

Culinary Metaphors as Cultural Symbols in Riau Malay Food Naming: A Pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract—Food traditions not only fulfill biological needs but also serve as powerful mediums for cultural communication, reflecting the social values of a community. This study explores the use of metaphors in the naming of traditional foods and beverages in Riau Malay culture through a pragmatic approach. By employing linguistic ethnography and critical discourse analysis, the research identifies the conceptual

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metaphors used and examines their socio-cultural functions. The findings highlight that Riau Malay culinary metaphors represent values of history, aesthetics, religion, and social harmony. This study contributes significantly to the field of pragmatic cultural studies and the preservation of Riau Malay local wisdom. It offers a novel perspective by bridging pragmatics with cultural inquiry, analyzing Riau Malay culinary metaphors not only as linguistic constructs but also as cultural signifiers that embody ethnic identity, preserve culinary heritage, and transmit shared social values.

***Index Terms*—culinary metaphors, cultural communication, Riau Malay culture, pragmatic approach, socio-cultural functions**

I. INTRODUCTION

Food traditions serve as more than biological sustenance; they embody cultural memory, social identity, and emotional expressions deeply rooted in everyday practices (Iflazoglu et al., 2025). In contemporary cultural linguistics and pragmatic studies, food metaphors have emerged as a critical site where language, cognition, and culture intersect, often revealing how abstract concepts are shaped through sensory and embodied experiences (Jurafsky, 2014). These metaphors not only reflect cultural values but also function as tools for social interaction and meaning-making. While numerous studies have explored the symbolic and semiotic functions of food metaphors in Western and East Asian contexts (Barthes, 1977; Tan, 1993), relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to how these metaphors operate pragmatically within Southeast Asian societies. In particular, the Riau Malay culture—with its rich culinary heritage and nuanced linguistic expressions—provides fertile ground for inquiry. Several studies highlight the culinary diversity of Riau Malay cuisine, which reflects a blend of local and global cultural influences, embodying identity, social function (Ghilda Nisa, 2023), and cultural symbolism. Dishes like *nasi lemak* are tied to the coastal Malay identity, shaped by interregional trade and distinct spices (Soh et al., 2021). The social function of Riau Malay food is emphasized, especially in communal meals during *Kenduri* or *Hajatan*, which strengthen community bonds. Furthermore, the symbolic meaning of coconut milk, representing softness and togetherness, is discussed (Sundari, 2024), while *asam pedas* reflects life's dynamic challenges (Amanda & Yasnel, 2025). These studies aim to fill the gap by analyzing the pragmatic roles of culinary metaphors in Riau Malay food naming practices, uncovering how language encodes cultural knowledge and communicative intent.

Metaphor is a fundamental mechanism through which humans conceptualize abstract experiences via concrete domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Among the various metaphorical domains, food serves as a particularly rich source due to its deep integration into daily life and cultural practice. Food metaphors offer a fertile ground for exploring how societies narrate historical consciousness, express moral judgments, articulate social hierarchies, and preserve collective values. In Malay societies, food naming practices—often infused with metaphorical and symbolic elements—act as communicative tools that convey nuanced meanings, reflecting social identities, cultural norms, and traditional wisdom beyond their literal gastronomic functions (Anderson & Ingram, 2020; Goddard, 2005; Izhar et al., 2023; Jeong & Lee, 2021; Koerich & Müller, 2022; Rojas-Rivas & Cuffia, 2022).

Despite the recognition of the richness of Malay culinary traditions (Djalal et al., 2022; Ramli et al., 2023; Suryani et al., 2023), previous research has largely focused on anthropological or gastronomical perspectives, with limited attention to the pragmatic-linguistic dimensions. These studies have predominantly examined food from the angle of social practices, cultural identity, and symbolic roles, yet overlook the significant role of language in food-related expressions. More importantly, there is a gap in scholarly research concerning how Riau Malay food metaphors function pragmatically. These metaphors are crucial tools for cultural transmission, emotional expression, and social negotiation, yet their linguistic functions remain underexplored in the context of Malay communication.

