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**Filipino Students' Communication Performance:  
Challenging Established Variables and Recognizing Impacts of ICT**

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Abstract

The study was investigative in intention, particularly to explore the possibility of developing a MODEL that would allow a teacher to predict his/her students' overall performance in a basic oral communication class. From among 11 established variables, the study found that only two could be used to predict students' performance: Factor 2 (Training and Exposure) and sex.

From the qualitative data, it was revealed that a common denominator was central to almost all students who performed well— it was exposure to different forms of information and communication technology not only during the students' years prior to the course but more so during their stay in the university.

### Introduction

Through the years, teachers have often reflected on how best to help their students, what approaches to employ to achieve the best results, what teaching tools to use to maximize learning, and what techniques to utilize to support difficult students. Being able to forecast students' performance would greatly aid teachers in planning learning activities to suit specific learners. Consequently, problems could be addressed even before they actually happen.

It was in the light of the above discussion that the present study re-examined the influences of established variables, individually and collectively, on the overall performance of students in a basic oral communication course. Corollary to this, the following questions were studied: What made students perform the way they did inside the classroom? Did, and to what extent did certain variables foretell students' behavior? Was it possible to actually forecast students' behavior? Further, could a MODEL be developed for purposes of estimating students' probable grades?

This study determined the predictability of students' class performance (referred to in this study as grades in oral projects and final grade) based on the following variables: Factors of communication anxiety, trait anxiety level, language/s spoken at home, preferred language in conversations, special training in oral communication, high school attended, mother's education, sex, age, course, and year level in college.

### Study frameworks

A number of previous studies showed that certain variables influence a student's performance in oral communication. These variables were: Factors of anxiety, trait anxiety level, language/s spoken at home, preferred language in conversations, special training received in oral communication, high school attended, mother's education, sex and age.

#### Attributions of anxiety

Studies were done on students' attributions about public speaking anxiety. One such study was by Bippus and Daly (1999) on the attributions about stage fright of students from a large American public university. Results showed that students usually gave one of these nine reasons for public speaking anxiety: Humiliation, Preparation, Physical Appearance, Rigid Rules, Personality Traits, Audience Interest, Unfamiliar Role, Mistakes, and Negative Results. The study concluded that the reasons given by naïve speakers for public speaking anxiety were by no means unimportant. The existence of those reasons proved that public speaking anxiety was a common difficulty.

Another study by Proctor, et al (1994; in Bippus and Daly, 1999) discovered four factors among the reasons given for public speaking anxiety. These were: Evaluation and Criticism, Mistakes and Failure, Attention and Isolation, and Unfamiliar Audiences.

Results of a study conducted by Del Villar (2007b) to determine the attributions of public speaking anxiety of beginning Filipino students in the University of the Philippines revealed an 8 Factor model explaining 69.11% of the total variance in the data. The Factors were named: Expectation, Training and Experience, Audience, Self-Worth, Rejection, Verbal Fluency, Preparation, and Previous Unpleasant Experience. These Factors were the concerns that beginning oral communication students brought with them when they first stepped into the classroom. These were the concerns that influenced their perceptions of public speaking anxiety.

#### Trait anxiety level

Communication apprehension or CA is defined as "the predisposition to avoid communication, if possible, or suffer a variety of anxiety-type feelings" (McCroskey, 1977, 27). It is "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, 27). The person

experiencing CA feels fearful and uneasy about the communication situation he is about to participate in. He feels apprehensive and anxious about the speaking assignment as he anticipates its coming. He also foresees experiencing unpleasant psychological as well as physical manifestations on the day of the speech. He will, if possible, withdraw from the situation to escape the offensive feelings altogether.

On the other hand, communication state anxiety or CSA “refers to the reaction experienced during the actual communication” (Spielberger, 1966, 3). It is situational. It is the consequence or the “actual reaction” whereas CA is the “predisposition”. CSA is the unpleasant psychological and physical condition experienced by the apprehensive speaker on the day of the performance itself. He may sense any or all of the following physical and psychological manifestations: nausea, clammy hands, profuse sweating, knocking knees, palpitations, twitching of facial muscles, blushing, stammering, diarrhea, shortness of breath, mental block, confusion, fear, and panic.

McCroskey, Daly, and Sorensen (1976) stated that highly apprehensive people “avoid communication, if possible, or suffer a variety of anxiety-type feelings when forced to communicate” (376). One can almost always predict feeling the manifestations of CSA when he has CA. Other published studies agree that CA is “predictive of situational or state anxiety reactions” (Beatty, 1987, 1988; Beatty and Andriate, 1985; Beatty and Behnke, 1980)

A number of published researches found a positive correlation between CA and CSA as reported during public speaking (Beatty et al., 1991, 1989; Beatty, 1988, 1987; Beatty and Andriate, 1985). It was even found that there exists a causal relationship between CA and CSA (Beatty, 1988; Beatty and Andriate, 1985).

