



The **Epitome** */i'pitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

Theme,
**THE POWER OF EXPRESSION",
"REFLECTIONS & REALITIES:**

Volume 1
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2025



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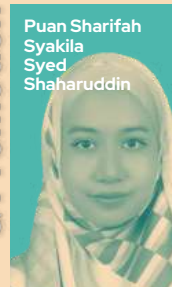


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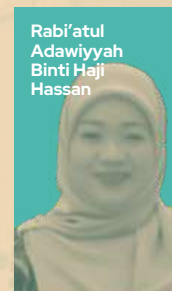
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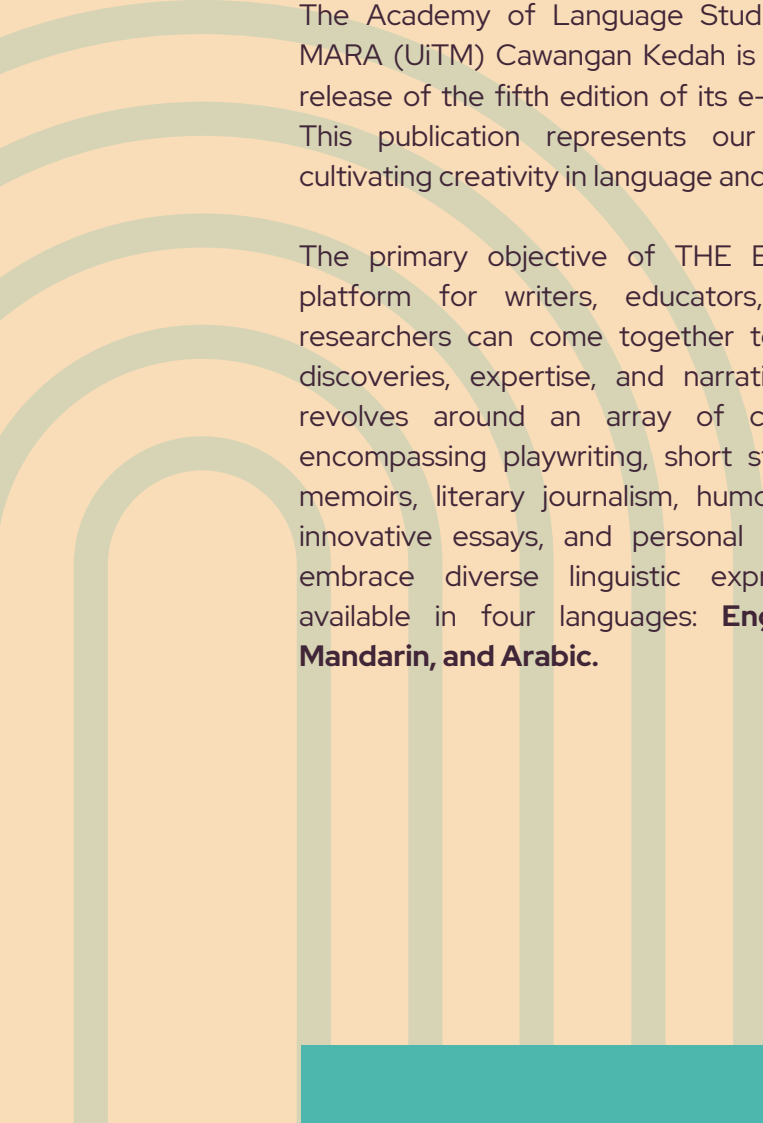
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Synopsis



The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Kedah is thrilled to announce the release of the fifth edition of its e-magazine, The Epitome. This publication represents our steady dedication to cultivating creativity in language and literature.

The primary objective of THE EPITOME is to offer a platform for writers, educators, scholars, poets, and researchers can come together to exchange their ideas, discoveries, expertise, and narratives. Our special focus revolves around an array of creative writing genres, encompassing playwriting, short stories, songs, speeches, memoirs, literary journalism, humour writing, lyric essays, innovative essays, and personal essays, with a goal to embrace diverse linguistic expressions, with content available in four languages: **English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, and Arabic.**





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Preface

Mr. Azlan Abdul Rahman

Head of Faculty
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa (APB)
UiTM Kedah Branch

Welcome to the 5th issue of Epitome. This time, we step into a world where reflections shape realities, and where the simple act of expression holds incredible power.

Our theme, "Reflections & Realities: The Power of Expression," captures the spirit of this collection. It reminds us that every creative work is more than just an arrangement of words – it is a mirror, a window, and a bridge. Within these pages, you will encounter a rich variety of voices, each offering a unique glimpse into personal journeys, dreams, questions, and truths. Together, they form a tapestry that reflects both the world as it is and the world as we imagine it could be.

