are working directly in food industries within the Kelang Valley, Malaysia. The results from descriptive and multiple regression analyses revealed that, the majority of the respondents have a relatively poor understanding on Malay cooking methods terminologies. The finding further proved that the respondents only use a few Malay cooking methods terminologies in their daily cooking activities. In this sense, transferring the Malay food terminologies and knowledge from generation to generations is the effective ways in achieving preservation of it. The more Malay food terminologies are understood, the better people will be able to communicate and use it in their daily life and at the same time will be able to sustain and constantly use the terminologies in the next future.

Keywords—Malay; Cooking method; Terminologies; Usage

I. Introduction

Many people would agree that language is a tool of communication encompassing symbol and codes used by people to reserved, retrieve, shape, and

transfer experiences and knowledge [13]. Language is not a static process but acts as a vehicle through which culture is expressed, conveyed from one generation to others [9]. Therefore, the preservation of a native language acts as a stronger connector to their ethnic community because the societies who embrace their language knowledge as a central value, it will encourage their children and the youngster to use the language more often in the society [26]. Besides, it is also develops within all fields of profession which act as a mechanism to pass a specific knowledge and information through language terminologies [15]. Reference [5] expressed that, language through it terminologies denotes and represent specific meanings of something. For instance, most of the universal music languages or terminologies are derived from Italian words ranging from the rhythm, key, tempo to the other elements [22]. In medical field on the other hand, doctors speak a language using terms that others don't understand, and so do lawyers. For that reason, these languages exist in just about every kind of area, and cooking is no exception. However, despite the universal terminologies established within particular disciplines, every ethnic culture or country are also having their own food languages or terminologies which signifying certain meaning to either in the preparations, methods of cooking, equipment, eating decorum and others [3].

Within the Malay community, language was used as a symbol to create and sustain the identity on the ways in which Malays today understand their culture, and how the language fits into their own cultural self-identifications [12]. As the Malay language represents the culture and society, it is important to promote it as this will ensure the sustainability and continuity of the Malay people's identity. Looking at culinary perspective, not to exaggerate that Malays as Malaysia indigenous group is having numerous, vast and valuable food terminologies which represent one of the language aspect that was created and used since olden [32].

However, Although Malay culinary is very rich in terminologies but some of them are disappearing. According to [32], the biggest single threat to the Malay food language is the modern culture and society that marginalizing tradition of the past. Much of the terminologies are no longer being learned by new generations of the children or by new adult speakers. The probability of these terminologies will become extinct when the older generation dies and it

will no longer be spoken or known by anyone. However, this phenomenon occurs not only among the ordinary youngsters but it also goes to young professional chefs and culinarians. Owing to the lack of usage, much of the Malay foods terminologies are believed getting ignored and gradually disappeared in fact some of the words are no longer exist. Furthermore, in the lack of effective legal protection, the Malay culinary heritage including its terminologies continues to disappear at an alarming rate and gradually dying out especially among the younger generation. This phenomenon has brought a concern and anxiety of many people including the older generation, government and linguistic experts [29]. Therefore this study aims to investigate the level of understanding of cooking methods terminologies and its impact towards the usage among the young Malay culinarians.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Food terminology

Like many other crafts, cooking has developed highly specialized terminologies for describing its various operations [7]. Many scholars posited that the understanding of food terminologies is essential to people of particular country especially those individual involve in culinary field. The terms are the standardized way to communicate specifically defined cooking techniques and methods that refer to the preparation of foods. Using the right terminologies is important as it has universal meaning in the culinary field and intended to describe or communicate a specific action or order. Reference [19] mentioned that food terminologies also can be learning through food tradition that can be passing down from generation to generation. He added that ethnic cuisines will often have their own vocabulary and terminology unique to their culinary traditions. Reference [28] offered similar ideas that food language could have one set of terms for everyday cooking and another for ceremonial cooking, or one set of terminologies for preparing the day meal and a different set for the evening meal. Without food terminologies, secret of cooking, technique and skill may not be transferred, people may not acquire knowledge of cooking through generations, and cultural continuity will not exist [19]. Those terminologies of food are certainly not static and constantly growing and the changes that occur signify cultural swings and the way the terminologies are used and practice by people [21]. Reference [8] mentioned that, every language of every culture or country also possessed their own unique and different food terminologies that may resemble the same meaning with other food terminologies from other countries.