McCroskey (1978) who, in fact, developed the Theory of Communication Apprehension, indicated that “CA is a major determinant of a wide range of communicative behaviors”. Characteristic examples of such behaviors are stuttering, fewer utterances, nervousness, trembling, and sweating. Other researches done by Richmond and McCroskey (1989) and Beatty et al (1991) support those findings.

These studies also showed that levels of apprehension are partially due to the anxiety experienced in previous performance situations. Past anxious behaviors cause the individual to anticipate similar behaviors in future performances. CA is therefore developed, and as the individual continuously undergoes similar behavior, his CA is further maintained. In effect, CSA causes CA, and vice versa.

The James-Lange Theory explains that a person’s own attributions of his emotion are largely a result of his own self-reflection (Beatty et al., 1991). As applied to communication, this explains that if a speaker foresees himself behaving apprehensively, he will consequently behave in such manner. If indeed he behaves as he himself predicted, he will begin to expect the same behavior in future situations. The whole process thus becomes a pattern for the individual.

Spielberger (1985), in his extensive research on anxiety, differentiated between trait and state anxiety. He defines trait anxiety in terms of “relatively stable individual differences in anxiety-proneness, i.e., differences between people in the tendency to perceive stressful situations as dangerous or threatening, and in the disposition to respond to such situation with more or less intense elevations in state anxiety” (10). State anxiety is seen as the “more temporary condition while trait anxiety is the more general and long-standing quality of trait anxiety” (Spielberger, 1985, 10)

Del Villar’s study (2007b) determined if beginning communication students differed in their perception of Factors of anxiety. Students were first classified into high, moderate, and

low anxiety groups according to their scores in the STAI-Trait instrument (Spielberger, 1985). An arbitrary classification was done where scores of 26 to 40 in the STAI-trait instrument were classified as low anxiety, 41 to 55 were moderate anxiety, and 56 to 72 were classified as high anxiety. The three groups' Mean or average Factor scores were then compared using ANOVA.

Results showed that there were significant differences among the three groups in their perception of four out of the 8 Factors. The differences were in Factor 1 Expectation ( $p=.008$ ), Factor 2 Training and Exposure ( $p=.005$ ), Factor 4 Self-Evaluation ( $p=.000$ ), and Factor 5 Rejection ( $p=.029$ ). In these four factors, the high anxiety group consistently and significantly displayed the highest level of fear of the said Factors. The low anxiety group showed the lowest level of fear.

There were no significant differences in how the groups viewed the other four Factors (Factor 3 Audience, Factor 6 Verbal Fluency, Factor 7 Preparation, and Factor 8 Previous Unpleasant Experiences).

#### Language/s spoken at home

Del Villar (2007b) identified Verbal Fluency (or lack thereof) as the 6<sup>th</sup> Factor in the underlying structure of the 36 attributions of beginning oral communication students. This Factor was seen as a chief cause of anxiety. An explanation given was that the level of proficiency in English varied depending on where the students finished high school and the quality of training they received during their growing up years. Some high schools provided superior English training while others did not. Some homes spoke English as a first language while the majority did not. The fact that Verbal Fluency came out as a Factor in the study means that not being fluent in English, not being good at verbalizing thoughts, feeling embarrassed about mispronunciations and feeling nervous when speaking were all major concerns of beginning oral communication students.

Similarly, in Del Villar's study (1978), it was found that language spoken at home significantly influenced a child's speech performance. A home that spoke a language similar to the one used in school gave the child a definite advantage over others. Related to this, Chesebro's study (1992) found that Hispanic and black children in the US had higher levels of apprehension when communicating in the school environment. Because English to them was a second language, they felt more at ease speaking in their first language (Spanish for the Hispanics and a dialect of English that was different from the mainstream English for the Blacks). This finding was consistent with a study done in Puerto Rico (Fayer, 1985) where students whose first language was Spanish were found to be highly apprehensive when communicating in English.

#### Language Comfortable Using in Conversations

A study done by the faculty and students of the College of Mass Communication in 2006 revealed that Filipino respondents were "much more comfortable speaking in Filipino than in English" (17). In a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 meant very uncomfortable and 6 as very comfortable, the respondents had a Mean rating of 5.27 when speaking in Filipino and a Mean rating of 3.94 when speaking in English.

Other previous findings showed that training in the language resulted in facility in its use. Children who were comfortable in using English in the classroom as well as other places, for example, were those who most probably spoke the language in their homes and past schools (Del Villar, 2007c).

