

**LANGUAGE AND SELF-PRESENTATION:
A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF FILIPINO PERSONAL
HOME PAGES**

LEAH E. GUSTILO

De La Salle University-Manila

gustilol@dlsu.edu.ph

This study addresses a gap in research about Personal home pages (PHPs) by examining the uses of language for the expression of identity and self-presentation through the analysis of self-expression/self-description data found on Filipino PHPs. Thirty personal home page texts that belong to 20 Filipino males and 10 Filipino females are analyzed to describe how Filipino home page authors present themselves on the web through their linguistic sources, which are investigated in terms of the structuring of three types of meaning involved in the clause: identificational, actional, and representational. When conveying identificational meaning through pronouns and modal markers, the authors present themselves as individuals who attempt to establish interpersonal relationship with their readers, casual communication, and high level commitment to their descriptions. When structuring actional meaning through 'sentence types' and speech functions, authors 'give off' information that stage them as writers who, on the one hand, are mainly engaged in knowledge exchange as participants who share information about themselves; and on the other hand, are occasionally involved in an activity exchange with their readers, asking the latter to perform some actions like clicking a link, exploring their site, or signing their guest book. When constructing representational meaning through process types and participant functions, the authors' choices of particular patterns present themselves as individuals who are mainly concerned with material processes of 'doings' and 'happenings' and in the relational processes of 'being.' Simultaneously, they present the participants (themselves and the people and things they describe) of the processes as active agents who are always present in the processes – 'doers' who do and make things happen and 'carriers' who represent that something is.

The study posits that when individuals prefer particular linguistic patterns, the choices have to be understood as signalling something about the persons' identity, because these linguistic choices are "paralinguistic" cues (corresponding to

GUSTILO

non-verbal cue in face-to-face interaction) that reveal something about an individual (Miller, 1995; Zilles & King, 2005).

1. Introduction

The World Wide Web or WWW, an internet client-server communication system that retrieves multi-media hypertext documents (Berners-Lee, Cailliau, Luotonen, Nielsen, & Secret, 1994, cited in Crowston & Williams, 1996), has burgeoned exponentially in recent years. Its potential to usher the internet users into immediate contact with the world of large-scale information is apparent for all to see (Slaouti, 2002).

The WWW hosts various kinds of discourses which are published not only by institutions and powerful people who once had the monopoly in the publishing domain, but also by ordinary layperson. Since the WWW was invented by Berners-Lee in 1992 (Groth, 1999), it has introduced us to a “network of authentic texts that illustrate a whole range of genres from specialist to generalist, from subjective opinion to substantiated academic arguments” (Slaouti, 2002, p. 120). This gives researchers the opportunity to study a wide gamut of discourses produced by both worlds – the powerful and the ordinary people. One kind of internet discourse published on the WWW is found on personal home pages (henceforth, PHP). A personal home page is a web site that is published and maintained by one individual or family and contains whatever information the author opts to put there (Dominick, 1999). PHPs represent a range of purposes, but their overall purpose is generally that of self-presentation (Chandler & Roberts-Young, 1998).

A considerable number of studies have already investigated PHPs. Most of these investigations look at this computer-mediated communication (henceforth, CMC) as a quintessential place for identity construction and self-presentation (Miller, 1995; Miller & Mather, 1998; Dominick, 1999; Chandler & Roberts-Young, 1998; Papacharissi, 2002a, 2002b; Papacharissi & Kim, 2003). They have examined how people reinvent or reveal aspects of their identity in the context of online communities. Others have investigated the phenomenon called “new literacy” or “web literacy” in PHPs (Karlsson, 2002). And a few studies have looked into the language of personal home page authors to theorize concerning the existence of power relations in the web (Killoran, 1998, 1999). But what seems to be lacking is an analysis of the linguistic features of personal home pages.

The present study aims to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between language and self-presentation in Filipino personal home pages, focusing on ways in which the self is presented through language. Particularly, it delved into the question: How is self-presentation in Filipino PHPs revealed in terms of the structuring of the following features?

LANGUAGE AND SELF-PRESENTATION

- (a) identificational meaning: pronouns and modality markers
- (b) actional meaning: 'sentence types' and speech functions
- (c) representational meaning: process types and participant

functions.

The study is informed by some theoretical frameworks that espouse the function of language in linguistic analysis and explain the nature of self-presentation in interaction.

1.1 Goffman's dramaturgical approach in interaction

Goffman (1959) describes how people behave in face-to-face encounters. Goffman employs a dramaturgical approach in which the activity of one person is viewed as a performance, which is constructed to provide others with impressions that are in agreement with the goals of the actor. An individual constructs a 'front,' the expressive tool used by an individual during self-presentation. Self-presentation or impression management, therefore, is viewed as a ritual that helps to smooth and control social relations. The process of establishing social identity becomes a function of interaction with others through an exchange of information (Goffman, 1959).

According to Goffman, impressions are formed through reading and interpreting the 'sign activity' of the other person during an interaction. This sign activity is of two kinds: the expression 'given' and the expression 'given off'. The 'given' expression consists of symbols intentionally expressed during verbal communication. Hence, when people directly tell about themselves, they present themselves in a particular way – this is their 'given' or avowed identity. But in the process of sending 'given' self-presentation, the 'given off' (e.g. sex, age, race, manner of speaking, choice of words, ways of clothing) aspects of self leak off unintentionally. The person's performance is a result of his/her expertise in controlling the information 'given' and 'given off.'

The study posits that when individuals prefer particular linguistic patterns, the choices signal something about the persons' identity because these linguistic choices are 'given off' information (corresponding to non-verbal cue in face-to-face interaction) that reveal something about an individual.

