Preparing An Interview Schedule for an Ethnographic Study in the Business Community

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Over the last decade, ethnographic studies have been steadily increasing, both in number, and in complexity and sophistication. This is probably due to the increasing use of qualitative methods in language research, and also, in large part, to the greater intertwining of other disciplines and activities with language teaching and research. This is especially evident in the areas of Second Language Research (SLA) and Language for Special Purposes (LSP).

The recent paradigm shift in LSP has seen it being perceived as a Situated Educational Enterprise (SEE). [See Tickoo (1993)]. In line with this view, an educational enterprise has to take full account of the situation (context of situation) in which the language learning activity takes place. Very often, this involves the suppliers of language teaching services having to tread terrains that are relatively unfamiliar.

Not only do they have to embark into this new and relatively unfamiliar territory, but they also have to understand the principles, philosophy, attitudes and other factors that may influence the effective acquisition of the necessary language skills for their customers' specific purposes. This involves having to encounter a strange world and having to make sense of it - exactly the kind of situation that requires an ethnographic approach (Agar, 1986).

Admittedly, the ethnographic approach does have several drawbacks, or shortcomings (Sargunan, 1997). Since ethnography is at its core a process of "mediating frames of meaning" (Giddens, 1976), the nature of a particular mediation will depend on the nature of the traditions that are in contact during fieldwork. Also, since ethnographies emerge out of a relationship among the traditions of the ethnographer, the group that is studied, and the intended audience, there is a great deal of subjectivity in the presentation of data (Agar, 1986). To add to all this, many researchers are not qualified ethnographers. As Swales (1994) points out, not any researcher who studies ethnographic factors can be an ethnographer. The approach requires considerable social skill and a particularly keen sense of people and places. [See Swales (1994) and Agar (1986) for a more in-depth discussion of the drawbacks of the method.]

It is important we remember that ethnography does not claim to describe a reality that is accessible only through statistics and experimental designs. There are certain dimensions, such as the historical and cultural aspects of the context of learning, that cannot be captured by these means. What ethnography tries to do is to complement the experimental / quantifiable findings with a qualitative description that tries to capture the other more elusive factors that have a bearing on the issue being researched, and thus present a more comprehensive picture to those interested in social / language research and education.

To dismiss ethnography as being overly subjective is to discard a valuable source of insight into language and language learning. What needs to be done is for readers to access the data while bearing the constraining factors in mind. There should be more concerted effort by both parties (those presenting the research findings, and those hearing or reading about them) to make a genuine and sincere attempt to understand the research issue. The readers too need to bear the culture and professional training of the researcher in mind, so that they can better respond to any seeming inadequacy or bias. Both parties need to **jointly** seek to understand the picture being created.

All this notwithstanding, there is a need to respond to the call for greater control and stability in ethnographic methods, and to be more stringent about procedures of ethnographic research. For instance, Swales' (1994) concern over the lack of properly trained ethnographers is legitimate, and does merit serious attention. However, no amount of training will enable an ethnographer to go out into the field, and conduct an efficient investigation. The training can only make him/her better prepared; s/he will still have to go out there and confront the myriads of issues that surface as s/he attempts to understand an alien (to the researcher) culture. Training has to go hand in hand with experience which can only be gained by stepping out into the "mud and slime", and slipping a few times!

Another way in which one can introduce greater control and stability in ethnographic research is by doing constant, relentless, and more in-depth albeit preliminary investigations in the area. Johns (1994) has suggested greater contextualization in the analysis of texts - consideration of more factors such as writer's purpose, audience (in terms of discourse community expectations), their values, etc. She has also advocated greater contextualization of the language and culture of discourse communities. Closer to home, Zubaidah (1994) suggests that more ethnographic studies be conducted into more specific targetted areas.

Still others have sought to establish greater validity in the method by doing more intensive and extensive research using and fine-tuning ethnographic procedures. For instance, a project on professional writing conducted jointly by the University of Malaya and the British Council (1992 - 1994) attempted to obtain data using ethnographic methods. They identified all the factors that they perceived had a bearing on the professional writing in the business community, such as the expectations, attitudes, practices and abilities of the members of the discourse community (expert writers and readers, novice writers and readers, etc.), and designed a research approach that would elicit data which would help the researchers understand the different culture that existed in that community [Refer to Chitravelu (1993), and Sargunan (1994) for more on this.]

