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FORM THREE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE AUTHENTICITY OF PT3
ENGLISH PAPER

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the researchers endeavor to explore 133 Form 3 students' perception towards the authenticity of PT3 English Paper from two urban schools located in one of the states from Malaysia, Selangor. The study, aims to find out the extent of authenticity of the PT3 English Paper among Form 3 students, to evaluate students' opinions in relation to authenticity of 6 sections covered in PT3 English Paper as well as to ascertain the relationship between students' level of English proficiency and their perception towards PT3 English Paper. This study adopted a mixed-method design which set out to obtain data through questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Data analysis was carried out by means of frequencies, SPSS and themes categorization. The findings in this study suggested that students from three different levels namely advanced, intermediate and elementary perceived that PT3 English Paper is relatively high in respect of its authentic. Nevertheless, exam sections such as novel and poem need to make further changes for students to have greater connections with their day-to-day tasks.

KEYWORDS: authenticity, PT3 English Paper, students' perception, TLU domain

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Background of the Study

Testing of 'real-life' language has recently emerged in the field of second language learning and teaching (Wang). As indicated by Bo, "authenticity has become established as a central concern in test design and test validation" (p. 31). Doye considered authentic assessment as "one that reproduces a real-life situation in order to examine the student's ability to cope with it" (p.3). Hence, authenticity is a vital test quality that test constructors need to take into consideration so as to provide language learners with more opportunities to perform successfully what they have learned in class in real situations. Moreover, authenticity is also pivotal because it has positive impacts on students' learning and motivation (Herrington & Herrington).

In 2014, Form Three students started to sit for the Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3 (PT3) which was introduced to replace the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) Examination. The shift means there is no centralized examination for Form Three students as the exam is considered as a school- based assessment, whereby the Examination Syndicate will prepare questions with different levels ranging from easy, moderate to hard in the question bank so that schools can make use of questions provided to assess students in written tests. By virtue of this, the syndicate would ensure the questions chosen are made up of all levels of questions and that no school picks all easy questions tests ("PT3 for Form Three Students"). In line with the move to progress towards a more holistic education development and

to produce well-rounded students, the purposes of the Ministry of Education (MOE) to adopt the new exam formats in PT3 English Paper are to equip students with creative and critical thinking skills, as well as to address declining standard of English Language proficiency by focusing on speaking, listening, writing and reading skills, as set out in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Erda).

New characteristics of the PT3 English paper include both subjective and objective questions, HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) questions and knowledge application questions in lieu of the traditional formats comprising multiple choice questions and rigidly formatted essays. Moreover, an oral test would also be carried out prior to the actual PT3 English Paper. The new examination format in PT3 English exam paper encompasses six sections namely error identification, information transfer, reading comprehension, guided writing, novel and poem analysis (Noor).

Different test purposes determine the target language use (TLU) domain (Zhuang). According to Wazir, PT3 exam is a summative assessment to evaluate students' overall intellectual ability and determine students' achievement at lower secondary level. Hence, test authenticity serves a vital role in reflecting true capacity of test takers' English Language skills. As stated by Wang, authentic test could effectively measure learners' language ability and proficiency. Another issue is that, a mismatch between testing situations and TLU may result in learners' false impressions of real world expectations and failures in coping with real-life language use tasks. As authenticity of the newly introduced PT3 English Paper is an under-researched area, it is crucial to address Form 3 students' perception towards authenticity of the PT3 English Paper. As a result, stakeholders will benefit from students' insights of the conformity between test questions and target language use tasks.

There exist six test qualities that have effects on test usefulness, that is, reliability, validity, authenticity, interactiveness, wash back and practicality. They are mutually complementary, and by raising the level of each test quality can guarantee the overall test quality to be increased

(Zhuang). On this account, this study targets to examine the perception of Form Three students about the degree of authenticity of PT3 English paper, their opinions in relation to authenticity of 6 sections covered in the test and the relationship between students' level of English proficiency and their perception towards PT3 English Paper. The paper also aims to contribute to more studies on the authenticity of PT3 English exam. On top of this, students' perception identified in the findings may offer some possible solutions for test makers or policy makers to improve the authenticity of PT3 English Paper.