1.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspectives on language

In addition to the aforementioned theory, the study also has a theoretical grounding on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspectives on language. SFL is a theory of language centered on the

GUSTILO

relationship between language and social theory. Although SFL accounts for the syntactic structure of language, its central focus is on the function of language (what language does, and how it does it). SFL takes into account the contextual dimensions of language (Chapelle, 1998).

Halliday (1985) interprets clauses in terms of three functions: clause as a message, clause as an exchange between the speaker and the reader, and clause as a representation of social reality. The three functions are more popularly known as textual, interpersonal, and ideational functions of language, respectively. This means that texts connect parts of texts together and connect texts with their situational contexts, represent the experience of an individual with the world, and show relationships between participants and attitudes, beliefs, and desires of participants (Fairclough, 2003).

A good example of text analysis which considers the relationship of texts with the other elements of social life and an application of Hallidayan framework is contained in Fairclough's (2003) recent work on discourse analysis which has linguistic analysis as its main approach. Drawing on Halliday's (1985) analytic categories, Fairclough (2003) classifies the types of meaning into three: Action (ways of acting), Representation (ways of representing), and Identification (ways of being). According to Fairclough (2003), representation corresponds to Halliday's 'ideational' function. Most of the categories in Identification are in Halliday's interpersonal function. And Halliday's 'textual' function is incorporated within Action. These three main types of meaning are "simultaneously at issue in clauses, and each gives a particular perspective on the clause, and particular analytical categories" (p. 135).

Fairclough (2003) claims that different analytical categories are associated with different types of meanings. He examined actional meaning by looking at the categories of speech functions (statements, e.g. *Perry likes Mary*; demands, e.g. *Talk to Mary*; offers, e.g. *Do you like a slice of cake?*; questions, e.g. *Where is Perry?*) and 'sentence types' (declarative, interrogative, imperative) which syntactically realize the speech functions.

The categories listed in the clause as Representation includes processes (verbal group), participants (nominal group), and circumstances (adverbial group). However, the study delved only into the process types and participant functions.

For identificational meaning, modality – what people commit themselves to when they state, ask, demand or offer – and pronouns were the foci of analysis. Fairclough (2003) claims that the use of these linguistic realizations tells about the identities of individuals and their relationship with their utterances.

Grounding the study in the aforementioned perspectives is important because the study aims to establish that the textual output of the PHPs is

LANGUAGE AND SELF-PRESENTATION

more than mere transmission of information. In addition to being vehicles of information, the texts reveal something about the authors, their intentions, relationships, and the nature of what they do in the web. More importantly, they leak off information that presents aspects of the self of a person.

2. Methodology

2.1 Corpus

The self-description/expression written data (except for quoted texts) drawn from a sub sample of 30 Filipino personal home pages created by authors who responded to the online survey conducted by the researcher constitutes the data for the present analysis. The self-description data, mostly located in the profile or biography link, greatly vary in length. Some PHP authors have short self-description data with about 150-250 words. Others spend a great deal describing themselves. To obtain a comparable amount of words for each text, for the home pages with long self-description, the study included only a portion of the texts, selecting the first two paragraphs, or one paragraph, if it is too long. For the home pages with short texts, the whole self-description/self-expression data were drawn.

2.2 Unit of analysis and chunking of texts

For the analysis of linguistic features, the clause was chosen as the unit of analysis. The researcher divided the texts into clauses, consisting of two different procedures:

- *Dividing clauses for the analysis of process and participant functions*

Text division into clauses for the analysis of linguistic features was guided by the examples found in the works of Halliday (1985), Fairclough (2003), and Huddleston and Pullum (2002).

For instance, *Maria loves Albert* is regarded as one clause. In the case of constructions with embedded clauses, the researcher divided the sentence into two or more clauses, depending on the number of finite and non-finite clauses that constitute the sentence. The types of clauses included in this part of analysis include: main clauses, subordinate clauses, non-finite clauses, and minor clauses.

- *Dividing clauses for the analysis of speech functions and 'sentence types'*

While the non-finite clauses were included in the analysis of process and participant functions, they were not made part of the analysis of 'sentence types' and speech functions. The texts were divided into main clauses, subordinate clauses, and minor clause constructions. The reason for this is obvious. A declarative or an interrogative, for instance, can only be

GUSTILO

realized by a complete sentence or a subordinate clause. Minor clauses were included in the analysis, following the example of Fairclough (2003).

2.3 Data analysis

- Analyzing pronouns

The central pronouns (personal, reflexive, possessive) were located in the texts using the Simple Concordance Program version 4.0, a statistical software available on the internet that can generate a word list with corresponding frequency for each word. Not all central pronouns figured in the concordance analysis. After the list of pronouns that occurred in the data was obtained, the individual contexts of *we*, *you*, and *it* were examined to determine whether *we* and *you* are generic and whether *it* is a referring *it* or a non-referential *it*. Instances of non-referential *it* were excluded from the frequency counting of *it*.

- Analyzing modality markers

The following categories and examples for each category served as the guide in identifying the modality markers. However, as in pronouns, not all examples on the list appeared in the data.

(1) Modal verbs – *can, may, might, could, must, shall, should, ought to, need to, have to, will, would*, and (contractions)

(2) Modal adjectives and adverbs

*Emphasizers/Amplifiers – *absolutel/absolutely, reall/really, certain/certainly, sure/surely, indeed, well, a lot, truel/truly, great/greatly, perfect/perfectly*, and the like.

*Downtoners/hedges – *almost, more or less, partly, hardly, virtually, practically, nearly, kind of, sort of, a little bit*, and the like.

