



The **Epitome** */i'pitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

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

Volume 1
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The
Epitome
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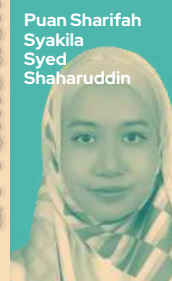


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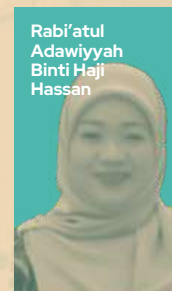
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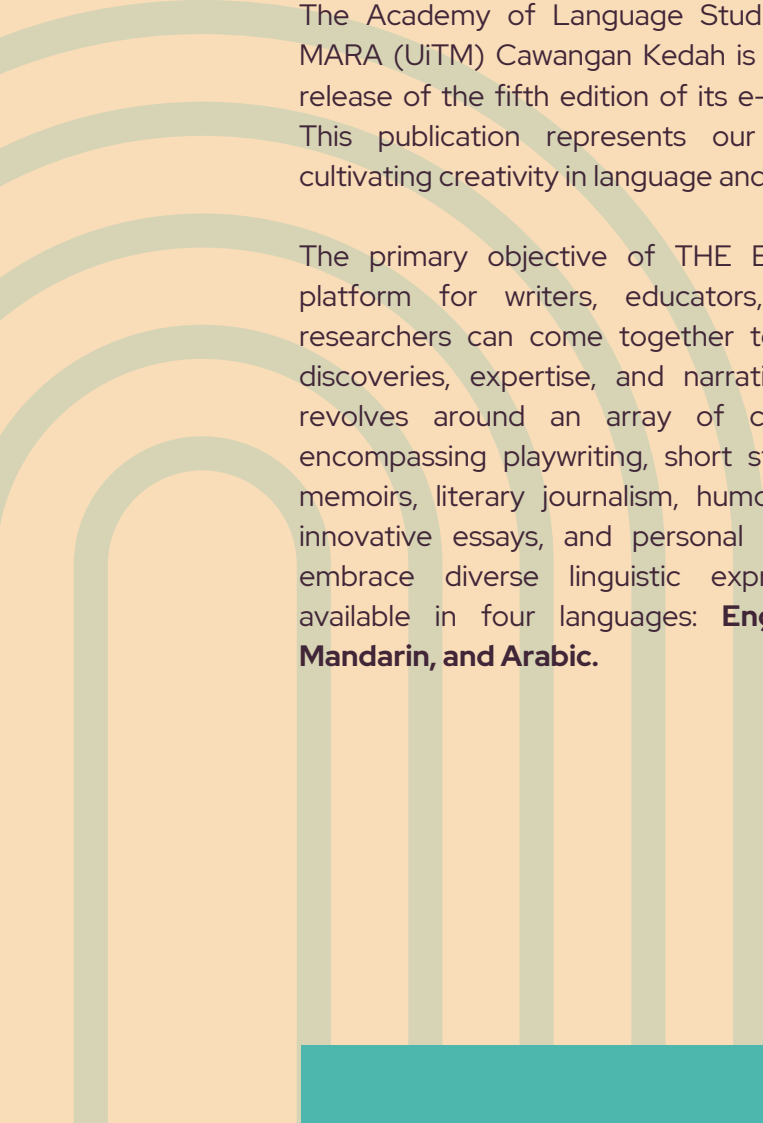
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Synopsis



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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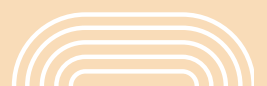
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Preface

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.

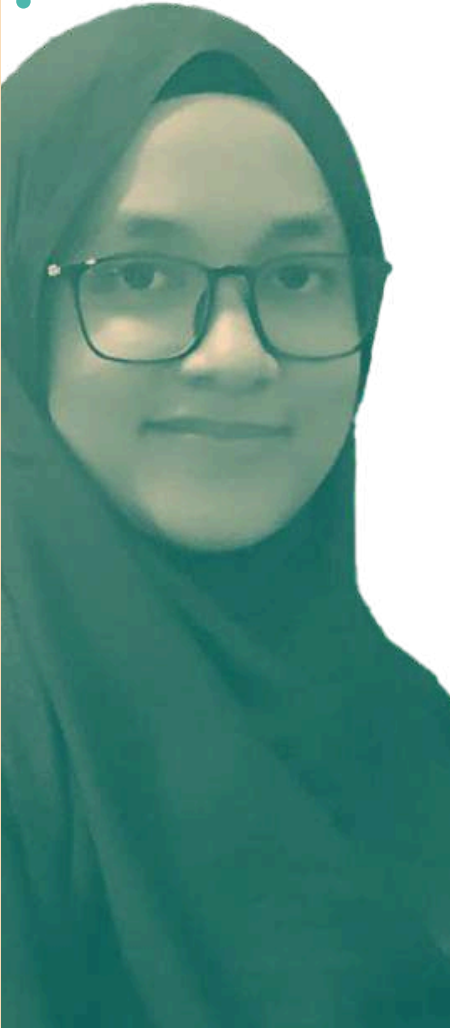
This publication's theme, "Reflections & Realities: The Power of Expression", embraces the essence of storytelling in all its forms—raw, whimsical, honest, and imaginative. Within these pages, our contributors navigate the labyrinth of identity, nostalgia, struggle, resilience, and creativity. Whether 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



