



The **Epitome** */i'pitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

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

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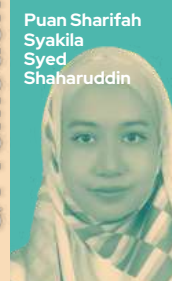


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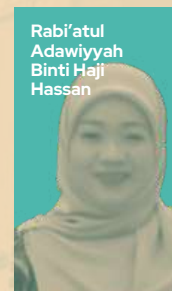
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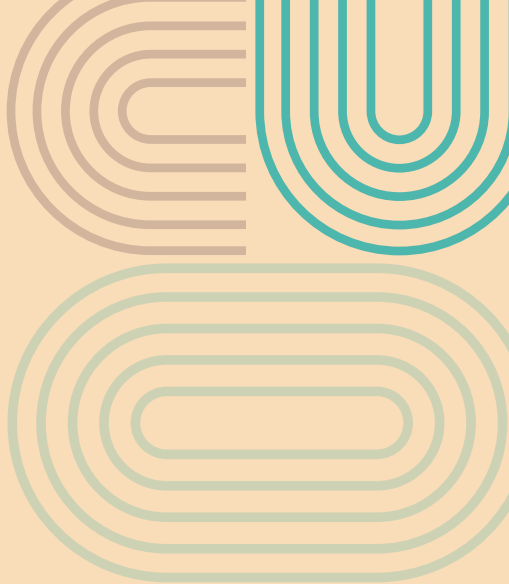
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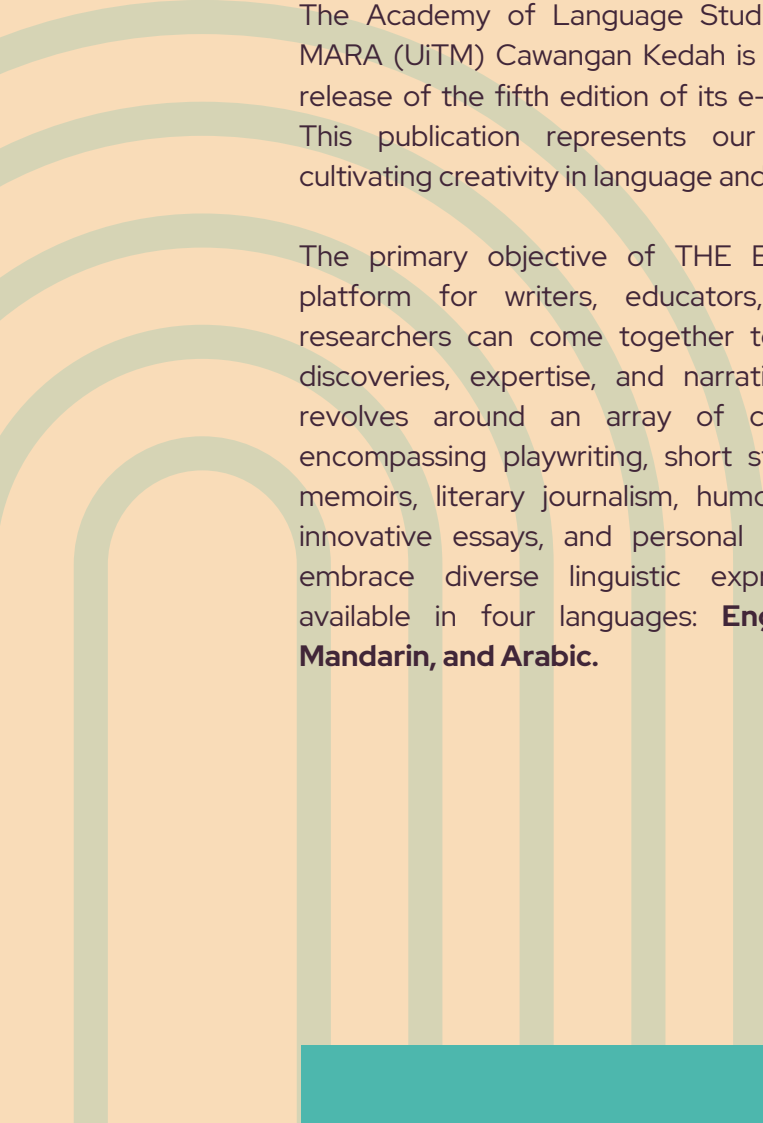
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Synopsis



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
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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!



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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





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Something felt off that morning. My colleague and I had planned to grab Roti Canai for breakfast at our favourite stall before work, like we always did. But when we got there, it was closed. Just... closed. We glanced at each other, then at the closed door signing us to stop, there was this faint smell of dough and curry that seemed like a tease, it tempted us.