(3) Stative verbs – *seem, appear, think, tend to, believe*

The study used the Simple Concordance Program v. 4.0 in determining the occurrence and frequency of each modal verb. Then the researcher manually looked into the semantic functions of the modal verbs and lumped them into semantic categories (e.g. ability, possibility, volition, prediction). For the modal adjectives, adverbs, and stative verbs, manual analysis was used in determining their occurrences, frequencies, and semantic categories.

- Analyzing speech functions

The speech functions were identified based on the following coding framework:

(1) Statements

Statements of fact ('realis' statements) (RS) – statements about what is, was, has been the case (e.g. *My name is Miguel Halcos*).

LANGUAGE AND SELF-PRESENTATION

'Irrealis' statements (IS) – predictions (e.g. *I will meet Mary tomorrow*) and hypothetical statements (e.g. *I might meet Mary tomorrow, if he comes to Manila*).

Evaluations (E) – statements that evaluate (e.g. *Mary is a kind person*) and exclamatory evaluations (e.g. *What a kind person he is!*)

(2) Demands (D) – sentences that make orders or commands (e.g. *Open the window.*)

This category includes other imperative constructions that are not demands in the ordinary sense of the word, such as instructions as to what to do (e.g. *click the button below*).

(3) Offers (O) – sentences that offer something (e.g. *Would you like some tea?*) or make invitations (e.g. *Come back next time; Feel free to explore my website*)

This category also includes speech functions that include thanking, apologizing and promising.

(4) Questions (Q) – sentences that inquire about something (e.g. *Who are you? Are you okay?*) and embedded questions in subordinate clause constructions (e.g. *I don't know [where he was going]*)

(5) Greetings (GR) – minor clause constructions of greetings (*Hi! Hello!*)

- Analyzing 'sentence types'¹

The 'sentence types' coding categories with their code signs are seen below:

(1) Declarative (DEC) – Subject precedes verb

(e.g. *Mary is in Manila*)

(2) Interrogative (INT) – Verb precedes subject (e.g. *Is Mary in Manila?*); initial *wh-* word (e.g. *Where is Mary?*)

(3) Imperative (IMP) – No subject (e.g. *Click below to enter my homepage; Welcome to my homepage!; Feel free to explore*)

(4) Exclamatives (Exc) – Exclamatory *wh-* element and subject precedes verb (e.g. *What a kind answer you gave!*)

This category includes constructions that are marked by exclamatory point (!).

(5) Minor clauses (MINOR) – grammatically incomplete constructions (e.g. *A loving husband*).

¹ Huddleston and Pullum (2002) classify declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamative constructions under the category of clause types. Fairclough (2003), on the other hand, calls them 'sentence types' (enclosed in single quotation marks). The latter is used throughout the study because the main portion of the theoretical framework informing the linguistic analysis was culled from Fairclough (2003).

GUSTILO

- Analyzing process and participant functions

Below are the coding categories and code signs used in the analysis of process and participant functions. The participant functions are enclosed in parentheses (e.g. Actor, Goal).

Material processes [Mat] — Processes of doing, creating, and happening

Perry (Actor) carried Maria (Goal).

Perry (Actor) resigned from his job.

Perry (Goal) was sacked from his job. (passive)

Mental processes [Men] — Processes of feeling, thinking, and perceiving.

Perry (Senser) liked the gift (Phen)

Perry (Senser) loves buying gifts (clausal phen)

Relational processes [Rel] Processes of being: attributing and identifying. The clause represents that something is.

Examples: Attributive clauses

1. *Mary (Carrier) is intelligent (Attribute)*

2. *The meeting (Carrier) is on Tuesday (Attribute)*

3. *Mary (Carrier) has a necklace (Attribute)*

Examples: Identifying clauses

4. *Perry (Identified) is the president (Identifier)*

5. *Perry (Identified) is/plays the leader (Identifier)*

6. *Tuesday (Identified) is my birthday (Identifier)*

7. *The necklace (Identified) is Mary's (Identifier)*

Verbal processes [Verbal] – The clauses represent processes of saying.

He (Sayer) praises God (Target) everyday.

Existential processes [Exist] – The clauses connote that something exists or happens.

There is an elephant (Existent) on the stage.

There are many instances in which the participants were not represented or were implied in the clause. For example, in the non-finite clause *Walking hurriedly, he tripped on the hump*, the subject of *walking* is implied. In such cases, the implied participant is represented by a minus (-).

2.4 Establishing inter-coder reliability

Fifty percent of the self-description data were given to three coders for the following analysis:

- (1) 'Sentence types' and speech functions
- (2) Process types and participant functions

The coders had practice sessions on coding texts using a separate sample until a high inter-coder agreement was reached. Percent Agreement (total number of agreements divided by total lines coded) was used to measure inter-coder reliability. Going beyond percent agreement to measure inter-coder reliability was not resorted to since the overall inter-coder reliability in each linguistic feature was very high.

The two other coders worked independently on the texts. In deciding which clauses could count as having inter-coder agreement, the researcher set the following criteria:

3 inter-coders agreed on coding – high agreement was established and the coded clause would be included in the data

2 out of 3 inter coders agreed on coding – satisfactory agreement was established and the coded clause would be included in the data

0 coders agreed in coding – no agreement was reached and the coded clause would not be included in the data

Clauses with satisfactory (i.e. two coders agreed) and high agreements (three coders agreed) were counted and those with zero agreement were dropped from the data. There were only two instances of zero agreement, and that occurred in the coding of process and participant functions. To get the overall inter-coder reliability for each linguistic category, the total number of satisfactory and high agreements were divided against the total clauses coded. An example is seen below:

$$\frac{254 \text{ total number of clauses with agreement in process types}}{256 \text{ total number of coded clauses}} = 99\%$$

The coders coded a total of 256 clauses for process and participant functions and arrived at 99% (given as a previous example) intercoder agreement – (93% or 239 high agreement and 6% or 15 satisfactory agreement). For the speech functions, intercoder agreement was at 100%. Out of 191 clauses, the three coders had satisfactory agreement on 92% or 15 clauses and high agreement on the rest of the clauses (98%) with no instances of zero agreement. As regards the 'sentence types,' intercoder agreement

GUSTILO

was at 100%, which was 98% high agreement and two percent satisfactory agreement for the 191 clauses.

