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INVESTIGATING TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENT-LEADERS' LANGUAGE METAFUNCTIONS IN SUPERVISORY COMMUNICATION

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Abstract
As student-leaders are tasked to manage their respective student-organizations and protect the interest of whom they represent, they are expected to be fluent communicators. Hence, they need to be conscious of the way they generate their utterances and text by considering appropriate language functions. This survey type of research determined the extent of utilization of language metafunctions in supervisory communication by teacher education student-leaders in a state university at Malvar Batangas, Philippines. By employing a researcher-made questionnaire as a primary tool for obtaining data and applying appropriate statistical tools, the study revealed that the respondents utilized the ideational language metafunction as they influenced their fellow members to actively participate in activities initiated by their respective organizations through citing favorable and positive personal experiences, the interpersonal metafunction as they listened willingly to the suggestions and complaints expressed by their colleagues during various fora, and the textual metafunction as they solicited in a friendly manner their colleagues' suggestions for the improvement of their organizations during meetings. This study calls for enhanced supervisory communication skills among student-leaders through capacity building communication-related activities.

Keywords: communication skills, language metafunctions, student-leaders

Introduction
The current era requires individuals to be competent communicators to adapt to the changes revolutionizing the global society. This inevitable adaptation to the demands of the merging societies of the world necessitates people to communicate with one another despite of the diversity of their cultural backgrounds to establish partnership and collaboration in realizing their respective goals (Bañez & Callo, 2019). According to Lawrence (2015) and Abbasi et al. (2011), developing strategic communication is seen beneficial in securing competitive advantage in this cross-cultural global society. The essential role of communication in establishing linkages among people and promoting interconnectedness makes it imperative for educational institutions across different levels to cultivate students' communication skills to prepare them to the demands of their respective fields (Iksan, 2011; Cansoy, 2017).

As students practice effective communication through observing the interplay among message, channel, audience and context; their opportunity for leadership expands as they develop capacity to influence other individuals (Black et al., 2014; Capulong, 2014).With effective communication, student-leaders are able to motivate and inspire their colleagues and to solve complex problems facing their organizations (Luthra & Dahiya, 2015; Zulch, 2014).

Communication involves giving and receiving information in either oral or written, formal or informal and verbal or non-verbal forms considering audience and purpose. Along with this, no organization can successfully exist without proper and harmonious communication. Communication is a pivotal factor in the transmission of information throughout the organization. This serves as the purpose that supervisory communication has been idealized.

Supervisory communication is important in organizational management. It serves as the link between leaders and associates. It follows five different directions; downward, diagonal, upward, lateral and external flow communication. Downward flow takes place when the message starts from leaders to their associates in a chain of command. Upward flow is commonly used by members of an organization to convey their problems and performances to their leaders. When communication occurs at same levels of hierarchy in an organization it is called lateral flow communication. Communication that takes place between a leader and associates of other organizations is called diagonal communication. Lastly, external communication takes place between a leader of an organization and their stakeholders (DuBrin, 2016). Therefore, student-leaders have the overall duty in spreading the information through supervisory communication. Effective leaders have a wide variety of media and strategies to communicate. According to Rijavec as cited by Spaho (2013), leaders are expected to know how to interpret comments from different channels including print, internet, radio, television, outdoors and word of mouth.

Supervisory communication skill is not merely transferring of messages through which the audience can receive. It also requires correct usage of language in which information are conveyed effectively. Language is formal and follows rules. An organization that follows rules and formal pattern of language is likely to achieve higher levels of efficiency.

Supervisory communication is governed by language metafunctions. These language functions is derived from the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by Halliday. SFL is a linguistic theory that focuses on the functional relationship between language and other social aspects especially the social character of texts. The focal areas of the study of SFL are functional approaches to language analysis. Halliday describes multi-functionality of texts that have three categories: the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. Matthiessen and Halliday (2014) noted that Bloor and Bloor had provided a comprehensive summary of language metafunctions covering three premises. First, the ideational function is used to organize, understand and express one's perceptions of the world and own consciousness. Second, the interpersonal function enables people to participate in communicative acts with other people, to take on roles and to express and understand feelings, attitude and judgments. Last, the textual function allows

communicators to relate what is said or written to the real world and to other linguistic events. As applied to supervisory communication, the language metafunctions serve as language filters in which messages or information are appropriately conveyed as people interact differently in consonance with their preferred way of expressing their thoughts that are very vital in organizational discourses.

Utilizing appropriate language metafunctions is vital in organizational communication as this utilization requires conformity of language usage to functionality that can promote understanding among leaders and associates. Student-leaders are expected to be good communicators as they manage their respective organizations. Educators are then tasked to develop among students both proficiency and fluency in communication.

In line with this, conducting a study on the language metafunctions in supervisory communication of teacher education student-leaders becomes imperative. The researcher believed that it is beneficial to conduct the study among teacher education student-leaders. As future teachers, they are the most important agents of change in classroom to overcome challenges that shape the 21st century educational landscape. It is vital for educational institutions to redesign themselves as knowledge-building communities to encourage students' collaborative construction of knowledge in everyday discourse. Also, one of the key requirements of education is to establish healthy communication throughout the classroom, the school and the community.

