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Exploring the Awareness and Acceptability of Philippine English among Language Studies Students in a State College

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A B S T R A C T

This study explores the awareness and acceptability of Philippine English (PhIE) among language studies students at a state college in the Philippines. While Philippine English has achieved recognition as a legitimate English variety in academic, professional, and media domains, its acceptance, especially in educational settings, remains uneven due to entrenched native-speaker norms. Using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the study first employed a validated survey instrument to gather quantitative data from ninety-seven (97) respondents. Descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation were used to measure levels of awareness and acceptability, and the relationship between them. This was followed by semi-structured interviews with six (6) participants. Findings revealed that students were generally aware of the meaning, features, and uses of PhIE, with highest awareness scores for grammatical and pronunciation features and usage in digital media. However, acceptance of PhIE grammatical and lexical items remained limited, especially in formal contexts. A statistically significant but inverse correlation ($r = -.995, p < .001$) was found between awareness and acceptability—suggesting that greater knowledge may reinforce prestige bias rather than dismantle it. Three key factors influencing awareness and acceptability were identified: (1) educational exposure and curricular influence, (2) digital media and online representation, and (3) peer and instructor influence. The findings highlight the urgent need for a critical pedagogical shift which not only raises awareness of local English varieties but also fosters linguistic pride and legitimacy. Implications point to the inclusion of PhIE in curricula, teacher training, and institutional policy as necessary steps toward equitable and context-sensitive English language education in the Philippines.

I. INTRODUCTION

The English language has long ceased to be the sole possession of its native speakers. In the contemporary time, it has become a pluralized and diversified medium of communication, giving rise to what scholars now call World Englishes (Kanwal et al., 2024; Hilgendorf, 2015; O'Regan, 2021). These multidimensional forms are constituted by the local sociolinguistic contexts, where it generates varieties that bear the hallmark of native linguistic systems, historical development, and

the special communicative needs of the different populations. In Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines, English has evolved into a localized, indigenized, and widely accepted medium of instruction, governance, business, and even in terms of interpersonal communication (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2020).

The Philippine English (PhIE) is one of the most well-developed and widespread of such English varieties since the country has considered this language as its L2. The distinguishing language

characteristics of PhilE have been known as early as in the 1960s when scholars have recorded how PhilE differs with American and British English in terms of grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and pragmatics (Dimaculangan & Sarmiento, 2025; Dimaculangan et al., 2024; Bautista, 2008; Fuchs, 2017; Dimaculangan & Gustilo, 2018; Arangilan et al., 2022; Ravago et al., 2024). For instance, in grammar, PhilE commonly exhibits variations such as the omission of plural markers and the use of progressive aspect with stative verbs which are considered nonstandard in American or British norms (Dimaculangan & Sarmiento, 2025). In vocabulary, PhilE includes lexical innovations and localized terms such as *comfort room* for “restroom and/or toilet” and *ref* for “refrigerator”, reflecting Filipino cultural realities (Dimaculangan & Gustilo, 2018). Phonologically, it is characterized by the non-distinction between /ɪ/ and /i:/ sounds (as in *ship* and *sheep*) and the tendency toward syllable-timed rhythm rather than stress-timed rhythm (Arangilan et al., 2022). Pragmatically, Filipinos’ preference for polite forms, indirectness, and code-switching between English and Filipino languages highlights a culturally embedded communicative style that values respect and harmony (Ravago et al., 2024). Further, it is pivotal to note that this is not a type of interlanguage of a learner or a collection of errors, but a rule governed system of expression that voices the communicative and cultural identity of the Filipinos. The acceptance of PhilE as an available and standard English variety has since been proven by it getting into academically printed materials, dictionaries, and even style handbooks and its use in media, academic institutions, and even the courts (Borlongan, 2022; Bautista, 2008).

Amidst the establishment as well as the popularity of this variety of English in scholarly and practical fields, there is nevertheless still a lack of appreciation of it and/or an outright misconception of Philippine English in terms of educational aspect. Even before, students, preferably those being enrolled into teacher education programs, continue to view American or British English as the only available correct models to follow (Guray et al., 2022; Pefianco Martin, 2014; Lorente & Tupas, 2013). This happens because a lot of students, especially those who reside in the marginalized communities, project that American or British varieties of English shall only be used during standardized assessments in such international

applications. This also reflects broader global trends in higher education where English, as a medium of instruction, is associated with prestige, academic quality, and internationalization (Elkhayma, 2022). Similarly, it is noted that a gap between the reality of lingual conditions and the requirements of the academic sphere has been implemented by the internalization of the native-speaker norms that are promoted by the curricula, teaching resources, and systems of evaluation, too. This usually leads to stigmatization of local varieties of English and consequently a low level of linguistic self-esteem among the Filipino students.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that sometimes students as well as teachers view the PhilE features with mistakes or wrong usages especially in grammar and vocabulary (Dayag, 2012). For instance, localized phrases like *open the lights* or *comfort room*, might be flagged as error and not considered as a registered variation. Due to this, several students lack knowledge of the sociolinguistic anchoring and real-world validity of PhilE, and in case they are knowledgeable concerning PhilEs application in formal situations, they might not consider using it completely. This becomes even more a matter of concern especially to language studies learners who are destined to become future language experts and teachers. In this case, there is a possibility that students might permanently change the face of language teaching and language policy in the state because of their outlook as well as approach toward Philippine English. In a larger sense, there is paucity of empirical studies examining the perceptions, awareness, and attitudes of tertiary students on their English variety notwithstanding the growing body of research on World Englishes and Philippine English (Pablo et al., 2023; Tupas, 2024; Bernardo, 2008; Bautista, 2001; Giray et al., 2022). Thus, it is necessary to examine how such learners view PhilE in terms of its characteristics and acceptability under various settings, particularly a state college whose students belong to different linguistic and socioeconomic groups.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining the levels of awareness and acceptability of Philippine English (PhilE) among Language Studies students in a state college. Specifically, it investigates students’ awareness of PhilE in terms of its meaning, distinct linguistic features, and communicative uses. It also examines their acceptance of commonly used PhilE

grammatical and lexical items. Furthermore, the study determines whether a significant relationship exists between students' awareness and their acceptability of PhilE. Lastly, the study identifies the factors influencing students' awareness and acceptance of PhilE based on qualitative interview data.

