

Original Paper

Lived Experiences of Foreign Students towards the Development of a Language Adjustment Assessment Tool

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Abstract

As part of internationalization of higher education, student mobility has expanded over the past decade. Particularly, at St. Paul University Philippines, internationalization is established by hosting foreign students from Basic Education Unit to the Graduate School. Reviewed literature shows that foreign students across countries face a range of unique acculturation difficulties brought by language difference. However, none of these focused solely on language adjustment of foreign students. The researcher considered this particular space in sociolinguistics as a potential niche to occupy, with the aim of explicating the lived experiences of foreign students to develop a language adjustment assessment tool. This study used hermeneutical phenomenology in understanding the lived experiences of foreign students on language adjustment. Considering data saturation in the qualitative phase, the researcher involved 18 college foreign students using semi-structured one-on-one interview. The data were subjected to thematic structural analysis to find emerging themes. Based on such themes, the researcher developed a language adjustment assessment tool in the quantitative phase, which was pilot-tested to 76 medical foreign students and finally administered to 51 college foreign students using purposive-convenient sampling. Cohens Kappa was used to assess the instrument's validity while Cronbach's Alpha for reliability. Based on the findings of the study, more enablers affecting language adjustment of foreign students were identified than constraints. Moreover, four major themes emerged

Adjustments, Language-related Socio-Cultural Adjustments, and Language-related Psychological Adjustments. The developed language adjustment assessment tool was also evaluated to be fairly valid and reliable.

Keywords

lived experiences, language adjustment, foreign students, hermeneutical phenomenology

1. Introduction

By enhancing the international dimension of teaching, research and service, there is an added value to the quality of the institution's system. Thus, the presence of foreign students on university campuses across the world has expanded over the past decade.

Particularly, in the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education encourages Higher Education Sectors in responding to the demands posted by the programs of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). As one of its strategic directions, St. Paul University Philippines has established internationalization by forging linkages, launching search engine optimization, international exposures of both students and faculty members, hosting international conferences, and applying for transnational education to cater to the needs of international students.

Therefore, to sustain these initiatives and benefits, host universities are deemed to leverage their knowledge and services, particularly on difficulties concerning foreign students' experiences, which are found to be a key element of internationalization.

Nonetheless, there is now much evidence to support the claim that international students across countries face a range of unique difficulties in their studies, which include cultural and communication problems, loss of social support, language difficulties, academic problems, financial, psychological, health and recreational issues.

Being an exchange student/teacher himself for short-term exchange programs in Japan, Taiwan and USA, the researcher found a consistent observation on language as a central factor in adjusting to the host country. Such endeavor ignited in him curiosity and interest to investigate language as part of every foreign student's adjustment problem.

Among the studies reviewed by the researcher, forty-six percent explored the experiences of foreign students vis-à-vis internationalization, while thirty-two percent investigated socio-cultural adjustment and English as a global language; and twenty-two percent examined academic adjustments. Across all reviewed adjustment experiences of foreign students, sixty-three percent cited language as a key factor in the accommodation process to the host country and that language competence is the greatest predictor of adjustment than the other domains of acculturation.

However, none of the reviewed literature focused solely on language adjustment of foreign students and how language competence becomes attributed to other kinds of adjustments. Moreover, only five percent of the literature was conducted in the Philippines. As a result, there is no comprehensive explanation on the assumption that language is the basis for all difficulties confronted by foreign students.

This gap raises a number of questions including: (1) How does language affect the adjustment of foreign students to their host university? (2) What are the needs, difficulties and experiences of students in coping with language constraints? and (3) How does one assess himself in terms of the level of accommodation to a foreign country? Hence, the researcher deemed it necessary to conduct a study on the adjustment experiences of foreign students, focusing on the role of language in the adjustment

process.