Literature Review

Bachman and Palmer defined authenticity as "The degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language task to the features of a TLU task" (49). Bachman and Palmer suggested that making comparison between the characteristics of test tasks and features of TLU tasks is the way to reveal the degree of authenticity of test tasks. They referred TLU domain as "a set of specific language use tasks that the test taker is likely to encounter outside of the test itself and to which we want our inferences about language ability to generalize"(44). Likewise, Bachman noted that the characteristics of the test task need to be consistent with the features of a target language use situation (situational authenticity), or an interaction that exists between the test takers and the test task, and an involvement of test takers' language ability in accomplishing a test task (interactional authenticity). A test task could be low on situational authenticity and high on interactional authenticity, or vice versa. In other words, "tasks would not necessarily be either authentic or non-authentic but would lie on a continuum which would be determined by the extent to which the assessment task close to the context in which it would be normally performed in real life." (Lewkowicz 48)

Authenticity in tests also refers to that what is tested should be closely concerned with what has been taught. The characteristics of test input should match the topics and kind of materials a teacher used in class. Another similar view suggested by Leung and Lewkowicz is that authentic test tasks should be constructed with of real-life

resources which are close to the test takers' expectations about their actual performance of the tasks beyond classrooms or test situations.

Research Questions

The present study is focused to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the degree of authenticity of PT3 English paper based on students' perception?
- 2) What is the extent of usefulness of each section in PT3 English Paper in their daily life?
- 3) What is the relationship between students' level of English proficiency and their perception towards PT3 English Paper?

Methodology

Research Approach

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted to address the aims of the study. The rationale for using mixed research design is to strengthen the study by minimizing the disadvantages of certain methods. Quantitative data generated from a questionnaire consists of two parts. Part 1, includes 5 five-point Likert-scale questions, aimed to acquire students' perception towards the extent of authenticity of the PT3 English Paper in general. In contrast, Part 2, which covers six items along with ten-point Likert Scale, centers on six sections found in PT3 English Paper to garner numerical data in relation to students' perception towards the authenticity of each section.

A semi-structured interview was conducted in an attempt to substantiate and validate the information gained from the questionnaire. Furthermore, data collected from this section seeks to answer research question 3: What is the relationship between students' level of English proficiency and their perception towards PT3 English Paper? Unlike closed-ended questions, open-ended questions provide rich and substantial qualitative data for in-depth analysis allowing not only for respondents to talk depth with their own words, but also for researchers to probe for clarification (Opdenakker). Four pre-set questions are to ensure that the interviewer asks relevant questions and stays on topic. Information collected from semi-

structured interview. Each interview lasted about 10-15 minutes.

Instead of utilizing an existing instrument, the researchers made efforts to translate experts' opinions and literature studied (Bachman; Bachman and Palmer; BO; Wang; Zhuang; Leung and Lewkowicz et al.) into statements and questions in both the questionnaire and semi-structured interview according to steps put forward by Rama. In the later phase, two pilot tests took place and reliability coefficient (alpha) of the instruments was also measured prior to the administration of actual questionnaire and interview session to establish reliability and validity of the study.

Validity and Reliability

According to Robert et al., reliability refers to, "repeatability or stability" or the production of consistent measurements over time. The validity of an instrument correlates greatly with its reliability – if the instrument accurately measured what needed to be measured, it will naturally yield constructive and consistent results. Reliability of this study is established using two pilot tests by collecting data from two groups of 59 subjects who were not included in the sample. In the second pilot test, questionnaire and interview questions were revised in accordance with the feedback received from the first pilot test. A reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.648 based on the second pilot test was generated.

Subjects and Sampling

Participants for this study were 133 Form Three students who are currently studying in two urban secondary schools in Seri Kembangan located in the state of Selangor in Malaysia. This study carried out convenient sampling as the 133 respondents from Form 3 were conveniently selected to partake in answering the questionnaire. Apart from that, a total of 15 students attended the semi-structured interview. Five students were selected randomly from each level of English proficiency based on their trial PT3 English Paper. To make sure sufficient representation of all levels fulfilled, the students were from different levels of English proficiency based on their trial PT3 English Language exam scores. Therefore, the sample consisted of students from the advanced level group, intermediate level group and elementary

level group. An advanced level group is the students who obtained a score between 70% and 100% (Grade A and B) for their trial PT3 English Language exam. The score of the intermediate group students are in the range of 40% and 69% (Grade C and E), while the elementary group students obtained a score of 39% and below (Grade F).

