

Introduction: Speech Communication in the Philippines Now

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The Department of Speech and Drama (DSD) at the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman emerged from a tripartite split that happened within the Department of English and Comparative Literature in 1959. Its foundation signaled the independence of speech and drama courses from the English and literature classroom and the subsequent recognition of speech communication and theatre arts as distinct academic disciplines in the modern Philippine university. It also addressed the need of students for regular speech training within a classroom setup solely dedicated for this purpose. Following what the communication scholar William Keith calls the “Mid-western” or “Illinois” model of a speech department or program, the newly formed DSD integrated every activity involving human speech. During its formative years, it offered courses in the areas of Performance (i.e., oral interpretation, interpretation of children’s literature, and interpretation of drama); Rhetoric (i.e., argumentation, forms of public address, discussion and conference leadership); Theatre (i.e., elementary stagecraft, playwriting, acting and directing, and art history of the theatre); Radio (i.e., basic radio techniques, radio writing, radio speech, program building, radio production procedures, programs and audiences, and station management); and Speech Education (i.e., directed speech activities and audio-visual communication). By 1965-1966, courses like Speech 111 (Voice and Diction), Speech 115 (Bases of Speech), and Speech 185 (Principles of Speech Correction) already appeared in the list of courses under DSD.

In 1977, UP’s Board of Regents (BOR) approved the renaming of the DSD to Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts or DSCTA (Minutes of the 895 th Meeting 12). This titular transformation recognized the paradigmatic pivots then taking place in the department, including the clear acknowledgement that the art of public speaking as well as expertise in voice and diction no longer centrally

defined the DSCTA's purview and scope. This shift was undeniably a strategic move. For one, it intended to distance the department from the proliferation of speech clinics in the country at this time. For another, it was to account for how the discipline and the department had "grown to encompass almost all kinds of human behavior—from the simple experience of perceiving to symbolic inter-action in society; from the intimate face-to-face interpersonal talk to the technological world of radio, TV, film and satellites" (Minutes of the 895th Meeting 12). This development eventually enabled the DSCTA to come up with courses that encompass other levels and forms of human communication, namely: interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, communication in the workplace, argumentation and debate, parliamentary procedures, as well as group discussion and conference leadership, among others. Focusing on the theory and practice of speech communication, these courses have encouraged students and faculty members of the department to produce scholarly research and creative outputs that draw theoretical and methodological influences from both humanistic and social scientific traditions (De Pano; Hernandez).

Considering the changing educational landscapes inside and outside the UP System from the early to the mid-2010s, the DSCTA underwent a massive curricular transformation and undertook a serious reconsolidation of its undergraduate programs in 2018. For the department's Speech Communication division, this entailed a serious and systematic reflection on a number of issues related to its disciplinary nature, curricular configuration, and course content. The division soon realized that its undergraduate curriculum was largely basic, introductory, and general. Put in another way, it was too broad in scope, too generalist in orientation, and too lacking in specialization. No wonder that speech communication majors would often refer to themselves (and be called by others) as "jacks of all trades but masters of none." At this point, the call among faculty, students, and alumni was to institute areas of concentration that could aid students in focusing on specific topics prospectively useful for their future chosen careers.

Indeed, these issues compelled the DSCTA to reevaluate its program offerings, clarify its goals and mission, distinguish its academic programs from other disciplines, improve its assessment instruments, and develop new courses that could both address and cultivate the needs of Filipino students in the 21st century. Hence, the Speech Communication division introduced four major strands of study: Rhetoric, Performance, Interpersonal Communication, and Instructional Communication. The first two strands contain some of the original courses offered by the DSCTA from its foundation. However, in keeping with global academic developments, what was then known as Oral Interpretation now became Performance Studies. The latter two strands consist of courses that emerged as the DSCTA expanded its paradigmatic purviews through time. Interpersonal Communication comes from the Department's focus on human communication, while Instructional Communication evolved from speech education. Consequently, these strands were clustered into two major areas of concentration (AoC): Rhetoric and Performance, on the one hand, and Interpersonal and Instructional Communication, on the other.

These two AoCs address the seemingly unwieldy content of the current curriculum and offer a specialized approach to studying, teaching, and researching speech communication. They also highlight the pedagogical strengths of the DSCTA faculty and establish the paradigm the department takes in understanding and practicing speech communication at UP. Even more important, they enable the faculty to improve upon their agenda for teaching, extension service, and scholarship and research. Inevitably, the speech communication faculty instituted new courses encompassing the range of rhetoric, performance, interpersonal communication.



