

The Malaysian University English Test (MUET) and its Use for Placement Purposes: A Predictive Validity Study

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Abstract

The use of standardised English proficiency tests like IELTS and TOEFL for admission and placement purposes is widely practised in academic institutions throughout the world. Similarly in Malaysia, many tertiary institutions utilise the results of a localised version of such tests called the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) as a measure of students' proficiency level, prerequisite for admission, as well as placement in various academic programmes. This paper reports on the predictive validity of MUET as a measure of undergraduates' English language proficiency and the appropriacy of the MUET cut-off bands for placement purposes. The MUET bands of 2884 undergraduates from various faculties and the grade they obtained in an English language enhancement course were analysed to answer the research questions. The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between the undergraduates' MUET bands and their grades in the English language course. Chi square results also indicate that the difference between MUET band 3 undergraduates' ability to obtain good grades is significantly different compared to undergraduates with MUET bands 1 and 2. Besides providing evidence for MUET's validity as a measure of students' English language ability, the findings also recommend a need to review the cut-off MUET band for placement purposes.

1 Introduction

Globally, the vital role of the English language in tertiary institutions has long been recognised. Proficiency and competency in the language are regarded as a passport to better academic achievement (Bellingham, 1995; Cheng, 2008). With the increasing use of English in academic contexts, mastery of the language is now a must and no longer seen as a complementary competence particularly in the field of science and technology (Rea-Dickins & Scott, 2007). Realising such importance, universities are taking various measures to assist students in improving their English language proficiency. One of those measures is offering a range of English language courses, some of which are compulsory for graduation requirements. Entry to such courses is often determined by the students' score in a proficiency test as predetermined by the university (Elder & O'Loughlin, 2003) such as TOEFL (The Test of English as a Foreign Language), IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and ESOL exams (English for Speakers of Other Languages). Students with lower proficiency scores are usually required to enrol for remedial English

language courses as to provide them with extra help in improving their proficiency in the language (Cotton & Conrow, 1998; Tsai & Tsou, 2009).

Studies pertaining to the use of standardised English proficiency tests for placement purposes in tertiary institutions have largely centred on the issues of the tests' predictive validity. Predictive validity is concerned with the use of the test performance to predict future performance on some other valued measure or criterion. In many cases, this predicted measure is undergraduates' academic performance. Dooley (1999) and Feast (2002), for example, examined the predictive validity of IELTS on students' academic success. Similarly, Spitzer (2001) and Ayers and Peters (1977) investigated the same measure on TOEFL. There is limited research that examines the relationship between students' scores in these standardised tests, and their performance in English language proficiency courses conducted by the universities.

In Malaysia, English is widely used as a medium of instruction at the tertiary level (Gill, 2005). Thus, there is a great need to determine prospective students' English language proficiency before entering university. The widely used benchmark in determining one's proficiency in English for the purpose of admission into tertiary institutions is the Malaysian University English Test (MUET).

2 The Malaysian Universiti English Test

The education system in Malaysia is basically divided into three tiers: primary, secondary and pre-university. Children are enrolled in primary school when they are 7 years old. Primary level education which consists of 6 years starts with Primary 1 and ends at Primary 6. In lower primary (Primary 1-3) English is taught for 240 minutes per week, and in the upper primary (Primary 4-6) for 210 minutes per week. At the end of primary school, students sit for the Primary School Assessment Test, known as *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (abbreviated as UPSR). English is a compulsory subject in the UPSR examination (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2008).

Secondary education consists of two levels, lower secondary (Form 1 - Form 3) and upper secondary (Form 4 and Form 5). In the secondary level, English is taught for 200 minutes per week. At the end of Form 3, students sit for the Lower Secondary Assessment, known as *Penilaian Menengah Rendah* (abbreviated as PMR) and the Malaysian Certification of Education at the end of Form 5. The Malaysian Certificate of Education, which is also known as *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (abbreviated as SPM), is the local version of General Certificate of Education (GCSE) O-Levels examination. Just like in UPSR English is a compulsory subject in PMR and SPM (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2008).

