



## The repertory of lingual-cultural kitchen herb lexicon representing the Asahan Malay's culinary riches

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### Abstract

The kitchen herb ecolexicon in Malay is essentially a record of Malay's culinary culture of the past. It consists of culturally material products originating from natural environment and stores the Asahan Malay's wealth of meaning and value of life which manifest the verbal coding through the naming of engredient plants, flavorings, and proverbs. This paper is an attempt to describe the lingual-cultural kitchen herb lexicon which relies entirely on the theory of Eco linguistics and on the qualitative descriptive method. It can be concluded that the diversity of the kitchen herb lexicon can be considered to be the manifestation of its society's knowledge of their environment. These insights are inseparable from the cultural reflection of the local community. The more lexicons that contain information about the Asahan Malay's environment indicate the greater wealth of such environment the community have. Moreover, the availability of expressions embodied in the kitchen herb lexicon shows the creativity of its people who remain to store the knowledge of and to preserve the lexicon inherited to them by the past generation. For example, the lexicon of *buas-buas* leaves (*Premna cordifolia* *Syzygium aqueum*) as a culinary ingredient of *anyang buas-buas* and of *umbut pisang* lexicon used as *anyang umbut pisang* ingredients. What is interesting is that the *umbut* lexicon is used by the local people to create a proverb: *Umbutnya juga tak ketinggalan, mentah masaknyanya enak dimakan, direbus pula kawannya santan, dibikin rencahnya si anak udang, enak rasanya bukan kepalang* (The umbut is also not left behind, the raw which is cooked is delicious, it is boiled with coconut milk, it is flavored with shrimp, its taste is really absurd).

**Keywords:** kitchen herb lexicon, lingual-cultural, ecolinguistics, Malay

### 1. Introduction

A number of lexicons are stored in the native speakers' cognitive and inseparable from the language's survival and past era; they usually refer to the current and past entities. Various types of lexicon available in the speakers' cognitive represent the richness of meaning and value of human life. One type of the lexicon is related to the ecolexicon in general, but in specific the culinary ecolexicon consisting of various types of kitchen herb lexicon (KHL). The culinary ecolexicon becomes part of local vocabularies which are laden with cultural wisdom that has ever existed in the centuries ago but remains to exist till today; such lexicon has a reciprocal relationship between language and environment either in macrocosmic or in microcosmic scale.

The KHL as part of the Malay culinary ecolexicon (MCE) is essentially a recording of Malay culinary culture of the past. The KHL in this paper is not only limited to spice, but also to all types of basic ingredients of cuisine which is included as one type of cuisine and consists of cultural material products that originate from the natural environment and of wealth of meaning and value of life of Asahan Malay society (AMS). The meaning and values manifest the AMS' verbal coding through the naming of spice plants, ingredients, flavors, and proverbs but due to the time changing, the dynamics of culture and the natural and social changes bring impact on the changes of MCE which can become means of Malay ethnic culinary culture. Malay's generation today have even begun to forget and to abandon their local language and traditions,

especially those who live in urban environments and in heterogeneous neighborhoods. All this is due to the rapid growth of fast food products which bring national and international characteristics.

With reference to the development of time and spatial dynamics in socioecology which becomes the living space of language, such factors are categorized as the determinants of the changes, shifting, and "marginalization" of the Asahan Malay language (AML); the AML has undergone a shift, especially in the terms associated with socioecology. These terms are displaced, altered, or marginalized by the outside terms which are increasingly accepted by the AML's native speakers. The outside terms may come from Bahasa Indonesia. It is related to what Lindo and Bundsgaard argued when the environment is changing, the language that lives in the speech environment is also changing in the course of time<sup>[1]</sup>. The most rapidly changes in languages are lexicons. The changes are influenced by three dimensions, such as ideology, society or sociology, and biology<sup>[2]</sup>.

In an effort to explore the KHL in AML, the role of native speakers in the use of KHL is very preferred. Haugen (1972) suggested that there are three constituents in Eco linguistics: language exists only in the minds of its users and will function when its users relate to each other naturally as their natural and social environment; the ecology is psychological, that is, the interaction with other languages in the mind of a bilingual or multilingual speaker; sociological interaction with society in its function as communication media (in Mbetee *et al.* and

Widayati) [3, 4]. However, the verbal concepts in the minds of its speakers can not be separated from the environmental conditions where the referents live.

## 2. Method

Efforts to describe the KHL uses the referential [identity] method with connecting and comparing, and contrasting techniques [5]. That is, the linguistic data should refer to the observed environmental identity. A number of environmental lexicons are associated with spice plants, ingredients, and flavors. With regard to the wealth of culinary eolexicon, the researcher also used value analysis which was collected through deep interviews with informants and aimed at sorting, classifying, and giving meanings to the lexicon.

