Isolated Linguistic Mantra in the Verbal Narratives of PUP Senior Bachelor in Secondary Education English Majors

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Abstract. This study was conducted to analyze the recorded verbal narratives of Senior Bachelor in Secondary Education English Majors of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) What is the rating of the participants' verbal narratives in terms of the presence of the narrative elements and their delivery? (2) What is the number of isolated linguistic mantra identified in the participants' verbal narratives, in terms of boosters, fillers, and hedges? (3) Is there a difference in the overall rating of the participants when they are grouped according to the number of their isolated linguistic mantra?

Keywords: Verbal Narratives, Boosters, Fillers, Hedges, Coda, Narrative Elements.

1. Introduction

Walter Fisher proposed a theory called Narrative Paradigm where he states that meaningful communication is in the form of storytelling or giving report of events and human beings experience and comprehend life as a series of ongoing narratives, each with its own conflicts, characters, beginning, middle, and end. Fisher believes that all forms of communication that appeal to our reason are best viewed as stories that are shaped by history, culture, character, and all forms of human communication are to be seen fundamentally as stories.

Labov and Waletzky support this theory, according to them, a narrative has five structural features which include; Orientation, Complication, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda. The orientation sets the scene, and the complication is the main body of the narrative describing the action or events that occur. As the narrative approaches its climax, an evaluation section is inserted which "reveals the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative by emphasizing the relative importance of some narrative units compared to others." The evaluation would be followed by the climax of the narrative, the resolution or outcome. The coda "is a functional device for returning the verbal perspective to the present moment."

2. Methods

The researcher used two research methods: descriptive method and mixed method. Pre-survey was conducted first in order to have the final survey. In the survey, the students chose their movie which they narrated and which the researcher recorded. Afterwards, the researcher followed the criteria made and got the final participants of this study which is 10. The researcher analyzed the participants' verbal narratives.

3. Analysis

In terms of rated verbal narratives and in terms of presence of narrative elements, 50% were excellent and 50% were average narrators. But in terms of delivery, 90% were fair narrators and 10% was poor. Of the 10 participants, only 4 or 40% managed to have an average as an overall rating. The rest, 6 or 60%, had a fair as an overall rating.

The frequency of boosters appeared in the verbal narratives of the participants is 166, while the frequency of fillers is 985, and the number of hedges in the participants' verbal narratives is 80. Among the elicited isolated linguistic mantra, fillers were most frequently used followed by boosters, and third was hedges.

The number of identified isolated linguistic mantra in the participants' verbal narratives made a difference in the overall rating of the participants. In terms of boosters and fillers, participants who have

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higher frequency of boosters have higher rating. But, in terms of hedges, the participants who have higher rating have lower number of hedges.

4. Discussion

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of the presence of narrative elements

Rating	f	%
Excellent	5	50%
Average	5	50%
Fair	0	0
Poor	0	0
Total	10	100%

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the presence of narrative elements in the participants' verbal narratives.

The table showed that half of the participants or 50% of the participants were rated as excellent narrators while the other half of them was rated as average narrators.

All of the participants were able to have verbal narratives with a complete elements namely orientation- the setting and characters, complication- the main body of the narrative and conflict, resolution- climax of the story, and coda- the resolution of the characters and ending of the story.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of the delivery of verbal narratives

Rating	f	%
Excellent	0	0
Average	0	0
Fair	9	90%
Poor	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Table presents 2 the frequency and percentage of the participants' delivery of their verbal narratives. It can be seen that none of the participants were rated as neither excellent nor average narrators but most of them or 90% of the participants were rated as fair narrators in oral discourse.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Overall Rating of the Participants

Rating	f	%
Excellent	0	0
Average	4	40%
Fair	6	60%
Poor	0	0
Total	10	100%

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the overall rating of the participants. Findings revealed that fair narrators were dominant among the 10 participants.

Table 4 contained the identified boosters and its number which occurred in the verbal narratives of the participants.

Boosters are also called as intensifiers which increase the effect of an utterance.

Findings showed 11 words were found that function as boosters. Among the participants, participant 10 had the highest frequency of boosters while participant 5 had the lowest frequency. It implies that participant 10 is confident about his verbal narrative, enough for him to strengthen his statements.

Some boosters were not found in other participants' verbal narratives yet considered as boosters because the researcher did not look how many times it occurred but on how it was used.

Table 4. Number of Boosters

Identified Boosters	Participants									
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
1. Actually	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	2	1	2
2. Already	0	6	1	4	0	1	0	6	7	1
3. A lot	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	2
4. Of course	7	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0
5. Really	9	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
6. So	0	3	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	2
7. So much	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Still	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
9. Suddenly	0	0	6	0	1	0	6	1	0	0
10. Unfortunately	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
11. Very	8	4	4	1	0	1	16	2	0	5
Total	27	15	21	7	5	11	29	11	11	29
Grand Total of Identified Boosters										166

Table 5. Number of Fillers

Identified Fillers	Participants									
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
1. Ay	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
2. Pause (dead air)	26	50	8	20	8	61	68	75	34	0
3. Repetition of words	32	60	29	24	15	14	34	40	11	43
4. Self-correction	7	3	4	9	4	1	2	18	4	4
5. Uh	28	2	11	2	17	6	5	6	9	54
6. Um	6	11	0	0	8	7	0	67	31	0
Total	100	130	52	55	52	89	109	208	89	101
Grand Total of Identified Fillers										985

Actually. Some researchers may not have classified "actually" as boosters. But Gonzales (51) believes that "actually" is used for an assertion or assurance.