At Epitome, we believe that creativity is not just about telling stories; it's about giving shape to experiences that might otherwise remain unspoken. Through story that stirs the heart, stories that spark new ideas, and essays that invite reflection, we celebrate the courage it takes to put thoughts into words and share them with others.

This issue is not just a showcase of talent – it is an invitation. An invitation to pause, to listen, and to engage with the many realities presented here. It asks us to look beyond the surface, to find meaning in unexpected places, and to recognize the universal threads that connect us all through the simple yet profound act of expression.

As you journey through this edition, we hope you find pieces that resonate with you, challenge your perspective, and awaken new ideas. May these reflections inspire you to embrace your own realities – and perhaps even to express them in your own way.

Thank you for allowing Epitome to be part of your reading experience. We are honoured to share these voices with you.

Happy reading!



Editor'snote

Presenting the fifth edition of THE EPITOME, a humble yet heartfelt collection of voices that reflect who we are, what we've experienced, and the truths we dare to express.

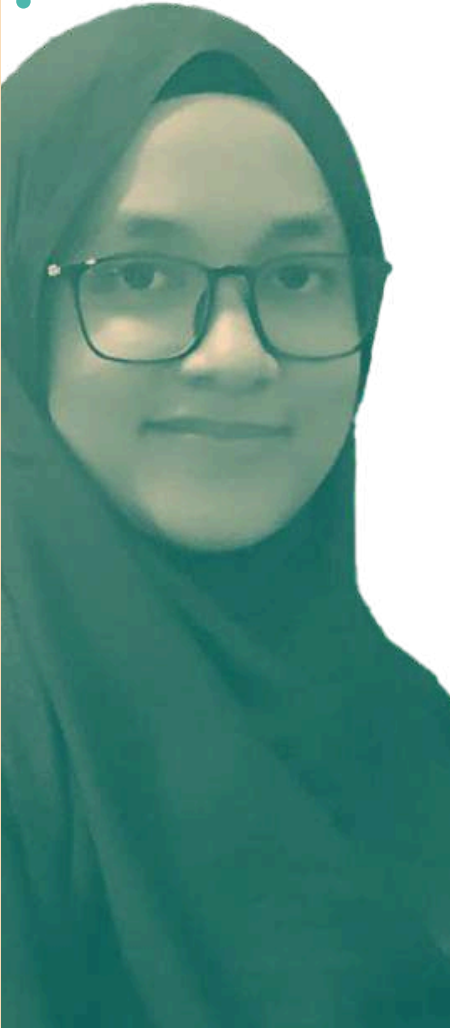
This publication's theme, "Reflections & Realities: The Power of Expression", embraces the essence of storytelling in all its forms—raw, whimsical, honest, and imaginative. Within these pages, our contributors navigate the labyrinth of identity, nostalgia, struggle, resilience, and creativity. Whether through memoirs, fiction, poetry, satire, or cultural musings, each piece represents a unique lens into the human condition, where language becomes both mirror and window—reflecting ourselves and revealing the world.

In a publication that welcomes expression in three languages—English, Bahasa Melayu, and Mandarin—we are reminded of the richness that lies in linguistic diversity. From humorous tales of online shopping to haunting narratives of secrets and self-discovery, from kampung chronicles to cross-cultural encounters, THE EPITOME offers a space for voices that often go unheard to finally be seen, read, and felt.

My deepest appreciation goes to the writers who have entrusted us with their stories, the editorial and design teams whose passion has brought this issue to life, and our readers who continuously support this platform as a space for creative and reflective exploration.

May this edition inspire you to reflect, to connect, and most of all—to express.

Warmly,
Dr. Nur Syazwanie Mansor
Chief Editor
THE EPITOME 2025



Facility Fatigue: Where Whinning Holds an Honorary Degree

When I hear complaints, yet “again” about the facilities at the university where I teach, it was today that truly sent a shockwave through my nervous system and brain. And gone is the glory or splendour that the structures and the location as a whole once possessed and provided, along with its contributions and services which many have forgotten! I have experienced these concerns numerous times throughout my 18 years of employment with the same organisation and I presume that today would be the perfect time to share my thoughts on this issue and potentially provide insights for the readers.

It may seem a trivial issue to some, but somehow to me, it hurts the pride and dignity or the more accurate word to use to describe this situation is lowly or inappropriate for employees who work in the organisation to fail to recognise the so-called bureaucratic red tape that happens in the organisation. A different lesson unfolds daily, the art of complaining- which overshadow knowledge as a precedent in the great halls of academia.