A third way to establish greater control and stability in ethnographic methods is to create a language that is appropriate for presenting ethnographic data. As Agar (1986) points out, there are different styles of social research, but only one dominant language to talk about them. This is sometimes called the "received view" of science, a view that abounds in concepts and terminology such as systematic tests, null hypotheses, and statistical measurements. But there are some research styles that are not so much concerned with all these, that seek to identify, investigate and communicate information that eludes the more traditional means of capturing it. Ethnography falls within this category And in order to facilitate presentation of data, ethnographers need a language to describe and evaluate their research, one that better represents the way it actually works (Agar, 1986).

Yet another way to improve ethnographic methodology is to learn from those who have done similar research before. To date, there have been many reports of ethnographic studies, but they have tended to concentrate more on the findings rather than the research process. This paper attempts to make available the experience of the present researcher in designing, administering and reviewing an interview schedule in the light of ethnographic principles.

The Research Situation

The interview that is to be described in this paper was designed as part of a pilot study that was carried out in a multinational manufacturing organization in Malaysia (henceforth referred to as MNMC as they prefer anonymity).The pilot study was in turn part of a larger research project that sought to investigate the gap between effective and non-effective technical reports (according to "local criteria") produced in MNMC. There would also be further investigation between the locally effective technical report and the generically ideal form for the organization (more on this below).

There would thus be a comparison between three categories of Technical Reports: the Non-effective report, the 'Locally' Effective report, and the 'Generically' Ideal report. A description of the 'Locally' effective report would be obtained according to the criteria and descriptors set forth by the discourse community (Swales, 1990) in which it (the report) is produced and consumed. There were several reasons for obtaining the description in this manner:

a. to ensure the creation of a set of criteria and descriptors that was customer oriented, in keeping with the tradition of the corporate world;

b. to enable the suppliers of language teaching services to direct their teaching towards the achievement of goals established by their customers.

c. to enable the creation of a proper contract between customers and suppliers of language teaching services that would be built on a jointly constructed foundation. (Refer to Sargunan, 1994.)

However, the criteria for effectiveness devised by the customers does not imply that it is necessarily the best for the organization. In the first place, they (the customers) may not be aware of alternatives. Secondly, they may not have taken all the relevant factors into consideration when describing their 'ideal' report.

These were the reasons for exploring the gap between the 'Locally' effective report and the 'Generically' ideal model. A description of the latter would be drawn up after reference to the following sources:

- experts in the Organization
- experts in similar Organizations
- language experts
- existing textbooks and manuals on technical report writing

Research Methodology

The research methodology for the main project involved, among other things, designing questionnaires and interview schedules to be administered to the relevant people. The list below indicates the intended respondents.

KEY PERSONNEL (Upper Management) (Administrative)	The Managing Director The Manager - Human Resources The Manager - R & D The Members of the Technical Excellence Committee

(Middle Management)	Heads of Departments
	Section Heads
	Supervisors
(Technical)	Technical Specialists
	Technicians
(Training)	Head of Department
	Section Head
	Course Instructor - (Technical Report Writing).

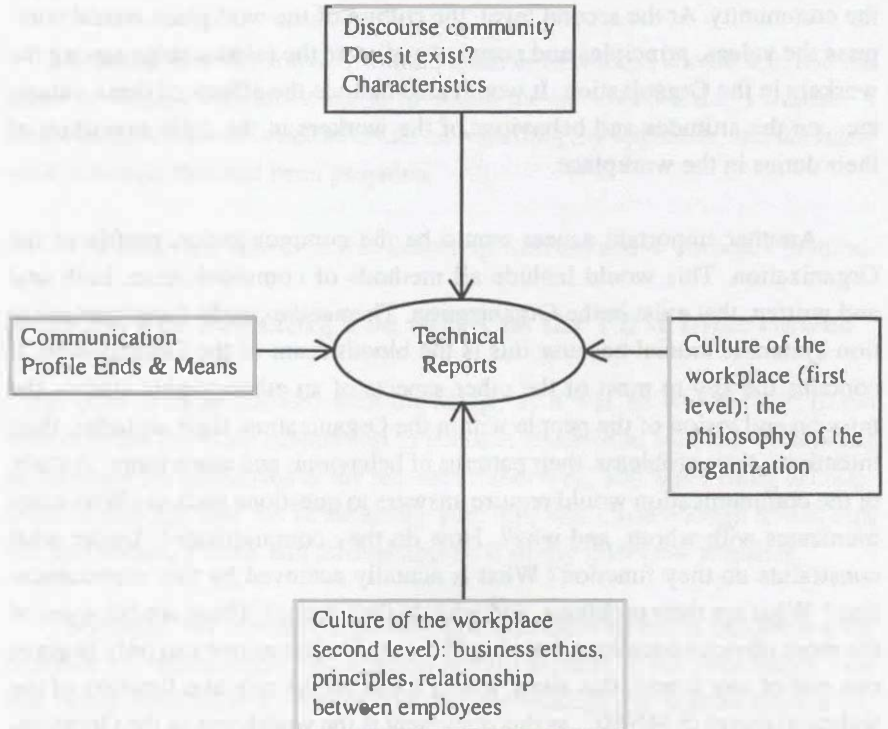
The pilot study was carried out to test the efficacy of the research methodology, especially the following aspects:

- the data gathering instruments
- the scope of the study - how many reports would have to be studied, and how many people need to be interviewed
- data analysis methods

The Objective of the Interview

The interview that is being described in this paper was the first that was administered.

The objective of the interview was to obtain data on the following so that I could obtain a bird's eye view of the organization:



My primary objective in designing the first interview was to obtain an overall picture of MNMC, and its workings (the bird's eye view). I had selected the Manager of Human Resouces (MHR) as my target (the reasons for this will be explained below), and I was not certain that he would have any knowledge/ experience of the Technical Report (which was in actual fact the ultimate subject of my research). However, I made provisions for the section on the technical report in my interview, as I wanted him to suggest who would be capable of responding to it, even if he could not answer the questions himself

Since the issues to be investigated (the two gaps between the three categories of reports) were emplaced in a culture that was relatively alien to me, I decided the best course of action would be to first understand the philosophy of the Organization. At the first level, this would encompass understanding its vision and mission, as well as its policies/attitudes towards its employees and the community. At the second level, the culture of the workplace would comprise the values, principles and norms that dictate the relationships among the workers in the Organization. It would also include the effects of these values, etc. on the attitudes and behaviour of the workers in the daily execution of their duties in the workplace.

Another important aspect would be the communication profile of the Organization. This would include all methods of communication, both oral and written, that exist in the Organization. The need to study the communication system is crucial because this is the bloodstream of the Organization. It contains the key to most of the other aspects of an ethnographic study - the mission and vision of the people within the Organization, their attitudes, their intentions, their problems, their patterns of behaviour, and much more. A study of the communication would require answers to questions such as Who communicates with whom, and why? How do they communicate? Under what constraints do they function? What is actually achieved by this communication? What are their problems, and why do they occur? These are but some of the more obvious questions that should be asked. But as one can only begin at one end of any strand, this study would focus on the role and function of the technical report in MNMC, as this document is the workhorse of the Organization.

As mentioned earlier, this would involve finding out who writes and receives the reports, why and how they are written, the document flow, and factors that affect their production and reception. The chances (based on my general knowledge) were high that the MHR would not be aware of most of the issues related to technical reports, but (as mentioned earlier) the schedule would contain a section on TRs so that he would be able to put me in touch with people who might.

Another important aspect I wanted to study was the discourse community. Was there a specific discourse community that could be identified in MNMC? [The term 'discourse community' is used here according to Swales

(1990) definition.] Did the MHR belong to any such community? Was he aware of the existence of such a community, if there was one existing? What were the characteristics of such a community? Did it have any influence on the technical report, or the factors that governed it? These were some of the questions to which I required answers.

In addition to the above, I wanted leads as to whom I should see, and the order in which I should see them, to obtain the information that I wanted. I also wanted some constructive criticism regarding my approach, and the interview schedule that had been prepared.

The interview schedule was drawn up with the above purposes in mind.

Reasons For Selecting The MHR as the First Interviewee

I was quite well-acquainted with the MHR, as it was he whom I had liased with in order to obtain permission to conduct research in MNMC. This being so, he knew the objectives of my research rather well, and was willing to cooperate. I also felt that my relationship with him was close enough to ask him for, and obtain, a frank and critical appraisal of my interview schedule.