Addressing this research gap, the present study aims to systematically analyze the types and pragmatic functions of culinary metaphors in Riau Malay traditional foods. By adopting a linguistic ethnography framework alongside critical discourse analysis, this research explores how these metaphors function beyond mere aesthetic elements. It seeks to uncover their role as active agents in shaping, preserving, and communicating cultural values. Through a detailed examination of food-related expressions in Riau Malay, the study will reveal how these metaphors reflect and reinforce social norms, emotional bonds, and collective identity. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of language's role in cultural transmission and social interaction.

This investigation is timely and significant, particularly in light of globalization and modernization, which risk homogenizing indigenous cultural expressions. By focusing on the pragmatic analysis of culinary metaphors, this study contributes to linguistic theory while supporting the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. The research underscores the role of language in maintaining cultural diversity amidst global pressures. The study addresses two primary research questions:

- (1) What types of conceptual metaphors are used in naming traditional Riau Malay foods and beverages?
- (2) How do these metaphors function pragmatically to express social emotions, construct collective identities, and transmit cultural values, thus contributing to cultural continuity?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), introduced by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*, revolutionized the understanding of metaphors as essential cognitive structures in human thought and communication, rather than just rhetorical devices (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). According to CMT, metaphors map one conceptual domain (source domain) onto another (target domain), making abstract phenomena more comprehensible by relating them to concrete experiences. This mapping process helps individuals understand complex ideas through familiar, tangible concepts, allowing for deeper cognitive engagement.

In the context of food metaphors, the source domain often involves culinary elements that are mapped onto complex cultural, emotional, or social constructs. For instance, the phrase "*Laksamana Mengamuk*" uses the imagery of a chaotic battle to metaphorically express intense emotions, historical significance, and valor. Such metaphors link tangible culinary experiences with abstract ideas, enriching the understanding of cultural identity and social dynamics through familiar, concrete terms.

Following CMT, three primary types of metaphors are typically distinguished:

- 1) Structural metaphors: One concept is structured in terms of another (e.g., "Life is a journey").
- 2) Ontological metaphors: Abstract experiences are given entity or substance (e.g., "She is full of anger").
- 3) Orientational metaphors: Concepts are organized spatially (e.g., "High spirits" vs. "Low spirits").

These categories provide the analytical lens through which culinary metaphors in Riau Malay culture are examined.

B. Pragmatics of Metaphor

Pragmatics studies the use of language in context, focusing on the social function language performs in communication. Metaphors, when examined pragmatically, transcend their cognitive role and are understood as tools that shape social interactions and cultural meanings (Carston & Wearing, 2011; Forgács, 2022; Gibbs Jr, 2015, 2023; Levinson, 1983; Tomlinson Jr & Assimakopoulos, 2013). The meaning of a metaphor emerges through the interaction between the metaphorical expression and its cultural and social context (Black, 2019; Cameron, 1999; Goatly, 2022; Hariyanto et al., 2023; Jakobs & Hüning, 2022; Kövecses, 2010; Nardiati et al., 2023; Shapiro, 1985; Sørensen et al., 2021). This framework is vital for analyzing how food metaphors in Riau Malay culture do more than merely describe; they actively participate in social life by evoking emotions, fostering communal relationships, and encoding societal expectations. For example, a food metaphor in Riau Malay may express respect, affection, or social standing, reflecting the values inherent in the community's social fabric.

Further, scholars argue that metaphors serve as strategic communicative tools (Brugman et al., 2019; Cameron, 2003; Chilton, 2004; Davdison et al., 2004; Ghazinoory & Aghaei, 2024; Macagno, 2020; Putnam et al., 1999; Rossi & Macagno, 2021; Zinken et al., 2016). They are used not only to influence thought and perception but also to construct social identities and negotiate social realities. In the context of Riau Malay, food metaphors function as pragmatic acts that serve several roles, including expressive, identificational, and didactic functions. These metaphors are central to the social negotiation of roles and values, helping individuals understand their place within the community while simultaneously reinforcing cultural continuity.