## 3. Discussion

It is not easy to comprehend the lexicon treasury presenting the AMS' socio-cultural environment because their awareness to AML is poor and as a result, they do not understand the lexicon comprehensively. The lexicon which is now difficult to find its entities will cause the existing lexicon to be in danger. However, although some entities of lexicon still exist, the way AMS name them has already shifted therefore, the researcher felt uneasy to collect the local equivalent or the borrowing terms from outside the AML. Similarly, some problems appeared when paying attention to the KHL from AMS.

Typically, natural conditions also support a variety of KHL

storage because the AMS still use the lexicon. Spice lexicon which is considered close to the AMS' life creates interaction and interrelation that brings dependency between the AMS and their nature. The insights gained from such interactions and interrelations are encoded into lingual forms. Table 1 shows kitchen spice lexicon, such as ingredients, seasonings, and flavors in AMS.

The buas-buas leaves (*Premna cordifolia* Syzygium Aqueum), fern leaves (*Diplazium esculentum*), bajaranongi leaves, tomu paoh (*Curcuma amada*), and banana umbut are some examples of lexicon referring to the anyang culinary basic ingredients. From these types of leaves (foliage) there appears the derived culinary vegetables, such as anyang daun sibuas-buas, anyang pakis, anyang bajaranongi, anyang temu pauh, and anyang banana umbut. The word class of nouns that encompass the cultivation of the culinary are kakapo, ketumbar, dried shrimp, red pepper, halo, red onion, and asam limo. Such ingredients and spices are very familiar among the owner of the culture. The interrelation and interaction among members of the AMS with various types of spice plants have derived certain verbs to realize the anyang culinary which is consumable; such verbs are for example diputek or dipotik 'plucked' with hands. Plucking leaves hands give a different effect than using a knife as a tool. "Fresh green" color remains even though the leaves are either dicolor or dirobus 'boiled'. Other verbs are kukur, diagnosing, and digiling which are used for the noun kalapo.

**Table 1:** Asahan Malay's kitchen herb lexicon

NO.	Ingredients	Seasonings	Flavors	Process
1.	Daun buas-buas 'Buas-buas leaves' ( <i>Premna Foetida</i> )	Kalapo ( <i>Cocos nucifera</i> )	Udang koring 'dried shrimps' ( <i>Palaemonidae</i> )	Diputek/potik 'plucked'
2.	Daun pakis 'pakis leaves' ( <i>Diplazium esculentum</i> )	Katumbar ( <i>Coriandrum sativum</i> )	Ayam 'chickens'	Dirobus 'boiled'
3.	Daun bajaranongi 'Bajaranongi leaves'	Cabe merah 'red chillies' ( <i>Capsicum annum</i> L)	Korang ( <i>Anadara granosa</i> )	Dikukur 'gratered'
4.	Temu paoh 'manggo meeting' ( <i>Curcuma amada</i> )	Halio ( <i>Zingiber officinale</i> )	Udang 'shrimp' ( <i>Palaemonidae</i> )	Digonseng 'frizzled'
5.	Umbut pisang 'banana umbut'	Bawang merah 'red onion' ( <i>Allium cepa</i> var. <i>Aggregatum</i> )	Sotong masin 'salted <i>Teuthida</i> '	Digiling halus 'finely grinded'
6.	Kopah ( <i>Polymesoda erosa</i> )	Asam limo ( <i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i> )	Sotong ( <i>Teuthida</i> )	Dirajang halus 'finely chopped'
7.	Daun mangkudu 'mangkudu leaves' ( <i>Morinda citrifolia</i> L)	Boras 'rice'	Ikan tongkol ( <i>Euthynnus affinis</i> )	Dikupas 'peeled'
8.	Daun tapak leman 'tapak leman leaves' ( <i>Elephantopus scaber</i> )	Asam potong ( <i>Garcinia atroviridis</i> )	Ikan tamonong ( <i>Rastrelliger</i> )	Diporas 'wringed'
9.	Daun ubi 'cassava leaves'	Lado/Marica ( <i>Piper nigrum</i> )	Ikan cincaro ( <i>Megalaspis cordyla</i> )	Dicolor 'taken with fork'
10.	Kangkung ( <i>Ipomoea aquatica</i> )	Daun si kontut ( <i>Paederia Foetida</i> )	Ikan ogak 'sarden' ( <i>Sardinella Aurita</i> )	Dikupek 'peeled'
11.	Kol ( <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>Capitata</i> )	Daun kunyit ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> )		Dirondam 'soaked'
12.	Daun pagago ( <i>Centella asiatica</i> )	Daun joruk purut ( <i>Citrus hystrix</i> )		Digoreng 'fried'
13.	Kacang panjang ( <i>Vigna unguiculata</i> ssp. <i>Sesquipedalis</i> )	Daun sop ( <i>Apium graveolens</i> var. <i>Dulce</i> )		Dipanggang 'roasted'
14.	Pisang abu mongkal ( <i>Musa acuminata</i> × <i>balbisiana</i> )	Daun jambu bol mudo ( <i>Syzygium malaccense</i> )		Dipotong petak 'cut into tetragon'
15.	Jagung ( <i>Zea mays</i> )	Daun pre ( <i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> 'Leek Group')		Ditumis 'stir fry'

