

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a general background to the study and serves as an overview. The first section describes the area of study undertaken, followed by the objectives and research questions. A background to the data site is given in the next section and is then followed by brief descriptions of the methodology and analytical approach adopted for this study.

The current study seeks to examine communication at a workplace, specifically verbal interactions at meetings in a business organization. Verbal interaction is situated in a research area which has gained interest among scholars locally and abroad, since the advent of recording devices to capture spoken discourses. Studies in communication at workplaces, specifically verbal interaction has been gaining popularity in the past two decades (Boden, 1994; Bargiela-Chiappini, 1997; Handford, 2010; Holmes 2000, Koester, 2006). These studies have looked at issues of politeness, power, gender, social action and practices vis-à-vis language use. In the same way, the current study examines the way language is used by managers at management meetings in a small-medium enterprise (SME) in Malaysia and adopts a case study approach.

1.1 Area of Study

Workplace communication studies have been an area of interest to researchers from various disciplines such as in anthropology, sociology and linguistics over the past decades, and interest in these has increased even more into the new millennium. It is of interest to business establishments that effective communication results in smooth running of the company, and this would result in higher productivity, which would in turn lead to bigger profits. With this in view, many business communication programmes have been designed to train human resource to enable them to speak fluently and write clearly so that successful communication takes place at workplaces. Breakdown in communication or mis-communication often brings disastrous consequences in such organizations. Though some studies have been carried out in western business contexts (Firth, 1995; Handford, 2010; Kangasharju, 2002; Koester, 2006; Svennevig, 2012), however not much attention has been given to how people at work communicate verbally and how they use language to construct their social and professional roles at Malaysian workplaces. Holmes observes that

previous research has tended to focus on specialised contexts such as classrooms, courtrooms and doctor-patient interactions or use material derived from indirect sources such as self-report data, interviews and anecdotal observations. (2000, p.2)

She adds that the outcome of these researches tended to be more prescriptive, and gives the example of how manuals which have been written and published for training only provide rules and procedures on how to conduct meetings or how to manage people at work.

To add, Gronn (1983) whose study on management meetings at Australian schools asserts that talk *is* the work of managers and while other studies have focused on giving descriptive accounts of lexical choice, cognitive processing and cultural influence on language use, there remains a dearth of studies on how language in business settings occurs as everyday talk (Boden, 1994). In fact only a few studies have looked at real language use and incorporated some of the findings into programmes for business communication training (Marra, 2003; Koester, 2006).

With this in view, the present study seeks to use the talk data obtained at managerial level meetings to examine what and how language is used. To my knowledge there are only a few such studies carried out in the Malaysian context (Nair-Venugopal, 2000; Nor Fariza, 2008; Paramsivam, 2004), particularly in investigating the use of real language, or what conversation analysts refer to as naturally occurring talk that takes place in Malaysian business establishments. One of the main reasons for the lack is the inability to gain access to such data sites. However the current study has taken the researcher into a company which has allowed its meetings to be recorded, transcribed and analysed. It is hoped that insights gained from a micro-level analysis via a discursive approach to the talk data will yield some useful findings which may add on to the existing field of knowledge in the area on workplace communication as well as offer suggestions for training in business communication programmes within Malaysian business settings.

The study falls into the area of spoken discourse in the context of business. The following section will present a brief discussion on what business discourse is about.

1.2 Business Discourse

Bargiella-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken (2007, p.3) state that business discourse is “all about how people communicate using talk or writing in commercial organizations in order to get their work done”. Investigating this form of discourse in business organizations, especially the talk at meetings can be analytically challenging and exciting (Heritage, 1992). It not only allows the researcher to look at dynamic language use, but also allows the researcher to see how talk shapes and forms organizations.

According to Boden (1994), talk pervades all organizations and it is through talk that the business of organizations is accomplished. She reiterates that “organizations are people, and when people come together to get things done, they *talk*.” (p.9). This study also attempts to show how talk is shaped by the organization, i.e. the social context, and how the organization in turn is shaped by the talk that takes place within it (Bargiella-Chiappini, Nickerson & Planken, 2007, p.8).

In examining the relationship between organizations and discourse, one of its main concerns is also to see how discourse shapes these organizations, which inevitably would include looking at language choices, and how these create and enact power relations at different levels of the organization. An organization, as defined by Munby and Clair (1977, p.181) is “a social collective, produced, reproduced and transformed through the on-going, interdependent and goal-oriented communication practices of its members”. They go on to say that organizations exist as members create themselves through discourse. This links with what Grant and Hardy (2004) propose in a definition of organizational discourse. According to them, it is

the structured collections of texts embodied in the practices of talking and writing...that bring organizationally related objects into being as those texts are produced, disseminated, and consumed. (p.5)

According to Sarangi and Roberts (1999), and Holmes and Stubbes (2003), spoken business discourse are goal-driven, and agendas of meetings are used to ensure this. Sometimes these goals are easily identified; however some are implicit and can only be discovered through analysis of the spoken data. The speaker's goals may be inferred from such analysis, and in doing so, reveal insights into how the talk participants use various interactional resources to achieve both explicit and implicit goals in interaction. These resources include turn taking features, repair and adjacency pairs evident from the data. The data is also examined in the light of some linguistic terms applied in this study such as topic change, and pronouns. (For more explanation on these interactional resources see Chapters Two).

Before moving on, a brief look at how business discourse as a field emerged is significant for this study. This area of research (business discourse) took off in the late 1980s with a more prescriptive slant and through the 1990s those interested in this field had to build on the work by defining the field and identifying the approaches and methodologies to apply in this domain (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). More specifically, a number of studies examined how language was used to achieve the goals of business discourse. Having provided this brief background on business discourse, the current study aims to investigate the use of language in a business context within Malaysia, focussing on the talk by managers in a manufacturing establishment. The next section will lay out the objectives of the study.

1.3 Objective of the Study

Business organizations are “busy, buzzing places” (Boden, 1994, p.10) and to get work done, people at work use talk. They talk at meetings, in teams, on the telephone, and along corridors, either face-to-face or in groups, or on the phones, and it is through talk that information is transmitted or transformed because no information is neither static nor neutral. Due to the dynamism of social life, information goes through various modes and channels and meaning becomes clear within the contexts. Business establishments are dynamic communities which engage in a myriad of tasks on a daily basis, and their ultimate goal is to gain profits, and this is actualized indirectly through hierarchical structures and operational processes for maximum output. All this is done via language use vis-à-vis communication.

This present study was carried out at a vibrant manufacturing enterprise. It is a business establishment which not only expects to maximise profits but seeks to ensure that their products are of quality, and that quality services are also offered to clients. As a production firm, it focuses on good manufacturing practices and seeks to ensure that its’ staff perform well and meets up to the company’s expectations as in their ability to fulfil their key performance index. To make sure these aims are achieved at the company, one of the main modes of checking on work done is through “talk” and meetings provide the avenue for this.

This study aims to examine talk at meetings and how managers at their regular management meetings engage in talk mutually to get work done in their “community of practice”, which is the theoretical framework on which this study is based. According to Wenger (1998), such communities are formed by three significant factors, and they are

(1) mutual engagement in similar activities, (2) a joint enterprise relevant to members of the community, and (3) a shared repertoire of language and ways of making meaning. The study hopes to explore how language is used by the talk participants at the meetings to achieve their interactional goals. In doing so the roles and identities enacted will be discussed and inevitably the interactions also give rise to a study of power owing to the asymmetrical relationship of the speakers.

1.4 Research Questions

Bearing in mind the objective as given above, which is to examine verbal interactions of managers at management meetings, the present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. a) What are the discursive activities evident in the talk data at meetings?
 - b) How are these discursive activities realised in the talk?

2. a) What interactional resources within the discursive activities are used by the talk participants?
 - b) How do these interactional resources facilitate or impede communication within the talk?

The term “discursive activities” is adopted from Koester (2006, p.4) which is types of talk that are task-oriented such as giving instructions, briefing, decision making and problem solving. Koester’s study on workplace discourse first examined the spoken data she obtained from workplaces which led her to differentiate between transactional and relational talk. Within transactional talk the concept of discursive activities was

proposed. Transactional talk is signalled by linguistic and interactive devices used by the participants to accomplish their communicative goals, which is related to work tasks (Koester, 2006). Therefore the discursive activities which recur at meetings may be evident via the linguistic choices made by the talk participants. More exposition on this concept is provided in Chapter Five.

Interactional resources refer to the conversation analysis devices which talk participants employ to communicate their meaning and goals at talk. Young (2008, p.43) explains that when people speak in real time, there is “constantly evolving interaction, meanings are not fixed but are negotiated”. The resources such as turn taking, repair and adjacency pair sequences used enable these meanings to be realised and the goal of talk may then be achieved.

1.5 Data Site

The primary data for this study are the transcripts of talk taken from audio recordings of meetings obtained from a Malaysian SME. The company will be known as “Alpane” (a pseudonym), and its core business is the production of food items such as buns, foldover breads, pizza crusts and tortillas. It has two factories in the industrial suburbs of Klang Valley, and its mission is to “exceed customer’s satisfaction by providing the Best Quality, Innovative Products and Outstanding Services leading us to be the best contract manufacturer in Asia Pacific”. Its mission statement is further enhanced with its vision in which it claims to

grow our baking business by being leading innovators in contract manufacturing and a focused baked product range and we will provide excellence through

customized product and services to our customers, thereby creating mutually beneficial relationships and value for all partners.

In other words, the vision is to see the company move on to be

- leading innovators in their fields of expertise, and
- excellent in what they do.

Their business covers the Asia Pacific region, which includes countries such as Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Philippines, and Thailand. They supply these food items to local and international clients. It is not a large establishment, with only 170-180 staff members. Of this total, 60 Malaysians are employed in administration and operations, while 120 employees work on the factory floor. These are mainly foreign workers from India, Nepal and Pakistan.

The two factories located in Klang Valley are 30 km apart. One site (Plant A), known as the bun line production, produces buns and breads, is situated nearer the city centres of Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. The other (Plant B), known as the flatbread line, produces pizza crusts and tortillas, is located in an industrial area nearer the port, and these products are meant for international markets.

The company has a management team which reports to the General Manager (henceforth GM). The team consists of managers and executives who head various departments, namely Operations, which include Production, Maintenance & Engineering and Quality Assurance, Finance and Administration, Human Resource, Customer Services, Purchasing, Sales and Marketing, Research and Development, and

Information Technology (IT). More information on their profile is provided in Chapter Four.

The GM oversees the organization and the department heads report directly to her. She chairs the monthly management meetings and the department managers are expected to attend to present their reports, discuss matters arising, review company matters and deliberate on future plans. The meetings usually last two hours on the average and minutes of the meeting would have been circulated a week before. The agenda is also accompanied with these minutes. The meetings are held at a fixed venue, i.e. the meeting room located at the office floor in Plant B.

1.6 Meeting Talk

Meetings are the heartbeat of any business organization and although work done outside of meetings is crucial to determine the success of any company, meetings are the place where feedback is obtained, tasks are meted out, and negotiations occur. Meetings cannot be taken as an isolated activity within organizations as they constitute the dynamism of the establishment. Boden (1994, p.131) states that meetings are “small worlds of interactive order, ritualized to some extent but decidedly dynamic”.

The call made by Boden (1994) to study organizations as they happen, particularly via their “talk”, poses a challenge. According to her, past research on organizational structure studied events and decisions long after they occur, and many of these studies depended on interviews and questionnaires or documents, which lacked authenticity. Considering what has been done, it is also viable to investigate organizations as social structures by looking at the social interaction, vis-à-vis “talk” that takes place within

them. Observing the talk-in-interaction among participants at these organizations would enable them to reveal their social practices, and how language is used to make sense of their shared activities and to arrive at their communicative goals.

At workplace meetings, particularly at the organization selected for this study, much of the interaction focuses on practical tasks and specific activities related to the nature of their work. The organization in this study is a manufacturing firm which has both management and production meetings. At their meetings, emphasis is placed on accurate reporting and technical issues, and managers with their respective designations are expected to come into meetings with sufficient factual and technical knowledge and be prepared for their tasks at hand. Such management and production meetings have pre-established format of interaction with a chairperson to facilitate their “talk” so that their interaction is guided to result in an effective meeting.

According to Beebe (2000, p.339), two factors contribute to effective meetings: they are structure and interaction, and for a meeting to achieve its’ goals, there needs to be a balance of the two. Meetings are crucial in most organizations and a well-managed meeting would help to achieve the goals of the organizations. It is also the role of the chairperson to be the gatekeeper of the meeting and to orchestrate meaningful interaction (Beebe 2000, p.343).

Meetings have various characteristics which define them, and one of these is that it is a directed activity. On the other hand it can be restricted in nature as it is controlled by only one chairperson. How the other members at the meeting respond to the chair and to one another would be unique to each organization’s own practices. Another feature which makes a meeting is that it is bounded in time and space, and it is “interactionally

bounded” (Boden, 1994, p.87). This means the meeting has a structure and order which can be self-contained, and talk within it can be structurally ordered and sequenced, with occasions of diversions. However the presence of the chairperson lends direction to it, thus making it rather definite. A final feature which constitutes a meeting is the presence (or absence) of its members. For a meeting to be “organizationally and interactionally meaningful” (Boden, 1994, p.91), the participation of its members is crucial. Some meetings cannot be effective if key members are missing as major issues that need to be raised at meetings cannot be carried out if the significant person is absent. Boden defines meetings as

purposive encounters, encapsulated and organized, yet significantly organizing...They are in some sense isolated from the ongoing flow of the organizations as a whole and have their own institutional and organizational boundaries, yet they are a constitutive part of the organizations: without it they lose their force and purpose; without them the organizations itself would grind to a halt. (1994, p.91)

Boden stresses on the importance of meetings in organizations and since this study is primarily focused on meetings, Chapter Two will elucidate this subject in greater detail and discuss numerous studies which have been done on meeting talk. However at this juncture it is to be noted that the language variety used by the talk participants in this business establishment is a Malaysian variety of English. Findings from past research have revealed that the use of English at Malaysian workplaces is widespread but appears in differing forms (Baskaran, 1994; David, 2000; Rajadurai, 2004). There exists a number of varieties of English but in this study the focus is not on any particular variety, rather it will be collectively known as Malaysian English, in short Male. Since

the researcher is also the analyst in this present study, she is able to comprehend the meeting talk (being Malaysian herself and having been exposed to various varieties of spoken MalE) and make the necessary interpretation of the language used by the participants.

To add, the meetings have been observed and field notes will be used to supplement the analysis when required. The language variety used is not the focus of this study but a list of its features is provided in Appendix 7 for reference purposes. The talk recorded at this particular workplace has evidence of authentic use of MalE, and to understand the way it is used at the meetings is quite easy as the content of the utterances does not deal with abstract concepts or ideas. It should be comprehensible even to a wider readership outside Malaysia, without having to go into the details of what each type constitute. However when some analysis required some understanding of MalE, the researcher has provided some background to the analysis to make it clear for general comprehension.

It is also hoped that this study on meeting talk which is fully transcribed and supported with field notes may offer insights to what really goes on at meetings. The challenge is to describe and analyse the data, interpret them and then see what insights these may offer to meeting practices, especially the language behaviour of managers. Further, it is a multi-disciplinary study which includes the interpretation of data in the fields of applied linguistics, anthropology, sociolinguistics, CA and business communication (management and organization studies).

1.7 Analytical Approach Adopted

As mentioned earlier, Community of Practice (CofP) is adopted as a theoretical construct in this study, focusing on the team of managers at their regular monthly meetings. Adopting this construct allows the analysis of spoken data to be used within the parameters of meeting talk. Scollon and Scollon (2001, p.268) proposes that over time, a CofP develops a “mutually understandable set of practices because of some common purpose of goal”. There are three features of a CofP provided by Wenger (1998) which frame the basis of this study. Firstly, there is mutual engagement whereby the members of the community engage in regular interactions. Secondly, there is a joint negotiated endeavour, which is reflected in shared goals at talk and finally, there is a shared repertoire of resources such as work routines and procedures that are particular to a specific CofP.

Handford (2012, p.34) claims “meetings embody and provide a platform for various practices that can go on in business, especially management practices”. And a way into understanding these practices is to look at the way language is used, thus the data for this study is primarily taken from the talk at the identified company’s internal management meetings. With data based on talk, Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA) is deemed as an appropriate approach for analysis. Pioneered by Sacks, Schgeloff and Jefferson (1974), CA tools have been employed by researchers to examine locally managed social action. Based on transcripts of talk from the recorded meetings, there is naturally occurring talk and Nofsinger (1991) observes that such talk data allows researchers to study conversations as they are and how these interactions may be

examined to accomplish practical goals in the talk, as compared to talk which is simulated.

In this study an eclectic approach to discourse analysis is employed. More specifically the use of CA tools is applied in the analysis of the data to draw out the interactional devices evident in the meeting talk. This is done firstly through the identification of the discursive activities, which according to Koester (2006) are talk that are task-oriented such as giving instructions, briefing, decision making and problem solving. Further, the study is also guided by the three features of institutional talk listed by Drew and Heritage (1992) and a thorough explanation on these is provided in Chapter Two. The three aspects of CA: turn taking, sequential organization and choice of lexis, considered as the fingerprints of institutional talk (see Section 2.2.2) are also explicated in the same chapter.

1.8 Methodology of the Study

Looking for an organization to study and gaining entry into it is a daunting task, and so when the “doors” open for the study, the opportunity was taken up. That began the journey of data collection. The researcher in negotiating her role with the GM of the company was initially given up to 6 months to observe the staff going about their daily tasks. However slightly more than half way through, the researcher was requested to leave the site because a major revamp was going to take place in the company, and this was not anticipated by the management when the project started. More data could have been obtained, such as interviews with management staff, and compiling written documents, but as Marra (2003) advises, for those who are brave enough to attempt research at real workplaces, they may have to run the risk of such incidents happening. However instead of concealing this information, it would serve the research community

well to reveal what really took place and explain how best the situation was dealt with. In this case, the researcher had managed to observe and collect data for three months. The meetings were audio recorded and the researcher was allowed to sit in at all these meetings as a non-participant observer. All meetings were recorded, but for this study the focus is on the community of managers who form the CofP. Hence only the internal management meetings are used for analysis. One of the chief reasons for selecting only the management meetings is due to the fact that they were conducted in English. As this study is conducted in Malaysia, the spoken English display not a standard form of the language, rather it is a Malaysian variety which is comprehensible to Malaysian English language speakers in general. This is also known as Malaysian English, in short MalE (Azirah Hashim, 2002). Production meetings were bilingual and the quality of the recording was not as good because the meeting venue was noisy and many members of the staff would walk in and out during the production meetings to attend to urgent tasks. In addition to the recorded data, an ethnographic approach was taken to add another dimension to the study. According to Watson, ethnographic research

involves feeling one's way in confusing circumstances, struggling to make sense of ambiguous messages, reading signals, looking around, establishing and maintaining a network of relationships. (2001, p. 8)

Without the opportunity to be present at the research site and observing how people go about their daily work tasks would not present sufficient contextual information to support the analysis and interpretation of the talk data. Being able to take field notes daily and writing these into a journal gave an added dimension to the analysis, and at certain sections where interpretation of analysis was given, these notes were able to

shed light to how the meeting proceedings took place and how the managers conducted their talk.

A more detailed write-up on the methodological approach and design is provided in Chapter Four.

1.9 Significance of the Study

A study of verbal interactions at management meetings within the Malaysian business context (manufacturing) using a discourse approach to data interpretation has not been conducted and it is timely that such a research endeavour be undertaken to understand the dynamics of such interaction in a real workplace in this country. There have been a few researches mentioned in Section 3.4 which dealt with talk at negotiation meetings and code-switching at workplaces. The fact that Malaysia is a fast-developing nation whose desire to compete globally, and whose aims are to produce a competitive workforce that is not only knowledgeable in their fields, or technically competent, but must be able to communicate effectively in the use of English internationally, adds significance to this study. The Former Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahatir Mohamed proposed that by 2020, Malaysia should become a nation with a strong workforce which is adaptable and multi-skilled, with particularly heavy emphasis placed on the communication skills (Ninth Malaysian Plan, 2006). Thus having a workforce who is communicatively competent would bring in higher productivity and therefore higher profits.

Also, in the light of changes in workplace interactional dynamics, especially in Malaysia, how language is used has become an interesting field of study. However not

many such studies have been carried out in this country. A survey of the few that have been carried out on meetings at workplaces dealt with topics such as patterns of conflict and non-conflict (Morais, 1994), language choice (Atan, 1998), power and politeness in negotiations (Paramasivam, 2004), and negotiations between real estate agents and potential buyers using an ethnographic and CA approach (Shanmuganathan, 2008). To my knowledge, a study on talk at meetings using CA and ethnography has not been explored, and hence a study of this nature is an attempt to fill the missing gap on research at workplace meetings in Malaysia.

Also, taking talk at meetings as the primary data, while framing it within a CofP, offers a micro level analysis and would reveal some linguistic and interactional resources used to construct various practices that are particular to speakers at a Malaysian workplace. Verbal interactions or talk in meetings is less often researched as one of its biggest obstacles is gaining accessibility into workplace sites. Hence this study offers a glimpse into what really happens at meetings in the real world. The findings of this study may be useful to all those involved in business, management and communication studies.

Studies of real language use in Malaysian business enterprises offer an authentic description of managerial discourse, and this can form a basis for further study on how these practices can help participants at meetings shape their discourse. Thus it helps contribute to the field of business discourse and communication, and also contributes to the empirical analysis of the social life of language and analysis of human social organization (Duranti, 1992).

To sum up, this study attempts to analyse the language used at meetings and emphasis is placed on how people get work done within talk at meetings. By such an analysis it is

hoped that some insights may be gained as to how managers and their subordinates in a Malaysian workplace use language in situ. Most organizational studies (Boden, 1994; Schwartzman, 1989) focus on events and discussions long after they occur, which is usually making use of interviews and questionnaires or documents, and in so doing, lose the dynamism which is a central feature of organizations. This study therefore is significant in that it looks at talk-in-interaction within a real workplace, and it is all about what organizations really are, and their structure, which may not be so neatly structured and yet work gets done. However as in many of such studies done, limitations do exist and the next section will discuss these.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

There are various limitations to this study and among them are:

1. The research was conducted in a business context, which deals with food manufacturing and is a Malaysian SME. The study focuses on verbal interactions of a CofP which consists of managers and the talk data comes from only the internal management level meetings. Therefore the findings from this study cannot be generically applied to the way managers use talk in Malaysian SMEs, nor in all local business contexts.
2. The data set used in the analysis is taken from two of its five recorded management meetings. Using Conversation Analysis as the analytical approach allows for a detailed examination of data where moment-by-moment interactional talk is observed and analysed. Hence to utilize all the five recordings would have been too much data to manage in relation to the scope of

this study. From the two meetings, talk data comprise 230 minutes of talk time. Furthermore the choice of this data is also based on the fact that the participants use MalE, and also the same participants comprising managers took part in these two meetings to form the CofP under study.

3. The duration of the observation period at the data site was three months and this may be considered too short a time. Initially it was planned for at least a six-month period of observation, with at least two re-visitations over another six month period. However due to a sudden turn of events beyond the researcher's control, the observation period was terminated at the end of the third month. It was the management's request to end the study as a takeover of the company was being planned. In her research for a doctoral thesis, Marra (2003) encountered problems which were also unforeseen and quoted McEntegart and Le Page (1982) who say that being honest with reporting the weaknesses and failures as possibly as space permits will benefit further research in sociolinguistics. This is a case where the researcher was not in control of the time frame and it was unexpected that company discontinued my observation with them. However in view of the scope of the study, and by the 3-month period, a number of management meetings were already observed and recorded, it was deemed sufficient.

1.11 Summary

A study of this nature is challenging as it takes the researcher into a real place of work where on a daily basis many activities take place, some more predictable than others. Being able to narrow the study down to observing and examining the language use vis-

à-vis talk of a group of dynamic managers in a small medium business enterprise in the manufacturing sector is a privilege. In investigating the language use through looking at their interactional resources using CA, many features of talk interaction are captured and the study hopes to build on its findings to understand how these people in management use language to get work done, while enacting social practice and action. To guide the study, CofP is used as the theoretical construct, which features the main characteristics of mutual engagement, a joint negotiated endeavour, and a shared repertoire of resources, and enable the analysis of the talk data to be located within this context to provide viable interpretation of the social practice in the community. The richness of this study lies also in the fact that talk is authentic and it is verbalised by managers as they seek to get work done through their meeting procedures and processes. It is hoped that the findings yield insights into the field of business communication and also add on to the existing knowledge in this area of studies. The next chapter will provide a review of the various constructs and relevant literature applied in this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This study sets out to investigate verbal interactions, specifically talk at workplace meetings. The research is based on data from the spoken discourse recorded at management meetings in a small medium sized company in Malaysia and it looks at managerial talk at the company's internal management meetings. This chapter first of all sets out to describe the theoretical construct used in the study, and then explains the methodological approach, which is Conversation Analysis (CA) influenced, and complemented with ethnography (see Chapter Four). Some issues related to CA in institutional interaction are further explicated and in the final section the concept of power is also expounded on.

2.1 Community of Practice (CofP)

The research's underpinning theoretical framework is Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998), and the main analytical approach taken is discourse analysis with a CA-influenced methodology (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Sacks, 1974). In applying these constructs, it is hoped that an in-depth analysis of the primary data obtained may bring new insights into workplace interaction, specifically talk at meetings. The following sub-sections seek to describe each of the constructs and explain the rationale for employing them in this study.

A Community of Practice (henceforth CofP) as defined by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) is

an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations - in short, *practices* – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour (italics mine). (p.464)

This study which focuses on language use at workplace meetings adopts CofP as one of its theoretical constructs. It is deemed appropriate because the study's primary data consists of verbal interactions at workplace meetings. The talk participants constitute a group of people who come together to talk about issues at work, sharing a common goal, which is fundamentally to get work done. They belong to a community of people and share a common set of values, beliefs, and power relations and as given in the definition of CofP above, these are known as the shared practices. The CofP framework focuses on the practice or activities of these members in the community and what they do together to show they belong to the group. These involve various aspects of behaviour which include “global or specific aspects of language structure, discourse, and interaction patterns” (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999, p.175).

Historically, CofP was a theoretical framework introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) as a component of the social theory of learning. It was further developed by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) who applied the framework for language and gender research. Barab & Duffy (1998), Wick (2000) and Lesser & Storck (2001) built on this concept by extending it to groups of professionals who work together for shared goals,

negotiated meanings and practices. Bergvall (1999, p. 279) contends that using the CofP approach would be beneficial in workplace contexts where employers/employees are often “constructing different practices in response to differing social opportunities and settings”, hence rendering this approach to be a very useful tool in the study of an organizational’s communicative practices. Young (2008, p.129) further adds that the theory of CofP is relevant in understanding the use of language and how it creates and maintains communities.

Wenger (1998), who formulated this theory, explains that there are three characteristics of CofP. She uses the term CofP as a unit, and the source of coherence in a community, as understood within CofP, is the practice or activity that the community engages in (Young 2008). As language use is at the core of this study, it is also the means of displaying a CofP (Sarangi & Van Leeuwen, 2002). The three characteristics of the community are

1. mutual engagement
2. a joint enterprise
3. a shared repertoire

What each of these means will be further explicated below. The first refers to the mutual engagement of the members in the community who interact to negotiate meanings with one another. This occurs as they are involved in various activities with one another, thus “membership in a CofP is therefore a matter of mutual engagement” (Wenger, 1998, p.73). Another aspect of this mutual engagement is that they are mutually dependent on one another’s competence. As each individual in the community possess their own area of expertise, especially in workplace institutions, subsequently as a group they share

this expertise so that the whole community may exist and perform to achieve their common goals or tasks. Each one's contribution may differ and yet there are similarities in what they can offer in order for them to function effectively. The result of this is seen in the more tightly bound interpersonal relationships. However this does not necessarily mean the relationships are always harmonious or problem-free. There may still be tensions, disagreements and conflicts but in this too there is a shared practice. In the words of Wenger (1998, p.77) "a shared practice thus connects participants to each other in ways that are diverse and complex" which results in a reflection of intricacy in doing things together.

The second characteristic that identifies a CofP is the negotiation of joint enterprise, and Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) refer to this as a process, while Young (2007) alludes to the 'enterprise' as an 'endeavour', and describes it as

ways that participants work to achieve their goals is influenced but not determined by the historical and social context, so that each community in fact evolves local practices and local ways of achieving participants' goals (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999, p. 130).

It is accountability for each other's action and it describes how its members are influenced to work to achieve their goals, and this does not necessarily include the historical and social context. The implication of this is that the shared goals are not fixed, but that in a CofP, members are always "engaged in an on-going process of negotiating and building their contributions towards the larger enterprise" (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999, p.175). In doing these the members come to understand their roles within the organization in which they work.

The third characteristic refers to shared repertoire which includes routines, words, tools, shared stories and actions (Wenger, 1998, p.77), in short common ways of doing things, and these as a result of members working together, which is made evident over a period of time. This encompasses the ways of doing things such as the ways members interact when they share stories or laughter, and have common discourses in the way they use a certain language variety or style. Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) included linguistic resources such as specialized terminology and linguistic routines in this category. Consequently a community is then created and developed around the repertoire of shared practices. However the community need not be free from issues of differences that may result in conflicts and clashes. One of the reasons for this is ambiguity that arises in interactions but Wenger (1998) concurs that even when this happens, it is acceptable because while inherent ambiguity may cause a breakdown in co-ordination and communication, it also allows room for repair. The tension between ambiguity and non-ambiguity may hence create a new dynamism in interaction and unpredictability; it may also lead to new meanings. In terms of communication using shared repertoire in a CofP, Wenger's explains,

effective communication or good design, therefore, are not best understood as the literal transmission of meaning. It is useless to try to excise all ambiguity; it is more productive to look for social arrangements that put history and ambiguity to work. The real problem of communication and design then is to situate ambiguity in the context of a history of mutual engagement that is rich enough to yield an opportunity for negotiation. (1998, p. 84)

Young (2008, p.129) adds that the theory of CofP is relevant in understanding the use of language and how it creates and maintains communities. It is accepted by scholars

(Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Young, 2008) that although the notion of CofP originated as a learning theory, it may be used as an effective means to examine the practices of a community which includes the acquisition of knowledge and skills on how to behave as a member of the community. Sociolinguists (Holmes, 2003; Mullany, 2004) who employ the CofP framework have found out ways in which members within the community interact and in the process, how they gain control of the discourse is appropriate to the context.

To sum up, “a CofP is a group of people who over a period of time share some sets of *social practices* geared toward some common purpose” (Scollon, 1999, p.13) and this aptly fits into the present study which has a group of managers come together on a regular basis to interact at meetings, endeavouring to achieve common tasks, or goals within the CofP. The data examined in this study is extracted from two long management meetings which is similar in nature. There appears to be common linguistic behaviour displayed by the talk participants and hence it features the characteristics as described by Wenger (1998) of what a CofP constitutes.

The current study is a qualitative one, and as such it requires a vigorous approach towards analysis of its primary data which consists of talk at the meetings. An eclectic approach to discourse analysis is adopted to understand and make sense of how language is used by participants of the talk to achieve their interactional goals. To do such an analysis a CA-influenced methodology is employed. More on CA is given in the following sections.

2.2 Conversation Analysis

Conversation Analysis has been known over the past four decades and continues to gain popularity as an analytical tool for studies in spoken interaction (Heritage, 1984; Psathas, 1995; Sacks & Schgelloff, 1974; Woofitt, 2005). Beginning from its application on ordinary conversations, researchers in the field of CA have used it to analyse institutional talk, ranging from studies on health care (Heath, 1984; Ten Have, 1999), news interviews (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991), legal (Atkinson & Drew, 1979), and in business settings (Cooren, 2007; Holmes & Stubbes, 2001; Koester, 2003). CA's strength lies in the fact that its analyses are carried out on naturally occurring talk as opposed to talk which are contrived or made up for purposes of linguistic analysis (Arminen, 1999; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Nunan, 1992). Further, some main literature in CA in the area of institutional talk has been concerned with expert-lay communication, as evidenced in doctor-patient or teacher-student interactions. In the past two decades some researchers have also carried out a fine-grained analysis of talk at work which includes meeting talk (Boden, 1994; Firth, 1995; Samra-Fredericks, 2000; Ford, 2008). In fact, some Scandinavian scholars have used CA to examine meeting talk and their work has yielded some interesting insights which will be discussed in this study as well (see Section 2.6) (Asmub, 2002; Nielsen, 2009; Ovaldsson, 2004; Svennevig, 2012).

CA was developed primarily on Sacks' (1987) concerns on the following issues:

- (i) how are social actions organized?
- (ii) how do parties in talk understand each other?
- (iii) how is the practical work of social life accomplished?

Further, the strength of this approach is analysts do not use simulated data which were considered as contrived. Instead they collected data from naturally occurring talk, rationalizing that although levels of linguistic structure and organization of talk are connected, “fundamental linguistic phenomena are significantly influenced by the interactive or textual context in which they are produced” (Brown & Yule, 1983, Stubbes, 1983). Van Rees (1992) considers a CA analyst as one who

uses no a priori theoretical perspective and does not work with a fixed theoretical motivated unit of analysis. He adopts a standpoint of observational naivety: nothing of what happens in the interaction can be excluded a priori as coincidental, meaningless or irrelevant. For this reason he works as exclusively with the raw material of tape recordings or as a complete a transcription of them as can be obtained. (p.152)

Thus, applying CA in research means using a data-driven approach, rather than theory-based. CA aims to explicate the procedures used by talk participants as they contribute to the verbal interaction, they try to make sense and meaning of the contributions offered by one another in the interaction. Moreover it seeks to discover how talk participants perform social actions such as the need to solve problems, or query when issues arise in interaction. While linguistic analysis of talk focus on the “what” of spoken data, CA asks ‘why this now?’ (Young, 2008, p. 12). With their main concern being that of social action and its social context, CA analysts examine each action of the talk in relation to what comes before and after the turn of talk.