The researcher considered this particular space in sociolinguistics as a potential niche to occupy, with the aim of explicating the lived experiences of foreign students; thereby contributing to the internationalization initiatives of the institution and the country at large. By employing a Sequential Exploratory Mixed Method, the researcher attempted to gather qualitative data to explore the lived experiences of foreign students, and then collected quantitative data to explain relationships in the phenomenological information initially obtained. The themes and subthemes that emerged from the qualitative phase were used to develop a tool on language adjustment, which later underwent validity and reliability testing through the quantitative phase.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study explored on the lived experiences on language adjustment of foreign students in SPUP. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

- 1) What enablers and constraints affect foreign students' language adjustment?
- 2) What co-created meanings can be derived to describe the language adjustment experiences of foreign students?
- 3) What tool can be developed to assess language adjustment of foreign students?
- 4) What is the quality of the language adjustment assessment tool in terms of:
 - a. Validity; and
 - b. Reliability?

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study underwent two phases. The initial qualitative phase explored on the lived experiences of foreign students on language adjustment; while the next phase quantitatively used findings to develop and validate a Self-Assessment Tool on Language Adjustment.

The first phase of the study employed Hermeneutical Phenomenology design, particularly using the Hermeneutic Loop with the goal to describe the lived experiences of foreign students. As the researcher developed an understanding of the lived experiences based on each response to interview questions, he began to question the meanings of these responses which were projected through actions and speech (verbal and non-verbal cues). The researcher engaged himself in all these answers and observations to find interrelatedness between and among experiences, observations and literature. Eliciting feedback was also done to clarify concepts, leading to a correct interpretation and greater understanding, which-of course-alters, yet again, the understanding of the whole.

After the analysis of the qualitative data, themes and sub-themes were used to drive the development of a language adjustment assessment tool. Such tool was subjected to reliability and validity tests.

2.2 Participants of the Study

In the qualitative phase, purposive-convenient sampling technique was used by the researcher while considering data saturation. A total of 18 participants were involved to totally extract all significant elements of the phenomenon being studied, leading to an endpoint called “data saturation”. The qualitative participants are composed of Indians (7), Nigerians (5), Papua New Guineans (2), East Timorese (2), Indonesian (1), and Korean (1).

Subsequently, in the quantitative phase of the study, purposive-convenient sampling technique was used for both pilot-testing and final administration. A total of 76 foreign students from Cagayan State University, College of Medicine and Surgery were considered in the pilot-testing of the tool, while 51 foreign students from St. Paul University Philippines were included in the final administration of the language adjustment assessment tool for foreign students.

2.3 Data Gathering Procedure

Throughout the process of the study, the researcher strictly complied with the institutional research protocols and regulations. A letter asking permission for the conduct of the study, duly signed by the Dissertation Adviser and noted by the Graduate School Dean, was sought from the Vice President for Academics of St. Paul University Philippines; and from SPUP’S Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB). Once approved, permission to conduct the study was also requested from the Director of International Relations.

In particular, the researcher met the foreign students who were qualified in the set criteria for interview and asked if they can be participants of the study. The nature and objectives of the study vis a vis participants’ rights were discussed with them, and informed consent was also sought. Those who agreed in the conditions thereof and signed the informed consent were asked for their convenient interview schedule.

Before starting the interview, a warm-up casual conversation was done to reduce the interviewee’s tension. The researcher used an interview guide to direct the discourse and facilitate a natural flow of conversation. Apart from open questions which encourage participants to talk at length, the interview guide also employed prompts to breakdown ideas into more specific experiences. During the interview, the researcher used an audio recorder, as permitted by the participants and was mindful of all verbal and non-verbal cues of the participants while being aware with moments of silence to allow both interlocutors to reflect on issues being discussed. These were recorded through field notes and the researcher also asked clarifications from the participants to obtain accurate response and ensure a fluid conversation.

Verbatim transcription was done after every interview through the help of a research assistant. Such transcription conformed to the following format: single space; space between speakers; dash to indicate pauses; ellipses to indicate gaps or prolonged pauses; parentheses to separate from the text all expressions like laughter and exclamation among others; provision of sufficient margin for coding, critique or comments; and inclusion of page number coded with interview number and participant

number. Such format was deemed to facilitate the familiarizing and immersing of the researcher with the data. Finally, proofreading was done by reading the transcript along with the source in order to add or repeal annotations on the transcript.