In this study, the researcher situated awareness as to students' metalinguistic knowledge of Philippine English. This includes specifically their understanding of its meaning, historical development, linguistic features, and even communicative functions. This aligns with the notion of critical language awareness, where learners develop explicit knowledge of language variation and its sociolinguistic foundations (French & Beaulieu, 2020). Meanwhile, acceptability pertains to students' attitudinal evaluation of PhilE grammatical and lexical items, especially their perceived correctness, appropriateness, and legitimacy across academic, professional, and interpersonal contexts. Both constructs are theoretically connected but not always in agreement; whereas awareness is a cognitive acknowledgement of PhilE as a linguistic variety, acceptability is a question of value-based judgement that is steered by linguistic ideology, standards of prestige as well as social perception.

Through an analytical and intensive reflection on such concerns, the present study aims to complement the body of literature on the English language variation, localization, and language education in the country. These results can be used in curriculum development, teacher education, and policy-making processes that can promote a more embedded and realistic approach to teaching English language, which has to appreciate local linguistic practices and an ability to enable Filipino learners to gain control of their English.

II. METHODS

Study Design

The research employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to holistically examine the awareness and acceptability of Philippine English among the research participants. In the first phase, quantitative data were gathered to identify the extent of awareness and acceptability of students and to examine the relationship between the two variables. Qualitative data were collected

in the second phase in the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Participants

The participants of the present study are the language studies students of Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges. The researcher of the study ensured that all the participants are qualified based on the established selection criteria. This includes: (a) Participants should be enrolled in CSPC pursuing a degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies, (b) He/she should not presently taking or has taken already the course Philippine English. The study was consisted of a total of ninety-seven (97) language studies students who served as respondents to survey in reference to the set selection criteria. For the interview phase, six (6) participants had voluntarily participated. The number of participants was the result of observing data saturation.

Materials and Instruments

The present study utilized two (2) main instruments to fulfill its objectives. The researcher used a validated survey questionnaire as the primary instrument and a semi-structured interview guide to carry-out the qualitative aspect of the study. The questionnaire is divided into three parts: (1) demographic profile, (2) awareness of Philippine English and (3) acceptability that centers on the grammatical and lexical items of Philippine English. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

The second part measured students' awareness of PhilE's meaning, linguistic features, and real-world uses. Sample items include statements such as: (1) Philippine English is rooted in local linguistic history; (2) I can identify grammatical differences in Philippine English; (3) I can identify pronunciation patterns unique to PhilE; (4) PhilE vocabulary items such as 'comfort room' and 'load' are familiar to me; (5) I encounter PhilE in online Filipino content and mass media. In this study, the "features of Philippine English" refer to the commonly documented linguistic characteristics of PhilE as identified in previous research (Bautista, 2008; Borlongan, 2022; Dimaculangan & Sarmiento, 2024). These include: (1) grammatical features, such as the use of "pass the paper," "reconsider me," or progressive forms with stative verbs; (2) pronunciation features, including the non-distinction between /i/ and /i:/ sounds; (3)

syntactic features, such as distinctive word order; (4) code-switching patterns common in Filipino discourse. These categories served as the basis for the awareness items included in the questionnaire.

For the last part of the survey, it deeply examined students' acceptance of commonly used Philippine English forms. In the context of the study, grammatical items refer to actual PhilE sentence constructions frequently used in Filipino academic, informal, and institutional communication. Sample statements include statements such as "submit it to me later," "reconsider me," "I'll go ahead now," "pass the paper," "avail of the promo," "He passed me his project," and "Did you already eat?". On the other hand, lexical items refer to Philippine English vocabulary and culturally embedded terms documented in prior literature. Sample statements include "comfort room," "topnotcher," "aircon," "high blood," "load," "salvage," "ref," "barangay captain," "traffic enforcer," and "police blotter."

Table 1. Likert Scale on the Awareness and Acceptability of Philippine English

Mean Range	Interpretation (Awareness)	Interpretation (Acceptability)
4.50 – 5.00	Highly Aware	Highly Accepted
3.50 – 4.49	Aware	Accepted
2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Aware	Moderately Accepted
1.50 – 2.49	Minimally Aware	Minimally Accepted
1.00 – 1.49	Not Aware at All	Not Accepted at All

All grammatical and lexical items used in the acceptability section were directly culled from documented Philippine English usage. These items were selected based on: (1) frequency of occurrence in Filipino educational, professional, and everyday discourse; (2) prior documentation in Philippine English research (Bautista, 2008; Borlongan, 2022; Gonzales, 2023); and (3) their value in distinguishing PhilE from American and British English, making them appropriate indicators of acceptability. The instrument underwent into a rigorous content validation by three experts in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics – two of them are internal validators and one is an external validator expert. Moreover, it was pilot-tested on fifteen (15) students of another public college whose Cronbachs alpha was equal to 0.86 which is high reliability. The instrument was also given in print and online forms so that they will be easily accessible. The participants were informed of the

study purpose and voluntary nature as well as the protocol of the confidentiality form.