Figure 1

Freedoms of Speech in Asia: 2023 Speech Communication Conference Poster

More importantly, they also have to produce scholarly work. This shift extends theoretical knowledge to practical application, as well as encourages the DSCTA to contribute new, relevant, and cutting-edge intellectual outputs to the field of communication studies.

To further bolster speech communication as a discipline and consolidate its academics, researchers, scholars, and students, the DSCTA organized “Freedoms of Speech in Asia: 2023 Speech Communication Conference” in October 2023 at UP Diliman (see Figure 1). The participants that this conference attracted from and beyond the UP System illustrated how the pedagogical principles, scholarly interests, and methodological approaches of speech communication have been continuously evolving in the country. What was made clear during this academic gathering is that various strands of knowledge and practice constitute the disciplinary formation of speech communication in the Philippines today. The discipline is no longer simply about public speaking and the prescriptive pursuit of teaching people how to speak well, how to become a speaker, and how to manage a speech-based encounter. Instead, its explorations and examinations now revolve around how speech develops and plays out as a communicative or performative act, a subject of scholarly inquiry, a mode of relating to others and expressing oneself, and a method of communication, to name a few.

The attention that the conference gave to the “freedoms” of speech was deliberate. The aim was to look into the many ways through which “speech” takes various forms, serves multiple functions, and realizes many possibilities as an activity, a modality, and a field or discipline

in the context of the Philippines, in particular, and of Asia, in general. Focusing on these freedoms sought to emphasize the entitlement of different subjects and institutions to exercise their right to free speech in different rhetorical, performative, interpersonal, and instructional circumstances, contexts, and conditions. Almost a hundred participants from a range of academic backgrounds attended this conference. It well illustrated the expansiveness of speech communication and the diversity of scholarship, inquiries, and practices that pivot around if not emanate from it.

To ensure that the conversations started in the 2023 Speech Communication Conference would carry on, get published and disseminated, and ultimately provide materials from which students, academics, and practitioners can potentially learn, the DSCTA called for journal article submissions for a special double issue of the *Philippine Humanities Review* (PHR) of the UP College of Arts and Letters (CAL) on the theme “Speech Communication in the Philippines Now.” Our primary aim is to account for the transitions and trajectories of speech communication in the Philippines while at the same time interrogating its conceptual and methodological underpinnings. Another aim is to reckon with how this disciplinary formation is shedding off its old biases to make way for developments not only in the field but also in Philippine society now.

In this issue, we begin a collective audit of where we are with the way we study and practice speech communication. The “we” here primarily refers to academics, scholars, and researchers in the DSCTA who profess their affiliation to the discipline and strive to maintain its institutional legitimacy and intellectual mission. It also includes those connected to other communication-related departments inside and outside the UP System who examine any phenomena, relations, dynamics, acts, and situations that find clarity under the general terms of “human communication,” “oral communication,” “speech communication,” and the more pointed categories of “rhetoric,” “performance studies,” “interpersonal communication,” and “instructional communication.” Furthermore, the “we” here extends to practitioners in non-academic sites (such as the market industry, the social community, the mass media, and other professional contexts) who use their communication proficiencies and competencies to eke out a living while managing to establish a name for themselves. In other words, the “we” here is an inclusive handle accounting for any individual participating in an ever-widening landscape where speech communication comes into play through multifaceted socio-political concerns, conceptual tools, and methodological approaches.

We keep in mind the expansiveness, diversity, multiplicity, and complexity of the discipline and its people. More significantly, we allow these features to inform, frame, and structure the questions we seek to answer here. In our call for contributions, we spotlighted the following queries: What is the nature of speech communication in the Philippines at present? How is speech communication carried out as an idea, an act, a performance, a process, and a system of thought and action in the country today? In what other ways might speech be understood and evaluated aside from its common conceptualization as a modality of ferrying messages across? What are the systems and structures that at once constrain and enable speech communication as a disciplinary formation and a socio-political practice? How have academic institutions regarded speech as both a subject of scholarship and research, and an object of knowledge and power? How has speech functioned as a medium for constructing, critiquing, and prospecting the transformation of reality? What future awaits speech communication in light of the changes happening in the realms of politics and governance, media and technology, business and commerce in the contemporary period? What new insights have communication studies and other

allied academic disciplines generated from the 20th to the 21st centuries that enable us to rethink speech as a mode of expression and communication?

