

Enhancing Students' Awareness on Metadiscourse in the Writing of Current Issues

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Abstract

Metadiscourse is an important linguistic resource to capture the audience's attention because it guides readers throughout the text (Dafouz-Milne, 2008; Hyland, 2005). During the pandemic, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) news had become a source of information to the public. However, guidelines in reference books, manuals or websites on how to write COVID-19 news were inadequate (Hyland, 2018). Due to the inconsistencies in the word choice, phrases and sentences, misinterpretations occur among the readers. The study aims to investigate the awareness of the metadiscourse features. In the training, pre-test and post-test of Metadiscourse Awareness Test, as well as news with and without metadiscourse together with the writing prompts in the form of Module 1 were given to 30 students to investigate their metadiscourse awareness. The Metadiscourse Awareness Test could be used as the base line results of the metadiscourse awareness. The writing prompts could gather specific information regarding the texts that they had read. Additionally, the constructed texts with and without metadiscourse could be used as a teaching resource. The expected outcomes will create awareness of using metadiscourse correctly to prevent the reporting of inaccurate information, as well as increase readers' engagement to combat misinterpretation of the texts.

Keywords: COVID-19 news, Metadiscourse Awareness Test, metadiscourse features, constructed texts with and without metadiscourse, writing prompts

Introduction

Captivating audiences is essential in every form of reporting. However, writers often neglect to capture readers' interest while presenting important details in media reporting and current events. This occurs as authors usually prioritise their authority, neglecting the readers' interaction with the text (Dafouz-Milne, 2008). One way to engage readers in the text is by employing metadiscourse features. The techniques used by writers to express their thoughts and create trustworthy material are known as metadiscourse features (Crismore, 1989; Hyland, 2005; Mauranen, 1993; Vande-Kopple, 2002). It is paramount to enhance the authors' awareness in the use of metadiscourse when they write about current issues (Seo & Na-Young, 2022). Nevertheless, when students are exposed to the use of metadiscourse, they are not aware of it because they use it wrongly in the text that cause confusion among the readers (Dallagi, 2021). Because of the inconsistencies in wording, phrases, and sentences, readers often misinterpret the text.

Metadiscourse elements can be categorised as either textual or interpersonal. Through the use of logical markers, sequencers, reminders, topicalisers, code glosses, illocutionary markers, and announcements, textual metadiscourse features illustrate the authors' awareness of readers and their desire for clarification, elaboration, guidance, and interaction. Hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries illustrate interpersonal metadiscourse

features that the author uses to signal readers to the text while showing an awareness of it. This occurs only when the writer has a clear, audience-centred intention for doing so. In other terms, metadiscourse components highlight not just the author's credibility but also the reader's engagement with the text. A comprehensive and innovative module would likely be created to guide writers in effectively producing reports on media and current issues.

There are limited examples or guidelines for creating coherent and cohesive texts; therefore, this study explores textual and interpersonal metadiscourse elements. The topic of writing current issues is discussed only briefly in reference texts or manuals (Sezgin & Topkaya, 2024). The characteristics are vital in helping readers to better understand the texts. Authors can incorporate their own opinions and perspectives into the conversation, enabling them to develop texts via metadiscourse (Chou, Li, & Liu, 2023). While authors have the liberty to share their views and objectives, they could exercise caution when crafting texts.

Hewitt (2002), as well as Hudson and Rowlands (2012) asserted that writers employ metadiscourse to make news engaging, appealing and intriguing. This enables writers to involve readers in the dialogue and demonstrate their expertise on the subject matter, boosting its trustworthiness (Hyland, 2018). It is noteworthy that the analysis of metadiscourse elements in the reporting of current issues receives so little attention (Chung, Crosthwaite, & Lee, 2023; Dynel, 2023; Ren & Wang, 2023; Sezgin & Topkaya, 2024).

The different linguistic elements taken from the report examples will demonstrate metadiscourse in action (Yuryevna, 2012). Roush (2006) asserts that no textbook offers comprehensive guidance for writing and reporting on subjects such as business, finance, markets, and similar areas. Recent graduates typically possess little experience with metadiscourse; therefore, it is pertinent to include formal exposure in the module's lessons (Hodges & Burchell, 2003). This research thus provides an insightful opportunity to improve the awareness of metadiscourse in the context.