In summary, the data reported in this part of the study have high inter-coder reliability.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Revelation of online self-presentation through linguistic features

Construction of identificational meaning through pronoun use and modality markers

The frequencies and percentages of the central pronouns are provided in Table 1. To facilitate discussion, only aggregate and not the specific figures for each pronoun are tackled.

Table 1. Frequency of pronouns

Pronouns	f
First person singular (<i>I, me, my, myself, mine</i>)	520
Third person singular (<i>he, she, her, referring it, his</i>)	90
Generic <i>you</i>	79
First person plural (<i>we, us, our, ourselves</i>)	34
Third person plural (<i>they, them, their</i>)	11
Total	734

Table 1 highlights that five central pronouns *I, me, my, myself, and mine* figured in the texts of site authors with an overwhelming popularity among all pronouns. The next group that obtained high frequency is the third person singular pronoun composed of *he, she, her, his, and referring it*. Generic *you* ranks third, but its frequency is still considerably high. First person plural *we, us, our, ourselves* and third person plural *they, them, their* are the least popular pronouns.

Table 2 summarizes the data on modality markers.

Table 2. Frequency of modality markers

Modality markers	f
Adjectival and adverbial emphasizers/amplifiers	55
Modal verbs	
▪ Prediction, volition (<i>will</i>)	34
▪ Possibility (<i>can, could</i>)	30
▪ Possibility (<i>may</i>)	8
▪ Ability (<i>can</i>)	5
▪ Non-assertion (<i>would</i>)	3
▪ Customary past action (<i>would</i>)	2
Adjectival and adverbial downtoners/hedges	7
Stative verbs (<i>seem</i> and <i>tend to</i>)	3
Total	147

As shown in Table 2, modal verbs tend to be the most frequently used modal marker by the site authors, i.e. 82 when totalled. The Filipino authors used *can* (e.g. *God sends special persons so that we can improve ourselves*), *could* (e.g. *We wanted to live in South city so that we could be close to Lyn's parents*), and *may* (e.g. *It may be due to global warming*) to express possibility; *can* was also used to encode ability (e.g. *I can easily express my feelings*). *Will* conveys prediction as in *He will forever be just a story for her*, and volition as in *I will show him my design*. *Would* was used in two senses: modal of assertion, e.g. *I would be nothing without him* and customary past action, e.g. *He would hug and kiss me when we play*.

Another tendency was the popular use of emphasize/intensifiers whose function is to reinforce or magnify the authors' commitment to the truth value of their message. Examples of emphasize/intensifiers that appeared in the data were the following: *exactly, really, very, exactly, most, doubly, great, mighty, pretty, especially, definitely, purely, basically, actually*, and *a lot*. Adjectival and adverbial downtoners/hedges, tools used to lower the effect on the force of the verb or predication, were less common. Their examples include: *maybe, hopefully, a sort of, relatively, and only*. Stative verbs, considered a form of hedging, were also less frequently used as a marker of modality in the texts.

Construction of actional meaning through speech functions and ‘sentence types’

Table 3 summarizes the results of the analysis for speech functions.

Table 3. Frequency of speech functions

Speech Functions	f
Realis Statement	355
Evaluation statement	76
Irrealis Statement	13
Questions	29
Demands	12
Offer	12
Greeting/Wish	8
Total	505

As shown in Table 3, personal home page texts are mainly statements of fact, comprising the biggest chunk of the total speech functions use, with a considerable number of evaluations and irrealis statements, few demands, questions, and offers. Greetings and wish were also used in the text but were very minimal.

Speech functions are realized by different ‘sentence types’: declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamative, and minor clause. Table 4 provides the summary of the results for ‘sentence types.’

Table 4. Frequency of ‘sentence types’

Sentence types	f
Declarative	423
Minor clause	42
Imperative	19
Interrogative	12
Exclamative	9
Total	505

As shown in Table 4, an overwhelming use of declarative is found in the data, almost five times the total number of the other clauses. Minor clause is the next popularly used ‘sentence type’, followed by imperative, then the interrogative. The exclamative is the least popular.

There is a close correspondence between a particular ‘sentence type’ and speech function. Declarative clauses are clearly statements and questions are usually interrogative (Fairclough, 2003). The study looked into these

LANGUAGE AND SELF-PRESENTATION

correspondences between ‘sentence types’ and speech functions. The results and their examples drawn from the actual data are provided in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency of speech functions realized by ‘sentence types’

Sentence types’ realization of speech functions	f
Declarative	
Realis statement <i>My name is Miguel Halcos.</i>	325
Evaluative statement <i>He’s so malikot,,, he’s so sweet.</i>	69
Irrealis statement <i>He will forever be a story for her.</i>	29
Minor clauses	
Realis statement <i>Currently assigned at ...Misamis Oriental</i>	25
Greeting <i>Hi there.</i>	8
Offer <i>Welcome to my website.</i>	5
Evaluative statement <i>A short and affectionate nickname</i>	3
Wish <i>God bless.</i>	1
Question <i>So see?</i>	1
Interrogative	
Question <i>Well, did you get what I mean?</i>	12
Imperative	
Demand <i>Click the link in the upper left.</i>	12
Offer <i>Feel free to look around.</i>	7
Exclamative	
Realis statement <i>And I was only expecting maybe 2 or 3 species!</i>	5
Evaluation <i>How majestic they looked!</i>	4
Total	505