In posing these questions, our goal is to reaffirm speech communication as an intellectual pursuit and to recognize the multidimensional challenges and crises it currently faces. More specifically, this series of inquiries throws into relief the state of the academic discipline; the manifestations of speech communication in an array of context and conditions; and, not the least, the traditions and trajectories of what may be generally termed as Philippine speech communication studies. It is important to note that we phrase these questions in this manner to bring into sharp focus how speech must not simply be taken as a readily given and easily learned skill, as a benign or basic communicative mode, or as a clearly understood concept. When we put speech in conjunction with social and political issues, consider the rise and growth of its logics and practices, embed its forms and functions in culture and society, and foreground the relationship of its theories and methods to other disciplinary formations, we are, in fact, shedding light on the often neglected, often taken for granted, and often downplayed ideological facets of how we speak or communicate, who we regard as speakers or communicators, and why we choose to resort (or not) to speech and communication.

This is the right time to assess, rethink, and revitalize speech communication in the Philippines. If there is urgency in this assertion, it is because the turnout of comprehensive, thoughtful, and systematic analyses of the discipline from Filipino scholars and academics has been so low and slow in terms of production. Furthermore, if there is definitiveness in our directive, it is precisely because there is no time to dilly-dally in professing how speech communication remains a vibrant and viable discipline in the country, even while academic institutions in the West have largely doubted, silenced, and totally declared its existence down and out some decades ago. As the articles composing this special issue illustrate, Filipino academics and scholars continuously produce scholarly works within the discipline of speech communication and in relevant and related areas. Moreover, they patiently and persistently navigate the complexity of tracing the discipline's traditions (i.e., histories and genealogies) and trajectories (i.e., prospects and possibilities) so that those who position themselves within the academic, scholarly, and professional terrains of speech communication can find clarity and direction in how they might study, think, teach, and work.

The nine articles of this special issue provide assessments of institutions currently in charge of teaching speech communication at UP; criticisms, analyses, and theorizations of various forms of visual, gendered, and political rhetoric; and qualitative and quantitative approaches to communicative phenomena. The first three articles assess speech studies at the Diliman, Los Baños, and Baguio campuses of the UP System. Individually, they offer a snapshot of how the discipline figures in distinct academic institutions that genealogically, structurally, and logistically differ from one another. Collectively, they convincingly affirm the incontestable role of UP as a national university in consolidating and furthering speech communication in the country and the Asian region. Jose Carlo De Pano et al.'s "Reflections on the State of Speech Communication at the University of the Philippines Diliman" examines the current curriculum of the BA Speech Communication (BASC) program of the DSCTA at UP Diliman in light of what they call a digital shift that became even more prominent at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. In their article titled "The UPLB Speech Communication Identity: Weaving Humanities Roots, Institutional Practices, and Disciplinary Trajectories," Cheeno Marlo Sayuno et al. try to weave an identity for speech communication within the BA Communication Arts (BACA) program of the Department of

Humanities at UP Los Baños. They do so by taking a deep dive into the history of the program, the teaching and research practices of the faculty, and the research and creative engagements of the student body. Meanwhile, Orville Tatcho's "Localizing and Theorizing Speech/Rhetoric Studies in the Philippine University" offers a roadmap for the discipline as it exists in the Department of Communication of UP Baguio. It argues for the need to adopt interdisciplinary, theoretical, socio-cultural, and other eclectic perspectives and approaches to keep the relevance of speech studies in the contemporary Philippine university setting and in Philippine society.

The second set of articles proffers insights into Philippine rhetorical studies and emphasizes the intensifying dedication of Filipino scholars to go beyond and against mainstream, Western, and elitist artifacts and practices. Carson Jeffrey Cruz, in "The Possibilities of Indigenizing Rhetorical Theory," argues that though rhetoric as a foundational area of knowledge in speech communication studies has expanded its theoretical scope, embraced new subjects of investigation, and welcomed new critical or creative methods of analysis, a large part of its epistemological and methodological tools continues to come from Euro-America, often at the cost of non-Western, non-canonical, and non-mainstream rhetorical knowledge and practice. To keep the vitality of rhetorical studies, Cruz pushes for the use of more grounded and more culturally-sensitive interpretative frames such as those inspired by or wrought within indigenous studies that scholars, critics, and researchers may use to disturb, if not deconstruct, the Western rhetorical tradition with its imperial roots and colonial legacies.