Secondly, my few meetings with him had allowed me to tailormake the schedule by taking into consideration certain aspects of his personality He was rather vociferous by nature, and had the tendency to digress quite a bit. Also, he was extremely proud of MNMC, and his own role in helping to maintain its image. Being a Malay, a blunt, direct approach would not have worked with him. (The Malay culture does not condone this kind of an approach.) Although these issues may appear to be minor, I found that paying attention to these details helped me tremendously in designing the questions, and especially in estimating the time I needed to spend with him. Knowledge of these issues also helped me determine the manner in which I should conduct myself during the interview - I could not, for instance, ask him questions that would indicate (to him) that I was aware of his digressions, and was trying to bring him back to the point. He would interpret that as rudeness. But, on the other hand, I could exploit his tendency to digress, and talk at length on the achievements of MNMC in order to obtain more information on the culture of the workplace, and the apparently irrelevant details that all serve to constitute a clearer, more authentic picture of the Organization.

Third, his being in charge of Human Resouces has placed him in an advantageous position with regard to knowing the roles and duties of the staff in MNMC. He would also be aware of their general strengths and weaknesses. Hence, he would be one of the best persons who could provide me with a lead as to whom I should see, and the sequence in which I should schedule my interviews.

Guidelines for the Interview Schedule

1. **Semi-open interview schedule**. Since the first interview was in the nature of a preliminary probe, I designed a semi-open interview schedule that would contain just some specific core questions that would permit elaboration and some limited diversions.

2. **Triangulation**. I also tried to design the schedule in such a manner that it would permit cross-checking of answers.

3. **Respondent's peronality** I tried to incorporate my knowledge of the character and personality of the respondent when formulating questions for the interview.

4. **Limited questions**. In order to reduce the length of the interview, I tried to limit my questions to only what was absolutely necessary. Previous experience had taught me that just the sight of a lengthy schedule was enough to put off the interviewee, right from the beginning. If necessary, I would have to ask him to see me at a future date.

   I have found this method (using second interviews) to be advantageous for two reasons: it allows the researcher to use material from the first interview to plan better for the second. It also allows him/her to keep the first interview short, thus preventing the respondent becoming tired or frustrated with it (the interview).

   But in order for this to happen, it is necessary that the interviewer makes a good impression on the interviewee at his/her first interview

5. **Structure**. The schedule was divided into two main sections. (Please refer to the interview schedule in Appendix A.)

The first section (A-G) comprised all the core questions on the personal details regarding the repondent, his perception of the organization's functions, goals, roles and mission, the culture of the workplace, the communication system (profile), and the discourse community It also contained a brief section on the technical report. This was to enable the researcher to obtain the respondent's perceptions of the "Local" criteria for effectiveness.

The second section contained characteristics of an effective technical report. These haracteristics were again divided into two levels.

Level 1 contained six adjectives used to describe an effective report (Markel, 1988). **Level 2** went a step further to list the characteristics of an effective technical report in greater detail.

The rationale for providing both sections was to allow for any deficiency the respondent might experience when trying to define an 'effective' technical report in terms that would be comprehensible and acceptable to the interviewer (who comes from the academic community). Previous experience had shown that people from unrelated fields (such as the corporate sector) find it difficult to think of expressions to describe issues/things in a language that researchers from the language/academic discipline find satisfactory This is probably because the former never had reason to deal with such situations as part of their often normal, and often, hectic lives. In order to cope with this, some researchers provide a list of expressions that their respondents can choose from.

However, I feel that using this approach might pre-empt the respondents from giving their own views: they are compelled to choose from a list given to them. Thus, I think it is better to allow them to give their own views first, in their own language (even if it is limited), and then allow them to substantiate this by choosing from a given list. Also, providing progressively deeper levels of choices (as in Section 2 of the interview schedule) would allow the respondents to be led in gradually to a point that we (the researchers) want them to think about. A secondary function of having two or more levels is that it would allow the interviewer to cross-check the answers provided.

It is important, however, that both levels should be linked by a consistent idea: the later levels should be expansions of the first. Only then can the rationale of providing successively deeper levels be justified.

Procedure for Administering the Interview

1 Prior to meeting the MHR, I tried to find out as much as I could about him from other sources. For instance, I found out his full name and designation, as well as a brief description of his duties, from his secretary. (Much of this information was obtained by talking about her daily routine/duties.) This allowed me to know enough about him to begin the interview with more confidence and greater impact.