Subsequent to the qualitative phase was the instrument development. A letter duly signed by the Dissertation Adviser and noted by the Graduate School Dean, asking permission for the pilot-testing of the tool was sought from the Campus Executive Officer of Cagayan State University.

With the assistance of the adviser and pool of experts, the researcher carefully conformed with the method of instrument development and validation by De Vellis (as cited by Gumabay, 2015).

This method involved eight steps, namely, (1) defining what is to be measured; (2) generating an initial item pool; (3) determining the measurement format; (4) having experts review the initial item pool; (5) pilot testing of the questionnaire; (6) evaluating item reliability and revising the questionnaire, (7) administering the final tool, and (8) measuring the reliability of the final tool.

2.4 Data Analysis

In the qualitative phase, Ricoeur's phenomenological hermeneutical theory was employed in the interpretation of text. This analytical theory was the main inspiration for opening the way into the hermeneutical circle. It included naive reading, thematic structural analysis, synthesis of findings, and illuminating and illustrating the phenomenon and integrating themes.

Next to the qualitative phase was the retrieval of all quantitative data by the researcher for further analysis. Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) was used for statistical calculation. The present study utilized Cronbach's alpha, a reliability statistics which determines the internal consistency or average correlation of items in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability (Santos, 1999).

Cohen's kappa coefficient (κ) was used to test the validity of the developed questionnaire. It is a statistics which measures inter-rater agreement for qualitative (categorical) items, and generally thought to be a more robust measure than simple percent agreement calculation, as κ takes into account the possibility of the agreement occurring by chance. In statistics, inter-rater reliability, inter-rater agreement, or concordance, is the degree of agreement among raters. It gives a score of how much homogeneity, or consensus, there is in the ratings given by judges, and it is one of the aspects of test validity.

2.5 Instrumentation

Semi-structured one-on-one interview. Since the chief concern of phenomenological studies is to elicit rich, comprehensive, and first-person accounts of experiences and phenomena under inquiry, the researcher utilized semi-structured one-on-one interview which allowed him and the participants to engage in a dialogue in real time. Such data collection technique also gave sufficient space and flexibility for original and unexpected issues to arise, which the researcher may investigate in more detail with further questions (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

Relevance Validity Assessment Form. This tool was used by experts to analyze each questionnaire item

and rate it as either relevant or not relevant, while editing or writing comments.

Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreigners. This tool was developed from the emerging experiences of foreign students as recounted in the phenomenological data. Results from the internal consistency test and questionnaire validation were used to refine items in the developed research instrument.

3. Result

This chapter presents the results of the gathered data from both phases of the research study. The qualitative phase includes the description and interpretation of the lived experiences of foreign students on language adjustment. Responses during the interview with foreign students were extracted to determine the enablers and constraints on adjusting to language. Moreover, after a thematic structural analysis, four major themes emerged, namely: Language-related General Living Adjustment, Language-related Academic Adjustment, Language-related Socio-cultural Adjustment, and Language-related Psychological Adjustment.

Subsequently, the quantitative phase of the study presents the developed Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreign Students for validity and reliability evaluation.

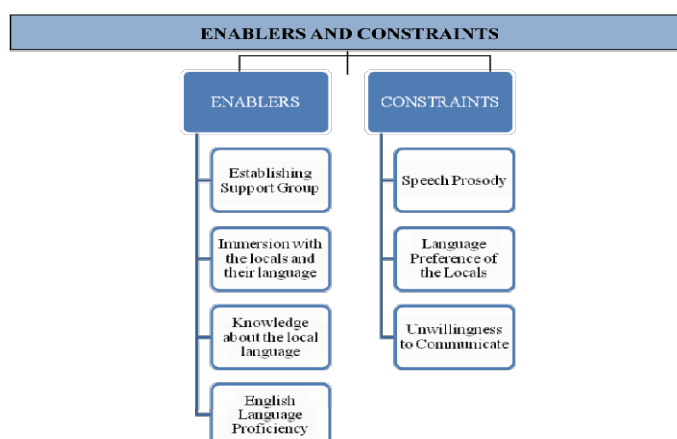


Figure 1. Summary of Enablers and Constraints Affecting Foreign Students' Language Adjustment