Another strength of CA is the existence of a set of procedures which is systematic and rigorous which can be used to examine social actions that bring about reproducible

results. Furthermore CA's premise is that participants at talk are creating meaningful social actions and these natural organizations can be studied and shows how talk is given detailed analysis. The turn taking features of CA is what interest researchers. In taking turns speakers co-construct meaning together and this extends the context beyond the time and place of the talk. In brief, the aim of CA as succinctly expressed by Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998) is

to reveal the tact, organized reasoning procedures which inform the production of naturally occurring talk ... these procedures, on which speakers rely to produce utterance and by which they make sense of other speakers' talk. (p.26)

2.2.1 CA-influenced Methodology

The research for this thesis investigates talk at meetings in a business setting and audio-recorded conversations are authentic, thus using a CA-influenced methodology to understand the interactional resources such as turn taking, and the use of adjacency pairs such as question-answer sequences, employed by the speakers is considered to be apt. From a linguistic perspective, the approach allows us "to see structure in suprasentential stretches of words in natural speech situations" (Ten Have, 1994, p.198). One of the goals of using such an approach is to see how the structures and functions of linguistic forms are used to perform social action with the ultimate aim of analysing talk.

An important feature of CA concerns the local management of talk. According to Cameron (2001, p. 90) talk is locally managed to mean that "its patterns and structures result from what people do as they go along rather than from being compelled to follow a course of action that has been determined in advance". Using CA helps the analyst to look at how talk participants interact and align their talk where there are mutually

shared rules, goals and practices. The interactional resources they employ may be examined using CA mechanisms such as sequential organisation, turn taking, topic change, and repair.

Since a basic principle of CA is that talk is systematically organised and ordered, talk participants will orient to its underlying organization. In other words, when an action comes across to the speaker as not to be organised, as in one turn of talk is not followed by another speaker taking up his/her turn, the phenomenon is noted and examined. Hence a detailed analysis signals some key features of the organisation of talk. CA also focuses on talk as “a vehicle for social action” (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p.16) and hence it has a social function (Nunan, 1992, p.170). It has developed analytical tools for the study of interaction and these tools are explicated in later sections (see 2.2.2 – 2.2.6) in this chapter.

Schegloff (1987) asserts that CA has developed an empirical analysis of talk by explicating four main features with regard to institutional talk. The first is that CA is activity focused, and it commences with a consideration of the interactional accomplishment of particular social activities. This is followed by the sequential analysis, where the talk is analysed turn-by-turn. The third feature is the notion of context in interaction, where utterances are said to be context-shaped and context-renewing. The last feature deals with the idea that any studies done apart from those on ordinary conversation will offer a comparative analysis to it. Hence studies on institutional talk will inevitably contribute to some aspect to advance the theory and empirical investigations in this field. This is added value in using CA for institutional interaction. Thus the strength of employing is that it is able to make clear the

interactional aspects of the conduct of conversation and focus is placed on the empirical details of the data. This in turn leads to a detailed analysis of conversational segments.

2.2.2 CA as a Means to Study Institutional Practices

The current study situates the use of language in a CofP at a particular workplace context. It seeks to examine talk as a form of interactional discourse at the meetings of a business organization. Research in this area of study is similar to many other studies carried out at institutions such as in the medical, legal and educational contexts. The studies have focussed on written and oral texts, and as this current study focuses on the spoken form. CA is the main methodological approach adopted to analyse the data obtained, and a more detailed description of its analytical tools is also provided below. The rationale of using CA is that it is a well-proven conceptual and methodological framework which has been used for the study of language use (Ten Have, 1999). The data gathered for this study allowed the use of CA as a means to make sense of the talk occurring during meetings recorded at the workplace.

One of the basic analytical strategies of CA is, as expressed by Ten Have (1999) is:

to take what people are doing, that is saying, not-saying, saying something in a particular manner, at a particular moment...and try to find out the kind of problem for which this doing might be a solution. (p.15)

During the early stages of CA development, Sacks (1974) used it to study the practical reasoning of talk as used by police officers in interrogation and psychiatrists with their patients. However CA later developed into looking at talk as a form social action which can be studied as a field in its own right (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Pomerantz, 1997).

The actual practices of people in interaction is fundamentally what CA is interested in, and by the 1970's, CA research into institutional talk gained more attention and till date, increased number of studies have focused on the management of social institutions in interaction (Heritage, 2005). As this study is a data-based research, CA serves as a powerful analytical tool to deal with conversational structure and organization of talk. The talk at meetings in a company which was audio-recorded and transcribed provides a rich source of data for this form of analysis.

Although CA started with the question on how to make sense of ordinary conversation in daily life, it has also been used to analyse talk in institutional settings. Cameron (2001) observes that CA analysis of institutional talk is usually based on the question of what makes it different from ordinary talk, and Drew and Heritage (1992) suggests that there are three such features which show this difference, and this description fits in with the aim of this study into talk at meetings. Institutional interaction

1. involves the participants in specific goal orientations which are tied to their institutional relevant identities
2. involves special constraints on what will be treated as allowable contributions to the business at hand
3. is associated with inferential frameworks and procedures that are particular to specific institutional contexts

(Heritage, 1997, pp.163-164)

These features serve as a guide into any analysis of institutional talk, bearing in mind that the talk participants have specific tasks and identities enacted via their interaction with one another. Early studies in institutional talk were found in the areas such as in

educational settings (Coulthard & Brazil, 1981; Heller, 1994), health care (Fisher & Todd, 1983; Mishler, 1984; Silverman, 1987), legal (Levi & Walker, 1990; Maynard, 1984), talk shows (Hutchby, 1996) and politics (Locher, 2004). These settings allow CA analysts to compare the differences between ordinary talk to verbal interaction between a doctor and patient, or a teacher and students. The findings reveal characteristics that were markedly different, as doctors and teachers are those in authority and may monopolise the turns at talk, whereas in ordinary conversations no particular speaker need to exert that. The current study has identified an area that has been explored since 1989 by Schwartzman, with others like Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1997) and Cooren (2007) and will build on their work. The discourse is taken from management meetings, and the findings might contribute some insights to the existing information in the field of managerial discourse and management studies. Other studies have also been carried out in business contexts (Drew & Sorjonen, 1997; Nielsen, 2009; Pomerantz & Denvir, 2007) and those who focused on meetings, such as Chipunza (2007) concludes that “management meetings can comprise a site which provide rich source of data about enacted identities and categorisation of persons in institutions” (p. 31), and this is well reflected in the present study.

Apart from that, Drew and Heritage’s (1992) insights into institutional talk also applies to this current study as they questioned how such talk differs from ordinary interactions, particularly in relation to organizational settings there are constraints on issues or topics that are permissible or not. As mentioned above, they summed it up to three main differences, and these will be further explicated below. To begin, the first distinction made between ordinary and institutional talk by Drew and Heritage (1992) is that

institutional interaction involves an orientation by at least one of the participants to some core goal, task or identity (or set of them) conventionally associated with the institution in question. In short, institutional talk is normally informed by *goal orientations* of a relatively restricted conventional form. (p.22)

In the current study the institution is a business organization, and the data obtained is from a specific speech event, which is the management meeting. In practice this means the participants' goal orientation is evident in a number of ways, such as in the recurring discursive activities (Koester, 2006) associated with the specific meeting talk. These include giving accounts, checking information, making plans, meting out instructions, problem solving and making decisions. This type of meeting talk is more task-focused, known as transactional talk, and also more structured than talk that may not be dealing with workplace tasks such as relational talk (Koester 2006). Only the former will be examined in this study. Cameron (2001) provides an example of spoken language used in a magistrate's court to illustrate this feature of institutional talk in. Because the goal of the talk is to ascertain if a fine should be imposed on an offender, the magistrate's goal is to determine if the penalty should be carried out, and how the payments are to be made. By using a series of questions and answers between the magistrate and the offender, the magistrate then made the final decision.

The second feature of institutional talk refers to the "special and particular constraints placed on what one or both of the participants will treat as allowable contributions to the business at hand" (Drew & Heritage 1992, p.22). In other words, there are constraints in institutional interaction which controls what the participants can or cannot say. According to Koester (2006), this may appear in several ways, such as the use of specialised turn-taking, and in details of the talk. In business meetings with managers taking part in work-related discussions, the task is to verbalise issues, give reports,

deliberate on solutions to problems if any arise or provide updates on work status. The chair plays a vital role in facilitating the talk and indirectly places constraints on the allowable contributions.

Koester (2006, p.4) adds by saying that the choice of lexis used by the participants also shows that there are constraints placed within the institutional context, and these could be technical or professional jargon, and reference items (as in the use of pronouns).

Finally, the third distinction put forward by Drew and Heritage (1992, p.22) is the term they refer to as “inferential frameworks”, which include procedures that are particular to specific institutional contexts. What they mean by this is when participants have certain institutional goals to achieve in their talk, they may have to use their understanding of what the institution expects, making inferences or applying certain reasoning that is unique to that institution. An example quoted from doctor-patient communication is when the doctor questions a patient, and in the process if the doctor receives a response which is ‘out of the ordinary’, the doctor should hold back the element of surprise (Cameron, 2001).

For analysis of the talk data in this study, extracts of talk are used to draw out the interactional resources of the CofP. Following from the three dimensions of institutional talk given above, Heritage (1997) also claims that these features create a “unique fingerprint” for interactions at workplaces. They are the “primary features of talk that are focused upon here as evidencing distinctively institutional orientations in talk at work” (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p.25). In view of using these three dimensions as a backdrop to investigating institutional interaction, Heritage proposes six areas where these can be investigated further. They are:

1. turn taking organization
2. overall structural organization of the interaction
3. sequence organization
4. turn design
5. lexical choice
6. epistemological and other forms of asymmetry.

(Heritage, 1997, p.164)

The six aspects are closely linked: turn taking organization and forms of asymmetry may be considered as one unit (Ten Have, 1999) while the overall structural organization of the interaction subsumes sequence organization, turn design, and lexical choice. The following sections below will explain these aspects in greater detail.

2.3 Turn Taking Organization

In ordinary day-to-day conversations people take turns to speak. If everyone speaks at the same time, then the message may not get across. In CA this phenomena is known as “turn taking”, where “one speaker speaks at a time, and speaker change recurs” (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974, p.700). This appears to be a simple rule and yet since it was first proposed in the 1970s, turn taking in talk has been extensively researched, both on ordinary conversations and institutional talk (Boden, 1994; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Holmes, 2000; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Locher, 2004). The rules of speaking states that:

1. current speaker selects next speaker (or if this mechanism does not operate then...)
2. next speaker self-selects (or if this mechanism does not operate, then...)
3. current speaker may (but does not have to) continue

This is the basic rule for both speakers and recipients. In analysing multiparty talk, it becomes challenging when in the data, it is found that these rules are violated. Not all participants who are present at a discussion speak one at a time. Speakers interrupt one another. CA unravels when these instances take place, and ‘why this now’. In doing so, the reasons behind these occurrences become interesting findings for implications towards the nature of talk itself. Handford (2010) suggests that in business meetings, speakers’ turns tend to be less rigid and less predictable, as compared to, for example courtroom discourse.

Turn taking may also be used by participants to manage or control the interaction. It could be done by way of competing for the floor via interruption. This is when overlapping talk also takes place. Sarangi and Roberts (1999) in their studies on turn taking has shown that speakers on the whole may be able to manage speaking without interruptions or overlaps depending on the nature and context of the talk. For example, patients allow doctors to talk and not interrupt as they may respect the doctors’ expertise and knowledge when the doctors are diagnosing their illness. However Fairclough (1992) argues that often in institutional talk, asymmetrical relationships between speakers allow for interruptions and overlapping talk as the more powerful speaker tend to take a turn at talk from the less powerful. The power exchange between speakers at such talk will be discussed in detail in a later section.

Turn taking may also be examined in terms of the number of turns each speaker has taken in a particular sequence, and also the amount of time taken to complete a turn. If speakers take a longer time at one turn, this means that they have control of the floor. This phenomenon can be examined in multiparty talk as there is more than one participant present and these participants are open to compete for the floor. They can do this by interrupting. The length of each turn and when the turns are interrupted, and the frequency of these interruptions can be investigated and its findings will reveal insights into the asymmetrical relationship between participants at talk and contribute to the understanding of social action and practices at organizations. In the present study both meetings recorded and used in the analysis are attended by eleven managers. There is evidence of multiparty talk, with speakers interrupting one another, and certain managers holding the floor for varied lengths of time.

2.3.1 Turn Taking and Asymmetry

As the current study is situated in a business setting, the organization's work tasks, which are in the field of manufacturing, is the focus of the talk at meeting. In any business organization, the relationship between employers and employees are not symmetrical. There is a hierarchical set up which inevitably places the highest authority at the top of the ladder, followed by the managers and then the executives, and the supervisors or junior executives. Each role within the organization would come with a different status, rank and seemingly relative power which would be discussed as a feature of interaction in this study. Hutchy & Wooffitt (1998, p.170) defines power in this case as "the structurally provided ability to constrain the actions of others" (more explanation of power is provided in Section 2.5). The definition given here imply that "the greater the organizationally sanctioned power difference between speakers, the

greater the opportunity for constraint” (Handford, 2010, p.219). Hence, such asymmetrical context would affect the turn taking organization of talk at workplace meetings. For instance, speakers’ self-selection in turns at talk or speakers’ making a shift in topics are tied to this their unequal status and roles within the organization (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003).

Turn-taking and power which influences the talk may depend on various factors, which include the number of turns speakers take to perform an action, speaker selection (by self or others) and the amount of time and words in each turn. These factors contribute to the way participants at multi party interactions display their asymmetry.

Moreover other CA text analytic devices are also used to relate turn taking to power and a few of these that will be examined in the data are described in the following sections.

2.3.2 Topic Change

When people engage in conversations, they naturally change or shift topics of discussion. According to Sacks (1971), the topics will change imperceptibly from one to another and the change may be linguistically marked or unmarked. Stenstrom (1994) suggests that discourse markers such as “right”, “well”, and “now” signal a new topic or shows a shift in the topics. Schiffrin (1987) views this as a complex activity and she identified discourse markers like “but”, “and”, “yeah”, “by the way”, and “that reminds me” as ways to lead the talk in a new direction. This is a linguistic strategy used by speakers as they exchange information and helps prepare the listener for the speaker’s next action.

Stenstorm (1994, p.154) lists questioning as a way to introduce a new topic or indicate a change in topic. She argues that a new topic is not usually initiated by statements. Interrogative expressions would be questions and imperative expression would be directives. She adds that that such expressions may not receive a response nor are they meant to be responded to but are used as an easy and polite way to taking the floor. Further, when markers are absent, the topic change may be marked by pauses or laughter.

At business meetings, topic change is usually carried out by the chairperson as she is in control of the discussion. The chair also brings the discussion back to the issue being deliberated when the speakers digress. Some studies on topic change have shown how speakers may assert their status and indicate their relationships to other speakers by way of changing the topic (Bublitz, 1988; Diamond, 1996). This involves the use of various linguistic strategies and it undergoes several sub-steps. First there must be face-to-face talk between at least two persons. Then when the speaker completes the turn, he or she must decide whether to continue in the current topic or make a move on to a new one. However there is a constraint placed on the speaker who raises the new topic. He or she has to ensure that the new topic is coherent and continuous to the previous one. Thus the speaker who introduces the new topic should obtain the recipient's consent of understanding and comprehension from the recipient (Stenstrom, 1994).

Coulthard (1977, p.21) states that "all interaction has regulative rules, usually not explicitly stated, which govern greetings, choice of topic, interruption and so on". The rules are tied to the turn taking parameters as explained above. In most formal meetings the chair as well as the agenda also dictates topic change. According to Boden (1994),

Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1997) and Barnes (2007), these two elements play a significant role in organising the topic transitions during meetings.

The way topics are changed may also reveal the identities, roles and status of the speakers (Chipunza, 2007; Fairclough, 1992). By using CA to look at the data, the analyst is able to understand how the meeting participants use topic change as a means to control the discussion. Generally discussion topics are usually complex and sometimes more than one speaker wants to speak at once, but the topic change is initiated by the one who has more power at the meeting. In this case, it is usually the chair. However, the participants may accommodate each other and turns are then negotiated. This is done by applying the rule of one person speaks at a time.

Topic change is not only a way of moving a discussion along. As mentioned earlier introducing a new topic can be considered successful only if the recipients accepts the topic. Hence there is a possibility that the new topic may be rejected by the others. However this is where the asymmetrical relationship of the speakers plays a significant role in determining whether the new topic is ratified or rejected. Apart from the discourse markers used to signal such topic change, pauses and laughter serves a similar function. Furthermore , if speakers who do not get consent from the recipients when a new topic is raised, they may fill the silence with prompts such as repeating or reformulating the proposed topic, or explicitly requesting a response (Diamond, 1996).

2.3.3 Interruption

Before a speaker is able to complete his turn at talk, another interlocutor could speak up and this means an interruption has occurred. The first speaker may continue or give up

his turn to speak. Or alternatively, if the first speaker is dominant the latter may not continue and refrain till he gets his turn. The interplay of such interaction depends on the speakers and how they manage the talk exchange locally. Charles (1995) considers interruption as a means to control the floor. Fairclough (1989) considers interruption as a means which speakers use to enact their power. And Itakura (2001) asserts that an interrupting turn is controlling when the one who has been interrupted withdraws from the conversation to allow the one who interrupted to continue or complete his turn.

Interruptions are found to occur at the transition relevant place (TRP). TRP is the place which is usually marked by a pause, or a possible end of a speaker's turn. There are also pragmatic markers which signal the possible completion of talk and some examples of these are "you know", "okay", "er" or according to Edelsky (1981) they are "units of interaction with an end boundary marked by turn claiming responses from the auditor" (p. 398). Speakers who interrupt often use clause connectors at the TRP and Coulthard (1977) lists words like "but", "however" and "also" as examples.

In earlier studies conducted by Zimmerman and West (1975), they described interruptions as an infringement of a speaker's turn and extrapolates that in any verbal exchange interruptions are not often random. Rather it is observed that some speakers, especially those with more status or power tend to interrupt more often than those who are of a lower status or those with less power. Chipunza (2007) in her study on male-female interactions at management meetings reveals that male managers tended to interrupt more than female managers. She attributes this to the factor of male dominance in Zimbabwean corporate boardrooms as the males tend to exert their influence by using such floor management techniques like interruptions.

2.3.4 Repair

One particular interactional tool which is also a mechanism used by conversation analysts is known as repairs. In any conversational exchange there is bound to be interactional trouble present. Sometimes this may be due to a mishearing, or misunderstanding. Repairs are used in discourse as a way for participants at talk to correct something that may not be clear or appear ambiguous. The participants then can repair their own utterances or the utterances of others using a variety of strategies.

According to Young (2008), participants cope with this by first of all identifying the source of trouble, and then seek out as to who would do the repair and complete it.

Schegloff (1979) classified repairs into four types:

1. other-initiated self repair (OISR)
2. other-initiated other repair (OIOR)
3. self-initiated self repair (SISR)
4. self-initiated other repair (SIOR)

Schegloff (2010) reiterates that problems which emerge in talk, be it in speaking, hearing or understanding, can be analysed according to the 4 types of repair as explained by Young (2008). Schegloff (2010) coins the phrase “division of labour” for these. He explains,

in describing such divisions of labor, the key way of ‘casting’ or describing the participants is to contrast the person who was the speaker of the talk being

repaired (the speaker of the trouble source) with everybody else in the interaction. (p. 101)

It is more likely that speakers do self-repair of previous or upcoming talk, which is then categorised as SISR, and there appears to be less of OIOR in talk. The repair sequence which is other-initiated self-repair (OISR) is “initiated with forms of utterance which locate with varying degrees of specificity what the source and/or the type of problem is” (Schegloff 2007, p.101). Question forms are the most common and they form the first pair part of the adjacency pair of question-answer sequence.

Liddicoat (2007) considers repair as a tool and also a set of practices designed for dealing with the various differences which emerge in talk. Repair is a fundamental part of conversation and reveals clearly the nature of conversation as a self-organizing and self-righting system based on rules which operate and are managed locally by participants. Liddicoat (2007) also refers to it as a ‘simple device’ while Young (2007, p.49) describes it as ‘the treatment of trouble in talk-in-interaction’. Repairs are “organized ways of dealing with various kinds of trouble in the interaction’s progress, such as problems of (mis) hearing or understanding” (Ten Have, 1999, p.116). The reasons for repair work in talk are numerous but fundamentally it is to allow for smooth communication between speakers, and to overcome misunderstandings in speech.

In simple terms, repairing involves “clearing up before proceeding” (Stenstorm, 1994, p.206). This may result in the recipients requesting for a repetition or reformulation, or the speakers themselves would carry out the repair using these strategies. Whether repairs are self- or other- initiated, there are factors underlying their use. Atkinson (1999) asserts that the speakers who are higher in status or more powerful would most

likely carry out other-initiated repair as a way to exert their authority or seniority in an establishment. This may appear in the forms of repeated interruptions with the aim of seeking clarification, asking for further information or just eliciting explanation.

2.4 Sequence Organization

In analyzing sequences, we essentially look at how particular courses of action are initiated and progressed and, as part of this, how particular action opportunities are opened and activated, or withheld from and occluded. (Heritage, 1997)

This sequential organization of talk will not result in much if the participants themselves are not orientating towards the talk, but most of the time, the speakers and hearers do. Schegloff (1992, p.191) terms this as “contextual resource” which enables the participants to accomplish shared understanding. Sequence organization is the heart of CA, and it examines how talk participants carry out their action in specific ways within the context of the interaction. Having mentioned earlier (see Section 2.3) that people take turns to speak, and this is managed in a particular way, what is observed is the talk comes in a sequence or series of exchanges. As Boden (1994, p.206) aptly points out that it is not so much that talk is produced on a turn-by-turn basis but, “by extension, that the sequential pacing talk gives to tasks is deeply implicative of organizations themselves.” It may appear simple and straightforward to say when one speaks the other needs to hold on until the first speaker finishes, but in the study of talk in interaction, it is not when the next speaker can have her turn, rather it is how the speaker will take his turn. If a question is posed, then an answer is expected. This kind of sequence is known as the adjacency pairs, but it is not only based on question-answer series. There are

other adjacency pairs such as invite-accept or decline, or greeting-greeting. This concept of AP will be described in the next section.

2.4.1 Adjacency Pair

The use of adjacency pairs (henceforth AP) in sequences of talk is the norm and CA seeks to examine how the use of an AP can help co-construct meaning in talk. Spoken interaction is structured in this sense that utterances occur one after another and usually the second utterance is related as well as functionally dependent on the first utterance (Cameron, 2001). AP consists of paired utterances such as greeting-greeting, question-answer, offer-accept, order-comply, or invitation-rejection. Sacks and Schegloff (1973) define AP as a sequence of two utterances which are produced by different speakers, are adjacently located with a first and second part, and the basic rule which governs it, according to Levinson (1983), is

having produce a first part of some pair, current speaker must stop speaking, and next speaker must produce at that point a second part to the same pair". (p. 304)

However what happens when the rule is not adhered to will open another way to examine the "other sequences" which include insertion, embedded, pre and post sequences. In understanding these sequences, the meaning and direction of the exchange is given, and in the words of Boden (1994), this "provides a kind of revolving prism that highlights each discrete point of this apparently microscopic social order" (p.206). For the purpose of this study, the basic sequence of question-answer will be examined in the view of answering the research questions posed.

- **Question-Answer Sequence**

Questions are interactive in nature, and they form the first pair part of a question-answer AP (Sacks et al. 1974). In conversations that are naturally occurring, talk is unplanned. Talk participants may use questions for various purposes. As mentioned earlier, in some cases it signals a topic change. The questions range from Yes-No types (polarity) to Wh-types, and responses are offered either directly or is followed by a series of explanation. Geluykens (1999) views question-answer as a conversational activity which is used to achieve coherence collaboratively.

The question-answer pair is an efficient mechanism which enables the talk to move forward, and each question “drives” the talk in a specific, locally relevant and locally managed manner (Boden, 1994, p.69). This in turn allows the hearer to pursue a topic for the information contained. In question-answer sequence, there is always a speaker that would initiate a question and subsequently a response should follow. In analysis however, the question which appear at the beginning of a conversation may not get an answer perhaps until many turns of talk. In analysing talk at work which is naturally occurring, it appears highly probable that question-answer sequences are not as neatly structured.

2.4.2 Lexical Choice

Lexis or choice of words could be taken as a way to show how speakers express themselves in terms of the form they take and its’ content. Drew and Heritage (1992, p.29) assert that “lexical choice is a significant way through which speakers evoke and orient to the institutional context of their talk”. Within this, two issues are brought to

bear: choice of descriptive items and self-reference (Heritage, 1997, p.179). Heritage adds that lexical choice is part of turn design, and turn design is part of sequential organization while sequential organization in turn is part of overall structure of organization. Hence the six areas of research into institutional interaction are intertwined.

In studies where lexis is concerned, the range of findings is numerous. For the current study it is not possible to cover the range of depth of lexical choices from the data. However only two aspects, i.e. specialised lexis and pronouns will be the focus in this thesis. As Hymes (1986) puts it, lexical choice has to do with meaning, and this infers a value-laden context. And Poncini (2004) suggests that to examine specialised lexis, it would be necessary to consider longer stretches of data because there are different levels of contexts in which the data is situated. This is concluded from a study by Collins and Scott (1997) who examined the organization of lexis in business meetings.

- **Pronoun Use**

The use of pronouns in business discourse has been investigated by researchers like Bilbow (1997), Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997) and Poncini (2004). They claim that by examining its use, it may reveal some significant insights into the way speakers use language. Poncini adds that by making a choice on the pronouns, speakers are adjusting their roles to the organization. More specifically the “pronouns are connected in the way speakers present themselves and relate to other participants in the interaction” (2004, p.86). Heritage (1997) places self-reference under lexical choice, and the use of “we” is a self-reference which he considers as “institutional euphemisms”

which are ways of talking that may minimize the “painfulness of the situation or the actions under discussion” (Ten Have, 1999, p.170).

Handford (2010) suggests that pronouns are used by talk participants as a mechanism to signal social relationships. The use of pronouns such as “we” in business settings and other institutional talk have been investigated by various researchers (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Fairclough, 2000; Poncini, 2002, 2004). According to Handford (2010, p.156), in institutional talk there are 5 common referents revealed by “we” and these are evident in internal business meetings, which are:

- Inclusive personal, referring to all those present at time of speaking
- Exclusive personal, referring to one in-group present
- Inclusive corporate, referring to both (or more) companies or departments
- Exclusive corporate, referring only to the speaker’s company or department
- Intra-organizational, referring to all employees within a company

Sometimes the use of one pronoun may signal more than one identity and this was shown by Zupnik (1994) in his study on personal deixis like “we” and “I” where shifts between such pronouns enact power in the discourse. Banks (1988, p.191) adds that “we”, among all the other pronouns, “has the greatest potential to be the most influential contemporary English personal pronoun of power and solidarity”. He continues by stating that where speakers who are of a higher status and have more power over their recipient, there is a “power semantic” at play. As mentioned earlier, in institutional interaction, there are constraints placed on certain speakers owing to the inferential frameworks and so Drew and Heritage (1992, p.31) point out that these speakers may choose between the use of ‘we’ and ‘I’ when referring to themselves. They call them

the “self-referring *we*” or the “institutional *we*” which can be used to signal an institutional identity over a personal identity. This goes to show that the organization’s members are speaking on behalf of the institution.

Examining pronoun use at managerial meeting discourse will have to consider the context in which they are used. The pronoun “we” in English does not differentiate its inclusive or exclusive use, and therefore has to be inferred from the context of the talk (Poncini, 2004, p.93). In business settings, some researchers who studied pronoun use have taken into consideration the group and functional areas within the business when choosing referents to pronouns. A study carried out by Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997) examined the use of “we” by two groups of people in both formal and informal meetings. The research found that there were shifts in the collective identity of those at middle management which was not within the meeting context, hence the “we” refer to a task group, a function or department, or the corporation, also known as the corporate “we”. They concluded that

such shifts are revealing not only in defining relationships within the group but also in positioning various speakers with the sense making processes of the corporate culture and the specific encoding of identity. (1997, pp.175-167)

In their study, they were able to show how talk participants were positioned within their own groups even though they belong to other subgroups. What they found is significant because it was able to reveal that by examining the use of pronouns in such meetings allow for different groups within the same organisation to be identified.

The other two vital pronouns are “you” and “I”. The use of “I” refers to an individual identity, as opposed to a collective identity when “we” is used. When talk participants use “I” it is referring to oneself and only one person is involved, as it is a singular pronoun. This is hence direct and straightforward unlike the use of “you” which could either refer to a single individual, or a group, or a subgroup. The use of “you” to refer to an individual may appear to be either impersonal or ambiguous, and this would depend on the context of the talk. However there are other pronouns which may be interchangeably used with “you” when referring to a group or subgroup, as in “you all”, “everyone”, “you people” and “everybody”. When superiors refer to a subgroup or group as “you all”, they appear to be placing emphasis on the collective and obviously minimising the emphasis on any particular individual. The choice of pronouns thus shows the interactional asymmetry and the unequal relationship between talk participants.

To sum up, as mentioned above (see Section 2.2), CA is a micro analytic approach, applying CA tools would allow one to discover the intricacies of the how talk is organized and makes sense in what seem disorderly. A look into these interactional resources used by the talk participants allow for a thorough examination on the way talk is facilitated or hindered. Cameron’s (2001) provides an analogy of a snowflake examined under a microscope, and maintains that this reveals the structure and complexity of the item which the naked eye cannot see, and in using CA and placing it under the so-called CA microscope “defamiliarizes what we normally take for granted, and reveals the unsuspected complexity of our everyday behaviour” (p.89).

Having covered the various aspects of CA and its analytical devices, the next section will discuss the notion of power which is evident within institutional talk.

2.5 Talk and Power

Power is a powerful word. The word has the sense of control or dominion of one group over another, an essential inequality between the dominant and subordinate...some people have more power over others and they exercise that power through certain face-to-face interactions and through discursive practices” (Young, 2008, p.66).

In social science theory, power has often been regarded as a variable. It permeates the whole of human existence, prevalent in families, societies and institutions. It is thus a basic social concern (Kramarae, Schulz & O’Barr, 1984). Studies on the relationship between language and power have been studied over the decades: in the fields of sociology, discourse and communication, and linguistics (Fowler, 1985; Handford, 2010; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Locher, 2004; Lukes, 1974; Watts, 1991). A significant outcome of such studies in situated contexts (in this case, talk at meetings) is the notion of power and how it is distributed. Access to such power discourse, according to Chipunza (2007, p.26), is regarded as “an important social resource upon which power and dominance is based, giving the more powerful speaker privileged access to influence processes and outcomes”.

There are various definitions of power: Wrong (1979) defines power as “the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others” (cited in Kramarae et al., 1984, p.11). Foucault (1980), however, views power slightly differently, asserting that power is not necessarily in the hands of individuals; rather it can be developed through relationships in verbal interaction. He further adds that power is not static. Instead it lies in a changing relationship where force and resistance co-exists. And he

concludes by proposing that power relationships be examined more specifically “within a particular institution at a particular time to study the overall structure and discourse within” (Kramarae et al., 1984, p. 25).

Language features in a highly significant way in the study of power. Because power exists within patterns of communication, and not necessarily within individuals, it is a dynamic concept which is negotiated as a result of “mutually constituted and mutually administered interaction system” (Treichler et al., 1984, p.64) and to evaluate any form of power is to locate it in sequential utterances of talk in interaction. This current study does exactly this. By examining how talk participants at meetings employ interactional devices using CA tools show how power is enacted in the discourse.

Further when analysing the notion of power in institutional talk, there is inevitably signs of dominance and control pervading the texts. According to Coultas (2003, p.46), there is “always a struggle for dominance and every conversation is a battleground for superiority and higher status”. But it is not all about domination as there also exist cooperation and communication. Coultas (2001) explains that the social position which is inherent in the speakers gives them the power to confer or deny each other in interaction. And those who have more power exert it due to the support they get from the institutions, for example in the law courts, which is socially recognised as a site of power. Moreover certain talk participants inherently has power in the occupation they hold, and this gives them the right to use specialised lexis within their work contexts. As they are empowered in this way they then exercise their power over others.

Holmes (2003, p.62) asserts that workplace interactions are seldom neutral in terms of power. And as Drew and Heritage (1992) claim, there are constraints placed on such

interactions in institutional interactions (see Section 2.2.2). The way turns are taken, and sequences are organised in talk reveal this asymmetry most succinctly. This is evident at meetings and confirms what Mumby (1988, p.68) alludes to, that they are the “most important and visible sites of organizational power”.

Language is clearly a crucial means of enacting power, and this may be seen in a number of ways at workplaces. Various studies have considered the role language play in the exercise of power such as Locher’s (2004) study on power and politeness. Her framework describes and identifies the nature and exercise of power and she proposes a checklist for understanding this notion in the light of qualitative research. The list is given below:

1. power is (often) expressed through language
2. power cannot be explained without contextualization
3. power is relational, dynamic and contestable
4. the interconnectedness of language and society can also be seen in the display of power
5. freedom of action is needed to exercise power
6. the restriction of an interactant’s action-environment often leads to the exercise of power
7. the exercise of power involves a latent conflict and clash of interests, which can be obscured because of a society’s ideologies
8. the exercise of power is often accompanied by displays of unmarked or positively marked relational work in order to maintain the social equilibrium and to negotiate identities

(Taken from Locher, 2004, pp. 39-40)

Ideally this checklist may serve as a means to analyse language use in verbal interactions. The list which has 8 propositions can be categorised into two areas: one deals with power that is more general or societal while the other belongs at the individual level. For the current study power appears more at the individual level and yet the talk is happening within an institutional, hence it can be seen at a societal level too. But Locher maintains that these propositions are closely related and “each one helps to explain the other” (2004, p. 40).

Studies on power and politeness at the workplace continue to increase in the past decade, with Holmes and Stubbes (2003) also examining discourse strategies that show how superiors and their subordinates move from enacting power at work to doing collegiality and promoting friendship and solidarity. Their notion of power is that seen from a social constructionist point of view. It means that where there is verbal interaction, talk participants will always be “enacting, reproducing and sometimes resisting institutional power relationships” by using certain discourse strategies (Holmes & Stubbes, 2003, p.3). These strategies may also be used in the construction and presentation of oneself as is usually evident in the chairperson or the boss of the company. In this case the talk participants may choose to present themselves through the use of oppressive and repressive discourse (Pateman, 1980) or what Fairclough (1989) calls coercive and consent forms of power. The former means having “power over” while the latter means having “power to” and various other terms have also been used almost synonymously. To explain these terms, the table below provides an overview of what the different terms mean.