2. I also tried to read up as much of the available literature as I could about the Organization so that I could better relate to what he (the MHR) had to say about it. I could also ask questions that were more knowledgeable and pertinent.

3. I made an appointment with him early enough to decide upon a date that would not disrupt his other schedules. I assumed (rightly!) that giving him more time would make him more amenable to the interview. I confirmed the appointment with him a day before the interview, and obtained permission to record it (audio-tape).

4. I explained the purpose of my interview once again at the beginning of the session so that he could better work with me in jointly attaining the objectives of the interview. He could direct his answers to better effect as he could see my goals clearly.

5. Although he agreed to spare me one hour of his time, the session went on for another fifteen minutes. I still needed to probe further regarding certain issues regarding the culture of the workplace and the discourse community, but I concluded the interview because I saw that he was getting a bit distracted. His cordiality remained unimpaired as he promised another interview with me in the near future.

Although he was a very obliging man, I believe that his cordiality was due in large measure to the manner in which I conducted the interview. I was interested in much of what he had to say, and listened to his digressions as earnestly as I listened to his more relevant comments. I did not push him too hard, or cut him short much as I wanted to! (I had to obtain so much information, and I had only so much time!)

Review of Interview/Interview Schedule

(Please refer to the Interview Schedule in Appendix A.)

1 **Technical Reports.** As expected the MHR did not have much to do with technical reports, and did not know much about them. This meant that a large section of the schedule was inapplicable (Item F in Section 1, Qs 1 and 3 of item G, and the whole of Section 2). But it must be noted that I had to prepare those questions because I was not absolutely certain of his knowledge of the reports. I had to prepare for the eventuality that he might have some experience, perhaps in his earlier portfolios. If he had had the knowledge, the questions would have been of invaluable help.

2. **Discourse Community** This was the section (Item 6) which required extensive revision. In the first place, two of the questions that I had prepared (1 and 3) were not applicable. Question 2 was of course rephrased to make it more accessible to the respondent, but it was still ineffective as I could not obtain the information I wanted, i.e., whether the respondent belonged to a particular discourse community, and if he did, whether he was aware of it, and could describe its' characteristics. The question was deliberately left till the end of the interview, as I wanted the respondent to be familiar with the 'culture of the workplace' before attempting to think about the concept of discourse community, as there are certain issues that are common to both the concepts.

   However, contrary to expectations, the respondent still could not understand what I wanted. This I think was largely due to the way in which I framed the questions. What I had done was to simpify my question by breaking it up into manageable (to me!) units. (Please refer to Appendix B for an extract of the interview.)

   I had used terms such as 'community' which had confused him, because he was thinking of it in terms of conventional definitions, and not in the technical sense that I had meant it to be. His responses clearly indicated that there had been some miscommunication. I decided that the best course of action was to let this be, and move on to the next topic. I needed to go back and approach the issue from a different angle, one that took into account the gap that existed between the linguistic/academic community, and the manufacturing community, in terms of the language being used, and the difference in concepts. I needed to translate my intentions in a language that was more transparent to my respondent. And I definitely needed to put aside more time for it, and it had to be quality time - I could not face him with this question towards the end of the interview!

3. **Constant Interruptions.** It was difficult to conduct the interview as effectively as I would have liked to because of the constant interruptions - phone-calls, unexpected visitors. The respondent was in charge of external relations as well, and very often he could not put off his visitors, although they had come without appointments, because they had come from IMPORTANT or distant places. The interruptions (4 of them) occurred at crucial moments in the interview Not only did they take up valuable time, but they also broke the trend of communication. In this kind of a situation, I had no choice but to grin and bear it, but it did give me a good reason to ask for a second interview.

4. **Priority List.** I had listed my questions in order of topics, so that there would be a sense of continuity, but this could prove to be an unwise move. An added factor that needs to be taken into consideration is that both time and the respondent's attention span is limited. In this particular case, the respondent was already quite tired by the time we came to 'THE DISCOURSE COMMUNITY', which was a very important section in my schedule. Thus it may be advisable to have 'top priority' questions early in the interview (just in case one does not get an opportunity for a second interview).