In Agravante's study (1973), it was found that language spoken at home significantly influenced speaking ability in school. If the child's predominant language at home were English, he would naturally feel comfortable speaking it in school or elsewhere. If English were the medium of

communication in the classroom and the child was at home with it, he would definitely have an advantage over those who did not feel at ease with it.

#### Special training in oral communication

Previous studies proved that training in public speaking significantly improved oral communication. One such study was by Ellis (1995) which reported that lab-supported skills training improved communication competence.

Connel and Borden (1987), Dwyer (1998, 2000), Kelly and Keaten (2000), as well as Robinson (1997) revealed that skills training was a significant way of remedying problems of public speaking anxiety. It was further proposed that skills training be combined with other training methods for more effective results.

Another study by Gerald Phillips (1986) discovered that combining individualized skills training with cognitive restructuring significantly reduced anxiety therefore improving confidence level. Kelly, Duran, and Stewart (1990) however found no difference between control and experimental groups using skills training and Phillips' (1986) formula respectively.

#### High school attended

Part of the individual's self concept is formed early in life through experiences outside of his home. School related experiences play a major role. His achievement in school gives him a powerful measure of his competencies'. Simmons (1973) in his study found that self-image is related to school experiences.

In the Philippines, it is generally known that education provided by private schools is of a much higher standard than those by public schools. This was evident from the number of students passing the University of the Philippines College Admissions test (UPCAT). In the June 2005 issue of the *U.P. Update Diliman*, it was revealed that of the 3,822 who passed the UPCAT 2,000 came from private high schools and only 944 came from public schools. The other qualifiers came from science high schools, state high schools and UP administered schools. In the May 1997 article published by the *UP Newsbriefs*, it was revealed that only 30% of the UP population came from the public schools, the rest were from private schools. The ratio changed in favor of the public schools when the admissions rules using handicapping for less privileged students from public schools were implemented for a few years.

#### Mother's education

The family plays an important role in the continuous formation of the individual's self-concept. What they say and do have a significant impact on the formation of one's self-concept in general and self-confidence in particular. The Filipino mother has always played a major role in the family. Because of this, she naturally becomes the principal instrument in the socialization of her children. Her children develop into persons that she herself shapes consciously or unconsciously. Whatever she is therefore influences her children in a very forceful way.

In a number of studies done on women the general findings were that women themselves accept the traditional roles of nurturer and homemaker that have been ascribed to them through generations (Torres, 1995). Manalang (1995) explained that the reason why women still clung to the old orientation was because 'their reality is focused on the family and its survival...they take identity from being mothers'(5).

As a result of the woman's family orientation through the centuries, she has gained the 'highest stature' in the home. According to Sevilla (1995) the woman has become the 'queen of the household...consequently family and home take precedence in her life'(10). Being queen, she has also gained some powerful influence in more areas of family life than the husband.

Because the woman's role is the nurturer of her children, she is naturally in close contact with them. Caring, feeding, training, disciplining, and modeling for them are primary responsibilities. She becomes the key instrument of the family in the socialization process.

As the woman's education increases, her status in the home also improves. According to Bautista (1995) this results in higher status in decision making. Her voice in the home becomes stronger not only in decisions regarding the home management but more so in decision affecting children. Palma (1995) discussed the merits that education did to the woman. Education not only enriches a woman it makes her a better mother and person as well. "Far from being a constant charge to the family, the educated woman has often been its sustenance and support in time of great need...[she is able] to argue and discuss on every subject with the men...she understands and can make herself better understood...[education] prepares... the woman for the proper performance of her duties"(14). He continued that with regard to education, the woman is not the only one who is benefited but also the people around her.

The woman's education influences her values and the values that she will pass on to her children. In response to her exposure to a wider horizon, her values too will change (Palma, 1995). As a consequence the values that she will teach her children will also change.

#### Sex

In a study conducted by the College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines (2006) results showed that sex did not play a significant influence in the ease of communication of the respondents. The specific situations identified were: communicating with family, with other people in social and professional circles, with people of higher or lower occupational status, with people in formal circles, with people from other socio-economic status higher or lower than theirs, with people using various modes of communication, and with people speaking in Filipino. It was however revealed that males were more comfortable than females when speaking with foreigners or dealing with strangers. Females on the other hand were found to be more comfortable when communicating with those from the same socio-economic status as theirs, when giving compliments to others, and when talking to gays and lesbians.

Another study by Crombie et al (2003) proved that sex was an important indicator of students' performance in the classroom because of unequal treatment and even prejudice against females. Presented were evidence such as significantly more male participation as a result of the emotional atmosphere in the classroom.