GUSTILO

The pattern for the speech function of statement is obvious. It is realized in declarative statements. It should be noted however that a minor clause can realize a statement (Fairclough, 2003), along with other functions. Realis and evaluative statements, therefore, can be seen among minor clauses. In addition, questions are realized in interrogative and minor clauses. Demands and offers are found in imperative, with offers realized also in minor clauses. The coders classified two kinds of exclamationatives in the data: the true exclamationatives (marked with *what* and *how*) which are clearly evaluations (according to Fairclough) and those that are clearly declarative in form with a function of statement but were punctuated with an exclamation point at the end of the sentence. The coders discussed the meaning of the latter type and decided to code its function as realis statement if the meaning is no more than narrating a simple fact. The presence of the punctuation mark may be an effort of the author to signal a non-verbal cue: an emphasis, perhaps, or a raised voice in face to face conversation, or a feeling of joy. Exclamationative evaluative clauses are those that involve evaluating a truth or fact (whether a thing is good or bad, simple or complex).

Construction of representational meaning through process types and participant functions

The analysis of the types of processes represented in the texts of site authors revealed that they were mostly engaged in material processes and relational processes. Mental process figured as the third most preferred process. Verbal and existential processes were less common in the data, as depicted in Table 6.

Table 6. Frequency of process types

Process	f
Material	
<i>I am also posting other articles</i>	228
Relational	
<i>[Sorry] for the poor scan quality</i>	215
Mental	
<i>But I can still sense that...</i>	100
Verbal	
<i>[Some say] it may be due to global warming</i>	11
Existential	
<i>No more sadness in his eyes.</i>	7
Total	561

LANGUAGE AND SELF-PRESENTATION

Of the 561 clauses coded for process types, the processes were explicitly represented in 553 clauses; and they were implied in 13 clauses: two instances in Relational process, six in Mental process, and five in Existential process. In the example, *Sorry for the poor scan quality*, which is a shortened form of *I am sorry for the poor scan quality*, the subject *I* (Carrier participant) and verb *am* representing the relational process are implied. The example *No more sadness in his eyes* for the Existential process left out the expletive *there* and the verb *is*, which represents the Existential process.

Table 7 summarizes the data regarding the representation of participant functions in material processes. Each type in the table is illustrated with an example drawn from the analyzed data. The underlined phrases or clauses illustrate the particular type of pattern, while the boldfaced font identifies the participants.

Table 7. Frequency of patterns for participant functions in material process

Participant functions	f
Actor, Goal (active-transitive) e.g. <i>I am also posting other articles.</i>	73
Actor, (active-intransitive) e.g. <i>Then I moved to Buffalo, NY.</i>	63
-Actor, Goal (active-transitive) e.g. I was hesitant [<i>to leave the dorm</i>]	43
-Actor, (active-intransitive) e.g. I am pleased [<i>to announce</i>]	23
Goal, (passive) e.g. [<i>Rizal and Francis Yu are shown</i>] in quick succession	13
Goal, Actor (passive) e.g. <i>Many graces... have been received by many</i>	7
-Goal, (passive) e.g. I had pocketbook titles [<i>published in the Philippines</i>]	6

Seven types of patterns can be noted in the data: the first four active constructions were more preferred than the last three passive constructions. Of the four active constructions, the Actor plus Goal type (*I* and *articles* in *I am also posting some articles*) which represents both the person or actor doing the process and the agent acted upon by the process was the most prevalent representation of the participant functions. This was followed by a single participant role type, the Actor (*I* in *Then I moved to Buffalo, NY.*) in

active-intransitive construction. The other two active constructions are also of significant usage: –Actor, Goal (*implied Actor, dorm in to leave the dorm*) and –Actor (*implied Actor in to announce*) which are found in non-finite clauses or minor clauses where the participant is assumed or unrepresented.

As for relational process, five ways of representing the participant functions are found: four are in the attributive clauses and only one is associated with the identifying clauses. Carrier, Attribute (*I and Filipino in I am a 25-year old Filipino*) was the most frequently used participant function pattern. Also common, but less frequent compared with the previous type is Identified, Identifier pattern (*Name and Randy Vanero in My name is Randy Vanero*). Other less common patterns are those that choose not to represent the Carrier of the process (*-to be closer to my family*) and the construction that represents the Attribute first (*majestic in How majestic they looked!*). These results are found in Table 8.

Table 8. Frequency of the patterns for participant functions in relational process

Participant functions	f
Carrier, Attribute e.g. <i>I am a 25 year old Filipino</i>	164
Identified, Identifier e.g. <i>My name is Randy Vanero</i>	25
-Carrier, Attribute e.g. <i>I moved to NY [to be closer to my family.]</i>	21
Attribute, Carrier e.g. <i>How majestic they looked!</i>	3
-Carrier, Attribute (Relational process implied) e.g. [<i>Sorry</i>] for the poor scan quality.	2

Four ways of representing the participants in the mental process emerged. The most common of all is the strategy that opted to represent both the Senser and the one being sensed, Phenomenon (e.g. *I and that in But I can still sense that*). In other less frequently used constructions, the Senser is implied (e.g. *to see you now; A loving husband*). Their frequency of usage is found in Table 9.