The pre-university level consists of Lower Form 6 and Upper Form 6. Matriculation programmes are also part of pre-university education. Approximately 240 minutes per week are allocated for Malaysian University English Test (abbreviated as MUET) coaching with the sixth form classes. The students sit for MUET which is a mandatory requirement for admission into public universities in Malaysia (Lee, 2004).

Prior to the year 2000, Malaysian universities had to rely on students' English language grade in the SPM examination as a measurement of their English language proficiency for university admission. However, it was thought that such practice has created administrative problems in identifying students' actual proficiency for placement purposes (Chan & Wong, 2004). Since there was an obvious two-year gap at the pre-university stage during which English was not taught as a subject, many researchers and academics felt that there should be a standardised English proficiency test similar to IELTS and TOEFL, which could be used as a yardstick to determine students' proficiency level in English. As further stated by Lee (2004), prior to the introduction of the MUET, there had been no provision for English classes in the pre-university level. As such, MUET was introduced by the Ministry of Education in late 1999 and fully implemented in 2000. MUET is administered by the Malaysian Examination Council and it specifically aims to "bridge the gap in language needs between secondary and tertiary education" (Chan & Wong, 2004, p. 35). The MUET syllabus seeks to consolidate and enhance the English language ability of pre-university

students to enable them to perform effectively in their academic pursuits at tertiary level, in line with the aspirations of the National Education Policy.

The MUET assesses candidates' ability in four language skills: listening (code 800/1), speaking (code 800/2), reading (code 800/3) and writing (code 800/4). The Listening Paper consists of three parts and each part comprises of a recording and five multiple-choice questions. The time allocated for the listening test is 30 minutes. The Speaking Paper consists of two tasks, an individual presentation followed by group discussion. Time allocation for the speaking test is 30 minutes. The Reading Comprehension Paper consists of a cloze passage, a passage of about 200-250 words for information transfer, a non-linear text (e.g. graphs, tables, flow charts) and four comprehension passages. The four passages progress in terms of length (400-750 words) and difficulty level. In total, the Reading Paper consists of 50 multiple-choice questions which have to be answered within 2 hours. The Writing Paper consists of two writing tasks, summary and extended writing. For the first task, candidates are required to write a 100-word summary based on a passage of about 500-600 words. The second task requires candidates to write an essay of about 250 words on a given topic. The time allocation for the Writing Paper is 1 hour 30 minutes. Reading is considered as the most important with the highest weightage (45%), followed by writing (25%), listening (15%) and speaking (15%). A summary of the MUET format and weighting is given in Table 1.

Test Component	Code	Time Allocation (minutes)	Maximum Possible Score	Weightage (%)
Listening	800/1	30	45	15
Speaking	800/2	30	45	15
Reading	800/3	120	135	45
Writing	800/4	90	75	25

Table 1: MUET format and weighting

The MUET scores obtained by the candidates are reported in a six-band scale with corresponding aggregated band score that ranges from 0-300. Each MUET sub-test score is scored separately and then averaged to obtain the overall band score. Each band has descriptions which explain the candidate's overall command of language, communicative ability, understanding and task performance, as shown in Appendix 1.

Most international testing bodies like Educational Testing Services and Cambridge ESOL constantly published documents on their tests' validity and reliability (Milanovic, 2009). It is generally known that Malaysian Examinations Council is actively conducting validation and reliability checks on MUET whereby analysis of the test and rater training programmes are carried out for the assessors to ensure reliability. However, despite extensive search, only one such report was found. The benchmarking study conducted by the Malaysian Examination Council investigated the correlation between MUET and IELTS. The study sample involved a total of 441 pre-university students. The students sat for MUET first and then for IELTS. Before sitting for MUET, the students were informed of the exam procedure and format. Similarly, the students were briefed on the IELTS procedure and format by the British Council in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The students were also given a copy of the IELTS specimen materials that contains sample questions, as a part of the preparation for the test.

The results of the study showed that there is a good positive correlation ($r=0.662$) between MUET and IELTS overall band. The highest correlation among the four test components is for writing ($r=0.521$), followed by reading ($r=0.504$), speaking ($r=0.464$) and the lowest is for listening ($r=0.295$) (Malaysian Examination Council, 2005). It can be inferred that MUET bands particularly for writing, reading and speaking can be reliably used as a good measure of candidates' ability. The high correlation between MUET and IELTS overall band is an indication that MUET is compatible to IELTS which is accepted internationally as a reliable measure of candidates' Eng-

lish language ability. However, since only one such study is available, the high correlation may not be conclusive.