Data Analysis

Data gathered from questionnaire was processed using the SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics obtained from Part A was employed to examine respondents' perception towards the level of authenticity of PT3 English Paper. In relation to Part B of the survey, gathered frequencies were tabulated and ranked in order to showcase the questions from that of the most relevant to students' real-life tasks to the least relevant ones.

Last but not least, data generated through semi-structured questionnaire were also tabulated into different themes. Other than that, comparison was made among students from three main categories: advanced level group, intermediate level group and elementary group to identify if there exists relationship between students' perception and their levels of English proficiency.

Results

The results of the study will be presented according to the three major questions related to the focus of this study.

A. Perception towards the extent of authenticity of PT3 English Paper

Table 1 gives an overall picture of Form 3 students' perception towards the authenticity of PT3 English Paper.

Table 1: Perception of Form 3 Students towards the Extent of Authenticity of PT3 English Paper

No.	Descriptions	Frequencies/ Percentages					Mean
		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5	
1.	I was able to solve the questions based on my real-life experience.	2 (1.5%)	24 (18%)	11 (8.3%)	82 (61.7%)	14 (10.5%)	3.62
2.	I was able to apply English knowledge or skills that I have learnt in the class during the test.	13 (9.8%)	0	12 (9%)	82 (61.7%)	26 (19.5%)	3.91
3.	The exam questions required me to think critically. (eg. provide suggestions, give opinions and etc.)	3 (2.3%)	14 (10.5%)	15 (11.3%)	71 (53.4%)	30 (22.6%)	3.83
4.	The exam focused on daily life English language which are familiar to me such as recipe, email writing, advertisement, newspaper etc.	18 (13.5%)	0	12 (9%)	76 (57.1%)	27 (20.3%)	3.84
5.	ALL questions asked in the exam are meaningful to me as I would possibly face similar tasks in my real life –	5 (3.8%)	34 (25.6%)	8 (6%)	65 (48.9%)	21 (15.8%)	3.47

	library, internet, reservation, book store, shopping mall, post office, et cetera.						
6.	Oral test in PT3 motivated me to have conversation with people around me in English.	3 (2.3%)	22 (16.6%)	4 (3.0%)	69 (51.9%)	35 (26.3%)	3.83
7.	English vocabulary used in real life is more difficult than English vocabulary found in test questions.	9 (6.8%)	31 (23.3%)	16 (12%)	53 (39.8%)	24 (18%)	3.39

Along the five-point Likert scale for perception, averages of 3.5 or higher indicate strong agreement, averages of 2.5-3.4 medium degree of support, and averages of 2.4 or lower low degree of support (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). As for item 1, *I was able to solve the questions based on my real-life experience.*, 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were selected by a total of 72.2% students. On the other hand, item 2 with the highest score of 3.91 indicated a strong agreement. In their responses to item 2, *I was able apply English knowledge or skills that I have learnt in the class during the test.*, 61.7% selected 'agree' and 19.5% selected 'strongly agree'. In addition, 76% either agreed or strongly agreed with item 3 that the exam questions required them to think critically such as provide suggestions, give opinions and so on. Moreover, the second highest mean score is 3.84 for statement 4 *The exam focused on daily life English language which are familiar to me such as recipe, email writing, brochure, advertisement, newspaper etc.* 57.1% selected 'agree' and 20.3% selected 'strongly agree'. Additionally, 64.7% responded with either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with item 5 that all questions asked in the exam are meaningful they would possibly face similar tasks in real life for instance library, internet, reservation, book store, shopping mall, post office and so forth. And 78.2% either strongly agreed or agreed with statement 6 that oral test in PT3 motivated me to have conversation with people around me in English. In contrast, as for statement 7 with lowest mean score of 3.39, The usage of *English vocabulary in real life is more*

difficult than comprehending or using English vocabulary in test questions, 53% selected "strongly agree", 24% selected "agree". Based on respondents' response to this statement, it was revealed that most of the students felt that PT3 English Paper is not authentic to some extent as the way vocabularies were tested was not closely connected with how they tend to use in their daily life.

B. Students' Perception towards the Extent of Usefulness of Each Section in PT3 English Paper in their daily life

Table 2 shows Form 3 students' perception towards the extent of usefulness of each section in PT3 English Paper in their daily life.