Figure 1 summarizes the enablers and constraints affecting foreign students' language adjustment. It is identified that there are more enablers than difficulties, indicating a high chance of adjusting well to the host country. Moreover, the ability to speak English is evident among Filipinos, but the difference in speech prosody, language preference, and willingness to communicate hinder foreign students to adjust.

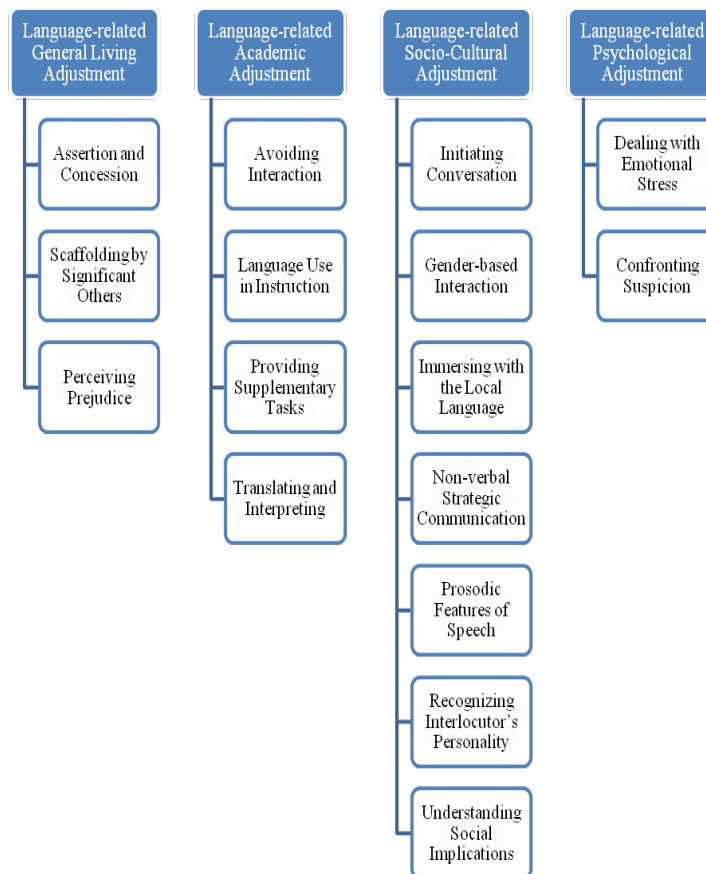


Figure 2. Co-created Meanings Describing the Language Adjustment Experiences of Foreign Students

Figure 2 presents the emerging themes and sub-themes that describe the lived experiences of foreign students on language adjustment. Such were extracted from the thematic structural analysis done with the responses of foreign students in the interview.

3.1 The Emergent Themes

Based on the extracted responses from the semi-structured one-on-one interview with foreign students, the following themes and sub-themes emerged.

Major Theme 1: Language-related General Living Adjustment

This theme revolves around the experiences of foreign students in their language adjustment to the language along the areas of transportation system and purchasing arrangement. The participants of the study accounted how language affected their interaction with the locals whenever the needs to travel and buy arise. The general living adjustment of foreign students can be represented by three language-related experiences, namely: (1) Assertion and Concession, (2) Scaffolding by Significant Others, and (3) Perceiving Prejudice.

Table 1. Major Theme 1: Language-Related General Living Adjustment

Sub-themes	Meaningful Units (Frequency)	Percentage (%)
1. Assertion and Concession	18	40.91
2. Scaffolding by Significant Others	12	27.27
3. Perceiving Prejudice	14	31.82
TOTAL	44	100.00

Table 1 presents the language-related general living adjustment of foreign students. There are 44 meaningful units extracted from the interview related to this major theme. Of the sub-themes, the highest percentage is on *assertion and concession* with 40.91%. Succeeding to this is *perceiving prejudice* and *scaffolding by significant others* with 31.82% and 27.27% respectively.