As mentioned earlier, in order to be admitted, Malaysian applicants must obtain the minimum band set by the faculties of each institution as to ensure that they have adequate level of English ability to cope with the courses in their chosen field of study (Kaur & Nordin, 2006). More importantly, the MUET band scores obtained by students are also used to provide diagnostic information for their placement in English language proficiency courses (Mohamed, 2008).

In most Malaysian universities, undergraduates who obtained bands 1, 2 and 3 in MUET are required to go through remedial courses with the objective of providing them with adequate proficiency in order to proceed to other advanced English proficiency courses. For example, in Universiti Sains Malaysia, undergraduates in the category of band 1 to band 3 are required to go through the Preparatory English course and obtain a minimum grade C before they are allowed to sign up for other English language courses such as English for Business and Communication, Creative Writing and Effective Reading (USM English Language Courses, 2010). This measure is deemed necessary to ensure that the undergraduates are able to cope with the advanced English language courses. However, in Universiti Putra Malaysia, undergraduates with bands 1 and 2 in MUET are placed under the course English for Academic Purposes (Basic Level English course) while band 3 undergraduates are placed together with band 4 undergraduates for Level 2 English language courses (UPM English Department's List of Courses, 2010). A similar placement method is used in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, in which only undergraduates with bands 1 and 2 in MUET are required to take basic proficiency courses (UKM English Language Courses Synopsis, 2009). In the case of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), undergraduates who obtain bands 1, 2 and 3 in MUET are obliged to take an English proficiency course known as Preparatory English 1. Upon passing the course, undergraduates are then required to take Preparatory English 2. Undergraduates who obtained band 4 to band 6 in MUET, on the other hand, are directly allowed to register for other English language courses within the generic category (Centre for Language Studies UNIMAS, 2007).

Although MUET bands are widely used for placements purposes, studies that examine the use of MUET band for this purpose are rather scarce. A majority of the research tends to focus on the use of MUET as a predictive measure of students' general academic success (Samad, Rahman, & Yahya, 2008). In addition, the use of MUET bands for placement purposes is usually devised according to the descriptions of the six-band scale without a proper empirical study that checks on its appropriateness in relation to the students' performance in the English proficiency courses. Templer (2004) also suggested that while MUET may be a localised version of other standardised English proficiency tests, its use in measuring students' English language proficiency should be further investigated.

Since MUET results are extensively used for placement purposes, there is an apparent need to answer the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between the MUET band obtained by the undergraduates and their grade in an English language course at tertiary level?
- ii. To what extent are the current MUET cut-off bands appropriate for the placement of undergraduates in the English language course at tertiary level?

3 The study

The study employed a quantitative research design and investigated the relationship between the MUET band of UNIMAS undergraduates and their grades in an English preparatory course.

3.1 *English language enhancement courses at UNIMAS*

Through the Centre for Language Studies, UNIMAS provides two language enhancement courses for students who obtain low MUET bands ranging from band 1 to band 3. The first en-

hancement course that the undergraduates are required to take is the Preparatory English 1, which is then followed by Preparatory English 2.

3.1.1 Preparatory English 1

In general, the Preparatory English 1 course at UNIMAS aims to develop students' social communicative ability in English for a variety of everyday purposes. The course covers all four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Emphasis is given to both language fluency and accuracy whereby students are exposed to language forms and functions used in daily social activities. In terms of evaluation, 50% of students' final grade is determined by two role plays and a writing assignment while another 50% is assessed in the final test which comprises of 30% spoken language and 20% writing.

3.1.2 Preparatory English 2

The Preparatory English 2 course aims to further strengthen students' communicative competence in English for a variety of social to academic purposes. Emphasis is given to both language fluency and accuracy whereby students are exposed to language forms and functions used in daily social and basic academic activities. Although the course covers all four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing, the emphasis is more on listening and speaking. In terms of evaluation, 50% of students' final grade is determined by two role plays which carry 20% and writing assignments which carry 30%. Another 50% is assessed in the final test which covers reading (35%) and writing (15%).

