

# English Second Language Acquisition Through Acculturation: Exploring the Experiences of International Chinese Students in SPU Manila

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## Abstract

International students who travel abroad for higher education have continued to increase over the years. These students experience cultural and social differences as they live in a foreign country. How they adapt influences their language acquisition. St. Paul University (SPU) Manila accommodates international students in their higher education programs. As Chinese students attend classes on campus and online, they learn and acquire the English language. This single-case study examines the experiences of Chinese students at SPU Manila. Specifically, it explores the relationship between their acculturation (cultural adaptation) and English second language acquisition. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather data. The data were coded structurally into categories, and thematic analysis was applied. Analyzed documents of related literature and government articles were used to interpret the experiences of acculturation and its effect on English second language Acquisition. Results found that students experienced successful acculturation and English second language acquisition and learning. The students had positive social relationships with the Filipino community, which promoted their acculturation. A major finding is that they faced challenges with language shock, language barriers, and culture shock. Thus, it implies that the students were more socially integrated than psychologically integrated. Their experiences enabled them to value and maintain both cultures and to have an open attitude towards language learning and acquisition. Based on the findings, a creative output was designed to help accommodate and promote the acculturation and English second language acquisition of the Chinese students at SPU Manila.

**Keywords:** Acculturation, English, Second Language Acquisition, International Students, Chinese Students

## Introduction

Students have the opportunity and option to study in another country during their pursuit of education. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) defines internationally mobile students as “individuals who have physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in the country of destination, where the country of destination of a given student is different from their country of origin.” According to UIS data, there were more than 6.3 million international students in 2020 (Migration Data Portal, 2020). In the Philippines, there were approximately 22,000 international students in 2022. Most of these students originate from India and China based on CHED data (ApplyInsights Team, 2023). Students consider the Philippines a top destination for education due to the quality of education, affordability, and hospitality (Martin, 2023; WanderGlobe, 2023). Studying abroad is advantageous for students' educational pursuits; however, it also comes with challenges.

International students face many difficulties while studying abroad. Some of these challenges include cultural differences such as language barriers and difficulty in adaptation and socialization (Alasmari, 2023). Cultural differences leading to culture shock may cause students to separate themselves from the local community (Kusek, 2014). One significant cultural difference is language. When students face language barriers, it negatively affects their ability to communicate with others and adapt to their environment (Lutfiana et al., 2020). Thus, students' cultural adaptation affects their language acquisition and learning.

St. Paul University (SPU) Manila hosts international students who are pursuing higher education. During their admission process, they are required to submit a valid English test result, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). If they do not have one, the university will endorse the applicant to SPU Manila's Academic English Services Program (AESP). As international students enroll at SPU Manila, they are expected to learn English, as it is the language of instruction. While studying at SPU Manila, students will acquire the English language from their environment.

## **Second Language Acquisition**

Second language acquisition (SLA) can be defined as “the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language” (Saville-Troike, 2005). The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis by Krashen (1982) distinguishes language acquisition as the subconscious learning of the language through communication. On the other hand, language learning refers to the explicit learning of the language through instruction. These two processes work together in developing a second language (Krashen, 1982, as cited in Higgs, 1983).

Second language acquisition occurs during the natural use of language. Language is a part of culture, and culture uses language as a medium (Yu, 2020). Yu discusses the importance of culture in SLA, wherein the culture of a language plays a significant role during the language learning and acquisition process. A review paper by Ren (2023) concludes, “According to the relationship between culture and language, no one can accept a language without getting in touch with its culture, which has an unconscious influence on learners.” When an individual uses the language to communicate, they also use the culture to which the language belongs. Language and culture are inevitably intertwined. The relationship between SLA and culture is explored through acculturation.

## **Acculturation Models**

In the field of SLA, acculturation can refer to the process “of integrating two or more cultures while living in a new country or learning a second or foreign language” (Salih, 2021). Schumann (1986) theorized that the degree of acculturation correlates with the degree of language acquisition. If the learner fails to integrate into the L2 group, it results in pidginization. He tested the model through various case studies. This proposition was true in most cases; in other cases, it did not correlate. A finding is that the model does not account for individual learner differences and conditions. The application and relevance of the model depend on the learner. He found that the model was applicable to the language acquisition of foreign students. Research by Maple (1982, as cited in Schumann, 1986) tested the correlation of social

distance with the SLA of Spanish-speaking students at the University of Texas. The results found a positive correlation between social distance and SLA, aligned with Schumann's theory.

### **Berry's Acculturation Model**

Berry (1997) proposed an acculturation model highlighting the individual's strategy of acculturation. His model looks into how the individual will respond to their native culture and L2 culture (Worthy, 2020). In this model, he states that one's acculturation strategy depends on context and individual circumstances.

In a new language and cultural environment, each individual will behave differently as they interact with the unfamiliar environment. They will experience changes and respond depending on various factors. In the field of SLA, this notion is explored and studied through acculturation. The prominent models of acculturation in SLA are by Schumann (1986) and Berry (1997). The social and psychological factors are concentrated in Schumann's model. In Berry's model, it is centered on the individual's strategy of acculturation. These models are often used in research as a basis or framework for study.