#### Age

In the College of Mass Communication study (2006), it was revealed that the variable age had no significant influence on the comfortableness of the respondents while communicating in various situations ranging from talking with immediate family, with people in social and professional circles, with people from socio-economic statuses lower or similar to theirs, talking through the telephone, dealing with strangers, speaking in formal circles, and speaking in Filipino. Compared with other age groups, it was the young ones whose ages ranged from 18 to 30 who displayed the most comfortableness.

The present study determined if all the important variables cited separately by previous studies could be used as predictors of students' class performance in oral communication classes, if considered collectively. Two other variables, course and year level, although not among those previously studied were included.

### Method

Since the study was investigative in intention, it employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques. It ran from the beginning of one semester till the end of that semester. It involved 10 sections of a basic oral communication course in the University of the Philippine (UP). The use of 10 sections was seen appropriate for the purpose of getting an extensive investigation of the respondents for the duration of one semester.

#### Communication 3

Communication 3, a General Education course on the fundamentals of oral communication, is offered in the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts, UP. As calendared in the syllabus, after lectures and discussions on the various principles and techniques in Speech Communication, students are then required to apply what they learned through oral projects. Oral projects range from group discussion to speeches. The minimum number of oral projects is three although some teachers require as much as 6 oral projects. There are also other requirements such as short tests, exercises, reaction papers, and final examination. However, in the present study only the oral projects and the final grades were used to determine the students' performance in the course. It should be noted that the grading system followed in the University of the Philippines is as follows:

**Table 1: University of the Philippines grading system**

Grade	Equivalence
1.0	Excellent
2.0	Very good
3.0	Passing
4.0	Conditional
5.0	Failing

#### Procedure: *Phase 1*

- Ten Communication 3 sections (in English) were randomly selected to be included in this study. From the original 250 respondents, only 197 were included.
- During the first week of classes the following questionnaires were administered to the 10 Communication 3 sections:
  - Information Sheet
  - Attributions of Anxiety Questionnaire by Del Villar (2007b)
  - STAI trait by Spielberger (1983)

#### Procedure: *Phase 2*

- At the end of the semester, more information were gathered through the following:
  - Teacher's rating of her students. The Communication 3 teachers of the 10 sections were requested to provide an evaluation of their students' performance at the end of the semester. These were in the form of the grades in all the oral projects and the final grade.
  - In-Depth-Interview. An interview of selected students was conducted to complement the findings of the quantitative measures. Ten selected cases were those whose performances were outstanding.

## Research instruments

### 1. The Attributions of Anxiety Questionnaire (Del Villar, 2007b)

This is a 36 item Likert-type questionnaire that determines how a respondent rates the 8 Factors of anxiety (Expectations, Training and Exposure, Audience, Self-evaluation, Rejection, Verbal Fluency, Preparation, and Previous Unpleasant Experience).

### 2. The STAI – trait instrument by Spielberger (1983 )

This is an established and valid instrument for measuring the construct anxiety in various contexts. It provides a “reliable, relatively brief, self-report scales for assessing trait anxiety... in research and clinical practice” (Spielberger, 1983). Trait anxiety, as differentiated from state anxiety, is “the more general and long standing quality” (996). In the present study, this instrument was used to measure the trait anxiety level of the respondents. This enabled the researcher to classify the respondents into high, moderate, or low anxiety groups.

### 4. In-Depth-Interview

Questions in the interview range from factors that students thought were responsible for their overall performance in Communication 3, self-confidence and communication anxiety. Findings from the interview were used to complement the quantitative data.

## Data Analysis

Cross tabulations were done to compare the communication performance (grades in oral projects and final grades) of the respondents against the 11 variables. Also, ordinal logistic regression was applied to come up with a model that would allow for prediction of students’ performance based on their scores/ratings in the 11 selected variables (Factors of anxiety, trait anxiety level, language/s spoken at home, preferred language in conversations special training in oral communication, high school attended, mother’s education, sex, age, course, and year level) .

In addition, findings from the qualitative data (In-Depth-Interview) were used to complement the quantitative findings.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic profile

From the ten Communication 3 sections a total of 197 students were included in the study. One hundred fifteen (58.38%) were females and 82 (42%) were males. Thirty one (15.90%) belonged to the 15 to 16 age group; 130 (67%) belonged to the 17-18 age group; 19 (10.%) belonged to the 19-20 age group and 15 (8%) to the 21+ age group. With regard the year level, 141 or 72% were freshmen; 28 or 14.29% were sophomores; 12 or 6.12% belonged to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year; 4 or 2.04% belonged to the 4<sup>th</sup> year; 8 or 4.08% were 5<sup>th</sup> year students; 3 or 1.53% were in their 6<sup>th</sup> year. The 197 respondents’ courses were classified into Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts courses. Those from the fine arts, human kinetics and other certificate courses were grouped with the Bachelor of Arts. There were 95 (48%) from the Bachelor of Arts courses and 102 (52%) from the Bachelor of Science courses. Thirty or 15.31% of the respondents attended public high schools, 16 or 3.16% attended private high schools in the provinces, 150 or 77% attended private high schools or special science high schools in Metro Manila.