Literature Review

The primary focus of most metadiscourse studies is written discourse. Farahani (2018) explained that metadiscourse elements are essential rhetorical features since the book's authors used them extensively to enhance its clarity and coherence for readers. In her research on postgraduate writing, Pronmas (2020) highlighted the importance of introducing new students to genuine texts to enhance their comprehension of writing conventions, especially when employing metadiscourse to improve writing quality. Nugrahani and Bram (2020) suggested that learners could recognise the role of metadiscourse and its functions to guarantee its effective application in their academic writing. This concept resembles the research conducted by Pronmas (2020). Future teaching methods might be determined by the findings of prior research. To make the content more relevant for readers, it is paramount to enhance understanding of metadiscourse in texts.

Various disciplines, such as translation studies, intercultural studies, and gender studies, have examined the characteristics of metadiscourse (Hyland, 1998; Hyland, 1999; Hyland, 2004; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Intaraprawat & Steffenson, 1995). Most of these studies concentrated on the pragmatic aspect. There are many methods to examine the characteristics of metadiscourse from a syntactic perspective (Hyland, 1998). Dafouz-Milne (2008) conducted a cross-linguistic study of two prominent newspapers to explore the role of metadiscourse markers in the persuasive aspect. Additionally, Noorian and Biria (2010) investigated the utilisation of interpersonal metadiscourse elements in persuasive journalism. Conversely, Thomas and

Finneman (2013) employed journalistic "metadiscourse" to investigate the Leveson Inquiry from its inception through to the conclusion of its hearing phase. Kuhl and Mojood (2014) examined the influence of cultural factors and general norms on the usage and distribution of metadiscourse within one genre (written in English and Persian) across 60 newspaper editorials.

Several studies focused on reports and news that examined the social representations and symbolic coping of the COVID-19 pandemic in newspapers (Phillips & Cassidy, 2024), in addition to analysing communication ecology of pandemic reporting (Perreault & Perreault, 2021). These investigations did not concentrate on examining metadiscourse characteristics in writings. In other words, the studies analysed other features in the COVID-19 pandemic reporting, but the metadiscourse features were not investigated. Consequently, this study examines textual and interpersonal metadiscourse due to the scarcity of examples or guidelines for composing coherent and cohesive texts. Understanding the features of metadiscourse is relevant to assist readers in comprehending the texts more effectively. By employing metadiscourse, authors can highlight their authority or position in order to express their views and attitudes (Wan & Yi, 2023). Nonetheless, there are no sufficient guidelines in reference books, manuals, or online sources on how to explicitly write news (Hyland, 2018). This will lead readers to misinterpret a text due to varying word selection, phrases, and sentences. Consequently, it is pertinent for the students' writing to be improved through the training sessions, as metadiscourse would aid in preventing misinterpretation of the texts. This is due to the fact that a complicated concept can be expressed with only one metadiscourse element, allowing readers to accurately decipher and understand the sentence's meaning within the texts. Thus, the authors' credibility and the readers' involvement are crucial to analyse and improve, making the texts clearer and more accessible to readers.

According to the studies mentioned earlier, there have been limited investigations into both textual and interpersonal metadiscourse in reports and news. Hooi, Tan, Lee, and Victor Danarajan (2020) conducted a study to examine the awareness of business news writers at *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* regarding the utilisation of metadiscourse characteristics. Their study demonstrated the significance of metadiscourse elements in business news, in which it was found that the authors made the most of them in the journalism field. During the training sessions, the Metadiscourse Awareness Test may be utilised to assess students' comprehension of metadiscourse and improve their awareness of using metadiscourse correctly in their writing. The validated writing prompts were capable of collecting particular data about the texts the students had read. Furthermore, the created texts that contain metadiscourse and those that do not could serve as a teaching tool in the writing class. Consequently, this organised training programme for students will help them learn to effectively use metadiscourse in their writing to maintain quality education (Chow, Hooi, & Wilson, 2024; Fife, 2018). There was also a lack of intervention-based studies. To date, Chow, Hooi and Wilson (2024) conducted a study on metadiscourse features awareness, in which an intervention process was done in a form of news with and without metadiscourse, as well as writing prompts. Their study revealed that the intervention process was effective for the journalism students to enhance their metadiscourse awareness in crisis news. On a contrary, Hooi, Tan, Lee, and Victor Danarajan's (2020) study in metadiscourse area did not use the intervention process to investigate the metadiscourse awareness in the text. Henceforth, it would be better to have an intervention process to ensure that the metadiscourse awareness is enhanced among the participants, so that there will not be disjointed and incoherent text.