In a similar vein, Rex Sandro Nepomuceno expands the notion of a rhetorical artifact by turning to contemporary photographs that visualize, perform, interrupt, and resist certain aesthetic regimes and values. In "Lo-fi Freedoms and the Anti-Aesthetic Photograph," Nepomuceno attends to the digital photographic projects *Picture lang* and *Mga sulat sa daan*, making a case for how they compel the viewers to understand not only the images of/in photographs but also their orality and aurality—that is, the kind of spoken and sonic qualities that they at once contain and register. A crucial argument of Nepomuceno is that the potency of these rhetorical artifacts lies in their specific depiction of a desolate, anti-aesthetic urban landscape, on the one hand, and their invitation for viewers to rework if not transform their notion of aesthetic value and practice via different experiences of seeing, feeling, and understanding, on the other.

Contributing in the area of performance studies are the articles of Junesse Crisostomo-Pilaro and Sherie Claire Ponce. Performance here relates to how Filipinos enact a politics of social movement through street protest as well as a politics of gender through mainstream advertisements. In "Political Activism through Liturgical Performance: Teatro Ekyumenikal and the Ecumenical Counterpublic at the United People's SONA," Crisostomo-Pilaro zeroes in on the call to worship that Teatro Ekyumenikal, the theater and liturgical arts group of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), staged as part of the United People's State of the Nation Address (SONA) protest in 2019 while former President Rodrigo Duterte was delivering his annual SONA inside the House of Representatives. For Crisostomo, Teatro Ekyumenikal instantiated how performance could take stock of the tragic realities Filipinos faced under Duterte's strongman rule; serve as an embodied mechanism for Filipinos to participate in political events; and enable faith-based activism and resistance to come to the fore even, or especially, during politically volatile periods in the nation's history. One of the many remarkable points that Crisostomo-Pilaro advances relates to how Teatro Ekyumenikal entangles the spiritual and the secular, the religious and the radical, and the political and the performative in their active productions and participations as a counter-public that came to the fore

despite or because of increasing violence against the Filipino people under Duterte's presidency.

Though not as overtly political as Crisostomo's contribution, the work of Ponce titled "The Gender Trap: Performing Gender and Queerness as Reflected in Pink Peso Advertisements" similarly highlights not only how performance assists in constructing or countering a social reality for a sector of Filipinos but also how performance theory can illuminate how heteronormative ideals and gendered identities operate and propagate in Philippine society. Examining "pink-peso advertisements" that contain elements and representations aimed at the LGBTQIA+ community and its allies, Ponce foregrounds the hegemonic ascriptions that the Philippine media attach to non-heteronormative individuals. She further underscores how these visual performances perpetuate traditional and dominant gender binaries, even while they offer a platform where queer subjects, lives, and realities may gain some degree of visibility.

Rounding out this special issue are the articles of Holden Kenneth Alcazaren and Jonalou Labor on instructional communication, and of Karl Lewis Cruz on interpersonal communication. In "Queering Teacher Identity: Filipino LGBTQ+ Teachers' Self-Disclosure of Their Sexual Identity in the Classroom," Alcazaren and Labor center the struggle of LGBTQIA+ educators with disclosing their sexual and gender identities within Philippine educational environments at the basic and tertiary levels. These educators greatly contend with homophobia and heterosexism in their professional workplace, evident in the ways they face various verbal assaults from students, co-teachers, and school administrators; wrestle with a range of castigatory policies on their sartorial and behavioral choices; as well as deal with blatant or hidden views of them as potential sexual predators. And yet, instead of being weighed down by these biases against them, these educators devise what Alcazaren and Labor call multidimensional "strategies of disclosure" that allow them to express their actual identities, embrace their subjectivities and positionalities, and confront, if not dispel, the consequences of the kind of heteronormativity and homophobia embedded in or emanating from the classroom setting.