Table 9. Frequency of the patterns for participant functions in mental process

Participant functions	f
Senser, Phenomenon e.g. <i>But I can still sense that</i>	79
-Senser, Phenomenon e.g. I am happy [<i>to see you now</i>]	13
-Senser, Phenomenon (minor clause) e.g. What are my life dreams? [<i>A loving husband...</i>]	6
Phenomenon, Senser e.g. They are the things [<i>that I liked.</i>]	2

Verbal process is minimally used in the data. As depicted in Table 10, only two modes of presenting the participants in the verbal process emerged. Of the two modes, the site authors preferred to represent the Sayer of the verbal process.

Table 10. Frequency of the patterns for participant functions in verbal process

Participant functions	f
Sayer , Verbal e.g. [<i>Some say</i>] it may be due to global warming	8
-Sayer, Verbal e.g. <i>Thanks a lot for dropping by.</i>	3

The most underrepresented process in the texts is the existential process (e.g. *No more sadness in your eyes*), with only seven instances of usage. All Existential clauses represented the lone participant which is the Existent.

3.2 Self-presentation through different linguistic categories

This study posits that when individuals prefer particular linguistic patterns, the choices signal something about the persons' identity because these linguistic choices are 'given off' information (corresponding to non-verbal cue in face-to-face interaction) that reveal something about an individual. Hence, throughout the analysis, the study approached PHP texts as events that showcase aspects of the author's self. All linguistic resources are used by the authors to stage online 'fronts' in order to manage the impressions that the readers may construct about them. They present their online identity when constructing three types of meaning in the clause: identificational, actional, and representational.

Self-presentation through identificational meaning: Modals and pronouns usage

Self-presentation through identificational meaning – how authors identify themselves relative to their message and readers – revolves around the categories of modality and pronouns. Modality is defined as “the manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker’s judgment of the likelihood of the proposition it expresses being true” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 219). In other words, modality mirrors the commitments which people make to their message. Fairclough (2003) explains that modality is important in texturing identities because “what you commit yourself to is a significant part of who you are” (p. 166).

The use of modals *can*, *could*, and *may* shows the author’s epistemic commitment to possibility and/or ability. These help them express what they think are the possible actions or events. *Will* shows their attitude of certainty when predicting and making decisions about future events and actions. The preponderance of high commitment *can* and *will* over low commitment *may* and *would* is interesting because the former present the authors as more committed to their message. The heavy reliance on adjectival and adverbial emphasizees/intensifiers shows more commitment on the part of the authors to their message or self-presentation on the web.

Another linguistic category that can establish identificational meaning in clauses is pronouns. Research has established that pronouns have the capacity to show the interpersonal function of language, in addition to their referential function (Hinkel, 2002; Fairclough, 2003). For instance, first person pronouns *I*, *me*, *my*, *myself*, *us*, *our*, *ourselves* mark interpersonal function because they reflect direct involvement of the writer with the text or with the assumed reader (Hinkel, 2002). In addition, second-person singular and plural pronouns (*you*, *your*) can elicit reader’s involvement and promote group solidarity between the writer and the reader (Hinds, 1983 as cited in Hinkel, 2002).

The investigation of the texts published on the personal home pages of Filipino authors yielded results which seem to reveal that the personal home page genre has the characteristics of spoken or oral communication where first person pronouns are preponderant, especially the first person pronouns *I*, *me*, *my*, *mine*, *myself*. Such usage may be attributed to the fact that the genre of personal home page revolves around the theme of SELF-PRESENTATION, where the person takes all the opportunity to talk about everything under the sun about his/her self. However, this may also be interpreted as the authors’ attempt to effect a more personal tone in writing. Authors could have opted to use the third person pronouns because they have the freedom to describe themselves in third person as in the case of the author of text number 25. But all the rest chose to communicate with their readers

in the first person. Fairclough (2003) claims that the use of I-statements or first person pronouns is evidence of subjectively marked modalities, which is important in determining the identification or commitment of the writer/author to his statements. Applying this concept to the present data on pronouns, it appears that the site authors project a subjective, personal image and that they are directly involved and committed to their self-presentation statements.

As regards the second person pronouns, the home page authors seem to be well aware of their online audience, as evidenced by their use of generic *you*. In many instances, the home page authors appear to be conversing with their readers (e.g. *My name is Miguel Calbo and you have reached my home page; Thanks for dropping by; I hope that you will find useful information and links here*). The considerable number of *you* usage in the data, not to mention the many instances of implied *you* in imperative clauses (e.g. *come back next time, feel free to explore, click the link below*), seems to be in keeping with the authors' desire to involve the readers in the assumed interaction between them and their readers.

As regards the question, "How do PHP authors present themselves when communicating identificational meaning?" it appears that linguistic choices of pronoun and modal usage tend to present the authors as persons who establish direct involvement with their message and their readers, seek group solidarity, and show commitment to their statements. The authors used pronouns not only to unify the information flow in discourse and to realize the references made on the theme of SELF-PRESENTATION but to present themselves as 'personal' (as opposed to impersonal) individuals who are committed to their self-presentation statements and to involve their readers in the assumed exchange during interaction. Likewise, they profusely choose emphasize/intensifiers over downtoners/hedges and high commitment modals *can* and *will* to index their reinforced commitment to the message.

Self-presentation through actional meanings: 'Sentence types' and speech functions

The linguistic choices of PHP authors on their usage of 'sentence types' and speech functions seem to present them as persons who are mainly engaged in knowledge exchange but are occasionally involved in an activity exchange with their readers. Their heavy reliance on realis statements, considerably having high frequency in the use of evaluations, and occasional use of irrealis statements – all realized in declarative sentences (and a few in minor clauses), reveals that the 'actional' meaning (Fairclough's term) or the nature of interactive event (Halliday's term) involved between the PHP authors and the readers is more oriented towards knowledge exchange. Those three speech functions are all concerned about giving information about the

person. This means that during the course of self-presentation through their written self-descriptions, the PHP authors take the role of information sharer when they state facts about themselves, judge things, and predict future occurrences; and the expected role of their readers is to simply acknowledge (or not acknowledge) their statements.