Major Theme 2: Language-related Academic Adjustment

This theme elucidates the academic adjustment experiences of foreign students which are attributable to language. Such academic endeavors include class discussions, collaborative activities in school, and supplemental instructions. To further illuminate the lived experiences of foreign students in their language-related academic adjustment, four sub-themes emerged, namely: (1) Avoiding Interaction, (2) Language Use in Instruction, (3) Providing Supplementary Tasks, and (4) Translating and Interpreting.

Table 2. Major Theme 2: Language-Related Academic Adjustment

Sub-themes	Meaningful Units (Frequency)	Percentage (%)
1. Avoiding Interaction	19	25.33
2. Language Use in Instruction	21	28.00
3. Providing Supplementary Tasks	11	14.67
4. Translating and Interpreting	24	32.00
TOTAL	75	100.00

Table 2 summarizes the language-related academic adjustment of foreign students. Along with this primary theme, there are a total of 75 meaningful units extracted. The highest among the sub-themes is *translating and interpreting* with 32.00%. Following this is *language use in instruction* and *avoiding interaction*, obtaining 28.00% and 25.33% respectively. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage is on *providing additional tasks* of 14.67%.

Major Theme 3: Language-related Socio-Cultural Adjustment

This theme speaks about the language-related experiences of foreign students in their socio-cultural adjustment. Generally, it includes how language difference affects their social dealings with interactants in the host country and how cultural diversity becomes attributable to foreign students' language apprehension. Such language-related socio-cultural adjustment can be abstracted into 7 sub-themes,

namely: (1) Initiating Conversation, (2) Gender-based Interaction, (3) Immersing with the Local Language, (4) Non-verbal Strategic Communication, (5) Prosodic Features of Speech, (6) Recognizing Interlocutor's Personality, and (7) Understanding Social Implications.

Table 3. Major Theme 3: Language-Related Socio-Cultural Adjustment

Sub-themes	Meaningful Units (Frequency)	Percentage (%)
1. Initiating Conversation	10	10.31
2. Gender-based Interaction	6	6.19
3. Immersing with the Local Language	19	19.59
4. Non-verbal Strategic Communication	16	16.49
5. Prosodic Features of Speech	14	14.43
6. Recognizing Interlocutor's Personality	21	21.65
7. Understanding Social Implications	11	11.34
TOTAL	97	100.00

Table 3 reveals that the language-related socio-cultural adjustment of foreign students garnered the highest number of meaningful units with 97 in total. Among the sub-themes, *recognizing interlocutor's personality* emerged as the peak having 21.65%, followed by *immersing with the local language* with 19.59%. On the middle range are *non-verbal strategic communication*, *prosodic features of speech*, and *understanding social implications*, obtaining 16.49%, 14.43%, and 11.34% respectively. Moreover, the lowest percentages come from *initiating conversation* with 10.31% and *gender-based interaction* with 6.19.

Major Theme 4: Language-related Psychological Adjustment

This theme summarizes the experiences of foreign students in terms of homesickness, depression, loneliness, anxiety, boredom, isolation, and suspicion which are affected by language. The analyzed narrations can be further abstracted to two sub-themes, namely: (1) Dealing with Emotional Stress, and (2) Confronting Suspicion.

Table 4. Major Theme 4: Language-Related Psychological Adjustment

Sub-themes	Meaningful Units (Frequency)	Percentage (%)
1. Dealing with Emotional Stress	28	60.87
2. Confronting Suspicion	18	39.13
TOTAL	46	100.00

Table 4 sums up the language-related psychological adjustment of foreign students, recording a total of 46 meaningful units. From the condensed thought units, two sub-themes emerged. *Dealing with*

emotional stress obtained 60.87 %, while 39.13% for *confronting suspicion*.