This study determined the extent of utilization of the language metafunctions in supervisory communication among teacher education student-leaders in a state university in Malvar Batangas, Philippines. These student-leaders were officially enrolled during the academic year 2017-2018. Specifically, this study aimed to identify the extent of utilization of the language metafunctions in supervisory communication among teacher education student-leaders as to ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions.

Method

The researcher employed the survey type of research in identifying the extent of utilization of the language metafunctions in supervisory communication among teacher education student-leaders. The subject of the study comprised of 102 teacher education student-leaders in a state university in Malvar Batangas, Philippines. The mentioned respondents were chosen for they were expected to be good communicators to lead and manage their respective organizations.

In gathering the needed quantitative data, the researcher had devised a survey questionnaire as a principal tool. The survey questionnaire is designed to measure the extent of utilization of the language metafunctions by the respondents in supervisory communication as to ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. The researcher made use of Halliday's theory in constructing five item statements for each language metafunction. These item statements were subjected to content validation by experts comprised of a doctorate degree holder

in English Language Studies, a master's degree holder in Teaching the English Language, two doctorate degree holders in Educational Management, and a registered psychometrician to ensure the conformity of the item statements to the aim of the study. Pilot testing of the questionnaire was also conducted to ascertain the internal consistency of the item statements by administering the copies to a group of 20 student-leaders who were not covered as respondents of the study. The computed Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.93 asserted that the items in the questionnaire are sufficiently valid.

Proven reliable and valid, the copies of the questionnaire were administered among the teacher education student-leaders who had provided their consent to participate in the study. The gathered data from the responses made by the respondents on the item statements in the questionnaire were statistically treated using mean. To facilitate the interpretation of the responses made by the respondents in the administered questionnaire, the following mean ranges and verbal interpretation were used: 3.51-4.00 Often/Highly utilized, 2.51-3.50, Sometimes/Utilized, 1.51-2.50 Seldom/Slightly utilized, and 1.00-1.50 Never/Not utilized.

Findings and Discussion

In line with the study's undertaking, the researcher sought the respondents' language metafunctions in supervisory communication. They were analyzed and interpreted through determining the overall mean of each language metafunction in supervisory communication. The results were presented in the following tables.

Respondents' Extent of Utilization of Language Metafuntions in Supervisory Communication

The first language metafunction surveyed in this study is the ideational metafunction. This type of metafunction is concerned with building and maintaining experience between and among communicators. Table 1 reveals the statements with their respective mean scores and verbal interpretations.

The table shows that the third statement obtained the highest mean of 3.34. The respondents sometimes influence their fellow members to actively participate in seminars, workshops and team buildings through citing favorable and positive personal experiences regarding the mentioned activities. This result implies the student-leaders capabilities in persuading their members to partake in activities associated to their organization. This capability essential to student-leaders is affirmed by Luthra and Dahiya (2015) noting that persuasive leaders can inspire members of the organizations to fulfill highest potential. Leaders persuade their members to set aside their personal interest and work together in achieving the organizational goals (Morgan, 2010). Blank et al. (1990) and Whitmore (2015) also observed that leaders are those who effectively influence change, improvement, innovation and performance as they consider the need of others more than of themselves. Their task is to promote positive performance of their organization. The

art of persuasion differentiates successful organization from fractured one (Monarth, 2013).

Table 1. Extent of utilization of ideational language metafunction in supervisory communication

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
As a student leader, I …		
1. express comfortably my own beliefs to my members on how the organization can be best managed.	3.26	Sometimes
2. analyze how my colleagues report and quote ideas from different sources, and reflect on them whenever they disseminate information on matters important to the club.	3.19	Sometimes
3. influence my fellow members to actively participate in seminars, workshops and team buildings through citing favorable and positive personal experiences regarding the mentioned activities.	3.34	Sometimes
4. give objective feedbacks on the performance of the members of my organization to avoid offending them.	3.09	Sometimes
5. distribute information among members whenever there are updates about requirements or documents needed in the organization.	3.25	Sometimes
Overall	3.23	Utilized

Meanwhile, the item statement that garnered the least mean of 3.09 exposed that respondents sometimes give objective feedbacks on the performance of the members of their organizations to avoid offending them. This result denotes that student-leaders are sensitive and equitable in giving comments about their members. Sensitive and equitable leaders recognize and comprehend their members' feelings and are able to exhibit them in the workplace. Good leaders also possess high emotional intelligence to understand how members feel about themselves which is a product of their sensitivity (Haltiwanger, 2015).

To summarize the results, the ideational metafunction of language was utilized by the respondents as reflected by the overall mean of 3.23. This result proves that student-leaders are capable of communicating within their organizations by exhibiting ideational leadership. In this context, ideational leadership is seen as a resource that helps transform resistance into acceptance of an initiative with the combination of abilities (Denti & Hemlin, 2012). This type of leadership enhanced by the ideational language metafunction practices entails student-leaders to formulate mechanisms to solve existing policy problems and justify them with reference to norms or values that are readily recognized by their respective organizations.