### **Students' Acculturation and SLA**

Gao (2020) discovered that Korean students successfully acquired and learned Chinese at a university in Xi'an. They were in a favorable acculturation environment, which led them to acquire the language. It also found that social factors had a more significant effect on their acculturation. Likewise, the study by Sevinc (2023) found that in an English for Academic Purposes classroom, social factors proved to be more significant.

In contrast, Ma (2022) suggests that Schumann's Acculturation Model does not apply to the current Generation Z. The results of the study found no significant relationship between the participants' language proficiency and cultural adaptation. Wang's (2023) study implies a positive correlation between acculturation and the Chinese students' language proficiency. A finding in the study is that psychological factors were more prominent.

In the study by Xing et al. (2020), they analyzed the acculturation strategies of Chinese university students in the U.S. It revealed that more than half of the students preferred integration as their acculturation strategy. These students manifested a positive correlation between their acculturation and language proficiency. Separation as their acculturation strategy came second. With this, language proficiency was affected negatively. Likewise, a study investigating the attitudes and influence factors on the acculturation of international students in China found that most students had integration as their acculturation strategy. Additionally, students with high Chinese language proficiency predicted integration, as these students understood the norms, values, and culture of the target language (TL) group while they communicated (Luo et al., 2021).

Chinese students at Western universities had different results regarding acculturation strategies. Some were able to integrate into the TL group and culture, realizing its importance. Students who failed to recognize this importance and had a negative impression of the TL resulted in separation. A conclusion from the study is that language issues were a significant factor in their acculturation strategy (Chen & Wu, 2021).

Zhao and Chayanuvat (2023) conducted a case study of Chinese students in a Thai private university. It concluded that most Chinese students have integration as their acculturation strategy. This strategy had a positive correlation with their student life and learning achievement. A notable finding is that the students tended to use Chinese more, but they still were able to learn the Thai language and use it daily. Nguyen and Stracke (2020) concluded that the students depended on the teachers for language learning and social interaction for language acquisition. This utilization of language inside and outside the classroom led to English language proficiency.

Lou (2021) found that adaptation and language proficiency were positively correlated. Macao students with Mandarin proficiency were able to adapt socially and academically. Similarly, Phan (2022) conducted a case study of a Hong Kong learner of English. The learner successfully acculturated to the language and culture due to her social and academic motivation.

These findings indicate that students experience acculturation and SLA in relation to each other. A study of Papuan students studying in Java by Wulandari and Jones (2022) discovered that language is a significant factor during the initial process of acculturation. If the student understands the local language, they are able to socialize and communicate with the host students, which positively affects the acculturation process.

### **Students' Acculturation and SLA in the Philippines**

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) released a 2016 memorandum order 55 that discusses the policy and strategies on the internationalization of Philippine higher education. The internationalization of Philippine higher education refers to the process of involving international, intercultural, and global aspects in higher education (Commission on Higher Education, 2016). This memorandum guides higher education institutions in the internationalization of education.

In addition, the Department of Tourism (DOT) promotes English as a second language as a major attractor for foreign students (Philippine News Agency, 2022). A study by Roxas and Vargas (2021) concluded that language and attitude problems negatively affected foreign students. In the same study, the students did not have any targeted programs to help them adjust, which contributed to their struggle. This conclusion is supported by Rico et al. (2021), wherein their study about the experiences of internationally mobile students in the Philippines showed that language differences were a factor in their academic performance. Moreover, Flores (2021) found that the practices of Filipino students and language differences were significant factors in the adjustment of foreign students in the university. Overall, foreign students experience the same difficulties as they study in Philippine institutions.

## Study Framework

**Theoretical Framework.** Schumann's (1986) and Berry's (1997) acculturation models were used in the study to test its hypothesis, frame the study, and interpret the findings (Leeming, 2018). The application of these two theories to the data refers to theory triangulation. This approach strengthens the validity and promotes the credibility of the findings (Stahl & King, 2020).

**Conceptual Framework.** The conceptual framework is used to design a brochure and infographic for the international Chinese students at St. Paul University Manila. In this study, the input-process-output (IPO) model was utilized to illustrate the procedures taken.

The concept of acculturation and second language acquisition is based on the two models reviewed in the study. For the input, the researcher interviewed the subjects to draw out their experiences at St. Paul University Manila. Their experiences were transcribed and encoded into data. The data then underwent structural coding. For the process, the coded data was analyzed thematically. Emergent and common themes based on the research questions were identified and arranged. From their acculturation and second language acquisition experiences, a brochure and infographic were designed and developed as the output of the study. The brochure and infographic will be composed of basic cultural and linguistic information to help them adapt culturally, socially, and linguistically in the university. The output of the study is intended to address the needs of the Chinese students to promote acculturation and English second language acquisition in the institution.