5. **Digressions.** One of the greatest difficulties I had was in getting the respondent to stick to the point. His digressions, though interesting, were time consuming and distracting. I found the following methods to be effective:

- asking questions / making comments that did not did not veer too sharply from the topic he was talking about, and was yet relevant to my original question. In other words, I gently guided him back to the issue under discussion.

- directing a brief but pointed glance at my watch: and

- switching off the recorder (with a smile to say 'no offence!').

6. **Copy of Schedule**. Giving the respondent a copy of the interview schedule has both advantages and disadvantages. Having a copy of the questions would encourage him to expect the researcher to stick closely to the questions, in terms of both sequence and expression. This may not be advantageous because the schedule, being semi-open in nature, is expected to be only a guideline. Also, the questions may be worded too technically, and this might do damage before the researcher has the time to explain it in more accessible terms.

On the other hand, giving the respondent a copy would allow him to read once again questions that he had imperfectly understood. Also, certain questions may be simple, yet long, and may contain alternatives that may be better read than listened to. In such cases, the interview can move much faster if the respondent has a copy

The interview discussed above followed ethnographic principles to the extent that it attempted to take into account all the factors in the particular environment that would have a bearing on the responses, such as the culture and personality of the respondent, the culture of the community / workplace in which he was operating, and other forces that influenced his daily actions and decisions. Most of this information was obtained by reading up about the environment in which the respondent operates, and talking to people who are from, or who know about this environment. First hand experience in the environment is of course invaluable, but quite difficult to obtain.

Ethnographic research can be very time-consuming as it is highly exploratory in nature, and many tentative attempts have to be made to grasp the core of the issue one is researching. Allowances have to be made for this. Each situation is attended by different and sometimes quite unique features that one might not have come across previously One only learns by more and more hands-on experiences in the field. As mentioned earlier, no amount of training can prepare one for the myriads of factors that surface as one goes about investigating a phenomenon.

However, the efforts of researchers to daringly grapple with data that is not statistically quantifiable should receive the recognition that they justly deserve. Producers and consumers of such research should be prepared to handle and view these efforts in a different light, and not compare them against the yardsticks used for data / research that is more easily identified and quantified. More effort should be expended on the creation of a language that can effectively handle and communicate the data produced by ethnographic field studies so that users can more readily appreciate their importance and value.

As mentioned earlier, there are no short-cuts. Ethnographers have to 'go in there' to discover what is present, and how this is to be unearthed and described. Every discovery has to be shared with fellow researchers, so that they receive both encouragement and invaluable knowledge/insight into relatively new and daring methods. Only in this way can we have the true development that is the mainstay of authentic research.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ~~———————~~ HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

SECTION 1

A. PERSONAL DETAILS

1 Name: 2. Sex 3. Age

4. Educational/Professional Qualifications: Level, Medium of Education, Duration & Qualifications

5. Present Job:

   i. Designation.
   ii. No. of years in service:

6. Previous Jobs. Place of employment, designation, and no. of years in service

B. JOB DESCRIPTION

[Any available documents specifying this?]

C. PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATION'S FUNCTION, ROLE, GOAL, MISSION

D. CULTURE OF THE WORKPLACE

1 What are the values that the organization tries to inculcate among its employees?

i. Attitude towards work / standards / work ethics
ii. Hierarchical differences / relationship between management and grassroots.
iii. Attitude towards promotion.
iv Attitude towards each other.
v. Attitude towards self improvement.
vi. Attitude towards the outer world
- the other branches of MNMC within Malaysia
- the other branches of MNMC without Malaysia other manufacturing companies
- the broader community - involvement, etc

2. Do the employees practise the advice of the Organization vis - a - vis the attitudes?

3. Does the Organization cater to the employees needs in other ways - welfare (social and economic), entertainment, etc.?

4. How does the Organization try to inculcate proper attitudes among its staff?

5 Please comment on any other aspect of the culture of the workplace that you think may be relevant to my study

E. COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

1 What are the established means of communication in your Organization? (Examples)

i. Telephone
ii E-mail
iii. Letters
iv Memos

v. Reports - Proposals
- Feasibility Studies
- Trouble-shooting
- Lab.
-Weekly reports

2. Can you rank them in order of use?

F. THE TECHNICAL REPORT

1 Your definition [with examples].

2. To your knowledge, who writes them, and who receives them? Why are they written? How?

3. Do you write or receive any technical reports? To / From whom? Why do you write / receive them?

4. How would you define an effective Technical Report? What are the qualities/characteristics of an effective TR? Could you rank them? [You can give equal importance to two, or more, characteristics.]