3.2 The Essence of Meaning

The language adjustments of foreign students are affected by more enablers than constraints. Such adjustments on language are identified to be existent in their general living, academic, socio-cultural and psychological experiences, allowing them to use language strategies when confronted with difficulties in the host country.

These language adjustments are initially problematic when foreign students immerse in a new environment where there is an abrupt change of people they interact with and an entirely different cultural norm. However, with social support group from inside and outside the host institution, they can accommodate new strategies of social interaction to minimize the negative effect of acculturation.

At SPUP, foreign students' language adjustments are properly dealt with through varied internationalization activities of the university and through the International Relations Office which serves as their front-line social support.

3.3 The Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreign Students

The Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreign Students is comprised of 32 items, encapsulating the lived experiences of foreign students on adjusting to the language in a host country. It is based on the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the qualitative phase of the study.

Directions: Rate your language adjustment experiences in the host country by encircling your choice from a scale of 1-4; where 4 (Strongly Agree), 3 (Agree), 2 (Disagree), and 1 (Strongly Disagree)

Table 5. The Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreign Students

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I adjust my pronunciation to the way the locals do.	4	3	2	1
2. I am accompanied by significant others (friends, mentors, and classmates in the local community) when doing transactions with the locals.	4	3	2	1
3. I am insulted if people negatively speak of words or concepts in my religion.	4	3	2	1
4. I am not comforted well by significant others due to the language barrier.	4	3	2	1
5. I ask assistance from someone in class to translate the discussion in English.	4	3	2	1
6. I become suspicious if the locals speak in	4	3	2	1

their language when I am with them.

7. I can hardly express my ideas during brainstorming in class.	4	3	2	1
8. I can sense if sellers increase prices for foreigners through their body language.	4	3	2	1
9. I can understand the discussion better when I am given additional reference materials written in English.	4	3	2	1
10. I cannot distinguish the mood of a person based on his/her pitch.	4	3	2	1
11. I cannot participate well in class discussions because I am not fluent in the language.	4	3	2	1
12. I choose the words I use when talking to someone from the opposite sex.	4	3	2	1
13. I closely study the social connotations of words in the local language before using them in daily conversations so I could not be misunderstood.	4	3	2	1
14. I do not bargain because the drivers/vendors cannot understand the way I communicate.	4	3	2	1
15. I do not oppose other's opinion to keep away from further arguments.	4	3	2	1
16. I enjoy collaborative discussions with my classmates despite language difference.	4	3	2	1
17. I establish friendship in order to combat homesickness.	4	3	2	1
18. I experience miscommunication due to difference in accent.	4	3	2	1
19. I feel comfortable because teachers and students generally speak English in school.	4	3	2	1
20. I feel offended when people point at me while speaking in the local language.	4	3	2	1
21. I find it difficult to inject humor in my conversation using English.	4	3	2	1

22. I go out with friends to prevent boredom.	4	3	2	1
23. I look for a common topic to start a conversation with an opposite sex.	4	3	2	1
24. I observe politeness strategies in communicating with the people in the host country.	4	3	2	1
25. I only talk to a person who has a personality which is the same as mine.	4	3	2	1
26. I rationalize what people intend to mean when they use sign languages in expressing their thoughts.	4	3	2	1
27. I refuse an offer when a driver charges me higher than the standard transportation rate.	4	3	2	1
28. I refuse to talk with others when they ask me for private information.	4	3	2	1
29. I speak more slowly to facilitate understanding.	4	3	2	1
30. I study first the attitude of a person before I do a casual conversation with him/her.	4	3	2	1
31. I use phone applications to give or/and ask directions when travelling or buying.	4	3	2	1
32. I use the local language so that I could be understood by others.	4	3	2	1

Scale Range Descriptive Statistics

Scale Range	Descriptive Interpretation
3.26-4.00	Strongly Agree/High Degree of Manifestation
2.51-3.25	Agree/Moderate Degree of Manifestation
1.76-2.50	Disagree/Low Degree of Manifestation
1.00-1.75	Strongly Disagree/Lowest Degree of Manifestation