However, in addition to knowledge exchange, the site authors also present themselves as participants engaged in an assumed activity-exchange in which they invite readers to take action or respond by means of demands (e.g. asking them to click a link), offers (e.g. offering them to explore their sites or come back next time), questions (e.g. asking them if they quite understood what they were discussing), and greetings (e.g. replicating face-to-face opening ritual of greeting when interacting with persons). The study considers greetings as a form of activity-exchange because its corresponding response, ideally, requires an activity which is also a greeting.

The tendency of the PHP authors to 'give off' information about themselves as writers engaged in knowledge and activity exchanges is expected within the context of self-presentation in that self-presentation on the PHP entails sharing information about oneself (through statements) and asking the readers to perform some actions (through demands, questions, and offers) in order for the writers to create impressions upon the readers – impressions that are favorable to the writers' desired end.

The frequent use of minor clauses, occurring 42 times, by the authors is worth discussing because it signals a feature of an 'informal discourse' – a feature of internet discourse that has been identified by other researchers examining the language of CMC (Murray, 2000). This being the case, the use of minor clauses, together with the other finding on the extensive use of first and second person pronouns, seems to confirm the personal, informal, "speech-in-writing" characteristics of the language of internet, 'giving off' information that the authors want to be identified as writers who prefer an informal mode of communication with a personal tone.

Self-presentation through representational meaning: Process types and speech functions

How do PHP authors present aspects of self when communicating representational meaning in the clause? To answer this question, it is necessary to understand how clauses realize representational meaning. Halliday (1985) explains that conceptions of reality consist of the processes of doing, happening, feeling, and, saying, and being which are mapped onto the semantic system of language and expressed through the grammar of the clause. The clause consists of the process that represents experience, the participants who make the process possible, and the circumstances associated

with the process. These three components can serve as an analytic framework for interpreting one's experience of what goes on.

The present study concentrates on the types of processes and the direct participants of the processes. The analysis of the texts yielded results that pointed to the authors' popular use of material process (processes of doings and happenings) and relational process (ways of being). This finding seems to be consistent with the general theme of self-presentation – that is, the site authors' main concern is to describe themselves in terms of what they had done and had accomplished and how they view things in relation to who they are as individuals who relate daily with people and events.

What about the direct participants involved in the represented processes? In the material process, most of the participants are overtly presented (as opposed to implied). In either transitive (two participants: Actor and Goal) or intransitive constructions (one participant which is the Actor), the subjects of the clauses, which are usually the site authors or the people they relate with, are the Actors (activized) in the process, those who do things and make things happen. They are seldom the goal (passivized) or the affected entities in the process. In the relational process, the Carrier is also always represented and seldom excluded. The Actors or Carriers they represent are always included in the social events, making them very much present and 'accessible' to their readers.

To recapitulate, in terms of the process types that represent experience with reality, PHP authors used linguistic features that present them as individuals who are mainly engaged in material processes of 'doings' and 'happenings' and in relational processes of 'being.' Concomitantly, they represent the participants (themselves and the people and things they describe) of the processes as active agents who are always represented in the processes.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

One of the gaps in PHP research is its seeming lack of attention to the analysis of language in the texts stashed away in the links of personal home pages. The present study addresses this gap and offers new insights that may benefit sociolinguistic research in examining identity and self-presentation, discourse analysis, research on the language of internet, and language teaching.

The present study has expounded on the relationship between language and self-presentation, demonstrating that identity or aspects of self can be uncovered by examining the linguistic repertoire of language users. The analysis of the linguistic codes used on PHPs has revealed insights regarding the authors who shape the texts, the nature of the interactive event on PHP, and the representation of experience with reality, confirming

GUSTILO

Fairclough's (2003) claim that a "textually oriented discourse analysis can be a tool for social research" (p. 2) because the linguistic features examined in the study reveal the identities of the social agents (PHP authors) who are important elements in our society. Moreover, the present analysis confirms the findings of other researchers that a new type of discourse is represented on the net as a product of creativity and innovation (Crystal, 2001 cited in Huffaker, 2004) in the new writing technology. The intermingling of oral and written language – informal "spoken" style of writing, which grows out of the writer's desire for interpersonal relationship with the readers (Tannen, 1982 cited in December, 1993), is one of the characteristics of the new type of discourse on the internet.

For future research directions, it is particularly interesting to expand the investigation by including a larger sample of PHPs in the data of linguistic analysis using the framework evolved in this study so that findings could lend support to more absolute generalizations about self-presentation on personal home pages. In addition, a larger picture of Filipino self-presentation on personal home pages may be gleaned if the reception processes of the Filipino home pages, e.g. investigating the readers' impressions on the PHP authors, can also be considered. This can be done by analyzing the readers' feedback found on the site owners' guest books using linguistic analysis.

Moreover, it might do well to choose more linguistic analytical categories (in addition to what the present study identified) and apply them to the linguistic data of PHPs or other internet discourse found in blogs, e-mails, and chat conversations of Filipino internet users. Such investigation would contribute to the burgeoning literature employing textual analysis within discourse analysis and help characterize the emerging language used in the internet.

