ADC 375

# COMMUNICATION AMONG THE SAFETY MANAGEMENT TEAM ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE

# **DEVI ARUMUGAM**

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULLFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ENGLISH AS A
SECOND LANGUAGE

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA KUALA LUMPUR

**FEBRUARY 2004** 



# PERAKUAN TENTANG HASIL KERJA AKADEMIK.

Dengan ini saya, Devi a/p Arumugam, No. Pendaftaran TGB 98030 mengaku bahawa naskah disertasi yang saya serah bertajuk: Communication Among The Safety Management Team On A Construction Site merupakan hasil kerja akademik saya sendiri kecuali bahan-bahan / petikan yang telah dinyatakan sumber asalnya.

Sekian dimaklumkan.

Yang benar,

Devi a/p Arumugam

Tarikh: 25 Februari 2004.

#### ARSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini adalah suatu kajian yang meninjau bentuk-bentuk dan strategistrategi perbualan yang digunakan oleh pekerja-pekerja di tapak pembinaan. Kajian ini meninjan keperluan penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris perbualan dalam interaksi harian untuk menyelenggarakan tugas-tugas harian. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengukur sejauh mana kepentingan bentuk-bentuk perbualan dan kemahiran strategistrategi perbualan yang digunakan oleh kaum pekerja tapak pembinaan membantu penyelenggaraan tugas-tugas di tempat kerja. Penyelidik telah menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk menganalisa data yang dikumpul. Data untuk kajian ini telah diperolehi dengan menggunakan temu bual, rakaman audio, dan pemantauan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa walaupun strategi-strategi perbualan membantu interaksi penyelenggaraan kerja-kerja, pekerja-pekerja pengurusan atasan terutamanya golongan jurutera dan pengurusan pertengahan iaitu pegawai-pegawai keselamatan dan penyelia-penyelia keselamatan dalam organisasi ini tidak sepenuhnya menguasai perbualan Bahasa Inggeris. Sehubungan dengan ini, beberapa cadangan untuk mempertingkatkan pengajaran dan pembelajaran perbualan Bahasa Inggeris telah diutarakan. Signifikasi kajian ini juga berpotensi memberi ruang untuk merapatkan jurang di antara alam pekerjaan dan alam akademik.

#### ABSTRACT

This research is a study of the communication patterns and strategies of a discourse community, namely the Safety Management Team (SMT) on a construction site. The main objective of this study is to determine how its communication patterns and strategies facilitate the interaction among the workforce to achieve its shared common goals. A qualitative approach was employed to access and analyse the data. The instruments used in this research are observations, audio recording and interviews. Findings show that communicative strategies employed by the Safety Management Team are effective to achieve its common goals in accordance with the safety code at the construction site. However, the English language proficiency among the workforce, especially the engineers from the top management level and the safety officers and supervisory staff from the medium level of the organization needs to be upgraded, especially with regard to their verbal communication. Recommendations and some possible improvements to the teaching and learning of oral communication have been suggested based on the findings obtained. The study is significant in the sense of providing an opportunity to bridge the gap between the working world and the world of academia

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I owe many people who sincerely and genuinely helped me throughout the writing of this thesis. I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr.Rajeswari Sargunan, for her patience, dedication, encouragement and gentle guidance.

I would like to thank and express my sincere appreciation to the management of Gadang Engineering Sdn. Bhd. This thesis draws heavily upon their insight and feedback, and therefore would not possibly have been undertaken and completed without their support.

My special thanks goes to my brother, Safety Manager, Mr.A.Subramaniam, who helped me obtain access to the organization, and assisted me with some of the initial ground work needed before I could embark upon the actual research. I owe him my deepest appreciation and sincere gratitude for his invaluable assistance and being the reference person in explaining construction jargons and registers encountered and the procedures involved in safety operation during construction. My appreciation also goes to him for sacrificing his time, in spite of his busy schedule.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the family of lecturer Mr.

M.Subramaniam and Vickneswary for their kind hospitality and invaluable encouragement. I would like to thank them for adopting me as their 'child'.

To the family of Mr.K.Ragavan I am grateful for their help. To my beloved student Sharvin Ragavan, I would like to thank him for his secretarial service rendered sincerely for many nights. To my friends, I wish them special thanks for their ideas, hints and feedback.

