

Exploring the acculturation of Taiwanese students in an Australian University: English self-confidence, wellbeing and friendships

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Abstract

Within the expanding international tertiary sector in Australia, the main objective of University policies is the successful acculturation and integration of international students. However, studies have shown that there is a lack or a very low level of interaction between students of South and East Asian background and local students. This paper discusses the problem of acculturation of Taiwanese students in Australian Universities, focusing upon the areas of psychological adjustment and social networking. Moreover, the study explores the connections between perceived English fluency, self-esteem, disempowerment, wellbeing, and friendships between international students and local students, as well as amongst international students. In total, 21 Taiwanese participants completed a questionnaire. The results have confirmed the validity of the identified area of psychological adjustment as being salient in the process of acculturation and social cohesion of Taiwanese students. Analysis of the data also shows that the levels of English self-assessment, self-esteem and friendships are lower for Taiwanese students in their interactions with local students as opposed to their interactions with non-native speaker students. However, there was a strong tendency revealed among the participants to form more meaningful friendships with Australians.

“Cada lengua es una visión del mundo, cada civilización es un mundo. El sol que canta el poema azteca es distinto al sol del himno egipcio, aunque el astro sea el mismo.”

Every language is a vision of the world, each civilization is a world. The sun that sings the Aztec poem is different to the sun of the Egyptian hymn, although the star remains the same. (Paz 1973 in Denis & Matas Pla 2002: 7; translation by author)

1. Introduction

The realm of the academic spheres is becoming increasingly characterised by multiculturalism, involving people from diverse cultures of origin and speaking different languages living, studying and interacting in university environments (Kashima and Low 2006). The international sector of educational systems of Britain,

the United States (US) and Australia has gained more and more prominence in recent years as an important part of the economy and as a lucrative business (Yang, Noels and Saumure 2006) – called “a hot global commodity” by Pandit (2007). The main objectives of the Australian Education International organisation are to work with universities to attract large numbers of students, in particular from South East Asia and, originating from a business rationale, to be competitive in the global international education market. That means meeting the expectations of students from different cultural backgrounds and addressing their wellbeing (Pandit 2007; Kashima and Loh 2006; Poyrazli and Grahame 2006). Based upon that, the policies implemented by universities are dominated by a strong focus upon acculturation, with programs pursuing internationalisation of campuses, integration of international students (IS) in the local culture and society, developing the skills that would allow IS to successfully and efficiently function in inter-cultural settings, and fostering social cohesion and intercultural mixing (Volet and Ang 1998; Pandit 2007).

The aim of this paper is to introduce and discuss the problem of acculturation of Taiwanese students in Australian universities. More specifically, the paper focuses on the area of psychological adjustment identified within acculturation as impacting upon social networking, seeking to explore the interconnections between English self-assessment, self-esteem and the development of personal relationships between Taiwanese students and Australian students in two kinds of lingua franca interactions: between native and non-native speakers (NS-NNS) and between non-native speakers (NNS-NNS).

Firstly, the paper will present a perspective on acculturation, social interaction and wellbeing as related to Taiwanese students, outlining the context of the current study. Secondly, the dimensions of English proficiency, self-evaluations and friendship will be discussed within the broader framework of the acculturation process. Thirdly, the research design will be described and the results of the study analysed. Finally, the paper will conclude that despite a number of limitations, the study conducted indicated that the issue of English self-assessment plays an important part in the overall adjustment process of Taiwanese students, influencing how they perceive themselves and their relationships, and how they view those around them.

2. Acculturation, social networking and wellbeing

Kashima and Loh (2006) in their study of acculturation of Asian students in Australian universities distinguish five aspects of acculturation: psychological adjustment, socio-cultural adjustment, acquisition of cultural knowledge, heritage cultural identity and Australian university identity. Psychological adjustment was

found to entail the main effects of the social ties and networks the student experiences, making it integral to social cohesion. Furthermore, Tanaka, Takai, Kohyama, Fujihara and Minami (1997) describe four components of the psychological adjustment, all of which involve an interactional element: general adjustment (stress), self-control adjustment (self-esteem), affiliative adjustment (sound interpersonal relationships) and dependant adjustment (coping with stress with the help of others).