TABLE2: Perception of Form 3 Students towards the Extent of Usefulness of Each Section in PT3 English Paper in Their Daily Life

No.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Sect ions	Error Identif ication	Infor matio n Transf er	Reading Compre hension	Po e m	Dire cted Writ ing	No vel
Me an	6.95	6.19	6.67	5.42	7.05	5.78

Along the ten-point Likert scale for perception towards the extent of usefulness of each section in PT3 English Paper, averages ranging from 5.42 to 7.05 were found. As it can be seen in Table 2, the highest mean of 7.05 displayed that the respondents felt that the section of directed writing

is the most useful section in PT3 English Paper. Aside from this, the second highest mean score of 6.95 tended to illustrate that error identification seem to be useful and highly applicable in a real life setting. Other than this, the mean score of reading comprehension is 6.67. In this case, it showed that students perceived that reading comprehension is fairly practical for everyday use as compared to others. Moreover, information transfer was ranked at the fourth place whose mean score of 6.19 revealed that the application of such skills is rather authentic in daily language use situations. As opposed to this, the lower mean of 5.78 and lowest mean of 5.42 exhibited that small numbers of respondents agreed that test tasks in relation to novel and poem respectively are authentic test tasks.

Discussion

Research Question 1: Perception of Form 3 Students towards the Extent of Authenticity of PT3 English Paper

The overall perception from Form Three students in this study suggested that the PT3 English Paper is rather authentic. Most of the students seemed to be aware of the fact that the English vocabularies used in the test didn't meet their expectations when they come to apply relevant vocabularies knowledge in practical situations while speaking, writing, listening or reading. One plausible explanation may be students found that even if they are able to perform the test tasks, they have a difficult time drawing upon their own vocabulary knowledge in the real-world discourse. The findings appeared to resonate with the view that a complete congruence of test situation and real-life situation is impossible (Doye). However, further changes in terms of vocabulary use in the test should be tailored to target day-to-day situations in a bid to present students with tasks correspond to the real world and better determine students' proficiency of the mastery of English skills.

Research Question 2: Perception of Form 3 Students towards the Extent of Usefulness of Each Section in PT3 English Paper in their Daily Life

It has been demonstrated in the results that subjects seemed to have disclosed that they are notably or directly exposed to writing tasks in

academic or outside settings for instance memo, letter, email, social media and so on. The results appeared to conform to the view that "the move from indirect testing of writing to direct testing was encouraged by the communicative movement, resulting in writing tasks being increasingly realistic and communicative – of the sort that a test taker might be expected to do in real life (e.g., letters, memo, academic essays)" (Alderson and Banerjee 95).

Besides that, students are also capable of relating their personal experience to familiar topics, structure and easy language while reading comprehension in the test encompassed newspaper articles and magazine articles. The findings in this study, therefore, correspond with the view that "reading is an interaction between a reader with all that the reader brings with him/her – background knowledge, affect, reading purpose, intelligence, first language abilities and more – and the text, whose characteristics include topic, genre, structure, language and so on" (Alderson and Banerjee 84).

Furthermore, error identification was deemed to be more useful among respondents as compared to information transfer. It may be attributed to the fact that not only is it prevalent for them as ESL learners to make mistakes in relation to spelling and grammatical or words' associations, be it speaking or writing, they also tend to accept and correct themselves once it happens. On top of this, they also found information transfer to be quite useful. On that account, it may suggest that they usually encounter real-life situations where there is a need to retrieve accurate information from web pages, recipes or advertisements.

Last but not least, as indicated in the results, poems and novels were not well perceived with regard to their usefulness, it can be reasoned that the contents of the literature does not suit student's personal experience or background knowledge. This leads to the fact that students may not be advantaged by taking tasks concerned with poems and novels because they lack motivation to apply the information outside of the classroom contexts.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between students' level of English proficiency and their perception towards PT3 English Paper?

In order to substantiate and validate the data collected in the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was conducted. The data which have been collected from the semi-structured interview will be discussed in chronological order according to the questions. 15 Form 3 students from different levels of English proficiency were interviewed. The results indicated that there is no significant difference between students' level of English proficiency and their perception towards PT3 English Paper. Therefore, it appeared to confirm the analysis from research questions 1 and 2 that Form 3 student's overall perception demonstrated that the PT3 English Paper is authentic to a certain extent as some respondents showed that not each skill or knowledge required in the real-life situation is reflected in the test tasks.