C. Cultural Linguistics

Cultural Linguistics is a framework that emphasizes the relationship between cultural conceptualizations and language structures (Ashurova & Galieva, 2019; Hariyanto et al., 2023; Palmer, 1996; Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b; Zalmansyah et al., 2023). This approach posits that language reflects the shared cultural schemas, conceptual metaphors, and cultural models that shape meaning-making within a community. In the case of Riau Malay, culinary metaphors are seen as cultural conceptualizations, deeply embedded in the community's collective memory, emotional expressions, and social practices. These metaphors go beyond mere linguistic expressions, encapsulating cultural values, social hierarchies, and identity. By examining food metaphors within Riau Malay, we gain insight into how metaphorical food names serve as vehicles for transmitting culturally significant meanings, acting as bridges between language and culture (Korangy, 2024; Lomotey & Csajbok-Twerefou, 2021; Schröder et al., 2020; Völkel & Nassenstein, 2022; Wierzbicka, 1997; Zalmansyah et al., 2025).

D. Culinary Studies and Food Semiotics

The semiotics of food underscores the idea that food operates as a system of signs, carrying meanings that go far beyond mere sustenance (Barthes, 1977). Food choices, preparation techniques, and naming practices are symbolic acts that communicate social status, cultural identity, and emotional states. Based on this foundation, some opinions on how the language of food menus and culinary naming practices shape consumer perceptions and cultural identity (Cook, 2016; Jurafsky, 2014). However, most studies have overlooked the pragmatic aspects of food metaphors in traditional naming conventions. This gap in research is important because it limits our understanding of how food metaphors function not just as linguistic expressions, but as active agents in communication and cultural transmission—something this study aims to address.

III. METHODS

A. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design with a linguistic ethnography approach (Duranti, 2011), blending linguistic analysis with cultural exploration within the community context. The objective is to capture the rich, context-dependent meanings of culinary metaphors in traditional Riau Malay society. The research methods include:

- 1) Participant observation, to study food practices in natural settings such as markets, traditional ceremonies, and community gatherings.
- 2) Semi-structured interviews with cultural experts, culinary practitioners, and local elders.
- 3) Document analysis of historical cookbooks, folklore collections, and traditional culinary archives.

The study applies Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013) along with pragmatic interpretation (Levinson, 1983).

B. Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted in key areas of Riau Province, including Pekanbaru, a hub for urban culinary and cultural activities, and the East Coast of Sumatra, known for its rich maritime culinary traditions. Participants were chosen using purposive sampling to ensure depth and diversity, including 5 cultural scholars specializing in Malay heritage, 7 traditional food vendors, 10 local elders (aged 60 and above) with expertise in oral traditions, and 5 younger-generation culinary entrepreneurs. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and ethical standards were adhered to following qualitative research protocols (Creswell et al., 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

C. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for this study took place over six months (January–June 2024) and involved several steps. First, local narratives related to food naming were recorded to capture cultural insights and metaphorical language. Additionally, examples of food menus, promotional materials, and documentation of culinary events were gathered to analyze how food is represented and named in public discourse. Finally, interviews were transcribed and coded, focusing on metaphorical expressions and interpretive commentary. This comprehensive approach allowed for a rich analysis of the linguistic and cultural dimensions of food metaphors in Riau Malay society.

D. Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis proceeded in three main stages:

- 1) Identification of Metaphorical Expressions: Mapping food names containing metaphorical elements.
- 2) Categorization: Classifying metaphors into structural, ontological, and orientational types based on CMT (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008).
- 3) Pragmatic Interpretation: Analyzing the communicative functions (expressive, identificational, didactic) and the cultural values embedded in each metaphor.

Triangulation was conducted by cross-referencing participant narratives, field observations, and document analysis to ensure validity and reliability.

IV. RESULTS

A. Analysis

This section presents a thorough analysis of culinary metaphors within Riau Malay culture, using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as the primary framework to categorize and explore their pragmatic functions (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). The analysis is organized according to three key types of metaphors: structural, ontological, and orientational. For each type, the study examines its role in conveying cultural meanings and its functions in communication. Specifically, the research explores how these metaphors serve expressive purposes, shape social identities, and perform didactic functions within the community. These metaphors not only reflect societal values but also act as tools for social cohesion and cultural transmission, emphasizing the interconnectedness of language, culture, and identity in the Riau Malay context (Table 1).