Table 2.1: Types of Power Relationship

Type of Power		Power based on:
Control “POWER OVER”	<i>Legitimate</i>	Formal status (a person’s role or position within an organization) and associated rights →exert authority
	<i>Coercive</i>	Use of force (emotional or physical) in the face of resistance →gain compliance
	<i>Expertise</i>	Specific skills, abilities or knowledge held by an individual or group →provide assistance
	Reward	Control over desirable resources or ‘goods’ (including relational ‘gifts’ and ‘permissions’) →grant access
	Personal	Individual personality or charisma (role models) →exert influence
	Social	Social status and associated rights (derived from a person’s role or position within a group or society) →exert influence and/or authority
Control “POWER TO”	Collaboration	Joint influence, negotiation or consensual decision making or action →offer mutual engagement
	Empowerment	Facilitation or genuine ‘giving up’ of power to others who are relatively power-less →delegate or share power

(Taken from Stubbes, 2003, p. 184)

Locher (2004) opines that power is fascinating because it is a social phenomenon that we encounter every day in our lives. In this study which covers managerial talk, the participants who interact at the meetings are obviously people who hold positions of power. Their talk have been recorded, transcribed and analysed and the findings will be reported in the Chapter Six.

CHAPTER 3

BUSINESS MEETINGS

3.0 Introduction

One of the many activities that occur at most workplaces regularly is meetings. When people come together for meetings, they talk and much of this talk is goal-oriented. The present study looks at talk at meetings. Known also a discursive practice, the meeting is seen as a site where talk activities are evident, and according to Schwartzman (1989), such talk is, “episodic in nature” (p.7), where participants either develop or use specific conventions to regulate or control their talk. As such talk at meetings offer a rich source of investigating the discursive activities that form the social structure of organizations for three reasons. Firstly, people have to talk at meetings, and it is either a two-way interaction or it may involve three to four persons in an episode. It is hence dynamic and the moment-by-moment interaction reveals the social and institutional role of its participants. Secondly, talk at meetings constitutes a specific form as it is “occasioned by and constitutive of the self-same setting which it accomplishes” (Boden, 1994, p.82). Finally, meetings are structured, as they are constrained by time and space. They are scheduled ahead of time, and held at specific places.

3.1 Research on Meetings

Research on meetings at workplaces has been on the increase since the early 1980's. Schwartzman's (1989) pioneering study into meetings resulted in a book devoted to this

topic. She proposed a theory of meetings, situating it in the context of anthropology. This was an extension of work done by Hymes (1974), who considered meetings as communicative events. Hymes' work had been further developed and adopted by many researchers in the field of language studies and linguistics (Saville-Troike, 1982).

Meetings as a field of study can be investigated on its own, but it can also be set within multi-disciplinary approaches. It has been observed that management literature on meetings focuses on researches that have been conducted mostly through interviews and survey studies (Streibel, 2003). However with the increasing use of discourse analysis in language studies in the areas of organizational and management studies, talk at meetings has been given more attention (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2007; Boden, 1994; Holmes, 2003).

Meetings which form the backbone of the organization is the main focus of the study and data collected at the meetings comprise of the talk that took place at the organization. The investigation began with a question of what really takes place at workplace meetings. Does the description of what takes place at meetings in organizations match what has been found in the textbooks on meetings? How do participants at meetings convey their messages to one another and how does the chairperson conduct the meetings?

Holmes (2011) consider business meetings as “omnipresent discourse events” in studies on workplace communication and over the past three decades since Schwartzman's (1989) sociological study on meetings, the discourse of meetings have attracted the attention of numerous discourse analysts. Schwartzman defines meetings as a “form of activity in which a group may be engaged, and, as a communicative event, it would

structure and affect the behavior of the individuals in a particular way” (1989, p.62).

Later, Boden (1994) defines a meeting as

a planned gathering, whether internal or external to an organization, in which participants have some perceived (if not guaranteed) role, have some forewarning (either longstanding or quite improvisatorial) of the event, which has itself some purpose of ‘reason’, a time, a place, and, in some general sense, an organizational function. (p. 84)

In 1996, a group of researchers under the leadership of Holmes from the University of Wellington in New Zealand undertook a funded research project which they named Language in the Workplace Project (LWP). As a result of this, Holmes and her team mates have written and published many articles and books on ‘meetings’. One of them, Marra (2003) defines meetings as “a pre-organised gathering of at least 4 participants in a task-oriented group” (Marra, 2003, p.43).

From the late 1990s to 2010, these authors, i.e Drew & Heritage (1992), Boden (1994), Sollitt-Morris (1996), Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1996), Bilbow (1997), Yamada (2002), Holmes & Stubbes (2003), Cooren (2007) and Handford (2010) have also examined meetings in various forms. Though their focus may differ, their basic premise do not, as most of these researchers use meetings as the central theme. For instance, Boden (1994) compared talk at meetings from various institutions and applied CA to look at how organizations emerge through the interactional talk. Stubbes and Holmes (2003) on the other hand looked at power and politeness in the workplace context and one of which is meetings. Cooren (2007) examined one main management meeting but applied different approaches to analyse it, focusing on areas like leadership and decision-making strategies. The latest product of a doctorate student at the University of

Wellington compared the difference between formal and informal meetings in two regions: New Zealand and Japan (Murata, 2011).

The Journal of Business Communication (JBC) in 2009 devoted a whole volume to the talk at meetings and contributors to the journal dwelt on various issues such as interpretative management in business meetings, joint laughter in workplace meetings, or making decisions in management team meetings. As expressed in the introduction of the journal, the special issue “investigates how meetings as complex social events can be understood as an interactional joint achievement of all involved participants” (2009, p. 3). This is done with the hope that it may contribute to a better understanding of the interactive and dynamic nature of interaction at the workplace. Asmub & Svennevig, (2009) comment that,

within the past decades there has been a move towards more micro-analytical approaches for the study of workplace interaction...and within the more prominent micro-analytical approaches to business communication there is a move from what Cooren (2007) calls an ‘interpretive turn’ in the 80’s to the discursive turn in the 90s and now to the interactional turn. (p.5)

In the context of the current study, the meetings referred to are formal, where the time and venue of the meetings are already planned ahead, though they may be subject to change. Changes are only permissible by the order of the GM. The meetings are attended by concerned participants whose roles have been defined by the organization. These roles are institutional in nature and when the participants interact at the meetings, their roles are enacted via their talk. All those who are required to attend the management meetings are department heads or supervisors. They make up the top management team but at these monthly management meetings, they become

subordinates to the GM. Inevitably there exists an asymmetrical relationship where power relations are present in the discursive practice.

3.2 Talk at Meetings

Fundamentally, meetings are “talk-based activities where much of the business of organizations get done” (Markman, 2009, p. 151). In Goffman’s (1961), Hymes’s (1962), Gumperz’s (1982) and Bateson’s (1972) work, a common thread which was found was that they had sought “to define and delineate specific features of meetings as communicative events and frames for behavior”. Meeting talk is a form of focused interaction, which takes place when participants agree to be engaged in talk for a period of time where they are focused cognitively and visually to the talk. It is maintained by a close face-to-face encounter, making the talk a collaborative one (Schwartzman, 1989).

Taylor and Robichaud (2004, p.399) concur that there are various perspectives to the study on meetings but it is where the organizing properties of conversation that can be shown most clearly “when is the talk itself that is the focus of analysis”. Talk at meetings which have been recorded and transcribed is the main data for this study. It is a form of spoken discourse and the talk is naturally-occurring and therefore authentic in nature. From a CA perspective, turn-taking during talk is a basic phenomenon and the founders of CA (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1978) advocate that these turns may be locally and interactionally managed in the system of talk (see Section 2.3). By employing CA tools to analyse the talk, the different units of discourse are given an interactional approach and this is able to show how the participants of the talk orientate towards specific social practices in the discourse. Although CA began with studies in ordinary conversations, it moved on to investigate institutional talk within a few decades (Arminen, 2005; Drew & Heritage, 1992). It certainly helped CA researchers

come to a better understanding of the nature of institutional talk and how the organization emerged through the talk. Taylor (2006) sums up aptly,

we can learn a good deal about how organization emerges out of conversation by concentrating first on the elementary communicative event: a single moment in an on-going flow of talk. It is here that reality gets established as a basis of coordinated response: it is here that activity is understood and generated. It is here that the relationships organizational members have with each other are expressed, and sometimes get renegotiated. (p. 148)

Studies carried out using the CA approach on business meeting talk has been increasing since the 1990s and towards the end of 1990 and into the 21st century the New Zealand LWP team wrote numerous papers and shared significant findings which have impacted the field of business communication in terms of training and curriculum design (Chan, 2004; Holmes, Stubbes, Vines, 1999; Marra, 2003; Murata, 2011). Their work ranged from examining politeness and power to directives and the cultural differences between speakers at meetings in Japan, Hong Kong and New Zealand. Their data was collected over a period of two years from 14 organizations with almost 2000 interactions and most of these came from dyadic exchanges, and also verbal interactions, at formal as well as informal meetings.

In another study, Atkinson, Cuff, and Lee (1978) examine how people talk at a meeting to achieve and sustain the meeting as a social setting. They argue that meeting talk can be investigated to discover ways in which this orientation is displayed and secured firstly, by those present. They tend to orient to meetings and to the course of events and activities as episodic. Secondly, the participants at meetings adapt to the scheduling and controlling of these episodes and the talk within them. Finally, they orient to meetings

as having purposes which helps to frame business, and the episodic organization of the business (Schwartzman, 1989, p.60).

To add, there are various phases of meeting talk that is usually eminent, and they comprise of the opening, the agenda which covers differing topic of discussions, and the closing (Boden, 1994; Bargiela-Chiapini & Harris, 1997; Chan, 2004; Murata, 2011).

Within each phase or stage, there may exist a range of discursive activities such as giving instructions or suggestions, making decisions and plans, solving problems, reporting or giving accounts, reviewing and negotiating matters. Embedded in these practices are other communicative forms of talk that serve various functions such as thanking, apologizing, complimenting and even reprimanding. Fundamentally people at work talk to get work done (Handford, 2010; Holmes, 2001).

The nature of the talk at meetings is also an area of study that a number of researchers have examined. How participants communicate depends on the meeting type, which may range from an informal or casual meeting to a very formal one. However it has been found that even at formal meetings people do ‘gossip’, tell stories, or basically do small talk as these are forms of relational communication that exists in most settings.

Some general features of formal meetings include:

- There is a pre-arranged time and venue to meet
- The number of participants are usually the same
- The chair is usually the leader of the organization or department
- There is a set agenda with minutes of the previous meeting

At business meetings, the participants come together to accomplish specific organizational goals which depends on achieving the main task they set out to do, with

discussion of the agenda led by the chairperson and in collaboration with the team present (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1997). The chair and her team play different roles and have different tasks to accomplish at these meetings. These tasks as meted out in the agenda signal the purposes of the meeting, often in explicit ways. Thus the chair's role in facilitating meetings, especially formal ones with agendas and minutes is vital in determining how the meetings' goals are enacted in the discourse. The section below explicates further the functions of the meeting chair.

3.3 The Meeting Chair

The role of the chair in any meeting is crucial for the general effectiveness of a meeting. One of the key functions of the chairperson is to moderate the structure and direction of the meeting (Marra, 2003). When meeting talk is on-going, the chair keeps the flow of the exchange by opening and closing topics, often following the agenda, interrupting when the exchange is digressing or summarizing matters deliberated when it is time to conclude. As Boden (1994, p. 89) aptly puts it, the chair functions as a "switchboard" for the interaction. In brief, the chair has the right or authority to act as the institutional gatekeeper to moderate the interaction and with this, comes certain rights and obligations. This allows the chair "to legitimately exercise power by controlling the development of the interaction" (Locher, 2004, p. 265). Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1997) observes that the chair who takes on such a specific role

becomes invested with the unconditional power of opening and closing the meetings...and no other participant is allowed to carry them out without committing a noticeable breach of conventions. (p.209)

Moreover, the chair has the power to control the meetings' openings and closings as it accepted tacitly by the team due to the interactional asymmetry in such business settings.

Pomerantz and Denvir (2007) add that the chair is an institutionally recognised position and she has the "rights and responsibilities afforded to the person who is an incumbent to this role" (p.31). With this the chairperson is entitled to carry out various kinds of activities at meetings. Pomerantz et al. (2007, pp.31-32) list these activities as:

1. opening and closing the meeting
2. introducing items or topics designated on the agenda
3. facilitating the closing down of talk on one agenda item and the introduction of talk on a next agenda item
4. allocating turns-at-talk by formally granting participants the right to be next speakers
5. sanctioning inappropriate meeting conduct

The chair's role in institutional meetings is by nature interactional. It involves the other meeting participants' acceptance of that role, as well as having "the contingent realization of those rights and responsibilities through the communicative behaviour" (Pomerantz et al. 2007, p.47) of these people.

Institutional talk differs from ordinary conversation in various ways and this study adopted the views proposed by Drew and Heritage (1992) where they listed three features that signal this difference (see Section 2.2.1 for the detailed write-up). The next

section will highlight some studies which have been done on talk at meetings, either locally or abroad.

3.4 Past Malaysian Studies on Meetings

In the Malaysian context, various studies have also been carried out on meetings. But to my knowledge only a handful have conducted a CA approach into the interactive and dynamic nature of meeting talk in a CofP framework. To name some doctoral studies which have been conducted in Malaysia using meetings are Morais (1994), Paramasivam (2003) and Nor Fariza (2008).

Morais (1994) looked at patterns of conflict and non-conflict via talk at work in a Malaysian business establishment, but her data did not come from meetings alone. She collected data at the company's job interview sessions and at the factory where supervisors briefed their operators. The language use was examined and one of the phenomena that arose from this study was language choice. Code switching was evident at the establishment and it was found that the top managers used more English among themselves but when they were in conversations with the factory operators they code-switched or code-mixed. The use of MalE was also pervasive in the data. In relation to this current study, the data are solely based on meeting talk and there was no evidence of code-switching. But MalE was the lingua franca used by the managers. Morais (1994) also looked at patterns of conflict and non-conflict and found that status and role of the participants played a significant role in the resolution of conflicts within the establishment.

Another Malaysian study conducted by Paramasivam (2003) examined language use in business negotiation in two aspects: power and politeness. The negotiations were carried out at three meetings between Malaysian and Japanese speakers who held positions of authority. She discovered that politeness strategies play a significant role in facilitating negotiation in this intercultural context. Although the current study and Paramasivam's both looked at language use, hers focused on the speech act of negotiation and examined notions of power and politeness between two cultures, while the present study focuses on one organisation which uses monthly meetings as a vehicle to get work done. Power is evident because of the hierarchical status of the managers in the company.

Nor Fariza (2008) investigated communicative strategies of ESL speakers in a local tertiary institution, where she observed and analysed talk at meetings of two groups: a simulated one with undergraduates and a group of executives at a company. The purpose of the study is to compare the communicative strategies used by the learners in simulated interactions with what takes place in the real world. Her study focused on the language functions of expressing agreement, disagreement, argument and negotiation. Her findings revealed that the executives at the workplace used similar types of strategies to achieve their goals, and in particular they code switched a lot.

While the three studies described above had examined different forms of talk and some on meetings, Nair-Venugopal's (2000) work provided interesting insights into the language choice and styles of Malaysian speakers who worked in a manufacturing organisation. These speakers had to make presentations as part of a training programme and their speeches were audio recorded, transcribed and analysed. The researcher found that when English was used, especially by those from the Chinese or Indian ethnic

groups, it was based on their perceptions that English is the language of business and it is therefore the norm to use it. However they used the marked form of MalE, classified as ethnolect, where the “prosodic and phonological features of MalE mark the group ethnic identities of Malaysians in distinctive ways of speaking English as members of different ethnolinguistic groups in Malaysia” (Nair-Venugopal, 2000, p.65). These findings may be useful for the study of MalE but in this present research it has been noted earlier (see Section 1.8) that subjects used MalE but the focus of the endeavour is not on choice of language rather the linguistic and interactional devices used by them to achieve their communicative goals.

However as noted from each of these three theses mentioned, analysis of talk was carried out with different aims and objectives. The closest work to this current study was carried out by Paramasivam (2003), who analysed data from three meetings and examined power relation and politeness strategies between Japanese and Malay speakers based on the linguistic features from the talk at meetings.

Various studies conducted on verbal interaction at meetings have been conducted by researchers in other parts of the globe. In 2004, Poncini concluded her studies on discursive strategies in multicultural business meetings. She claims that the study has filled the gap between those that have looked at localised business meetings without a cultural dimension to those that have only looked at cultural perspectives without the language component. Her extensive study included data of naturally occurring talk from the base company in Italy with its international distributors from 12 to 14 countries in Europe, Asia and North America. According to Poncini (2004, p. 298) the study “was able to identify features of language use and meeting organization that contributed to facilitating interactions at the multicultural settings examined”. Chipunza (2007)

investigated male-female interaction at management meetings in the Zimbabwean corporate setting and found that males tended to dominate and exert influence through interruptions, taking more control of the discourse. This is possibly due to the fact that in Zimbabwe, “men continue to be the fundamental power brokers in the corporate workplace” (p. ii).

3.5 Conclusion

Schwartzman (1989) observes that studies on contexts of language use and the role of language is on the increase, particularly in bureaucratic organizations in complex societies. These studies look at formal organizations as social construction of members, indicating a shift from the notion that organizations are stable and concrete, and not problematic entities. However between Schwartzman’s (1989) comment two decades ago and now, it has been said that today’s workplaces have evolved. A new work order has come about, which is fast replacing the old, with a redefinition of the abilities expected of the workforce. Filliettaz (2001) is of the view that

workers are now expected to be more and more flexible, creative and capable of coordinating their own tasks with other partners. In various ways, such profound changes in the organization of the enterprise have had a very interesting impact on *discourse strategies*...and it seems that the emergence of a new work order is associated with the growing importance of language use in the workplace (italics mine) (p.2).

It is not only in the way modern workplaces exist or function, but also how the workforce of today use talk to get work done. Moreover, attention is focused specifically on the interpersonal occasions in which organizations are realized, and this

means that talk, at events such as meetings, gives it structure and hence becomes significant contexts for research. To close, Schwartzman's (1989) view then still rings true in this new millennium, that

meetings are often context for these interactions and therefore provide researchers with a unique opportunity to examine both micro and macro level processes and dynamics. (p. 5)

By looking at how members of a CofP come together to talk at meetings to get work done, it is hoped that some insights may be gained as to how these "workers" (managers) come to arrive at their communication goals. Hence investigating the interactional features within a CofP provides the means to this end. It is in such meetings that the CofP interact and convey their meaning through talk and it is hoped that this current study will provide some insights into what really takes place at meetings in the real world of work, and also that the findings may contribute to a better understanding of the interactive and dynamic nature of such interactions.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the present study. The methods used are informed by the theoretical framework adopted for the study. The primary data of this study is taken from naturally-occurring talk at managerial meetings in a Malaysian business enterprise. A secondary source of data comes from the ethnographic field notes. While the study is qualitative in nature, the research design selected is aligned to the research objectives and questions. As stated in Chapter One, the study aims to examine verbal interactions of managers at management meetings in a CofP and how they use language to achieve their goals at talk. The following sections will discuss the research design and procedures used.

The study is qualitative in nature and one distinctive characteristic of this is that the data may be allowed to “speak for itself” (Cicourel, 1992, p.23) on the one hand while on the other, ethnographical field notes are used to provide evidence for further interpretation, with the aim of offering some in-depth insights into the findings.

4.1 Ethnography

Underlying ethnography is the theory of “naturalism” which suggests that the social world be studied in its “natural state”. Naturalists believe that the primary source of data

in social research must be in their “natural” rather than “artificial” settings. The present study adopted ethnography as a method as it was felt that too often language or linguistic studies is often carried out in the absence of context (Saville-Troike, 2003). Thus, using an ethnographic approach for such studies allows the researcher not just to analyse the language codes of its users, but the context in which language is used and the people who are interacting in that context. On the one hand, ethnography concerns primarily with the description and analysis of culture, while linguistics, on the other hand, deals with the description and analysis of language codes. However, despite this awareness of the interrelationship of language and culture, according to Saville-Troike (2003) ethnographers and linguists have not seemed to link the two fields. Therefore instead of just looking at the linguistic features of spoken discourse in the present study, it is pertinent that the context where the talk takes place be studied as well. In doing so, how the two elements (i.e. language and culture) interrelate may be better defined and described. Bauman and Sherzer (1974, p.7) describe the task of the ethnographer of speaking as one who identifies and analyses “the dynamic interrelationships among the elements which go to make up performance, toward the construction of a descriptive theory of speaking as a cultural system in a particular society”.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, if language research involves recording naturalistic speech, then it is best to locate it in a context. Gumperz (1970, p.9) argues that it is better to employ ethnography knowledge in such a case so that it is easier to “evaluate its social significance” particularly the “social norms governing linguistic choice in the situation recorded”. Couched within the community of practice framework, the context is explicated with ease. Though taking on ethnographic research is time-consuming and may pose various constraints on both researcher and organization, it is still a worthwhile

effort as the amount of data drawn from it is large enough for analysis and may provide greater insights into the linguistic resources of the phenomena under study.

4.1.1 The Ethnographic Process

In order for an in-depth study of a community of practice (CofP), ethnography allows the researcher to get into the situated context with a sense of preparedness. Subsequently when the language of the meetings is being analysed, an awareness of this context allows a more accurate interpretation of the data. To illustrate, when the chairperson is waiting for a meeting to commence, she expects the other members to be there ahead of her. However when one significant member is not present, her impatience and annoyance is reflected in her language use. Being present in the context to observe this phenomenon allows the researcher to comprehend the chairperson's annoyance which led to the choice of words portraying this behaviour. This lends more accuracy to the interpretation as compared to a situation where the researcher cum observer is absent and only the audio recording device is left in the room to do the recording. The interpretation would have captured the voices but no other behaviour may be observable (refer to Appendix 5).

In the Language at Workplace Project (LWP) led by Holmes (2000) and her team in New Zealand, they allowed their subjects to carry the recording devices and gave them autonomy to record their interactions. However after transcribing and analysing the data, the research team also interviewed the subjects. There is a time lapse and the question of how much do the subjects recall 'why they said what' raised doubts on their interview responses. However in cases where video recording was carried out, feedback appeared more authentic. In this current study, it was not possible to set up video recording equipment due to reasons of confidentiality.

Apart from using a non-participant observation approach, field notes are used to explain certain aspects of the discourse that were obtained as data in this study. However the work environment in a manufacturing set-up is often busy and employees have to meet crucial deadlines every day. To carry out research in such an environment is not an easy task as it involves adapting and adjusting to the people's schedules, and this requires flexibility. It was not possible to conduct a pure ethnographic form of research, hence a quasi-form of ethnography was employed. In the three-month duration, the researcher was able to be present in the work premise. Observatory notes were taken and during lunch and tea breaks there were opportunities for getting to know better (refer to Appendix 4 for field notes). The researcher was also allowed to sit in 18 held during office hours. A total of 9 hours and 23 minutes (563 minutes) of naturally-occurring talk at meetings were audio-recorded, within the three months spent at the company. Out of 563 minutes of data, 230 minutes of talk data is used for the analysis.

4.1.2 The Researcher's Role

The researcher played an active role in observing the daily lives of the employees at the CofP being investigated. Having obtained permission to access the company has proven to be an asset to this research. The opportunity to mingle among the employees during their work day and break time gave a deeper insight into their social practice.

At Plant A, the researcher was stationed at the meeting room on the first floor of the building. On her right is the work space for the production executives. A group of them would be communicating in their most common language of use, that is, Bahasa Malaysia or the Malay Language (henceforth Malay). They would talk rather loudly

across their work stations, and answer phone calls frequently, mostly done in Malay, while small talk was made in local Chinese dialects when the Chinese employees interact with one another. On the left side, the researcher was able to observe the customer service manager who made many phone calls in a work day and uses Malay with some Male. The researcher was conscious that she was not to disrupt their daily work routine and when she needed to clarify some matters regarding the audio-recording of the meetings, she had to consult various employees such as the HR manager and the GM's personal assistant. This was mainly regarding the meetings' schedules. The researcher also felt it necessary to have a look at the production line and how the company's products are being manufactured. Permission was obtained from the Operation Manager (Beng) and subsequently the production executives of Plants A and B gave a detailed explanation of the production process as the researcher visited the factory floors of both plants, taking notes as well. It would be apt to say that the researcher played an observer's role more than a participatory role as this area of work is new to her and the main focus of the study is language used at meetings, so the added perspective can be used to supplement her main study.

According to Gill & Johnson (1991, p. 112), this is an overt approach where the researcher is introduced at the commencement of the study as an "outsider". The people being observed are aware of the researcher and the research activity from the beginning and this may result in the two effects: the "observation" and the "researcher". The former results in the possibility of the participants in the study behaving differently because they know they are being observed while the latter implies that the researcher as an individual may influence the activities and relationships in the context. However the main data used in this study is the audio recording of management meetings. Both the effects mentioned above were minimized: the observation at the meetings was

unobtrusive, where the researcher sat in a corner behind the managers and the digital recorder is a tiny piece of equipment left on the table among many other paraphernalia, hence is hardly noticeable. The observer sat in at 18 meetings, but transcription was done of management meetings only. Initially the participants at the meetings may have been aware of the presence of the researcher and recorder but after the first week, this was minimal.

4.1.3 Ethnographic Field Notes

This study's main data comprise of the transcripts of talk obtained from audio recordings of management meetings. Since it was not possible to obtain video recording, the researcher attended all the 18 meetings recorded, to observe and take short notes. This provided additional information on the data. In cases when managers came in late or left the room, these were noted. In between the meeting's proceedings, mobile phones rang and it appeared to be a common practice for the managers to take the calls. Such activities were noted and recorded and these serve as additional information in the interpretation of the data. The notes on both management meetings have been included in Appendix 6. The notes were jottings done on the days the meeting and the researcher sat at a corner to observe how the meeting was run. She noted the non-verbal actions and incidents that occurred during the meetings.

The researcher was present for three months (78 days) and recorded what she observed daily. The observation was written as ethnographic field notes and they comprise the daily journal entry. The notes (Appendix 5) provide additional contextual information which is significant for a study of this nature. It was felt that ethnographic information

may aid the analyst to give contextual perspective to the study so that data interpretation may be supported.

4.2 Description of Talk Participants

Information on the data site has been delineated in Chapter One and what is given in the following section is information on the subjects. The main data is the talk at internal meetings, mainly at management level, held regularly at the company. The total hours of recorded data came up to 9.23 hours (563 minutes). The total number of meetings recorded and other significant information are given in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Number and Duration of Meetings

Management meetings	Duration of meeting (in minutes)
1	170
2	108
3	86
4	77
5	122
Total	563

All managers are expected to be present at these meetings and most of them have more than ten years of working experience, with at least five years at Alpane, the company being investigated. Table 4.2 shows their designation, and the pseudonym used with other personal information.

Table 4.2: Information on the Participants

Positions	Pseudonyms	Male/Female M/F	Age range
1. General Manager	GM (Mira)	F	50-55
2. Operation Manager	Beng	M	45-50

3. Finance Manager	Chai	M	40-45
4. Finance Executive	Yen	F	40-45

Table 4.2, continued.

Positions	Pseudonyms	Male/Female M/F	Age range
5. Finance Executive	Mei	F	35-40
6. Human Resource Manager	Lynn	F	30-35
7. Customer Service Manager	Mat	M	45-50
8. Sales Manager	Weng	M	40-45
9. Purchasing Manager	Suan	F	45-50
10. Manager at GM's office (personal asst)	Choo	F	45-50
11. Research & Development Executive	Samy	M	45-50

Since the company requested anonymity, the researcher opted for the above pseudonyms. The only person who is coded as GM is the General Manager, to differentiate her from the rest, as she is the boss and chairs the meetings that were analysed. However on a few occasions when her colleagues referred to her by name, she was given the pseudonym "Mira".

The company practises a traditional hierarchical system where the GM is seen as the authoritative figure and the other managers are her subordinates. Figure 4.1 shows the organizational chart of the organization.

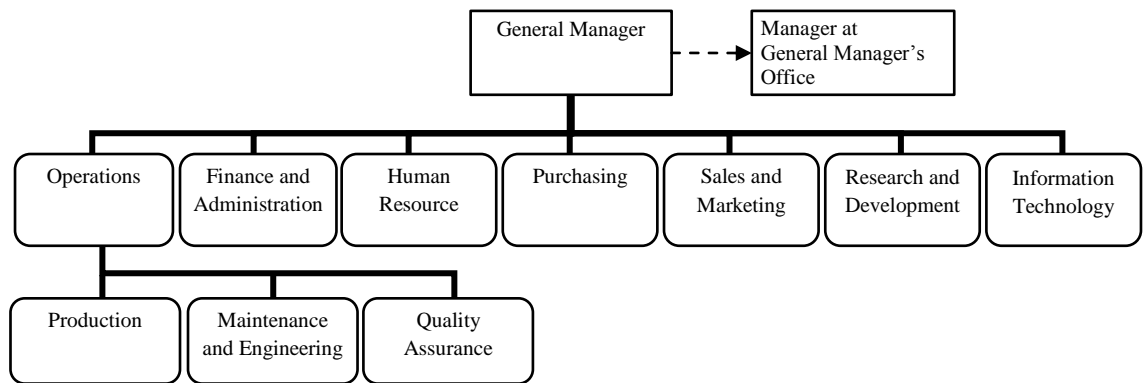


Figure 4.1: Alpane Organisational Chart

4.3 The Meeting Procedure

Management meetings are one of the main features of this organization and it is through these that the company is run and organized. They are crucial as they involve the managers coming together to report on work progress, to assess work which has been done and to project future plans. These meetings are chaired by the GM, and they take place at the conference room in Plant B. This is the company practice, as Plant B has a bigger meeting room and more up-to-date facilities. The room is air-conditioned and has a big rectangular-sized table that can sit up to 15 persons. It is equipped with plug points for the LCD projector and laptops. As the chairperson sits at one end of the table, she faces the other wall where the projector beams the information provided by the managers from their laptops (see Figure 4.2 below on their seating arrangement).

There are eleven managers present at the meetings and their verbal interactions are used as data for this study. The GM sits at the head of the table and the other 10 managers are seated around the table with the researcher behind one of them.

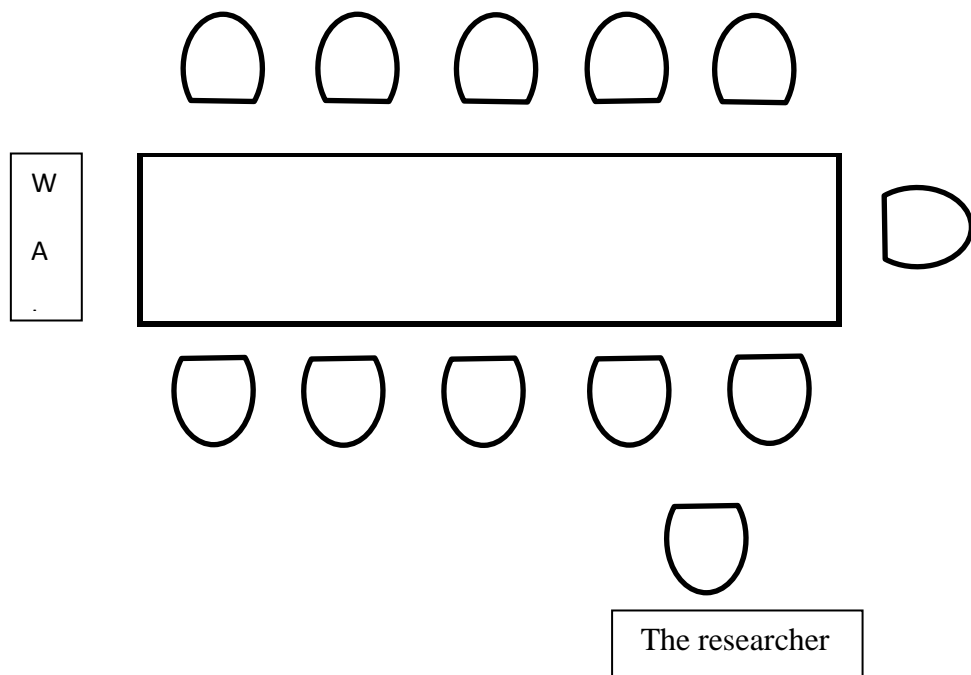


Figure 4.2: Seating Arrangement

The next section describes how the research was carried out and also the processes involved over various phases of data collection.

4.4 Data Collection Process

The primary data which comprise audio-recording of verbal interactions at the meetings are obtained from the CofP after consent was given. This involved a few phases and it is described in the following sections.

Phase I : Preparation

A key problem in obtaining data from real workplaces is the issue of accessibility. Few companies are willing or open to having researchers on their turf, and even if they do,

the gatekeeper (GM) lays down stringent measures and stipulate time frames. For the current study, the accessibility factor was minimized by the fact that the researcher had a contact person who was able to seek the permission from her immediate employer to allow the company to be studied. This contact person acted as the link between the researcher and the management. She provided the necessary background information of the company and sought the permission of her employer to allow the researcher to record their talk at work. A meeting was set up between the employer, who is the GM of the company and the researcher. After the first meeting, the GM requested a proposal of the research plans and this was duly submitted within a week. Following that, the researcher was given the green light to commence her project and allowed access to all meetings taking place at the premises of the company.

Within a three-month time frame, the researcher referred to the GM's personal assistant for instructions and advice as this was permitted by the GM. The personal assistant knows the GM's schedule and is also aware of all that is happening within the establishment, thus having direct access to the GM's personal assistant eased the research process. The personal assistant helped connect the researcher to the HR manager who then provided the list of meetings that could be observed and helped orientate the researcher during the initial stage of the research process. She also provided relevant documents pertaining to the background and administrative set up of the company. When the researcher needed clarification, the personal assistant was the main point of reference. A few informative talk sessions with the personal assistant formed a part of the ethnographic notes for this study.

Ethnographic studies involve research in the real world and though doing ethnography provides rich data and experiences, gaining accessibility into the real world is not easy.

The researcher is often faced with the daunting task of looking for a place that would take him/her in. It was through the help of a friend who knows the GM of the company that the researcher was able to gain access into a “real world” context. The GM graciously allowed the researcher to study her employees’ use of language, and she also agreed to my request of recording all their meetings in audio form. This took place after a proposal was submitted followed by a preliminary with the GM to discuss the nature of the research.

After the preliminary consultation, the GM allowed the researcher full access to the company (see consent letter in Appendix 1) which has factories in two locations. The researcher was allowed to be present at all the meetings held within both premises and to audio record the proceedings. After the initial negotiation, it was agreed that the study would be carried over a three-month period, and during the visits a place in the office would be provided for the researcher. Having had this agreement sorted out at the beginning of the research contributed significantly to the success of the ethnographic process.