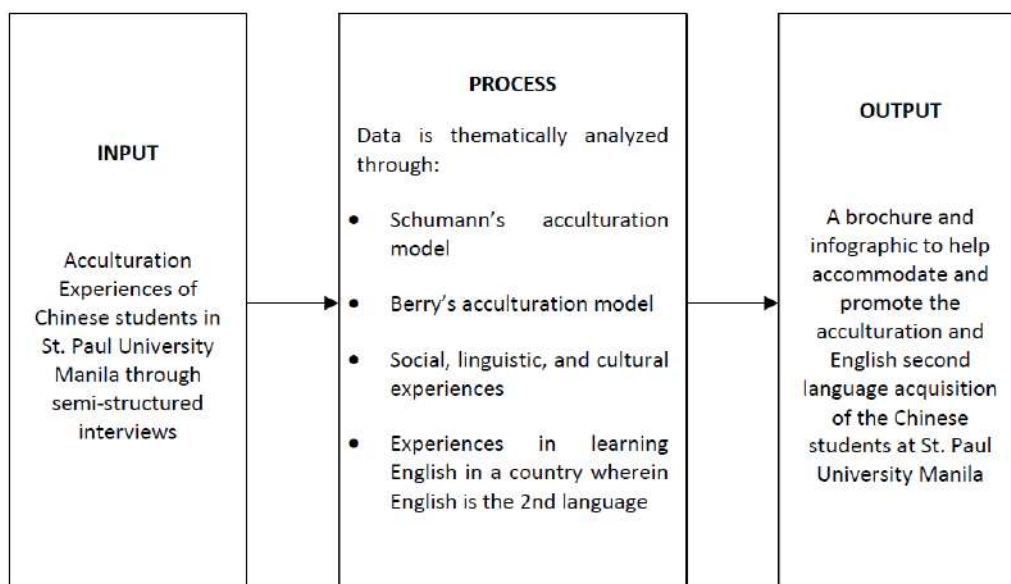


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### Statement of the Problem

The study sought to design a brochure and infographic to help accommodate and promote the acculturation and English Second Language (ESL) acquisition of Chinese students at St. Paul University Manila. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the acculturation experiences of the Chinese students at St. Paul University Manila?
2. What are the social, cultural, and linguistic experiences of the Chinese students in learning English at St. Paul University Manila?
3. What are their experiences in learning English in a country where English is the second language?
4. Based on the findings, what can be proposed to accommodate and promote the Chinese students' acculturation and English second language acquisition and learning?



## Methodology

To explore the case of Chinese students at SPU Manila, a single case study approach was employed with an interpretivist paradigm and descriptive qualitative design. The subjects of the study were Chinese students at St. Paul University Manila who were selected using a purposive sampling technique with the following criteria: (1) Chinese student; (2) uses the English language; (3) currently enrolled in the undergraduate or graduate programs at St. Paul University Manila; (4) has stayed in the Philippines for six months or more. These criteria were considered to address the research problem.

The researcher gathered the subjects with the aid of the college deans at the university. They formally contacted the college deans through letters of invitation. The dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education (CASE) responded and recommended five students, and one subject recommended their fellow classmate. The researcher contacted the subjects about the study, and if they initially agreed, they were asked to sign the consent form and personal data sheet.

Five male students agreed to be part of the study as subjects. Subjects were individually invited to participate in a scheduled semi-structured interview lasting one hour and were asked to sign a consent form after agreeing to participate. Four interviews were conducted online, and one was held at the university library, as preferred by the subjects. They were oriented about the topic and procedure before the interview began. The interviews started with a permission to record and with prepared questions, with the interviewer probing further into the subjects' responses.

Each session concluded with a summary. Recordings were later transcribed for data coding and analysis. Relevant documents were collected online and systematically collated using a word processor. These documents were used to interpret the data from the interviews. Structural coding was used to code the transcripts. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interviews were transcribed, arranged, and coded. The analysis was tabulated using themes, descriptions, and significant statements from the interviews. Ethical considerations were observed to ensure the autonomy of subjects and the confidentiality of information and data.

## Results and Discussion

The data gathered from interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The analyzed data is interpreted using related literature and government articles for triangulation. The discussion addresses the statement of the problem. The gathered and analyzed data were used to conceptualize and design a brochure and infographic aimed at accommodating and promoting Chinese students' acculturation and ESL acquisition during their study at St. Paul University Manila.

### **Acculturation experiences of the Chinese students at St. Paul University Manila**

In the case of the subjects, they experience acculturation positively and use an integration strategy. Each subject exhibited varying degrees of acculturation and integration.

Social factors examine the relationship between the second language learners (2LL), specifically the Chinese students, and the target language (TL) group and culture, which in this case are the Filipinos and Philippine culture. Certain relationships can either promote or hinder social integration, leading to acculturation (Schumann, 1986). The social factors identified in the data are social dominance, integration pattern, degree of enclosure of both groups, degree of congruence of the two cultures, inter-group attitudinal evaluations, and intended length of residence.