### Predictability of students’ performance in Communication 3 based on the 11 variables

When all the 11 variables were individually cross tabulated with grades in oral projects and final grade only Factor 2, sex, and year level proved to be possible predictors. The other 9 variables were not found to be significant. The table below shows a summary of the cross tabulations:

**Table 2: Summary of cross-tabulations of all 11 variables and grades**

Variables	Grades in oral projects	Final grades
	Tests conducted, significance	Tests conducted, significance
Attributions (8 Factors):		
<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>p=0.012</b>	<b>p=0.012</b>
Factors 1,3,4,5,6,7,8	n.s.	n.s.
Trait anxiety	Gamma=0.123 p=0.813	Gamma=0.023, p=0.89
Language/s spoken at home	Chi-square=0.727, p=0.69	Chi-square=0.11, p=0.94
Preferred language in conversations	Chi-square=2.38, p=0.19	Chi-square=3.50, p=0.173
Special training in oral communication	Chi-square=2.38, p=0.30	Chi-square=0.50, p=0.77
High school attended	Fisher's exact test p=0.98	Fisher's exact test p=0.865
Mother's education	Gamma=-0.041 p=0.98	Gamma=-0.098 p=0.84
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Chi-square=12.26, p=0.002</b>	<b>Chi-square=15.19, p=0.001</b>
age	Gamma=0.138, p=0.125	Gamma=0.175, p=0.121
Course	Chi-square=2.97, p=0.229	Chi-square=2.15, p=0.34
<b>Year level</b>	<b>Gamma=0.33, p=0.026</b>	<b>Gamma=0.31, p=0.05</b>

#### Predictability of grades in oral projects based on the Factors of anxiety

When the 8 Factors or attributions to anxiety were tested against grades in oral projects, results showed that two Factors (Factor 2 and Factor 6) were possible predictors of grades in oral projects.

Communication 3 students' anxieties about their previous training and exposure to public speaking were influential in their performance in class as shown in their oral projects. Their anxieties were mostly about lack of training in speaking, not used to talking in front of an audience, and lack of practice. Among the students (n=65), who received grades between 1.0-1.875 their Mean score in Factor 2 was 12.05; students (n=118) who received grades between 1.876-2.875 had a Mean score of 14.24; while students (n=14) who received grades toward 3.0 had the highest Mean score of 14.93. This consistently showed that the higher the anxiety towards Factor 2, the lower the grades in oral project.

The same observation was seen in Factor 6 (Verbal Fluency). Students (n= 65) who received grades in the 1.0 to 1.875 range had a Mean score of 10.45; those in the 1.876 to 2.875 range had 11.99; and those in the 2.876 and below had 12.14. These Mean scores steadily showed that the higher the anxiety towards Factor 6 the lower the grades. These students' anxieties were about not being good at verbalizing thoughts, being worried about fluency in English, feeling nervous when speaking, and being embarrassed about pronunciation.

When subjected to further tests (ordinal logistic regression), only Factor 2 (p value =0.012) proved to be a predictor of grades in oral project. Below is a table summarizing the Mean scores of the Factors across grades in oral projects. Note that only Factors 2 and 6 showed consistent trend.

**Table 3: Mean scores and SD of the Factors across Grades in Oral Projects**

	1.0-1.875		1.876-2.875		2.876- 3	
	N=65		N=118		N=14	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Factor1	17.38	5.28	17.53	4.97	16.5	4.832
<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>12.05</b>	5.15	<b>14.24</b>	5.39	<b>14.92</b>	5.51
Factor 3	15.12	4.85	16.08	4.99	15.28	3.93
Factor 4	10.97	4.59	11.85	4.39	11.43	5.43
Factor 5	14.37	4.78	15.36	5.41	14.78	4.38
<b>Factor 6</b>	<b>10.45</b>	4.03	<b>11.99</b>	4.37	<b>12.14</b>	4.38
Factor 7	6.51	2.14	7.22	2.52	7	2.04
Factor 8	3.23	1.59	3.73	1.71	3.5	2.06