TABLE 1
METAPHORICAL STRUCTURES AND PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS IN TRADITIONAL RIAU MALAY CULINARY NAMING

Name	Literal Description	Cultural Metaphor	Pragmatic Functions	Visual/Expressive Imagery
<i>Laksamana Mengamuk</i>	Beverage made from kuini (wild mango), coconut milk, syrup, and ice.	Represents emotional turbulence, strength, and honor of an admiral (laksamana).	Expressive: Evokes emotional intensity and excitement. Didactic: Transmits historical consciousness about heroism.	Scattered kuini pieces in coconut milk symbolize chaos and emotional fervor. “The Admiral's rage becomes sweet on our tongues, reminding us of our strength and forgiveness” (Interviewed with Dinawati, 2025).
<i>Putri Mandi</i>	Glutinous rice balls filled with sweet coconut, bathed in thick coconut milk sauce.	Symbolizes the purity, beauty, and spiritual renewal of a bathing princess.	Expressive: Symbolizes beauty and joy. Social Identity: Highlights feminine virtues in Malay cultural ideals.	Sweetness and softness visually represent rejuvenation. “The princess bathes not only to cleanse but to renew her spirit—just as we celebrate life in sweetness” (Interviewed with Dinawati, 2025).
<i>Putri Dua Sebilik</i>	Two-colored layered cake representing two entities sharing one space.	Signifies coexistence, tolerance, and mutual respect within shared spaces.	Didactic: Instills values of tolerance and harmonious living. Social Identity: Reinforces communal partnership ideals.	Dual-layered colors visualize harmony and shared identity.
<i>Es Air Mata Pengantin</i>	Colorful beverage with basil seeds, grass jelly, syrup, and ice.	Depicts emotional complexity during marriage—merging joy and sorrow.	Expressive: Conveys complex emotions during transitional rites. Social Identity: Highlights emotional depth in communal ceremonies.	Colorful, layered textures symbolize bittersweet matrimonial emotions.
<i>Sirup Mak Inang Sayang</i>	Sweet syrup drink with pineapple, apple, jelly, and basil seeds.	Embodies maternal affection and the role of women in cultural continuity.	Expressive: Celebrates maternal warmth and caregiving. Didactic: Encourages respect and gratitude toward maternal figures.	Sweet, nurturing flavors represent care and tradition-bearing roles.

Following the categorization proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, traditional Riau Malay culinary naming demonstrates the productive use of structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors to conceptualize cultural experience. Structural metaphors, as seen in *Laksamana Mengamuk*, map historical narratives of heroism onto sensory experiences, embedding emotional intensity and historical consciousness into everyday culinary practices. Ontological metaphors, exemplified by *Putri Mandi* and *Putri Dua Sebilik*, personify abstract cultural values such as purity, harmony, and communal identity through tangible culinary forms. These metaphors allow abstract cultural concepts to be easily understood and embodied through food. Meanwhile, orientational metaphors, represented by *Es Air Mata Pengantin* and *Sirup Mak Inang Sayang*, structure emotional experiences related to life transitions and relational roles, particularly emphasizing the complex affective dimensions of marriage and maternal caregiving. The pragmatic functions of these metaphors reveal expressive, didactic, and social identity-building purposes, suggesting that Riau Malay cuisine is not merely a matter of taste. Rather, it acts as a dynamic, living narrative system that sustains historical memory, imparts moral values, and strengthens communal cohesion.

The traditional culinary names in Riau Malay culture go beyond mere identification of food; they are deeply symbolic expressions that embody cultural values, emotional experiences, and social ideals. Each food name functions within a specific metaphorical type—structural, ontological, or orientational—each offering a unique perspective on how food reflects and shapes the Riau Malay worldview. These metaphors help in communicating complex cultural concepts, preserving traditions, and maintaining communal ties.

(a). *Laksamana Mengamuk*

The name *Laksamana Mengamuk* – ‘The Admiral Rampage’ is a prime example of a structural metaphor, where one conceptual domain (historical heroism and emotional turbulence) is mapped onto another (a sweet, refreshing drink made from kuini, coconut milk, syrup, and ice). The drink symbolizes heroism, emotional dynamics, and local historical narratives. The furious imagery of an admiral in battle is softened into a culinary experience, allowing everyday consumers to relive collective memories of strength, conflict, and forgiveness. Thus, *Laksamana Mengamuk* not only quenches thirst but also reactivates communal pride in historical resilience.