Like Alcazaren, Cruz also addresses the question of free speech in the contemporary Philippines. Unlike Alcazaren, however, he situates this concept alongside the rise of disinformation machines, peddlers of anti-free speech messages, and bureaucratic viciousness against activism and dissent. In his article "Protection from Anti-Free Speech Persuasion: An Experimental Testing of Inoculation Strategy in Building Resistance to Persuasive Anti-Free Speech Messages among Filipino Youth," Cruz asserts that given these anti-free speech, anti-activism, and anti-dissent factors, Filipinos are undeniably placed in a position where they choose to remain passive or silent even while their fundamental notions of truth and reality are getting distorted, if not totally eroded. Hence, Filipinos have to find a more robust way of understanding these communicative threats to their free speech and democratic values. Specifically, they have to equip themselves with what Cruz calls "psychological resistance against such forms of misleading and harmful persuasion including anti-free speech persuasion." To this end, Cruz pursues a factorial quasi-experimental research to test the effectiveness of inoculation strategy and its components (e.g., threat and refutational preemption) in building resistance to anti-free speech persuasion. Yielding interesting results on how different inoculation treatments induce resistance depending on specific social and communicative conditions, the study of Cruz ultimately emphasizes the need for the critical and careful usage of inoculation strategies to secure the overall value that Filipinos ascribe to free speech and democracy, and to protect themselves from the continuously growing and ever mutating anti-free speech efforts happening in the

local, national, and global scales.

In the succeeding sections, we parse out the terms “speech communication,” “in the Philippines,” and “now” comprising this special issue’s theme to clarify why they mean and matter to us. This is done not to provide a universal meaning or rehash a common conceptualization for each term. Rather, it is done to elaborate on these terms in line with our social positions, academic training, and intellectual investments as editors, academics, and scholars. Furthermore, this will assist in foregrounding how these terms can be understood vis-à-vis the ideas of our contributors who have tried to define, determine, and direct speech communication through their examinations of specific Philippine cases, examples, and phenomena.

Speech Communication

Scholars in American academia have pejoratively evaluated the disciplinary formation of speech communication as “derivative” (Cohen), “ambiguous” (Cohen), and “incoherent” (Bochner and Eisenberg). Various journal articles and book chapters by thought-leaders have marked not only the “silencing” (Gunn and Dance) of speech in the general area of communication studies but also the weakening of the discipline per se within academic institutions and organizations such as the National Communication Association (NCA) and the International Communication Association (ICA). If these foreign assessments are to be believed, the fate of speech communication is certainly bleak if not totally doomed.

And yet, in the Philippines, the view seems to be different. Though there are certainly doubts and anxieties about the coverage, nature, focus, relevance, and direction of speech communication, there have also been efforts to map out the epistemic and embodied practices, the pedagogies and performances, the content and agenda, as well as the politics and ideologies of the discipline (Serquiña “Institutionalizing Speech Communication”). There have also been efforts to enrich and expand the history of the discipline by situating its practices in histories of colonialism and imperialism (Serquiña “Communicative Colonialism”); the rise and growth of the modern Philippine university; the development of English departments and Anglo-American dramatic traditions in the country (Serquiña “Institutionally Speaking”); and the spread of media technologies such as the radio (Serquiña “Voices on the Air”). In other words, Filipino scholars have initiated several measures to grasp speech communication’s genealogy and its capacity to perpetuate epistemic, creative traditions and practices in the country.

More specifically, the DSCTA and other departments across the UP System carrying speech communication and allied disciplines or fields have taken significant steps to account for the subject matters, theoretical frameworks, methods, analytical tools, modes of practice, and historical contingencies of speech communication in the Philippines. They have started tracking down the history of the discipline, probing its disciplinary past and present, and deciding on how its faculty and students can proceed with their disciplinary, pedagogical, and institutional future in light of trends in technology and other social, political, and even educational advancements and pressures (Gochoico). Furthermore, they have taken measures to rethink the highly Western orientations of the discipline, offering models that consider how speech communication and its specific areas such as rhetoric operate in geographical sites distant from the US such as the Philippines and get entangled with other epistemological and methodological systems such as those in/from indigenous and marginalized communities (Navera; Moraga-Leaño; Agravante; Mozo; Serquiña “Revitalizing Philippine Rhetorical Education”).

Indeed, despite its unlamented disappearance as an academic program in the West, speech communication still remains a persistent disciplinary formation in the Philippines. The nine articles in this special issue offer strong proof that Filipino academics and scholars choose to work within and revitalize the different areas of speech communication. They, too, offer crucial insights on the shape and status of speech communication in the country today. First, public speaking is no longer at the heart of the research projects taking place in the discipline. Many other communicative acts, styles, and modes have taken center stage in the intellectual inquiries of academics and scholars of speech communication. Some of our contributors have paid attention to bodily communication (such as rallies and protests) and visual communication (such as vandalisms, photographs, and advertisements). Others have attended to specific ways of communicating such as “coming out” and other particular sites of speech (away from the podium, the pulpit, or the theatrical stage) such as the classroom and the streets. What these points clarify for us is that speech communication is now becoming less about the generation and transmission of a speech as artifact and more about the diversification of spoken, communicative, embodied, and visual practices as procedures of production and participation.