In the case of the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were carried out either in person or on the Zoom meeting, depending on the preferences and availability of the participants. All interviews were recorded and each took about 20 to 30 minutes and done in the presence of the participants' consent. An interview guide questions were utilized by the researcher. Some questions asked during the conduct of the study include:

1. How did your early English teachers and textbooks shape your views about Philippine English? Were you encouraged or discouraged from using it?
2. Did your classes treat PhilE as legitimate, or mostly as "errors"? How did this shape your perception?
3. Do you think digital platforms make it easier or harder for students to accept Philippine English? Why?
4. Can you recall a time when a peer or teacher corrected your Philippine English? How did that experience affect your confidence or attitudes?
5. Do you feel comfortable using PhilE in front of classmates or teachers? Why or why not?

These questions were specifically structured to be aligned with the problem formulation of the study that aims at investigating the factors that influence the level of awareness and acceptability of Philippine English among the students. The initial question is the impact of early education exposure, including teachers, materials, and classroom norms that assists in the understanding of the development of awareness of PhilE over time. The second examines teaching attitudes and classroom disposition towards PhilE, and thus, how legitimacy or absence of it influences students by altering their judgment of acceptability. The third question investigates the effect of digital platforms on the exposure and acceptance of PhilE by students. The fourth question draws about their personal experience of correction or stigma, and it provides an understanding of affective and interpersonal aspects that guide confidence and attitudes towards PhilE. Finally, the fifth question examines the levels of comfort of the students using PhilE in academic and peer contexts, thereby giving a better insight into the readiness of the students to

use and accept PhilE in real-life situations.

Procedure

Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the institution. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. After gaining approval, the researcher coordinated with instructors to administer the survey during designated class hours. The informed consent form (ICF) was used to inform the target participants of the purpose of the study, their rights and voluntary participation in the study. The survey was conducted in print and digital version so as to suit the interests of the students.

In the case of data collection, this was done during 2 weeks. The practicality of the process was that the researcher could access the intended class time and introduce the research and consenting process and give out the questionnaires to be completed during the lesson. The students were given fifteen (15) minutes time to when they could answer and after which, the forms were collected. Those who decided to join online received a link particularly designed via Google Forms. The link was sent through their channel of communication to the classes. During the qualitative phase, the key informants were requested to be involved in a sequence of interview sessions where semi-structured questions are asked and audio feature of a cellular phone was used to record. The process was done under confidentiality and no personally identifiable information was entered and included in the data set.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed and computed using descriptive statistics to determine the levels of awareness and acceptability. In an attempt to test the relationship between the awareness and acceptability of Philippine English among students, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was applied. In testing the significant relationship, Jamovi 2.6.44 version was used by the researcher. Also, thematic analysis in accordance with the six steps of the model of Braun and Clarke (2022) was used. Manual line-by-line coding was done by the researcher in order to produce initial codes which were organized into patterned categories and elaborated into broad themes. The inductive method of coding was employed to give the themes a chance to emerge

as a result of the narratives of the participants. Peer debriefing with a specialist in qualitative research helped in enhancing the credibility of the themes and preliminary themes were matched against interview excerpts to make sure there was consistency and accuracy. No qualitative analysis software was used; instead, manual coding tables were utilized to organize codes, categories, and themes. In keeping with the explanatory sequential design, qualitative findings were integrated with the quantitative results by examining how students' narratives explained or contextualized the observed inverse relationship between awareness and acceptability.

III. RESULTS

Language studies students' awareness of Philippine English

This part shows the degree of awareness of language studies students regarding Philippine English in three distinct aspects which include (a) meaning, (b) features, and (c) uses. The data are also presented in tabular format to appreciate the in-depth meaning that it has with the corresponding weighted mean per indicator and verbal interpretations.

Awareness of Philippine English along with its meaning

In this study, "meaning" refers to students' conceptual understanding of Philippine English specifically their knowledge of what PhilE is, its sociolinguistic status, historical development, and its place within the broader framework of World Englishes. This aligns with theoretical perspectives on language variety recognition and metalinguistic awareness where learners' understanding extends beyond semantics to encompass sociolinguistic identity as well as functional legitimacy.

The results recorded and revealed that language studies students demonstrated an overall aware level of understanding of the meaning of Philippine English (PhilE) (Table 2). The highest-rated indicator was the recognition that PhilE is rooted in the Philippines' local linguistic history ($M = 4.17$, Aware), followed by its acknowledged presence in formal and professional settings ($M = 4.11$, Aware) and the students' familiarity with the global concept of "World Englishes" and PhilE's place within it ($M = 4.01$, Aware). Indicators with relatively lower scores, though still within the

Table 2. Awareness of Philippine English along with its meaning

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Philippine English rooted in local linguistic history.	4.17	Aware
Presence of PhilE in formal and professional settings.	4.11	Aware
Familiarity with “World Englishes” and PhilE’s place in it.	4.01	Aware
Use of PhilE in both oral and written forms.	4.00	Aware
Usage of PhilE in local schools and universities.	3.92	Aware
Academic research focused on PhilE.	3.92	Aware
Philippine English recognized as a legitimate variety.	3.76	Aware
English understood as varying by sociolinguistic context.	3.61	Aware
PhilE spoken by millions of Filipinos.	3.61	Aware
Distinction of PhilE from American and British English.	3.54	Aware

Table 3. Awareness of Philippine English along with its features

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Recognition of PhilE grammatical differences.	4.18	Aware
Identification of PhilE pronunciation patterns.	4.08	Aware
Examples of PhilE syntax are being understood.	3.87	Aware
Coexistence of code-switching with PhilE has been recognized.	3.80	Aware
Unique verb usage in PhilE (e.g., “pass,” “repeating”).	3.71	Aware
Distinctive vocabulary of PhilE was identified.	3.70	Aware
Familiarity with PhilE lexical innovations (e.g., “load”).	3.65	Aware
Awareness of different word order in PhilE expressions.	3.63	Aware
Use of expressions like “for a while” to mean “wait.”	3.63	Aware
Knowledge of PhilE lexical items (e.g., “comfort room”).	3.51	Aware

“Aware” category, included the awareness that English varies across sociolinguistic contexts (M = 3.61, Aware) and that PhilE is distinct from American and British English (M = 3.54, Aware).