Phase II : Data Collection

The researcher was allowed to be present at the company’s two locations where the office and factory were located. The observation at both locations stretched over a three-month period. Apart from presenting the chronological order of the research process, it is also pertinent to mention the number of meetings which were observed and audio-recorded. There were a total number of five management meetings, eight production meetings, four ad-hoc, and one briefing given to the factory operators. However although the researcher was present at these meetings, audio recording was not carried out at all the meetings. Two factors that contributed to this is firstly, the nature of the

meetings and secondly, the venues in which these meetings were held. For example, the ad-hoc meetings were not recorded because they were impromptu and dealt with urgent matters. Most of these were with production staff. In the end the decision was made to transcribe meetings that were conducted at managerial level and where the use of English was prominent.

It was deemed sufficient to do a micro-analytical analysis of two out of the five transcribed audio recordings, which is 230 out of 563 minutes. It is also to be noted here that the language used by the managers in these recorded meetings is English of the Malaysian variety (MalE). The managers did not use Bahasa Malaysia or Mandarin. There was no code-switching. As such the phenomenon of language choice is not considered in this study. Hence, after reading through the transcripts it was also felt that to match the research objectives and questions set forth in this study, two meetings data was extracted as the main source for analysis. This is because it was found that there is sufficient amount of transcribed data to identify the interactional resources and may be used to answer the research questions.

- **Method of Recording**

A Sony ICR Recorder was used to record the interactions at meetings. The digital recorder was placed at the middle of the table in the conference room. The participants sat around this table. The researcher was seated at a corner of the room behind the personal assistant.

At the first meeting, the researcher was introduced to the managers. The GM requested the researcher to explain the purpose of her study and this was significant because it

meant that the researcher need not seek individual permission to record the meetings as the GM vetoed the decision.

After each recording was done, the researcher downloaded the data directly into a computer which then stored the data in the media real player software. This has eased the process of transcription.

Phase III : Data Processing

Once the recording was transcribed, the researcher identified segments of talk that were relevant to answer the research questions posed. This process was time consuming and since it is a data-driven study, the researcher cum analyst meticulously listened and looked out for emerging patterns of speech. The tools used for this will be discussed in the data analysis section below but before moving into that, the transcription process needs to be mentioned.

Apart from the quality of recording and availability of clear transcriptions, the researcher allowed the data to “speak” for itself. This was further verified when the transcripts were further refined using an adapted version of Jefferson’s (1973) transcription convention (see Appendix 2).

4.5 The Transcription Process

The recorded data was stored into media real player file in a computer, and transcription commenced by opening a word document file and typing what one hears from the computer speakers to the word processor. It is generally accepted that during the process of transcription, researchers need to decide what information to include and how this information may be presented in written form (Ten Have 1999). There are a number of

factors to consider and no matter how accurate or close a transcription is done, it can never fully reflect the actual speech that took place (Cook 1997). For this study, five recorded meetings were transcribed. Out of these, two were transcribed in further detail using an adapted version of Jefferson's (1973) conventions as mentioned earlier (see Appendix 2) in order to be analysed at a micro-level.

Researchers like Heritage and Atkinson (1984), Psathas and Anderson (1995) and Ten Have (1999) advise that transcriptions should not be regarded as substitute for recordings as these transcripts are selective data, "theory-laden renderings of certain aspects of what the tape has preserved of the original interaction" (Ten Have 1999, p.77). It is subjected to the transcriber's study objectives and her special abilities and limitations. As Ten Have (1999, p.77) puts it, "because it is tedious, it gives one a kind of access to the 'lived reality' of the interaction that is not available in any other way". The researcher transcribed two meetings using Jefferson's (1973) transcription convention and had it verified to ensure the transcription was accurate. It is noted that in such studies it is best that the researcher cum analyst be the one to do the transcription to ensure that what is captured in the talk is not missed out. Another advantage to the researcher if transcription was done by herself is that the researcher would be familiar with the data and would be able to access any part of the transcription and use it for comparative purposes and for identifying emergent patterns of talk. Heath and Luff (1993) succinctly sums up,

the process of transcription is an important analytical tool, providing the researcher with an understanding of, and insight into, the participants' conduct. It provides the researcher with a way of noticing, even discovering, particular

events, and helps focus analytic attention on their socio-interactional organization. (p.309)

4.6 The Transcription Convention

In the 1970s, Jefferson (1973) developed a transcribing system which made use of symbols available on the conventional typewriter and on today's computer keyboards. According to Wooffitt (2005, p.11) this system "is particularly useful for capturing aspects of speech production and the temporal positioning of utterances relative to each other". Since the seventies, many other transcribers and analysts have adapted this system and some have created their own. The most thorough and comprehensive used for CA was introduced by Jefferson (1973) and over the years this convention has been adapted and modified by various other researchers. For the purpose of this study the researcher adopted Jefferson's (1973). Furthermore a researcher may continue to refine its transcripts as she progresses in her work depending on insights she gains along the way, and this is explained by Liddicoat (2007),

transcription is not a once-for-all-time representation of talk but rather an open-ended process in which the transcript changes as the researcher's insights into the talk are refined from on-going analysis" (Liddicoat, 2007, p.13).

The transcription convention used in this study is adopted by Jefferson (1973) and is provided in Appendix 2.

4.7 Approach to Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Once the talk of the managerial meetings has been transcribed, massive amounts of written data is available. To select the data to be analysed was challenging and various factors were considered. First, the data that were located within one CofP was identified. Then out of five meetings within this CofP, in order for a fine-grained analysis to yield results to answer the research questions, two meetings where the participants were the same were finally selected. They were both extracted from the monthly meetings attended by eleven managers within the CofP. Once the two sets of meeting data were determined, the transcriptions were examined in greater detail by the analyst and extracts of talk were identified to be used to answer the research questions. Adapting the definition of discursive activities provided by Koester (2006), each activity was identified and then the parts that used these were extracted to answer the research questions (the process of how this is done is provided Section 5.3). The analysis in Chapter Six is done in both a descriptive and normative way.

4.7.1 Criteria on Data Selection

It was earlier stated that five meetings were recorded, and of these, two were selected for detailed analysis. These two meetings were selected based on the following criteria:

- i. both meetings were attended by the same managers
- ii. both meetings were from the monthly management meets
- iii. the participants used MalE and there was no code switching of languages
- iv. both meetings followed a set agenda and had minutes taken

The criteria given above form the basis for using the two data sets for analysis and were sufficient to answer the research questions of this study.

4.8 Validity and Reliability

Nunan (1992, p. xi) notes that “published research is all too often presented in neat, unproblematic packages, and crucial skills are needed to get beneath the surface and evaluate the reliability and validity of the research outcomes”. Indeed presenting research is not a straightforward task where data collection is concerned, especially when it involves entering a world not familiar to one’s own. Furthermore in the case of this current study, the data site is a busy workplace and production involves meeting deadlines and maintaining marginal loss while achieving maximum profits.

McEntegart and Le Page (1982, p.105) in early studies on qualitative research approaches argue that reporting on weaknesses and failures in research reports may benefit the practitioners in academia especially regarding data from workplaces. It would assist those who wish to embark in such studies in future to look out for similar pitfalls and prevent the mishaps that may occur.

Adopting Marra’s (2003) approach in the NZ Language for the Workplace Project this study takes into consideration that the workplace is not “a sterile experimental site” and hence problems during data collection arise on a day-to-day basis. The researcher has described the activities as she observes the participants at work daily, and a detailed description of this is provided in the field notes (see Appendix 5). The authenticity of this study using a quasi-ethnography approach is a way to validate the study and the analysis carried out on the primary data is reliable in using a CA approach.

4.9 Ethical Issues

Research carried out at real workplaces pose a great challenge mainly due to the issue of confidentiality. Generally in Malaysian companies, the process is more complex because of bureaucracy. In various cases, research was conducted when the researcher personally knows the employer or gets acquainted with bosses via their family and friends network. In the present study, the researcher gained access to the company via a contact who knew the company's management top person. Upon entry to the research site, the ethical issue of how much data can be obtained and whether the findings can be shared with the larger academic world became two main concerns. The General Manager gave permission to use the information as long as names of people and products are anonymous (see Appendix 1 for consent letter).

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter presents the methodology used in the present study. The design was chosen based on the objective of the study, which is to examine talk at meetings and how the managers within the CofP are mutually engaged in this activity to get work done. This study is qualitative in nature and conducted at one business establishment. Ethnographic field notes were used to provide additional information to the interpretation of the talk data.

The design and approaches adopted tie in with the aims and research questions of the study. Being a qualitative piece of work, there are many ways to describe and explain the data. The following chapters will present the findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCURSIVE ACTIVITIES

5.0 Introduction

The chapter focuses on research question one. The next chapter will put forth findings relevant to question two. The first research question has two parts. The first part focuses on the discursive activities evident in the meetings while the second part focuses on how these discursive activities emerged from the meeting talk.

Research question 1 will be given here for easy reference

- a) What are the discursive activities evident in the talk data of the management meetings?
- b) How these discursive activities realised in the talk?

Sections 5.1.1-5.1.4 will first describe each discursive activity, followed by a tabulation of its frequency count and how the data on this is obtained will be discussed. Section 5.5 will discuss how the activities are realised.

5.1 Discursive Activity

Drew and Heritage (1992) state that one of the features of institutional talk is that the participants orient their talk to some core goal, or task, and this is reflected in particular

types of discursive activities. Four discursive activities which emerged from the analysis are:

- checking information
- giving accounts or reporting
- giving instruction
- problem solving

According to Koester (2006), discursive activities refer to the types of talk that orient to specific goals of workplace discourse. In her studies, she identified instruction-giving, decision making and briefing. One of the ways this activities are identified is by examining the “linguistic clues” (Koester, 2006, p.32) that appear in the discourse. As mentioned in Section 1.4, there is transactional talk in workplace discourse as the talk revolves around work tasks. The people at work meet and discuss, instruct and make decisions; hence their talk is task-oriented. While in the midst of these kinds of talk, there is relational talk, but the focus of this present study is not on the relational aspect.

The data set in this study has been examined and it was found that the above four types of discursive activities are evident. An explanation of what each of these is and how it works within the meeting talk is provided in the following sections.

5.1.1 Checking Information

The first discursive activity is checking information, and it includes clarifying matters that may seem unclear. This also includes having to validate or verify if information is accurate. This may be considered a straightforward discursive activity and usually comprises of question-answer sequences. Once answers obtained are sufficient and

satisfactory, the sequence is brought to a close. However using CA tools to do a micro-analytical analysis of talk reveal that the process of identifying each discursive activity is not as clear cut. From the meeting data, there are instances of overlaps when the talk begins with the intention of just checking a piece of information but soon after becomes an account-giving activity. In the coding of data into various discursive activities, the predominant activity is labelled first and within that particular segment, if any other form of activity is evident, it is then classified according to what the activity is. For instance within checking of information, there were occurrences of account-giving (refer to Tables 5.2 & 5.3).

Thus, even when a predominant discursive activity has been identified, within that other types of activities are also evident, and these are listed as the sub discursive activities in the tables (Tables 5.2-5.5). For the purpose of this present study, the CofP with shared membership and practices has revealed that at both meetings, the highest count of discursive activity is checking information. This concurs with other studies done on meeting talk (Vines 2009, Handford 2010) which shows how meetings would be an ideal place for people who come together for a face-to-face encounter to obtain clarification instantly, or on the spot. The next discursive activity is account-giving and it is explicated below.

5.1.2 Account-Giving

The second discursive activity evident from the talk data is account-giving. Scott and Lyman (1968, p.46) define accounts as “statements made to explain untoward behaviour and bridge the gap between actions and expectations”. In this study it is referred to as account-giving (AG), and is almost the same as reporting. Koester (2006) concedes that

accounts occur frequently in transactional talk, and may be seen as strategies towards a joint problem-solving interaction, and that account-giving is a way to “excuse the failure to meet expectations” (p.154) or just a means to justify an end.

Giving an account of what has taken place at the work site entails providing enough information to clarify matters or clear up issues. It is usually regarding the task that has already occurred and the outcome may have been either successful or not, but whatever the outcome, it still warrants an accounting. It is the prerogative of the person in higher authority to ask for the account and the responsibility of the subordinate to provide a report on the matter. In this study’s data, the discursive activity of account-giving is made up of a series of question-answer exchanges and in CA, it is termed as an “adjacency pair”, which has been described earlier in Section 2.4.1. Hence talk here is seen as a cooperative act where participants at the meetings structure their verbal discourse in such a way that their institutional roles are also co-constructed and maintained (Iacobucci, 1990). Scott and Lyman (1968) suggest that when accounts are given, they “take a normative structure which determines whether and in what manner accounts may be required and given, honoured or discredited” (1968, p.58). In this light, account-giving is seen as a form of relational talk.

In this study, account-giving is a form of reporting. Conventionally reporting signifies a one-way talk, where a staff presents a report and may be questioned at the end. In the current study the data shows that reporting is not by way of a presentation or a monologue. Instead, each time the chair of the meeting appears to be putting forth questions and the manager then answers. This is evident throughout the data in both meetings analysed. Thus it may be considered a shared practice found within the CofP.

While managers may have written reports ready at hand, or in their computers, it is the verbal exchange which draws the report out to be an account-giving talk activity.

5.1.3 Giving Instruction

The third discursive activity is giving instruction, which may also be classified as a directive discourse and it is usually enacted by “a discursively dominant speaker telling an addressee how to do something or what to do” (Koester 2006, p.43). Bilbow (1997), in a study on verbal interaction at the workplace, notes that directive discourse allows for exploring how power is enacted. Vines’ (2004) research which focussed solely on directives among superiors and subordinates revealed that power is negotiated through interaction, and often expressed covertly (p.209). She defines a directive as “an attempt to get someone to do something – in each case a manager asking a member of their staff to complete an action” (2009, p.1396). She further explains that the requested action is the recipient’s responsibility. Hence there is an expectation for the task to be carried out by the designated person(s). However things may not be as straightforward and what follows could be some amount of discussion or negotiation to the tasks at hand. Holmes (2000, p.6) asserts that directives “are often complex and subtle negotiations between people who are very aware of their relative roles and responsibilities”.

The context where the talk exchange occurs plays an important role in determining how instruction-giving is meted out. Without an understanding of the surrounding contexts which include pre- and post- sequences of interaction, it would not be easy to investigate such naturally occurring talk in the data (Jones 1997). In the data of the two meetings, the count on this discursive activity (giving instructions) is almost the same as that of account-giving, and almost half of the meeting talk contains this type of talk (refer to Table 5.1).

5.1.4 Problem Solving

The final discursive activity identified in the talk data is problem solving. Before a problem can be solved, it begins with the identification of the problem. To understand this activity, the starting point is to investigate if there is problem or issue being discussed. Once the problem has been identified then the matter can proceed to solutions. Before the problem can be resolved, the discussion will comprise of putting forth various possible options to solve the problem, and what would the strengths or weaknesses of the possible solution. These matters will be deliberated before a final solution is accepted. It might be followed by appointing a person or team who would take charge and implement the solution and in future meetings, an evaluation of this matter should be presented. Problem solving within talk is not a straight forward matter. People who come together to talk would have their differing views and make varying stands on issues. Hence the dynamism in such a discursive activity is challenging to investigate.

Only two portions of talk from the meetings data demonstrate this discursive activity. Owing to its low frequency count the two extracts are not highlighted but analysis and interpretation is carried on how various CA tools were applied to draw out pertinent issues in relation to the constraints of talk.

Having described the four types of discursive activities evident in the talk data, further explanation of the findings is provided next.

5.2 Types of Discursive Activities

Table 5.1 provides a breakdown of the type and total discursive activities found in both meetings. MM stands for Management Meeting: MM1 means the first meeting, while MM2 means the second meeting.

Table 5.1: Types of Discursive Activities and Frequency Count

DISCURSIVE ACTIVITY	MEETING	MM1	MM2	TOTAL	
				In No.	In %
CHECKING INFORMATION (CI)		17	16	33	46
ACCOUNT GIVING (AG)		10	9	19	27
GIVING INSTRUCTIONS (GI)		10	7	17	24
PROBLEM SOLVING (PS)		2	-	2	3
TOTAL		39	32	71	100

It appears that 33 out of 71 of the total number of discursive activities identified are checking of information. The number of account and instruction giving appears to be almost the same (27% for the former, 24% for the latter) and some portions of this discursive activity are long and complex. Only two discursive activities are problem-solving. Other studies on meeting data have shown that problem solving and decision-making are pervasive (Boden 1994, Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997, Marra 2003) but in this data set it appears that problem solving is minimal.

Further the use of CA assisted in the identification of the strategies used by the talk participants as they collaborated and co-constructed the activities in mutual engagement

and interaction. This leads the way to how the second part of this research question is answered and the explanation will be provided below.

As mentioned earlier it is also the way the Chair of the meetings directed the flow of discussion that marks a change of topics. She changes topics as a way to move the talk along. Each meeting is confined by time and space. The time allocated for the meetings is between one to two hours and from the informant the researcher was told that these meetings held once a month are also known as the Balance Score Card meetings. What this means is it is a formal meeting where the GM must be present and act as chair, and all the department heads are to attend. Hence the dates for such meetings are already identified in the annual plan, and one of the main focuses of these meetings is tabulation of profits and losses. Related to these issues could be problems encountered, and what has been done to solve the problems, and if not what are the reasons for not settling the problems.

The meetings take place at a designated place and time each month and the chair would begin promptly. The minutes of the previous meeting is referred to and an agenda would be used as a guide for the on-going discussion. In both data sets, the total time for both meetings amounted to 230 minutes (refer to Table 5.6) and the topics covered totalled 71. On average a topic was changed every 2.8 to 3.8 minutes.

How the Chair carried out the change of topics is part of this explanation and will provide the answer to the second part of the research question. A fine-grained analysis is carried out to examine how these topics were shifted, and some extracts are given as illustrations of how topic change was done. Various strategies were employed by the Chair who carried out the change of topics most of the time, while three other managers

initiated a topic change on five occasions. It was found that out of the 71 segments of talk identified as discursive activities, only five times were the topic change carried out by the other managers.

The following section discusses the ways in which the discursive activities are manifested in the meeting talk.

5.3 Identification of Discursive Activities

It is through the identification of topics of the meeting talk that the discursive activities were categorised. Once the topics and sub topics were ascertained, they were used as a guide to categorising each discursive activity. The results were tabulated and presented in Tables 5.2-5.5. Within some of these discursive activities are some sub activities which have been identified and tabulated as well. It was not easy to draw a line between one activity and the next. For instance if an account-giving activity is identified when the Chair of the meeting or a fellow manager changes the topic, within that other discursive activities may also be present, such as instruction-giving and problem solving, but they are not the pervasive ones. Hence the one that is most pervasive is classified as the first discursive activity, while the rest are considered the sub-activities.

To illustrate this, an extract of talk on account-giving is shown below.

Sample Extract: Discursive activity: Account-Giving
Location: Management Meeting 1. Main Topic 4. Lines 303-324.

Speaker turn	Dialogue	Line
Beng 1	=yeah okay ah in term of engineering the flatbread issue ah when we discuss that carry out the the modification of the trench chain due to the cycle time and also the er ah the conveyor before the oven this one we do not require extra motion-	303 304 305
GM 2	=is there any good er result	306
Beng 3	ah this one is basically er before replacing this there are two sections so one guy have to go and put the pan so now no need just put it straightaway	307 308
GM 4	so you save how many	309
Beng 5	=save the motion only for several products so the headcount still the same it's just	310

	base base on the motion	311
GM 6	but the wall bread after you change that do you feel any improvement	312
Beng 7	=there is some improvement in term of the pan flow	313
GM 8	should say your result lah so I don't have to ask report your result as well-	314
Beng 9	=so that means this one you / can	315
GM 10	/ you can put either ah	316
Beng 11	=you can put it as result lah instead of / cost saving oh	317
GM 12	/ result ah result achieved and what is your account payable er is this better I think now better orh more efficient orh	318 319
Yen 13	ah nearer lah	320
GM 14	=huh	321
Yen 15	=they are nearer to each other-	322
GM 16	=oh	323
Chai 17	=no need to walk around right (he laughs)	324

In this extract, Beng raises a new topic (MT 4, refer to Table 5.2) by giving an account of the flatbread issue. At turn 1, Beng explains what he has done to solve the engineering problem with the flatbread line. This is followed by a series of three adjacency pairs of question-answer where the GM asks, and Beng responds accordingly (turns 2-3, 4-5 & 6-7). Following this, the GM goes into an instruction-giving mode, in turn 8, using “should”. Both the GM and Beng co-construct the talk to make the task clear and in turn 12, the GM finalises the decision in (line 319) “better I think now better orh more efficient orh”. The remaining turns are relational talk by two other participants (Yen and Chai) to verify that the decision has made it “nearer to each other” (line 323).

The illustration shows how each extract of talk has been classified. A new topic demarcates the previous from the present extract. Within this topic (Table 5.3) comprises the account-giving activity (MT3, STvii) with giving instruction as a sub activity. Although this is not the ideal way to categorize the activities, for the sake of analysis such a stand has to be made. It would otherwise be difficult to describe or identify the activities. Overlaps do appear throughout the data and the sub activities are also mentioned in the tables given for both MM1 and MM2.

5.4 Classification of Discursive Activities

The discursive activities were manifested in the way the topics changed or shifted during the meeting talk. Most of the time this was done by the chair of the meeting, and only on five occasions was it carried out by the managers. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 below show the topics and discursive activities from the data of MM1 and MM2 respectively. Table 5.2 shows that there are 20 main topics labelled as MT (the 20 MTs are listed in the first and second columns from the left). Within some of these main topics, are various sub-topics labelled as ST. There are 19 STs, and this makes a total of 39 topics evident in MM1.

The discussion is guided by the minutes of the previous meeting. To expound on the topic used, the data from MM1 is referred. The meeting talk begins with the GM indicating to Beng that there is “no need to explain the green...” (this is the opening utterance found in line 1 of MM1: see Appendix 2 for full transcript). After 3 lines, this topic is closed and the GM moved to another topic, labelled as “number of complaints”. From the table below, the main topic is thus labelled “Begins meeting”, and under MT 1, there are 2 STs: the two which have just been explained above. The table shows MT and ST in column 1, followed by the lines of talk in column 2, followed by the topics and lastly, in the last 2 columns, are the discursive and sub discursive activities. The same applies for the next data set, that is, MM2.

A key is provided for the abbreviations used in the tables below.

MT: main topic	ST: sub topic
CI: checking information	GI: giving instruction
AG: account giving	PS: problem solving

Table 5.2: Topics and Discursive Activities in MM1

No	Lines	Topics	Main discursive activity	Sub discursive activity
MT1 ST (i)	1-3	Begins meeting: Red in chart	GI	-
ST(ii)	3-13	No. of complaints	CI	-
MT2	14-60	A lot of rejects	AG	GI
MT3 ST(i)	60-101	Budget Matters: Revised budgeted volume	AG	GI
ST(ii)	102-112	Pointer	GI	-
ST(iii)	112-144	Budgeted cost for transport	AG	GI
ST(iv)	145-163	Third party	CI	-
ST(v)	163-191	Maintenance cost for trucks	AG	-
ST(vi)	192-218	MFD outstation delivery	AG	GI
ST(vii)	219-252	Own truck business	AG	GI
ST(viii)	253-261	Mutu	CI	-
ST(ix)	262-302	Page & title	CI	GI
MT4	303-324	FBL engineering matters	AG	GI
MT5	325-358	Staff claims	CI	GI
MT6 ST (i)	359-397	Action Plan April: VOQ	CI	GI
ST(ii)	398-417	March Action Plan	CI	-
MT7	417-435	BUK	CI	-
MT8	436-498	Five-S	GI	CI
MT9	499-536	CFC & staff feedback	GI	AG
MT10 ST (i)	537-555	WFS: X-recipe	CI	-
ST (ii)	556-633	Evenness issue	AG	-
MT11	633-684	Efficiency	CI	AG
MT12 ST (i)	685-701	Action Plan: Raw material	GI	CI
ST (ii)	702-711	DOK	GI	-
ST(iii)	712-753	EOQ	GI	CI
ST(iv)	754-927	Problem with communication	PS	GI
MT13	928-1016	Contract expiry	AG	PS
MT14	1017-1100	Cost saving program	PS	GI
MT15	1101-1138	March improvement plan: Item 2,6, 11-12	AG	CI
MT16 ST(i)	1139-1153	FBL minutes: Store survey	GI	-
ST(ii)	1154-1171	Tortilla	CI	AG
ST(iii)	1171-1198	Staff turnover & training prog	CI	AG
ST(iv)	1199-1225	DMP Korea	CI	-

Table 5.2, continued.

No	Lines	Topics	Main discursive activity	Sub discursive activity
MT17	1226-1277	Brainstorming session	GI	-
MT18 ST(i)	1278-1288	Engineering items: 3.8 & 3.13	CI	-
ST(ii)	1288-1304	Sales	CI	-
ST(iii)	1305-1328	DE	GI	-
MT19	1328-1334	Reduction cost item	CI	-
MT20	1335-1349	Closing	CI	-

In this meeting (MM1), there are 17 CIs, 10 AGs, 10 GIs and only 2 PS (already shown in Table 5.1 above). This brings the total number of topics covered in MM1 to 39. In MM2, the total number of topics is 32. The analysis carried out on the talk data from MM2 is tabulated in Table 5.3 and shown below.

Table 5.3: Topics and Discursive Activities in MM2

No	Lines	Topics	Main discursive activity	Sub discursive activity
MT1	1-13	Begins meeting: MC & EL	GI	-
MT2 ST (i)	13-30	Flatbread: Flatbread line	CI	GI
(ii)	30-85	Bunline	AG	CI
MT3 ST(i)	85-100	Report: UK volume	CI	-
ST(ii)	101-110	Sale	CI	-
ST(iii)	111-152	Rejection rate	GI	-
ST(iv)	153-233	Casa hotpress	AG	GI
ST(v)	234-266	Labour cost	AG	GI
ST(vi)	267-324	Tight budget	AG	GI
ST(vii)	325-417	T-1 tortilla	AG	GI
ST(viii)	418-423	Repair & maintenance	CI	-

Table 5.3, continued.

No	Lines	Topics	Main discursive activity	Sub discursive activity
MT4 ST(i)	424-432	HR matters: Customer satisfaction	CI	-
ST(ii)	433-480	Downtime	CI	GI
ST(iii)	481-561	Lynn's report	CI	GI
ST(iv)	561-599	Training	CI	-
MT5 ST(i)	600-608	Cost saving	CI	-
ST(ii)	609-639	CPI : June	CI	GI
ST(iii)	640-659	Innovation	CI	-
MT6 ST(i)	660-727	Agenda item 3: Store survey	GI	AG
ST(ii)	727-766	New staff	GI	
ST(iii)	766-785	Product testing	CI	-
ST(iv)	786-900	Sample X-11	AG	GI
ST(v)	900-952	Consistency report	AG	-
MT7 ST(i)	953-956	Production schedule	CI	-
ST(ii)	957-995	WSI	CI	-
ST(iii)	996-1012	API	GI	-
ST(iv)	1013- 1107	August order	GI	PS
MT8	1108- 1154	Sample sent	AG	-
MT9 ST(i)	1154- 1195	Soya oil	GI	-
ST(ii)	1196- 1255	MCF order	AG	GI
ST(iii)	1255- 1319	DCM agreement	CI	GI
ST(iv)	1319- 1322	AOB	GI	-

As summarised in Table 5.1, the discursive activities identified from MM2 are 16 CIs, 9 AGs, 7 GIs but no PS. Similar to MM1, CIs are the highest while AGs and GIs are almost of the number but in MM1 there were 2 problem-solving episodes whereas in MM2, none was identified. From Table 5.3 it was evident that there are 9 main topics identified, with 23 sub topics bringing the total to 32.

5.5 Topic Change

Topic change is indicated in various ways by the speakers at the meetings and in this CofP, the Chair of the meetings has been doing the topic change. The Chair who is also the GM of the company uses topic change as a way of moving a discussion along. She has to do this to accomplish her goals at talk, and she has to do it within a certain time frame. The following discussion will discuss this in further details.

5.5.1 Opening Utterances

Another set of analysis was done on locating the opening utterances for each new topic and tabulated in the same manner as Tables 5.2 and 5.3 above, except for the column which display the utterances. Tables 5.4 and 5.5 below show the topics that were covered in the meetings and how the topics change with the opening utterances, a majority of which was done by the chair (in the last column on the right-hand side, the opening utterances on how the topic changed or shifted are provided).

MT: main topic	ST: sub topic
CI: checking information	GI: giving instruction
AG: account giving	PS: problem solving

Table 5.4: Topic Change & Opening Utterances in MM1

No	Lines	Topics	Opening utterances
MT1 ST (i)	1-3	Begins meeting: Red in chart	no need to explain the green ah...
ST(ii)	3-13	No. of complaints	there are three three complaints ah
MT2	14-60	High rejection rate	but what are you doing with this

			ah...
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Table 5.4, continued.

No	Lines	Topics	Opening utterances
MT3 ST(i)	60-101	Budget Matters: Revised budgeted volume	Mat your side regarding the ah...can you revise budgeted volume
ST(ii)	102-112	Pointer	can you bring some pick...
ST(iii)	112-144	Budgeted cost for transport	okay say say again can you point
ST(iv)	145-163	Third party	third party you budgeted how many pieces
ST(v)	163-191	Maintenance cost for trucks	and then the higher maintenance cost ...
ST(vi)	192-228	MFD outstation delivery	can we can we er deal with MFD outstation delivery of bun ah...
ST(vii)	229-252	Own truck business	okay erm help to evaluate own truck ...
ST(viii)	253-261	Mutu	hey how come Mutu is not here ah
ST(ix)	262-302	Page & title	so er I am a bit- how do I go on to this page ah
MT4	303-324	FBL engineering matters	okay ah in term of engineering the flatbread issue ah...
MT5	325-358	Staff claims	and then the the staff ...
MT6 ST (i)	359-397	Action Plan April: VOQ	okay ah any other thing...
ST(ii)	398-417	March Action Plan	next one
MT7	417-435	BUK	so now we go to the minutes ...
MT8	436-498	Five-S	er five-S
MT9	499-536	CFC & staff feedback	my side also-
MT10 ST (i)	537-555	WFS: X-recipe	okay any other thing from the-
ST (ii)	556-633	Evenness issue	okay Samy and Beng you all have a ...
MT11	633-684	Efficiency	next one is efficiency ...
MT12 ST (i)	685-701	Action Plan No 6: raw material	okay under- so let's see your action plan...
ST (ii)	702-712	DOK	DOK do it properly
ST(iii)	713-753	EOQ	okay whatever you can do the EOQ...
ST(iv)	754-927	Problem with planner	other department are you happy ...
MT13	928-1016	Contract expiry	is there anything I miss out today...
MT14	1017-1100	Cost saving program	er er on the er program cost saving...
MT15	1101-1138	March improvement plan: Item 2,6, 11-12	okay er then we go into- I think ...
MT16 ST(i)	1139-1153	FBL minutes: Store survey	ah mmm the flatbread...

Table 5.4, continued.

No	Lines	Topics	Opening utterances
ST(ii)	1154-1171	Tortilla	so three point two I think ...
ST(iii)	1171-1198	Staff turnover & training prog	and move on to staff turnover ...
ST(iv)	1199-1225	DMP Korea	okay three point five er...
MT17	1226-1277	Brainstorming session	the brainstorming will have to defer...
MT18 ST(i)	1278-1288	Engineering items: 3.8 & 3.13	okay quick net one...
ST(ii)	1288-1304	Sales	what is the sales like ah...
ST(iii)	1305-1328	DE	DE ECDC ECCE is alright
MT19	1328-1334	Reduction cost	okay the next one ...
MT20	1335 - 1349	Closing	okay that's it lor ...

From Table 5.4, it can be seen that “okay” is the most frequently used discourse marker to signal a change of topic (13 out of 39). This is followed by “and”, “so” and “ah mmm”, “er er”. Next is Table 5.5 which shows the topics and opening utterances from MM2.

Table 5.5: Topic Change & Opening Utterances in MM2

No	Lines	Topics	Opening utterances
MT1	1-13	Begins meeting: MC & EL	by now you all should know ah ...
MT2		Flatbread	
ST (i)	13-30	Flatbread line	so we go on to flatbreadline today
(ii)	30-85	Bunline	Chai you have anything important to talk on SJ on bunline
MT3		Report	
ST(i)	85-100	UK volume	okay start ah...maybe you go through quickly
ST(ii)	101-110	Sale	what is the sale so far ah Suan
ST(iii)	111-152	Rejection rate	okay move on to the rejected

ST(iv)	153-233	Casa hotpress	ah ah can you go through...
ST(v)	234-266	Labour cost	how is your labour you save ah

Table 5.5, continued.

No	Lines	Topics	Opening utterances
ST(vi)	267-324	Tight budget	what is the reason...
ST(vii)	325-417	T-1 tortilla	okay let me go to...
ST(viii)	418-423	Repair & maintenance	okay ah repair and maintenance overall is green right
MT4		HR matters:	
ST(i)	424-432	Customer satisfaction	er then we go to...
ST(ii)	433-480	Downtime	okay go through again this one
ST(iii)	481-561	Lynn's report	orh okay come down again ah...
ST(iv)	561-599	Training	do you have training that you have done
MT5			
ST(i)	600-608	Cost saving	any other thing to update please
ST(ii)	609-639	CPI : June	so the rest of the project
ST(iii)	640-659	Innovation	okay so these are the improvement ...
MT6		Agenda item 3	
ST(i)	660-727	Store survey	ah we go through ...
ST(ii)	727-766	New staff	next one Chai
ST(iii)	766-785	Product testing	next one
ST(iv)	786-900	Sample X-11	Chai
ST(v)	900-952	Consistency report	Chai continue
MT7			
ST(i)	953-956	Production schedule	next one is what
ST(ii)	957-995	WSI	okay next one
ST(iii)	996-1012	API	action plan for improvement done
ST(iv)	1013-1197	August order	Chai anything you want to highlight
MT8	1108-1154	Sample sent	okay what else
MT9			
ST(i)	1154-1195	Soya oil	what else
ST(ii)	1196-1255	MCF order	what else
ST(iii)	1255-1319	DCM agreement	okay what else
ST(iv)	1319-1322	AOB	any other thing

It is also found that in MM1, 9 out of 32 opening utterances began with “okay” and 6 began with “so”, “ah” and “er”. These discourse markers indicate the start of a change

of topics. What strategies were used to indicate a change of topic has occurred will be explained next.

