

Communication styles of teacher education students of HEI in the Northern Philippines

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Abstract

Effective communication is the cornerstone of human interaction, influencing relationships, group dynamics, and organizational outcomes. This research study delves into the communication styles of Teacher Education students who will become facilitators of the younger generation. To gain an understanding of how individual differences impact communication styles, the profile of the respondents was determined along with their communication styles which were correlated to determine the significant relationship between the two. The intervention preferred by the respondents to enhance their communication style was also gathered which can help educators to conduct interventions that will help the respondents become better in communicating with other people. A validated questionnaire was used to gather data from the 239 respondents who are enrolled at North Luzon Philippines State College. The data were analyzed and interpreted through descriptive and correlation research designs. Many of the respondents are pragmatic in their communication style, sex was found to be significantly related to their communication styles, and modeling by the teacher is the preferred intervention to enhance the communication style of the respondents.

Keywords: communication styles, teacher education, pragmatic communication, modeling

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1. Introduction

Communication is an integral part of human existence which brings more life to interaction and better understanding of one another. With communication ability, people create a pattern of self-expression that eventually becomes their communication style. The communication style of a person is different from that of others. It is defined according to one's way of sending verbal and nonverbal signals in social interactions (Vries, 2015). The quality of social interaction and the achievement of interaction intentions is dependent on communication style. This shows that it is important to be aware of how it is best to deliver messages and adapt to other communication styles and contexts.

Kuria (2019) stated that leaders and members of institutions need to understand that communication style is important in public relations. Both leaders and subordinates need to understand each other's communication styles in order to know how to modify and develop their relationships within the organization. In fact, a person can choose his style of communication for the attainment of his goal in the communication process. However, it must be noted that communication style is influenced by factors such as people and situations which may contribute to the result of interaction with positive or negative effects (Ken State University, 2016). This is the reason why there are persons who opt to be activists, reflectors, pragmatists, and theorists in communication contexts. They adjust their communication styles in accordance with their purpose and how they observe the direction of communication. Below are descriptions of the four communication styles involved in this study.

The communication style of activists is observed in their open-minded attitude which makes them enthusiastic about anything new. They spend their days actively engaged in various activities. Once the thrill of one activity subsides, they quickly move on to seek out the next one. When faced with problems, they approach them by brainstorming. Although they thrive on the challenge of new experiences, they become disinterested in the implementation and the long-term consolidation of their actions. They are outgoing individuals who frequently interact with others. However, in doing so, they aim to make themselves the central figure of all activities. Also, they usually act first and consider the consequences later.

On the other hand, the communication style of pragmatists is observed in their enthusiastic behavior. They actively seek out novel ideas and eagerly experiment with new concepts that they want to apply in the real world. They prefer to take quick and confident actions on ideas that appeal to them and are not fond of lingering in open-ended discussions. Pragmatists are essentially practical individuals who prefer to make decisions and solve problems in a down-to-earth manner. They respond to obstacles and opportunities as a challenge believing that there is always a better way and that if it works, it's good. They become restless with overthinking and tend to prioritize practicality over theoretical contemplation.

Theorists are perfectionists who strive to achieve a tidy and logical scheme, and they are interested in exploring basic assumptions, principles, theories, models, and systems thinking, and solving problems by employing a systematic and methodical approach. They also analyze and synthesize information in a vertical and step-by-step manner with their motto as "If it's logical, it's good." When presented with concepts, the common questions that pragmatists ask are: "Does it make sense?", "How does this relate to that?", and "What are the fundamental assumptions?". Since theorists are often objective, analytical, and committed to logical objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. They maintain a consistent logical approach to problem-solving and prefer to maximize certainty and feel uneasy with subjective judgments, lateral thinking, and anything that seems frivolous or unimportant.

In communicating with the reflectors, one must be aware that they act with caution, and they are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They tend to take a back

seat in meetings and discussions, enjoying the opportunity to observe others in action. Reflectors are good listeners who take the time to understand the discussion's direction before voicing their opinions. They tend to maintain a low profile and project a slightly distant, tolerant, and unflappable demeanor. When they do take action, it is within the context of a broader perspective that considers the past, present, and others' observations, in addition to their own.