Scholar [24] measuring knowledge and understanding toward cooking found that young adults generally have a low level of food terminologies knowledge. He mentioned that people

who do not understand cooking terms such as use proper equipment, appropriate ingredients, or make inappropriate substitutions for ingredients may end up with substandard food product even if the recipe and preparation instructions were accurately prepared. As mentioned by [18], cooking terminologies can be so intimidating that people may become anxious and discouraged to cook. Therefore, defining cooking terminologies in the recipe instructions, providing suggestions for acceptable substitutions, or describing in detail proper ways to measure ingredients can help to increase food terminologies knowledge and to reduce the likelihood that errors resulting from insufficient cooking knowledge. Reference [16] stated the benefits of improving food terminologies knowledge range from increasing the frequency of cooking at home, and helping families, especially youngsters, able to recognize the characteristics of a tradition food of their society.

2.2 Malay Food Terminologies

Nearly every culture and language has contributed to the culinary language. Including Malay, it also possessed its own terminologies of food that embrace from its preparation, method of cooking, and numerous unique food names [27]. Reference [25] claimed that Malay food terminologies has been shaped by cultural transmission over many generations. He also stated that the average Malay parents would usually inherit the skill and process of cooking to their children through it terminologies that act as medium of transmitter that occurs not only during daily cooking activities, traditional event but also during wedding ceremony [12].

In Malay food preparation, varieties of ingredients used are often described as spicy and flavorful as it melting pot of spices, herbs and roots. Strong, tangy and flavorful fresh herbs, spices and ingredients such as *serai* (lemon grass), *pandan* (screwpine), *kemangi* (a type of basil), *kesum* (polygonum or laksa leaf), buah pala (nutmeg), kunyit (turmeric) and *bunga kantan* (wild ginger buds), biji sawi (mustard seeds), halba (fenugreek) and buah pala, (nutmeg) are often used. Apart from the Malay ingredients terminologies, another important aspect for Malay food terminologies is the equipment and utensils used [6]. Several traditional Malay cooking equipments including several types of grinders called *lesung batu* (pestle and mortar), *batu giling* (stone roller), and the *batu boh* (mill) used for preparing spices and pastes. Vegetables are diced on a *landas* (wooden board); while a coconut scraper or *kukur niyur* is indispensable in making both curries and sweets. Pastries are also made for desserts and for this a *torak* (rolling pin) and *papan penorak* (pastry board) are considered essential. Besides the preparation and the cooking methods, food names also play an important role in Malay food terminologies [17]. There are abundant of unique food names that can be found in Malay delicacies that typically named after the appearance of the food, the way food is prepared, places, people and by certain event or incident. Some

of the famous and unique Malay food names include buah melaka, lompat tikam, badak berendam, tahi itik, cek mek molek, serabe, beriani gam, cakar ayam, nasi dagang and etc.

2.3 Malay Cooking Methods

Different cultures and language tend to have their own unique ways of cooking and each of them has different terminologies which often come from historical necessities [20]. Traditional cooking methods in Malay cuisine are quite similar to life in Malay villages, slow and laidback as most authentic Malay delicacies cooked on low heat for a long time as compared Chinese food [11]. Reference [30] mentioned that there are numerous methods of cooking terminologies that are used in Malay cooking that consist of dry and moist methods. Tumis (use a small amount of oil or fat in a shallow pan over relatively high heat), salai (smoked or grilled food on the fire such as dried fish and the ingredients are usually cut into pieces or thinly sliced to facilitate fast cooking), sangai (method of cooking whereby food mainly dries spices are frying without oil), layur (warm over low heat to dry) are examples of terminologies for dry-heat cooking methods. On the other hand, moist-heat cooking method includes terms such as tanak (cooking in a pot especially rice), jerang (boiling or simmering normally used of liquids), celur (blanching or dipping something such as vegetable into the hot water) and reneh (simmering or boiling food).