Rosenthal, Russell and Thomson (2006), Myles and Cheng (2003) and Volet and Ang (1998), who all looked at inter-cultural group interactions, stress that inter-cultural contact, social networking and friendships positively influence acculturation in general and are thus paramount for all levels of psychological adjustment and wellbeing of IS, particularly for students from Chinese (and most likely other East Asian) backgrounds, for whom *guanxi*, the dynamics of inter-personal relationships, is a vital part of life (Luo 2007:1-2). Moreover, Trice (2004), in her study of 497 South-East Asian IS in the US, and Olivas and Li (2006) found that friendships with local students, encapsulating affiliative adjustment, had a positive effect on academic success by diminished the levels of anxiety and alienation. Therefore, the research indicates strong relationships between social networking on a personal level in NS-NNS interactions and the quality of life of an IS in his/her Australian university identity, as well as with the willingness to acquire cultural knowledge.

Theoretically, the view of relationships as social capital and key to access of social resources, is supported by the Social Capital Theory (Stanton-Salazar 1997 in Trice 2004). The research conducted in the area identifies certain factors recognised as significant in fostering successful intercultural social networking and in adjustment of IS. These factors can be divided into group or environment based or individual, including gender, race, age, education level, academic progress, self-esteem, English language proficiency (Rosenthal *et al.* 2006; Volet and Ang 1998; Trice 2004), and psychological stress factors such as loneliness, homesickness, powerlessness and depression (Poyrazli and Grahame 2006).

However, studies show that there is a lack of, or low, interaction between local and Asian students (Volet and Ang 1998), with Rosenthal *et al.* (2006) citing specifically a lack of friendships on an Australian campus. With regards to the underlying reasons for this, the views in the literature are mixed. Rosenthal *et al.* (2006) in their study found that IS want more interaction, but that this does not occur, whilst Myles and Cheng (2003), in their study of a campus in Canada, found that IS did not make an intentional effort to contact NS. Both of these observations reveal the importance of the student, as an individual, as a participant in social networking, and of the more subtle layers of his/her psychological business.

The problem of social connectedness has been shown by universities to be difficult to address (Rosenthal *et al.* 2006). Some of the proposed and implemented activities on campuses that aim to foster interpersonal relations are social events, picnics (Pandit 2007), buddy schemes, faculty-based activities and study group schemes (Rosenthal *et al.* 2006). By and large, these activities are putting the IS in the intercultural situation, not preparing them for it, potentially impacting their effectiveness. Olivas and Li (2006) therefore call for more research regarding the psychological adjustment of IS in order to assist counsellors with their work. Communication problems are being reported even in the interactions between IS and counsellors themselves, the majority of counsellors being NS.

Therefore, a gap in the research can be observed in terms of the institutional goals, salient factors identified and institutional practices and reality. Moreover, despite individual-related issues being present in the objectives of universities and individual-related factors being researched, a specific focus on individual development in university programs is lacking, particularly in regard to research of the personal psychological adjustment process and the relevant variables that relate to the Asian population. Thus, this study focused on two main issues: a) perceived English fluency and English self-confidence and their impact on self-esteem, as a part of self-control psychological adjustment and the position of power; and b) the impact of these on the development of the affiliative and dependant aspects of adjustment manifested through friendships between Taiwanese and Australian students.

3. English proficiency and self-evaluations

Bolitho *et al.* (2003), within the framework of English teaching as a foreign/second language, describe awareness of linguistic performance as an emotive issue that affects the way the students view themselves. Similarly, Dao, Lee and Chang (2007) show a correlation between depression and low perceived English fluency in Taiwanese students. In the case of East Asian students, perceived English fluency and English self-confidence can produce a particularly serious impact on social networking. Moreover, a link has been established between the interdependent self-construal of East Asian culture, which entails placing high value on social acceptance, emotional interdependence, high need for cognitive closure in intercultural situations, and low English self-confidence, communication problems, poor psychological adjustment and view of self (Yang *et al.* 2006; Kashima and Low 2006). In terms of self-esteem cognitive evaluations in East Asian students, Kernis (2005) states that over reliance on evaluations by others and controlling family environments, recognised in East Asian contexts, both impact upon self-esteem. A

study comparing East Asian and American students has shown that the East Asian students score lower on self-report measures of global self-esteem and that their cultural value of modesty is stronger than in their American counter-parts, which leads to low levels of self-esteem on cognitive evaluations and appraisal of self (Cai, Brown, Deng and Oakes 2007). Coupled with the stressful factors of acculturation, Kernis (2005) indicates that lower self-esteem measures bring about depressive symptoms and fragile self-esteem, leading to overgeneralisations of failure in interactions and making the students more likely to look upon communicative events in a more negative light. Therefore, a vicious circle affecting the development of friendships is formed.