#### Predictability of final grades based on Factors of anxiety

Again, the 8 Factors or attributions to anxiety were tested against final grades. Results revealed that three Factors (Factor 2, Factor 4, and Factor 6) were possible predictors of final grades because they displayed consistent relationship with that variable. In Factor 2 (Training and Exposure), results showed that the lower the Mean scores in anxiety, the higher the final grades. The same was true for Factor 4 (Self-Evaluation) where lower Mean anxiety scores meant higher final grades. The tendency also proved to be true in Factor 6 (Verbal Fluency) where lower Mean anxiety scores guaranteed higher final grades. Further tests (ordinal logistic regression) however revealed that among the 3 Factors showing some trend, only Factor 2 proved to be significant (p value =0.012). The table below shows a summary of the Mean scores in the 8 Factors with their corresponding sample size and SD. Note that only Factors 2,4, and 6 showed consistent trend.

**Table 4: Mean scores and SD of the Factors across Final Grades**

	1.0-1.875		1.876-2.875		2.876- 3	
	N=85		N=97		N=14	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Factor1	17.6	5.29	17.31	4.89	16.5	4.83
<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>12.29</b>	5.11	<b>14.44</b>	5.45	<b>15.28</b>	5.5
Factor 3	15.14	4.6	16.28	5.21	15.28	3.93
<b>Factor 4</b>	<b>11.43</b>	1.48	<b>11.48</b>	4.42	<b>13.43</b>	5.68
Factor 5	14.85	5.67	15.08	4.81	15.21	1.41
<b>Factor 6</b>	<b>10.55</b>	4.05	<b>12.13</b>	4.41	<b>12.86</b>	4.13
Factor 7	6.62	2.28	7.29	2.5	3.85	1.75
Factor 8	3.22	1.55	3.85	1.75	3.5	2.06

#### Predictability of grades in oral projects based on sex

When sex was cross tabulated with grades in oral projects, results showed that females were dominant (46 or 70.7%) among those whose grades ranged from 1.0 to 1.875, while males comprised only of 19 (29.2%). Females also tended to dominate the 1.876-2.875 bracket (66 or

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57%) while the males dominated those in the 2.876 and lower grade bracket (78.52%). Chi-square test proved that the difference between the two sexes was significant (p value= 0.002). Females performed better than the males as shown in their grades in oral projects. Therefore, sex as a variable can be used as a predictor of probable grades in oral projects. These results confirmed the findings of Crombie, et al (2003) that sex was a predictor of class performance in a university context although their findings were in favor of the males. Their conclusions cited unequal treatment and prejudice as the reason why females did not do well. On the contrary, the present findings revealed that the difference was in favor of the females. In the Communication 3 context female students have consistently displayed more positive behavior (diligence, responsibility, maturity) than their male classmates. They were generally the ones who spent more time preparing their projects, studying for examinations, and attending classes religiously. In addition there were no findings to show prejudice of any kind against either of the sexes. Further, the present study's conclusions did not concur with those of the College of Mass Communication's that sex did not play a significant role in interaction. It should be remembered however that the CMC study had a different context. In the present study, sex significantly proved to be an important variable in the students' oral performance in the Communication 3 classroom. Summary is shown below.

**Table 5: Sex and Grades in Oral Projects**

SEX	1.01.875	1.876-2.875	2.876+	Total
Females	46	66	3	115
Males	19	52	11	82
Total	65	118	14	197

Chi square = 12.2650                      p value= 0.002

**Predictability of final grade based on sex**

When sex was cross tabulated with final grades, results showed that females (59 or 69%) dominated those whose grades ranged from 1.0 to 1.875 while the males comprised 27 or 31.3%. It was the same for the 1.876 to 2.875 grade range. Females comprised 54 or 56% while males were 43 or 44%. Females consistently did better than the males as shown in their domination of the 1.0-1.875 and 1.876-2.875 grade brackets. As was proven in the previous cross tabulation of sex and oral project, females consistently showed dominance over the males even as all the course requirements were considered together to comprise the final grade. Chi-square test result (15.1957, p value=0.001) showed highly significant difference between the two sexes with the females doing better than the males. Sex can be used as a variable for predicting final grade. Summary is below.