Awareness of Philippine English along with its features

The results show that students were generally aware of the linguistic features of Philippine English, with all indicators in this category falling within the “Aware” range (Table 3). The highest awareness was seen in recognizing PhilE grammatical differences (M = 4.18, Aware) and identifying PhilE pronunciation patterns (M = 4.08, Aware). Students also reported being aware of PhilE syntax (M = 3.87, Aware), code-switching (M = 3.80, Aware), and unique verb usages like “pass” and “repeating” (M = 3.71, Aware). On the lower end, awareness was slightly less for localized expressions like “for a while” meaning “wait” (M = 3.63, Aware) and lexical items such as “comfort room” (M = 3.51, Aware).

Awareness of Philippine English along with its use

The results reveal that students were aware of the various uses of Philippine English in society (Table 4). The highest awareness was reported for exposure to PhilE in online Filipino content (M = 4.05, Aware), followed by its presence in mass media (M = 3.93, Aware) and its role in enhancing relatability in local communication (M = 3.91, Aware). Slightly lower, though still in the “Aware” range, were awareness scores related to PhilE’s use in official government communication (M = 3.60, Aware) and as a marker of socio-cultural familiarity (M = 3.53, Aware).

Acceptance of Philippine English along with grammatical and lexical items

In this section, the degree of acceptance by the language studies students to the Philippine English (PhE) grammar and lexical items is conveyed with the focus being put on how the students have evaluated the overall validity and correctness of vernacular constructions used commonly.

Table 4. Awareness of Philippine English along with its use

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Exposure to PhilE in online Filipino content.	4.05	Aware
Use of PhilE in mass media (TV, radio, print).	3.93	Aware
PhilE enhancing relatability in local communication.	3.91	Aware
PhilE as a reflection of Filipino identity.	3.86	Aware
Application of PhilE in both formal and casual speech.	3.82	Aware
Use of PhilE by professionals in workplaces.	3.76	Aware
Prevalence of PhilE in schools and universities.	3.70	Aware
Legal and academic documents containing PhilE.	3.64	Aware
Official government communication using PhilE.	3.60	Aware
PhilE as a marker of socio-cultural familiarity.	3.53	Aware

Table 5. Acceptance of Philippine English along with grammatical items

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Use of “submit it to me later” in class contexts.	3.50	Accepted
“Reconsider me” accepted in job applications.	3.44	Moderately Accepted
Acceptance of “I’ll go ahead now” as a farewell.	3.32	Moderately Accepted
Use of “He is working in the office now.”	3.22	Moderately Accepted
“He is for suspension” acceptable in media.	3.17	Moderately Accepted
Local meaning of “salvaged” understood and accepted.	3.16	Moderately Accepted
Use of “open/close the light” as acceptable.	2.91	Moderately Accepted
Use of “pass the paper” in classroom settings.	2.53	Moderately Accepted
“She’s in the hospital for check-up” deemed acceptable.	2.52	Moderately Accepted
“Fill up the form” recognized as proper usage.	2.41	Minimally Accepted
Approval of “She is studying her lessons now.”	2.38	Minimally Accepted
“Working student” used to describe status.	2.22	Minimally Accepted
Acceptance of “Did you already eat?” as valid.	2.12	Minimally Accepted
“Avail of the promo” recognized as valid usage.	2.06	Minimally Accepted
“He passed me his project” accepted in PhilE.	2.01	Minimally Accepted

Acceptance of Philippine English along with grammatical items

Table 5 show that students’ acceptance of Philippine English grammatical items was mixed, with only one item reaching the “Accepted” level: “submit it to me later” (M = 3.50, Accepted). Most other items were rated as “Moderately Accepted,” such as “reconsider me” (M = 3.44) and “I’ll go ahead now” (M = 3.32). The lowest-rated items, such as “he passed me his project” (M = 2.01) and “avail of the promo” (M = 2.06), fell into the “Minimally Accepted” category. This suggests that while students recognize some grammatical features as acceptable, many other expressions remain contested or viewed as incorrect.

Acceptance of Philippine English along with lexical items

Table 6 reveal that among lexical items, only “tomboy” referring to a masculine lesbian identity reached the “Accepted” level (M = 3.50, Accepted). Most items were “Moderately Accepted,” such as “cousin brother/sister” (M = 3.28), “comfort

room” (M = 3.20), and “topnotcher” (M = 3.17). The least accepted items included “police blotter” (M = 2.34, Minimally Accepted), “traffic enforcer” (M = 2.58), and “barangay captain” (M = 2.62), indicating a limited acceptance of terms used in government, media, and public services.

Test of significant relationship between the students’ level of awareness of Philippine English and their level of acceptability of it in different communication contexts

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient revealed a very strong, statistically significant negative correlation between students’ awareness of Philippine English and their acceptability of it across communication contexts ($r = -.995$, $p < .001$). This means that as students’ awareness of PhilE increases, their acceptance of its grammatical and lexical features tends to decrease — an unexpected finding, given the assumption that greater awareness might naturally lead to greater acceptance.