5.5.2 Number of topics

As mentioned in section 5.2, there are a total of 39 and 32 topics/subtopics extracted from both meetings. The table below sums up the information on the meetings with regard to topic change.

Table 5.6: Information on the Meetings and Number of Topic Change

Meetings	Duration	No of topics covered	Change of topics done by:	
			GM	Others
MM1	108 mins	39	35	4
MM2	122 mins	32	31	1
Total	230 mins	71	66	5

Most of the time the chair carries out the topic change and directs the flow of discussion. It appears to be the norm as it is known that one of the many roles of the chair of any meeting is to facilitate and move the discussion along. A literature review on this has been given in Chapter 2. A discussion of these findings will be given in sections 5.6.- 5.8.

5.5.3 Strategies Used

The analysis has also shown how the topic change occurs. There are basically three ways in which this is carried out:

1. by using a statement

2. by using directives (as is done only by the GM and not the other managers)
3. by asking questions, mainly for two purposes:
 - to seek information which is unknown at the point of speaking, and
 - to seek clarification when what is written in the minutes or discussed before did not come across as sufficiently clear

Table 5.7 below shows the number of times (in numbers and percentage) each of the three strategies was used in both meetings. The count for directives is the same for both MM1 and MM2: 47%. As for “asking questions”, MM1 has 44% and MM2 has 47%. Statements are the least used in both: 18% and 6% respectively. On the whole questions are used most as a means to change topics for both meetings, followed closely by directives.

Table 5.7: Number of Topics and Strategies Used

Types of Meeting	Management	
	MM1	MM2
No. of Topics covered	39	32
Strategy used:		
Statements	7 (18%)	2 (6%)
Directives	15 (38%)	15 (47%)
Questions -	17 (44%)	15 (47%)
• seek information	16	14
• seek clarification	1	1

The number of questions used as a means to change topics is particularly significant. There are basically two types of questions: one to seek clarification and the other to ask for information. Most of the time when questioning was used, it was to seek information and the GM used it a means to move on to new topics or subtopics. Questions seeking for clarification were only used once.

It is evident from the analysis that the three strategies employed to change or shift topics within talk at meetings are recurrent patterns. It has confirmed the findings of past studies (Stenstrom, 1994) which show that questioning is the most commonly used approach to indicate a change in topic. However directives and statements are also used though in less frequency.

The following sub sections will look into each of the strategies used to change topics in greater detail. It will begin with the use of questions as a way to indicate the change of topic.

5.6 The Use of Questions

The questions used for topic change appear in two forms: firstly, those that seek information, and secondly, those that seek clarification. Stenstrom (1994) lists questioning as a way to introduce a new topic or indicate a change of topic. In the data set examined, it was found that in both meetings, the strategy that was most used to change topics was question forms. In MM1 the questioning strategy comprise 44% of the total while in MM2, it was 47%. This means almost half the strategies used were questioning. The other two were statements and directives. The kinds of questions put to use and how they were used and by whom is shown in the examples below.

5.6.1 Questions to Seek Information

Most of the questions used were aimed at seeking information regarding matters of work in the company. The managers were often asked questions by the GM who is also

the chair of the meeting. She uses this to shift topics and move the meeting proceedings along. In extract 1 the GM uses a wh-question and directed it to Beng.

Extract 1 (MM1)

GM	I think you have explained that ah but what are you doing with this ah is it okay with you I mean in terms of the oven breakdown is it incidental or because the poor maintenance	14 15 16
Beng	=okay the first one partly is because of the er preventive maintenance when they do the preventive maintenance they didn't cover the checking of the tensioning just do a clean up clean up of the shaft	17 18 19

The GM asks a wh-question and she also offers two options as answers: “is it incidental or because the poor maintenance” (lines 15-16). Beng latches onto the GM’s utterance and offers an answer which is the first option offered by the GM.

Questions not only keep a conversation going but here it is used to shift topics.

Extract 2 (MM1)

Bengthis month MDL Malaysia is having promotion for macarabia er which start today start promotion	1286 1287
GM	=this month May May May May May May May so far what is the sales like ah Weng	1288 1289
Weng	=sorry	1290
GM	=May month	1291
Weng	=er around equals around one point one	1292

Extract 2 shows how the topic shifts from Beng reporting on the “promotion for macarabia” to the sales figures for the month. The GM has selected Weng to answer the question and in doing so has shifted her focus from Beng to Weng. Not only are questions used to change topic, it is also an information seeking question which is directed to the person who can provide the answer.

Apart from such directed wh-questions, the chair is also seen to use a simple direct question “what else”. In MM1 there is one instance where the GM directs a wh-question

in this manner: “what is the sales” (see Table 5.4, line 1288). Further in MM2 there are four such instances, seen in lines 1108, 1154, 1196, and 1255 (refer to Appendix 2 for full transcript). This form of questioning is common and found throughout the data. It serves as a means to move the discussion at the meetings. The chair uses this as a way to seek information on other matters that need to be brought up at the meetings.

Other than the wh-question, there is the “how” questions and these are shown below.

Extract 3 (MM1)

GM	=ah yeah so it's it's- we just have to accept the fact that our budget ah the figure is on the high side then we just explain lah but it's not your fault we know it's because of ah it's a normal volume right (several turns skipped) third party you budgeted how many pieces	142 143 144 145
Mat	=one zero five zero	146

In extract 3, the how-question is used to ask for quantity and in this context the discussion has moved on to the “third party”. Prior to this the discussion was on the first party budget. A shift in topic is evident. Extract 4 is also similar in the way the chair changes topic. Prior to the GM’s turn, Chai was explaining the figures and the GM suddenly shifts the topic to “Mutu” (line 253) and uses the “how” question to enquire about Mutu’s absence. He is the person in charge of the maintenance team. To this question, Beng self-selects and answers the GM.

Extract 4 (MM1)

Chai	so I give you the figures let's say average for the next ah remaining buns how much per bun lah	251 252
GM	hey how come Mutu is not here ah	253
Beng	I think he is ah dealing with this er er oven	254

Apart from the question forms seen above which seek more information, the chair uses polarity questions where a “yes” or “no” answer would be expected. However, from the data it is observed that the managers do not use a direct affirmative or negative. Extract 5 shows the chair posing a yes-no question type using Malaysian English (MalE). Lines

1335-1336 would be phrased in Standard English as “Have you all got any matters to raise?”. Interestingly, the question is answered not with an affirmative or a negative. Rather, Lynn puts forward a proposal. In doing so, the meeting continues and moves on to the new topic of the video clip.

Extract 5 (MM1)

Beng	=you said hold on first until UMA come in	1334
GM	=okay until PUMA come in ah okay that’s it lor that’s it lor for today you all got any other things	1335 1336
Lynn	I’d like to share you guys a video clip on the work progress	1337

Extract 6 also shows a yes-no question type and again the response which is provided by Suan is neither an affirmative nor a negative. Suan provides an answer which is almost an affirmative but hedges it with “er... basically not much...” (line 756).

Extract 6 (MM1)

Beng	=ah when when we want to run the production	753
GM	other department are you happy with this you all work with Jom already is it any problem with him	754 755
Suan	er on our side basically not much of a problem lah but it’s just that the production-	756 757

More polarity questions were evident from the data. They are yes-no question forms used to obtain additional information. In the examples above, the responses to the questions were given with explanations and reformulations. However the extracts (7-9) below show how the staff members who were questioned gave more direct responses to signal an affirmative or a negative.

Extract 7 shows the Chair selecting Chai to answer her query and in the turn of talk that follows immediately, Chai responds with “not yet” and repeated it (line 1154). He also latches on the last turn of talk to show he was alert and able to provide a reply instantly.

Extract 7 (MM1)

Beng	=definitely because that testing also I make myself available with Keong so we have tested it they accepted it	1152 1153
GM	so three point two I think it's not already done er Chai	1154
Chai	=not yet not yet	1155

Further, extract 8 shows the Chair selecting Chai to respond and this time he was not forthcoming in his reply. He did not latch on her turn at talk and used “I think” (line 1015) as a hedging device to signal some amount of uncertainty.

Extract 8 (MM2)

GM	how soon you can do that	1011
Beng	depends on the er (?)	1012
GM	push lah push up ah okay I think that's it oh Chai anything you want to highlight	1013 1014
Chai	I think Suan side their order for August under MMF-	1015

As a final illustration, extract 9 shows how the chair poses a yes-no question in lines 927-928 but did not receive any instant reply. As no response was forthcoming, the chair continued her discourse, and took an incoming call and then continued the meeting with a directive to go on to the “next one” (line 928). The apparent reason for this move is that since no one has anything else to talk about, the meeting will proceed. To this Beng latches on her talk and mentions a new issue. He brings up the air conditioning contract expiry and this is followed by an exchange on the topic (refer to lines 939-1016 in MM1, Appendix 2).

Extract 9 (MM1)

GM	=yeah we talk about that already just now he was worried that if they are bogged down with their own work they may not (?) without it so finally we say in order to avoid that is to update the planner has to place on the board if the planner did not paste on the board go look for her <u>Beng</u> will go and look for her so it will not be a problem lor even if they are busy with their work no time to have the fifteen minute meet since you have the time you take in the discussion (?) is there anything I miss out today (?) (GM answers a call) ahem okay er next one er I think this one no other question do you all have questions do you all have question nobody	922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930
Beng	=the	931

The above extracts identify how questions were used as a way to change or shift topics in the meetings. The question forms aimed at obtaining additional information on work related issues. Some responses were instant and provided relevant information asked for, while other questions did not get straightforward responses and information was skeletal. However when the flow of discussion needed to be changed, the Chair raises a new question to the participants and shifts the topics to get the meeting going.

The next section will highlight the questions that were used to seek clarification. In MM1, 17 questions were located in the data set. Of these only one was used to seek clarification. In MM2, the same pattern is evident, where in a total of 15 questions used, only 1 was to seek clarification. Both are given below.

5.6.2 Questions to Seek Clarification

The extract below shows the Chair directing her question to Mat, the customer service manager. As she read the report provided by Mat, she queried him on the matter “can you revise budgeted volume” (line 62). She seeks clarification on this matter and in doing so she has changed the topic from an earlier discussion regarding the rejection rate (refer to Appendix 2).

Extract 10 (MM1)

GM	this has caused quite a lot of rejects you know Mat your side regarding the er discussion on the high cost per unit ah due to lower volume so you say want to revise the budgeted volume can you revise budgeted volume (Mat tries to respond but Chai speaks)	60 61 62 63
Chai	I think I- we have checked through ah / through	64

While extract 10 is taken from MM1, 11 is extracted from MM2. Here the chair was in a discussion with Beng and she posed him the question to verify if “these are the improvement” he has made under innovation (line 640), which signalled a shift in the earlier issue in the preceding lines. Beng clarifies this with a direct “yeah” response.

Extract 11 (MM2)

Yen	which one (?)	638
Beng	(?)	639
GM	okay so these are the improvement that you have done ah Beng under innovation	640
Beng	yeah	641

The next section will look at another strategy used to change topic and that is the use of directives.

5.7 The Use of Directives

Directives are basically instructions and it has been described in Chapter two that the Chair of the meeting is entitled to use such directives at meetings as she is the facilitator and is responsible for the meeting accomplishing the goals it sets out to do. The GM as chair is able to change topics by directing the discourse. There are two ways she does this: in a direct manner with no modality, and a mitigated way by using a form of modality. The following extracts illustrate the two types.

5.7.1 Directives with No Modality Used

Extract 12 (MM1)

GM	no need to explain the green ah just go on red red one um the third party one is explained already only discuss about the ASA side lah I think the rest are quite alright ah except for number of complaints Beng has already answer there there are three three complaints ah	1 2 3 4
Beng	=yeah	5

The exchange in extract 12, the GM commenced the meeting. She managed to get the managers' attention by raising her voice when she said "no need to explain..." (line 1). From the ethnographic notes it is observed that the participants at this meeting then quieted down and listened to her.

The interaction that took place just before this segment was a short exchange of talk where various participants at the meeting were discussing on work-related matters. There was no official call to begin the meeting although the GM was already seated. It appeared that the others were not focusing on the meeting yet as Beng, Chai and Mat were still setting up their laptops. It was only when Beng projected his charts from the LCD projector onto the wall in the meeting room that the GM made her utterance as a way to begin the meeting. Hence the directive was put forward to Beng and it appears as an instruction to explain the "red one" and "no need to explain the green".

A change of topic took place within the same stretch of utterance, i.e. in lines 3-4 when the GM shifts the talk now to the number of complaints. This example shows how a directive is used as a means to change the topic, and other similar ones are evident in a few other extracts of talk in both MM1 and MM2.

Extract 13 shows another example and the exchange shows what comes immediately after an exchange on the 'pointer' (line 104, see full transcript in Appendix 2). A directive was used as a way to shift topic. Prior to this turn of talk, Mat was making a budget presentation but he was using his mouse to point at the chart on his laptop (according to field notes).

Extract 13 (MM1)

GM	who is taking care of all this better take care of all this small thing lah but then it's nice to be aware that this is difficult for presentation okay say say again can you point	111 112 113
Mat	okay actual cost for the transport...	114

The GM appears to express her annoyance when she asked where is the 'pick' or 'pointer' that should be used at such presentations (line 112). A brief exchange between the GM, Choo and Lynn ensued and the 'pointer' issue ended. The GM then proceeded with a topic change from 'pointer' to asking Mat to continue his presentation in line 112 ("say say again"). As the chair of the meeting, she changes topics and controls the flow of the discussion. Other examples of these are extracted from MM2 and given below. The following two extracts show how the GM uses directives to change topics with the verb 'go'.

Extract 14 (MM2)

GM	...what make me very angry is that you know when you have a big meeting like this people just go on mc and leave ah be mindful ah please (mobile phone rings and Chai takes the call) so we go on to flatbread line today	11 13 13
Beng	running through the bun line	14
GM	are you all prepared	15

In extract 14, the GM has just reprimanded her staff on the issue of 'emergency leave'. Then the talk was interrupted by a telephone call. It was Chai's mobile phone and he took the call. While this was taking place, the others at the meeting silently read the minutes (according to field notes). When the call ended, she directed the members by saying 'so we go on to...' (line 13) as a way to change topic. It could be inferred that the telephone call allowed time for the GM to cool off after the burst of anger she expressed regarding the 'emergency leave' issue as well as bring them back to focus on the meeting (according to field notes). In response to the directive in line 13, Beng self-selects and counters with a question (line 14), and a short exchange on the matter ensued.

Extract 15 (MM2)

Beng	now we try to cut the labour already for the month of July (?) because of the repositioning and then er the conveyor (?)	422 423
GM	okay alright so finish Beng one- er then we go into gross margin finish excellence excellence start with what customer satisfaction right hey where's your excellence growth then excellence no complaint ah	424 425 426
Yen	no complaint	427

The lines in extract 15 show how the GM moves on from one topic to another, and it is straightforward. After the verb “go”, the next verb she uses is “start” and both imply an act of doing and the meeting discourse continues.

To further add examples (extracts 16 and 17) of such directives used by the GM as a way to change topic, the extracts below show how the phrases “next one” or “next one + name of person” are put to use.

Extract 16 (MM1)

Beng	yeah	632
GM	so now talking about G-recipe next one is the efficiency Beng you say that higher percentage of thirty plus fifty five percent discount what do you mean by this ah because I think it's not reflected there	633 634 635
Beng	=whole year one ah	636

Extract 17 (MM1)

GM	... Choo put in my diary I'll push it I'll do it I will get you all to come in I will so we will just do once in a once in a quarter that will do okay quick next one erm so you better try and find another day not too late if you keep changing ah three point	1276 1277 1278 1279
Choo	three point eight is correction	1280

In extracts 16 and 17, “next one” is the term used by the GM to direct the managers to move on to another item on the agenda. On both occasions she says this with no waste of words. She shifts from one issue to another without pauses or hedging. It is found that at meetings of this nature, there are many matters to discuss and time is limited. As such the GM economises on instructions, so she is direct. Another way in which she uses “next one” is that which follows a name selection. Extracts 18 and 19 below show her directing Chai to proceed with the discussion.

Extract 18 (MM2)

Weng	they are still buying (?)	723
GM	quarterly lah I think it's quite fair at least you go you see unless they request more often lah but I don't think so they have time for us to go- too often you have to get feedback from them lah do like what we do for our bun line you see get feedback from your customer okay next one Chai	724 725 726 727
Chai	er this one has been started today I think we monitor for a few more months lah I think eventually it's good that we can convert (?) especially-	730 731

Extract 19 (MM2)

Beng	(?) the offer	761
GM	=the minute they say okay on the twenty-third they will come here already go ahead and employ what you need then you might as well get their offer letter ready now okay ah get the offer letter all of you on the twenty-third they are coming in if you need people you can interview now the minute they say okay offer letter ready next one Chai bun line one no need- no need to go through ah	762 763 764 765 766
Chai	er er (?) three point six	767

The point to note here is that Chai was earlier on given the task of taking over the chair of this meeting (MM2) after an hour into the session (in line 656: “Chai can you chair for me ah”). However although she handed the task of the chair to Chai, she still acted as the chair when she directs Chai at each juncture to “move on” or “next one”.

5.7.2 Directives with Use of Modality

Extract 20 (MM1)

Mat	=for example the report you see they the (?) it comes from the volumes the budgeted cost for ah ah transport is up here	100 101
GM	can you bring something Alpane not so poor mah some the pointer-	102
Choo	no	103
GM	oh don't have ah	104

This extract is an instance when the GM makes a request for a pointer. This happened when Mat was presenting and pointing at the charts on the screen with a ruler. When Mat said “up here” he was pointing to the graph, and the GM observed he was doing it with the mouse, hence she asked if someone could bring the pointer. The topic shifted from the presentation to the pointer. A short exchange followed after this among the

GM, Choo and Lynn, because these two ladies (Choo & Lynn) were responsible for such matters. Note however that the GM uses the modal verb “can” which signals a request.

Extract 21 below also shows the use of ‘can’ to signal a request as a change of topic.

Extract 21 (MM2)

GM	ah oh oh correct Beng your explanation for higher return	151
Beng	ah it’s in the er action plan (she laughs)	152
GM	ah ah can you go through a little bit so that we get it	153
Beng	okay overall for month of June maybe due to er casa breakdown the oven base on the (?) for bunline (?) out of control we have change to the valve er calibration for the smartline there is a few occasion of motor er we are taking down how long can this- so we are still checking and from there we will change before (?)	154 155 156 157 158

This request was directed at Beng who had earlier reported on the rejection rate. As chair of the meeting the GM has shifted the topic to request Beng to give the reason for the rejection rate. Both the extracts above show the use of the modal verb “can” as a form of request. This is classified under the general term of ‘directive’ for ease of classification, and to show how the chair shifts topic by making use of such strategies.

An additional example of a directive with modality is seen in extract 22.

Extract 22 (MM1)

GM	=I know to establish the DOK you say dynamic is very difficult to but again you want him to	708 709
Beng	=the pizza one is quite consistent so it is okay for us but some product ah you order once a while that one is a bit problem because we also have to consider the shelf life of the product-	710 711 712
GM	= okay whatever you can do the EOQ on the minimum and the maximum one you should establish already having	713 714
Beng	=yeah yeah that one already established for the containers one product <u>there’s no issue at all</u> just some issues it’s er some kind- on those product that is run once in a while	715 716 717

Here the GM changes topic from the previous one on raw materials (DOK). She suggests to Beng to “establish” (line 714) the EOQ issue on the “minimum and the maximum” (line 713), with the modal verb “should”, mitigating the force of the directive.

As shown in the numerous examples above, there are two ways in which directives are used to make a change in the topics at the meetings. The presence of a modal signifies a mitigated form of directive, while the absence of a modality shows the directness of the GM’s discourse in giving instructions to the meeting participants. The data from both meetings show that all the directives are meted out by the GM and are directed at her subordinates.

To sum up, topic change by way of using directives are all done by the GM. She asserts her authority by giving out commands. In MM2, directives comprise 47% of the number of strategies used, with statement only 6% and question forms 47%. The number of directives used in MM2 is more than the number used in MM1 (38%). The use of directives as a means to change topics is rare as found in past studies done by others (Stenstrom 1999). Here the GM’s chairing style appears to be authoritarian. She does not waste time on words. She gives orders in a direct manner, using verbs like “go on”, “move on’ and “continue”. When on two occasions the modal verb ‘can’ was used, they were meant as requests. As such, it may be concluded that the GM is not authoritative all the time.

The use of statements was the least used strategy and the analysis is given in the next section.

5.8 The Use of Statements

Extract 23 (MM1)

GM	first quarter but still April already okay lah okay cannot change I think / better not change	160 161
Mat	/ just explain-	162
GM	just explain that's why you are here to explain erm mmm and then the higher maintenance cost for the trucks	163 164
Mat	=currently for the consumer side we have only two trucks plus we use a PK truck for Alpane	165 166

In extract 23, it appears that the GM was reading from the minutes on “higher maintenance cost for the trucks” (line 163). The examples below reflect the same trend where the statements are either read from the minutes or reports.

Extract 24 (MM1)

Choo	track under the table lah	1198
GM	okay three point five ah under my name the DMP Korea and so (?) the palm oiling you don't want to increase price . just change the palm oiling maybe they are willing to so the er er	1199 1200 1201
Weng	=the cost to repair ah ah	1202

Extract 24 shows the GM uses a statement to make a shift in topic. She begins with the item from the minutes which is “three point five” (line 1199). This helps guide the flow of discussion as the other participants at the meeting also refer to the item listed in the minutes of the meeting.

Extracts 25 provides another example in which statements are used. This is when the GM uses “let me go” as a way of directing and yet it is not a directive as there is no force to the statement. “Let me go” is a way to signal the shift in the topic, and also appears to be a subtle form of directing them.

Extract 25 (MM2)

Mei	for flatbread ah the tortilla one	324
GM	=okay let me go to T-one tortilla	325
Mei	Tortilla t-one er individual products	326

As mentioned earlier a total of 39 and 32 topics were identified in MM1 and MM2 respectively. Interestingly, out of these 71 topics, only on 2 occasions were topic change made by the other managers. The rest were solely the GM's, and these 2 occurrences show topic change made using statements. The extracts below show who made the statements and how they were used to change topics.

Extract 26 (MM1)

GM	=no dispute ah sometimes working ah you all ah	1016
Beng	=er er on the er program cost saving program base discussion so each one for me I feel that we focus more on cost saving a lot of pressure to the supplier eventually waste reduction is something that we focus on we cannot control (?) whatever savings is actually come from the come / from the	1017 1018 1019 1020
GM	/ both side both teams must do you see but how you do it ah	1021 1022

Extract 26 shows that Beng, the operation manager, raised the issue of “cost saving program” and he introduced it as a new topic. Prior to this the GM was reprimanding the managers who had a dispute over the issue of “communication flow” (lines 927-1016, see full transcript in Appendix 1). Another instance of topic change was carried out by Suan, the purchasing manager, and is shown below.

Extract 27 (MM1)

GM	=we are sending sample for them to test	1225
Suan	=the brainstorming we will have to further defer to June lah	1226
GM	ah no such thing as tight schedule ah everybody tight schedule you know...	1227

Here in extract 27 Suan is referring to the statement as indicated in the minutes of the meeting. She is stating that the brainstorming meeting has to be further deferred. Written minutes are documents used in meetings. In management meetings of this

nature, clear concise minutes are important as they serve as the point of reference for all discussions at meetings. A look at the minutes has shown how the reading of the minutes by the participants appear as statements which are used as a means to change or shift topics.

In MM2, there were only two occasions when statements were used to change topic and both occasions were carried out by the GM. More statements were used in MM1 than MM2 but on the whole the use of statements is the least used (refer to Table 5.7).

Hence the strategy which shows the lowest frequency count is the use of statements. Past studies in the area of topic change have also shown this to be true (Stenstrom 1994). It was found that in MM1, statements comprise 18% of the overall topic change whereas in MM2, only 6% was observed.

5.9 Conclusion

The discussion above has provided the answers to the research question on the discursive activities evident in the talk at meetings, and how these activities were realised. From the explanation given above, it was found that there are four types of discursive activities most evident from the data set and each of these emerged as a result of topic change carried out most of the time by the Chair of the meeting. How the topic change was done was also highlighted in the data analysis and reported in this chapter. It is evident then, that in this CofP, the managers come together regularly to interact and have the common goal of getting work done. The way they go about it is to concede to the chair of the meeting, who is also their superior in this business establishment, to lead and guide their discussion. The Chair uses two artefacts, that is the minutes and the

agenda of the meeting to facilitate the proceedings. There is a time frame where the meetings would be expected to end, and though there was no explicit indication of a time limit on how much they can say within a certain topic (issue), there appears to be an implicit understanding in the CofP that the meeting discussion will cover all relevant matters regarding their work. On average it was found that a topic was covered within 2.8 to 3.8 minute frame. How these topics were changed, as done by the Chair, is by the use of three significant strategies: question forms, directives and statements.

On the whole the data reveals that there is a smooth flow of talk at meetings, as the managers weave in and out through the various discursive activities, and at the end achieve their goal of the talk.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.0 Introduction

The chapter provides the analysis and interpretation of the data to answer research question two which consists of two parts: to examine the interactional resources used by the talk participants in the discursive activities. Couched within the four types of discursive activities evident in the meeting talk (as discussed in Chapter Five), the interactional resources are identified and discussed in the light of the practices within the CofP, to show how the managers interact and use language and its resources to facilitate or impede communication. As the analysis is uncovered and interpreted, a discussion of the findings is also given.

6.1 Interactional Resources

The analytical approach adopted for this study is CA, and employing CA and its tools on the data obtained uncovered various interactional resources used by the talk participants, who are managers employed at a Malaysian SME which deals with the production of buns, crusts, and tortillas. The talk obtained from the internal management meetings is then examined in the light of the interactional resources, and these resources are analysed within each of the discursive activity. Before moving on to a discussion of these, a brief description is given on the first interactional device to be discussed, and that is the adjacency pair of question-answer sequences.

6.1.1 Question-Answer Sequences

It has been established that from the talk at meetings, 4 main discursive activities were evident and they are checking of information (CI), account giving (AG), giving instruction (GI) and problem solving (PS). Among the four, account-giving is the platform for the chair of the meeting to ask for a report of what has taken place at work. When a task is not done, the chair wants to find out what happened. She appears to use a specific adjacency pair to achieve this and it is through question and answer (henceforth q-a). Various extracts of talk which shows this phenomenon is analysed and discussed below.

- **Question-Answer Sequence in Account-Giving**

As mentioned earlier (Chapter Five), account-giving is a discursive activity where people at work give a report of what has been done regarding issues that have been raised. When the people responsible do the reporting or give an account for the issue at hand, the chair is often seen to use questions to obtain information. Sometimes questions are used to check if work is done properly, or if not, why it is not done.

In this CofP it is a joint enterprise or endeavour between the GM who is in control of the overall operations of the company, and her managers who are individually in-charge of their respective departments. They are responsible for the smooth running of the work they do. So when they get together to interact at meetings, they share interactional resources to accomplish their goal at talk. In account-giving, q-a sequences are evident and the following extracts of talk will examine how these sequence of talk as an interactional resource is carried out by the talk participants.

Before each extract is analysed and discussed, a brief background to each is provided.

Extract 1 (MM1): Background

Extract 1 is the portion of talk based on the topic: “a lot of rejects” (refer to Table 5.2). The talk lasts 2 minutes and the participants in the interaction are the Chairperson (GM) and Beng (Operations manager). Nine other managers are present but they do not contribute to this portion of the talk. The GM asks why the oven had broken down and Beng gives an account of what happened. Extracted from lines 14-60, the main issue is not the breakdown of the oven, rather it is the consequence: a lot of rejects of the product (buns). As a result of this, the company suffers losses.

Speaker	Dialogue	Line
GM	I think you have explained that ah. <u>but</u> what are you doing with this ah . is it okay with you . I mean in terms of the oven breakdown .. is it incidental or . because the poor maintenance	14 15 16
Beng	okay the first one . partly is because of the er preventive maintenance . when they do the preventive maintenance they didn't cover the checking of the tensioning . just do a clean up . clean up of the shaft	17 18 19
GM	=ah isn't it become er er quite a normal process already why didn't we do that	20
Beng	=yeah because the tension is not ah loose easily one . that is for the the trench chain . so what happen was ah . the first instant when they they discover that the what you call that the latch broken . then ah they change it without this wear and tear . and then it happen again . and then they found out the tensioner / is	21 22 23 24 25
GM	/okay is it quite alright situation for you . to- not to check	26 27
Beng	=no it's not alright . so now now we redefine the MPBF program to include all those areas	28 29
GM	=if if I mean . if . what my question here is that . isn't it a normal already . if you change this you have to check the tension	30 31
Beng	=no this is separate area . on the separate area so what do they do on the preventive maintenance program now is mainly the cleaning of the tract . and oiling of bearing . so this tensioner is inside one of the gearbox	32 33 34
GM	=a common sense for you to actually change actually change check the tension right	35 36
Beng	=ah that is actually . once in every few months	37
GM	=yeah all I am asking you is that if you change ah the bag /the bag ah	38
Beng	huh huh	39
GM	is it a common sense . to also check it again	40
Beng	=yes . by right they have to check but they thought it's a wear and tear just change without checking the tensioner . so that was what happen to the second / group	41 42 43

GM	/ but but by right he has to	44
Beng	=check the tensioner . before er install the er the replacement part . so what happen was they just change the parts without checking	45 46
GM	so what do we do to him	47
Beng	=so I have to ask him . to ah ah what do you call that . ah include all this into his normal routine checkup . instead of few few ah once in few months . do on every month	48 49 50
GM	now how often now	51
Beng	=now every month have to do the checking . because checking you have to open / up the	52 53
GM	/ so who is verifying the monthly check	54
Beng	=ah I get. this er this Siti to do that now . basically I ask her to er er do more on the verification process for engineering department	55 56
GM	=you check their record	57
Beng	=ah I do check lah . now every week she give me a report . and then also I meet up with Zain to discuss on the outstanding things as a progress ..	58 59
GM	this has caused quite a lot of rejects you know ...	60

Extract 1: Analysis

The verbal interaction begins with the GM posing a question to Beng and she offers two options as possible answers (lines 15-16). Beng responds with a reply which is inclined towards the second option given. He hedges his answer with “partly” and hesitates with “er” (line 17). The GM uses the word “poor” but Beng chooses the word “preventive” to describe the maintenance. In doing this she appears to be pre-empting a reply from Beng and has narrowed the answer to two choices. This shows her knowledge of the technical aspect of the task, which is the equipment used in producing the buns. She is aware of the problems that may have caused the oven breakdown. In this case not only is she the chair, she also takes on an expert role, and thus appears to use this as a means to show some form of authority. In giving an account of what happened, Beng is being guided by the GM’s questions. In the extract the GM begins with a q-a sequence.

Studies by Fisher (1991) and Sollitt-Morris (1996) found that the asymmetrical relationship between speakers at talk influence the amount of talk produced, such as observed in teacher-student and doctor-patient interactions. However in the above extract, the amount of talk by Beng is more than the GM’s. This is due to the fact that

Beng has to provide an explanation on the procedures taken to sort out the issue of the oven. On the other hand, the GM is asking the questions, which are to the point, hence her turns of talk are shorter. Instances of these are found in lines 26, 30, 35, 47, 52 and 54.

The GM tends to direct the interaction and interrupts more than Beng. At line 26, the GM does not wait for Beng to complete his utterances, instead she puts forward a question which is a repeat of a previous question in line 20. The question is repeated twice but phrased differently (as shown below for easy reference):

for the first time:

- isn't it become er er quite a normal process already why didn't we do that (20)

and is repeated twice:

- is it quite alright situation for you . to- not to check (26)
- if if I mean . if . what my question here is that . isn't it a normal already . if you change this you have to check the tension (30-31)

It appears that the GM's questioning style shows her asserting her power over Beng. As Beng offers an explanation on how his team (M & E) dealt with the oven breakdown, the GM cuts him off once, and then latches onto his talk, thus signalling a certain amount of impatience (lines 19-20, 27-28 & 31-32). In repeating her questions twice, the GM appears to also signal to Beng that she is not satisfied with his explanation. She rephrases and reformulates. In line 30 she states that it is a question ("what my question here is that"), seemingly to reinforce to Beng that he has not answered her questions

before line 30. The use of question tag (“isn’t it” and “is it”) also shows the GM’s assertiveness. To this Beng appears to be dodging a direct respond.

Furthermore, her choice of words such as “common sense” appears to imply that Beng lacks good judgment, and denotes a talk down to Beng. At this instance the GM is enacting her power overtly. In fact she repeats the term (lines 35 & 37) and Beng attempts to answer as professionally but he tends to grope for words. But there are attempts by Beng to assert himself though feebly, as noted in these two occasions when she repeats her question, he latches onto her talk, responding promptly to the questions, and shows no hesitancy. Thus, from here it is observed that Beng begins his accounts with more hesitancy and is more tentative but as the interaction unfolds, he picks up pace and speaks with less hesitation, as evidenced in lines 41-43, 45-46, & 48-50. The number of short pauses appears to lessen in these lines.

The GM, in this AG, is possibly exerting her rights, and she is in a privileged position as their employer (highest in the hierarchical structure), which gives her the right to ask questions in a forthright manner. On the other hand, Beng appears to be less direct in responding, and uses hedges like “partly”, “just” and the filler “ah” and “er” and repeats words and phrases like “the” , “they” , “clean up” . Beng’s way of replying to the GM’s direct questions appear evasive, and the GM is seen to exert more control of the situation. Institutionally she has the right to question him, and as head of operations, Beng’s role is to provide the answers. The way he responds to the GM’s queries, in a dodging and evasive manner, as observed in the use of backchannels and hedges, signify possibly the lack of monitoring on his part. In this company, as the field notes show, Beng is in charge of the maintenance and engineering (M & E) team. This team consists of the maintenance supervisors and engineers whose task is to maintain and

solve any technical issues with equipment. If there is a faulty device, prompt action must be taken, otherwise it affects productivity, which in turn causes losses for the company. The role of this form of adjacency pair, that is q-a, facilitates their talk, thus achieving the goal of account-giving.

At the end, in line 60 the GM draws a conclusion by saying “this has cause quite a lot of rejects you know”. She closes the whole AG episode with an evaluation, and it is phrased in a negative way. This implies that she is not happy with what has happened.