To my family members I owe them gratitude for their unfailing love and support. They have sacrificed time and effort despite their tight schedule to care for my child and me. My physical and emotional strength is, upon their concern and love. Finally, a special note of thanks to my husband, Mr.M.Jegathesan for his patience and support, and my wonderful child, Uganesh Kumaran for letting 'Amma Suguna Devi go university'.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

			Page
PERAKUAN	TENT	ANG HASIL KERJA AKADEMIK	i
ABSTRAK			ii
ABSTRACT	•		iii
ACKNOWL	EDGEM	IENT	v
TABLE OF	CONTE	NTS	xi
LIST OF AB	BREVI	ATIONS	xii
LIST OF FIG	GURES	AND TABLES	x iv
LIST OF GL	OSSAR	Y	xv
CHAPTER	: 1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	OVE	RVIEW	2
1.2	BACK	GROUND TO THE STUDY	
	1.2.1	DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSTRUCTION	2
		INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA	
	1.2.2	IMPORTANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE	4
		IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY	
	1.2.3	THE RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING THE	
		SAFETY MANAGEMENT SECTOR AND	5
		SAFETY TEAM	7
	1.2.4	PUTRAJAYA AS THE RESEARCH SITE	8
	1.2.5	GADANG ENGINEERING BHD.	
	1.2.6	COMMON UTILITY TRENCH (CUT) AT PUTRA	. 9
		JAYA	

	1.2.7 THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE SAFETY	
	MANAGEMENT TEAM AND ITS OVERALL	
	COMMUNICATION LINES.	
		10
	1.2.8 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE	
	SAFETY MANAGEMENT TEAM	
		12
1.3	PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH	
1.4	OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH	15
1.5	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	15
1.6	SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH	15
1.7	DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY	16
1.8	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	17
1.9	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	17
1.10	THE ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS	19
		19
CHAPT	ER 11: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
2.1	INTRODUCTION	
2.2	DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION	20
2.3	MODELS OF COMMUNICATION	20
2.4	THE CONCEPT OF FEEDBACK	23
2.5	RELEVANT COMMUNICATION TERMS	27
	2.5.1 COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICE	29
	2.5.2 COMMUNICATIVE PATTERNS	30

2.6	BILINGUALISM AND TRANSLATION	31
2.7	CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING	32
2.8	ACCOMMODATION	33
2.9	DISCOURSE COMMUNITY	37
2.10	COMMUNICATIVE SITUATION, EVENT AND ACT	38
2.11	COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE	39
2.12	CHANNELS, MEDIUMS AND CODE	40
2.13	NON- VERBAL COMMUNICATION	41
2.14	ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES	43
2.15	ESP IN MALAYSIA	44
2.16	NEEDS ANALYSIS	45
2.17	ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION	47
2.18	RELEVANT RESEARCH	52
2.19	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	56
СНА	PTER III : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
3.1	INTRODUCTION	57
3.2	RESEARCH DESIGN	57
	3.2.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN	58
	3.2.2 THE ETHNOGRAPHIC METHOD	60
3.3	NEGOTIATING ACCESS	60

2.5.3 COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES

31

3.3.	SOURCES OF DATA	60
3.4.	COLLECTION OF DATA	62
3.5.	INSTRUMENTATION	64
	3.6.1 INFORMAL INTERVIEW	65
	3.6.2 OBSERVATION	65
	3.6.3 AUDIO RECORDING	66
	3.6.4 NOTE TAKING	66
	3.6.5 PHOTOGRAPHS	67
3.7	DATA ANALYSIS	67
3.8	CONSTRAINTS	68
3.9	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	68
CHAPTER	R IV : DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS	
4.1	INTRODUCTION	70
4.2	THE OVERALL ORGANIZATION OF THE SAFETY	72
	MANAGEMENT TEAM	
4.3	ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SAFETY	72
	MANAGEMENT TEAM	72
4.4	ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PEOPLE WHO	
	INTERACT WITH THE SAFETY MANAGEMENT	
	TEAM	75
4.5	TYPES OF COMMUNICATION	79
	4.5.1 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION	79

4.6	SECTION - TO - SECTION MEETINGS	93
	4.6.1 PROGRESS MEETINGS	93
	4.6.2 CO-ORDINATION MEETINGS	94
	4.6.3 SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS	95
	4.6.4 SAFETY BRIEFINGS	96
	4.6.5 TOOL BOX MEETINGS	97
	4.6.6 SAFETY INDUCTION	98
4.7	CANNELS OF COMMUNICATION	99
	4.7.1 FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION	99
	4.7.2 TELEPHONE CONVERSATION	99
	4.7.3 WALKIE – TALKIE	100
	4.7.4 MEGAPHONE / SIREN	100
	4.7.5 NON-VERBAL SAFETY SINAGE	101
4.8	COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES	102
4.9	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	109
СНА	PTER V: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS	
5.1	INTRODUCTION	110
5.2	SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS	111
5.3	IMPLICATIONS OF MAIN FINDINGS	116
5.4	SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESERCH	118
5.5	CONCLUSION	199