2.4 Usage of terminologies

The terminologies that people use in their daily lives can reveal important aspects of their social and psychological worlds [2]. The ways people use terminologies convey a great deal of information about themselves, their audience, and the situations they are in and indicates their social status, age, sex, and motives. Reference [4], the usages of terminologies are influenced by 1) Word of languages: Some terms might have a problematic structure, i.e. they do not fit into the wording system of a language. 2) Related terms: If a term is already well established, a new term will probably not be used and finally the 3) Frequency of use: On the one hand, if a term can be so specific that it is hardly used by anybody it will not be well-known. On the other hand, a term might be well-known, even if words make it hard to pronounce.

Scholar [33] studies the usage of terminologies formation, terminologies structure, and type of food names terminologies in restaurants. In relation to this research, the writer suggests to among restaurant owners to better understand and frequently practice of English language structure if they want to use English food menu names in their restaurant. In Japan, on the other hand, the topic of food is discussed in nearly every aspect of life. It will be mentioned in almost

every TV show, on the radio, and will come up in nearly every conversation. It is even commonly discussed during or after a meal [23]. In relation with that, [1] affirmed that the understanding of the food terminologies are important because the more food terminologies and related word they understand, the better there will be able to communicate and use it in their daily conversation.

III. Methodology

As this study examines the understanding and usage of Malay cooking methods terminologies among young Malay culinarians, a quantitative research approach is considered to be the most suitable method to be used. A questionnaire survey was used in assessing the understanding and the usage of Malay food terminologies among the young Malay culinarians. The information requires for this study were obtained from young Malay culinarians who previously had undergone formal culinary education with the age range from 22 until 30 years old. Owing to the large number of young Malay culinarians in the country and the geographical dispersion, only those who are working directly in food sectors such as in independents restaurants, hotels restaurants, cafes and cafeterias within the Kelang Valley (Shah Alam, Petaling Jaya, Subang Jaya and Kelang), Malaysia, will be chosen as a sample. The surveys was conducted during weekdays within a month, however, due to the distance constrain, only 10 to 20 questionnaires are able to be distributed to the targeted respondents per day. In line with that, approximately 200 (20 days x 10 questionnaires per day) surveys are able to be collected. Based on researchers experienced, 10 to 30 questionnaires would be able to gather by a researcher in a day [10][14]. The analytical method such as descriptive statistic, reliability, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis was used to analyze all the gathered data.

IV. Results and Analysis

4.1 General Perception of Malay Food Terminologies

The findings for the first research objectives which is the general perception of Malay food terminologies revealed that many of respondents agreed that Malay is rich with valuable and unique food terminologies. With that, they also believed that Malay is rich with food preparation terminologies, cooking method terminologies and food names terminologies. Since the respondents agreed that Malay is loaded with food terminologies, they were also certain that the Malay recipes, techniques, secret and cooking skills can be learning through its food terminologies, and that the reason why it is so important to pass down the Malay food terminologies to young generation. This is more important especially among the Malaysian culinarians to

understand and use the food terminologies because the constant usage of Malay food terminologies by culinarians will obviously help to continue and preserve the traditional Malay food and culinary heritage. Thus, besides English and French, it is recommended to use and teach the Malay food terminologies in culinary institution as well as in food industry such as hotels and restaurants.

Variable	
Understanding of Malay Cooking Method Terminologies.	.278**

4.2 The Level of Understanding of Malay Cooking Method Terminologies

Although Malay is loaded with cooking methods terminologies as confirmed in first analysis, unfortunately, the result for this analysis apparently shows that the overall respondents generally have a moderate understanding on Malay cooking methods terminologies in general. This can be seen through moderate mean scores on understanding on Malay dry-heat cooking method terminologies, understanding on Malay moist-heat cooking methods terminologies and understanding on Malay combination cooking methods terminologies. These result further supported by moderate mean score based on the example of terminologies given including sangai (food mainly dries spices are frying without oil), tumis (Use a small amount of oil or fat in a shallow pan), lengat (cooking rice or food with vapor or steam), and reneh (simmering or boiling food).