This account-giving discursive activity on “a lot of rejects” will also be examined later for the use of pronouns (extract 12) and repair (extract 19). However the next extract given below offers another illustration of a q-a sequence.

Extract 2 (MM2): Background

Extract 2 consists of 75 lines (lines 153-226). Since it is a longer portion of talk than extract 1, it will not be fully presented below, but the whole meeting transcript (MM2) can be found in Appendix 3. For discussion of the analysis, the relevant portions will be given here. In this AG, the GM is again having a discussion with Beng on a similar issue as to the previous one, which is a machine breakdown. There is a third speaker who offers only two utterances towards the end. The GM begins with an instruction to Beng to explain the issue at hand, which is the casa breakdown (casa is the oven used for baking). It is under a main topic of discussion (entitled “casa hotpress”) that this segment of talk follows.

GM	ah ah can you go through a little bit so that we get it	153
Beng	okay overall for month of June maybe due to er . casa breakdown .the oven base . on the (?) for bunline (?) out of control we have change to the valve . er calibration for the smartline there is a few occasion of motor . er we are taking down how long can this- . so we are still checking and from there we will change	154 155 156 157

	before (?) ..	158
GM	ah a few times it broke down right . why you took quite a long time for you to find out the reason	159 160

Extract 2: Analysis

The GM begins by requesting Beng to go through “a little bit so that we can get it” (line 153). Beng complies by giving an account of what happened to the oven base and states the steps taken to resolve the casa breakdown. Similar to extract 1, the issue is rejection rates caused by a breakdown of a machine. The GM approaches the issue in a similar fashion to extract 1. Beng, in one turn, explains with these utterances (reproduced below for easy reference):

- we have change to the valve (155)
- we are taking down (156-157)
- we are still checking (157)
- from there we will change before (157-158)

He refers to actions in the present continuous and future forms, and this probably implies that though the casa breakdown has occurred, so far nothing has been done about it. So in the next turn, the GM begins her q-a series, as she seeks accountability for the undone task. The GM employs questions as a means to obtain reasons why tasks at work are not done. She seems to be making use of questions to lead, and in this way she gets to have answers that she wants, and not what Beng would say if he is just reporting. At the end of the extract she draws a conclusion, which takes the form of a directive (line 226: “I want to make sure not that this is not the the same problem would not occur again...”).

The q-a sequences used in the interaction is similar to extract 1: the GM puts forth her questions in a direct manner and Beng would respond accordingly, and six such pairs are reproduced below for easy reference:

Set (i)

GM	ah a few times it broke down right . why you took quite a long time for you to find out the reason	159 160
Beng	=no the reason is camouflage we just want to find out the timing how often it breaks down	161 162

Set (ii)

GM	=so what do we do to prevent this	167
Beng	=we need to change the camouflage before the breakdown . so we have to find out how long it last . average for all the-	168 169

Set (iii)

GM	= how long have you monitored this	170
Beng	=only one month	171

Set (iv)

GM	= this kind of problem started how long ago	180
Beng	er . very much earlier earlier we thought that long production it cannot last . then we check with the motor supplier why is the (?) how long it last	181 182

Set (v)

GM	so from now you monitor every single motor . how many motor you have to monitor	209 210
Beng	=oh we have every basic unit the same kind of motor	211

Set (vi)

GM	= is it very expensive ah this one	214
Beng	=no the price is cheap . but the type of motor is their nature is like that . unless it is ac motor but ac motor can't-	215 216

From these, it is apparent that Beng answers each question immediately, as is seen in the way he latches onto the last utterance produced by the GM at each end of the

question. From lines 159-189, questions are asked as a way to find out why certain things are not done. The GM seems to be waiting for responses that are satisfactory and when she does not get them, she asks even more questions.

It may be concluded that the institutional authority she has allows her to ask the questions and she would also want answers that meet her expectations. However often, as observed from the data, she does not seem to be getting the answers that are satisfactory and this leads her to come up with even more questions. More of this is seen in the portion of talk below:

Beng	=no long term is / to get this	173
GM	/ change it before-	174
Beng	=no average time and change before this average time	175
GM	but we run this this line for so long already	176
Beng	=(?) after talking to the supplier they say / we have to check this	177
GM	/ I mean the	178
Beng	=only last month we check this	179
GM	=this kind of problem started how long ago	180
Beng	er very much earlier earlier we thought that long production it cannot last then we check with the motor supplier why is the (?) how long it last	181 182
GM	they should tell us or you all should find out it find it out earlier	183
Beng	who	184
GM	the engineer department ah should know it right	185
Beng	=yeah but after talking to different supplier only we know the current supplier just say okay change this part that's all	186 187
GM	take too long lah what I mean- should have been known earlier so you have less rejection rate ah	188 189

In another sequence of q-a, Beng confirms the point that there is no long term solution to the problem (line 173) and proceeds to add more information, while the GM overlaps with his talk in line 174 with “change it before” (line 175) and that seems to set her off to another q-a sequence as she wants to know when this problem began (line180). Beng replies with an answer and continues to justify his actions and to this the GM ends the q-a sequence with a reprimand (line 188-189: “take too long lah what I mean- should have been known earlier so you have less rejection rate ah”). A few turns later she reprimands again (line 195-196: “wah tell you ah if you all take so long to find out I think you have to knowledge with engineering ...”), possibly to place emphasis not only

on Beng alone, but his M & E team as well because she uses “you all” (line 195), referring to them as a group.

The way the interaction unfolds between these two managers appear to show one has institutional power over the other (Coultas, 2003), and Beng, the one with less power in this CofP appears to resist the authority slightly. This in turn leads the GM, towards the end of the talk, to hedge and soften the mitigated instructions, as seen in the use of particles of “lah” and “ah” and a restating of what she means to make herself clearer (lines 188-189). The use of Male is obvious and the “lah” serves to soften an instruction as is noticed in Malaysian contexts (Morais 1994). On the whole, the communication is impeded slightly with the AG stretching over 74 lines of talk, and the questions used to obtain accounts are not satisfactorily responded.

Extract 3 (MM1): Background

As the meeting appears to come to a close after an hour 34 minutes of discussion, the GM now asks the managers if they have any other issues to raise. To this Beng raises an issue a pertaining to the contract agreement for the air conditioning services provided by a company known as ECO Tech (pseudonym). Apparently the contract has expired and Beng highlights this issue because two air conditioning units have broken down and they have not been repaired. Due to this, the production output has been affected, and a discussion ensued (lines 956-1016, refer to Appendix 2). This portion of the interaction (lines 956-985) has more managers involved; apart from the GM and Beng, there are Chai (F&A), and Suan (Purchasing).

GM	=what is the problem can you tell me I don't understand it	956
Chai	=we have a contract between ECO Tech . and Alpane . for the normal maintenance of air cond	957 958

GM	=okay	959
Chai	=about the er (?) so ah this contract actually expire . April	960
Beng	=February and March	961
Chai	so actually before before we sign again er . actually we involve reviewing (?)	962
GM	=involve in- you are reviewing the contract	963
Chai	=reviewing the contract	964
GM	=but it take so long . now April already	965
Beng	=yes before the expiry not after the expiry	966
Chai	(?)	967
GM	=so what is your problem now . they don't want to do for us	968

Extract 3: Analysis

The GM introduces a topic change by asking “do you all have question” (line 930). Beng latches onto this utterance and raises an issue regarding “the contract” (line 933). In line 956, the GM shows that she does not seem to follow the discussion and so she seeks clarification from both Beng and Chai. A few turns later the GM repeats the question with a reformulation to show some understanding (line 968: “they don’t want to do for us”). As she phrases it in this way, she appears to be questioning them (Beng & Chai) to seek clarification. She voices her concern about the fact that since the contract has not been renewed, does it mean ECO Tech does not want to repair the air conditioning units? The next few lines show the GM asking for an account on what has taken place. To examine how the GM puts forward questions and how the others respond, is taken from a section of the extract as reproduced below:

Beng	=now ah there are some reluctance from them all call also they don't come	969
Chai	=because of the delay they have er-	970
Beng	=but the contract not sign	971
GM	=but did they come and do it . did they come and do the service	972
Beng	=if we force them they come lah . you know if you don't force they don't come and some of the case that regular one . they come often now they have some leak	973 974
GM	=it's true also lah what they say	975
Chai	=maybe I give him a call later to see-	976
GM	=why do you take so long to renew a contract . contract should be review renewed before its expiry . otherwise there's no contract why should I do for you. I will do like that .. you are reviewing the cost and all these I understand but it should be done much earlier . so your your timeline ah . instead of finishing in April you should put it in because now it's already February . it should be finish in January so why did you run into this kind of situation .. can you all do it faster . but you	977 978 980 981 982 983

	give him a call first give him a call first	984
Chai	=yeah we have fax him also	985
GM	=but don't delay it anymore because it's May already	986
Beng	=because yesterday I call him for the two er units that is down he say no p.o. I cannot do	987 988
GM	it's true what running a business so I won't I won't	989

Here the GM appears to be using questions to seek answers as a way to get an account of what has taken place regarding this issue. She poses the questions to Chai, who should have taken care of the contract renewal:

- why do you take so long to renew a contract (977)
- why did you run into this kind of situation (983)

However no answers to these questions are forthcoming. The reason could be due to the fact that she places both questions in the same turn of talk and intersperses it with reprimands. Hence these questions appear to be rhetorical. From lines 977-984 the GM goes into a long discourse with instructions and reprimands. She instructs Chai with the following utterances, backing them with justifications:

- contract should be review renewed before its expiry otherwise there's no contract why should I do for you
- so your your timeline ah . instead of finishing in April you should put it in because now it's already February . it should be finish in January
- can you all do it faster . but you give him a call first give him a call first

and she reprimands Chai with these:

- why do you take so long to renew a contract . contract should be review renewed before its expiry . otherwise **there's no contract why should I do for you.** I will do like that ..

- you are reviewing the cost and all these I understand **but it should be done much earlier**

Reprimands seem to be used within contexts of such talk, and in this case as she asks Chai the questions in a rhetorical manner, she is probably not expecting an answer but uses them as a way to tell him off in an indirect manner. Further on, the data shows the GM exerting her position of authority by defending ECO Tech and justifying their action. These are found in the following utterances:

- it's true also lah what they say (975)
- it's true what . running a business so I won't I won't ... (989)

It appears that the goal of the talk is to get to know what has happened and when accounts are given, guided by questions from the GM, she has the tendency to close the account with either a reprimand or a directive (line 1016: “no dispute ah sometimes working ah you all ah”). The others in the interaction do not answer back in the same manner as she questions them, and this could be because they have not been doing their jobs, hence there is probably nothing more for them to say. They seem to deserve the reprimands.

For this AG, Beng is the one who raises the issue of the contract and his aim is to highlight to the boss that as a result of the contract expiry, the contractor has not repaired the air conditioning units. His explicit goal is to ask for action to be taken and in this CofP, it is the responsibility of the F&A department (under Chai). The GM's aim in this AG is get an account of why the contract was not renewed. She uses q-a and then reprimands. At the end, Chai is instructed to do the job (line 983-984: “you give him a

call first”). The problem is solved by the GM putting her foot down and asserting authority with a directive. Though the use of the interactional device of q-a may not have reached the communication aims, the way the GM uses her institutional power with directives and reprimands gets the work done. In a later analysis, this extract is again discussed in relation to the pronoun use (extract 13). However another AG with q-a sequence is analyzed below to support this phenomenon.

Extract 4 (MM1): Background

Extract 4 comes just after the first account of oven breakdown in Extract 1. The Chair of the meeting moves onto a new topic, which is “revised budgeted volume”. She moves the discussion to this topic that has been written in the minutes of the previous meeting. She seeks a clarification on the term used. In MM1, this is the first sub-topic to be covered under the main topic: “Budget Matters” (refer to Table 5.2).

GM	... Mat your side regarding the ah discussion on the high cost per unit ah due to lower volume so you say want to revise the budgeted volume can you revise budgeted volume	60 61 62
Chai	I think I- we have checked through ah / through	63
GM	/ budgeted means budgeted how can you revise the work unless the company allowed you to to give you a- I mean you already submitted your budget you do not (?) <u>revise</u> the (?) why revise	64 65 66
Chai	=I think we explain this ah why why it's so high now er / I ask Mat to-	67
GM	=yeah I know it's high	68
Chai	/ take the fixed cost	69
GM	/ <u>ah</u> say it again	70
Chai	we analyze into fixed cost for the transport and the variable cost basically variable cost all those petrol and maintenance and the sub con of the- then in fact the variable are consistent so only the fixed cost per piece actually fluctuated so because ah the budget is one million pieces but compare to actual now just because the volume lower fixed cost actually higher so this price will overall-	71 72 73 74 75 76
GM	yeah you can explain but you <u>cannot revise</u> okay	77

Extract 4: Analysis

The GM begins with a question directed at Mat. She wants a clarification from him, as he has written in his report that the budgeted volume is to be revised. She wants him to explain what he means by “revised budgeted volume”, because according to her once a budget is confirmed, no one can revise it. Though she begins with a question, it appears that she wants to bring Mat accountable to what he says. Although she selects Mat (Customer Service manager) to respond, Chai (F&A) speaks up instead.

The GM in line 64 appears not to accept or perhaps not to have heard Chai’s utterance. From line 64 there is an overlapping stretch of talk with Chai’s utterance. As the talk overlaps, Chai does not continue, instead the GM pursues the issue of the budget and then appears to reprimand them (Chai and Mat) with “how can you revise the work unless the company allowed to to...” (lines 64-65). She presses them for an answer to the question and she repeats “why revise” (line 66). To this Chai attempts to further explain (lines 67 & 69) and finally it appears that when she realises Chai is trying to provide an explanation, does she instruct him to “say it again” (line 70). The line also shows she has stopped talking so that Chai can voice his explanation (lines 71-76). The GM appears to accept the reply and then closes the matter with a directive, and stressed on the two words as underlined (line 77: “you cannot revise okay”).

From the beginning of this q-a sequence the GM already appears to exert her authority over them, and demands a justification from Mat. When Chai speaks up for Mat (although he was not asked to), it could mean two things: either Chai has the expert knowledge (being the Finance manager) to understand why the budget is revised, or he is lending a hand to Mat. Mat would have had worked with Chai over this budget issue

(from field notes), so when Chai speaks up for Mat, it might be because he is deflecting the GM's power over them, especially over Mat.

Further, although both Chai and Mat are department managers, in this CofP it appears that some managers have a higher position or play a more significant role in the company than others. Chai being the F&A manager is seen as almost next to the GM in terms of institutional rank. In fact at MM2, half way through the meeting, the GM passes her role as chair of the meeting to Chai (refer to line 656, Appendix 3). When she does this at a management level meeting it comes across that she is selecting Chai as the next-in-line, and according to the field notes, that in the absence of the GM from the office, Chai holds the reins.

More evidence to support this comes from this budget issue which goes on for a few more lines of talk, and it is noted that Mat only gets to speak up in line 90. The GM selects him to respond in line 60 ("Mat your side regarding the ah discussion on the ...") and only 30 lines later does he speak up. He is silent over a number of turns of talk, while the whole time he is listening to the interaction between the GM and Chai (lines 30-90, Appendix 3). This shows how he has taken the back seat for a while and there is also no instance of talk (for 30 lines) to show him attempting to snatch back his turn of talk from Chai.

From this extract, it appears that the GM exerts control over the discussion and expects justification and Chai on his part is able to provide her the explanation and she accepts it. Then she closes the sequence with a directive. At the end she has the final say, and this indicates that her institutional power is not questioned or challenged. However Chai is rather close in rank to her, and appears to be rather confident when he explains the

situation and seems to cover up for Mat. Although he does not openly resist the power displayed by the GM, he seems able to deflect the power she has over Mat and indirectly over him. This extract is re-visited again for analysis on pronoun use (extract 14) and repair (extract 19).

The next extract is another AG episode which focuses on q-a sequence.

Extract 5 (MM1): Background

This extract begins a new topic in the meeting after the Budget (just discussed above: extract 4). The main topic is “Flatbread line Engineering Matters (refer to Table 5.2). As mentioned earlier, the issues being discussed at the meetings are guided by the minutes of the previous one. The GM is here asking for an account of what has taken place regarding the oven.

Beng	=yeah okay ah in term of engineering the flatbread issue ah when we discuss that carry out the the modification of the trench chain due to the cycle time and also the er ah the conveyor before the oven this one we do not require extra motion-	303 304 305
GM	=is there any good er result	306
Beng	ah this one is basically er before replacing this there are two sections so one guy have to go and put the pan so now no need just put it straightaway	307 308
GM	so you save how many	309
Beng	=save the motion only for several products so the headcount still the same it's just base base on the motion	310 311
GM	but the wall bread after you change that do you feel any improvement	312
Beng	=there is some improvement in term of the pan flow	313
GM	should say your result lah so I don't have to ask report your result as well-	314

Extract 5: Analysis

The Chair begins a q-a sequence with Beng, as she wants to know the outcome of the modification carried on the trench chain. Beng does not provide a direct answer, instead

he goes on to explain how that particular device functions. Similar to extract 1 (“a lot of rejects”), Beng seems to have a way of dodging the GM’s queries. He tends to hesitate more, evident from the use of fillers like “er” and “ah” (lines 307-308) but the GM is also quick and wants prompt answers. She directs the next question to him (line 309: “so you save how many”) as her main concern is that the company do not make losses (similar to extract 1). This time Beng gives an immediate response (line 310) but again does not appear to answer her question specifically. The GM continues to pursue the issue and uses another question where she wants to have his opinion (line 312: “do you feel any improvement”). This time Beng voices out his response but uses hedges like “some” and also specifies that it is only applicable to “pan flow” (line 313). The GM does not indicate if she accepts that response but like the previous extract, she closes the q-a sequence with a directive and justifies why she wants it done that way (line 314: “should say your result so I don’t have to ask...” 314).

As evident in the extracts of talk analysed above, each time an AG episode closes, the GM gives an evaluation of the situation, or instructs them on what to do next or reprimands them for work not done well. This goes on in a similar fashion for the next extract.

Extract 6 (MM2): Background

Extract 6 is taken from a longer part of talk which focuses on “the evenness issue”. It is an AG segment and the GM again uses q-a to obtain answers, this time regarding the uneven crust that they have produced. This unevenness has resulted in a complaint from one of their customers. However the interaction analysed below is a short segment

within the whole AG, where 3 managers are involved: the GM, Beng and Samy, the R & D executive.

GM	so the the more thicker one is like how many mm / different from the	573
Samy	/ ah our target-	574
GM	=the lowest and the highest is how many mm different	575
Samy	=we giving the two to three so they are which three plus three point two-	576
GM	=ah that is the thing if you give two to two to three the whole piece ah should be around two to three ah you see but certain area ah higher than three than- that's where the crispiness is affected / so you <u>better</u>	577 578 579
Beng	/ we we right now ah- where else because when we run the DMP one no problem so only run this-	580 581
GM	=okay don't say that no problem DMP one ah-	582
Beng	=not consistent-	583
GM	=you have to ask your girl that oh <u>really really</u> compare you know ask your QA girl to focus that time a little bit on this because <u>don't forget</u> thin crust pizza is our function now	584 585 586
Beng	=okay	587

Extract 6: Analysis

The GM begins the q-a session by asking about the difference in the thickness of the thin crust. At first Samy does not provide an answer so she repeats the question and when he replies in line 576, it appears to be vague. However she seems to have a grasp what he said and responds with a slight reprimand and warns them to be more certain. She is about to instruct them to be “better” (line 579) but is interrupted by Beng who self-selects the turn and speaks up and offers his explanation.

Beng, in a previous extract has self-selected to speak up (see extract 1), but although he volunteers to speak up here, it does not appear to be forceful. He hedges with “ah” and “only” (lines 580-581), signalling hesitancy. Here the GM seems to refute Beng (lines 582) and then gives a directive to them. She tells them (Samy & Beng) to carry out their tasks, and closes with another warning (line 585: “don't forget”), which apparently serves as a strong reminder that the company now focuses on thin crust pizza and not on

flatbread line products. She seems to imply that from now on they need to be even more vigilant on this line of products, hence the warning to perform well and not be inefficient. This is because in the future the main earnings of the company will probably depend on this line of products and therefore they cannot afford to be slack here.

In this extract, it is noted once again that a q-a sequence closes with a reprimand. This appears to show the power the GM has over all operation matters and her goal is not to see the company suffer losses. To ensure this, she has to keep tab of their work efficiency. The findings drawn from the talk shows that when she questions her subordinates, she has the higher hand, and thus closing the sequence with a directive, a reprimand or a warning is permissible. This extract will also be analysed for its pronoun use in a later section (extract 10).

Extract 7 (MM2): Background

This extract is another account-giving discursive activity but is taken from a longer portion of talk under the topic “Tight Budget”. However, only a few lines will be analysed here because the focus is on the q-a sequence. In this exchange, facts and figures are involved, as the team discusses the target for production output. Those in this interaction are the GM, Beng, Chai and Mei, the finance executive who reports directly to Chai in the F&A department.

GM	T-one ah so what do you mean by eighty-six percent how many pieces you are using Mei you er got that report or not Chai can you get get someone-	315 316
Beng	=four point four er	317
GM	=no no I am not asking that I am saying that you say you achieve eighty-six percent efficiency per hour efficiency	318 319
Beng	ah	320

and a few turns later,

GM	individual products	327
Mei	ah	328
GM	=okay	329
Mei	=okay for T-one for example if base on (?) daily our target is six four two six pieces per hour	330 331

Extract 7: Analysis

Here, the GM and Beng discuss the T-one tortilla's downtime and Beng reports they have achieved 86%. To this, the GM asks Beng what he means, in terms of number of pieces. Without a pause she turns to Mei to enquire if Mei has the report and in the same breath, she instructs Chai to get someone, apparently to do the report or to get the report but it appears that before she could finish her sentence, Beng interrupts and gives her a figure (line 317: "four point four"). It may be assumed this is to answer the figure for the number of pieces she had asked for earlier. But her next turn indicates a disagreement, as she appears to deny what is given. Instead she seems to request Beng to let her know if he has set a target to achieve for the T-1 tortilla. Her apparent dominance over Beng is noted, and the rest of the interaction shows an overt display of this. This is seen in the way she phrases her questions and also reformulates, such as evident in the phrases below:

- no no I am asking ... (318)
- so I am asking... (321)

It appears that when she puts forward questions earlier, Beng does not show his understanding, and at this juncture she states that she is "asking" in a direct manner. Beng again provides an answer which is not what she wants. Then Beng clarifies that it would depend on the size. The q-a sequence for this part is resolved when Mei provides

the answer once they both (GM & Mei) narrow down the product to the individual T-one, and it is “six four two six” (lines 330-331).

This q-a sequence shows the GM asks questions and when the answer is not what she expects, she reformulates, possibly as a means to exert her institutional power to make them give her the answer she wants. According to Fairclough (1989, p.114), reformulation is a re-phrasing and the right to do this belongs to the more powerful person in any interaction, used as a means of control over the less powerful. In this interaction, it seems that the other managers are expected to be on the alert, and should know their facts, and when the responses are not forthcoming, the GM pushes even harder. She calls them by name, and instructs, such as seen when she tells Chai “to get someone” (line 316). The q-a session above displays a more overt form of power by the GM on Beng. She is able to do so as she has the institutional power over them. However there are a few instances, as exemplified in the analysis above, that managers like Chai and Beng do attempt to deflect the power she has over them. The way Chai and Beng attempt to enact some power differs from the GM’s. They do not use any coercive form of power (Fairclough, 1989), rather they collaborate in the discourse to exert themselves and in doing so, it diffuses the legitimate power of the GM (see Table 3.1 in Section 2.5). They do not use q-a, instead they self-select to speak up for their team mates, and provides explanations. A final extract to examine the use of q-a in AG is given below.

Extract 8 (MM2): Background

The problem of a product trial run (sample X-11) is the issue of the talk in this extract. The GM is not happy with how the trial run was carried out by the R&D team, led by Samy. However the person in-charge is Beng, who as the Operations manager takes

care of this portfolio too. The rationale is the trial runs are tested on future or potential products of the company, and eventually these products will be produced by the company, so Beng has to know what is going on.

GM	=how big batch is the trial run	838
Samy	we use about thirty forty kilo on the batch-	839
GM	=thirty kilo forty kilo when you do the trial runs er did you involve production people	840 841
Samy	yes the supervisors	842
GM	=who are those only supervisors	843
Samy	=only supervisor	844
GM	=only supervisors . Beng and Abu is not around	845
Samy	I mean the Abu and the supervisors and also QA department involve then the review and everybody agree on this / (?)	846 847
GM	/ yeah you are agreeable or not QA and production department	848
Samy	the latest one everybody agree that's why we submit	849
GM	=can you show me the report on that please show me the report on that- did people agreed on that batch on that day on that batch the variants of the product thickness and er-	850 851 852
Samy	=what I am requesting is	853
GM	=and er Beng you are suppose to be in the loop you are supposed to know this trial run because ultimately you are the final person to- you are the owner of the process at the end of it so if you all after submission of the samples er after so much of work done with the customers now you say that oh the dough weight we have to increase ah is quite shocking to us lah	854 855 856 857 858

Extract 8: Analysis

This extract begins with the GM asking Samy (R&D executive) the amount he used for the trial run. A simple question requires a simple answer and to this, Samy offers a prompt reply. It is observed that the five q-a sequences used are relatively simple: the GM questions and Samy answers: lines 838-839, 840-842, 843-844, 845-846, 848-849. However after line 849, the GM requests for the report and when Samy interrupts, she seems to ignore him and continues to reprimand Beng. There appears to be some power enactment here. Although the GM obtains all the necessary answers from Samy, she does not seem to be satisfied with the situation regarding the trial run. Instead of reprimanding Samy, who is directly in-charge of R&D, she focuses on Beng in line 854,

and states outright that he is the “final person”, and “the owner of the process” (line 855), implying that he is to be held fully responsible if things go wrong at R&D, because it ultimately affects the production line.

When she cuts Samy off and then selects Beng as the one responsible, she exerts her authority as the boss and she has the right to tell him off. In her reprimand, she brings up two issues that cause aggravation:

- after submission of the samples (856)
- after so much work with the customers (857)

These tasks have been done and then they report that they still have to increase the dough weight (line 858), which probably means that the whole trial run is nullified, and this annoys her and in her words, “quite shocking to us lah” (line 858). She begins with a stern reprimand focusing on Beng (lines 854-855: “Beng you are suppose to be in the loop”, “you are supposed to know this trial run”), yet at the end of the same utterance she says “you all” referring to Beng & Samy and the R&D team, and then “we” have to increase the dough weight, using “we” to refer to the company as a whole. Here she deflects the power from “you” to “we” and “ah quite shocking to us lah” which contain two particles (line 858: “ah” & “lah”) to soften the tone and hedges with the word “quite”, a sign of deflecting the power she displays earlier (more on the use of pronoun is given in Section 2.4.2.).

One possible reason for this could be because Samy is the one who did the trial run and Beng could have just overseen the whole matter and if anything goes wrong, the first

person to reprimand is Samy, not Beng. She begins with Beng and perhaps realises that Beng is not solely responsible, so she tones down her mitigation (lines 854-858).

To sum up, the use of q-a sequences in the discursive activity of AG appear to show that the talk participants in this CofP have a shared practice of carrying out their social action. The chair's role is the most significant, as she seems to be the one asking the questions most of the time for AG. Undeniably she is the chair and also the GM, and hence she has the right to ask the questions. She does so as a means to clarify matters, to seek new information, and at times, to get her subordinates to get the work done. The way q-a is used in these verbal interactions facilitates the discussion, more so for the GM. Nonetheless by using q-a, she gets what she wants most of the time, and achieves the goal of her talk. It may be concluded that the GM uses q-a sequences with the aim of getting work done in this establishment. She seems to use them (q-a) with clarity and assertiveness. But what is interesting in this analysis is that each time she closes the q-a sequences and ends the AG talk, she uses a directive, warning or reprimand. What is significant then in this CofP it is their way of doing things, and talking things out, appears to be acceptable. The others at the meeting do not refute the GM's instruction, warning or reprimand.

The next discursive activity to look at is checking of information (CI), and below is an extract of talk analysed.

- **Question Answer Sequences in Checking Information**

The highest frequency of discursive activities found in the meetings is checking information (46.5%). It is obvious that when someone is checking for information,

questions would be used. Answers are then expected. If there are no other matters to raise, the topic changes to the next one. This is quite a straightforward activity. Only one extract is used as an illustration as the q-a sequence is simple, and there is little to say in terms of their shared practice in this respect.

Extract 9 (MM2): Background

In this short extract, the GM wants to know if the quality assurance (QA) executives have visited the stores to do the survey. She is just checking information, seeking clarification and confirmation. The managers in this interaction are the GM, Samy (R&D) and Weng, the Sales and Marketing manager.

GM	=who did the product testing	772
Samy	erm Keong and Heng and also Weng also went together-	773
GM	=to the restaurant lah Weng	774
Weng	=yeah	775
GM	=they happy no- not significant	776
Weng	er not much	777
GM	any report ah	778
Samy	we already have-	779
GM	=didn't you show us the report wah you all do thing ah wah quiet quiet do already then okay already ah shelf it put in the drawer this is not the way you should do thing you should send a report out and inform everybody we have already completed this project the- the- the texture taste what is the evaluation of the result the report conclude this project and then said done_not until now ah you still haven't send out the report <u>Chai</u>	780 781 782 783 784 785

Extract 9: Analysis

The way the GM gets answers is to ask questions and this is already explained earlier in AG. The discursive activity here is checking information (CI). She begins with a simple question of “who did the product testing” (line 772) and the answer is just as simple, provided by Samy (line 773). Subsequently she wants to know the result of the visit.

Each question is answered by either Samy or Weng (lines 772-773, 774-775, 776-777, 778-779). Upon closing, the GM metes out a directive regarding the report (lines 781-784: “you should send a report out and inform everybody...”), which seems to imply that although the product has been tested and they have visited the restaurant, there was no report submitted. Here is where their work is slacking. To this she appears to be dissatisfied and that is why a reprimand follows, and she uses MalE structures (line 780: “wah you all do thing ah wah quiet”) which seems to indicate that they did not report to the management on what they have done, instead they just remained silent. Because of her institutional identity as the boss, she has the right to tell them off in this manner. Her power is overtly expressed here.

Although from both the meetings analysed, CI has the highest count compared to the other discursive activities, the segments of talk culled out are shorter than AG. In CI, q-a sequences are used but they are mostly simple and straightforward, and a few examples are identified from the CIs and given below:

Example 1:

GM	... third party you budgeted how many pieces	145
Mat	=one zero five zero	146
GM	=actual it's seventy-five	147
Mat	=seventy-six	148

Example 2:

GM	hey how come Mutu is not here ah	253
Beng	I think he is ah dealing with this er er oven	254
GM	sometimes it is very good for them to be here-	255
Beng	=yeah I did spoke to him-	256
GM	=to hear the kind of things that we want to do-	257
Beng	=spoke to Abu also this morning-	258
GM	=yeah even Abu even Abu the efficiency and all this they can hear themselves and they will be under the kind of / er ah	259 260

Example 3:

Choo	three point eight is correction	1280
GM	and then three point one three innovation	1281
Beng	=er engineering	1282
GM	=engineering side	1282
Beng	=engineering need the er oven to be down for them to study the circuit so right now the oven is still quite busy regarding er the bun and macarabia because this month MDL Malaysia is having promotion for macarabia er which start today start promotion	1284 1285 1286 1287

Example 4:

GM	what is the sale so far ah Suan	101
Suan	ah one point five	102
GM	wah not bad ah July	103
Suan	one point five seven	104
GM	good for Alpane and do one good eh (she laughs) before closing something to cheer	105 106

Example 5:

GM	any other thing to update please- your cost saving seems to be moving okay ah am I <u>right</u> to say that Suan	600 601
Yen	Suan	602
GM	Suan you achieve your target ah	603
Suan	I achieve the target	604

From the examples (1-5) above, it is evident that CIs though evident most in the meetings, do not seem to contain the same richness of q-a sequences as in AG for analysis and interpretation. However this is also a shared practice, and it is noted that the q-a sequences which are used by the chair in CIs are basically for obtaining quick answers and her managers know what to expect and moves on without having to prolong the episodes of talk, if these are meant for clarification. In this respect, the q-a facilitate the talk at meetings.

Having dealt with q-a sequences, the focus of the analysis which follows is the use of pronouns in institutional talk.

6.1.2 Pronoun Use

In Chapter two, the use of pronouns in institutional talk has been discussed. The use of pronouns which is specific in this CofP reveals how these are used to facilitate the goals of talk. Some extracts of talk from both MM1 and MM2 are analyzed and discussed in the following sections.

- **Pronoun Use in Account-Giving**

As a discursive activity, account-giving make up 27% of the overall activities (see Table 5.1 in Section 5.2) was evident in both meetings. The focus on use of pronouns in this discursive activity has revealed how the talk facilitates the goal of the talk.

Extract 10 (MM2): Background

Extract 10's topic is the "Consistency Report", where in 52 lines the GM asks for some facts and figures. The pronoun use includes first and third person pronouns, and the possessives. It is a longer discourse and the shifting of pronoun use is marked and provides some insights into how the GM exerts control over the discussion. In this interaction, 3 managers are involved: the GM, Beng and Chai. The Chair (GM) of the meeting begins by enquiring about the data and as the discussion progresses, she puts herself in direct command of how the data should be obtained and results tabulated.