In light of the benefits of understanding communication styles, the following are included: the ability to motivate individuals to develop their potential; the ability to identify learning and communication strengths and learn how to use them; the promotion of communication culture at work; development and achievement of personal goals; and understanding the way in which one should communicate (TP3 Pty. Ltd., 2017). Furthermore, when communication is effective, all parties involved in the communication context are satisfied because they have accomplished their goals. When one delivers clear messages, misunderstanding can be avoided which decreases any possibility of conflict. Hence, effective communication ensures peaceful and interactive situations where issues are resolved in an appropriate manner. The style of communication can either make or break a person's potential to secure a job, maintain good relationships, and sustain productivity in their respective contexts (Stevenson University, 2021).

In the academe, both teachers and students also need to be aware of the different communication styles and reflect on their own. Because of the many people that are encountered in the field of teaching, teachers are highly encouraged to adjust to the communication style of their colleagues, stakeholders, and visitors so that they can relate with them well. This is a crucial function that teacher education students must observe and they need to modify their communication styles in order to establish good relationships with their peers and teachers. Students in the Teacher Education programs must learn how to be good communicators because they will interact with the learners as they facilitate the teaching-learning process. Anent to this, Khan, Lhan, Zia-Ul-Islam and Khan (2017) found that students recognize the significant role of the teachers' communication skills in their academic success. Cohort Nominate (2017) also concluded that teachers need to have good interpersonal or communication skills. They also stressed that while voice, body language, appearance, and body gestures are factors that play vital roles in effective oral communication, it is also very important to consider the way the content is transferred to the listeners.

As Teacher Education students, they need to know that they have to employ appropriate styles or manners to communicate effectively, verbally or non-verbally, and cultivate a warm learning environment. While the said students are being prepared for the work of teaching, students need to learn that when they will be deployed to the different schools for practice teaching, they will also communicate like professional teachers who do not only impart ideas that promote subject understanding but also communicate feelings and attitudes to their learners (Ndethiu, 2019). Another context that shows the importance of developing the appropriate communication style is when students will be seeking jobs where they can apply what they have learned. Iksana et al. (2012) cited that graduates will be tested in communication during their job interviews. Hence, students have to be equipped with the ability to communicate clearly and effectively before they graduate.

Acknowledging and adjusting to various communication styles can improve the efficiency of both teaching and learning. Teacher Education students are groomed for their future profession and they possess a variety of methods for absorbing information which can help them customize their communication styles in order to motivate learners to study better. When Teacher Education students know their own communication styles, they can communicate their needs, deliver the lessons effectively, and adapt to the style of communication of others (Lafko, 2022). Apparently, the success of student learning is directly related to interactive, engaging teaching environments where lessons are communicated effectively and clearly. Students become more engaged and inspired to learn and retain information if teachers use the appropriate communication style while engaging with the students (Office of Teaching, Learning, & Technology, 2017).

Suyu-Tattao (2019) encouraged researchers to delve into a broader study that should encompass additional

variables that could potentially influence students' communication styles throughout the teaching and learning process. Additionally, it should aim to identify the communication styles that align most effectively with students' learning processes and teaching methodologies.

This study aimed to determine the communication styles of the Teacher Education students of HEI in the northern Philippines. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following:

- What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, location of residence, average income of family, religion, language mostly spoken, and hobbies?
- What is the communication style of the respondents in terms of activist, reflector, theorist, and pragmatist?
- Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their communication style?
- What intervention can be conducted to enhance the communication style of the respondents?

The aforementioned shows the importance of determining the existing communication styles of learners. In the context of Teacher Education, such studies are crucial as bases to help pre-service students enhance their communication styles which can be done through various interventions. It is the purpose of this study to gather data that will help the said students who are currently enrolled in the Teacher Education programs of an HEI in the northern part of the country, the North Luzon Philippines State College (NLPSC). Along with this, the researcher believes that the data of this study will help the faculty of language and communication disciplines and the students of Teacher Education to become aware of the importance of knowing their communication style and how they can be helped to enhance it in order to adapt to the communication environment.

2. Methodology

This research used descriptive and correlation research designs. Hassan (2022) cited that descriptive research design aims to determine, systematically and accurately, the attributes or characteristics of the population or phenomenon. Moreover, he also cited that correlational research examines the relationships between variables that can be measured, such as attitudes, behaviors, or even thoughts, and how strong those relationships are. The descriptive research design was used in this study to characterize the profile of the respondents and their communication style while the correlation research design was used to determine the relationship between the profile of the respondents and their communication style. The data gathering tool was a survey questionnaire with its Part I dealing with the profile of the respondents, Part II dealing with the communication styles, and Part III dealing with the interventions to enhance the respondents' communication styles. Although Part II was adopted from TP3 Questionnaire on Communication Styles, it was slightly modified to suit the context of the respondents. The instrument gained a validity index of 4.4.