Even though metadiscourse elements are utilised, students occasionally employ them inappropriately. This is due to the possibility that they could use these features without realising

it; hence, they do not recognise the roles the text takes on, leading to a lack of coherence and engagement. In this study, the research question is: “To what extent are the students aware of the use of metadiscourse features?”

Methodology

Participants

The participants of this study encompassed 30 Form 4 students in a private school. The students were selected purposively, in which they would need to take Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) in 2025. These students, who were above-average in their studies, were chosen according to the results of the English language examination. This was due to their ability to convey their reactions clearly when reading the chosen news articles. The authorities from the school were contacted to obtain their permission to include the students in the research. The students also provided their consent to join in the study.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework used in this study was Dafouz-Milne’s (2008) model. The model comprises two dimensions, which are textual and interpersonal metadiscourse. Textual metadiscourse serves to emphasise the writers’ authority, while interpersonal metadiscourse helps to highlight the readers’ engagement. There are seven categories of textual metadiscourse that include logical markers, sequencers, reminders, topicalisers, code glosses, illocutionary markers, and announcements. In contrast, there are five categories of interpersonal metadiscourse that encompass hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

To ensure the reliability of the data analysis, two inter-raters were utilised to evaluate the Metadiscourse Awareness Test together with the news with and without metadiscourse, as well as the writing prompts. Ambiguous wording and faulty sentence construction were detected and adjusted, as needed. Later, the Metadiscourse Awareness Test together with the news with and without metadiscourse, as well as the writing prompts were pilot tested with seven students. A reliability assessment was performed to evaluate the internal consistency of the Metadiscourse Awareness Test items. The Cronbach's alpha value for the Metadiscourse Awareness Test items was 0.804. Consequently, the Metadiscourse Awareness Test items were deemed reliable and subsequently utilised in the study.

The Metadiscourse Awareness Test, news with and without metadiscourse together with the writing prompts in the form of Module 1 were given to 30 students to investigate their metadiscourse awareness in the training. The Metadiscourse Awareness Test could be used as base line results of the metadiscourse awareness. Additionally, the constructed texts with and without metadiscourse could be used as a teaching resource. The writing prompts could gather specific information regarding the texts that they had read.

The Metadiscourse Awareness Test, which was the main quantitative data collection, was adopted from Chow, Hooi and Wilson’s (2024) study (see Appendix). The test consisted of 12 multiple choice question items with an extract for each item. The purpose of this test was to investigate the students’ awareness in identifying the metadiscourse features for all items. This was done because the students were not aware of the functions of the metadiscourse features;

thus, they would use these features incorrectly in the text, making the points in the text incoherent and disjointed. The duration of the test was set to be 15 minutes.

There were two sets of constructed texts used, in which one set of the texts analysed the textual metadiscourse (adapted from *The Star*), and another set of texts analysed the interpersonal metadiscourse (adapted from *The Edge*). These two sets of news articles had a common theme, which was about the COVID-19 issue. Pertaining to the texts that examined the textual metadiscourse, News 1 was the news without textual metadiscourse, while News 2 was the news with textual metadiscourse. This set of news was administered to the students after the administration of the Metadiscourse Awareness Test, and the students would need to provide their responses on the writing prompts in the first hour. With regards with the texts that examined the interpersonal metadiscourse, News 3 was the news without interpersonal metadiscourse, while News 4 was the news with interpersonal metadiscourse. The students would also need to give their reactions to the texts read on the writing prompts in the second hour.

In this paper, only quantitative findings from the Metadiscourse Awareness Test were analysed by using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 and would be reported at the Results and Discussion section. The scores were determined by using descriptive statistics. This was done to determine the students' level of English proficiency in writing.