5. In your opinion, how would you classify TRs in MNMC: EFFECTIVE OR NON-EFFECTIVE? [Could you quantify them in terms of percentages?)

6. Why would you say they were ineffective?

7 Why do you think people write effective / non-effective reports? What makes them effective / non-effective writers?

8. Do you think that the effective TRs are necessarily the best? Can they [the former] be made even more effective? If so, how?

9 Can / Should the modified version be implemented in MMMC? What are the implications?

10. What do you think is the role of TRs in MNMC?

11. Do you think that the role of TRs can be enhanced in MNMC? How?

G. THE DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

1 Earlier, we talked about the culture of the workplace. Do you think that this has any bearing on the TR?

2. Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to a particular community, in the sense of a business community, or in relation to your career? For example, do you belong to the administrative, or managerial community? Would you like to be even more specific - managerial/business community in the manufacturing sector?

   If you think that you are a member of such a community, how would you name It (the community)? What are its characteristics?

3. Do you think that the TR is influenced by the thinking and the behaviour of this particular community? How, and to what extent?

SECTION 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL REPORT

LEVEL 1

CONTENTS ORGANIZATION STYLE / LANGUAGE

Clarity

Comprehensiveness

Accessibility

Accuracy

Correctness

Conciseness

LAYOUT

Aesthetic Considerations

Format

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL REPORT

LEVEL 2

1 Simple, straight-forward language.

2. Predominantly active voice.

3. Balanced use of technical, sub-technical and non-technical language.

4. Awareness of audience (reader).

5. Awareness of purpose, i.e., writer's own.

6. Contents - selection of relevant information.

7 Contents - inclusion of all relevant information.

8. Contents - objectivity in presentation.

9 Contents - accuracy of facts and figures.

10. Organization: The technical report must have the following sections (tick your choices).

    a) abstract
    b) summary
    c) introduction
    d) objectives
    e) background
    f) method / procedure
    g) problem
    h) discussion
    i) suggested solutions (proposals)
    j) conclusion
    k) recommendations
    l) appendices
    m) glossary
    n) references

o) acknowledgements
p) preface
q) foreword

11 Which do you think are the most essential sections? What should the order / sequence be?

12. What should the contents be in each section?

13. Graphics should be used wherever possible. (Can they be used in place of linear texts?)

14. Graphics should be accompanied by captions.

15 Graphics should be placed as close to the text as possible.

16. Appendices should be used whenever possible, to make the actual technical report less bulky.

17 Language / style: Correct grammar
Correct spelling
Correct vocabulary (technical, & otherwise)
Consistency – headings, sub-headings
Numbering system
Underlining
Punctuation

18. Layout Spacing, (margins, etc.)
Lettering (fonts, etc.)
- for practical purposes - clarity, accessibility
- for aesthetic reasons

19 Following house style.

20. Facts presented in point form. Just basic explanation.

Appendix B

EXTRACT FROM INTERVIEW (modified to eliminate irrelevancies)

Q : Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to a particular community, in the sense of a business community, or in relation to your career; for example, do you belong to the administrative or managerial community Or would you like to be even more specific - managerial-administrative community in the manufacturing sector. How would you name it? What are its characteristics?

(Long pause)

A : I am a member of the managerial-business community

Q : Could you explain more. Do you think think that you could be more specific. Is there something that is particular about the manufacturing community, that is different from other business communities?

(Long pause)

A There are two things involved here. I am a businessman. I am a manager. What

what - what - ?

Q : What am I asking?

A . Ya.

Q : See, what I want to find out is - your community is so special, do you think you are different from another community. Being a manager in the business community, or in the business-managerial community, is different from being a a manager in the service community, hospitals, for example. My question is - do you see that, or do you think there is no need to make a distinction? I'm trying to find out whether people in the business community think they are members of a select community

A : Social hierarchy. Kings, sultans etc belong to one community. Next is senior government officials. They belong to one hierarchy. ... This goes down to the coolie, etc. 5/6 layers. But now corporate people have moved up. Government officials are being replaced by the corporate. We own listed companies - we own the world!...