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## **ABSTRACT**

It is known across the world that individuals with disabilities, particularly those with debilitating speech conditions, benefit from the wonders of digital technology. Some may think that digital technology has provided enough aid for the “voiceless.” However, on the standpoint of the “voiceless,” have they truly bridged the communication gap between them and the society? Do they feel included in our society’s endeavor for shared growth?

Using autoethnography as the methodology, this personalized account of a 37-year-old Filipino’s decade-long and ongoing struggle with a speech disability called dysphonia aimed to look at the communication challenges of a dysphonic Filipino, and to identify how he utilized digital technology to effectively communicate and to find his identity. The data which comprised of the author’s thoughts, memories and reflexive thinking as expressed in the author’s social media posts, medical documents, photos, and journal entries were used to answer the research question, “what are the communication barriers of dysphonic Filipinos and how can they effectively communicate and find their identity through digital technology?”

The data gathered were organized using thematic organization which classifies the information into the following: an abstract (What was this about?), an orientation (Who? What? When? Where?), a complication (Then what happened?), an evaluation (So what?), a result (What finally happened?), and a coda (the finished narrative). The data were analyzed using narrative analysis and explained from the perspective of Communication Theory of Identity (CTI).

The main communication barriers identified in this study revolve around unavailability or unsuitability of assistive communication mediums; lack of human support, knowledge, or readiness; unconducive environment; and the dysphonic person’s physical and psychological barriers.

In addition, the author described how dysphonic individuals can effectively communicate through digital technology and eventually find their self-identity. By sharing how digital technology was utilized in terms of the Eight Dimensions of Wellness (physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, social, environmental, vocational, and financial), the author shared that achieving a happy and productive life is possible.