**Table 6: Sex and Final Grades**

SEX	1.0-1.875	1.876-2.875	2.876 +	Total
Females	59	54	2	115
Males	27	43	12	82
Total	86	97	14	197

Chi square = 15.1957                      p value= 0.001

### Predictability of grades in oral projects based on year level

When year level was cross tabulated with grades in oral projects, results showed that majority (53 or 81.5%) of those who got grades in the 1.0-1.1875 range were first year students, followed far behind by sophomores (5 or 8%), juniors (3 or 5%), then by those in their fifth year (3 or 5%) and sixth year (1 or 2%). This tendency showed that freshmen were the most hardworking students in the Communication 3 class. An explanation for this is that freshmen students were still highly motivated after having just graduated from high school. In addition, they wanted to prove that they were worthy of having passed the University of the Philippines College Admissions Test (UPCAT). Those in their higher years may have, for some reason, lost their steam. The gamma coefficient test showed that the difference among the year levels in their oral projects was significant ( $\gamma=0.3315$ ,  $p=0.026$ ). The gamma coefficient also showed there was a significant moderate positive linear relationship between year level and grades in oral projects. Another way of putting it is that as students get older by one year in the university, their chances of getting a grade toward 3.0 increase by 24% (Odds Ratio = 1.24). As a separate variable, year level can predict students' grades in oral projects. Summary in table form is shown below:

**Table 7: Year Level and Oral Project Grade**

Year Level	1.0-1.875	1.876-2.875	2.876+	Total
1	53	82	6	141
2	5	21	2	28
3	3	6	3	12
4	0	2	2	4
5	3	5	0	8
6	1	2	0	3
Total	65	118	13	196

$\gamma = 0.3315$  ASE = 0.130 Fisher's exact  $p = 0.026$

Oral projects	Odds Ratio	p-value	[95% conf Interval]
Year Level	1.24	0.11	0.952526 1.61716

### Predictability of final grade based on year level

When the year level was cross tabulated with final grade results showed that freshmen made up majority (69 or 80.2%) of those whose final grades ranged from 1.0-1.1875 followed far behind by the sophomores (8 or 9.3%), juniors (4 or 4.6%), fifth years (4 or 4.6%) and sixth years (1 or 1.1%). Again this showed that with all the requirements added up to make the final grade freshmen students consistently excelled in Communication 3. Statistical test results proved that the difference among the year levels was significant at  $p = 0.05$ . The gamma coefficient further showed that for every year increase in year level, the chance of having a final grade towards 3.0 increases by 22% (Odds Ratio = 1.225337). Or, as students get older by one year in the university their chances of getting a final grade toward 3 increase by 22%. As a separate variable year level can be used as a predictor of final grade.

**Table 8 : Year Level and Final Grade**

Year Level	1.0-1.875	1.876-2.875	2.876+	Total
1	69	66	6	141
2	8	17	3	28
3	4	5	3	12
4	0	3	1	4
5	4	4	0	8
6	1	2	0	3
Total	86	97	13	196

gamma = 0.3190 ASE = 0.120 Fisher's exact p= 0.05

Final Grade	Odds Ratio	p-value	[95% conf Interval]
Year Level	1.225337	0.104	0.959124 1.565441

Predictability of grades based on all the variables combined

Among the 11 variables combined, only Factor 2 (OR = 1.07, p value = 0.012) and sex (OR=2.36, p value =0.004), were found to be significant predictors of students' performance in the oral projects. Results of the ordered logistic regression showed that for every 1 unit increase in student's score in Factor 2 (Training and Exposure) his/her risk of having a grade in oral projects close to a 3.0 increases by 7%. Or, his/her risk of having a grade close to 3.0 in oral projects increases by 1.07 for every point unit increase in his score in Factor 2. Put simply, the higher the score in Factor 2, the higher the probability of getting a low grade. These results showed that from among the 8 Factors or attributions of anxiety, it was the fear of previous training and exposure that really affected the new Communication 3 students. Students were generally worried by their overall lack of experience in speaking prior to their enlistment in Communication 3.

At the same time, male students are 2.36 times more likely than females to have a grade towards 3.0 in oral projects. This means that male students are 136% more likely to have a grade towards 3.0 than their female counterparts. As was found earlier in the study, sex as a separate variable can be used as a predictor of grades in oral projects. It also proved to be a strong predictor even when subjected to the ordinal logistic regression. These results further confirmed previous findings that sex was a predictor of class performance in the university context (Crombie, et al, 2003). Although as was mentioned earlier, Crombie's findings were in favor of the males while the present study's were in favor of the females. Further, this disproved the findings of the College of Mass Communication (2006) saying that sex did not play a significant role in communication. It should be noted that communication contexts in the CMC study (communicating with family, with other people in social and professional circles, with people of higher and lower occupational status, with people in formal circles, with people from other socio-economic status higher or lower than theirs, with people using various modes of communication, and with people using the Filipino language) differed from that of the present study (oral communication in the classroom). Model A below shows the two variables and how they predict the dependent variable grades in oral projects.