There were 239 Teacher Education students who served as the respondents of this study. They were determined through Lynch formula from their total population of 593. The respondents were enrolled across the Teacher Education programs at North Luzon Philippines State College in SY 2022-2023. The researcher secured permission from the HEI authorities then randomly floated the questionnaires. The researcher informed the respondents about the purpose and scope of the study and then took their consent before requesting them to answer the questionnaires which were later on retrieved, tallied, computed, analyzed, and interpreted. Frequency Count (*f*) and Percentage (%) was used to determine the number and percentage of the responses made by the respondents in their profile and communication styles; Correlation coefficient (*r*) was also used to determine the relationship of the profile and communication styles of the respondents; and the Mean was used to determine the communication style of the respondents.

3. Results and discussions

The following tables show the findings of this study such as the profile and communication styles of the respondents and their correlation, as well as the intervention to be conducted to enhance the respondents' communication styles.

Table 1

Frequency and percentage of the profile of the respondents

Profile of the Respondents	<i>f</i>	%
Age		
24 and above	4	1.70
23	2	.80
22	16	6.70
21	69	28.90
20	55	23.00
19	66	27.60
18	27	11.30
Total	239	100.00
Sex		
Male	87	36.40
Female	151	63.20
Total	239	100.00
Civil Status		
Single	225	94.10
Married	7	2.90
Separated	2	0.80
No response	5	2.10
Total	239	100.00
Location of Residence		
City	122	51.00
Municipality	117	49.00
Total	239	100.00
Monthly Average Income of Family		
Php50,001 and above	7	2.90
Php40,001- Php50,000	6	2.50
Php30,001- Php40,000	9	3.80
Php20,001- Php30,000	20	8.40
Php10,001- Php20,000	52	21.80
Php5,001 - Php10,000	56	23.40
Php5,000 and below	88	36.80
No response	1	4.0
Total	239	100.00
Religion		
Roman Catholic	163	68.20
Iglesia Ni Cristo	12	5.00
Assembly of God	16	6.70
Protestant	11	4.60
Jehova's Witnesses	2	8.00
Seventh Day Adventist	9	3.80
Islam	2	8.00
Pentecost	20	8.40
Total	239	100.00
Language Mostly Spoken		
Ilokano	214	89.50
Filipino	19	7.90
English	1	.40
Kankanaey	4	1.70
Maranao	1	0.40
Total	239	100.00

Hobbies (Multiple responses)		
Singing	129	54.00
Dancing	99	41.40
Visiting places	110	46.00
Composing songs	32	13.39
Writing literary pieces	45	19.25
Playing games/ sports	95	39.70
Playing music instruments	71	29.71
Browsing social media sites	162	67.80
Cooking	112	46.86
Gardening	70	29.71
Food and beverage tasting	61	25.50
Playing online games	91	38.10
Taking and editing pictures	95	39.70
Reading books/ magazines	82	34.31
Chatting with friends/ peers	155	64.85

Based on the table, the profile of the respondents shows that many (69 or 28.90%) of them are 21 years old; the majority (151 or 63.20%) of them are female; most (225 or 94.1%) of them are single; the majority (122 or 51.00%) of them reside in a city; many (88 or 36.80%) of the families of the respondents have a monthly average income of Php5,000 and below; the majority (163 or 68.20%) of them are affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church; the majority (214 or 89.50%) of them speak Ilokano most of the time; the majority (162 or 67.80%) of them browse social media sites as hobby.

Table 2

Frequency and percentage of the communication styles of the respondents

Communication style	<i>f</i>	%
a. Activist	36	15.10
b. Reflector	63	26.40
c. Theorist	56	23.40
d. Pragmatist	84	35.10
Total	239	100.0

The table shows that many (84 or 35.10%) of the respondents use the pragmatist communication style while the least of them (36 or 15.10%) use the activist communication style. It is then implied that the students interact with other people through socially accepted constructs including socially accepted manners. In pragmatic communication, the style is constructed based on socially accepted rules in interaction such as body language, eye contact, greetings, turn-taking, and the manner in which people are referred to and treated in a conversation (Victoria State Government Education & Training, 2020).