3.1.3 Generic English language courses

As mentioned earlier, students who obtained MUET band 4, 5 and 6 can directly enrol in the generic English language courses. Students with MUET band 2 and 3 are required to obtain a pass in Preparatory English 2 before they can sign up for the generic courses. All undergraduates are required to pass two generic courses as a part of their graduation requirement. UNIMAS offers five generic courses that cover a range of contexts including academic, professional and social.

3.1.4 Vetting and moderation process

The assessment tasks and final tests for every course offered by the Centre go through two major vetting processes. The first vetting process is at the team level where instructors who are involved in teaching the course go through all items, answer keys and marking schemes and provide feedback to the course coordinator. Discussion sessions are held during which feedback from team members are further discussed. Then, the items are improved as agreed during the discussion. The final test paper is then submitted to the Vetting Committee which consists of senior members of the Centre for Language Studies. During this second vetting, the course coordinator and instructors answer queries from the committee members and make changes according to the agreed suggestions. After the exam, raters are trained to assess the subjective questions using actual sample scripts from candidates. The aim of the vetting and training session is to ensure validity and reliability of the assessments.

Although the Preparatory English 1 course focuses on social context compared to MUET which focuses on the academic context, just like MUET, it covers all four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The course has been introduced for several years, however, there was no empirical analysis conducted to verify the appropriateness of the predetermined MUET bands in relation to the undergraduates' achievement in the course. Thus, it is the purpose of the present study to address this by examining the relationship between undergraduates' MUET band and their performance in Preparatory English 1.

3.2 Method

The MUET bands and final grades of 2884 undergraduates who enrolled for the Preparatory English 1 course in year 2007 to 2010 were used as the data for the study. The grading system at the university ranges from A to F. The mark range for each grade is illustrated in Table 2.

Grade	Mark Range (%)
A	80 - 100
A-	75 - 79
B+	70 - 74
B	65 - 69
B-	60 - 64
C+	55 - 59
C	50 - 54
C-	45 - 49
D	40 - 44
F	0 - 39

Table 2: The grade and mark range

With the assistance of Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS), the relationship between the undergraduates' MUET band and their final grade in Preparatory English 1 was first obtained using Pearson's correlation analysis. Then, Chi-square test was used to test the significance of relationships between variables comprising of the categorised final grades and MUET bands, cross-classified in a bivariate table (Greenwood & Nikulin, 1996). The chi-square test results inform the degree to which the conditional distributions (the distribution of the dependent variable across different values of the independent variable) differ from what would be expected under the assumption of statistical independence.

3.3 Results and discussions

The correlation between undergraduates' MUET band and their final grade in Preparatory English 1 is shown in Table 3.

		MUET Bands	Prep 1 Grades
MUET Bands	Pearson Correlation	1	.555(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	2884	2884
Prep 1 Grades	Pearson Correlation	.555(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	2884	2884

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Correlation between undergraduates' MUET band and Preparatory English 1 grades

The Pearson's correlation result shows that there is a significant and positive relationship ($r=0.555$, $p=0.001$) between the undergraduates' MUET band scores and their grades in the Preparatory English 1 course. It also means that a higher MUET band is correlated with the higher grades in Preparatory English 1. This finding is fairly consistent with the study by Samad et al. (2008) who discovered that MUET is a valid predictor of undergraduates' performance in language courses but their target sample were undergraduates who enrolled in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) programme.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of undergraduates' grades in Preparatory English 1 according to their MUET band.