**Social dominance.** Social dominance refers to the perceived status of the Chinese students in relation to Filipinos and the Philippines. Students 2 and 3 expressed a positive and high perception of Filipino culture, specifically its scenery and work ethic. Student 5 had a neutral and objective perception based on the Philippines' history. The theme of social dominance pattern was only present among the undergraduate students. Schumann (1986) explains that if the 2LL group is perceived as inferior or superior to the TL group, there may be resistance to language learning. In the case of these students, their perceived status of the Philippines and the Filipinos did not negatively affect their acculturation.

**Integration Pattern.** Adaptation as an integration pattern was expressed by Student 1 and Student 5. Adaptation occurs when the learner adopts the TL lifestyle and values while maintaining their native lifestyle and values for use within the 2LL group (Ahamefule, 2019). Both students expressed that they were able to adjust to Filipino culture while maintaining their Chinese values and lifestyle. Student 1 maintained Chinese calligraphy, and Student 5 engaged in intragroup contacts. This is evident in the response of Student 5 who said “of course, for me there is very little that I need to adjust to. I love the culture of the native Filipinos including their beliefs and behaviors as well as their passion and attitude towards life. But the only thing I don't understand is that on many weekends and holidays when I need to shop or go out I am often annoyed by the lack of waiters or drivers. This is a problem I don't have in China.”

**Degree of enclosure of both groups.** Students 1, 2, and 4 indicated that they have low enclosure with the TL group. Low enclosure means that the students and the Filipinos share the same social facilities. This is illustrated by Student 1's statement wherein he said “I think I can adapt to the Filipino culture quickly because I have adapted to the Philippine religion and food habits. I have been in the Philippines for more than 200 days, I am used to eating local Filipino food, I also like to read the Bible and visit different Catholic churches.” It is evident as they stay on campus, visit malls or churches, and go to supermarkets frequented by Filipinos. With low enclosure, the students experience frequent contact and exposure to the TL language.

**Degree of congruence of the two cultures.** In terms of cultural similarities, Student 1 and Student 4 gave contrasting statements. Student 1 believes that Chinese culture and Filipino culture are different. Schumann (1986) theorized that if the cultures of the two groups are similar, it will facilitate second language learning; if not, it will impede it. In the case of the two students, this did not have a significant effect on their English language learning and acquisition.

**Inter-Group Attitudinal Evaluations.** Students 2 and 5 experienced positive attitudes from Filipino people, specifically from university faculty and students. They expressed that Filipinos are kind and helpful to them. As Student 5 states, “all my

teachers and classmates have been very kind to me and I'm very grateful for that.” This experience implies that the university adheres to internationalization policies by being an inclusive and open community (Commission on Higher Education, 2016). This result is similar to the study by Wulandari and Jones (2022), wherein positive attitudes contributed to successful adjustment.

**Intended Length of Residence.** All students intend to stay for more than a year in the Philippines. The shortest intended length of residence is two years for Students 1 and 3. The longest intended length of residence is three years by Student 4. Student 5 did not specify an exact duration but plans to stay for a long time. A longer length of residence is conducive to TL language learning and acquisition (Gao, 2020). Luo et al. (2021) found a similar result, where the planned length of stay can affect acculturation.

Affective factors focus on the learners' psychological aspects during the acculturation process. These factors contribute to psychological distance, which negatively affects the acculturation process and impedes second language acquisition (Schumann, 1986). Three affective factors emerged from the analyzed data: language shock, culture shock, and motivation.

**Language shock.** Language Shock is present in the experiences of Students 2, 3, 4, and 5. Students 2, 3, and 4 had difficulty with language because Filipinos tend to use some Tagalog words while speaking English. Student 2 articulates this difficulty as he states “yeah. I remember when I first attend the university I heard someone like our professor talk with our classmate like “afternoon po” “morning po” Our classmates talk with our professor, they say “afternoon po” “morning po.” So some time I confused what they mean the “po”s. Is it an English word? What Tagalog word? So first I was confused but right now I know po is respect like our professors respects us. My experience changed (me) well (in that I now) know a lot of Tagalog in our daily life like “Ma’am” like “Po” like this one.” Student 4 had difficulty with listening, while Student 5 had difficulty with speaking. Previous studies report that this is a common experience that negatively affects students’ adaptation (Lutfiana et al., 2020; Flores, 2021).

**Culture shock.** Three students experienced culture shock. Student 1 experienced fear in navigating when they arrived in the Philippines, as they mentioned “we have so many strange fear, because we don’t know how to take the taxi, how to ask for different directions and which way we should go and which bus. There (are) so many questions. And if we want to buy something and we don’t know which is (the) supermarket.” Students 4 and 5 felt disoriented by the Philippine education and university system. Despite the initial shock, the students were able to overcome it over time with the help of the community. Similarly, Alasmari (2023) found that international students in Saudi Arabia were able to adapt despite experiencing culture shock.