When asked if they could apply the English skills (reading, writing) or knowledge (e.g. vocabulary) that they have learnt in class during the PT3 English examination, 15 students answered that they could. The reasons given were that they were taught enough vocabulary and had a substantial amount of practice prior to the PT3 examination. It seemed to prove the results generated from questionnaire that students deemed the daily use of vocabulary are more difficult than vocabulary tested in the PT3 English Paper (see Table 1 earlier). It was factored into the fact that even though students are able to understand or solve test questions, it is challenging to apply their vocabulary knowledge when there is a lack of prompts or there is a need for immediate response in real-life situations. Hence, it may reflect that the test questions are inauthentic at some levels.

Based on the responses given for Questions 2(a) and 2(b) whether the questions that appear in the examination encourage them to apply their critical thinking skills and if they were able to solve the problems based on their experiences, 14 out of 15 students answered in the positive. They agreed that the examination questions did require them to apply their critical thinking skills and that they were able to relate their answers based on their own life

experiences. However, seven students from different three levels did also mention that they had practiced similar types of questions prior to the examination. This proves that the students have had adequate drilling on similar types of questions prior to the examination. This makes the researchers question if the HOTS questions literally evaluate their critical thinking skills, or whether the students have been conditioned to answer the questions in a particular manner.

Question 3(a) required students to list down a few authentic materials that they could find in the examination paper. Students from each level were able to identify common authentic materials such as newspaper articles, magazine articles and webpages. Contrastively, there were students from three levels who were not able to acknowledge what an authentic material is. One student from the high proficiency level had listed song as one of the authentic material that he was able to identify. However, no songs were used as material in the examination question. One plausible explanation to this would be that is the lack of exposure to the concept of authentic materials among students, even from the high proficiency level.

Question 3(b) asked if the questions in the examination paper were suitable for the students to answer. All students from all grade levels agreed that the questions were indeed suitable, easily understood and relatable to them. Thirteen out of 15 students also answered in the positive when asked if they enjoyed answering or dealing with the materials in the examination (Question 3(c)). Almost all the students, 13 out of 15, agreed that the examination-type questions have been practiced in the classroom prior to the examination (Question 3(d)). This seemed to congruently match the results from items 1, 2, 4 and 5 in questionnaire (see Table 1 earlier).

Question 4 asked for the students' personal opinion as to which types of questions were most useful and least useful for their daily English usage. Students from each level agreed that error identification and oral test were the most useful types of questions, whereas the least useful forms of questions were the novel and poem. By contrast, only one student from advanced group agreed with

the usefulness of writing so as to excel at interviews, entrance exams or professional development. They asserted that error identification and oral test help them to improve their speaking skills and ability to communicate without grammatical errors. They also mentioned that novels and poems bear no importance in their daily lives as they do not read them at all. This showed that novels and poetry are not engaging the students at this level, and this does not stimulate the students' interest towards novels and poetry, which makes up a very big part in the PT3 English examination paper.

Limitations of the study

First of all, the alpha coefficient reliability test a result of more than 0.70 is generally considered to show an acceptable and satisfactory internal consistency (Nolan). However, the coefficient reliability of the questionnaire is 0.648. Hence, it is in need for other research to design a more valid and reliable instrument for assessing students' perception with regard to authenticity level of test. Not only that, samples were only from two representative schools, hence, results gathered from this study are restricted to two schools and further study on this topic should done on broader sample for generalization.

Conclusion

Students from different levels of English Language proficiency perceived that PT3 English examination paper is moderately authentic based on the results analyzed in both the questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Overall views expressed by participants indicated that they are able to relate to most of the questions in the examination paper based on their past experiences and daily English usage. In other words, the critical quality of authenticity is to be confirmed in the new format that places attention to what students need to understand and to enhance students' capacity to apply what they learn in school in real life, such as writing and reading skills. However, it is recommended that teachers, curriculum designers, test developers alike should ensure the exposure to novels, poetry and vocabulary is contextualized for Form 3 students to associate with real-life experience or events so that this help them manage to make use of what is tested in the real-world.