GM	=how many data you need	915
Beng	at least one hundred and twenty	916
GM	let us know how long is the report is going to come out	917
Beng	so right now we are testing our GSS one once we run GSS (?)	918
GM	okay you need one hundred fifty data one day how many data you can get	919
Beng	one day twenty data er (?)	920
GM	twenty batches one hundred fifty one hundred fifty data so one day you can	921

	get twenty data	922
Beng	let's say twenty batches means twenty data	923
GM	divide by twenty is how many days can I get the data	924
Chai	seven point five	925
GM	about seven point five days you should be able to get all the data so can I give you up to two weeks to get the-	926 927
Beng	=now I am collecting the data already even the form are are designed to collect	928
GM	=okay okay we we we give ourselves two weeks to get the data out sixteenth okay end of the month I should get the data of the consistency report and let me know ah out of all this press ah this hot press ah can this hot press to able to use some more we have to let-	929 930 931 932
Beng	=right now I'm using casa or you want me / to (?)	933
GM	<i>/ doesn't matter lah you see every hot</i> press has its problem you see so if you are able to give me a justification of the press problems perhaps we can recommend this to Andy in MMF so they can do something for us you see the equipment manufacturers- so what are the things we need from them that our press will give a good quality product you see so by all this data we send to them when Andy come on the twenty-third I hope lah that's why you are a bit too late you see by the time they come just show that <i>I have collected so many data I have done so much of work you know I continuously to get the consistent figures so I would like to change the plate or I would like to change the hydraulic</i> we have to recommend to them mah so that you won't leave the inconsistency- the product inconsistency- continue to leave like that you see they are able to do equipment for us nowadays so just go ahead and do it problem solving lah think a bit proactively okay	934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946
Chai	(?)	947
GM	=if you can collect the data faster I'm sure you have done quite a lot of data perhaps by end of this week you can give me the report so twenty-third when he come ah-	948 949 950
Beng	=yeah	951
GM	we can be able to give him some results and show him you know these are our problems next one is what production	952 953

Extract 10: Analysis

The Chair is at first engaged in a q-a sequence with Beng over the data and while she refers to Beng with the pronoun “you”, Beng responds with the pronoun “we” (lines 915 & 917 with 918). Then in lines 926-946, the shift of pronoun use is evident. When she informs Beng that she can give him up to two weeks to get the data, Beng latches on her turn and replies that he is collecting the data already and to this she shifts her “I” to “we”. In using the earlier “I”, she uses an individual stance but her shift to “we” seems to show that she is now part of this task (of seeing the data collected), and not only “we” as in the first pronoun, but “we give ourselves two weeks” (line 929), the “our” in a possessive state, and all this in the same turn of talk.

She continues in this mode for the next stretch of talk (lines 934-946), using “we” and “our” probably to soften her authority, and also as a move of solidarity with Beng and his team. It appears that she wants them to work out the problem and expects them to produce something tangible (the consistency report) so that when Andy from MMF arrives on the specified date, the report is ready for submission on time. She also uses “perhaps”, possibly as a means to tone down her authority. The instruction appears more advisory in nature (line 836: “perhaps **we** can recommend to this to Andy in MMF so they can do something for **us**”). The absence of “I” in her use of pronouns here (she uses “we” and “us) shows her deflecting her power perhaps in an attempt to get Beng to cooperate with her on the task ahead. The closing utterance before a change of topic occurs indicates another way whereby she expresses her goal of this talk: “**we** can be able to give him (Andy) some results (the consistency report) and show him these are **our** problems” as found in lines 952-953. In the end it is the use of “we” that reflects a collective institutional identity (this concept has been explained in Chapter 2).

Another AG is analysed with regard to pronoun use and given below.

Extract 11 (MM2): Background

The topic is “T-1 tortilla”, and the Chair discusses figures with Beng, after a lengthy talk on the budget, prior to this. The use of pronouns here by both the chair and Beng appears to be similar to extract 10. They are talking about achieving a higher percentage for downtime on the T-1 tortilla product.

GM	=can you can you work towards ninety percent	367
Beng	some product er (?)	368
GM	=I I think we should work on average because 85% percent has been- we 've given the allowances up to eighty-five percent lah so now we 're eighty-five percent of eighty-five percent you know am I right to say that for example you achieve eighty-six percent of the eighty-five percent still have big gap ah in a way you are allowing you - yourself about thirty percent huh almost thirty percent down	369 370 371 372 373

	time justifiable <u>Beng</u> thirty percent down time / you	374
Beng	/ we only have (?) to run (?) the problem last month is the oven breakdown some some product is so low because of the (?)	375 376 377
GM	eighty-five percent of eighty-five can you- you continue to monitor the trend lah for the next year we still ah have to set our target I can understand lah now you say a lot of breakdown but if you can make sure that your maintenance department eh work hard on this lah so that you have less downtime lah you see the problem is downtime then you work on the downtime hopefully you are able to achieve ninety percent of eighty-five percent now we have eighty-six percent oh the ah eighty-five ah allowance for the- because July month is last month under Alpane (she laughs) so at least this is the month for you to consolidate lah Beng so maybe August month ah we try our best to work better better result lah huh	378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387

Extract 11: Analysis

The GM refers to Beng as “you” (line 367) and specifically directs questions and instructions at him, but when she wants things done she does not use the individual “I”. Instead she keeps using “we” (lines 369-374), the inclusive corporate referent, placing herself and others in the department as one identity. However she seems to differentiate the “we” inclusive as opposed to Beng as “you”, highlighting him as an individual, who have done a certain action which is not aligned to them (the “we”) as evident from lines 369-370, 371, 373 and 374. This has created two sides: the GM as “we” versus Beng as “you”, while on her part she has taken various positive steps, it looks like Beng on his part, has not taken the necessary measures to prevent the percentage to rise. In lines 378-387 this recurs: the GM uses “we” thrice (lines 379,384, 387) and also “I” (379) to take an individual and institutional stance, while Beng is again “you” (5 times), the one person who needs to improve his work.

By shifting the use of pronouns between “I” and ‘we” when she refers to herself, she is probably downplaying her power over Beng. While she keeps referring to Beng with “you” she also uses various strategies such as hedging like “I think” (line 369) to

minimise the directives, and hence this does not seem to come across so much as a reprimand, but rather an advice. She also hedges with “ah” (line 379), “you see” (line 381), “hopefully” (line 382), “so at least” (line 385) and “so maybe” (line 386). Furthermore she also appears to tone down her directives by assuring Beng that she understands the situation (line 379: “I can understand lah”), acknowledging the difficulty involved in the task and using the particle “lah” to soften the mitigated directive. The GM appears to use linguistic devices such as hedges and particles to subtly deflect her power in the situation, lessening the force of the mitigation and possibly so that Beng does not come across as incompetent. Another analysis is done on the use of repair in interactional trouble for this extract later (extract 23), however the next extract analysed still focuses on pronoun use in AG.

Extract 12: Background

In this interaction of 46 lines, it is noted that the use of pronoun display interactional asymmetry. This extract is re-visited (extract 1) so a more detailed background has already been given. Basically the talk concerns the oven breakdown which has resulted in high rejection rates. Since this portion of talk has already been discussed, only relevant sections will be provided here for analysis but the whole transcript can be found in Appendix 2.

Extract 12: Analysis

The GM begins with referring to Beng as ‘you’ (line 14), then she shifts it to an exclusive ‘we’ in line 20, referring specifically to Beng’s team. This is an effort to show her solidarity with the team (M&E) working behind the scenes and handling the

maintenance of the oven. After all she is indirectly also part of this team as she is in-charge of them too.

GM	I think you have explained that ah. <u>but</u> what are you doing with this ah . is it okay with you . I mean in terms of the oven breakdown .. is it incidental or . because the poor maintenance	14 15 16
Beng	okay the first one . partly is because of the er preventive maintenance . when they do the preventive maintenance they didn't cover the checking of the tensioning . just do a clean up . clean up of the shaft	17 18 19
GM	=ah isn't it become er er quite a normal process already why didn't we do that	20
Beng	=yeah because the tension is not ah loose easily one . that is for the the trench chain . so what happen was ah . the first instant when they they discover that the what you call that the latch broken . then ah they change it without this wear and tear . and then it happen again . and then they found out the tensioner / is	21 22 23 24 25
GM	/okay is it quite alright situation for you . to- not to check	26 27
Beng	=no it's not alright . so now now we redefine the MPBF program to include all those areas	28 29

At first, Beng refers to his team as 'they' (lines 22, 24) and then shifts to 'we' (line 28) which is an inclusive corporate "we" according to Handford's classification (2010), appearing also to claim solidarity with his co-workers. The GM refers to Beng as 'you' further on in the interaction and Beng still uses 'they' but by line 44, the GM appears to pin the responsibility to one person and she uses 'he'. At this point, as the analyst, it is uncertain who they are referring to. However through my participant observation at the meetings and ethnographic study of the establishment (refer to field notes in Appendix 5), that the man referred is Zain, head of M&E. Here it is seen at first that Beng does not mention the name, instead he uses 'he'. But when the GM brings the matter up again, Beng concedes to her talk, and they both have a shared understanding of who the 'he' is. Later in the exchange it is revealed that 'he' is 'Zain' (line 59). It is possible that the GM has in mind to bring up Zain's name but in the talk, she does not seem to be forthright. In the end Beng puts a name to the "he" in line 59. It may be concluded that the GM's goal in this extract is not just to find out the cause of the rejection rate, but who is responsible for the inefficiency. And she achieves her aim at the end.

Beng, on the other hand, appears not to have identified any particular person at first and uses ‘they’ to refer to his team. Note that even when the GM identifies ‘he’ in line 44, Beng continues his account by using ‘they’ in line 46. For easy reference the short snippet is produced below:

GM	/ but but by right he has to	44
Beng	=check the tensioner . before er install the er the replacement part . so what happen was they just change the parts without checking	45 46
GM	so what do we do to him	47
Beng	=so I have to ask him . to ah ah what do you call that . ah include all this into his normal routine checkup . instead of few few ah once in few months . do on every month	48 49 50
GM	now how often now	51
Beng	=now every month have to do the checking . because checking you have to open / up the	52 53
GM	/ so who is verifying the monthly check	54
Beng	=ah I get. this er this Siti to do that now . basically I ask her to er er do more on the verification process for engineering department	55 56
GM	= you check their record	57
Beng	=ah I do check lah . now every week she give me a report . and then also I meet up with Zain to discuss on the outstanding things as a progress ..	58 59

While Beng as a leader seeks to identify with his team, the GM is more interested in identifying the individual responsible and adds by questioning Beng on the action he has taken as a form of reprimand on Zain. There appears to be a play of power in this brief interaction with the subtle shifts of pronouns. It appears that as much as the GM asserts her dominance, Beng uses pronouns of “we” and “they” to resist her control of the issue. He seems to do this also by latching onto her utterances and providing prompt replies. Pronouns may be regarded as a “central mechanism by which speakers signal the social relationship ... and different identities through the use of the same pronoun” (Handford 2010, p.157). Such reference to shifts in personal deixis enhances power, according to Zupnik in his study on political discourse. Although the talk here is located in a business context, the similarity is in the one authoritative figure (GM) whose mini-monologues takes on an almost political nature of talk, especially when she instructs,

warns or reprimands her subordinates. The extract that follows is another instance which looks into analysis of pronoun use within AG.

Extract 13 (MM1): Background

The interaction begins with a shift in the flow of the discussion when Beng (line 928, Appendix 3) brought up the issue of the expiry of the air conditioning services contract with ECO Tech (also analysed in extract 3). When Beng brings this up, he highlights a pertinent issue, that is Chai who is in charge of this area of work, did not renew the contract on time. As the discussion unfolds it is evident that in this CofP, these managers are accountable for their tasks, and so if one does not carry out his task, it affects the other. The chair is seen to take over the interaction when she gets a better grasp of the picture.

GM	1	=what is the problem can you tell me I don't understand it	956
Chai	2	= we have a contract between ECO Tech . and Alpane . for the normal maintenance of air cond	957 958
GM	3	=okay	959
Chai	4	=about the er (?) so ah this contract actually expire . April	960
Beng	5	=February and March	961
Chai	6	so actually before before we sign again er . actually we involve reviewing (?)	962
GM	7	=involve in- you are reviewing the contract	963
Chai	8	=reviewing the contract	964
GM	9	=but it take so long . now April already	965
Beng	10	=yes before the expiry not after the expiry	966
Chai	11	(?)	967
GM	12	=so what is your problem now . they don't want to do for us	968
Beng	13	=now ah there are some reluctancy from them all call also they don't come	969
Chai	14	=because of the delay they have er-	970
Beng	15	=but the contract not sign	971
GM	16	=but did they come and do it did they come and do the service	972
Beng	17	=if we force them they come lah you know if you don't force they don't come and some of the case that regular one they come often now they have some leak	973 974
GM	18	=it's true also lah what they say	975
Chai	19	=maybe I give him a call later to see-	976
GM	20	=why do you take so long to renew a contract contract should be review renewed before its expiry otherwise there's no contract <i>why should I do for you</i> I will do like that you are reviewing the cost and all these I understand but it should be done much earlier so your your time line ah instead of finishing in April you should put it in because now it's already February it should be finish in January so why did you run into this kind of situation can you all do it faster but you give him a call first give him a call first	977 978 980 981 982 983 984

Chai 21	=yeah we have fax him also	985
GM 22	=but don't delay it anymore because it's May already	986

Extract 13: Analysis

This portion of talk shows Chai using 'we' in the following lines (957, 962, 973, 985) except at one turn of talk (976). It is an inclusive 'we', where he places himself in the team in which he is head, that is the F&A department. By using "we" he appears to be deflecting individual responsibility for what has happened. However the one time he used 'I' (line 976) is to show that he will act on the matter but he says "maybe I give him a call later". He even latches on the prior turn to show a sense of urgency. It appears that by using 'we', Chai does not claim sole responsibility for the problem. It is Beng who raises this issue of contract renewal, and Chai is obviously the one responsible for not renewing the contract.

The subtle use of "we" by Chai appears to show that he is shifting responsibility and indirectly exercising his power covertly in this interaction. However the GM has chosen to use "you all" (line 983) to indicate it is not Chai alone, but Beng too who should be vigilant with such matters. Later on Suan comes into the picture as she is the one in charge of purchasing and therefore is aware of the situation (lines 999-1015).

The shifts in pronoun use by the different managers display the asymmetrical relationship is evident in this extract, and another AG is examined below for further illustration into this aspect.

Extract 14 (MM1): Background

Extract 2 is re-visited here for analysis. The GM addresses Mat to seek clarification on the matter of the budgeted volume which has been revised. The GM picks out the term “revise” and asks Mat what he has written. Instead of Mat replying, Chai self- selects and responds (line 63). Then the GM and Chai engage in the verbal interaction to solve this issue. Only the section that is being examined is provided below.

GM	this has caused quite a lot of rejects you know <u>Mat</u> your side regarding the ah discussion on the high cost per unit ah due to lower volume so you say want to revise the budgeted volume can you revise budgeted volume	60 61 62
Chai	I think I- we have checked through ah / through	63
GM	/ budgeted means budgeted how can you revise the work unless the company allowed you to to give you a- I mean you already submitted your budget you do not (?) <u>revise</u> the (?) why revise	64 65 66
Chai	=I think we explain this ah why why it's so high now er / I ask Mat to-	67
GM	=yeah I know it's high	68

Extract 14: Analysis

While the GM uses “you” to refer to either Mat or Chai, Chai uses only the inclusive “we”, placing himself with Mat in this, and probably his F&A team too. Chai begins his explanation, first by saying “I think I-...” (line 63) which is an abrupt cutoff, and switches to “we’ in the same utterance. The “I” he uses refer to himself but almost as it is uttered, he switched it to “we” and it appears to show how he is shifting his stance. The use of “I” signals an individual taking charge but when he changes it to “we”, it does appear that he is deflecting the responsibility to a team and not him alone. According to Banks (1989), “we” is a pronoun which shows solidarity. The instances when Chai uses “we” is given below:

- I think I- **we** have checked through ah (63)
- I think **we** explain this ah why why it's so high now er (67)
- **we** analyze into fixed cost for the transport and the variable cost basically variable cost (71)

While Chai uses “we”, the chair keeps using “you”, referring to Chai as an individual and not to the team. The talk is reproduced below to show how “you” appears in the utterances:

- budgeted means budgeted how can **you** revise the work unless the company allowed **you** to to give **you** a- I mean you already submitted **your** budget you do not (?) revise the (?) why revise (64-66)
- yeah **you** can explain but **you** cannot revise okay (77)
- oh then **you** say a wrong thing **you** should say revise the measurement (94)
- oh BSC must be very precise ah because the way **you** say budget ah should straightaway I jumped into it and oh budget...(96-98)

Chai	we analyze into fixed cost for the transport and the variable cost basically variable cost all those petrol and maintenance and the sub con of the- then in fact the variable are consistent so only the fixed cost per piece actually fluctuated so because ah the budget is one million pieces but compare to actual now just because the volume lower fixed cost actually higher so this price will overall-	71 72 73 74 75 76
GM	yeah you can explain but you <u>cannot revise</u> okay	77
Chai	/ er	78
GM	/ can you revise	79

and a few turns later,

Chai	/ not the budget he's talking about the measurement here	93
GM	=oh then you say a wrong thing you should say revise the measurement	94
Chai	=correct	95
GM	oh BSC must be very precise ah because the way you say budget ah should straightaway I jumped into it and oh budget (she laughs) how to revise I'll I'll definitely make noise lah <u>right</u>	96 97 98

The use of pronouns by the two speakers varies. Chai use of ‘we’ claims solidarity with the team while the GM uses “you” to refer to Chai and Mat. Banks (1989) claims “of all the pronouns, ‘we’ has the greatest potential to be the more influential contemporary English personal pronoun of power and solidarity” (p.91). He further adds that the ‘power semantic’ is evident when speakers with asymmetrical relationships address each other, and this is obvious particularly in organizational interaction between managers. The use of pronouns in the examples above show some amount of power control, first by the GM, and then Chai, who tries to exert his control but in a more subdued manner. The person who seems not to have exerted any form of power is Mat.

Extract 15 (MM2): Background

This segment of talk has been analysed in extract 8 and here the use of pronouns is examined. The discussion is about the X-11 sample. The managers in this interaction are: the GM, Beng, Chai and Yen, and the background has been given.

GM	=and er Beng you are suppose to be in the loop you are supposed to know this trial run because ultimately you are the final person to- you are the owner of the process at the end of it so if you all after submission of the samples er after so much of work done with the customers now you say that oh the dough weight we have to increase ah is quite shocking to us lah	854 855 856 857 858
Beng	=no that's before X-eleven	859
GM	=huh	860
Beng	that's before the X-eleven	861
GM	=no no I'm talking about X-eleven	862
Beng	X-eleven I have to-	863
GM	= I'm talking about X-eleven not before what just X-eleven huh	864
Chai	have you given samples to them	865
Yen	yes	866
Chai	given right (?)	867
GM	can you re-do the same er trial run exactly the same what Dr Wong say er must be able to re- reproduce-able	868 869

Extract 15: Analysis

The Chair begins this segment in line 854 calling on Beng. She appears to be warning him as a result of the report on a customer's complaint. She uses the word 'shocking' and this connotes a negative aspect of the work. She is probably not at all happy with what has happened. At the beginning of the segment, she uses 'you' (lines 854, 855 & 857) to refer to Beng three times:

- "you are suppose to be"
- "you are the final person"
- then "you are the owner"

The "you" refers specifically to Beng, and not to his team. She appears to be exercising her power over Beng and rather overtly, making sure that Beng gets her message. She is implying that he better do his job well.

In line 856, she uses 'you all' showing a shift in the use of pronouns, not to Beng but to the whole team (Production and R&D) who is in charge of the X-11 matter. The contrast shows the use of pronouns 'you' and 'you all' serve different purposes. Further, in line 858 she uses first a 'we' then a 'us', referring to the company as a whole. The use of 'we' and 'us' as collective nouns is inclusive, that is she is part of that team as opposed to her stance with Beng, when it was 'you' and 'you all'. This is probably a covert way of her showing her power dynamics in this interaction.

From the analysis of AG extracts, pronoun use has revealed that the asymmetrical relationship among the managers in this CofP is obvious: the GM versus the others. As

the one who runs the company, she has the institutional backing to exert her authority over her subordinates. However without them she is “powerless” as the company is run by them: production, finance, and so on. Therefore although at numerous instances she uses “I” to exercise the power over them, she appears to be mindful that she has to downplay the power stance and choose to use “we”, claiming an institutional identity. “We” is also regarded as a softening device (Holmes & Stubbe 2003, p.38) which reduces the force of mitigation.

- **Pronoun Use in Checking Information**

Similar to q-a sequences, pronoun use is also evident within the discursive activity of checking information. Below is analysis of one such extract of talk. The Chair of both meetings uses “I” to refer to herself as an individual but since she is the head of this company, her role is significant. It is both a professional and an institutional role which gives her institutional power over the others. However when she uses “we” in the discourse, and there are many instances of these, she appears to be using it for different purposes.

Extract 16 (MM2): Background

The short extract here is taken from the beginning of the meeting. The analysis below show how the GM uses pronouns to either exert or downplay the asymmetrical relationship among the speakers. The meeting has just started and before this, it is observed that she begins the meeting with a monologue of 13 lines (refer to Appendix 3 for transcript) where she reprimands the managers. Apparently there is an implicit practice that staff takes emergency leave on a Monday morning when they know they

have to attend an important meeting. This implies that the staff is intentionally on leave to avoid the meeting.

From the extract it is seen that by line 14, the GM's mood is already affected and she is upset. This probably explains why in lines 18-21 she repeats her phrases (circular talk) and appears annoyed. The laughter noted is not a positive one; it is more cynical (according to field notes).

GM 1	...so we go on to flatbread line today	14
Beng 2	running through the bunline	15
GM 3	are you all prepared	16
Beng 4	flatbread line	17
GM 5	if you want to do you can do ah if you want to do you can do ah I have already told you no need to do you still ask me you want to do it you can go ahead and do (she laughs) I told you many time already no need to do but you are asking me (she laughs) you want to do (she laughs) please go ahead	18 19 20 21
Yen 6	Mei (?)	22
GM 7	you very keen to do you can do it Beng you prepare already ah ah Beng you prepare the flatbread line ah	23 24
Beng 8	(?)	25
GM 9	if you have anything to tell you can just do lah because what I am doing here is that this is the follow up you see the people who are taking over are not here might as well brief them	26 27 28
Beng 10	(?)	29
GM 11	you might as well brief them when you go back to the SJ there ...	30

Extract 16: Analysis

The interaction exchange is between the GM and Beng. Prior to this, she had reprimanded the staff on their accountability of leave taking and then in line 14 she commences with the phrase “so we go on to...”, indicating a change of topic. She uses “we” to address the managers present, including herself, and following Handford’s classification (2010), it is the use of the inclusive and personal “we”. The “we” is used to signal a collective identity, as they have a shared membership in this CofP. However when Beng raises the issue of whether to go through the bunline matters, she takes on

an individual stance, and exerts her authority. She continues to use “I” to make her point succinctly and directly, and this is what she says (from lines 18-21, 23-24, 26-28):

- if you want to do you can do ah if you want to do you can do ah
- **I** have already told you no need to do you still ask me
- you want to do it you can go ahead and do (she laughs)
- **I** told you many time already no need to do but you are asking me (she laughs)
- you want to do (she laughs) please go ahead
- you very keen to do you can do it Beng you prepare already
- if you have anything to tell you can just do lah because what **I** am doing here is that this is the follow up you see the people who are taking over are not here might as well brief them

These utterances show how she repeats herself, and she uses laughter as a way to diffuse the reprimand. But it appears that she is exerting her authority on Beng. At the end she justifies herself by expressing her intention (lines 26-28), and in this way she downplays her exertion of authority she earlier displays (lines 18-21, 23-24).

Note also that she refers to Beng with “you” throughout the discourse. In this interaction it is clearly just between the two of them: the “I” and “you” as two individuals in the company whereas in the earlier portion of talk (lines 1-13) she uses “we”.

However in one instance, at the beginning when Beng raises the issue, she replies with a “you all” (line 16), at that point showing that she refers to all of them who were present at the meeting and not Beng alone. Subsequently, after that she focuses on Beng, even when in line 22, Yen mentions something about Mei, the GM just narrows in on Beng

and how he has earlier been told that he need not run through the bunline and should he still want to, then he could go ahead. She does not let go off this matter lightly and appears to be giving a lot of flack to Beng.

The analysis of pronoun use in CI also shows power asymmetry between the top person and her subordinates. The next section will look at pronoun use in another discursive activity, that is, giving instruction (GI). In the frequency count, GI and AG appear almost the same in both meetings, making up 24% and 27% respectively (see Table 5.1 in Section 5.2).

- **Pronoun Use in Giving Instruction**

Giving instructions is usually carried out by the GM and she uses directives. Apart from the use of directives, she makes use of pronouns as a means to get her managers to work. Below is an analysis of such talk at work.

Extract 17 (MM2): Background

The topic on “store survey” is discussed in this interaction and the issue is brought up by the GM who is following up on this matter, as recorded in the minutes from the previous meeting. In such a GI activity, the use of directives are evident and mostly uttered by the GM. It tends to be assertive, with the use of modality such as “can” and “cannot”. This portion of talk refers to a survey which the QA team is responsible for and their task is to go to their customers’ stores around the Klang Valley to conduct the survey.

GM	=can you come up with a schedule to put it in a plan so that Richard is aware that- how often we go there to do the survey you see	673 674
Beng	so far we (?)	675
GM	=yeah but doesn't matter as long as you tell him we want to come here every quarterly to do a store er check you know to do product checking you can do it quarterly lah if he is happy with quarterly then it is okay if he say <i>no I want you to come and do alternate</i> then you have to see whether we can do alternate mah come up with a agreed plan because now your focus is in this flatbread line then you really have to do a very good job to make sure the customer are happy ahem hem the other thing is MCD foldover bread you all also have to do a kind of er product check with their QA department just like bun at least you know what is happening in the store so you probably in in the MCD you do er ABCQ right	676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684

a few turns later,

GM	=but currently we are using our bread what- can't you also ask Noor to also go to the store buy some product try it out just like we do for MCD er product bun product- check it out talk to them	697 698 699
Beng	yeah er er-	700
GM	=feedback any complain about our product it need not necessary just for the- you know it could be a temperature problem it could be a- a product not pack properly there are so many feedback you can get from the customer	701 702 703
Beng	but they really rely on the (?) if we buy they say it's hot but (?)	704
GM	=but you rather don't go lah	705
Beng	=no not to say don't go we are going now to finalize the spec	706
GM	=then go lah (she laughs)	707
Beng	= we are at the stage of finalizing the specs	708
GM	=it's okay you can still finalize the spec I'm not saying you cannot you you don't have to wait for the spec to finish then only you go the store right you can go now also I am asking you to set a schedule still set a schedule to go <i>can I go your store every quarterly check on the product quality</i>	709 710 711 712

*the utterances indicated with italics is the direct speech used by the GM

Extract 17: Analysis

The GM begins with a request for Beng to work out a schedule for the store survey. She uses “we” in line 674 as an inclusive and corporate way, referring in particular to Beng’s team which consists of the QA supervisors. The use of “we” here is inclusive, which seems to show that although she is not part of this team, she identifies with them. She uses the same pronoun in the same way again in lines 676, 679 and 698. It is evident from here that she is giving instructions to Beng to do his job. In fact she directs

Beng, telling him what he should do and how he should talk to the people concerned. The exchange between Beng and the GM appears to show some subtleties in the power play.

The GM exerts her control but uses “we” to downplay her authority, while Beng in explaining why he is not doing what she wants him to do, uses “we” throughout, and not “I”. The “we” Beng uses is classified as exclusive corporate, as opposed to the GM’s use of inclusive corporate ‘we’. He claims identity with his QA team and he states this to show he belongs to that group. He does not refer to any individual in particular nor does he place himself as “I” to carry out or not carry out the task.

The GM persists in pointing at Beng specifically with a “you” most of the time, with only a “you all” once (line 682), and later specifically mentions the name of a QA staff, Noor in line 697. She exerts her dominance in these instances while Beng deflects this by not claiming individual responsibility, and sticks to his collective identity with his team.

The GM’s control is most evident in the last part of the extract where she moves from “we” to “I” and reformulates to emphasize her instructions to Beng. She uses “I” in clarifying to Beng (line 709:” I’m not saying you cannot ... “). Then she reformulates an earlier instruction with a directive (line 711: “I am asking you to...”).

In this extract, Beng does not at any instance use “I” while the GM uses “we” three times. The shift in the use of pronouns between these two speakers at the meeting shows how they both try to exert and also downplay their power asymmetry.

Also to note here is the way she uses quotes and switches into direct speech. In Goffman's (1981) terms, the person who is reporting is the animator of the message and why is she doing this in this interaction? She switches footing from the Chair who is telling them to do their work (line 677: "to do product checking") to firstly, a store owner who says "no I want you to come and do alternate" (line 678-679), and secondly the QA team who says "can I go to your store and do quarterly (lines 711-712). It seems to show that she even has to put words in their mouth so that they would know what to say when they call up to ask if they could go to the stores for the survey. This is another strategy used to indicate her power.

Another discursive activity that is analysed for its pronoun use is in problem solving (PS) and will be given below.

- **Pronoun Use in Problem Solving**

As mentioned before, there are only two problem solving activities found in the talk data. As such a discursive activity is more complex, the discussion is always longer than the other discursive activities. The extract below shows the use of pronouns as the managers discuss to try to solve a problem.

Extract 18 (MM1): Background

The topic of discussion is "Cost Saving Program", and is initiated by Beng. It is a cost saving program which comes with a problem of implementation. The GM and Beng engage actively in this discussion over which is better: cost saving or waste reduction, the two terms used throughout the interaction. This topic is initiated by Beng (refer to

Table 5.2), and he begins somewhat haltingly, as noted by the use of backchannels such as “er” and then eases into the topic he wants to raise.

Beng	=er er on the er program cost saving program base waste reduction so each one for me I feel that we focus more on cost saving a lot a lot of pressure to the supplier eventually waste reduction is something that we focus on we cannot control (?) whatever savings actually come from the come / from the	1017 1018 1019 1020
GM	/ both side both teams must do you see but how they do it ah	1021 1022
Beng	=because eventually cost saving also may lead to waste because for example	1023
GM	= Beng you have to open your mind and think this way you see cost saving though you don't like to use the word cost saving you like to use the word waste reduction but this talk negotiations about the lower price by moving about purchase in / recently (?)	1024 1025 1026 1027
Beng	/ but sometimes there's a change of material	1028
GM	=if there is a change of material you do not know whether the the the the the that at the end boils down to your QA department to check that the specification from the raw material sent to us is according to the previous one	1029 1030 1031
Beng	but / (?)	1032
GM	/ so they can give me a lower price but they cannot short cut the quality so	1033
Beng	=this one is very subjective / because we won't be able to	1034
GM	/ so now the carton come back to us ah it has to be separate it has to be used lah you won't allow them to change the carton immediately you say <i>give me two months before I change I want to make sure that you get the price of twenty percent reduction in the cost of carton that has got no impact to my quality</i> and you have to give two months I know you are rushing into getting er better performance financial performance you know but the thing here is I need to make sure that the quality of the carton the integrity of the carton is still there so I have to ask my QA girl to study the strength of the carton so it all lies in your hands you know lies in your hand depending on how you control and manage it you see you don't you cannot allow other department for example to do what they want until you say <i>yes it's proven that quality has no problem now go ahead</i> and then how do you monitor that the quality is still consistent you put in your checking lah you know because your carton monitoring strength monitoring should be still there you see it's it's eventually you know after using actually using for two months ah it collapsed then you check again eh is this the same as the last quality last time the quality is like that now after three months now there is a change you should know the movement you see so the thing here is you have a say in this not other department so you can use waste reduction use it use the word waste reduction <u>can</u> can use it	1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 1041 1042 1043 1044 1045 1046 1047 1048 1049 1050 1051 1052 1053
Beng	because / it's not only	1054
GM	/ but all their efforts	1055
Beng	=not only the word it's it's the effort also because sometimes-	1056
GM	=so just like what I say all their efforts that they do is actually er also thinking about the company wise lah	1057 1058
Beng	=yes of course	1059
GM	it's not for their own individual department so so you have to work together with them but don't rush into it don't rush into it that is my (?) the thing is you do your evaluation make sure things are alright you comply with the quality halal certification HACCP you know specification everything is there then only allow them to change it will take some time lah but this is very specific	1060 1061 1062 1063 1064

Extract 18: Analysis

Beng in earlier interactions rarely uses “I” because he often represents his teams, which consists of 3 departments: Production, QA and M&E. He often uses “we”. But here he is seen to use “I” and appears to exert his individual stance as head of operations and makes a bid for institutional power. However it is only for a brief instance, as within the same utterance length he shifts his “I” to “we”. The ‘we’ used is basically for himself as he is not in favour of the cost saving program. To refute Beng’s view, the GM begins by voicing her stand on the matter and she specifically explains to Beng, using “you” to refer to him alone and not his team or the company as a whole. However while Beng uses “we”, seemingly to tone down his opposition, the GM does not use any form of collective identity in her response which stretches many lines of talk. This could be to show some form of collectivity, and she uses “us”, the possessive pronoun in the context of what they are discussing. “Us” refers then to the company.

The way these two speakers shift their pronoun use display their asymmetrical relationship in this CofP. In the end Beng’s voice appears to be silenced. The GM also uses direct speech (shown in italics) as if she has to give Beng the words to use when he instructs others. Furthermore she also has the final say, and she gives precise step-by-step instructions with a marked use of the discourse marker “so”. Some of the lines are reproduced here:

- so now the carton come back to **us** ah it has to be separate it has to be used lah
- **you** won’t allow them to change the carton immediately **you** *say give me two months before I change I want to make sure that you get the price of twenty*

*percent reduction in the cost of carton that has got no impact to my quality and **you** have to give two months*

- so it all lies in **your** hands you know lies in **your** hand depending on how **you** control and manage it you see
- and then how do **you** monitor that the quality is still consistent **you** put in your checking lah you know because **your** carton monitoring strength monitoring should be still there you see
- so the thing here is **you** have a say in this not other department
- so **you** can use waste reduction use it use the word waste reduction can can use it

It comes across as if she is leading him by the hand and this is appears rather degrading as Beng is after all the Operations manager. Beng does not appear to resist the control she is exerting on the managers and specifically on him. The asymmetrical relationship is very obvious here and not only is the GM exerting power *over* but also power *to* the people and situation.

To sum up, the use of pronouns in the discursive activities has facilitated the talk at meetings, mainly because it is the GM who has set goals in the talk and intends to achieve these goals. In order to do so, she exerts her institutional power over the others. Poncini (2004) suggests that when speakers make a choice on pronoun use, they are adjusting their roles to the organization. The findings as given above show many instances of this role adjustment and in doing so the power play is most evident.

6.1.3 Repair

Repair as a CA mechanism is used to solve interactional trouble, as explicated in Chapter Two (refer to section 2.3.4). It is a tool which talk participants use to either correct themselves or the other, when they encounter some misunderstanding. It is a kind of treatment of an interactional trouble, and according to Young (2008, p.49) the trouble could be just about anything “to which the participants in the interaction orient as problematic”. The meeting talk from this present study has evidence of numerous occurrences of repair work, either carried out by the trouble source, or the others, and also shows how the source or the others collaborate in talk to complete the repair, that is, to solve the interactional problem. Below are the analyses on these occurrences.