**Motivation.** The motivation for language learning varies depending on the student. Student 1 has instrumental motivation because their interest in and motivation for learning English grew after realizing its importance in communication. Students 2 and 3 have integrative motivation because they express a personal interest in the target language and culture, as evident as Student 2 shared “They already give a lot of chance. Give us a lot of skills so maybe from us, from our personal want to learn, to study.” Similarly, Gao (2020) found that integrative motivation promoted language learning. Student 4 expresses both integrative and instrumental motivation. He has a personal interest and motivation, which is evident in his self-study of English. He is also motivated instrumentally because he has a goal of obtaining his PhD degree. This is similar to the finding of Phan (2022), wherein the learner’s instrumental motivation was more significant to her acculturation compared to integrative motivation.

Based on Schumann’s (1986) Acculturation model, acculturation is evident in the students’ experiences both socially and psychologically. The students experienced favorable acculturation as their social factors promoted second language acquisition and learning. The Chinese students generally have a good relationship with the Filipino community, which in turn promotes acculturation. On the other hand, most of their affective factors negatively impacted their acculturation, except for their motivation. Language shock and culture shock created psychological distance, but did not completely hinder their acculturation. Their motivation to learn was favorable to

acculturation. Likewise, previous studies reported that social factors had a more significant effect compared to affective factors (Gao, 2020; Sevinc, 2023). This contrasted with the findings of Wang (2023), wherein affective factors had more significance. In all, the students generally had favorable acculturation experiences that promoted English second language acquisition.

**Maintenance.** All students mentioned their native culture in the interviews when talking about their experiences. This implies that they do not avoid or reject their Chinese culture while experiencing the Philippine culture. They differ in the degree and effort of maintenance and preservation. Student 1 is able to maintain and preserve his culture to a higher degree due to his occupation as a Chinese calligraphy teacher. Students 2, 3, 4, and 5 were able to maintain and preserve their culture through socializing with other Chinese students and talking with their families. Student 4 suggests that the university encourages the preservation of their native culture by organizing activities to discuss it. They do not avoid their own culture. Overall, the students are able to maintain and preserve their native culture while interacting with another culture.

**Contact and Participation.** All students are frequently in contact with the Filipino community and culture. They attend classes with Filipino professors and students at St. Paul University Manila. Students 2 and 5 recall their positive experiences with their Filipino professor and course mate. Student 2 mentioned “but our professors and our classmates always help us to understand our class or understand our assessment. Help us a lot of things. So thank you very much. Philippines best place. Philippine people are very very kind. That is why I can practice my spoke English. That’s why my spoke English right now, maybe for me, has some improve because my classmate and our professors always help us.”

According to Berry (1997), when the individual values their native culture and host culture, they have integration as their strategy of acculturation. Thus, the Chinese students chose integration in the process of acculturation. The students value their Chinese culture as they freely talk and interact with their native community and culture. They also value and respect the Filipino culture because they are able to build good and constant interaction with the Filipino community.

## Social, cultural, and linguistic experiences of Chinese students in learning English at St. Paul University Manila

The students experienced positive social interactions with the community at SPU Manila. Student 1 recalled university events such as parties and concerts where he had memorable interactions with the community, as he mentioned “the most memorable thing was when I attended a SPUM party last August and heard SPUM's sister share her story.” He also likes to stay on campus with the Filipino students. Student 2 shared that he sees the community as kind because his professors and classmates help him in class. Student 3 interacts with the community through events like university week. Student 4 said that they are able to communicate and socialize with others by visiting various places within and outside the campus. Student 5 found that interactions with his teachers and classmates were helpful and kind. A supportive environment can significantly help students integrate into the new environment (Wulandari & Jones, 2022,). Overall, their positive social experiences at St. Paul University Manila aided them in connecting to the community, which promotes acculturation.

The students had different reactions and responses to Philippine culture. Student 1 gained interest when he learned about the religious culture in the Philippines. Student 2 was able to adjust to Filipino cuisine and find Filipino food that suited his taste. Student 3 experienced the culture with the help of his classmates. Student 4 was surprised to encounter a new university system and culture at St. Paul University Manila. Student 5 had problems with the traffic in Manila; however, he adapted and got used to the lifestyle. Each student had their own cultural experiences, but all of them were able to adapt over time. Similarly, foreign students at De La Salle Lipa were surprised by Filipino culture but were able to understand and respect it (Flores, 2021). Generally, the students were able to adjust and adapt to Filipino culture after understanding it.

The students recalled challenging and progressive experiences in language. When Student 1 had difficulty understanding the language, he would utilize a translator and recordings to cope. Students 2 and 3 recall being confused with both English and Tagalog, as they pronounced some words incorrectly and did not understand Tagalog words such as “po” and “diba.”

Student 2 used a translator with the help of a Chinese friend to adjust to the language during the first few months. Student 4 struggled with the accent of Filipinos when speaking English. Student 5 had difficulty speaking the language, as he expressed “It’s hard to say because I don’t speak much English outside of school, so there are a lot of “stuck” situations, such as editing my English in my head when I speak it, etc. It’s been a long time, but it seems that my English is better now than it was before.” Students 2 and 4 shared that their professors encouraged them to speak English.