Table 6. Number of Questionnaire Items Derived from each Theme

Items	General Living	Academic	Socio-Cultural	Psychological
1. I adjust my pronunciation to the way the locals do.			/	
2. I am accompanied by significant others (friends, mentors, and classmates in the local community) when doing transactions with the locals.	/			
3. I am insulted if people negatively speak of words or concepts in my religion.			/	
4. I am not comforted well by significant others due to the language barrier.				/
5. I ask assistance from someone in class to translate the discussion in English.		/		
6. I become suspicious if the locals speak in their language when I am with them.				/
7. I can hardly express my ideas during brainstorming in class.		/		
8. I can sense if sellers increase prices for foreigners through their body language.		/		
9. I can understand the discussion better when I am given additional reference materials written in English.		/		
10. I cannot distinguish the mood of a person based on his/her pitch.			/	
11. I cannot participate well in class discussions because I am not fluent in the language.		/		
12. I choose the words I use when talking to someone from the opposite sex.			/	

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13. I closely study the social connotations of words in the local language before using them in daily conversations so I could not be misunderstood. /
14. I do not bargain because the drivers/vendors cannot understand the way I communicate. /
15. I do not oppose other's opinion to keep away from further arguments. /
16. I enjoy collaborative discussions with my classmates despite language difference. /
17. I establish friendship to combat homesickness. /
18. I experience miscommunication due to difference in accent. /
19. I feel comfortable because teachers and students generally speak English in school. /
20. I feel offended when people point at me while speaking in the local language. /
21. I find it difficult to inject humor into my conversation using English. /
22. I go out with friends to prevent boredom. /
23. I look for a familiar topic to start a conversation with opposite sex. /
24. I observe politeness strategies in communicating with the people in the host country. /
25. I only talk to a person who has a personality which is the same as mine. /
26. I rationalize what people intend to mean when they use sign languages in /
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expressing their thoughts.

27. I refuse an offer when a driver charges me higher than the standard / transportation rate.

28. I refuse to talk to others when they ask me for private information. /

29. I speak more slowly to facilitate understanding. /

30. I study first the attitude of a person before I make a casual conversation with him/her. /

31. I use phone applications to give or/and ask directions when traveling or / buying.

32. I use the local language so that I could be understood by others. /

TOTAL	6	6	16	4
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Table 6 shows the number of questionnaire items derived from each theme. The most number of items from the developed tool was taken from the Language-related Socio-cultural Adjustment with 16 items. It is followed by Language-related General Living and Academic Adjustments having six items for both themes. The least is Language-related Psychological Adjustment with only four items.

3.4 Quality of the Language Adjustment Assessment Tool

A. Validity

Table 7. Inter-Rater Validity Cross-Tabulation and Kappa Value

	Agreed by both raters	Disagreed by raters
Relevant items	18	0
Not-relevant items	4	10
Total number of items	32	
Cohen's Kappa Value	.310	

This table presents the degree to which the two validators agreed and disagreed on their judgment of item relevance or non-relevance. Out of 32 items in the questionnaire, 18 items were relevant as agreed by both validators. Moreover, both validators agreed that there were four not-relevant items. Therefore, there were ten items for whom the two validators could not agree.

Moreover, since the obtained Kappa value was .310, the result was under the range of “fair agreement”. McHugh (2012) also indicated that a kappa value of 0.21-0.40 is considered “fairly valid” for a newly developed instrument. Thus, the Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreign students is found out to be fairly valid.