Variable	Mean	S.d.
Understanding of Malay Cooking Method Terminologies.	2.91	0.864

The overall means score further strengthen the finding. Generally, the levels of understanding of cooking methods terminologies among the respondents are relatively moderate (M=2.91).

TABLE 4.1: TOTAL OVERALL MEAN SCORE FOR THE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF MALAY COOKING METHODS TERMINOLOGIES.

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

4.3 The Level of Usage of Malay Cooking Methods Terminologies

Most likely due to low understanding on the Malay cooking methods terminologies as mentioned in previous analysis, result obviously revealed a few usage on Malay food terminologies among the young Malay culinarians. For that reason, it is not surprising that the level of usage of Malay food preparation terminologies during their daily cooking activities is also relatively low. The respondents also mentioned that they only use a few Malay cooking methods

terminologies during their culinary studies or culinary exposure which possibly becomes the reason why the usage of Malay cooking methods terminologies among their working colleagues as well as in recipes and menu writing is relatively low.

4.4 Correlation Between Cooking Methods Terminologies Attributes Towards the Usage.

TABLE 4.2 PEARSON CORRELATIONS AMONG VARIABLES

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To test the correlation between the independent variable (understanding of cooking methods terminologies) and dependent variable (usage of Malay cooking terminologies) a Pearson Moment Correlation was used. The result in table 4.2 revealed a small (.278) correlation between understanding of cooking methods terminologies and the usage.

4.5 Relationship between Understanding of Cooking Methods Terminologies and the Usage.

The relationship between understanding of cooking methods terminologies and usage among young Malay Culinarians was further confirmed with multiple regression analysis. Table 4.3 signifies that the understanding of Malay cooking methods terminologies expounded ($R^2 = .19$) of the variation in the usage of the terminologies. Hair et al., (2006) stated that the higher the value of R^2 , the greater the explanatory power of the regression equation and thus enhanced the prediction of the dependent variable. Therefore, the variables (cooking methods terminologies) were only explains 19 percent (19 %) of the variance in the usage of Malay food terminologies which appear to be slightly low result. the regressions disclosed that the understanding of Malay cooking methods terminologies significantly impacted the usage ($p < 0.000$). However, the impact is somewhat low by looking at the beta value ($\beta = .23$). Therefore, it has been proved that the understanding of Malay cooking methods terminologies among young Malay culinarians only contributed few usages in their daily cooking activities.

TABLE 4.3 MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULTS

Independent Variable (IV)	Dependent Variable (DV)
	Usage of Malay Food Terminologies Beta Coefficients and Significance Levels
Cooking Methods	.23 ***
R ²	.19
F-Change	52.25***

v. Implication, Conclusion, Recommendation

Transferring the Malay food terminologies and knowledge pertaining to Malay ingredients, preparations, equipment and cooking methods from generation to generations is the effective ways in achieving preservation of it. With regard to the ways of retaining the Malay food terminologies together with the traditional food, every mother should encourage their children in helping them in the kitchen, introduce the name of the foods, ingredients and the way they prepare foods as well as teach them how to cook especially before they leave the house for higher education, married or working. Besides that, this can be done through passing down the knowledge of food terminologies through the involvement in cooking processes during religious and cultural events with the older peoples. Therefore, knowledge and understandings of Malay food terminologies is very important especially among young generation. This is because, the more Malay food terminologies are understood, the better people will be able to communicate and use it in their daily life and at the same time will be able to sustain and constantly use the terminologies in the next future. In addition to the above statements, the relevant authorities, either public or private sector should help to increase the awareness and disseminating information on the importance of preserving Malay heritage, language and foods through media and food events. Such actions would at least encourage the young generations especially the culinarians to better understand and appreciate the Malay foods, language and heritage. Besides, this also can be done through increase the use of traditional Malay food terminologies in Malay recipe books as a source of references for future generations.

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