(b). *Putri Mandi*

Putri Mandi – ‘The Princess Bathes’ represents an ontological metaphor, where abstract qualities — beauty, sanctity, and social harmony — are embodied in a tangible culinary form: glutinous rice balls immersed in thick coconut milk. The act of bathing, associated with physical and spiritual purification, becomes a metaphor for celebrating life's sweetness, joy, and renewal. The culinary presentation reflects a culturally idealized vision of feminine virtue and emotional rejuvenation, reinforcing the importance of personal and social purity within Malay traditions, and is also reflected in the cultural practices and social ideals of the community.

(c). *Es Air Mata Pengantin*

Es Air Mata Pengantin – ‘Wedding Tears Ice’ employs an orientational metaphor that links emotional states to spatial or bodily experiences, particularly during significant rites of passage. This colorful beverage, composed of basil seeds,

grass jelly, syrup, and ice, represents emotional complexity in sacred ceremonies such as marriage. It captures the bittersweet blend of joy and sadness that accompanies major life transitions. The layering of textures and colors mirrors the multilayered emotional realities of weddings, where happiness, nostalgia, and hope coexist, reflecting not only the emotional sensitivity of the Riau Malay ceremonial life but also the community's deep reverence for such transformative cultural rituals.

(d). *Putri Dua Sebilik*

Putri Dua Sebilik – ‘*Two Princesses in One Room*’ is another example of an ontological metaphor that emphasizes balance and tolerance in communal living. The two-colored layered cake physically embodies the concept of coexistence: two distinct yet harmoniously integrated elements occupying a single space without losing their identities. This metaphor conveys a social ideal — the importance of tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect within households and wider communities. It underscores the possibility of unity in diversity, a value deeply embedded in the Riau Malay cultural fabric.

(e). *Sirup Mak Inang Sayang*

Sirup Mak Inang Sayang – ‘*Beloved Lady-in-Waiting Syrup*’ – employs an orientational metaphor to project abstract notions of affection and the vital role of women in cultural preservation into a sensorial experience. The drink, made from fruits and basil seeds, references *Mak Inang*, a traditional female figure associated with caregiving and nurturing within royal households. Through this culinary expression, maternal affection is spatialized and embodied in sweetness, symbolizing the emotional warmth and sustaining presence of women. It underscores their crucial role as custodians of tradition and emotional stability within the community.

In sum, Riau Malay culinary metaphors function as living cultural texts, encoding values of heroism, beauty, emotional complexity, social harmony, and familial love. Each dish transcends mere sustenance to become a medium for conveying collective memory, transmitting moral values, and reinforcing communal identity, thus preserving its cultural identity across time. These metaphors reflect a worldview deeply rooted in emotional sensitivity, historical consciousness, and social cohesion — core elements of the Riau Malay cultural imagination.

B. *Pragmatic Functions of Culinary Metaphors*

The naming of traditional foods in Riau Malay culture reflects not only metaphorical creativity but also serves distinct pragmatic functions—ways in which language, through food naming, operates purposefully within its social and cultural milieu. These functions encompass expressive, social identity, and didactic purposes. Expressively, food names convey emotions and shared experiences; socially, they affirm group identity and cultural belonging; and didactically, they transmit moral lessons, cultural values, and historical narratives. Each function contributes to maintaining cultural continuity, fostering emotional resonance, and strengthening communal cohesion across generations.

(a). *Expressive Function: Conveying Collective Emotions*

The expressive function of culinary metaphors is exemplified in names like *Es Air Mata Pengantin* (“Wedding Tears Ice”), which encapsulate the emotional richness and complexity of marriage rituals—where joy, hope, sadness, and nostalgia converge. Such metaphors provide the community with linguistic tools to articulate deeply felt yet often ineffable emotions during life’s transitional moments. In this way, consuming the beverage becomes a symbolic act of participating in collective emotional memory. By transforming affective experiences into tangible, consumable forms, expressive metaphors enable individuals to process, externalize, and affirm emotional states in socially meaningful and culturally resonant ways.