Second, local academics and scholars are becoming more reflective of the distinct iterations and heterogeneous strands of speech communication in the Philippines. Some contributors latently or tacitly deal with the task of not only defining the discipline or determining its conditions of emergence and evolution but, also just as important, tracing its intersections with other disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. It can be observed that most of the theories that our contributors have utilized in their articles draw from a range of disciplines or fields (e.g., performance, media, gender, and cultural studies; education; psychology; and political sciences). Additionally, the methods and methodologies distinctly vary: from close reading and semiotic analysis of texts and images, through ethnography and direct interviews, all the way to quantitative surveys. Rather than taking the diversity and multiplicity of deployed theories and methods as a source of anxiety and doubt about the disciplinary identity and academic integrity of speech communication, we choose to see them as indicators of the vibrancy and dynamism of how academics and scholars appreciate speech communication as a discipline and examine the ever evolving kinds, modes, processes, and artifacts of communication that come about through the interaction of humans, media, platforms/channels, materials or resources in all sorts of contexts and environments.

Third, all of our contributors are expanding the notion of a speaker or a communicator with a sense of liberty and progressiveness. The term “speaker” or “communicator,” as the articles here attest, no longer simply references a figure on stage delivering a ready-made spiel or speech with unimpeachable memory and mastery; instead, it also accounts for anyone and everyone producing, disseminating, and receiving a message or a stimuli in whatever form—lingual, pictorial/photographic, corporeal— in order to obtain a response, whether overt or implied, to register an existence or leave a trace, and to institute, affirm, or shake up certain orders or relations of things.

Fourth, the contributors make it clear that the present day study of speech communication is not a benign undertaking. It is no longer merely about the voice, the body, and language being activated and mobilized for straightforward, transparent, and easily navigable ends. What the articles evidently lay bare is how speech communication study and practice, research and scholarship cannot be separated from the problematics of sex and gender, race and ethnicity, politics and society, power and ideology, as well as the influence of institutional and disciplinary structures. Spoken and embodied practices, oral competencies and skills, communicative acts and processes, communication technologies and platforms, speakers and

communicators, audiences and spectators are situated in and develop from socio-economic forces, ideological and political regimes, and technological advancements.

What all these points underline is that speech communication is a discipline composed of not just one but many areas of study and practice in the Philippines, and largely for good reasons.

In the Philippines

In a special issue of PHR in 2019, Belen Calingacion and Banaue Miclat-Janssen expressed the need to determine “the role of speech communication in the Philippine society” and “to develop our own home-grown theories anchored in a context that is Filipino and Asia, avoiding reliance on the Anglo-American perspective in the study of human-to-human communication” (np). Though worth raising, these remarks are not at all new. Historically, the discipline of speech communication has long been branded as elitist, Western, and removed from Philippine realities. Pedagogically, it has favored the English language, virtuous speakers and effective communicators, as well as well-rehearsed, well-executed performances such as public speeches and oral interpretation productions. Its pioneering teachers showed keen and undying interest in teaching oral skills with the guidance of ancient or modernist rhetorical tenets and Euro-American literary canons, communicative standards, and theatrical traditions. These tendencies and preferences have certainly solidified the notion that the discipline of speech communication has yet to undergo a process of Filipinization—an undertaking that disciplines such as psychology, history, anthropology, and literature, to name a few, have successively carried out by turning to local, regional, folk, indigenous, and everyday belief systems and life-worlds, and by using these as the analytical frames and methodological approaches in perceiving and examining any phenomenon involving Filipinos in the country and elsewhere.

However, in contrast to the arguments that Calingacion and Miclat-Janssen have brought forward, we make the assertion that the situation in the country is not as dire. In fact, our claim is that the Philippines has served as a fertile ground that allows speech communication to grow, morph, and mature as a discipline and as a practice outside its Western origins. More specifically, Philippine academia by way of UP has compelled speech communication as a disciplinary formation to account for and interface with realities and phenomena, agents and activities in Philippine society. The DSCTA, in particular, is no longer a mere importer and recipient of communication knowledge from the West. Even if its institutional structure and curricular components draw from American influences, the DSCTA is one of the active sites in the country where the study and practice of speech undergo serious negotiation.