The second language metafunction surveyed in this study is the interpersonal metafunction which refers to the grammatical choices enabling speakers to enact

their complex and diverse interpersonal relations. Language involves interactions where student-leaders initiate or respond to the act of giving or demanding for services or information. Table 2 illustrates the respondents' extent of utilization of interpersonal language metafunction in supervisory communication.

Table 2. Extent of utilization of interpersonal language metafunction in supervisory communication

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
As a student leader, I …		
1. tell my members how I feel about a certain issue in our organization to let them know my stand regarding it.	3.27	Sometimes
2. listen willingly to the suggestions and complaints expressed by my colleagues whenever we have forum.	3.62	Often
3. ask the help and support of my associates on the projects being conducted by the organization in a friendly manner.	3.52	Often
4. praise accomplishment and achievement of any member of my organization.	3.55	Often
5. observe etiquette whenever I inform my colleagues on the agenda of the meeting that they failed to attend.	3.21	Sometimes
Overall	3.43	Utilized

As illustrated in the table, the mean of 3.62 revealed that the student leaders often listen willingly to the suggestions and complaints expressed by their colleagues whenever they have fora. This result suggests that the student-leaders are able to listen emphatically to the members' concerns regarding the organizations. Nelson and Quick (2006) affirmed that leaders who are emphatic listeners use reflective listening skills as they analyze and respond to problems brought by members about their work. Riordan et al. (2005) also emphasized that active listening combined with empathy is the most effective form of listening.

In general, the respondents utilized the interpersonal language metafunction in supervisory communication as revealed by the overall mean of 3.43. This result suggests that the student-leaders possess interpersonal sensitivity to easily communicate with the members of their respective organizations. This observation is supported by Mast et al. (2012) stating that interpersonal sensitivity is an important aspect of what people expect from good leaders as sensitive leaders have more satisfied subordinates compared to those who are not.

The last language metafunction surveyed in this study was textual metafunction. This function of language encompasses all the grammatical system responsible for managing the flow of discourse. Results of the survey in this language function are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Extent of utilization of textual language metafunction in supervisory communication

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
As a student leader, I …		
1. share my ideas and beliefs whenever I am assigned to give a talk in our meeting or seminar.	3.30	Sometimes
2. listen for cues to determine the consistency of ideas cited in the complaints made by my colleagues and evaluate them later.	3.31	Sometimes
3. ask for my colleagues' point of views for the improvement of the organization during our meeting in a friendly manner.	3.47	Sometimes
4. know the proper words to use whenever I discuss dilemmas with my member.	3.29	Sometimes
5. justify issues affecting the organization.	3.17	Sometimes
Overall	3.31	Utilized

As depicted, the respondents sometimes ask for their colleagues' point of view for the improvement of the organization during their meeting in a friendly manner by obtaining the highest mean of 3.47. This result signifies that student-leaders value the members' opinions by showing initiative to accommodate the thoughts of their members on the improvement of their respective organizations whenever they conduct meetings. Stashevsky and Koslowsky (2016) and Delaney (2012) supported this notion by stressing that true leaders value group cohesion as the idea that all group members can get along and work on projects together.

On the hand, the item statement obtaining the least mean of 3.17 revealed that the respondents sometimes justify issues affecting the organization. This initiative of student-leaders to examine issues within their respective organizations is acknowledged by Conrad and Poole (2012) by stressing that this trait possessed by enlightened leaders can help them recognize problem that will occur in an organization and communicate clearly about its consequences as good leaders know how to seek solutions before problem arises. They also noted that leadership behaviors that contribute to a group's task-related functions include providing, seeking and evaluating information. Leaders are also information seekers as they ask for elaboration or clarification of the issues affecting the group that can help provide an important evaluative function.

Generally, the overall mean of 3.31 signifies that the respondents utilized the textual language metafunction in supervisory communication. This implies that student-leaders are working on their communication skills to preside over their respective organizations for better development. Similarly, unity is rooted in the use of effective communication that is believed to be one of the distinguishing characteristics of a high performance organization. Together with this is the clear and consistent messages within the group that serve as the foundation for its vision and identity as strengthening group cohesion requires members to interact in an

open climate where they are free to ask questions and disagree with one another and even in working through inevitable conflicts (Harun & Mahmood, 2012).

Conclusion

The importance of language metafunctions in supervisory communication cannot be underestimated. These functions of language empower student-leaders to manage their respective organizations and perform various tasks as leaders. As revealed in the study, teacher education student-leaders utilized the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions in communicating between and among members of their organizations to promote understanding which is beneficial for the growth of student-organizations and attainment of their respective organizational goals. In accordance with this finding, conducting of trainings, seminars, workshops and other related activities in supervisory communication that can provide avenue for exchanges of best practices in maintaining excellent organizational culture are seen vital in helping student-leaders to successfully lead their respective organizations. Moreover, future researchers may conduct similar studies to identify other factors that may influence student-leaders' utilization of language metafunctions in supervisory communication.

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