(b). *Social Identity Function: Affirming Roles and Solidarity*

The social identity function is exemplified in names like *Sirup Mak Inang Sayang* (‘*Beloved Lady-in-Waiting Syrup*’), which metaphorically highlight nurturing and caregiving roles traditionally associated with women, especially in preserving emotional balance, cultural traditions, and communal well-being. By invoking such roles, the metaphor not only honors feminine contributions but also reinforces gendered and generational identities within the cultural structure. Through these metaphorical expressions, food becomes a vehicle for affirming group belonging, sustaining intergenerational respect, and validating social roles. In this way, culinary metaphors help cultivate a sense of solidarity and cultural continuity by embedding social meaning in everyday consumption.

(c). *Didactic Function: Transmitting Historical and Moral Values*

The didactic function is vividly embodied in culinary names like *Laksamana Mengamuk* (‘The Admiral Rampage’), which serve as pedagogical tools for transmitting historical and moral lessons. This metaphor evokes narratives of heroism, emotional control, and moral resilience by linking abstract values to a familiar sensory experience. Through such naming, traditional foods become mnemonic devices that preserve collective memory and encourage reflection on virtues like bravery, honor, and forgiveness. In everyday contexts, these metaphors render cultural teachings more accessible, ensuring their transmission across generations in a form that is both enjoyable and memorable.

C. *Representation of Cultural Values*

Culinary metaphors in Riau Malay culture are not just linguistic adornments; they function as essential instruments for representing and transmitting fundamental cultural values that shape social life (Manik et al., 2024; Shariff et al., 2022). Through metaphorical naming, food becomes a vessel for preserving and communicating historical narratives (Johnson-Jennings et al., 2020), moral teachings, aesthetic ideals, and religious beliefs. These metaphors encapsulate key cultural values such as local wisdom (Abas et al., 2022; Fusté-Forné, 2022; Hidayat et al., 2019) and historical memory (Fatimah et al., 2021; Lugo-Morin, 2022), aesthetic sensitivity and social courtesy, as well as religiosity and social harmony (Ajina, 2024; Dahiya et al., 2025; García García, 2025). By embedding these values in everyday culinary experiences, Riau Malay food names reinforce communal identity and strengthen cultural continuity across generations.

(a). *Historical and Local Wisdom: Heroic Tales Embedded in Food Names*

Names like *Laksamana Mengamuk* ('Admiral Rampage') pragmatically encapsulate historical narratives and local wisdom (Duarte Alonso et al., 2022). These names recall heroic episodes and valorous figures from the community's past, embedding lessons of bravery, leadership, and emotional mastery into daily practices. By consuming and discussing these foods, individuals symbolically reconnect with their ancestral legacies, making history a living part of their identity. Culinary metaphors, thus, ensure that historical consciousness is not only preserved in texts but actively embodied in everyday life. Food names act as mnemonic devices that preserve and revitalize collective memory, allowing historical wisdom to dynamically persist across generations.

(b). *Aesthetics and Courtesy: The Figure of the "Princess"*

Metaphors involving figures like *Putri Mandi* ('Bathing Princess') reflect Malay cultural ideals of beauty, refinement, and moral propriety. The image of a princess bathing suggests not only physical beauty but also inner purity, grace, and the courtesy expected in social relations. These aesthetic values are closely tied to moral decency and respectful behavior, which are foundational virtues in Riau Malay society. Culinary metaphors, therefore, pragmatically educate and remind individuals of the aesthetic and ethical standards that govern interpersonal conduct. Through metaphors of noble beauty and purity, Riau Malay culinary traditions reinforce societal expectations of decorum, refinement, and moral excellence.

(c). *Religiosity and Social Harmony: Compassion and Gratitude in Communal Meals*

Culinary metaphors like *Sirup Mak Inang Sayang* ('Beloved Lady-in-Waiting Syrup') and *Es Air Mata Pengantin* ('Wedding Tears Ice') reflect values of compassion, gratitude, and emotional togetherness. These values are deeply tied to Malay religiosity, which emphasizes gratitude to God, respect for elders, and compassion within the community. Metaphorical foods served at communal gatherings, such as weddings, religious celebrations, and harvest festivals, act as embodied expressions of these spiritual and social principles, promoting cohesion and mutual care.