It should be emphasised that this current study constitutes a minor component of a broader study. Henceforth, a triangulation of data took place, in which the qualitative results from the writing prompts were examined by utilising the ATLAS.ti version 9 software to complement the quantitative findings from the Metadiscourse Awareness Test. The students' responses from the writing prompts were collected and reviewed as required. The replies were classified based on the elements of the writing prompts. The replies to the writing prompts were assigned codes, which encompassed logical markers, sequencers, reminders, topicalisers, code glosses, illocutionary markers, announcements, hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries to assist in the examination of metadiscourse characteristics. The codes assigned to the students ranged from Student 1 to Student 30, depending on their responses. Given that the students were separated into six groups, these groups were labeled as Group 1 through Group 6 for simplified data analysis.

Results and Discussion

Metadiscourse Awareness Test was used to investigate the students' awareness of metadiscourse features in writing. The Metadiscourse Awareness Test scores are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Students' pre-test scores

Students	Pre-test Scores (%)
1	83.33
2	50.00
3	50.00

4	50.00
5	58.33
6	58.33
7	66.67
8	50.00
9	58.33
10	58.33
11	50.00
12	66.67
13	58.33
14	50.00
15	50.00
16	50.00
17	33.33
18	66.67
19	75.00
20	58.33
21	41.67
22	50.00
23	41.67
24	58.33
25	50.00
26	50.00
27	58.33
28	33.33
29	50.00
30	75.00

From Table 1, the results revealed that the highest score was exhibited by Student 1 with 83.33 per cent, while the lowest score was exhibited by Students 17 and 28 with 33.33 per cent. Most students (40.00%) scored 50.00 per cent, while only one student (3.30%) scored 83.33 per cent.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the students' pre-test scores

Mean	54.9993
Std. Deviation	11.28689
Variance	127.394
Skewness	.442
Std. Error of Skewness	.427
Kurtosis	.668
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.833
Range	50.00
Minimum	33.33
Maximum	83.33

Table 2 shows that the average score was 55.00 per cent and the standard deviation was 11.29. The value of skewness was .442 and the value of kurtosis was .668. This shows that the results were in normal distribution (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al. 2010).

In the Metadiscourse Awareness Test, Item 1 tested the students on their ability to identify the commentary category. This category was in the form of a question. It was observed that most of the students could identify this category correctly. The use of the question was helpful to draw the attention of the readers to ensure that they would be interested in the content of the text. For Item 2, it was to analyse the students' awareness in identifying the logical marker category. It was noted that the students answered "so" instead of "as well as" that made the answer wrong. This is because the logical "as well as" was used to connect two complete ideas together to signify the addition of points in the sentence. The use of the logical marker "so" was to connect the cause and effect together in the sentence. Since the function was to connect two complete ideas together in the sentence, the answer to Item 2 would be "as well as". The use of the logical marker was to ensure that the readers would be able to follow the thoughts of the writer. It was noted that the authors established links between various parts of the information in the text (Hooi, Tan, Lee, & Victor Danarajan, 2020). This will enhance the students' language awareness following the intervention process used in the training, enabling them to recognise the language features necessary for writing manuscripts correctly and preventing any misinterpretation of the texts by the readers.

Pertaining to Item 3, the next category, which was on hedges, was analysed. The answer to the item should be "would" because it was used as a helping verb in conjunction with a main verb to express shades of mood for the government to take the prudent steps before declaring the transition to the endemic phase. The hedge "may" could not be the answer because it would be used to ask for permission or consent instead. For the hedge "could", it would be used to make recommendations to be done instead of actions to be taken. Authors employed hedges to reconcile the truth and assertions with potential counterarguments from readers, while also softening facts or personal beliefs based on certain evidence to evade personal responsibility. Hedges were used to demonstrate that the writer mitigated commitment to the truth of the propositions because he or she did not have the actual knowledge on the information or subject matter (Abdullah, Rahmat, & Zawawi, 2020). This will guarantee that the students will

understand from the module on how to captivate readers by using language properly in their writings.

Item 4 would be on the identification of the topicaliser category. For this topicaliser category, some of the students answered wrongly by choosing the option on “For students’ discovery in new things”. This was because in the sentence, it was mentioned that the students were discovering the value of deep learning from learning to play the violin to deciphering advance physics, but there was no mention of “discovering new things”. Hence, the answer to Item 4 should be “For students’ way of learning”. The topicaliser was used to give emphasis to a new topic within the text. This transition served as a significant indicator within the text to illustrate writers’ efforts to make sure readers managed to accurately understand the authors’ arguments and concepts (Hyland, 2005). This happens because students typically possess the content; however, due to insufficient language features, confusion arises about whether the points relate to the main idea, explanation, or examples. This part is not taught in the class and should be included in the curriculum or syllabus of the English writing lessons.