Table 6. Acceptance of Philippine English along with lexical items

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
“Tomboy” refers to masculine lesbian identity.	3.50	Accepted
Use of “cousin brother/sister” for close relatives.	3.28	Moderately Accepted
Preference for “comfort room” over “restroom.”	3.20	Moderately Accepted
“Topnotcher” considered a valid local term.	3.17	Moderately Accepted
“Aircon” widely used and understood.	3.04	Moderately Accepted
Use of “high blood” to describe anger.	3.03	Moderately Accepted
“Salvage” accepted in its localized meaning.	2.99	Moderately Accepted
“Tuition fee” accepted despite redundancy.	2.97	Moderately Accepted
“Load” used to refer to mobile phone credits.	2.87	Moderately Accepted
“5-6” used to describe informal lending.	2.86	Moderately Accepted
“Ref” as a common term for refrigerator.	2.75	Moderately Accepted
“Yaya” and “kasambahay” seen as part of PhilE.	2.70	Moderately Accepted
“Barangay captain” accepted as official title.	2.62	Moderately Accepted
“Traffic enforcer” recognized as a job title.	2.58	Moderately Accepted
“Police blotter” commonly used in media.	2.34	Minimally Accepted

Table 7. Test of significant relationship between the students’ level of awareness of PhilE and their level of acceptability of it in different communication contexts

		Awareness
Acceptability	Pearson’s r	-0.995***
	df	28
	p-value	<.001

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

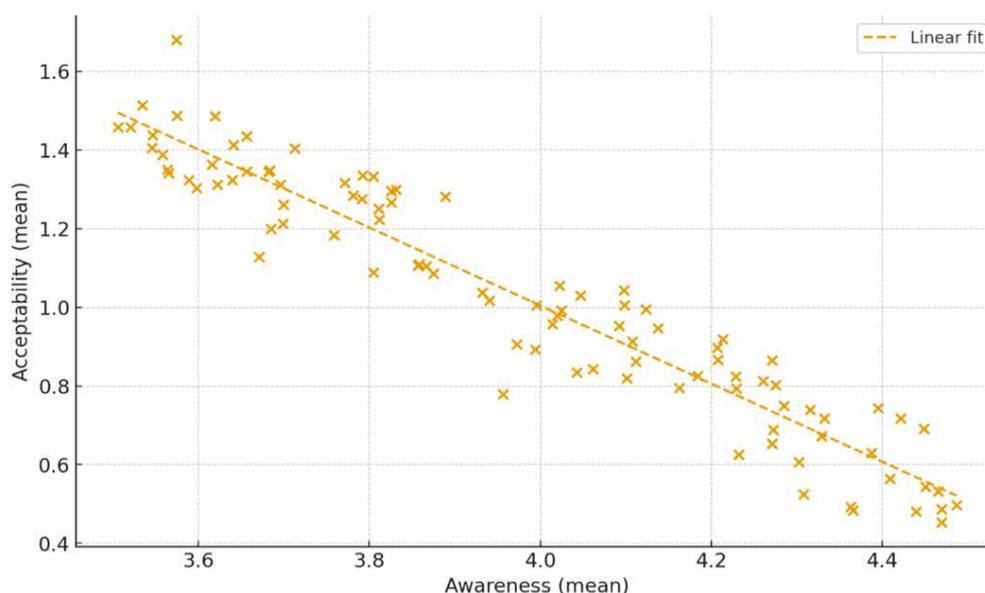


Figure 1. Scatterplot Showing the Relationship Between Awareness and Acceptability of Philippine English

Figure 1 shows an evident negative linear correlation which means that the higher the awareness score was, the lower acceptability rating. This trend is a visual confirmation of the statistically significant negative relationship, as determined by the Pearson product-moment

correlation analysis ($r = -0.995$, $p < .001$). The data points are concentrated in the high side of the awareness scores indicating that the range is limited, and this could be one of the reasons that led to the high correlation coefficient. However, the scatter plot reveals that the distribution is consistent

and there are no extreme outliers or unusual data points, which means the computed relationship between the participants is stable and constant. The graphical evidence confirms the numerical findings and emphasizes that students who have a better command of the Philippine English language are more likely to show a decreasing level of accepting the localized grammatical and lexical aspects of the language, reflecting the persistence of the prestige bias, in which native-speaker norms are more accepted in the formal contexts.

Factors affecting the awareness and acceptability toward Philippine English

The researcher found that there is a significant effect of educational exposure and influence of curriculum on the awareness and acceptability of the participants. The participants observed that their first language knowledge of English was based on American and/or British English. It has added to a low level of exposure to localized varieties and a tendency to see PhilE as inferior or mistaken. Furthermore, it has been noted that several participants acknowledged increased exposure to PhilE through Filipino content creators on social media platforms. This increased awareness and normalization of local expressions in digital spaces. Moreover, peers, teachers/instructors influence has been found to be one of the factors. Language correction by teachers and peer criticism were identified as deterrents to embracing PhilE. Participants recounted experiences where PhilE expressions were labeled as “wrong” or “informal.”

IV. DISCUSSION

Language studies students’ awareness of Philippine English

In line with the awareness of the participants of Philippine English in terms of meaning, findings suggest that students have internalized the general idea that PhilE is part of the national linguistic landscape and has formal recognition, but their understanding may remain largely surface-level. Empirically, the lower awareness scores on the sociolinguistic variation of English and the specific distinctions between PhilE and other English varieties point to an incomplete grasp of PhilE’s structural and functional uniqueness. While students are aware that PhilE exists and is used, they may lack a deep critical appreciation

as well as recognition of how it differs and why those differences matter. This gap could be due to the way PhilE is introduced in educational settings, as a passing mention or historical fact, rather than as a robust system with its own grammatical, phonological, and even pragmatic rules.

This awareness is only partial and as such there are various implications. This restricts the possibilities of students to confront linguistic hierarchies which probably put native varieties of English in superior or more correct positions. Many students may continue to regard localized expressions as errors rather than legitimate linguistic variations if they do not have a clear knowledge of the rule-governed as well as the unique nature of the Philippine English. In this case, subsequently, may serve to reinforce or foster negative attitudes towards language, their own linguistic self-confidence, and the growth of locally/contextually based teaching ideologies once they become teachers in the both basic and higher educational tiers.