This experience aligns with the promotion of English as a second language being an asset for the Philippines (Philippine News Agency, 2022). Students 2, 3, and 5 had similar experiences wherein they encountered difficulties when people used Tagalog with them instead of English. These reports are similar to the study by Flores (2021), which found that foreign students had the most difficulty with language during their residence at De La Salle Lipa. In sum, the Chinese students had difficult linguistic experiences that they were able to cope with the help of the university.

### **Experiences in learning English in a country where English is the second language**

To account for the experiences of the students learning English in a country where English is the second language, the themes of language barriers and language attitudes emerged. When they arrive in the Philippines, they encounter language barriers because their native language is Chinese, while the native language in the Philippines is Filipino. Both groups have English as their second language, which contributes to their language attitudes when using English.

**Language Barrier.** The difference in the first language between the learner and the host country creates difficulty for the learner in language learning and language acquisition. All students encountered this difficulty. Students 1 and 4 had difficulty in listening to the language. They overcame this problem through the use of a translator and recording applications. Students 2, 3, and 5 had difficulties when they encountered Tagalog in communication. To account for Student 5’s experience, he shared “Yes it is more often, but this translator is not used for everyday English, I use the translator for references and reading materials given by professors, and the place where the translator is used the most is in messenger to translate Tagalog because a



lot of teachers don't use English when assigning homework and notices.” Likewise, Flores (2021) reports that foreign students at De La Salle Lipa found the language barrier to be a significant problem. This result is similar to a previous study wherein language barriers significantly hindered the student’s learning process (Lutfiana et al., 2020). Previous research suggests that language barriers negatively affect the adaptation process (Wulandari & Jones, 2022). The language barrier is proven to have a significant role in the student’s acculturation process.

**Language Attitudes in Language Learning and Acquisition.** The students exhibited and experienced positive attitudes in learning and acquiring English. Students 2 and 3 conveyed their openness to learning English both in the classroom and outside. Student 4 showed eagerness to learn and improve. In the interview, he expressed “hmm..Yeah. Actually, I have more confidence than before. I also know to do more hard work than before. I want to be a good, excellent here. I should do more effect... More hard work.” Student 5 expresses that the students and teachers are patient with him when he speaks English despite being conscious of his English skills because he corrects his speech. Students 2, 3, and 5, who are all undergraduates, experienced kind and hospitable attitudes from the Filipinos when they spoke in English. In the study by Wulandari and Jones (2022), positive attitudes significantly facilitated the integration process of Papuan students studying at a university in Java. Similarly, Flores (2021) concluded that the kind and friendly attitudes of the Filipinos towards foreign students facilitated the students’ adjustment process. Thus, the positive language attitudes of the Chinese students and the Filipino community promoted language learning, language acquisition, and acculturation.

**Based on the findings, what can be proposed to accommodate and promote the Chinese students’ acculturation and English as a Second Language (ESL) acquisition and learning?** The results revealed a significant relationship between acculturation and ESL acquisition by Chinese students. The students’ social factors greatly promoted acculturation while their affective factors inhibited it. However, they were able to successfully acculturate and consequently, successfully acquire the English language. This finding supports Schumann’s (1986) Acculturation Model, wherein he suggested that a learner’s degree of acculturation is parallel to

their second language acquisition. With Berry's (1997) acculturation model, the findings suggest integration as the students' strategy of acculturation. The students maintain contact with their Chinese community and culture while staying in the Philippines and interacting with the Filipino community and culture. They express the maintenance of their native culture while having constant contact and participation with the Filipino community and culture. The integration strategy promoted English second language acquisition and learning. The experiences of the students imply that acculturation is strongly linked to English second language acquisition. As the students studied at St. Paul University Manila, they were able to socialize with the Filipinos and use the English language. They were able to cope with language and culture shocks. They show that they value their Chinese culture while being open to Filipino culture. They were able to acquire and learn the English language during their acculturation. With these findings, a creative output in the form of a brochure for offline dissemination and an infographic for online dissemination is proposed.

### **Creative Response**

A brochure and infographic for the Chinese students is designed, as seen in Figures 2, 3, and 4. The goal of the brochure and infographic is to help accommodate and promote the students' acculturation and English second language acquisition. It may aid the students in culturally, socially, and linguistically adjusting to their environment at St. Paul University Manila by orienting them about Filipino culture, social events, and the English and Filipino languages. The brochure can be given to the Chinese students as a hard copy or soft copy via email. The infographic can be posted on the university website. The information on the brochure and infographic can help the students understand the culture, be prepared to cope with the language barrier, and integrate with the community.

The content of the brochure and infographic is based on the findings and results of the study. It hopes to address the acculturation and English second language problems and issues the Chinese students experience. The brochure has three major sections: Socialize, Speak, and Support. The Socialize section is designed to open opportunities for the students to interact with the community. The Speak section aims to address the problem of language shock and language barrier. The Support

section responds to ways the university already supports acculturation and English second language acquisition and learning.