Further study might well be able to throw light on teachers' perception to gather information on how well the new format is working for students.

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Dear Form 3 Students,

PT3 English Exam Trial Exam Grade: A/B/C/D/E/F

This questionnaire is an attempt to gather your opinions about the authenticity of PT3 exam you have just taken. Your ideas are highly valued and your cooperation genuinely appreciated. The data thus collected only serves this particular research and will retain confidential. Please feel free to share your opinions and report frankly your real situation when answering the following items. You are advised to finish the questionnaire within 20 minutes.

Part A: Closed-ended questions


For each statement, there is a scale for you to **place a tick** to specify to what degree you agree with the statement:

No.	Descriptions	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1.	I was able to solve the questions based on my real-life experience.					
2.	I was able to apply English knowledge or skills that I have learnt in the class during the test.					
3.	The exam questions required me to think critically. (eg. provide suggestions, give opinions and etc.)					
4.	The exam focused on daily life English language which are familiar to me such as recipe, email writing, advertisement, newspaper etc.					
5.	ALL questions asked in the exam are meaningful to me as I would possibly face					

	similar tasks in my real life – library, internet, reservation, book store, shopping mall, post office, et cetera.					
6.	Oral test in PT3 motivated me to have conversation with people around me in English.					
7.	The usage of English vocabulary in real life is more difficult than comprehending or using English vocabulary in test questions					

Part B: Closed-ended questions

Among 7 PT3 English exam questions that were tested which questions do you think are *useful* to you based on the situations you speak/use English in daily life? Based on your opinions, please rate ***'1'-least useful*** to ***'10'-most useful*** to show *the degree of usefulness* of each PT3 exam questions.

Degree of Usefulness		Least useful  Most useful									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Questions										
1.	Error Identification										
2.	Information transfer (1)										
3.	Information transfer (2)										
4.	Comprehension										
5.	Poem										
6.	Directed Writing										
7.	Novel										

Thank you-

PT3 English paper trial test grade: A/ B/ C/ D/E/ F

Interview questions

1. Could you apply the English skills (reading, writing) or knowledge (e.g. vocabulary) what you have learnt in the class during the PT3 English exam? Yes/No Why?

2. (a) Did the questions that appeared in the test encourage you to apply your critical thinking skills? Yes/No Why?

- (b) Could you solve them based on your own life experience in the past? Yes/No
If yes, How? If no, why?

3. (a) Based on the PT3 English paper, could you list down a few authentic materials that you could find such as magazines articles, newspapers articles, advertisements, pamphlets, recipe, itinerary songs, web pages, posters, menus etc. ?

- (b) Were they suitable? Yes/No Why? (e.g. difficulty)

- (c) Do you enjoy answering/ dealing with these materials in the exam? Yes/No Why?

- (d) Have these questions been taught in the classroom? Yes/No Why

4. Among questions that tested speaking skills, listening skills, writing skills, reading skills which questions (e.g. oral test, error identification, information transfer, comprehension, directed writing, novel, poem) do you think are most/least useful to you based on the situations you speak/use English in daily life? Please state your reason for your answers.

Most useful question:

Least useful question:

Autobiography of Corresponding Author

Lim Ying Xuan, currently pursuing Master of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language at Universiti Putra Malaysia, which is also known as UPM. I was born and brought up in Malaysia.

After completion of schooling and university, I started my career smoothly as an English teacher at a non-government aided secondary school. Since the main medium of instruction is Mandarin, head of English Department at this school strives to cultivate an English speaking environment for students. I, along with other colleagues, managed to hold a myriad of English activities, such as English week, drama, singing contest, choral speaking and et al., to boost the mastery of English among students. The results were encouraging! It was indeed an eye opener for me.

However, after two years of teaching, I decided to widen my horizons and started a new chapter in my life. Although it was a tough decision, I gained seamless support from my family, ex-superior, ex-colleagues and friends. In September 2015, I had finally gained an outstanding opportunity to further studies and enroll in master's degree at UPM.

Though the nature of assignments and lessons is a far cry from what I have gone through before, I indeed enjoy the course to the fullest. I have since learned to justify and overcome problems persistently. Not only do these achievements broaden outlook on life, they paves a way in my future teaching profession. I believe that the positive attitude in me will enable me to face hardship at any phase of the studies.