As for the articles in this special issue are concerned, Filipino academics and scholars have been reimagining the discipline and navigating the particular qualities of speech communication in the context or institution where it lands, grows, and takes shape (De Pano et al.; Tatcho; Sayuno et al.). Others have taken the task of de-Westernizing speech communication and rhetoric, not only by exposing the limits of the textual, Euro-American, and classist presuppositions of these disciplines or fields but also by thoughtfully offering alternative ways of arranging, arraying, and analyzing communicative and rhetorical knowledge (Cruz, “The Possibilities of Indigenizing Rhetorical Theory”). There are efforts not only to test the applicability of existing communication theories on Philippine soil but also to see how their fundamental ideas and principles may be nuanced or negated once they meet the specificities of Filipino concerns and contexts. In other words, the task of critiquing the Euro-American epistemologies

and methodologies governing the discipline and identifying a “Philippine-effect” (i.e., adaptation, localization, reorientation, and reciprocity) on speech communication is already well within the efforts initiated and sustained by Filipino academics and scholars.

Indeed, our contributors offer examinations of speakers and speech-centered activities or events that constitute and are, in turn, constituted by political regimes (Crisostomo-Pilario), technological platforms (De Pano et al.), and cultural processes (Cruz, “Protection from Anti-Free Speech Persuasion”) in the Philippines. They also provide case studies that illustrate the relationship of speech to Philippine state and society, public culture and community, as well as ideology and transformative practice (Nepomuceno). We emphasize these points to underscore how we, in the Philippines, do not simply accept and regurgitate imported communication-related knowledge and practice. Both the country and the modern Philippine university have provided an address for speech communication to exist beyond the West. Furthermore, both the country and the University have given topics and themes, methods and methodologies, as well as figures and frameworks that have allowed and continue to allow teachers, scholars, and researchers to extend and enrich the disciplinary, theoretical, and practical reach of speech communication.

Now

As indicated by the word “now,” urgency, immediacy, and presence characterize our call for journal article contributions. For one, we aspire to bring together scholars and researchers who can provide a sustained and systematic analysis of speech communication. For another, we deem it of paramount importance to take stock of the discipline’s immediate environment, its burning issues, the institutions inside and outside UP that keep it relevant, as well as the pedagogical, intellectual, and creative logics and practices it continues to consider valuable.

However, in locating speech communication in the Philippines now, we do not mean to be shortsighted, ahistorical, and unburdened by convention. Rather, what we aim to explore are such questions as: What are the conversations happening within and around speech communication in the country today? And how do these current conversations vary from those that academics, scholars, and practitioners previously invested in? Indeed, when we ask about the “now-ness” of the discipline, we first wish to identify the DSCTA’s emergent entry points for epistemic or embodied practices as well as its current disciplinary barometers and investments. Second, we hope to lay bare the changing conditions, narratives, modalities, means, and even agents of speech communication.

But our questions around temporality also aim to bridge the gap between the presentism of the “now” and the history of the “then.” We are interested in tracing how the ways of speaking and communicating in the current moment have developed and then diverged from how Filipinos spoke and communicated from before. Just as we are curious to probe traditions and customs that came about in the long, layered history of the discipline, so are we determined to know the new lines of pedagogical and theoretical inquiries or habits at present. Certainly, while aiming for a clear view of the prevailing paradigms in the study and practice of speech communication, we simultaneously desire to open up spaces for new ways of thinking, researching, and practicing the discipline.

The now-ness of our call, in other words, is not exactly about the “newness” of speech communication in the Philippines. Rather, it is about what endures from the past as it leads into the present; what comes about in the intersection between old and new ideas; and what

has shifted in the standing conditions of the discipline and its people in the here and now. We see these dynamics more clearly in contributions that evaluate how speech communication is faring within academic institutions and departments across the UP System. UPD's DSC-TA, UPLB's Department of Humanities, and UPB's Department of Communication are well represented in the first three articles of this special issue. At varying scales, they touch on the overall structure of their speech communication programs. Independently, they clarify the particular directions of speech communication in their particular institutions. Together, they exemplify overlapping academic pursuits, visions, and investments of the University. All of these institutions are proactively reworking speech communication and making it more relevant to the technological age (De Pano et al.), more theoretically robust and socially engaged as a research-based discipline (Tatcho), and more structurally sensible as a humanistic discipline or department (Sayuno et al.). What ties these institutions together is a clear commitment to revitalize speech communication by keeping it abreast of trends in the present-day settings of the academe, the market industries, and Philippine society at large.