V. DISCUSSION

The metaphorical structuring of traditional Riau Malay cuisine reflects a deeply ingrained cultural orientation toward historical consciousness, emotional expressiveness, communal values, and moral education. Through the analysis of structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors, it becomes clear that food naming and presentation in Riau Malay society are not arbitrary but are intentionally embedded with layered meanings, serving as powerful cultural signifiers.

The structural metaphors, particularly as embodied in *Laksamana Mengamuk*, highlight how historical memory is seamlessly integrated into everyday life. By mapping the abstract domain of heroic emotional intensity onto a sensory experience like a beverage, the Riau Malay community maintains a living connection to its past valor and collective resilience. This approach transforms the act of consumption into both an act of remembrance and an emotional reenactment, ensuring that narratives of strength, honor, and forgiveness persist in communal consciousness.

Meanwhile, the ontological metaphors found in *Putri Mandi* and *Putri Dua Sebilik* reflect a worldview that emphasizes the embodiment of virtues such as purity, renewal, tolerance, and harmony. In these examples, food items serve as vessels of idealized human qualities, reinforcing social values through tangible, everyday practices. Ontological metaphors also function as identity markers, particularly concerning the roles of women and the significance of coexistence within a diverse social fabric.

The use of orientational metaphors in *Es Air Mata Pengantin* and *Sirup Mak Inang Sayang* highlights the Riau Malay community's sensitivity to emotional complexity and life transitions. These metaphors map bodily or emotional states onto spatial or sensory experiences, reflecting a culturally significant view that emotions, especially during pivotal rites of passage like marriage, are multifaceted and deserving of recognition. Moreover, these metaphors honor maternal roles and caregiving as essential to cultural continuity, emphasizing affection, gratitude, and respect across generations.

Across all types, the pragmatic functions — expressive, didactic, and identity-forming — demonstrate how traditional food serves not only as a medium for emotional expression but also as a moral guide and a social binder. In Riau Malay society, eating transcends a mere biological necessity; it becomes a culturally significant act, infused with historical, emotional, and ethical dimensions. Culinary metaphors thus function as powerful mechanisms through which values are internalized, emotions are expressed, and collective identities are continually formed and reinforced.

This analysis affirms Lakoff and Johnson's proposition that metaphor is not only central to language but also to thought and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). In the context of Riau Malay traditional cuisine, metaphor serves as an essential medium for transmitting cultural knowledge, negotiating social relationships, and preserving a cohesive, value-driven worldview across generations.

The classification of Riau Malay culinary names into structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors provides valuable insight into how the community encodes complex social values, emotions, and historical narratives into everyday practices. Each metaphor type employs distinct cognitive strategies and serves specific cultural functions, shaping how individuals and communities relate to their identities, emotions, and social environments. These metaphors are not merely linguistic tools but are integral to how cultural meanings are constructed and transmitted within the Riau Malay society.

A. Structural Metaphor: Heroism and Emotional Dynamics

The structural metaphor represented by *Laksamana Mengamuk* illustrates the Riau Malay community's tendency to frame daily life through grand historical narratives. In this case, an abstract domain—heroic emotions, turbulence, and historical valor—is mapped onto the sensory experience of a beverage. This metaphor reflects a worldview where personal and communal experiences are intricately linked to historical memory. By naming a refreshing drink after the intense rage of a *Laksamana* (admiral), the culture symbolically transforms chaotic emotional energy into something pleasurable and sustaining. Structural metaphors thus not only serve to shape abstract feelings but also transform potentially disruptive emotional forces into sources of communal identity and pride.