"It's too early, I guess?" my colleague murmured, though the place was usually open by now. We waited for a bit, hoping the door might creak open any minute soon. Nothing. Just the flickering lamp that looked like it had seen better days. We waited, but it was clear our hopes were as shut as that door. Finally, we shrugged, exchanging a quiet laugh over our "failed" mission and headed to our car to leave, already wondering where else to get our breakfast fix.

Funny thing, though... I had this nagging feeling that by the time I'd wake up tomorrow, I'd barely remember why it mattered.

With breakfast plans thwarted, we eventually headed to work, only to find a new surprise waiting for us: our workplace had been transferred to an entirely new location. Boxes were piled everywhere, half-open, and colleagues were busy packing up the last of our things. What was even happening here



Quest For Roti Canai Takes A Surreal Turn

The new building looked modest from the outside, a plain, almost down-to-earth structure tucked between two towering offices. But stepping through the door felt like crossing into another world. The entrance gave way to an extensive, open space that seemed impossible given the building's exterior. High ceilings stretched above us, and room after room unfolded in all directions, each more expansive and high-tech than the last. I kept stepping in and out, rubbing my eyes to be sure. No matter how many times I tried, it was still enormous inside, way bigger than it looked from the outside.

It was like the space itself had stretched. Every corner held sleek, high-tech equipment I'd only seen in catalogues, gleaming with promises, as if the building itself were expanding around us, revealing new spaces we hadn't seen before.

I decided to take the tour, intrigued, though most of my colleagues had already given up and found places to sit, too worn out from hauling boxes. As I wandered from rooms to rooms, I couldn't shake the feeling that everything was just a little too... surreal.





As I wandered through, they introduced me to all sorts of high-tech gadgets, but the TV room was what really caught my attention. It felt like a hotel lounge—too perfect and polished for an office, with plush seating and a giant screen. But what really threw me off was the camera mounted in the ceiling. Just say, “Hey, Camera!” and it would snap a picture, like it was waiting for some grand reveal. The whole setup felt strangely familiar yet utterly bizarre, as if I had stumbled into a scene from a dream.

Just when I thought I was getting used to the new workplace, everything shifted in a way I couldn't quite explain. One moment, I was in a sleek office, and the next, I found myself wandering through a grocery store, picking up random items. I could only recall grabbing a yogurt drink, though I seemed to have a cart full of stuff. And then, out of nowhere, I was chasing someone down the walkway, fuelled by a sudden wave of anger. Clutching a steaming pot of water and a freshly blanched vegetable? I flung it at him. It was craaaaazily hot.

Just when I felt reality slipping away, everything changed again. I became a fugitive, running through what felt like an endless maze of aisles. I was being hunted down by the police; my name plastered on the serial killer list. They found me quickly, guns drawn and aimed right at me.



Without warning, they opened fire, and I took off, dodging bullets as they flew past. I had to find a place to hide, my heart's racing as I felt the sharp sting of being hit, but somehow, I was still able to breathe and move. I escaped upstairs, only to find another character waiting there, gun aimed at me.

Trapped, with nowhere left to run, I realized this was turning into something straight out of a nightmare. The last thing I heard was a deafening bang as I fell, my mind racing through a haze of confusion, recounting those fleeting moments as everything faded to black.

It kept getting weirder from there. I wasn't actually dead. My sister had jumped in, saving me from the brink and insisting I undergo plastic surgery to escape the chaos.

As I lay there, the surgeon chiselled at my jaw, and I could feel every agonizing moment. When it was over, I looked completely different—like a stranger staring back at me in the mirror. The surgery had left me so stiff that even moving a muscle on my face was difficult. I couldn't even attempt a smile; the pain was too intense, leaving me trapped in an expressionless mask.

Crying in pain, I caught sight of a hidden room across from me, a dark reminder of my past. My sister rushed over, wrapping her arms around me. “Don't cry, my little Barbie. I'll always be here for you,” she whispered, but in that moment, a chilling realization washed over me—I was nothing more than her trophy, saved only to become her prisoner.

And then, with a sudden jolt, I woke up, drenched in sweat. “Thank goodness it was just a dream!” I chuckled to myself. But as I glanced around my room, I froze. The mirror reflected a face I didn't recognize—my bedhead looked like I'd just fought a tornado-like battle, and I had drool on my pillow. I couldn't help but laugh. “If I'm going to be someone's trophy, I at least need to brush my hair first!”

Biodata of author(s)

Nur Areena Aqilah is a writer at heart who sees writing as her favorite escape from the world. She earned her Master's degree in Library Science from Universiti Teknologi MARA and spent six lively years as a librarian at Sunway JB Library & Learning Commons. Along the way, she juggled roles as a social media manager and library marketer. As a lecturer now, she enjoys sharing these stories with her students, demonstrating that librarianship is far from boring!"





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