With regards to Item 5, the students were tested on the category of certainty marker. In the sentence, it was shown that there was a certainty through this clause that “a sacrifice would be seen among the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) members”. Thus, the answer should be “clearly” instead of “undoubtedly”, in which most of the students chose that. The metadiscourse “undoubtedly” would be a form of attitude marker to empathise with the readers’ situation which not the function of this sentence. The certainty marker was used to make the text more credible and reliable (Rabab’ah, Yagi, & Alghazo, 2024). Item 6 tested the students to identify the illocutionary marker category. In this case, this category was used to emphasise the writer’s act in the text, which was “I hope”. This was used to stress on the writer’s voice or claim in the text (Fang, 2023). The training’s outcome indicating that metadiscourse features are utilised more often following the intervention process could serve as a glossary of linguistic forms. The students will be able to identify the accurate words, phrases, or sentences in order to prevent any misunderstanding among the readers. This is due to the fact that language features cannot be used interchangeably but are applied based on the contexts and settings.

In respect of Item 7, the category that was tested was on attitude markers. The answer should be “interestingly” because it was used to correspond with the readers’ feelings on the issues in the text. The use of the attitude marker was for the writer to convey his or her feelings towards an issue in the text. Through the use of attitude markers, writers can emphasise their expertise or stance to convey their opinions and perspectives (Wan & Yi, 2023). Item 8 was constructed to analyse the students’ awareness of the announcement category. The announcement was essential to inform that there were problems with the contractor at the residential area. Therefore, the answer to Item 8 would need to relate to the problems in the announcement of that paragraph. The announcement was used to keep the readers excited for what would be written by the writer next in the text (Pearson & Abdollahzadeh, 2023). From the module used in the training, the students manage to step into the readers’ perspective to determine if they grasp what they have expressed in their writings.

For Item 9, the identification was on the category of attributor. This was important to note that the attributor was used to evoke trust for the readers because there were citations from important people. Nugrahani and Bram (2020) mentioned that attributors are pivotal linguistic elements in writing because citation of other writers’ work provides credibility to the writer’s own writing. It was noted that most of the students answered correctly, which was “the Ministry of Health said that”. Item 10 tested on the identification of the code gloss category. The answer should be “like” because it was used in the middle of the sentence to provide examples or illustrations to ensure that the readers understood the message the writer would want to convey.

The answer could not be “for example” and “in other words” because there would be a comma or a full stop before these metadiscourse features. The code gloss would be pertinent to be used to explain to the readers by giving a context or a background especially those who had no background knowledge on the subject area. Additional examples and clarifications, along with reading prompts, were incorporated in the form of code glosses (Dafouz-Milne, 2008). It is pertinent for the students to understand how to support their writing with appropriate illustrations and examples, ensuring that while they write as authors, they also comprehend the texts as readers.

With regards to Item 11, the category that was tested was on reminders. The context before the reminder was used included factors. Hence, the reminder category should be related to the factors that were mentioned before. The reminder was used for the readers to refer back to previous sections in the text (Swarts, 2022). For Item 12, the students were tested on the sequencer category. The answer to Item 12 should be “another” because it was another issue after the first issue about the traumatic family separations was mentioned. The sequencer was used to arrange the flow of events and order the series in the text (Dallagi, 2021). It is fundamental for the students to understand on how to ensure their points transition smoothly from one to another, clearly differentiating between the main idea, explanation, and elaboration with supporting examples. This occurs because students typically possess the content, but the absence of linguistic features can lead to confusion about which points pertain to the main idea, explanations, or examples. Therefore, this should be taught in lessons.

Conclusion

The finding that the authors' understanding of metadiscourse enhanced after the intervention would help them to identify the metadiscourse features that can be applied in manuscript writing, guaranteeing the correct application of metadiscourse to avoid any confusion for readers. This would ensure that the educators concentrate on clarity and audience engagement while addressing current subjects in the text with suitable organisation and emphasis (Hyland, 2022). Another finding elucidates that the writing prompts, together with the texts produced that include and exclude metadiscourse, may serve as a method to improve writers' understanding of how to use metadiscourse effectively (Bourdin & Fayol, 2022). This would ensure that they grasped how to engage with their audience by utilising metadiscourse effectively in their writing. The authors would share their insights with others through their understanding of metadiscourse, clarity, reader engagement and grasp of metadiscourse use.