**SPEAK**

There may be instances that Filipino students or professors may use Filipino or Tagalog unconsciously when speaking with you. Let them know that you do not understand and kindly remind them to use English. You can also ask help from a fellow student if you have difficulty in understanding. If this incident persists, inform your program chairperson to address the issue.

**Respect**

Filipino culture highly values respect and politeness for other people, especially those who are older.

Po: a word used to show respect and politeness. It is commonly added to the end of the sentence.

Example: Can you explain po?

Opo: a polite and respectful way to agree. It is usually used as a response or answer.

Example: Do you have class? Opo

**SOCIALIZE**

The school hosts various events wherein you can socialize with the SPUM community, participate in fun activities, and see the culture.

**University Week**

When: January  
Where: University Quadrangle  
The school celebrates its founding with a week filled with activities for the entire SPUM community.

**Kantiawan**

When: January/February  
Where: Flear De Lis Auditorium  
A performance done by the university faculty and staff. It shows the talents of the community through dancing, singing, and acting.

**Starting at SPUM**

A cultural, social, and linguistic guide to studying at St. Paul University Manila

Figure 2  
Starting at SPUM Brochure (1)

**SPEAK**

English is the second language in the Philippines. It is also one of the official languages.

Filipino is the first language in the Philippines. It is a Tagalog-based language that is mixed with other languages in the Philippines.

Tagalog is the language spoken by the majority of Filipinos, especially in the Manila area.

**Greetings**

Greeting other people in the university is a sign of politeness and respect in Filipino culture. When entering in an office or running into a professor, it is practiced to say "Good Morning po" or "Morning po, Miss/Sir" to respect them.

**Common words you may hear**

Salamat - Thank you  
Sige - Alright/Okay  
Diba? - Right?

Kuya - Brother  
Ate - Sister  
Kuya and Ate are used to address other people who are older than you.

**SOCIALIZE**

The school hosts various events wherein you can socialize with the SPUM community, participate in fun activities, and see the culture.

**Recruitment and Advocacy Week**

When: September  
Where: Founder's Lobby  
A week wherein the university clubs or organizations look and recruit for members through booths in the lobby.

**Father Louis Chauvet Cup (FLCC)**

When: Depends  
Where: University Court, Gym, and Swimming Pool  
The sports event in the university where students can participate and compete in various sports such as basketball, volleyball, and swimming.

**SUPPORT**

The SPU Manila community does their best to support their students in their academic journey.

**I want to learn the English language more. What can I do?**

The university library has English language learning books that the students can borrow and use for self-study. You can also try asking your program chairperson if there are offerings for English classes during your semester.

**I have free time and I want to stay on campus. Where can I go?**

The campus has common areas that students can stay in during their vacant time. Some of these areas are: Library, Garden area in front of the clinic, Founder's lobby, and Pedro Gil Lobby.

**I have concerns about my stay in SPU Manila. Who can I contact?**

Please contact [alm@spumanila.edu.ph](mailto:alm@spumanila.edu.ph) for academic and admission guidance.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

St. Paul University Manila is also fondly called "T'pol" by the students and the students at SPUM are called "Paulinians"

Photos courtesy of St. Paul University Manila, The Paulinian and Paulinian Shatters Club

Figure 3  
Starting at SPUM Brochure (2)

**Starting at SPUM**  
A cultural, social, and linguistic guide to studying at St. Paul University Manila

**SOCIALIZE**

**University Week**  
Every January at the University Quadrangle, the school celebrates its founding with a week filled with activities for the entire SPUM community.

**Kantiyawan**  
Every January or February at the Fleur De Lis Auditorium, a performance done by the university faculty and staff. It shows the talents of the community through dancing, singing, and acting.

**Recruitment and Advocacy Week**  
Every September at the Founder's Lobby, the university clubs or organizations look and recruit for members through booths in the lobby for a week.

**Father Louis Chauvet Cup (FLCC)**  
The sports event in the university where students can participate and compete in various sports such as basketball, volleyball, and swimming at the University Court, Gym, and Swimming Pool.

**SPEAK**

English is the second language in the Philippines. It is also one of the official languages.

Filipino is the first language in the Philippines. It is a Tagalog-based language that is mixed with other languages in the Philippines.

Tagalog is the language spoken by the majority of Filipinos, especially in the Manila area.

There may be instances that Filipino students or professors may use Filipino or Tagalog unconsciously when speaking with you. Let them know that you do not understand and kindly remind them to use English. You can also ask help from a fellow student. If you have difficulty in understanding, if this incident persists, inform your program chairperson to address the issue.

**Respect**

Filipino culture highly values respect and politeness for other people, especially those who are older.

For a word used to show respect and politeness, it is commonly added to the end of the sentence.

Example: Can you explain po?  
Opo, a polite and respectful way to agree. It is usually used as a response or answer.

Example: Do you have class? Opo

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**Common words you may hear**

Salamat - Thank you  
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**SUPPORT** .....