The concept of friendship among Taiwanese students, on the other hand, was shown to be determined by the degrees of the following dialectical tensions which influence the status of a relationship: instrumentality and affection, openness and closeness, autonomy and connection, judgement and acceptance, and impartiality and favouritism (Chen, Drzewiecka and Sias 2001); this translated into significant differentiation being made among descriptions of 'acquaintances', 'just friends' and 'good friends' (Chen *et al.* 2001).

4. Research Questions

From the theorised network of associations among the discussed variables the following research questions were generated (Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran 2001: 40):

- (1) Is there a connection between self-assessment of English proficiency, self-esteem and disempowerment in Taiwanese students?
- (2) If a relationship is established between the above-mentioned variables, is it an impeding factor preventing Taiwanese students from forming friendships, and/or personal relationships with Australian students?
- (3) What is the significance of these variables for the development of personal relationships between Taiwanese students and Australian students?

5. Research Design

5.1 Participants

In total, 21 Taiwanese people currently living in Australia took part in the study. Of those, 15 were female (71.4%) and 6 were male (28.6%). On average, 62% of the participants were aged between 18 and 24, 33.3% were from 24 to 30, and 4.7 % were aged 31 to 35. The average length of stay in Australia was 5.6 years across the

participants: for females an average of 4.7 years, and for males 7.9 years. The minimum length of stay was 0.5 years and the maximum 16 years.

5.2 Method

The method of investigation chosen was the use of questionnaires followed by a qualitative, descriptive analysis of the gathered data. The questionnaires were chosen because they are the most productive way to gather a larger sample, the anonymity of a questionnaire allowed for more 'honest' answers, and all respondents could receive standardised questions. The information collected included facts and opinions of the respondents (Denscombe, 2006: 145–146). Furthermore, the survey was conducted in one single session and contained two sets of questions: one set related to interactions with Australian native speakers of English, and the other set related to those with non-native speakers of English. The questions, which aimed at contrasting the results for the two social groups, were structured in such a way to allow the participants to consider the reoccurring question afresh. There were 26 questions in total, a mix of open and closed questions, with a Likert scale being used for some. The questionnaire incorporated insights from Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (Kernis 2005, Cai *et al.* 2007), the critical discourse analysis framework (Van Dijk, 1993: 277; Van Dijk, 2003: 354) and Rybak and McAndrew's (2006) friendship indicators. The paired indicator questions, targeting the comparison of responses relating to NNS-NNS and NNS-NS respectively, were as follows: 5-16; 6-17; 7-18; 8-19; 9-20; 10-21; 11-22; 12-23; 13-24; 14-25; 15-26 (Appendix 1). The open-ended questions were: 14-25; 15-26 and spaces for commentaries were included in the pair 7-18. The first three questions were warm-up questions. The study was conducted by e-mail and questionnaires were codified.

6. Results and discussion

RQ 1: Is there a connection between self-assessment of English proficiency, self-esteem and disempowerment in Taiwanese students?

Firstly, the respondents were asked to self-assess their English proficiency level. The overall response average was 2.7, representing the description "I feel fairly confident about my English in non stressful situations" (Q4, Appendix 1). Taking into consideration the average length of stay, this result indicates a rather low level of self-assessment. Also, an interesting observation was that for males the average was 3 and for females it was 2.6, coming closer to "I can communicate, but it is still a foreign language", despite the sample size differences in favour of females. The only female who marked a level 4 for English had stayed in Australia for 7 years. This

may be indicative of a difference in self-assessment of English between females and males.

In assessing the English proficiency level whilst talking to Australian and non-native speakers of English (Q5, Q16), the response average was 2.7, signifying "sometimes" for the description "pleased with myself", followed by "proud" in the case of NS–NNS interactions, and 2.9 for "pleased with myself", followed by "proud" on 2.4 in NNS–NNS interactions. It is perhaps surprising that, on average, the respondents reflected that they felt quite good about their English while talking to Australians. In regards to rating the weighting of the opinions of others in assessing their English proficiency, the results showed 3.2 points for importance in the case of Australians and 3.0 for non-native speakers on the Likert scale 1–5. As readings of 1 and 2 were very rarely marked on the scale, this indicated that there might be a level of preoccupation about what others think of their English in Taiwanese students, and that that level is slightly higher in the case of Australian speakers.