For the students, it was difficult to find them since they attended various classes and had differing schedules. It is recommended that future studies be carried out on a broader scale by involving more students, enabling the results to be generalised. Additionally, this may help course instructors create better resources for professionals, guaranteeing that students receive a certain level of structured guidance from their teachers (Ramasamy, Mohamad, Sanmugam, & Hooi, 2025). The different language characteristics taken from the report samples would provide a useful example of metadiscourse in action (Yuryevna, 2012). The results of this study may also elevate authors' understanding of how to connect with readers through their content. The appropriate expression of news incorporating metadiscourse elements by writers can improve the texts' clarity and increase readers' engagement with the material (Noorian & Biria, 2010). To assess whether the ideas and material in the reports would be understandable to readers, an analysis of metadiscourse is performed (Kuhi & Mojood, 2014). As a result, this study provides writers with valuable knowledge about metadiscourse. Furthermore, the findings may provide writers with essential insights, a passion for language, and a curiosity

regarding text organisation (Arnold, 1991; Breen, 1985; Canado & Esteban, 2005; Morrow, 1977). Kaur (2013) noted that it is fundamental for course instructors to involve students in significant learning experiences throughout the varied courses offered by the institution. Considering the importance of producing texts in a professional context, the findings indicate students' awareness of metadiscourse elements. As a result, the findings contribute to the study of current issues writing.

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Appendix

METADISCOURSE AWARENESS TEST

Select the correct answer.

Item 1

For many months, the US Federal Reserve had argued that the rising inflation was transitory, effectively playing down the risks. The same chorus was echoed by the European Central Bank and, for a while, even the International Monetary Fund. What is really surprising is the fact that the major central banks have themselves been surprised and caught unawares, despite their years of ultra loose monetary policies, repressed interest rates and unprecedented stimulus.

1. _____ Even now, with 7.5% inflation, QE is still ongoing, albeit at a lower quantum. Many in the US government and academia already think the Fed is behind the curve with inflation.

(Adapted from My Say: Central Banks May Have Worked Themselves into a Corner, Opinion, The Edge Markets, Obiyathulla Ismath Bacha, 24 February 2022)

1. A. How will inflation be reduced?
- B. Does inflation affect other banks?
- C. Why is inflation such a big surprise?
- D. I do not know.

Item 2

Stock markets in Asia tumbled into technical correction, with some falling into bear market territory, over the week as investor sentiment turned cautious on geopolitical concerns 2. _____ the impending rate hike by the United States Federal Reserve (Fed) remained unstable.

The benchmark FBM KLCI yesterday rose for a second day, gaining 4.03 points to close at 1,520.02. On Wednesday, it tumbled close to the psychological 1,500-point ark at 1,503.34 before recouping some losses to close at 1,508.91.

In total, the index, which comprises 30 largest companies by market capitalisation, had lost about 0.4% over the week. Year-to-date, the index had shed about 3%. The FBM KLCI could test the 1,500-point level in the short term, an analyst tells StarBizWeek, citing growing uncertainty.

(Adapted from Pressure on Equity Market, Business News, The Star, [Cecilia Kok](#), 29 January 2022)

2. A. so

B. but

C. as well as

D. I do not know.

Item 3

Two years into COVID-19, the pandemic is not over yet. But more countries are prepared to move into the endemic stage, though there has been a resurgence in global coronavirus cases. With rising global vaccination rates, healthcare experts suggest that it is time to treat the virus as a seasonal flu.

At the same time, the reopening of borders has been on the agenda of many countries, including Malaysia, where the National Recovery Council has suggested to fully open the borders as early as March 1 without the mandatory quarantine requirement. Senior Minister (Defence) Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said last Thursday the proposal was still being discussed as it involves various ministries and has to be deliberated by the cabinet. This was followed by Minister of Health Khairy Jamaluddin's remarks last Friday that the government 3. _____ take prudent steps before declaring the transition to the endemic phase.

(Adapted from Cover Story: Omicron-influenced Behaviour to Dominate Recovery, Corporate, The Edge Markets, Lee Weng Khuen, 24 February 2022)

- 3. A. may
- B. could
- C. would
- D. I do not know.