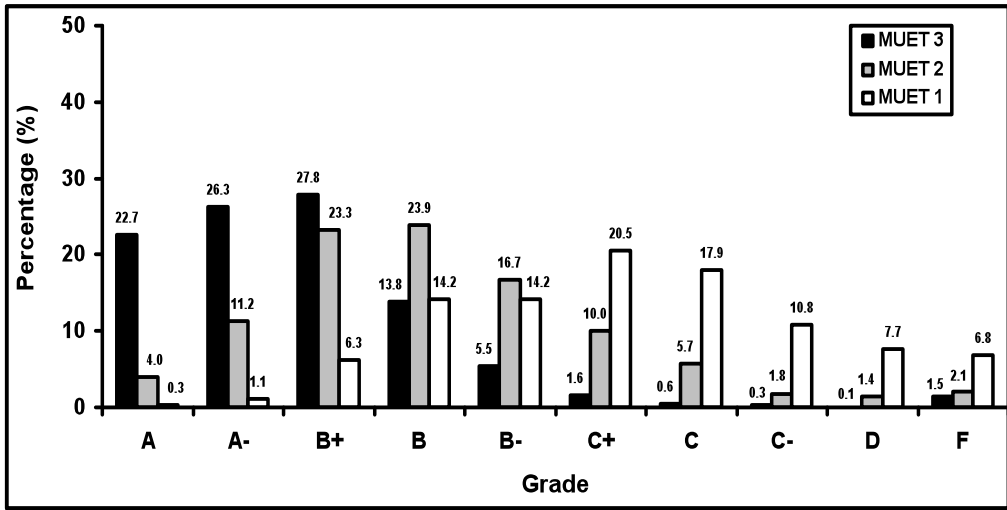


Fig. 1: Distribution of undergraduates' Preparatory English 1 grade according to their MUET band

Figure 1 shows that MUET band 3 students' grades were mainly distributed towards the higher grades (A,A- and B+). On the other hand, MUET band 1 students' results is slightly distributed towards the right with the peak at C+ and C. MUET band 2 students' results in Preparatory English 1 seem to follow a bell curve with B and B+ being the peak.

In order to obtain a clearer view of the student' performance based on MUET band, the grades were then grouped into four categories: Category 1-Good pass (A, A- and B+), Category 2-Average pass (B, B-, C+ and C), Category 3-Weak pass (C- and D) and Category 4-Fail (F), as shown in Table 4.

Grade	Mark Range	Grade Category
A	80 - 100	Good pass
A-	75 - 79	
B+	70 - 74	
B	65 - 69	Average pass
B-	60 - 64	
C+	55 - 59	
C	50 - 54	Weak pass
C-	45 - 49	
D	40 - 44	Fail
F	0 - 39	

Table 4: The mark range and grade category

Figure 2 shows the students' grades category according to their MUET bands.