In an attempt to gain a perspective on how the participants feel during conversation and the perceived position that they occupy in interactions, the question set 7/18 was used (Appendix 1). Participants scored equally highly for the statements "I feel as an equal to him or to her, I feel confident" and "I feel the native speaker dominates the conversation most of the time": 3.7 on the Likert scale 1–5, followed by "I feel more of a listener and less of a speaker" at 3.5. That result suggests that the students might feel they are equals in certain situations when talking to Australians, but at the same time in numerous situations they feel dominated. Furthermore a possible trend emerged when comparing female and male results. Females scored 4.0 for the question on dominance, as opposed to 2.8 by males, and regarded themselves as more of a listener at 3.6, compared with 3.3 for males. Overall, the scores showed a downward trend for the same indicators for NNS-related responses; most salient drops were detected for "I feel I am more of a listener and less of a speaker" and "I feel the speaker dominated the conversation most of the time". Therefore, possibly the participants did feel more comfortable in conversations with NNS.

Regarding the link between the position of power in the conversation and self-esteem, two statements were formulated in Q13/24 (Appendix 1). In the case of the first statement, relating to self-esteem and wanting to make Australian friends, there were 12 selections of neutral, 6 of strong agreement, 3 of agreement and 1 of disagreement (male), which is an indicator that self-esteem has an important role in interactions for Taiwanese students. In the case of the second statement, involving the effect of feeling good about one's English on friendships, the results were more mixed: 9 neutral, 2 strongly agreed, 6 agreed and 4 disagreed. The situation was very

similar in the case of NNS–NNS, indicating that self-esteem is important in interactions with them too. However, with the second statement, there was considerable disagreement, with 7 respondents strongly disagreeing with the statement that English is a factor in forming NNS–NNS speaker friendships. This highlights the trend that English proficiency worries seem to be more valid in NS–NNS conversational interactions.

Therefore, even though it was indicated that, on average, the respondents think they feel quite good about themselves when talking to Australian speakers, it is very important to them what Australians think of their English, more so than with NNS. Their self-assessment of English is rather low; when they are talking to Australians the indicators for dominance and passive roles in conversation are considerably higher compared with NNS. In addition, while there is an indication that self-esteem is important in both NNS–NS and NNS–NNS interactions, when analysed in relation to English proficiency and self-assessment, its importance decreases somewhat.

The following commentaries were also added: questionnaire 8 (F, 9 years length of stay): “Sometimes I don’t even know what they are talking about so don’t know what to say”; questionnaire 9 (M, 6 year length of stay.): “It’s usually the case that I cannot articulate myself well enough”, reflecting the connections between the variables of English proficiency self-assessment, self-esteem and position in social interactions.

RQ 2: If a relationship is established between the above-mentioned variables, is it an impeding factor preventing Taiwanese students from forming friendships, personal relationships with Australian students?

Based on the collected data, Taiwanese students’ friendships leaned towards NNS of English: 57% of the respondents stated that they “rarely” did things socially with Australians, whilst on the other hand 52% said that they “often” socialised with NNS. Respondents also indicated that they felt more supported by NNS speakers than by NS; the level of support was 3 for 42% of participants in the case of NS and rose to 4 for NNS. The best relationship with an Australian translated into an almost 50/50 split between “good friends” and “just friends” with a striking uniformity; relationships in general were described mostly as “just friends” (57.1%) and “acquaintances” (23.8%). The same question for NNS friendships yielded an almost 50/50 split, but this time between “good friends” and “best friends” for the best relationship, and the rest of the relationships were characterised as “good friends” (57.1), “just friends” (23.8%) and “best friends” (19%). Also, when asked if they would want to have more good Australian friends, 38% replied with “very much”; however, 61.9% said the same about international students.