**I want to learn the English language more. What can I do?**  
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The campus has common areas that students can stay in during their vacant time. Some of these areas are: Library, Garden area in front of the clinic, Founder's lobby, and Pedro Gil Lobby.

**I have concerns about my stay in SPU Manila. Who can I contact?**  
Please contact [alm@spumaniila.edu.ph](mailto:alm@spumaniila.edu.ph) for academic and admission guidance.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
St. Paul University Manila is also fondly called "Tipoi" by the students and the students at SPUM are called "Paulinians".

Photos courtesy of St. Paul University Manila. The Paulinians and Paulinians Shouters Club

Figure 4  
Starting at SPUM Infographic

Using a brochure and infographic as the medium of communication ensures the dissemination and accessibility of information. The brochure is printed and distributed to the Chinese students. It can also be sent directly to their email addresses. The brochure guarantees that the information is directly given to the Chinese students. The students in the study often stay on campus for class or to

study. Previous studies found that brochures were effective tools for improving information and influencing knowledge (Alvis et al., 2019). The infographic is proposed to be posted on the university website for wide dissemination and ease of access. Recent studies proved that infographics had a positive academic effect (Elaldi & Cifci, 2021). It can also be printed as a poster and posted on the bulletin boards around the school. Overall, the brochure is based on the acculturation and English SLA experiences of the Chinese students in the study. It is hoped to aid students in socially, culturally, and linguistically adjusting to the university.

## **Discussion**

The findings revealed that the Chinese students at SPU Manila experienced favorable acculturation that resulted in their integration into Filipino culture and acquisition and learning of the English language. Based on Schumann's (1986) model, the social factors from their experiences were favorable towards acculturation. In contrast, affective factors such as language shock and culture shock created psychological distance. However, the students continued to be motivated to acquire and learn the English language. They employed an integration strategy in acculturation according to Berry (1997). The data from the interviews shows that the students do not avoid their Chinese culture and community, as they were able to talk and be open about it. They experienced constant contact with Filipinos and were able to participate in Filipino culture. Thus, they value and maintain both cultures, which led to their integration strategy.

The Chinese students had positive social experiences, challenging cultural experiences, and varying linguistic experiences. They accounted for positive social experiences wherein they found the Filipino students and professors to be kind and encouraging in their language learning. Most of their cultural and linguistic experiences proved to be challenging as they experienced a new culture, lifestyle, and language. Despite this, they were able to cope in their own way.

In learning English in a country where English is the second language, the Chinese students had significant experiences with language barriers and language attitudes in language learning and acquisition. Language barriers were present when

the students encountered the Filipino language or the Filipino accent, which impeded acculturation and language acquisition. They found that the attitudes of Filipinos towards language acquisition and learning were positive. They received encouragement, kindness, and patience from Filipinos when they spoke English. The students also exhibited a positive and open attitude towards language learning and acquisition that promoted their acculturation. The experiences of the students proved the significant relationship between acculturation and ESL acquisition, in which the students acquired the language to the degree that they acculturated. The students successfully integrated with the TL culture and group, which enabled them to acquire and learn the language successfully.

The findings of the study were used to design and propose a brochure and infographic. These were used as the medium of communication to ensure dissemination, accessibility, and effectiveness. The contents were divided into three sections: Socialize, Speak, and Support. The students expressed how interacting with others helped them practice and improve their English, which resulted in the Socialize section. They mentioned language and culture shocks in their experiences, which is addressed in the Speak section. The students expressed personal motivation in learning English. To encourage this motivation, the Support section presents ways that students can initiate acculturation and English language learning and acquisition. In all, the brochure and infographic are grounded in the findings.

Based on the findings and results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

**Social Events.** SPU Manila can organize a social event every semester to increase social contact, participation, and language exposure. The event will be open to the SPU Manila community but will be catered to the Chinese and other international students. Through these kinds of events, the students will be given opportunities to practice their English. They will also be able to get to know the Filipino students, faculty, and staff. This recommendation will create a favorable environment for acculturation and ESL acquisition and learning through social integration.

**Cultural Seminars.** The university may hold cultural seminars about Filipino culture. This may help lessen the students' culture shock and encourage understanding. It can help the students adjust to their new environment in the Philippines and will promote acculturation for the international students.

**Extra-curricular Organization.** A university organization for Chinese and other international students can be established. In the organization, they can promote community and cultural diversity in the university. It will give a sense of belonging and inclusiveness to the students.

**Peer Support Program.** A peer support program can be proposed to accommodate the Chinese students during their study at SPU Manila. The program can assign a Filipino student as the Chinese student's buddy or partner. The Filipino student will assist them with their needs in the university, such as finding certain offices or translating Tagalog for ease of communication. This also builds the connection of the students. This is beneficial for both students because they will learn from each other and make new friends.

**Further Research.** The researcher acknowledges the limitations of the study and advises further research on the case and topic. Future research can include larger sample sizes that include students from other college departments. It can also be done as a multiple-case study that includes other international students. It can be conducted in Filipino as well. Thus, further research must be done to develop the area of research and address the further needs of international students at SPU Manila.

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