Already. Functioning as an intensifier, "already" implies a degree of conviction as to the truth of the scene (Gonzales 53).

A lot. "A lot" signifies to a very great degree or extent.

Of course. Holmes regarded "of course" as one of the words that function as booster, but it is important to take note that this booster tends to occur in a more formal context.

Really. Gonzales (49) claimed that "really" has the same meaning with "very" which escalates the strength of the utterance.

So. "So" is a kind of coordinating conjunction yet when it is used before an adjective, it becomes a booster which reinforces the adjective.

So much. "So much" is similar with how "so" is used as a booster. It also describes and boosts a statement.

Still. It is similar to other boosters, it illustrates conviction and certainty to a statement.

Suddenly. In Gonzales' study (57) "suddenly" expresses the manner in which something is done as an adverb. It also refers to the time element of a particular action.

Unfortunately. According to Gonzales (60), booster "unfortunately" is used as a sign of warning that the succeeding words are unpleasant events.

Very. "Very" is performed as a booster to intensify the force of the statement and to amplify the strength of the objectives Gonzales (48).

Table 5 is the number of fillers elicited from the participants' verbal narratives.

Findings displayed that 6 fillers were found in the participants' verbal narratives. The number of occurrences of the fillers of each participant's verbal narratives has a wide gap compared to the number of identified fillers.

"Pause (dead air)" received the highest frequency. It suggests that despite the thinking given to the participants before they narrate, they still grope for words that they will say next, proving that a smooth verbal narrative is hard to achieve.

Ay. This pause exudes a slightly different function with "uh…/ah…" since the use of "aw…/ay…" performs as an admission to a mistake the participants have made and, in a way, indicates that what they are about to do is a self-correction (Gonzales 69).

.**Pause (dead air).** A speaker may use pauses to enhance the message delivery. But, in this study, "pause" refers to a rest, hesitation, or temporary stop. It was categorized under fillers meaning a time interval during which there is a temporary cessation of something.

Repetition of words. Another way of indicating hesitation and holding the floor is repetition. The repetition of words, though it may have been overlooked, actually shows hesitation of the participant to give the floor or leave a gap in the statement (Gonzales 67).

Self-correction. In this study, the researcher used the meaning in Gonzales study about self-correction. She claimed that correcting one's self is a function of filler words (64).

Table 6. Number of Hedges

Identified Hedges	Participants									
	P1	**P2**	**P3**	**P4**	**P5**	**P6**	**P7**	**P8**	**P9**	**P10**
1. As /I remember/ I can't remember	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0
2. I think	0	11	0	0	3	2	2	0	0	0
3. I don't know	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
4. I guess	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. I mean	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
6. Like	0	3	0	0	3	8	2	0	0	1
7. Like that	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
8. Not really	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9. Not that	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
10. Somewhere	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
11. Something like that	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
12. Sort of	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
13. What do you call this/that	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	2
14. You know	3	0	0	0	5	4	2	0	0	0
Total	8	16	0	1	19	16	11	4	1	4
Grand Total of Identified Hedges										80

Uh. As cited in Gonzales (68), Baalen claimed that a variation of the filler word "um" is "ah…" or "uh."

Um. This vocalized pause hints hesitation but Gonzales (66) asserted that it functions more as a way to hold the floor while the participants' minds are whirling away trying to develop and organize his thoughts on what to say next.

Number of hedges was tabulated in Table 6. Hedges are devices that reduce the force of an utterance and generally soften its effects. Moreover, hedges also convey doubt of participants.

As/I remember / I can't remember. These words are called disclaimers. Grob, Meyers and Schuh point out that these disclaimers have the same function as that of a hedge for they soften the force of the message and sometimes discredit the utterance. These are usually found at the initial position of a sentence which denotes degree of uncertainty of the utterance (qtd. in Gonzales' study).

I think. With falling intonation may serve as a softener following a directive or it may express genuine uncertainty (Holmes 188).

I don't know. This also under the disclaimers that denotes the uncertainty of the speaker's utterance.

I guess. This is a hedge since it used as the best guess of the speaker.

I mean. This hedge is used to make the force of the utterance moderate. It is also used to correct the first words that the speaker said.

Like. According to Gonzales (33-34) "like" showed control of the floor time as he groped for the appropriate words to follow. Baalen (qtd. in Gonzales 34) indicated that a hedge is a sign of not wanting to give up the floor while developing his thoughts.

Like that. The use of "like that" appears as a way to hedge the information that he is uncertain of (qtd. in Gonzales).

Not really. It functions as a hedge which tends to soften the speaker's utterance.

Not that. The same as "not really", this serves to downplay the statement of the speaker.

Somewhere. The role of this hedge is to show that the speaker is not certain with the exact location on his narrative.

Something like that. It is used as a hedge that shows the speaker's doubt in his utterance.

Sort of. It serves as hedge that lessens the force of the utterance; it also expresses the speaker's uncertainty.

What do you call this/that. This hedge is used to convey that the speaker is thinking for the next word he will utter.

You know. As Holmes claims, "you know" expresses the speaker's non-commitment to what he is saying and thus softens the effect of the utterances (qtd. in Gonzales 37). Furthermore, Holmes stated that it may act as an appeal to the listener for reassuring feedback (189).

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the researcher arrived with at these conclusions: (1) Delivery of the participants' verbal narratives does not affect the presence of narrative elements (2) Among the elicited isolated linguistic mantra, fillers were most frequently used followed by the participants, then followed by boosters and third was hedges. (3) Isolated Linguistic Mantra affected the overall rating of the participants and the quality of their verbal narratives.

6. Acknowledgments

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