Table 3

Significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their communication styles

Profile	<i>r</i>
Age	.060
Sex	.164*
Civil Status	.036
Location of Residence	-.009
Average Income of Family	.050
Religion	-.039
Language Mostly Spoken	-.163*
Hobbies	.268

Legend: *significant at 0.05 level of significance

The profile of the respondents on sex ($r=.164^*$) and the language mostly spoken ($r=-.163^*$) are significantly related to their communication style, this result implies that sex and the language mostly spoken by the respondents affect their communication style. Freeman (2020) wrote that the gestures of women are more fluent or flowing than men who tend to use sharp and directed movements. Also, women tend to make direct eye

contact with those they communicate while men regard it as a challenge of position or power.

It was also written by Sanow (2015) that men and women display different body language signals during communication. Men do not show as many facial reactions and do not make as much eye contact. Women, on the other hand, make more face-to-face contact and nod when listening which is mistaken as agreeing with the speaker. However, women nod to show that they are listening and processing information.

Table 4

Interventions to be conducted to enhance the communication style of the respondents

Interventions to be Conducted to Enhance Communication Style I like to enhance my communication styles through	\bar{x}	Descriptive Level
1. modeling by my teacher	3.66	SA
2. online lectures	3.15	MA
3. seminar-workshop	3.58	SA
4. everyday practice with my classmates	3.54	SA
5. role-playing in class	3.38	SA
6. watching relevant video clips, like TikTok and vlogs	3.35	SA
7. reading relevant offline and online articles	3.35	SA
8. the use of television and radio programs	3.31	SA
9. asking relevant questions from people around me	3.51	SA
10. feedback from the people I communicate with	3.59	SA

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree, 2.51 - 3.25 Moderately Agree, 1.76 –2.50 Moderately Disagree, 1.0 – 1.71 Strongly Disagree

Most of the interventions on the table gained a descriptive level of strongly agree. However, *Item number 1. modeling by the teacher* gained the highest mean of 3.66 which is described as strongly agree. Item number 2. online lectures gained the lowest mean of 3.15 which is described as moderately agree. Riches (2019) wrote that modeling is learning through seeing before doing which reduces ambiguity around an outcome. The teacher’s modeled behavior becomes a pattern for students to practice what they have learned. Also, modeling provides a clear target for students to achieve what is expected from them, thus, removing any misconception about a lesson or task. The aforementioned was affirmed by the study of Wong and Cheah (2022) which found that teaching modeling improved the understanding of students in terms of self-directed learning which can be applied by the students in their future learning. Moreover, students find it more enjoyable and meaningful if modeling is used as an intervention to improve their language skills (Sidiq, 2018).

4. Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, many of the respondents are in their early twenties, the majority of them are female, most of them are single, the majority of them live in the city, many of them survive with the meager income of their family, they speak Ilokano most of the time, and majority spend time browsing social media sites. This study also concludes that many of the respondents use a pragmatic communication style. Sex, as a variable, greatly influences the communication style of the respondents. Lastly, modeling by the teacher is preferred by the respondents because they can clearly see the teacher doing the actions and they ask relevant questions, which was validated during an interview with some of the respondents.

Pragmatic communication is directly connected to social skills which is important in building relationships with other people. In the academe, pragmatic communication can help build a friendly learning environment through peer or teamwork. Teachers will be able to conduct and facilitate learner-centered instruction through activities that students do by and among themselves. The integration of pragmatic communication in the curriculum will aid students in optimizing their learning experiences and prepare them for the real world of the profession by knowing how to adapt their communication style inside and outside the school contexts. Teaching strategies, such as modeling, help students reflect on the benefits and risks in using a particular communication style. Schools that recognize the use of different communication styles in their contexts provide more opportunities for growth and development to students with individual differences.

4.1 Recommendations

It is recommended that Teacher Education students, particularly males, should enhance their communication styles and learn the different communication styles to deal with a variety of speakers and adapt to the different communication contexts. Also, TE students should try using other languages, aside from Ilokano, to be able to communicate with people who do not speak the language. Topics on communication styles should be integrated into the curriculum, such as in Purposive Communication, to increase awareness and enhance the skills on communication styles of the Teacher education students. Language and communication teachers should equally emphasize the importance of learning the appropriate communication styles along with other areas of language and communication studies. The use of appropriate strategies in teaching communication styles to students, such as modeling is also highly recommended.

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