It further indicates that the present curricula might not be doing their best to enhance the sociolinguistic and metalinguistic knowledge of PhilE for students. This, practically, exposes them to the risk of prestige bias and internalized linguistic stigma. Furthermore, this implication might be a big call for updates and review of what’s reflected within the educational curricula. Intensive and meticulous analysis and evaluation on this matter should be conducted. Concurrently, the trend is similar to Dimaculangan (2022) who underlines that PhilE is not just an interlanguage of a learner but a complete set of codified English with its norms and features. PhE should be treated as equal as American or British variety since that basically it’s a unique language within the country. Unfortunately, what’s really emerging to most Filipinos is that even with academic acceptance of PhilE, most students and teachers still perceive it as the second-class form of English due to the still-present colonialist attachment to the norms of native speakers. Several individuals still perceive it as a low-class variety of the English language. Moreover, according to Baker et al. (2024), World Englishes education often fails to dismantle prestige hierarchies which, in one way or another, leave students with an abstract acknowledgment of variation but without the ideological tools to value local forms in real-life use. In the last vein, without

addressing this educational gap, students may remain caught between knowing about Philippine English (Phile) and fully accepting it as part of their linguistic as well as cultural identity.

In the aspect of the awareness of students of Philippine English in terms of features, the acquired results suggest that the participants are conversant with the most salient and recurrent features of Phile particularly those pertaining to grammar and pronunciation that are widely emphasized in the classroom and in the general/public discourse. Student-participants are just informed within the recurringly appearing and used within their learning classroom for they are also unconsciously using it to talk to their peers and classmates. Prominently, even educators in academic institutions are using it and in most cases students hear and imitate what teachers use. However, the recorded relatively lower awareness of specific lexical and idiomatic expressions imply that their knowledge can be rather uneven, with a higher tendency to focus on the surface forms, but not on deep sociolinguistic and pragmatic functions that Phile is unique. Basically, this trend can be influenced by classroom exposure emphasizing formal features more than actual use or social beliefs that deemphasize the importance of everyday localized expressions as non-standard or even wrong. Well even in the advent of World Englishes advocacies, there are still educators who keep on opposing it, seeing that Phile is informal.

More so, there are critical implications to this imbalanced awareness. It implies that although students are able to cite examples of Phile in the form of textbooks, they do not necessarily dedicate enough attention to the entire scope of its linguistic repertoire, particularly, to the level of idioms, expressions, and especially to the colloquial speech. As future educators, language workers, or communicators, this limited awareness may affect their ability to model, explain, or legitimize Phile in professional or academic spaces. In turn, they might weaken the advocacy of embracing Phile within and beyond the academic arena. Having no idea of the sociolinguistic nature of Phile, they might be less capable of breaking the linguistic prejudice or promoting the use of it as a legitimate and expressive form of English.

Empirically, it has been noted that Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024) highlighted in their study that while formal features of Philippine

English (Phile) are increasingly documented, there still remains a part of it as hesitation in accepting or even teaching its more localized lexical and idiomatic forms. In a deeper sense, teachers' role in the classroom particularly in this circumstance might be a big factor that should be investigated. The approach as well as its implementation in the grassroots by educators should also be assessed properly to ensure consistency. Besides, in the same range, Babanto et al. (2023) zoomed-in on the concept that awareness requires not only in the field of structural knowledge but also appreciation of the role played by this language variety that is pivotally implemented in real-life life. It is notable to mention that unless these characteristics will be instilled and rooted into the educational activity, the learners in the academic institutions will proceed in compartmentalizing Philippine English as grammar and pronunciation only. In this case, this may quiet misses the full picture of how and what makes it a distinct and meaningful English variety.

Furthermore, as far as its applications are concerned, the findings of this study indicate that most student-participants become aware of the prevalence of Phile in informal and public areas. This encompasses digital and media environments where local English is very visible/noticeable and normalized by everyone. What is within the gray areas of concern is that students know less about the presence of Phile in formal institutions like governmental as well as legal communications and that, apparently, is a symbol of socio-cultural identification. This circumstance points to a possible disconnect between their perception of how Phile is applied in the field and how they would think it works in the aspect of formal institution or symbolic expression. On the strategic level, this scenario can be among the outcomes of what most students understand that, as an English variant, Phile is informal and should not be employed in governmental and academic facilities. This can be the manifestation of hidden attitudes, which predetermine that Phile should be attributed to casual or entertainment, and not to serious or official communication. In this, it may be intimately repercussive of the language education and policy.

Realistically, when the students will simply associate Phile variety with informal use, they will be less willing to think of it as appropriate or acceptable in academic, legal, or in governmental use. This contributes to the marginalization of

PhilE at all times in the areas where the linguistic legitimacy and authority is negotiated and manipulated. Not recognizing the full range of PhilE applications could hamper future teachers and communicators in terms of promoting local language practices in policy-making process, curriculum development and design, or in the mass media. This result echoes Hashim et al. (2024) statement that English varieties in outer-circle countries like the Philippines are often recognized in media and personal communication but are underacknowledged in formal institutional discourse. In this case, this heightened the myth as well as the notion that PhilE is not applicable for formal settings. Lorente and Tupas (2013) argue that until educational and institutional spaces actively legitimize local English varieties, students will continue to perceive them as confined to informal settings.

Language studies students' acceptability of Philippine English

In the context of students' acceptability of PhilE's grammatical items, the findings revealed a selective acceptance pattern: students are more willing to accept PhilE grammatical items they encounter regularly in semi-formal academic settings but are hesitant to extend this acceptance to more localized or marked expressions. The reluctance toward items such as "he is for suspension" or "avail of the promo" can be explained by the fact that the participants feel that they do not belong to the norms of the standard English. In a more precise sense, this is a sign of students internalizing native-speaker standards as an example of correctness. In addition, this selective position means that the acceptance is not entirely a question of familiarity but it goes through the language attitudes due to educational norms and social expectations.