B. Reliability

Table 8. Reliability Statistics of the Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreign Students during the Pilot-Testing of the Questionnaire

N=76 (pilot-testing)		
Number of items Retained	Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
45		.533
44	Item 15: I cannot distinguish the real emotions of others using only their facial expressions.	.567
43	Item 3: I am being passed on to others when I ask for explanations in English.	.619
42	Item 7: I am tasked to do other things in class when I experience difficulty in interacting with my group mates.	.639
41	Item 45: To avoid conflict, I just pay whatever price drivers ask me.	.653
40	Item 41: I use social media to open a conversation with someone in school.	.633
39	Item 44: I watch movies to divert my loneliness.	.645
38	Item 6: I am offended when the locals make fun of our language.	.654
37	Item 43: I wait for others to take the first move in opening up a conversation.	.666
36	Item 24: I feel anxious when people keep staring at me for an unknown reason.	.675
35	Item 27: I feel disrespected when the locals laugh at how we do our cultural greetings.	.683
34	Item 9: I become impatient when people talk to me in English at a low speech rate.	.689
33	Item 34: I over-think when I cannot understand people speaking in their local language.	.697

32	Item 26: I feel disregarded when only a few people talk to me.	.702
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Table 8 shows that during the pilot-testing of the 45-item language adjustment assessment tool among 76 foreign students, the reliability statistics provides an initial actual value of .533 for Cronbach's Alpha. It indicates a low level of internal consistency. As such, there was a need to delete less reliable items with the intent of obtaining at least .700 Cronbach's Alpha.

After deleting a total of 13 less regular items, the tool obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of .702, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Moreover, the Language Adjustment Tool for Foreign students is trimmed down from 45 items to 32 items.

Table 9. Reliability Statistics of the Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreign Students during the Final Administration

N=51 (final administration)

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.703	32

Table 9 shows that during the final administration of the 32-item language adjustment assessment tool among 51 foreign students, the reliability statistics provides an actual value of .703 for Cronbach's Alpha. It indicates that the developed tool is deemed reliable.

4. Discussion

- 1) There were five assessed enablers of foreign students in adjusting to the language which include establishing a support group, immersion with the locals and their language, knowledge about the local language, English language proficiency, and tolerance.
- 2) The three difficulties in adjusting to the language, as identified by foreign students, are speech prosody, language preference of locals, and unwillingness to communicate.
- 3) There were four major themes deduced from the interview responses which include language-related general living adjustment, language-related academic adjustment, language-related socio-cultural adjustment, and language-related psychological adjustment.
- 4) Language-related general living adjustment revolves around the experiences of foreign students in adjusting to the language along the areas of the transportation system and purchasing arrangement. The sub-themes include assertion and concession, scaffolding by significant others, and perceiving prejudice.
- 5) Language-related academic adjustment includes dealing with language in class discussions, collaborative academic activities, and supplemental instructions. The sub-themes are avoiding

interaction, language use in instruction, providing additional tasks, and translating and interpreting.

6) Language-related socio-cultural adjustment is about how language difference affects foreign students' social dealings with interactants in the host country and how cultural diversity becomes attributable to foreign students' language apprehension. The sub-themes include initiating conversation, gender-based interaction, immersing with the local language, non-verbal strategic communication, prosodic features of speech, recognizing interlocutor's personality, and understanding social implications.

7) Language-related psychological adjustment includes how language is attributed to the experiences of foreign students in terms of homesickness, depression, loneliness, anxiety, boredom, isolation, and suspicion. The sub-themes are dealing with emotional stress and confronting suspicion.

8) The developed Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreign Students is comprised of 32 items, encapsulating the lived experiences of foreign students on adjusting to the language in a host country.

9) After measuring validity and internal consistency, the developed Language Adjustment Assessment Tool for Foreign students is found out to be fairly valid and reliable.

5. Conclusions

The language adjustments of foreign students are existent in their general living, academic, socio-cultural and psychological experiences, allowing them to use language strategies when confronted with difficulties in the host country. These adjustments are generally attributed to language apprehension brought by difference in language and culture. Moreover, Philippine environment is more enabling than constraining. This is evidenced by the fact that there is a support system prevalent among foreign students. In particular, SPUP is a friendly community in terms of language and cultural adjustment.

Evaluated as valid and reliable, the developed Language Adjustment Assessment tool for Foreign Students, which encapsulates the lived experiences of adjusting to the host country's language, is ready for use.

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