16.	Toge ( <i>Phaseolus aureus</i> )	Jintan manis ( <i>Pimpinella anisum</i> )		
17.	Buncis ( <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i> )	Kunyit ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> )		
18.	Ubi rambat ( <i>Ipomoea batatas</i> )	Langkuas ( <i>Alpinia galanga</i> )		
19.	Ubi kayu ( <i>Manihot esculenta</i> )	Cokur ( <i>Kaempferia galanga</i> )		
20.	Labu lomak ( <i>Cucurbita moschata</i> )	Soreh ( <i>Cymbopogon citratus</i> )		
21.	Kaladi ( <i>Colocasia esculenta</i> )	Kacang tanah ( <i>Arachis hypogaea</i> )		
22.	Labu air ( <i>Lagenaria siceraria</i> )	Kincung ( <i>Etligeria elatior</i> )		
23.	Jipang ( <i>Sechium edule</i> )	Kacang ijo ( <i>Vigna radiata</i> )		
24.	Wortel ( <i>Daucus carota</i> )	Kamiri ( <i>Aleurites moluccanus</i> )		
25.	Timun ( <i>Cucumis sativus</i> )	Daun kumange ( <i>Ocimum × citriodorum</i> )		
26.	Mi kuning 'yellow mie'			
27.	Ikan sumbilang ( <i>Paraplotosus sp</i> )			

The verbs of diagnosing and digiling halus are finely understood to make rice as a spice ingredient. The verb *digiling halus* is derived from the noun red chilly, *katumbar*, *marica*, and *udang koring*. While, the verb *dirajang halus* 'finely chopped' is derived from the nouns of *umbut pisang*, *temu pauh*, red chilli, hallo, and red onion. The verbs *digoreng* 'fried' and *dipanggang* 'roasted' are taken from the noun *ayam* 'chicken' which is used as the *anyang umbut pisang* flavors. The last verbs are *dibolah* 'cut into two' and *diporas* 'wringed' which are derived from the noun *asam limo*. The *anyang kopah* culinary is liked by the AMS since it is cooked without fire. That is made by combining the *kopah* with the *anyang* ingredients. In this culinary, no verbal terms such as *dicolur* 'taken with fork' or *dirobos* 'boiled' are not used but, instead, the terms *dikupas* 'peeled', *mantah* 'raw', and *diporasi* 'wringed' with *limo* acid are found.

The richness of KHL as described above indirectly represents that the culinary culture in Asahan is very distinctive. This is in line with what Fill and Muhlhausler [6], Odum [7], Mbete [8], and Widayati [9], argued that humans as users of language and environment which beomes the living space of language influence each other. Based on the ecological parameters of language, diversity within the dimensions of environment can be in line with the diversity of the lingual wealth of its community. This can happen if there is a strong interaction and interrelation between the community and all the elements in the environment. The patterns of interaction and interrelation within the community can include all activities utilizing all elements that exist in the environment, both biotic and abiotic elements. Moreover, the concept of interrelationship that walks gradually and continuously forms an interdependency pattern between humans and the environment that provides a space for them to stay live and thrive.

What I mean here is that the diversity of lexicon of a language is the manifestation of society's comprehension to their environment. The more lexicon that contain information about the environment of a language indicates the greater environmental wealth exists within the language community. This can be understood, for example, if people within a particular environment collectively often see, touch and even use certain animals and plants, but do not have a lingual code

to mention the entity in question. This is not possible because such circumstances create a condition of "*sangat akrab, tetapi tidak mengenal*" 'very familiar but not knowledgeable'.

Another manifestation that shows how familiar the AMS are with their environmental condition is addressed to the *bubur podas* 'spicy porridge'. This type of culinary is almost known by all Malay people in the East Coast of Sumatra. The porridge requires special ingredients and has specific method of production and moreover, this culinary food is indirectly shaded by a number of nominal and verbal lexicon amounting to more lexicon compared to other culinary types.