When thinking of the discipline now, we are, at the same time, trying to comprehend the curiosities of its scholars, researchers, and educators. To what research topics are they drawn? Through which disciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches do they choose to encounter speech communication? With what broad categories (e.g., race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, politics and society) do they entangle speech, communication, and speech communication? What kinds of artifact/object of study/subject of inquiry fall within the remit of this discipline nowadays? And from which standpoints do the scholars and researchers scrutinize them?

What this special issue brings into clear focus, on the one hand, is the pervasiveness of speech communication as a practice in institutional, industrial, and interpersonal contexts. On the other hand, it emphasizes the move of academics, researchers, and scholars to underscore the usefulness of speech communication as a disciplinary formation in shedding light on non-Western cultures, Philippine protest traditions, and the gendered and political lives of Filipinos. Now more than ever, speech communication is far from being skills-based, platform/podium/script-centric, and English oriented. It has been, in fact, proactively wresting itself from these highly Western or, to be more exact, Euro-American biases. In their speech communication classrooms and their scholarly or creative pursuits, educators and researchers are becoming more analytical, if not critical, of the canonical tenets and modernist principles that have long guided speech studies. A clear example of this point is seen in Carson Cruz's contribution that takes stock of indigenous concepts, methods, and worldviews as possible ways of destabilizing the colonial legacies of rhetorical theory, criticism, and practice and, by extension, interrogating the inherent whiteness, elitism, and conservatism of speech communication.

Additionally, this special issue amplifies how speech communication has become unapologetically interdisciplinary. It involves the necessary disruption of all types of binaries (e.g., human/machine, speech/technology, face-to-face/online, physical/mediated) that conventional teachers of speech communication have historically perpetuated largely to give definition to their disciplinary identity and justify their classroom strategies. The articles here demonstrate that these narrow divisions can no longer hold. While human-to-human communication surely remains as the foundation of the discipline's central interests, it would be unwise to understand speech communication in isolation from the media artifacts (such as advertisements), technologies (such as computers and the internet), and platforms (such as streaming and social networking sites) that shape it at present. In fact, as evidently shown by the contributions of Nepomuceno on the performativity and rhetoricity of photographs, of De Pano et al. on the

digital turn in speech communication study at the DSCTA, and of Ponce on the construction and circulation of gendered identities through pink peso advertisements, what humans do and say are now rendered possible notably via technological forms, channels, and formats.

Undoubtedly, the task of capturing how speech communication currently develops in the Philippines requires a broadness of mind to fathom how academic institutions work, how formal disciplines mutate, how scholarly and pedagogical orientations expand, how conditions of knowledge and practice shift, and how the subjectivities, positions, and tactics of communicative agents change in light of all sorts of constraints and advancements. This special issue clearly exemplifies that speech communication teachers, academics, researchers, and affiliates in the Philippines are not only far from shying away from theory but also readily and committedly enunciating the ones they utilize to be able to work in the classroom and on their respective scholarly, research, and even creative endeavors. Several of the contributions here, in fact, are the direct outcomes of ongoing attempts of speech communication academics to decisively define their respective program's or department's rules of engagement with the hope of taking their rightful position in the vast academic landscape such as the whole UP System.

Calingacion and Micalat-Janssen argued that “speech communication remains a little recognized field and is generally confused with the more popular field of mass communication” (np). They also asserted that “[i]t is time we asked ourselves if it has truly reached the status where it is recognized as a distinct field in Philippine education and at par with other academic disciplines” (np). With the articles comprising this special issue as our bases, we wish to respond to these points by saying that speech communication as a discipline in the country has deepened its aspiration and extended its reach. Moving beyond its orthodox obsessions with scripts and speeches, it now takes into serious consideration all communicative forms, subjects, and practices. Nevertheless, we agree with Calingacion and Micalat-Janssen's argument that “[t]here is really so much to be done in this area” and that “[w]e have barely scratched the surface of the many possible researchable topics of speech communication in the Philippine context” (np). Institutions and academics must, indeed, continuously strive to rebuild, revitalize, and enrich this disciplinary formation where they find ground and take nourishment by mapping out its place in contemporary society through theoretical, scholarly, and critical work.

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