Item 4

Students are required to complete an [Independent Learning Project](#), combining their newfound innovation and emotional intelligence skills with a commitment to serve.

Here, they would work with the community, enabling active learning and to acquire valuable life lessons by using ethical research approaches to solve problems in the community.

Moreover, Charterhouse Malaysia also gives students the time to explore their own academic and personal strengths and passions.

4. _____, the school is ever ready to assist students in discovering the value of deep learning from learning to play the violin to deciphering advanced physics.

Furthermore, the school believes all its students are leaders. So once enrolled, students are automatically members of the Charterhouse Forum, which acts as a vehicle for them to explore leadership opportunities.

(Adapted from Gearing up for a New Reality in Education, Education, The Star, [Starpicks](#), 31 January 2022)

- 4. A. For students' way of learning
- B. For students' discovery in new things
- C. For Charterhouse Malaysia accrediting smart students
- D. I do not know.

Item 5

The fact that many ordinary Malaysians were willing to give time and money to help their fellow Malaysians, regardless of race or religion, was one bright spot amid the pain and hardship brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Would Malaysians also be willing to help out fellow Malaysians when it comes to their retirement savings?

One of many ways policymakers could find out is to ask the top 0.5% of the 14.9 million Employees Provident Fund (EPF) members who collectively had 12.4% of the savings managed by the provident fund at end-2020.

5. _____, a sacrifice would be seen among EPF members with more than RM1 million saved with the provident fund. Based on *The Edge's* assumed tiered dividend rate, someone with RM1 million in savings would see the effective yield fall to 4.4% on a tiered rate, compared with the existing flat rate of 5.09%.

(Adapted from Would Multimillionaire EPF Savers Help Poorer Members?, Corporate, The Edge Markets, Cindy Yeap, 24 January 2022)

- 5. A. Clearly
- B. Significantly
- C. Undoubtedly
- D. I do not know.

Item 6

With the COVID-19 pandemic situation now much better than it was a year ago, many families are yearning to have a smashing reunion feast for the upcoming Chinese New Year. Swiss Garden Beach Resort Kuantan had prepared two festive food promotions to mark the joyous and meaningful occasion.

The Sou Kong package caters to business groups and private companies wishing to treat and reward their staff for a job well done over the past year. As for the Reunion package, it is meant for family members to get together and look forward to prosperity and good health.

My culinary team has put together a host of appetizing dishes to meet the needs of guests and walk-in diners. 6. _____ to play a part in livening up the festive atmosphere and putting smiles back on faces after two years of hardship.

(Adapted from Scrumptious Meals Sure to Bring Smiles Back on, Food, The Star, [Simon Khoo](#), 27 January 2022)

- 6. A. I hope
- B. You hope
- C. They hope
- D. I do not know.

Item 7

There is only one way to put it — 2021 has been an eventful year for oil and gas prices, after years of underperformance compounded by the pandemic-induced bloodbath at the start of the decade. For the first time in three years, Brent crude oil prices breached the US\$80 per barrel (bbl) mark, while natural gas prices rose more than 150% to the highest in seven years at above US\$6 per metric million British thermal unit (MMBtu).

While research agencies agree that supply will likely outstrip demand in 2022, forecasts for demand — still impacted by pandemic issues like international travel restrictions — have diverged following the Omicron variant outbreak. 7. _____, Opec has revised upward its demand forecast in 1Q2022 by 1.1 million bpd, partly arising from the delay in 4Q2021 recovery induced by the virus resurgence, with a view that inventory replenishment will support the market.

(Adapted from A Good Run for O&G in 2021, Tested by Omicron, Corporate, The Edge Market, Adam Aziz, 11 January 2022)

- 7. A. Admittedly
- B. Fortunately
- C. Interestingly
- D. I do not know.

Item 8

“We understand that the monsoon drains come under the purview of JPP,” he added.

JPP director Zaireezal Ahmad Zainuddin also blamed the lackadaisical attitude of workers involved in cleaning the drains and cutting the grass.

8. _____.

“MPK has issued a stern warning to the contractor to desilt the drains, sweep the residential roads once a week and cut the grass twice a month,” he said.

Zaireezal added that MPK would ensure the supervisor monitors cleaning works in the area. “We may remove the contractor if this issue persists,” he said.