The findings provide support for the fact that the indicators for friendship levels of NS–NNS interactions are lower than for NNS–NNS interactions. However another trend observed was that the relationship between Taiwanese students and NNS is not as clear as previously thought: a number of questionnaires contained low scores for support, social activity and willingness to increase social cohesion with other international students. That trend further surfaced in the open-ended questions. In addition, there was an inclination shown towards making more NS friends, especially in the open-ended questions.

RQ 3: What is the significance of these variables on development of personal relationships between Taiwanese students and Australian students?

The open-ended pair questions 14/24 and 15/24 (Appendix 1) were formulated with the purposes of collecting opinions about the important factors for developing friendships and also to get an insight into the participants' personal assessments of their own feelings during conversations with other people, NS and NNS:

14. In your opinion, what are the factors that are important to you in developing, or not developing close, long lasting friendships with Australian students?

15. In general, how do you feel when communicating with Australians? Is the way you feel impacting on your relationships with them?

In the case of NS–NNS interactions, the following factors were identified as salient for friendships: culture differences; differences in interests/beliefs/thoughts; different perceptions of socialising; amount of time spent socialising with NS; lack of acceptance by NS; low friendliness levels (e.g., "Australians don't want to make NNS friends"). Furthermore, NS were referred to as "locals", "westerners", "they" as opposed to "us", the international students, who have to be "accepted" and "included" into the NS group. NS, however, "don't ask you actively about your daily life" and "are not interested in making friends". Respondents mentioned that friendships were not long-lasting and "just friendships", not anything more. The fact that communicative situations are charged with emotions and feelings and leave a deep impact becomes very clear from reading the opinions about language, namely English and everything related to it. English proficiency was often cited as a factor alongside personal confidence and talking without hesitation, the need to be active or lose opportunity to speak while talking to Australians and not to be afraid to make mistakes. Thus, evidence suggests that the impact of how the respondents felt about their relationships appeared to be quite significant, and possibly resulted in the mainly negative perceptions of communicative experiences being described. The impact is even more obvious in the following comments from the questionnaires:

“my relationship with local students can’t go any further”; “we can’t have any closer relationship”.

In the case of NNS–NNS situations, the following factors were observed: different cultures and languages as advantages; helping other NNS as important for friendships; personality; friendliness as a positive factor and understanding each other’s feelings; “good” communication with NNS seen as opportunity to practice; NNS-like use of English, and not having to worry about good/bad English and mistakes, talking, socialising more; and the fact that NNS show concern for one’s feelings. The participants stated that it was easy to get along with NNS, easy to make friends and feel good whilst talking: “I always feel more comfortable when talking to other international students”, “I have more to say than with Westerns [sic]” and “feeling more confident and expressing your feelings”.

Finally, in the analysis of the data, a strong emotional reaction element was picked up as salient in the two questionnaires, and could be observed in the discrepancies between self-assessment of English, friendship indicators and open-ended questions. Therefore, the statements, made by the respondents in these cases, potentially revealed that the variables described in this paper do play important roles in the lives of students and care needs to be taken in raising these issues.

7. Limitations and recommendations

Despite the detailed construction of the survey, the role of the interpreter is paramount and can have impact on the findings; therefore, this area needs to be further addressed and controlled. The sample was unequal in terms of gender and length of stay. In addition, an ethnocentric bias was present in the study. Therefore, the inclusion of NS perspectives will be beneficial in future studies. The responses should also be analysed using appropriate statistical tools, although this requires a larger sample and so such statistical analyses were not carried out here in this paper. The relationships between the independent variable (IV) of age and length of stay and DP of English self-assessment, for instance, could be measured that way. The data processing design could be twofold including appropriate statistical testing for significant differences, and an analytical qualitative method. From the qualitative perspective, in order to further examine the research questions the relations between responses in questionnaires can be analysed for within subject trends. This would mean examining carefully the responses for the relationships between answers to questions for each subject and comparing the findings, allowing for the potential influence of the emotional reaction element.

Although the questionnaires used in this study proved to be suitable for determining possible trends, the actual process of conducting research using

questionnaires is limiting in terms of the amount of the data received from the participants. Therefore, the information received from the questionnaires has to be further processed and integrated into a refined interview design, allowing exploration and follow-up interviews in which trends could be further explored. This could be especially productive in the case of issues proved to be as personal as those presented by this research.