This is one of the major roles in the future of the language teaching and linguistic identity. Students of language, being aspiring teachers, writers, and even communicators, may proceed to practice linguistic gatekeeping that supports local versions at the expense of the international or native-speaker versions, in case they are inculcated with a hundred percent acceptance of the Philippine English (PhilE) variety. This may enhance the linguistic self-doubt of students and recreate classroom activities that rectify or dissipate local forms, even more estranging learners to their own sociolinguistic

worlds. In a different angle, there are still educators who mark the utilization of PhilE expressions as incorrect instead of teaching the students that PhilE is a legitimate variety. To be genuinely accepted, educational practices have to directly teach the structural rules and the sociocultural legitimacy of the local forms – not merely tolerate them as informal speech (Martin, 2010; Bernardo, 2017). Without this shift, students may be left in a state of continuing linguistic awareness without linguistic pride.

In another angle, regarding the lexical items, the results demonstrate that the students are more accepting localized terms that are deeply rooted in everyday life and social identity, but less accepting of the institutional or technical terms that do not have the standard English counterparts. This implies that students can fragment lexical acceptance: words that are local can be tolerated in non-formal, everyday speech but are opposed or perceived to be problematic when they touch on such formal areas as governance, law, or public administration. This compartmentalization indicates that there are uncertainties concerning the status of PhilE as a full-scale variety of English, not only as casual or a cultural variation. Additionally, the low integration of the institutional lexical items implies that the students may continue to perceive PhilE as something that cannot be used in an official or a formal setting, which, respectively, reinforces somehow the role of the native English standards in the professional and governmental communication. This phenomenon can be of long term consequences to the status of PhilE in the public life. This will make it not to be fully assimilated in the different disciplines of language like legal, communication in the public service and most importantly academic writing in schools.

The outcome is an indication to both the language educators and the curricularists that the language stratifications must be investigated promptly not only in the everyday discourse of individuals but also in the institutional language. This point of concern, must be evaluated adequately. Further, this conclusion of the current study echoes what Gonzales (2023) has noted that emphasizes the fact that not only PhilE is having a problem with informal consent but also faces a problem trying to get institutional consent. Without the curriculum and policy changes that can reaffirm PhilE in all spheres, students are likely to continue

to be incompetent in perceiving it as a resource that can be applied by all communicative situations.

Test of significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of Philippine English and their level of acceptability of it in different communication contexts

The high degree of inverse correlation achieved in the current study implies that the heightened awareness can lead to a heightened critical rather than enhanced openness of the PhilE features amongst the students. The more students learn about the fact that the PhilE is not the same as the other varieties of English, the more they can be conscious of how these differences deviate from global or native-speaker norms. In simpler words, the increased linguistic awareness might make them more attentive to aspects that they view as non-standard, and thus more resistant or judgmental, particularly when in a formal or academic context. The dynamic suggests that awareness by itself is not enough to break up the prestige bias, on the contrary, it can increase it unless it is accompanied by critical consideration of language ideologies. Moreover, it implies that the spread of knowledge about PhilE without considering attitudes, values, and ideological orientations may unwillingly support linguistic stigma. In the case of language education program, this underscores the dire necessity to integrate linguistic knowledge and critical pedagogy. This involves teaching not only the content of PhilE, but the reasons as to why it is important, why it is valid and why it must be accepted. In the absence of this, students would run a risk of leaving school with a technical knowledge of local varieties but internalizing a deficit perspective of seeing them as poor instead of as articulations of local identity, culture, and legitimacy.

This is in line with what scholars such as Leon (2018) and Ives (2015) have used to claim: that the teaching of World Englishes should not only be structural descriptions but also take into consideration linguistic inequality, power, and ideology. In tandem with this is the idea that unless the systems of education actively question the status quo of a preference to the indigenous standards of the native English language, the students will still be suspicious or repulsive of the local forms even when they are being taught about the same.

Factors affecting the awareness and acceptability toward Philippine English

The researcher has identified three (3) emerging themes that were considered as factors affecting the awareness and acceptability of participants toward Philippine English. These themes were drawn from the conducted in-depth semi-structured interview through the transcripts. These include (1) Educational Exposure and Curricular Influence, (2) Digital Media and Online Representation, and (3) Peer and Instructor Influence.

Educational Exposure and Curricular Influence

Participants consistently mentioned that their foundational English instruction was anchored on American or British English models, which were framed as the only correct standards. Philippine English was rarely introduced in positive or academic terms. This conditioning shaped students' early beliefs that localized English features were either mistakes or forms of "bad English." As a result, students developed a sense of linguistic insecurity when encountering or using PhilE in academic settings.

"Back in grade school, our English books followed American grammar. We weren't taught that 'comfort room' or 'fill up the form' are actually part of Philippine English." – P672

"I only learned about PhilE in college, but even then, it was just a topic — not something we were encouraged to use." – P250

"We were corrected for saying things like 'pass your paper' or 'I'll go ahead now.' They told us it's wrong even if everyone says it." – P538

This kind of educational exposure strengthens the marginal position of PhilE through depicting it as informal or wrong. This reduces the inclination of students in accepting or using PhilE features particularly in professional or academic language. Although later language awareness may be formed, early instruction in language based on native-language norms creates a permanent effect of devaluing local use. This is in line with Blasco et al. (2024) who note that Philippine education still perpetuates a colonial linguistic hierarchy. PhilE being a legitimate variety that is rule-governed but not explicitly integrated into curricula, students are not likely to internalize its value or put it into practice in a confident manner.