Plant Parenthood: Growing Plants, Growing Love

I never thought that a young tree would teach me the art of parenting. Yet here I am, looking outside my window and my eyes are on my small garden, marveling at how this new hobby has transformed not just my yard but also my perspective on life. Growing a plant makes me realize that it is much like raising a child. It demands more than the basics of sunlight and water; it requires attention, love, and above all, discipline.

It all started as a casual venture after I moved into our new house last year. One weekend, while watching a live session on an online shopping platform, I was drawn to the vibrant tiny saplings shown by the seller. A set of *Plectranthus mona* lavender saplings really caught my eyes, the seller's description boasting a promise of vibrant purple flowers and lush foliage. Without much thought, I purchased them, imagining a simple, linear process: plant, water, and growth. Very easy-peasy to care, I soon discovered how naive I had been.

Planting the saplings was easy. I followed the instructions on the tag, carefully placing each one in moist soil and arranging them in a shaded corner of my garden. For the first few days, I monitored my new plants with anticipation, checking for the slightest hint of growth. There was a tiny addition, still fragile and unassuming, but to me, it was such a satisfaction for a beginner.

After a few weeks, my enthusiasm met reality. The mona lavender demanded more than water and sunlight; it needed consistent care and an understanding of its unique needs. One morning, I noticed its leaves drooping slightly. I googled it up, the results showed it was a subtle sign of either overwatering or lack of light. Another day, I spotted the lower branches became darker and the leaves turned yellowish. Not only that, white fungi were easily spotted at the surface of the soil, just near the root. I thought that was because of continuous downpour at my place, and made the soil moist too much – soaked with water. The journey had become more complex, and this reminded me of the nuances of raising a child.

Much like children, plants thrive under a balance of freedom and guidance. Being over-watered, and the roots rot; being under-watered, and they wither. Similarly, excessive leniency or control in parenting can lead to emotional imbalance or a stunted sense of independence.

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Each day, I found myself asking questions. Is the plant getting enough light? Should I prune this stem or let it grow? In those moments of uncertainty, I saw parallels to decisions every parent must face. Should I step in to correct my child's behavior, or should I allow them to learn from their mistakes?

One significant lesson for me, care doesn't mean indulgence. A plant, like a child, needs boundaries. I recall the moment I decided to prune a sprawling stem to allow the plant's energy to focus on the blooms. It was kind of cruel to cut them off, but it was necessary for the mona lavender's long-term health. Similarly, discipline in parenting is not about denying love but about shaping resilience and strength. Allowing a child to have everything they want may seem kind in the short term, but it can lead to an inability to cope with life's inevitable challenges.

Of course, not all my gardening attempts have been successful. Apart from mona lavender, I bought a couple of lemon cypress saplings on another day. These 1.5 feet tall were stunning ones, with the nice smell like lemon grass and I was so excited about its potential to add a vibrant splash of green to my garden. Unfortunately, my enthusiasm led me to over-fertilize it, unknowingly causing fertilizer burn.

The once-bright sapling started to wither, its needles browning at an alarming rate. I was very frustrated, but the experience taught me a valuable lesson: enthusiasm is no substitute for knowledge. Plants, like children, require us to understand their specific needs. As a mother of three, now I understand what works for one may not work for another, and sometimes our good intentions can lead to unintended harm.

As the months passed, my mona lavender began to thrive. The first flower was small, almost unimpressive, but it was a triumph nonetheless.

It symbolized perseverance, care, and the invisible bond between a gardener and their plant. When I saw its vibrant purple bloom, I couldn't help but feel a deep sense of accomplishment. I had nurtured something from a fragile sapling to a thriving plant. Yes! It wasn't just the flower that had grown; I had grown too!

Parenting is much the same. The moments of pride—a child's first steps, their first words, their first achievements—are interwoven with countless days of unseen effort. Behind every milestone is a foundation of care, discipline, and patience. Like my mona lavender, children flourish when nurtured with love and guided with wisdom. I learned to embrace the small milestones—a new leaf here, a budding flower there—and celebrate each step of the journey. As a parent, I've realized that no two challenges are the same. What worked once may not work again, and flexibility is key to nurturing growth. In the end, I understand both gardening and raising a child are acts of faith—investing time and energy into something fragile, trusting that it will grow into something beautiful.



The mona lavender – Purple blossoms in my heart



Withered, dying leaves – leaving me cry!

Biodata of author(s)

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