Jean Hoo Fang Jing

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The grievances directed at the university's facilities appear to neglect a reality such as punctuality which also requires equal effort. From non-functional projectors to broken air-conditioning units, the faculty seems to have a list of grievances that grows longer than their lecture notes. But, beneath the commotion, there lies a harsh reality even the most basic problems are frequently left unaddressed because no one is to pick up the concerns, or worse, accept responsibility for them. The administrative offices, which are ignorant about the complaints from other employees within the organisation, frequently encounter obstacles such as constrained resources and rigorous approval procedures. These financial and regulatory constraints complicate the fixing of even simple maintenance concerns, turning small problems into major obstacles.

Then again, are the lecturers entirely free from fault? When classes start late without notice, assignments remain unmarked for long periods, and absenteeism becomes common, it raises questions about their own responsibilities and this weakens the position to criticise. Lecturers play a vital role in shaping students' knowledge and character, serving as guides not only in academics but also in fostering positive attitudes towards life.

Students may experience distress in an uncomfortable learning environment; nonetheless, it is the responsibility of lecturers to ease tensions and provide reassurance, rather than intensify frustrations! Lecturers must exemplify the principles they stand for, demonstrating resilience and problem-solving skills under challenging situations.

In today's era, where social media is a primary platform for students to voice grievances, lecturers must lead by example. Instead of allowing negativity to spread, they should encourage constructive dialogue and model positivity. Language lecturers, especially, have a unique opportunity to transform complaints into teachable moments, using kind and motivating words to inspire change and growth. This aligns with subjects taught to students, such as constructive evaluative commentary, which emphasises on skills like effective communication in both verbal and non-verbal situations. Similarly, business correspondence focuses on using appropriate language and vocabulary to deliver messages and opinions clearly and professionally.



Language lecturers, therefore, have a crucial responsibility to model and reinforce these attributes, both in classroom settings and beyond. By demonstrating effective communication, proper word choice, and respectful dialogue, they set an example for students to follow. Whether addressing grievances, leading discussions, or engaging with students in informal settings, language lecturers should consistently promote clarity, empathy, and professionalism. This approach not only enhances students' linguistic skills but also prepares them to navigate real-world situations with confidence and a positive mindset. Back to the point I previously mentioned, why do such grievances appear to annoy all parties involved? I will explain The Complaint Cycle Framework, which examines Helplessness (Seligman, 1972), Blame (Heider, 1958), and Collective Inaction (Latane et al., 1979). This framework may provide insights on the existence issues that remain unacknowledged.

The cycle of complaint in the university settings starts when faculty members repeatedly request maintenance for malfunctioning air conditioning units, functional projectors, and improved parking facilities, issues that raise the most complaints and yet administrative delays discourage future efforts to escalate or resolve these matters. Eventually, lecturers stop all attempts, but resort to other accessible solutions such as utilising their own portable projectors. Hence, whining serves as a channel for frustration although no further action takes place. This helplessness is further compounded when facilities fail to function, and lecturers blame the issue exclusively on administrative inefficiency ("They are oblivious to our needs") instead of seeking practical solutions. On the contrary, when students express dissatisfaction on delayed feedback, lecturers blame it on workload rather than inadequate time management. This fosters an unhealthy attitude to transfer blame, reinforcing lack of accountability on both sides of the dispute.

Finally, even when a faculty meeting acknowledges maintenance issues, faculty members assume someone else will report or resolve them. Likewise, lecturers trust that the administrative personnel would take actions upon the complaints made to their interests, leading to collective inaction that forms the dissatisfaction and grievances ultimately results in greater emotional distress.

The once magnificent structure, operating despite early criticism, now faces the pressure of numerous daily complaints. The university's noble mission and vision which are to impart knowledge and create opportunities for the bumiputra community have been undermined, lost amidst the chorus of grievances. The goals to maintain dignity and excel as a prominent institution for future generations have been predominantly neglected, despite the national anthem and university songs dutifully recited at meetings and gatherings, functioning as mere formalities rather than genuine pledges. It is deeply disappointing that some lecturers, entrusted to the important task of educating and guiding students, have diverted from their true purpose. Instead of demonstrating perseverance and guiding their students with positivity, they have yielded to the challenges they should overcome.

New buildings no matter how splendid they once were, will inevitably show wear and reveal flaws over time, this is the natural course of things. Likewise, the previously youthful and inexperienced lecturers have aged, and with this maturation, one would expect an increase in wisdom, patience, and proficiency in mentoring the forthcoming generation. Just as structures require maintenance to serve their purpose, lecturers must consistently enhance their skills to lead and motivate. It is an undeniable fact that, although facilities in buildings may deteriorate, the human ability to adapt, guide, and preserve the fundamentals of education is important in shaping a more promising future.

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Jean Hoo Fang Jing is a senior lecturer with a Master of Arts in Linguistics at the Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Melaka Branch. She currently teaches English courses such as Proficiency and Proofreading & Editing Skills and has 21 years of teaching experience. She has published journal articles and proceedings in the linguistics and education disciplines.



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