Digital Media and Online Representation

Participants reported that much of their exposure to Philippine English came through digital platforms, including social media influencers, vloggers, and online content creators who naturally use localized expressions in their English. Digital media served as a counterbalance to formal schooling, offering informal validation of PhilE features through relatable content. This is consistent with the broader digital-learning experiences reported by students in a state college, who described online spaces as sites for multilingual interaction, community-building, and adaptive communication practices (Pontillas, 2025). Similar observations were noted in higher-education e-learning research, where online platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Meet were shown to significantly shape students' communication practices and learning behavior (Haslina & Lilimiwirdi, 2022). This exposure made students more aware of how English is authentically used in the Filipino context, especially among the youth.

"I started hearing phrases like 'high blood' or 'load' in local vlogs, and I realized they're part of how we really speak English here." – P142

"Filipino YouTubers and streamers use words like 'comfort room' or 'yaya' like it's normal. It feels more real than what we're taught in class." – P340

"TikTok opened my eyes. The creators talk like us — Taglish, PhilE, everything. And they're confident about it." – P651

While digital spaces encourage awareness and relatability, they also reinforce the idea that PhilE belongs only in casual or entertainment contexts. Students admire the use of PhilE online but may still be hesitant to bring it into academic writing, job applications, or formal presentations unless institutional support affirms its legitimacy. These reflect Kirkpatrick and Liddicoat's (2020) findings on the growing role of digital spaces in the democratization of World Englishes. However, as Tenedero et al. (2022) cautions, digital normalization does not guarantee formal legitimization unless institutional and educational structures evolve to support what is already accepted in lived experience.

Peer and Instructor Influence

Several participants shared experiences of being corrected or ridiculed by teachers or peers for using PhilE expressions in formal settings. These social sanctions strongly impacted their

willingness to accept or use localized forms. Even students who were intellectually aware of PhilE's validity felt discouraged from using it publicly due to fear of correction or embarrassment. Social dynamics in the classroom exert significant pressure on linguistic choices, making students self-regulate and conform to what is perceived as standard.

"When I said 'ref' instead of 'refrigerator,' my classmate laughed. It made me think it sounded wrong." – P427

"My teacher once said, 'Don't use "blotter" — that's bad English.' Since then, I always second-guess myself." – P582

"Even if we know PhilE is legit, we avoid using it in class because it feels unsafe. People might correct you." – P258

These experiences illustrate that linguistic policing by peers and instructors discourages the open use and acceptance of PhilE. Such gatekeeping perpetuates linguistic insecurity and undermines students' confidence in their own sociolinguistic identity. As future language educators, this dynamic could negatively influence how they treat local English forms in their own classrooms. This supports Al Muhairi and Al Jaber (2024) who highlight that instructor and peer feedback plays a crucial role in shaping language attitudes. Unless teachers become advocates of inclusive, critical language pedagogy, linguistic stigma toward PhilE will persist within classrooms.

V. CONCLUSION

The paper has examined the level of awareness and acceptability of the Philippine English (PhilE) among students undertaking the Language Studies in a state college. Even though the study provides interesting data on the student awareness and acceptability of Philippine English, the research outcome is limited to a sample state college and the convenience sample of students as per the subject of study. The results then are contextual and may not fully reflect the students of the other institutions and academic programs.

Furthermore, the results suggest that even though students are not ignorant of the existence, features and usage of PhilE in different communicative situations, their evaluation of grammatical and lexical peculiarities of the tool is uneven and cautious. Noticeably, the research revealed statistically significant negative correlation between the awareness and acceptability. This indicates that higher or increased knowledge about

PhilE does not always guarantee higher linguistic support. Instead, the increased awareness can lead to the further internalization of the norms of native speakers among the students and the emergence of ambivalence or even opposition to the validity of localized forms. The ideological implicitness of the students in their selective acceptance of everyday phrases, particularly in informal or semi-formal contexts, is an example of how ingrained ideologies still play a role in forming the perceptions of what would mean as correct English. These observations confirm the fact that linguistic hegemony continues to thrive in Philippine education and that a critical re-evaluation of language pedagogy is necessary. As a result, it is worthy to note that high critical awareness can be also accompanied by low prescriptive acceptance (Dimaculangan, 2022). Learners might get to know that Philippine English (PhilE) is rule-based and valid but still disapprove of its characteristics under the influence of internalized native-speaker norms or in fear of what is seen by many as being right when using formal communication. This conceptual relationship can be used to conceptualize why the current study found an inverse correlation between awareness and acceptability; that a higher level of sociolinguistic awareness can make students more sensitive to deviation of American or British norms thereby supporting the prescriptive biases instead of undermining them.

The research has also determined the influential elements to the linguistic orientation of students: (1) educational exposure based on the colonial English standards, (2) informal validation of PhilE on the virtual and media platform, and (3) the regulative impact of peer and instructor commentary. These forces shape the linguistic confidence of students and lead to a process of compartmentalization of PhilE as an informal or culturally stigmatized variety that does not fit the institutional and professional discourse. In this way, this paper presents the necessity of creating

educational activities that should not only raise awareness but also instill positive beliefs and critical consciousness of the localized versions of the English language. There are some undeniably necessary steps to dismantle prestige bias and promote linguistic inclusivity. This includes but not limited to curricular integration of PhilE variety, critical language awareness instruction coupled with educators training grounded/rooted in the stems of World Englishes and sociolinguistic legitimacy. Additionally, the results of the study being conducted highlighted that Philippine English is not just a collection of phrases or a set of expressions. Instead, Philippine English is an embodiment of nationality, identity, and significantly of communicative influence. Its full acceptance, however, requires a fundamental shift in how language is taught, valued, and legitimized in both academic and societal domains.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The study was reviewed and approved by the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) as well as the Research Development Services Office (RDSO) of Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their identities have been kept strictly anonymous to ensure confidentiality. The research fully complies with the ethical standards and publication guidelines of Jurnal Arbitrer.

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DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares that he has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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