This culinary porridge dominates all KHL and all lexicons of basic ingredients that are used when producing the *anyang* culinary. When *si kentut* leaves (*Paederia foetida*) are added in making the *bubur podas*, the porridge becomes the mainstay about how rich it is with KHL. Other ingredients are also existing, such as *mangkudu* leaves lexicon (*Morinda citrifolia* L), *leman* leaves (*Elephantopus scaber*), cassava leaves, *kangkung* (*Ipomoea aquatica*), cabbage (*Brassica oleracea* var. Capitata), pagago leaves (*Centella asiatica*), long beans (*Vigna unguiculata* ssp. *sesquipedalis*), *kepok* banana (*Musa acuminata × balbisiana*), *jagung* (*Zea mays*), bean sprouts (*Phaseolus aureus*), beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*); sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*), cassava (*Manihot esculenta*), pumpkin (*Cucurbita moschata*), taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), water gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*), *jipang* (*Sechium edule*), carrots (*Daucus carota*), *timun* (*Cucumis sativus*), yellow noodles, cuttlefish (Teuthida), *ikan tongkol* 'snapper' (*Euthynnus affinis*), *ikan tamonong* (*Euthynnus affinis*), *ikan gembung* 'rancelliger fish', *cincaro* fish (*Megalaspis cordyla*), and *ikan ogak* 'sardines' (*Sardinella aurita*). All these ingredients make this culinary porridge very good for health especially when it is served during fasting month of Ramadhan.

Other forms of lexicon that describes how intimate the AMS are with their KHL are manifested in the forms of *peribahasa* 'proverbs or maxims' and *pantun* 'verses' as their efforts to preserve and transfer the number of lexicons that exist in the AMS' culinary culture. Since the *peribahasa* and *pantun* become the symbol of creativity of their makers, these two literary products are also known by Malays at East Coast of Sumatra as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** The AMS' proverbs and verses containing KHL

Lengkuas 'galangal'	Proverb: <b>Lengkuas di tepi kandang, tegak puas badan menyandang. 'Galangal at the edge of the cage, stiff standing the body contented'.</b>	Meaning: <b>The mistake made will be borne by the mistake maker).</b>
Shrimp Udang	Proverb: <b>Bagai udang tahi di kepala 'Like the dirt of shrimp on the head'</b>	Meaning: <b>To mention that someone who has a lot of debt.</b>
Serai 'lemongrass'	Proverb: <b>Serumpun bagai serai, selubang bagai tebu 'At the same clump like lemongrass, at the same hole like sugar cane'</b>	Meaning: <b>People who are relatives or friends, who keep words and all embraces want to do work altogether, either the work is light or heavy and are ready to bear all risks altogether.</b>
Cabe 'chillies'	Proverb: <b>Siapa makan cabe, dialah berasa pedas 'Who ate chilly, he feels the spicy'.</b>	Meaning: <b>Who makes mistake, then he will bear the consequences of his mistake.</b>
Pagago 'gotu kola'	Proverb: <b>Gule masam ikan sembilang, Nasi pengiring ulam pegago, Maksud jahat samo dihempang, Penyejuk diri di rumah tango, 'The sour gule of sembilang fish, rice accompanies the ulam pegago, the evil intent should not be allowed together, the self-conditioning at home'.</b>	
Umbut	Proverb: <b>Umbutnyo jugo tak ketinggalan, mentah masaknyo enak dimakan, direbus pula kawannyo santan, dibikin roncahnyo si anak udang, enak rasanyo bukan kepalang. 'The umbut is also not left behind, the raw which is cooked is delicious, it is boiled with coconut milk, it is flavored with shrimp, its taste is really absurd'.</b>	

#### 4. Conclusions

The diversity of lexicons regarding to the names of KHL of a language becomes the manifestation of society's comprehension to their environment. The insights are inseparable from the cultural reflection of the local community. The more lexicons that contain information about the environment of a language indicate the greater wealth of KHL among language speakers. In addition, the expressions embodied in the KHL becomes the AMS' creativity when they understand and safeguard the lexicon that they received from the older generation. For example, the lexicon of *buas-buas* leaves (*Premna Cordifolia Syzygium Aqueum*) as a culinary ingredient of *anyang buas-buas* and of *umbut pisang* lexicon used as *anyang umbut pisang* ingredients. What is interesting is that the *umbut* lexicon is used by the local people to create a proverb: *Umbutnya juga tak ketinggalan, mentah masaknyo enak dimakan, direbus pula kawannya santan, dibikin rencahnya si anak udang, enak rasanya bukan kepalang* (the umbut is also not left behind, the raw which is cooked is delicious, it is boiled with coconut milk, it is flavored with shrimp, its taste is really absurd).

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