BIBLIOGRA	PH	Y		120
APPENDICE	ES			127
	Α	:	Transcripts	150
	В	:	Technical Reports	155
	C	:	Samples of non-verbal communication	166
	D	:	Diagram and the map of location of Common Utility	
			Trench (CUT)	168
	E	:	Examples of Personal Protective Equipments and	
			Machinery	173
	F	:	Letter of Indemnity	174
	G	:	Samples of Minutes of Meetings	194
	Н	:	Relevant pictures taken at the project site	199

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GDP - Gross Domestic Production

COSH - Conference On Occupational, Safety And Health.

CIDB - Construction Industry Development Board.

OSHA - Occupational Safety And Health Act.

DOSH - Department Of Occupational, Safety And Health.

CUT - Common Utility Trench.

KLSE - Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange.

PPC - Pembinaan Punca Cergas

PKK - Perkhidmatan Kontraktor Kerja

HQ - Head Quarters.

PMT - Project Management Team.

TNB - Tenaga Nasional Berhad.

JBA - Jabatan Bekalan Air.

OSH - Occupational Safety And Health.

FMA - Factories and Machinery Act.

DBKL - Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur

OT - Overtime.

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment

PJ - Putra Jaya

ESP - English For Specific/Special Purposes.

EOP - English For The Occupational Purposes.

ESL - English As A Second Language.

UMESPP - University of Malaya's English Special Purposes Project.

UMSEP - University Malaya's Spoken English Project.

MoU - Memorandum Of Understanding.

UM - University of Malaya.

TSA - Target Situation Analysis.

IT - Information Technology.

UKM - University Kebangsaan Malaysia.

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

# Figure No.

1.	Communication is interaction.
2.	Communication is transaction.
3.	Model of communication - Shahnon and Weaver in Burgoon.
4.	Model of communication - Lesswell.
5.	Model of communication - Newcomb in Fiskie.
6.	$\label{eq:Model} \textbf{Model of communication} - \textbf{Wesley Maclen in Fiskie}.$
7.	TSA Framework.
8.	Organization of Safety Management Team.
9.	Project representatives
10.	Overall lines of communication of the Safety Management Team
11.	Patterns of communication (Internal).
12.	Patterns of communication (External).
13.	Communication patterns of section-to-section meetings.

# 13. Table No.

- 1. Educational Background Of The Safety Management Team
- 2. Communicative Activities Between Safety Manager Engineers.
- Communicative Activities Between Safety Manager Safety
   Officers/Supervisors.
- 4. Communicative Activities Between Safety Manager Safety Crew.
- 5. Communicative Activities Between Safety Manager Craftsmen.
- 6. Communicative Activities Between Safety Manager Labourers/Security.

#### GLOSSARY

Temporary structures/stages - Structures erected temporarily to withstand permanent ones

ones.

Scaffolding - Standard steel -frames erected on site.

Dump trucks - Ten wheeler lorries, mainly used to carry earth.

Slab - Concrete placed in a horizontal formation.

Signages - Signboards, stickers and posters.

Toolbox meeting - Brief meeting in the morning to discuss daily work

and tools to be used.

Road furniture - Items used to safeguard road users' safety like

shuttle barrier and beacon.

Delineators - Illumineuos lining to demarcate 'danger area'.

Guard rails - Timber or steel erected to prevent falling.

Scupper drain - Small drains along sidewalls which contain water.

Casting - Concrete powder.

Concrete - A mixture of sand, cement and aggregate.

Elevation - Area above ground level.

Craftsmen - Operators of crane, excavators and machinery.

Consultant - Deciding authority of engineering work.

Suppliers - Persons involved in supplying materials to the

job site.

Barricade - Plastic/timber used to 'cordon off' an area.

Cross bracing - Two pieces of steel erected in 'X' manner.

Manhole - Construction area 'access' for one man through an

opening.

Confined space - Area covered on all sides - limitation to entry and exit.

Safety crew - Persons involved in safety work at job site.

Man hours - Hours worked by the entire work force to complete

the project.