(Adapted from Flash Floods Caused by Clogged Drains, Lifestyle, The Star, Edward Rajendra, 31 January 2022)

- 8. A. There is a *gotong-royong* carried out by the neighbourhood every month
- B. There is cleaning as a daily routine that is done in the neighbourhood almost every month
- C. There are initial findings that show that the contractor for Taman Sentosa Phase One does not have a full crew as per the agreement
- D. I do not know.

Item 9

Recognising that the Malaysian economy cannot afford another lockdown, and taking a cue from its vaccine rollout earlier this year, the government has been responding fast to combat the Omicron variant. It began offering booster shots in October to prevent another wave of COVID-19 infections.

In fact, following the World Health Organisation’s recent warning that the Omicron variant poses a “very high” global risk, 9. _____ it will accelerate the rollout of the booster shots to 150,000 per day from 120,000 previously. It will then be increased in stages to 200,000 doses per day.

MoH’s website shows that 4.88 million people in Malaysia have got their booster shots as at Dec 21.

(Adapted from Cover Story: Will COVID-19 Boosters Become the Norm?, Corporate, The Edge Market, Syafiqah Salim and Kang Siew Li, 10 January 2022)

9. A. the report declared that
B. the Ministry of Health said that
C. the World Health Organisation presented that
D. I do not know.

Item 10

It is also able to destroy influenza virus such as H1N1 (Swine Flu); hand, foot and mouth disease viruses including HFMD (Coxsackievirus A16), as well as bacteria 10. _____

E. Coli, MRSA and Staphylococcus Aureus.

NPM group managing director Yaw Seng Heng said, “The new products are part of the group’s endeavour in keeping everyone safe indoor. It is formulated with Silver Ion Technology, which is skeptically proven to destroy 99.9% of harmful viruses and bacteria on painted surfaces.

“As the number one paint in Malaysia and Asia, the anti-viral and anti-bacterial range from Nippon Paint is part of our continuous efforts to create safer indoor space for everyone for their homes, workspaces and public premises.”

(Adapted from Keeping Your Home Safe, Starpicks, The Star, 7 January 2022)

10. A. like
B. for example
C. in other words
D. I do not know.

Item 11

The new norms arising from the COVID-19 pandemic are not only affecting our lives but the food markets too. Just as our lives are about to “normalise”, food prices have spiralled beyond our imagination.

To understand the evolution of the phenomenon, the price hike issue can be sliced up into three components. First, the increasing trend is largely due to an imbalance in fundamentals, where demand is chasing supply. Second, “excessive increase” in price is corollary to market power emanating from a highly concentrated or non-competitive market structure. Third, the ground on which market participants interact is clouded with uncertainty due to the advent of the COVID-19 shock, which was unprecedented and unexpected. Other technical factors include COVID-19 mitigation measures that disrupted the supply chain of goods (including inputs) globally and locally.

The convergence of 11. _____ has created an inflationary effect worldwide and Malaysia has not been spared. The ability to absorb the price shock depends on the state of the food sector of the country. A net food exporter country may be able to handle it better than a net importer like Malaysia.

(Adapted from My Say: Let the Next Golden Crop Be Grown for Food, Opinion, The Edge Market, Fatimah Mohamed Arshad, 24 December 2021)

- 11. A. the issues presented before
- B. the factors mentioned above
- C. the measures discussed previously
- D. I do not know.

Item 12

On her first night in the United States, Hernandez shared a bed with her daughters, gazing at them as they slept and marveling at how much they had grown.

"So many years without seeing them," she said to Reuters this month, her voice shaky from crying. "They are so big now."

The Trump administration contended that allowing families to be released together in the United States while they applied for asylum only encouraged illegal immigration. In response, the administration sought to prosecute and deport parents like Hernandez and place their children in U.S. custody as "unaccompanied minors."

There were several problems that occurred. The first issue was traumatic family separations began in 2017. 12. _____ was any official announcement was captured in the media worldwide and caused international outcry. Trump, a Republican, reversed course with an executive order ending the practice in June 2018.

(Adapted from Split up at the U.S.-Mexico Border, Family Finally Reunites, World, The Star, Mica Rosenberg and Carlos Barria, 31 January 2022)

- 12. A. Then
- B. Next
- C. Another
- D. I do not know.