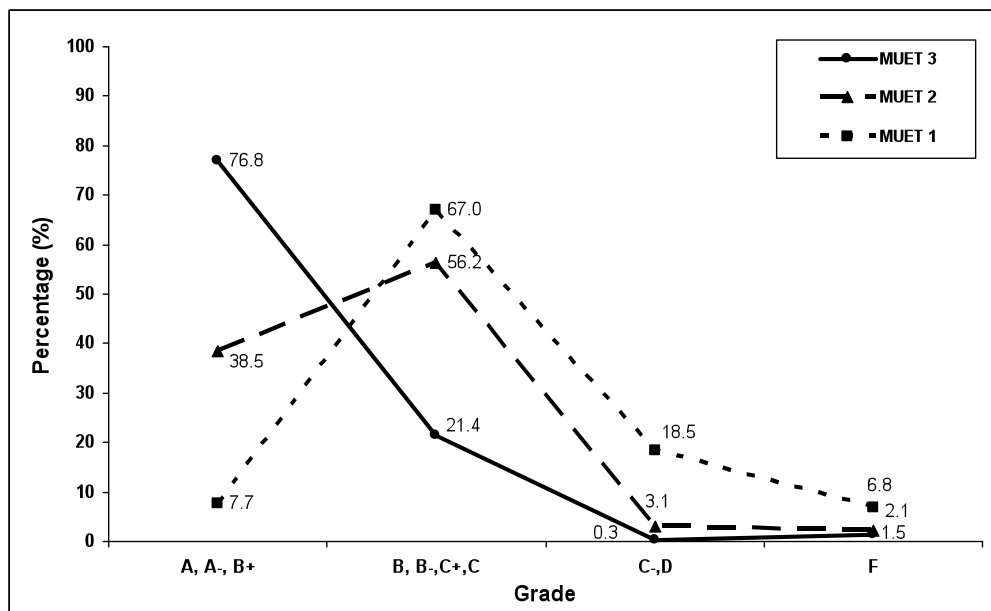


Figure 2: Preparatory English 1 grade category according to MUET band

Figure 2 clearly shows that a large majority (76.8%) of the undergraduates with band 3 in MUET obtained good grades (A, A- and B+) in Preparatory English 1 as compared to their counterparts with bands 1 and 2. On the other hand, only 7.7% of the undergraduates with MUET band 1 and 38.5% of MUET band 2 undergraduates were able to obtain a good pass in Preparatory English 1.

In addition, a large majority (67%) of MUET band 1 and a similar majority (56.2%) of band 2 undergraduates obtained average grades (B, B-, C+, C). In contrast, only a minority (21.4%) of MUET band 3 undergraduates fell in this category. Similarly, while 18.5% and 3.1% of the MUET band 1 and 2 undergraduates respectively obtained weak grades (C- and D), only a very small minority of 0.3% of MUET band 3 undergraduates obtained these grades.

The results also show that 6.8% and 2.1% of MUET band 1 and band 2 undergraduates respectively, failed the course. Conversely, only 1.5% of MUET band 3 undergraduates failed the course. Upon checking the students' assessment marks, it was found that those who obtained grades C-, D and F did not sit for at least two of the assessments which in turn led them to obtain a '0' for those assessments. Grades A to C are reflective of the performance of undergraduates who sat for all assessments. Thus, grades A to C are more accurate reflection of the undergraduates' ability and performance. A close observation of these grade categories show that a huge majority of the MUET band 3 undergraduates were able to score good grades, while the majority of MUET band 1 and 2 undergraduate were only able to obtain average grades .

In order to verify the appropriacy of the MUET cut-off bands for placement purposes, cross-tabulation and Chi-square test were used to analyse the data. Table 4 shows the cross-tabulation of undergraduates' MUET bands and category of grades obtained in Preparatory English 1.

		Grade Category				Total
		1	2	3	4	
		Good Pass	Average Pass	Weak Pass	Fail	
MUET Band 1	Count	27	235	65	24	351
	Expected Count	189.5	140.6	12.7	8.3	351.0
	% within Muet	7.7%	67.0%	18.5%	6.8%	100.0%
	% within Category	1.7%	20.3%	62.5%	35.3%	12.2%
	Std. Residual	-11.8	8.0	14.7	5.5	
MUET Band 2	Count	418	610	34	23	1085
	Expected Count	585.8	434.5	39.1	25.6	1085.0
	% within Muet	38.5%	56.2%	3.1%	2.1%	100.0%
	% within Category	26.8%	52.8%	32.7%	33.8%	37.6%
	Std. Residual	-6.9	8.4	-8	-5	
MUET Band 3	Count	1112	310	5	21	1448
	Expected Count	781.7	579.9	52.2	34.1	1448.0
	% within Muet	76.8%	21.4%	.3%	1.5%	100.0%
	% within Category	71.4%	26.8%	4.8%	30.9%	50.2%
	Std. Residual	11.8	-11.2	-6.5	-2.2	
Total	Count	1557	1155	104	68	2884
	Expected Count	1557.0	1155.0	104.0	68.0	2884.0
	% within Muet	54.0%	40.0%	3.6%	2.4%	100.0%
	% within Category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Std. Residual					

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of MUET bands and grade categories

Table 5 shows that there were a considerably higher number of MUET band 3 undergraduates (1112) who obtained good grades from the expected figure of approximately 782 undergraduates. In contrast, about 190 MUET band 1 and 586 band 2 undergraduates should have obtained these grades but only 27 and 418 respectively, managed to obtain these good grades.

As for average and weak grade categories, although about 580 and 52 of MUET band 3 undergraduates were expected to obtain grades within these categories, the actual count was far lower with only 310 and 5 respectively. On the other hand, while only 141 and 13 of MUET band 1 undergraduates were expected to fall into these grade categories, the actual count was higher with 235 and 65 respectively. Similarly, only 435 of MUET band 2 undergraduates were expected to obtain an average pass, but a far higher number of 610 fell into this grade category.