B. Ontological Metaphors: Embodying Virtues and Social Ideals

Ontological metaphors, as exemplified by *Putri Mandi* and *Putri Dua Sebilik*, represent a distinct cognitive strategy: the embodiment of abstract values in concrete, consumable forms. In *Putri Mandi*, the metaphor of a bathing princess evokes ideals of beauty, renewal, and inner sanctity, reflecting the cultural emphasis on moral and aesthetic virtues. Similarly, *Putri Dua Sebilik* constructs a metaphor of coexistence and tolerance through the image of two distinct entities sharing a single space, thus reinforcing ideals of social balance and harmonious living. Ontological metaphors, therefore, anchor abstract moral lessons in the sensory realm, making cultural values not only more tangible and comprehensible but also emotionally resonant through everyday practices such as eating.

C. Orientational Metaphors: Emotional Navigation and Social Roles

The orientational metaphors in *Es Air Mata Pengantin* and *Sirup Mak Inang Sayang* focus on guiding emotional navigation through life's transitional phases. In *Es Air Mata Pengantin*, the emotional complexity of marriage—an event interweaving joy, sadness, hope, and nostalgia—is rendered tangible through a colorful, layered beverage. The sensory richness of the drink mirrors the emotional intricacies of the rite. Similarly, *Sirup Mak Inang Sayang* metaphorizes nurturing and maternal affection through sweet and refreshing sensory experiences, highlighting the pivotal role of women in maintaining familial and cultural stability. Orientational metaphors in this context enable individuals to emotionally position themselves within the broader communal fabric, guiding appropriate emotional expression and reinforcing social responsibility.

D. Broader Cultural Implications

Overall, the distribution of metaphor types reflects a Riau Malay cultural orientation that is both relational and historically grounded. Structural metaphors link the individual to the collective memory of the past; ontological metaphors connect abstract virtues to concrete daily practices; and orientational metaphors guide emotional states during significant life events. Collectively, these metaphorical systems allow the Riau Malay people to narrate their identity, values, and appropriate emotional responses in various contexts.

In this way, food in Riau Malay society functions not only as biological sustenance but also as a powerful medium for conveying collective memory, moral teachings, emotional regulation, and social identity formation. The richness of culinary metaphors underscores how everyday practices are deeply imbued with symbolic meaning, ensuring the continuity of cultural values across generations through pleasurable, habitual acts of consumption.

Through the pragmatic use of culinary metaphors, the Riau Malay people express and perpetuate essential cultural values that shape their collective identity. Historical memory is preserved through heroic narratives embedded in food names, ensuring that the community remains connected to its past. Aesthetic and moral ideals are reinforced through metaphors of refined nobility, symbolizing virtues of beauty, purity, and grace. Religious values and social harmony are interwoven into the communal act of eating, where food becomes a medium for emotional sharing and mutual respect. In Riau Malay tradition, food transcends mere nourishment, becoming a symbolic script that encapsulates cultural memory, emotional experience, ethical conduct, and shared beliefs.

VI. CONCLUSION

Traditional Riau Malay culinary naming utilizes conceptual metaphors to articulate cultural identity, social emotions, and collective memory. Through expressive, social identity, and didactic functions, culinary metaphors serve as vital media for cultural transmission. This study not only contributes to the fields of pragmatics and cultural linguistics but

also offers valuable insights into safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the face of modernization. Its novelty lies in bridging pragmatic analysis with cultural inquiry—treating Riau Malay culinary metaphors not merely as linguistic constructs but as cultural signifiers that embody ethnic identity, preserve culinary heritage, and transmit shared social values.

The exploration of metaphor types in Riau Malay traditional cuisine reveals that food is more than a material necessity—it is a dynamic medium of cultural expression, emotional articulation, and moral instruction. Structural metaphors reinforce historical consciousness and emotional resilience; ontological metaphors embody social virtues and communal ideals; and orientational metaphors guide emotional experiences through life's transitions. Metaphors in Riau Malay food naming are pragmatically purposeful: expressive metaphors convey emotion, social identity metaphors affirm belonging and gender roles, and didactic metaphors function as informal moral education. Together, these metaphorical functions reflect a value-centered worldview in which daily acts like eating affirm identity, sustain memory, and transmit cultural wisdom. Future research may expand this inquiry by comparing culinary metaphors across other Malay-speaking regions to explore broader patterns of metaphorical and cultural meaning in the Malay world.

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