8. Conclusion

Notwithstanding the limitations of the study, the process of the research and the results have confirmed that the identified area of psychological adjustment is in need of further investigation, as it is demonstrably pertinent to the overall situation of Taiwanese students in Australian universities. Moreover, the oversimplified view of the highly prioritised university policy issue of social networking, which considers a phenomenon such as lack of NS/NNS social cohesion as an isolated occurrence, or as originating solely from the unwillingness on behalf of NNS, is inaccurate and bound to lead to a limited understanding of the situation. Thus, by focusing on analysing English self-confidence within the dimension of self-esteem and incorporating these two in the dynamics of the communicative interactions that Taiwanese students engage in, this paper has attempted to present a more detailed picture of the issue of friendship, what it means to the group in question and how they feel about it. The data has shown that, although the level of English self-assessment is quite low for Taiwanese students, the respondents displayed a positive outlook upon their proficiency when thinking about NS–NNS interactions. In addition, the data indicated the importance of self-esteem in both kinds of interactions. However a higher level of tension seemed to have been experienced by students when talking to Australians, and a possible trend was observed in terms of gender differences in the areas of cognitive self-evaluations of English proficiency and the dynamics of communicative interactions. Finally, although the level of friendships with Australians did seem to be lower if compared with NNS–NNS ones, that result has to be analysed with awareness of the view of the complex relationships between IS with other IS and the presence of a strong desire to communicate more with Australians.

In conclusion, the area of psychological adjustment needs to be examined in more depth in order to gain a better understanding of what is it like to be a Taiwanese student in Australia, what the benefits and the problems they encounter are, and how these change the perceptions and intentions of an individual. In this way, we can gain a better understanding of what adjustments need to be made to

university policies to better address the individual needs of NNS students in Australia.

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7. When talking to a native Australian speaker of English, do you feel...

(1-not at all; 2-rarely; 3-sometimes; 4-oftenly; 5-very much)

As an equal to him or to her, I feel confident 1 2 3 4 5

I participate in conversation, but don't always say what I want to 1 2 3 4 5

I feel I am more of listener and less of a speaker 1 2 3 4 5

I feel the native speaker dominates the conversation most of the time
1 2 3 4 5

I feel disadvantaged, I can never say what I want to say 1 2 3 4 5

Any other comments about your experiences:**8. How often do you do things socially with Australian students (that includes: going to movies, parties, meeting on campus, going to each other's place)?**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often All the time

9. Do you feel supported by Australian students? 1 2 3 4 5

(on a scale from 1-5: 1-not at all; 5-very much)

10. The best relationship you've had with an Australian student is best described as:

Acquaintance Just friend Good friend Best friend

11. Most relationships between you and Australian students can be described as:

Acquaintance Just friend Good friend Best friend

12. Would you like to make more good Australian friends? 1 2 3 4 5

(on a scale from 1-5: 1-not at all; 5-very much)

13. While you are talking to Australians:

Feeling good or bad about myself in a conversation is an important factor for wanting to make Australian friends.

18. When talking to a Non-Native speaker of English, do you feel....

As an equal to him or to her, I feel confident 1 2 3 4 5

I participate in conversation, but don't always say what I want to 1 2 3 4 5

I feel I am more of listener and less of a speaker 1 2 3 4 5

I feel the non-native speaker dominates the conversation most of the time
1 2 3 4 5

I feel disadvantaged, I can never say what I want to say 1 2 3 4 5

19. How often do you do things socially with Non-native English speakers (that includes: going to movies, parties, meeting on campus, going to each other's place)?

Never Rarely Sometimes Often All the time

20. Do you feel supported by International students? 1 2 3 4 5
(on a scale from 1-5: 1-not at all; 5-very much)

21. The best relationship you've had with an International student, non-native speaker of English is best described as:

Acquaintance Just friend Good friend Best friend

22. In general, your relationships with International students can be described as:

Acquaintance Just friend Good friend Best friend

23. Would you like to make more good International friends? 1 2 3 4 5
(1-not at all; 5-very much)

24. While talking to non-native speakers of English:

Feeling good or bad about myself is an important factor for wanting to make International friends.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Feeling good and confident about my English is an important factor for wanting to make International friends.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

25. In your opinion, what are the factors that are important to you in developing, or not developing close, long lasting friendships with International students?

Please feel free to express your valuable opinions:

26. In general, how do you feel when communicating with other International students? Is the way you feel impacting on your relationships with them?