These results clearly indicate that MUET band 3 undergraduates were performing much better than expected in the Preparatory English 1 course. To further confirm this, Chi-square tests results were obtained (as shown in Table 6).

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	881.846(a)	6	.000
Continuity Correction			
Likelihood Ratio	868.945	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	662.130	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	2884		

a – 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.28

Table 6: Results from Chi-square tests

Table 6 shows a very large Chi-square value probably due to sample size and that the columns are significantly different from each other ($\chi^2 = 881.846$, $df = 6$, $p = .000$, $n = 2884$). This further confirms that MUET band 3 undergraduates' ability to get a good pass in the English Preparatory 1 course is significantly higher compared to undergraduates with MUET bands 1 and 2.

4 Conclusions and future work

This paper uncovers the relationship between students' MUET band and their performance in an English language enhancement course meant for low band undergraduates (band 1, 2 and 3). Although MUET focuses on academic context and Preparatory English 1 on social, both cover all four language skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The findings from this study have revealed a significant positive relationship between MUET band and Preparatory English 1 grade, whereby undergraduates with higher MUET band scores are indeed performing very well in the English language proficiency course. Similarly, undergraduates with lower MUET bands tend to obtain average and weak pass in the Preparatory English 1 course. The benchmark study reported by Malaysian Examination Council (2005) showed a good correlation between IELTS and MUET bands ($r = 0.662$) indicating MUET as a reliable measure of students English language ability. Along the same line, it can also be inferred that the English Preparatory 1 test results which correlate strongly with MUET band, is an indication of its validity. In addition, it is also an acknowledgment to the vetting and moderation process carried out to ensure the accuracy of the test in measuring what it set out to measure.

The findings have also shown how undergraduates with MUET band 3 are performing better than expected in Preparatory English 1. Their chances of obtaining good grades are much higher compared to undergraduates who have obtained MUET bands 1 and 2. This suggests that it may not be appropriate to group the MUET band 3 undergraduates together with bands 1 and 2 undergraduates because MUET band 3 undergraduates' command of English language far exceeds those with MUET band 1 and 2. Thus, there is an apparent indication that the MUET cut-off band for the placement of undergraduates in the course should be reviewed. Based on the context of the study, it can also be recommended that MUET band 3 undergraduates be exempted from Preparatory English 1 and allowed to proceed directly to the next level course which is the Preparatory English 2.

Future research could compare the performance of MUET band 3 undergraduates who have gone through Preparatory English 1 and undergraduates who were allowed to go directly into Preparatory English 2. If no significant difference is found between the performances of both groups of undergraduates in Preparatory English 2, then the findings of the present study can be strengthened and justified.

Though the findings from this study are specifically applied to the UNIMAS context, the process of validating test scores against English language course scores may have broader applicability. This process may help to determine the relevance of test scores that determine undergraduate placement in English language courses and thereby ultimately enhance teaching and learning.

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Appendix

MUET Bands and Descriptions

Aggregated Score	Band	User	Command of language	Communicative Ability	Understanding	Task Performance
260-300	6	Very good user	Very good command of the language	Very fluent, accurate and appropriate; hardly any inaccuracies	High level of Understanding of the language.	Functions extremely well in the language
220-259	5	Good user	Good command of the language	Fluent, appropriate, but with occasional inaccuracies	Good level of understanding of the language	Functions well in the language
180-219	4	Competent user	Satisfactory command of the language	Generally fluent, appropriate but with occasional inaccuracies	Satisfactory level of understanding of the language	Functions reasonably well in the language
140-179	3	Modest user	Fair command of the language	Fairly fluent, usually appropriate, but with noticeable inaccuracies	Able to understand but with some misinterpretation	Able to function, but with some effort
100-139	2	Limited user	Limited command of the language	Lacks fluency and appropriacy, inaccurate use of the language resulting in frequent break-downs in communication	Limited understanding of the language	Limited ability to function in the language
0-99	1	Extremely limited user	Poor command of the language	Inappropriate and inaccurate use of the language; frequent break-downs in communication	Poor understanding of the language	Hardly able to function in the language