**Table 9: MODEL A**

Dependent Variable: ORAL PROJECTS				
ORAL PROJECTS	Odds ratio	p-value	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Factor 2	1.071103	0.011	1.016492	1.136949
Sex	2.313629	0.007	1.255764	4.262647

As for predictors of final grade, the two variables combined - Factor 2 ( p value = 0.012) and sex (0.004) were found to be significant. For every 1 unit increase in score in Factor 2, the risk of having a grade towards 3.0 increases by 7%. Or, for every 1 unit increase in Factor 2 score, the risk of having a grade towards 3.0 multiplies by 1.07. Simply put, the higher the score in Factor 2, the higher the chances of getting a low grade.

Also, male students are 2.36 times more likely than females to get a final grade towards 3.0. Male students are 136% times more likely to have a final grade towards 3.0. Model B below shows how the dependent variable final grade was predicted by the two variables Factor 2 and sex.

**Table 10: MODEL B**

Dependent Variable : FINAL GRADE				
FINAL GRADE	Odds ratio	p-value	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Factor 2	1.071103	0.012	1.015426	1.129833
Sex	2.363116	0.004	1.322304	4.223169

### Conclusion

This study concludes that from among the 11 variables that were previously identified as important indicators of students' performance in the classroom only two proved to be significant - Factor 2 (Training and Exposure) and sex. These two variables persisted in influencing students even as the other variables ceased to be important.

The first variable Factor 2 (Training and Exposure) continued to influence students' performance because it was what commonly preoccupied students' minds at the beginning of a course that requires a lot of speaking. In an interview one respondent admitted that he was obsessed by the fact that he lacked previous speech training. He realized that he was disadvantaged and as a result he felt apprehensive. Another respondent related that what he considered most worrisome was lack of preparation. Just thinking about facing an audience and not being intellectually prepared made him extremely anxious. Another student disclosed that his lack of experience and exposure in facing an audience made him fearful of the course Communication 3.

The second variable sex also proved to be influential in students' performance in Communication 3. Generally, female students exhibited traits of industry, responsibility, and stability that consequently earned them better overall speech performance. As the outstanding female students admitted in the interviews they set aside adequate time preparing for their projects and examinations. No matter how busy they were with their other school work, they made sure they

spent time for their Communication 3 requirements. To most of them, planning their school days and prioritizing their studies were the keys to good grades.

The other variables which were once strong predictors of students' performance in the classroom, did not show much significance in the present study. What could be the new elements that provided these new generation of students with the equalizing advantage to do well? What could be the reasons why they did well despite the seeming disadvantage of having various attributions about communication anxiety, experiencing some levels of trait anxiety, not growing up in a home that spoke English as its first language, not comfortably using English in conversations, not having special training prior to Communication 3, not graduating from a private high school that provided good training, not having a mother with higher level of education, and not being more mature in age? The qualitative data gathered from the respondents provided valuable information that illuminated the seeming loss of influence of the previously significant variables.

From the journals and in-depth-interviews of the students, a common denominator was discovered in almost all of those who performed well in both the oral projects and final grades – it was the exposure to different forms of information and communication technology not only during their years prior to Communication 3 but more so during their stay in the university. When asked to what they attributed their good performance in class, most of them acknowledged access to different media even as they lacked exposure to the conventional forms of stimuli (cultural activities, specialized training, travel, etc). This access was the liberating force that made possible networking with anyone from any part of the world and accessing information about virtually anything instantaneously. To most of them socio-economic status was not an obstacle to having a ticket to information and media technology. Majority may not have traveled to other countries nor received costly training in special oral communication courses but they had access to the internet and the world wide web and therefore to an infinite world of influences and possibilities. As one respondent disclosed, she did not have her own computer and internet connection but she frequented an internet café in the campus shopping center and spent her free time exploring the web and filling her mind with myriads of fascinating information that she could not have possibly acquired through other means. Another student divulged that she may not have travelled outside the country but she regularly emailed and chatted with a lot of foreign friends and that the experience contributed to her personal growth. One student proudly analyzed that her experience with the information technology has added enormously to her intellectual maturity. She called herself savvy in so many areas and as a result she has also gained so much self-assurance. No wonder these new generation of students were knowledgeable about a variety of information and their knowledge consequently gave them the confidence to excel in a basic course like Communication 3.

#### Recommendations for future studies

Future research could be pursued to address the limitations of the present study. One could be a replication on a much bigger scale. Although the present study's sample size of 197 was quite adequate, a number of trends were established but were not confirmed when further subjected to statistical tests. A bigger sample might prove otherwise.

The qualitative data showed an interesting finding that was not hypothesized in the present study. This was the presence of information and communication technology as a probable important variable. Further studies could be done to confirm the role of this variable in the overall performance of Communication 3 students.

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