Finally, curriculum designers, as well as written communication teachers, may learn a great deal from this present study. It can make them cognizant of the fact that they are given the task of helping students shape some aspects of their self through language. It may even make them consider that some written communication may be dependent upon features of informality. As Murray (2000) states: "speech communities adapt language to new situations...the forms language takes results from the complex interaction among the various aspects of the context." (p. 416)

LANGUAGE AND SELF-PRESENTATION

REFERENCES

- Berners-Lee, T., Cailliau, R., Luotonen, A., Nielsen, H. F. & Secret, A. (1994). The World Wide Web. *Communications of the ACM*, 37(8), 76-82.
- Chandler, D. (1998). *Personal home pages and the construction of identities on the Web*. Retrieved Feb2, 2005 from <http://users.aber.ac.uk/dgc/Webident.html>
- Chandler, D., & Roberts-Young, D. (1998). *The construction of identity in the personal homepages of adolescents*. Retrieved January 28, 2005 from <http://users.aber.ac.uk/dgc/strasbourg.html>
- Chapelle, C. (1998) Retrieved January 30, 2005 from <http://www.wagsoft.com/Systemics/Definition/chapelle.html>
- Crowston, K., & Williams, M. (2000). Reproduced and emergent genres of communication on the World-Wide Web. *The Information Society: An International Journal*, 16(3), 201-216. Retrieved January 15, 2005 from <http://crowston.syr.edu/papers/Webgenres.html>
- December, J. (1993). Characteristics of oral culture in discourse on the Net. Paper presented at the Twelfth Annual Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition, University, Park, Pennsylvania, July 8, 1993. Retrieved January 16, 2007 from <http://www.december.com/john/papers/psrc93.txt>
- Dominick, J. (1999). Who do you think you are? Personal home pages and self-presentation on the World Wide Web. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 76(4), 646-658.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis of social research*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction Ritual: Essays on face-to-face behaviour*. New York: Anchor/Doubleday.
- Groth, K. (1999). *Knowledge net – A support for sharing knowledge within an organisation*. Unpublished Licentiate Thesis, Royal Institute of Technology, Department of Numerical Analysis and Computing Science. Retrieved January 30, 2005 from <http://www.nada.kth.se/~kicki/Reports/LicKthesis.pdf>
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London and Baltimore: Edward Arnold.
- Hinkel, E. (2002). *Second language writer's text: Linguistic and rhetorical features*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hoey, M. (1991). *Patterns of lexis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

GUSTILO

- Huddleston, R. & Pullum, G. (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Karlsson, A-M. (1998). *Selves, frames and functions of two Swedish teenagers' personal home pages*. Paper presented at the 6th International Pragmatics Conference, Reims/Frankreich. Retrieved January 6, 2005 from <http://www.nordiska.su.se/personal/karlsson-a-m/ipra.htm>
- Karlsson, A-M. (2002). Web Literacy, web literacies or just literacies on the Web? Reflections from a study of personal home pages. *The Reading Matrix*, 2(2). Retrieved January 6, 2005 from <http://www.nordiska.su.se/personal/karlsson-a-m/ipra.htm>
- Killoran, J. B. (1998). *Under construction: Revision strategies on the Web*. Paper presented at the Conference of College Composition and Communication in Chicago. Retrieved January 30, 2005 from <http://www.brocku.ca/english/jkilloran/cccc1998.html>
- Killoran, J. B. (1999). *Trees falling in the cyber-forest: Making a sound on the Web*. Paper presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Atlanta. Retrieved February 5, 2005 from <http://www.brocku.ca/english/jkilloran/cccc1999.html>
- Killoran, J. B. (2000). *Little flies in big Webs: Affinity, modality, and parody on the World Wide Web*. Paper presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Minneapolis. Retrieved January 9, 2005 from <http://www.brocku.ca/english/jkilloran/cccc2000.html>
- Kim, H. & Papacharissi, Z (2003). Cross-cultural differences in online Self-presentation: A content analysis of personal Korean and US home pages. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 13(1), 101-121.
- Miller, H. (1995). *The presentation of self in electronic life: Goffman on the Internet*. Paper presented at the Embodied Knowledge and Virtual Space conference, London. Retrieved January 8, 2005 from <http://ess.ntu.ac.uk/miller/cyberpsych/goffman.htm>
- Miller, H. (1999). *The hypertext home: Images and metaphors of home on World Wide Web home pages*. Paper presented at the Design History Society Home and Away Conference, Nottingham Trent University, 10-12 September 1999. Retrieved January 8, 2005 from <http://ess.ntu.ac.uk/miller/cyberpsych/homeWeb.htm>
- Miller, H., & Mather, R. (1998). *The presentation of self in WWW home pages*. Paper presented at the IRISS'98 conference, Bristol. Retrieved January 5, 2005 from <http://ess.ntu.ac.uk/miller/cyberpsych/millmath.htm>
- Murray, D. (2000). Protean communication: The language of computer-mediated communication. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(3), 397-421.

LANGUAGE AND SELF-PRESENTATION

- Papacharissi, Z. (2002). The self online: The utility of personal home pages. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. Retrieved February 9, 2005 from <http://www.highbeam.com/library/doc1.asp?DOCID=1G1:92352918&num=3&ctrlInfo=Round9c%3AProd2%3ASR%3AResult&ao>
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman
- Slaouti, D. (2002). The Word Wide Web for academic purposes: Old study skills for new? *English for Specific Purposes*, 21, 105-124.
- Snyder, I. (2001). A new communication order. Retrieved January 30, 2005 from www.education.monash.edu.au/profiles/ilanas
- Zilles, A.M.S. & King, K. (2005). Self-presentation in sociolinguistic interviews: Identities and language variation in Panambi, Brazil. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 9(1), 74-94.