- **Repair in Account-Giving**

As stated earlier, q-a sequences are mostly evidence in the account giving discursive activity. Within the q-a, the role of pronouns also show how in this CofP its members share the use of the self-referencing items to enact their institutional power. Here in examining repairs, there is also evidence of power play in the interactions, some more overtly expressed than others. To begin, extract 19 is discussed next.

Extract 19 (MM1): Analysis

This part of talk from MM1 has been analysed and interpreted earlier by examining the q-a sequence (extract 1) and pronoun use (extract 12). Therefore the background to this has already been provided. The discussion on this topic (“a lot of rejects”) runs into 60

lines, but for this analysis on repair phenomenon, only the affected lines will be dealt with and is reproduced below.

GM	=if if I mean if what my question here is that isn't it a normal already if you change this you have to check the tension	30 31
Beng	=no this is separate area on the separate area so what do they do on the preventive maintenance program now is mainly the cleaning of the tract and oiling of bearing so this tensioner is inside one of the gearbox	32 33 34
GM	=a common sense for you to actually change actually change check the tension right	35 36
Beng	=ah that is actually once in every few months	37
GM	=yeah all I am asking you is that if you change ah the bag /the bag ah	38
Beng	/huh huh	39
GM	is it a common sense to also check it again	40
Beng	=yes by right they have to check but they thought it's a wear and tear just change without checking the tensioner so that was what happen to the second /group	41 42 43
GM	/ but but by right he has to	44

In line 30 the GM begins her utterance with “if if I mean if..what my question here is that...” which shows how she initiates a repair and also completes it. She begins with the conditional “if” and as she tries to put her point across, she opts to use a more direct way of asking Beng, abandoning the “if” statement. The utterance “what my question here is that” (line 30) shows a stronger and more direct way of putting forth her proposition to Beng. This repair may have been chosen to enact power as she is the Chair of the meeting, as well as the boss. The GM wants to get to the root of the problem, which is to identify the reason why the tensioner was not checked before the situation worsened. Prior to this, the interaction between the GM and Beng focused on the oven breakdown which caused a lot of rejects of the buns produced. This inevitably affects the profits of the company and hence the oven breakdown is crucial and has to be put right. The accountability of the team to the task at hand is evident and each manager or executive brings their expertise and competence to this CofP. In dealing with a technical issue, Beng is responsible to ensure Zain (the engineer) has carried out his task and not have this oven break down a few times which resulted in losses to the company. Hence when he is questioned, the Chair is not only questioning his lack of

monitoring on Zain, but his expertise as well. The Chair on the other hand is a capable manager who not only manages the firm but possesses the technical competence of how each machine works on the factory floor. She uses this to her advantage, and exerts this situational power on top of her institutional power. Communication is not impeded, rather it is facilitated by the expertise information she brings in. More of this follows.

Next the GM directs her question to Beng “isn’t it a normal already. if you change this you have to check the tension” (lines 30-31). She now initiates another repair (known as a other-initiated repair) and in doing so, it would mean Beng is the trouble source of the interaction and hence is expected to carry out and complete the repair. This, according to Schegloff (2007) is more common than the other sequences of repair. The repair sequence which is other-initiated self-repair ‘are initiated with forms of utterance which locate with varying degrees of specificity what the source and/or the type of problem is’ (Schegloff, 2007:101). Question forms are the most common and they form the first pair part of the adjacency pair of q-a sequence. In using a question form to initiate a repair, she is seeking clarification. But more than that, the utterance appears to be a reprimand as well. The use of reprimands is a phenomenon that emerges from the AG episodes, and will be discussed later (refer to section 5.2).

Beng answers the question with a “no” in line 32 and proceeds to give an explanation to clarify the GM’s question. His explanation (lines 32- 34) provides information on the process involved in solving the problem and before he could finish, the GM latches on his talk and makes a comment which appears to show disdain for Beng. The GM is seen to exercise her power overtly by the use of lexical item ‘common sense’ in line 35. The lexis employed here evidently shows the asymmetrical relationship between them.

Further down, this term is used once again (line 40), emphasizing the overt enactment of the GM's power over Beng.

In line 35, the GM also poses a question as an effort towards seeking further clarification, seen again as a other-initiated repair while Beng seeks to complete the repair. The question in lines 35-36 is answered in line 37 by Beng. While they seem to be co-constructing the repair, the GM appears to have the upper hand, and she exerts her authority once again in line 39 by dismissing Beng's explanation in line 38 with an expression "all I am asking you is that". This appears to dismiss Beng's answer which may have been unsatisfactory (line 38). Although the transcription does not indicate volume level or intonation patterns because the study as a whole does not focus on the non-verbal language of this data, it is to be noted here that in listening to the audio several times as well as evidence from the field notes, the phenomenon is evident. Finally in lines 41 - 43 Beng completes the repair initiated by the GM, and the issue then moves on to who is responsible for the problem (line 44), signifying a move away from the dialogue that went on before this.

In this extract, interactional trouble is solved by way of repair, but in this effort to do so, the GM asserts her position as the boss, that is she is at the top of the hierarchical structure and hence the final authority. The way she uses direct questions and choice of lexis, and the way she latches on previous turns at talk, all go to show the asymmetrical relationship between them.

The next portion of talk is extracted from MM1 and the topic is on "revised budgeted volume" and how interactional trouble is repaired within the talk is examined.

Extract 20 (MM1): Background

As this part of talk has already been analysed earlier (extracts 2 & 14), the background to it has already been given. For this round of analysis, only the sections which display interactional trouble is examined and this is done in two parts. The discussion is on budget matters and as a reminder, the managers in this talk are: the GM, Beng, Chai and Mat.

GM	this has caused quite a lot of rejects you know <u>Mat</u> your side regarding the ah discussion on the high cost per unit ah due to lower volume so you say want to revise the budgeted volume can you revise budgeted volume	60 61 62
Chai	I think I- we have checked through ah / through	63
GM	/ budgeted means budgeted how can you revise the work unless the company allowed you to to give you a- I mean you already submitted your budget you do not (?) <u>revise</u> the (?) why revise	64 65 66
Chai	=I think we explain this ah why why it's so high now er / I ask Mat to-	67
GM	=yeah I know it's high	68

Extract 20 (a): Analysis

The Chair notices a problem as she reads the minutes and raises the issue. It appears that the chair identifies a 'trouble' and seeks clarification (lines 60 - 63). Chai tries to initiate a repair by providing an explanation but it is many turns of talk later (line 95) that the repair is completed. The chair is seen here to dictate the discourse, and she poses the questions and expects answers from her subordinates. Usually repairs are initiated with a question which is found in the first pair part of an adjacency pair (Schegloff, 2007), and is evident in line 62, where the GM first uses a statement, then replicates the same utterance in the form of a question (can you revise budgeted volume). In doing this, the GM is trying to seek clarification on the use of the term 'revise budgeted volume'. Presumably by using a question in the first pair part, an answer would be given in the

second pair part. The person who responds to the question seeks to initiate the repair and in the talk above, Chai selects himself to answer. He makes an attempt to do so and begins with an explanation (line 63).

In the second half of the same extract (see below), the repair is completed by a joint effort made by the three managers in this interaction. However it takes a few turns (skipped lines 70 - 86) to arrive at this successful repair. And it is the GM who finally completes the repair and Chai ends by responding with an affirmative word ‘correct’ (line 95).

Extract 20 (b)

Chai	=I think he’s talking about the BSC measurement lah	87
GM	/ oh BSC	88
Chai	/ not the budget	89
Mat	/ the invoicing	90
GM	/ don’t simply say budget budget budget budget ah my mind is budget you know	91
Mat	/ the invoicing	92
Chai	/ not the budget he’s talking about the measurement here	93
GM	=oh then you say a wrong thing you should say revise the measurement	94
Chai	=correct	95

The interactional exchange above shows that repair sequences are not as straightforward as it appears. In talk-in-interaction there are obvious constraints and this is clearly one where institutional roles play a part in determining success in communication (Drew & Heritage, 2001). To begin with, there was communication trouble over the phrase ‘revise budgeted volume’. The Chair who has the authority at this meeting raises the question and seeks clarification. Repair is initiated by Chai and later an attempt is made by Mat. At the end, the chair seems to put it blatantly across to them in line 36 (then you say a wrong thing). The asymmetrical relationship of the managers is reflected in this exchange. The Chair changes the flow of discussion from line 62 ‘can you revise

budgeted volume' to line 66 'why revise' and then to line 91 'don't simply say budget' and finally line 94 'you say a wrong thing you should say revise the measurement'. She directs the conversation and is in control of the discussion. She tends to interrupt the speakers as and when she likes (as seen in lines 63-64, 67-68, 91-92). According to Van Dijk (1996), interruptions violate a relationship and threaten the status of recipients in talk, and are used as an enactment of power in this case. To add, on a couple of occasions Chai and Mat also interrupt (lines 89-90, 92-93) the Chair. Their attempts here may also show that they are trying to exert some force on the flow of the conversation.

The choice of lexis used by GM in this whole segment reflects her authority. The word "wrong" (line 94) carries a negative connotation. The phrase 'can you revise' carries an illocutionary force which is not a mere statement or question, but one which denotes accusation. This is further emphasized from lines 64-66 when she says "how can you revise the work unless the company allowed you to", with a speech stress on "can you revise" as underlined. It appears as an accusation and she seems to be questioning why they are doing this without the company's permission. She is saying that they are breaking the company's rules. These utterances are spoken without hedging (line 91: "don't simply say budget", & line 94: "you say a wrong thing") and are directed at both Chai and Mat. The language and repair employed in the AG episode here shows once again how manipulation of such CA devices can facilitate the communication. Another instance of this is analysed in the interaction below.

Extract 21 (MM1): Background

The AG activity here discusses the issue of outstation delivery. There is some interactional trouble over the matter of the use of trucks for delivery to towns outside the Klang Valley. The managers in this interaction are: the GM, Beng and Mat. The GM begins with a question which leads to the closing, where a suggestion to overcome the shortage of trucks is offered.

GM	=can we can we er deal with MFD ah outstation delivery of our bun ah is still go into the truck ah	192 193
Beng	=it's with other products oh it's not only buns-	194
GM	still with other products ah	195
Beng	ah so a bit dangerous	196
GM	ah the volume is too small to go by our own truck	197
Mat	we cannot we cannot use because we don't have the number of certain rules at least certain parts (?) so we can carry that volume-	198 199
Beng	=oh not carry that volume are you saying that we can tumpang	200
Mat	tumpang ah	201
GM	I'm saying that do you all study the- because we can put and keep more erm space for their- so the minute they're asking contractors to do the bun then it is the opportunity for Alpane lah	202 203 204
Mat	/ is other trucks-	205
GM	/ just that lah	206
Mat	/ other trucks	207
GM	they are still mixing our bun into their truck company <u>right</u> so the minute you know that they're using outside truck just to deliver buns that is something that you all may think about / whether you want to do yourself (?)	208 209 210
Beng	/ they they do have occasionally	211
GM	/ or go through the country-	212
Beng	/ because of the two plus one also so two times ah is theirs one time is bun so when it's ah purely buns then probably-	213 214
GM	=only one time bun the the the drop lah	215
Mat	that one we have to cater truck currently our truck use is full-	216
GM	=orh	217
Mat	=in term of capacity in term of capacity it's full	218
GM	okay erm help to evaluate own truck in current business	219

Extract 21: Analysis

The interaction begins in line 192 where the GM asks if the buns are still sent with their trucks and in response, Beng adds that there are other products in the trucks as well (line 194). In line 195, the GM repeats Beng's phrase. She seems to be seeking a confirmation of what he has said. But in line 197 she continues by posing another question, and Mat self selects to speak. He offers an answer and then Beng adds on by ascertaining that in order for the trucks to have a load of that volume, they can *tumpang* ('tumpang' is a Malay word and it means 'take a lift', hence in this context, the sharing of trucks with MFD would mean the company's products are also being transported). While Beng asks 'are you saying that', the GM responds by using a direct strategy 'I'm saying that', showing alignment in this interaction and repair work being done. One seeks to clarify and the other offers an immediate clarification. The two speakers appear to be discussing the idea which finally leads the GM to offer her suggestion of solving the transport problem. She is direct and authoritative in the way she speaks as observed in the few lines which are reproduced below are easy reference:

- "I'm saying that do you all study the- because we can put and keep more erm space for their- so the minute they are asking contractors to do the bun then it is the opportunity for Alpane lah" (202-204)
- "that is something that you all may think about" (209 – 210)

The analysis continues with more evidence on repairs carried out at the meetings by the participants. The next extract is between Beng and Chai over the expiry of the air condition contract services.

Extract 22 (MM1): Background

This portion of talk has been analysed and discussed in extracts 3 and 13, and here how repair is utilised by the talk participants to solve their interactional trouble is examined. The background to this has already been provided, however the discussion below is based on only 12 lines of talk. This part of talk belongs to a longer segment of AG which stretches from lines 929-1016 (refer to Appendix 3) where Beng brings up the issue on the expiry of the air conditioning service. In the talk just before this, the chair has asked if there are any other matters to raise (line 929: “do you all have questions”). As this question is thrown to the floor, Beng initiates the issue, and the interaction unfolds.

GM	...I think this one no other question do you all have questions do you all have question nobody	929 930
Beng	=the	931
GM	=oh you very kind to each other	932
Beng	=the contract for the ah	933
GM	=no question	934
Beng	=er Chai the contact for er- the air cond the (?)	935
GM	(?)	936
Beng	=we talk to the (?)	937
GM	=you are suppose to do- I will talk to you	938
Beng	=because this one is already overdue the thing is now I have two breakdown ah it will affect my output and the the er GR also raise is it going to be send out because they need to repair the for the er er	939 940 941
Chai	/ er I suppose to	942
Beng	/ this one suppose to review ah before the contract expire it's not that after expire	943

Extract 22: Analysis

The GM begins with a question, and when Beng speaks up in line 933, it appears that the GM has not picked up on what he said because it is not heard (as observed in the recording). However Beng also does not direct the matter to the GM, as seen in line 935, instead he addresses Chai. He raises the issue of the contract for the air conditioning services. Generally, Beng speaks in a softer tone. And because of the

volume level, the last part of his utterance could not be captured, but in lines 939-941 Beng continues to explain the issue in greater detail.

In lines 939-941 Beng puts forward his proposition in three parts:

- (i) the contract renewal for the air condition services is overdue
- (ii) he has encountered two breakdowns which affect the output and the GR is raised
- (iii) he calls for the air condition units to be repaired.

In line 939, Beng initiates a repair on the contract matter and selects Chai to respond. When Chai fails to do so, he continues by giving a fuller explanation. In line 942 Chai speaks up but before he could continue, Beng latches on his utterance in line 943 and completes the repair, hence it is a self-initiated self repair sequence. This usually takes place when the speaker is addressing some problem in his own talk, and then completes it himself. In self-correcting, Beng also puts right the issue with Chai.

The contract should have been renewed before it expired and “not that after expire” (line 943). In doing so, Beng may be indirectly suggesting that Chai did not do his part in renewing the contract on time. As a result there are two breakdowns in the factory air conditioning, and this has resulted in some negative consequences (lines 939 - 941).

Beng and Chai are on the same hierarchical level in the organization (refer to Figure 3.1) and the relationship is supposedly symmetrical. In this interaction it can be observed that Beng does not overtly exercise his power over Chai. In fact he does not directly point to Chai as the cause of the problem. However by going into the details (lines 939-943) and latching onto Chai’s utterance in line 943 with “this one suppose to

review”, Beng uses the passive form to implicate Chai. The use of passives removes the agent and focuses on the action, and this appears as a move by Beng to be covert in his approach to Chai.

In line 942, Chai uses the pronoun ‘I’ claiming his responsibility to carry out the task of renewing the contract, but Beng does not allow him to continue. Instead he speaks up in line 943 with an indirect reprimand (‘this one suppose to review er before the contract expire it’s not that after expire’). The subtlety in Beng’s utterances reflects two things:

- (i) he is at the same level as Chai and therefore he does not have the right to reprimand Chai on his inefficiency at work
- (ii) he is not focusing on Chai’s inefficiency, rather his own problems with the breakdowns.

The power enactment is evident but appears subtle and hence covert in nature. The GM, in this short exchange does try to intercept with comments but at that point it appears that she is not following the line of discussion between the other two managers. At first she makes a comment in line 932 (“oh you very kind to each other”) which suggests that she did not hear Beng saying “the” in line 931, and subsequently Beng continues with “the contract for ah” (line 933) and pursues on in line 935. Intercepting between Beng’s three utterances is the GM, who apparently does not hear Beng, and is in her own line of thoughts. It is only in line 938 that she hears Beng raising the new topic. Her earlier comment was uttered in reference to whether they had any matter to raise (line 929). There is some interactional trouble which is due to misalignment and probably because the GM does not hear Beng’s softer voice. Hence the repair analysis

here is focused on Beng and not on the GM's. To proceed on, another AG with repair work is analysed below.

Extract 23 (MM2): Background

This extract has also been examined for its use of q-a (extract 8) and pronoun (extract 15). The discussion follows a complaint from a customer regarding the X-11 product and a background of this is already given. Those in the interaction are: the GM, Beng, Chai and Yen, as the portion analysed below looks only at repair on an interactional trouble.

GM	=and er Beng you are suppose to be in the loop you are supposed to know this trial run because ultimately you are the final person to- you are the owner of the process at the end of it so if you all after submission of the samples er after so much of work done with the customers now you say that oh the dough weight we have to increase ah is quite shocking to us lah	854 855 856 857 858
Beng	=no that's before X-eleven	859
GM	=huh	860
Beng	that's before the X-eleven	861
GM	=no no I'm talking about X-eleven	862
Beng	X-eleven I have to-	863
GM	=I'm talking about X-eleven not before what just X-eleven huh	864
Chai	have you given samples to them	865
Yen	yes	866
Chai	given right (?)	867
GM	can you re-do the same er trial run exactly the same what Dr Wong say er must be able to re- reproduce-able	868 869

Extract 23 (MM2): Analysis

To begin, the GM speaks to Beng and seems to imply that they have done something wrong, in lines 857 - 858 (“now you say that oh the dough weight we have to increase ah is quite shocking to us lah”). So it appears that the trouble source is Beng. He then begins to initiate a repair by first denying it and he points out that the situation is before the X-11. This is repeated twice by Beng but the GM seems to insist on referring to X-11. The trouble is not solved nor repaired. Instead Chai offers help by putting forward a

question and to that Beng is able to answer with a straightforward ‘yes’ in line 866. It seems that the repair is not directly completed though the interaction carried on and later some resolution is evident by the fact that the GM moves on by posing a question instead of dwelling on the issue of X-11. It appears again that she is in control of the discussion. Next is a final analysis on AG discursive activity.

Extract 24 (MM2): Background

This portion of this talk was already analysed with regard to its use of pronoun (extract 11). It is taken from a longer segment (lines 325-417) but here only the repair work which is evident is extracted for analysis. The topic is “T-1 tortilla”. Red and green, as mentioned in the interaction, refer to the colours used to show the different columns where numbers appear on the charts that have been beamed onto the wall in the meeting room. The numbers relate to the production figures. Hence Yen, who is the accounts executive, is being questioned by the chair.

Mei	=tortilla	392
GM	=why tortilla is sometimes red sometimes green only <u>one</u> green ah	393
Yen	ah earlier one	394
GM	how many green	395
Yen	fifty	396
GM	=ah fifty fifty percent ah	397
Yen	only one green one- the rest is yellow two yellow and the rest-	398
GM	=if you can achieve yellow still not too bad lah but then now you are much more higher than zero point zero I mean I’m comparing you with yellow color lah	399 400
Beng	=the tortilla one is for April and May is low compare to (?) for a change over	401
GM	you apportion base on what Yen	402
Yen	the apportion production time	403
GM	base on production time ah	404
Yen	production time	405
GM	is there a better measurement for you Beng base on production time to give er the result is base on the production time this total total utility and then the apportion base on the num- number of hours you don’t have a meter right	406 407 408
Beng	no (?)	409
GM	=don’t have	410
Beng	=overall	411
GM	so okay let me see the overall utility er within the month for the er-	412

Extract 24 (MM2): Analysis

The GM initiates a repair based on information provided by Yen. She is puzzled about the colour coding for the tortilla. As she initiates a repair in line 393, Yen in the next turn (line 392) completes the repair. It is in the form of an adjacency pair, like the others, of a q-answer sequence. However more interactional trouble is in store when the GM probes further. Her questioning leads Yen in line 398 to re-confirm the answer and she repeats (“only one green one”), putting emphasis on the word ‘one’.

A repeat of this sequence is seen a few turns later in line 402, when she now selects Yen to answer. Yen in line 404 provides a response with some hesitancy, noted by the long pause. For easy reference the sequence is reproduced below:

GM	you apportion base on what Yen	402
Yen	the apportion ... production time	403
GM	base on production time ah ...	404
Yen	production time	405
GM	is there a better measurement for you Beng base on production time to give er the result is base on the production time this total total utility and then the apportion base on the num- number of hours you don't have a meter right	406 407 408

In repeatedly asking Yen for confirmation the GM is checking the answer. She initiates a repair and Yen completes the repair. In this segment, the GM is alerted to colours and figures and she is performing her task as the person in charge and who has a clear overall picture on the company's production matters. The two managers: Beng and Yen, provide the answers. The GM also selects the speakers as evident in lines 402 and 406. This shows the asymmetrical relationship among the participants. The GM appears to enact her authority using the interactional resources available to her. By choosing who

she wants to answer her queries, and by initiating repairs, she expects the others to complete it in the turn sequences, and this contributes to the enactment of power.

Using the CA mechanism of repair as a way to solve interactional trouble serves to facilitate communication in talk at meetings. The repairs are initiated, then completed by self, or the other. While this is being done among the managers, power is at play – either overtly or covertly. The chair exerts in a more overt manner, which is inevitable due to her position of authority while the others take a more covert approach. The analyses (extracts 19-25) have been taken from AG discursive activity and the next section will look at the other, firstly checking of information.

CI has the most count (47%) from the meeting data, but as mentioned earlier (refer to Chapter Five, Table 5.1), it basically comprise of straightforward q-a sequences and there is little discussion on the issues. However for repair, two portion of talk has been considered and is given below.

- **Repair in Checking information**

The checking of information discursive activity comprise simple questions with straightforward answers and this type of talk contains shorter portions compared to account giving. However a few occurrences of repair are noted and two such extracts are examined below.

Extract 25 (MM1): Background

The checking of information is carried out by the GM and she clarifies the issue on efficiency with Beng, Yen and Choo. It deals with facts and figures which were reported

in the minutes of the previous meeting. The GM queries this fact reported in the minutes. This part of the talk begins with the GM looking at what is beamed on the wall by Beng.

GM	so now talking about X-recipe next one is the efficiency Beng you say that higher percentage of thirty plus fifty five percent discount what do you mean by this ah because I think it's not reflected there	633 634 635
Beng	=whole year one ah	636
GM	=huh (?) where's the minutes	637
Choo	(flip pages) wait a minute under the table the one given by him	638
GM	but I didn't see I didn't see thirty five percent efficiency for thirteen under the title of efficiency higher percentage of thirteen-inch pizza crust fifty five percent this month contributed to lower efficiency fifty five percent of reject is it don't know what you are writing	639 640 641 642
Beng	=no this one is base on that this one is not written by me the Alpane report right	643
Yen	(?)	644
GM	so fifty five percent of rejection rate is it	645
Beng	oh the	646
GM	fifty five percent of rejection rate	647
Beng	er not too sure because of the the higher er er number of thirteen-inch produced in month / of-	648 649
GM	/ <u>oh the proportion</u>	650
Beng	yeah proportion produced in the month of the er April April	651

Extract 25: Analysis

The GM seeks clarification on a percentage given in the table. The interactional trouble occurs when the GM specifically mentions that she cannot see the 35% efficiency under item 13 (line 639). She then bluntly says “don't know what you are writing”. This resulted in a repair. In the next turn, Beng clarifies that the report was not prepared by him. Hence the repair is completed in a rather direct manner. In line 650 the GM says ‘oh the proportion’ and this shows that she is able to figure out the problem and hence it appears that she solves the problem herself. It takes 10 lines of talk exchange for this to come about.

The matter being discussed is the figures and this has caused some confusion for the GM, and she directly states it in line 634 (“what do you mean by this”). This is further reiterated in line 642 when the GM says “don’t know what you are writing ah”. Both these utterances show the directness of the GM’s style and she is able to do so as a result of her role as Chair and as the GM. Beng, Choo and Yen are her subordinates, with Yen placed at a lower hierarchical level than the other two. Repair work is seen as a result of the interactional trouble occurring in what has been presented in the table. The table appears to have been prepared by Beng, probably with the help of Yen. The clarification needed is on the “55%”- is it the rejection rate?” (line 645). Beng responds by justifying that the report was not written by him, but just as soon as he says this, Yen responds with a ‘yes’, referring to the report which is the Alpane report. The GM is still not satisfied with the answers given and repeats her question twice (lines 645 & 647). In the next turn Beng does not give a direct answer but attempts to explain with hesitancy. Before he could complete the explanation, the GM appears to have figured out the issue and says “oh the proportion”, referring to the 55% as the proportion and hence not the rejection rate. To this Beng latches on and confirms that it is “the proportion”.

Although the trouble was first identified by the GM and attempts at repair is made by Beng, in the end the GM solves the problem, so she completes the repair. She moves from non-understanding to understanding. The relationship between the speakers in this interaction appears to be obvious, that is, the GM is the authority and appears to be in control of the whole situation, leading and directing the discussion. She asks the questions, makes direct statements, and tends to imply that the staff is inefficient, and she draws conclusions which are acknowledged as right, showing her technical competence in the operations of the company. Another CI is given below for analysis on repair.

Extract 26 (MM2): Background

The interaction is between the Chair and Yen, discussing the facts and figures of the human resource department. There is repair initiated but the source of the interactional trouble, who is Lynn, is not present at the meeting. She is the HR department manager and is on emergency leave. So the repair is completed by Yen, who is reporting on Lynn's behalf.

GM	=so now <u>now</u> she completed the percentage is ah overall sixty something percent	585
Yen	=yeah sixty-four	586
GM	sixty-four middle management seven percent management- seven percent middle management fifty-seven percent operators zero percent am I right	587 588
Yen	=yep	589
GM	=so how you get sixty-four	590
Yen	I think she just added that up and then get sixty-four	591
GM	aiyoh cannot do like that right it should be average Chai can you teach how to do calculation cannot do like that one what you have to do is- what is the total plan what is the- never mind this one we leave it to her to come back during SQMS Chai can you highlight to her the calculation according to percentage how to calculate lah so that actual ah when you all see this kind of thing you should tell her already not wait until the day ah learn a little bit calculation (flips pages) I think that's all right	592 593 594 595 596 597 598
Yen	yeah	599

Extract 26: Analysis

The trouble is with the calculation and in line 590, the GM raises the problem. Yen who attempts to complete the repair is not successful because the GM notes that the figure is wrong. Since Lynn is not available, the GM does not pursue the matter although she starts with a reprimand (line 592: "aiyoh cannot do like that right . it should be an average") but she discontinues this line of thought and calls upon Chai to act on the matter. Note that Chai is called upon but he does not select to speak up, instead Yen does, probably because she is his assistant and she is responsible for this task. The GM makes another attempt to pursue the matter (line 593: "you have to- is what is the total

plan what is the-“) but abandons it again, stops mid-way with a word ‘nevermind’ and then reverts to the decision of waiting for Lynn to report when she comes back. She then directs Chai to teach her (line 595: “highlight to her”).

There is an identification of a repair source yet the repair is not completed due to the absent manager. However even though the repair is not done, the authority exerted by the GM is forceful on the unratified participant, evidenced in the way she directs Chai to take care of the situation and also in the way she reprimands. In lines 596 - 597 (“when you all see this kind of thing you should tell her already not wait until the day”) implies that she is telling them off, using ‘you all’ to refer to the whole team of people at the meeting. The power she exerts here is obviously overt. The next section will discuss another discursive activity, that is, repair in giving instructions.

- **Repair in Giving instruction**

Another discursive activity evident in the meeting talk is giving instruction which makes up 24% (see Table 5.1 in Section 5.2) of the total talk activities. Instructions are basically meted out to get work done and the GM has the authority to ask her subordinates to do the work. Repair is evident in the extract below.

Extract 27 (MM1): Background

Extract 27 is unique in that it covers two topics of MM1 (namely DOK & EOQ: refer to Table 5.2). Both are discursive activities of GI and here it is examined in the light of how repair is used to solve some interactional problem. The two managers are discussing the matter at quite a fast pace, as observed by the latching of talk.

GM	=DOK do it properly	702
Beng	we are because this one is quite er dynamic	703
GM	=dynamic	704
Beng	=quite dynamic so we can't really gauge lah for instance like their	705
GM	=but if	706
Beng	=their	707
GM	=I know to establish the DOK you say dynamic is very difficult to but again you want him to	708 709
Beng	=the pizza one is quite consistent so it is okay for us but some product ah you order once a while that one is a bit problem because we also have to consider the shelf life of the product-	710 711 712
GM	=okay whatever you can do the EOQ on the minimum and the maximum one you should establish already having	713 714
Beng	=yeah yeah that one already established for the containers one product <u>there's no issue at all</u> just some issues it's er some kind- on those product that is run once in a while	715 716 717
GM	so even those ones once in a while because then it's not the problem of EOQ already so you have already establish all the EOQ for every those products that you are running it's only those once in a while lah and you tell me now that you cannot do EOQ for those then now you are mentioning EOQ	718 719 720 721
Beng	huh no this one is to improve on on those areas lah like like those products that is not running all the time like for example the naan some consideration is put into the materials that have shelf life er issues	722 723 724
GM	establish a proper buffer stock pre-order level and EOQ to minimize the production shortage or changing of product on completion days you read you read and see	725 726 727

Extract 27: Analysis

Self-initiated repair occurs when speakers acknowledge that aspects of their own argument or exposition that might be expected of them are in effect absent. Other initiated repair usually occurs when interlocutors explicitly draw attention to points that are missing from their interlocutor's account (Chipunza, 2007). In line 713, the GM seeks clarification from Beng. She is initiating a repair and it looks like Beng needs to do repair work here. Beng's statement written in the report has created an interactional trouble so he is the source of the trouble.

In line 715 Beng clarifies the point but is doing so with some amount of hesitancy, as he uses backchannels ("er") and repeats words (for example: "on on", "like like"). He uses

an example to illustrate his point on the difference between the two types of products produced: one with a shelf life and the other, the shelf life is not significant (refer to lines 722-724). For the products with no shelf life issue, the EOK has been established. For the products with a shelf life, the EOQ is a matter that the GM is bringing up in discussion with Beng here. There appears to be some interactional trouble. To emphasize the point, the GM reads what has been written and directs Beng to read (line 726: “you read . you read and see”). This imperative seems direct and forceful, showing her authority overtly over Beng, and she also pointedly uses the pronoun ‘you’ to refer specifically to him.

Beng	=yeah I know	728
GM	=this sentence	729
Beng	=because sometimes there’s ah we plan to run this time and then suddenly we have to change to run another time so the changes actually depend to the raw material stock sometimes this stock don’t have so I’ve er er discuss with Jamil on the areas of changes so basically sometimes we don’t capture the of changes because of the communication issues so still I highlighted to him here is to see how to improve on the communication lah	730 731 732 733 734 735
GM	=more of communication rather than EOQ right	736

Beng latches onto this with an utterance that he knows what the issue is and as he continues to explain to the GM, she points specifically to the sentence he has to read. This does not deter him from continuing his explanation. From lines 730 - 735, as Beng’s utterances unfold, it is clear that that problem identified by the GM earlier is not the EOQ, rather there is a communication issue between the production department and Jamil (the inventory supervisor). The way Beng hesitates, and uses backchannels to show a certain amount of measured speech. He is not directly putting the blame on Jamil although Jamil appears to be the cause of the problem. But it does appear that there is probably a lack of communication between Beng and Jamil and this has led to the problem. This portion of talk ends with the interactional trouble being completed by Beng (line 751) and the GM accepts it and moves on to the next topic of discussion.

Beng	EOQ economic in order quantity so what is the economic quantity to order is not the minimum stock to order for example you you er want want a good price want a a product which can last in a shelf life so we order according to this factor	747 748 749
GM	=so what have you- so in the whole sentence here er the action plan is to	750
Beng	=to avoid the er shortage of material	751
GM	=to avoid the shortage of material	752
Beng	=ah when when we want to run the production	753

The interactional trouble is obviously other initiated self-repair, where the trouble is identified by the more senior person in the meeting who initiates a repair and then the subordinate takes the responsibility to complete the repair. Schgeloff (2007) associates this with the concept of division of labour, where when there is trouble at talk, one person initiates and another completes the repair. At institutional talk as evident from the data above, the repair work is seldom abandoned.

To sum up, repair as an interactional resource, is used by the talk participants at the meetings to clear up misunderstandings or errors. In the discursive activities, some illustrations of this CA tool has been examined is described and explained from extracts 19-27.

It is however noted as the analyses and interpretation of the meeting talk was carried out, an emerging pattern found to be recurring at numerous times is reprimands, utilised by the Chair of the meeting, who is also the GM. As it is a pervasive, some analysis of reprimands is deem appropriate, taken out of the discursive activities and discussed in terms of the interactional resources evident within these, thus the following section will contain a few of such extracts of analysis.

6.2 Reprimands

Within the discursive activities, reprimands occur at numerous places (extracts 3, 6, 8, 9, & 17). The GM seems to reproach her subordinates (the managers) for tasks that are not done, or in some cases, the tasks are carried out, but inefficiently. The most obvious reprimands come from AG, where she usually ends a q-a sequence with reprimands. When she reprimands a manager, there is hardly any sign of resistance. After a reprimand it is either followed by silence or a new line of discussion (topic change). The GM has the final word. This shows the enactment of power through her language use. For her managers to accept the reprimand, it would appear that they have committed a mistake and therefore deserve being reproached, and there is evidence of this in the talk data which will be discussed based on analysis in the following extracts.

According to Mulholland (1991), a reprimand means “to offer formally an adverse judgment to another about a serious matter”. The synonyms of reprimands are “reprove, chastise, rebuke or reproach”. In a reprimand it is not the speaker alone who allows the reproach to be what it is. The recipient also plays an equally important role. Mulholland (1991) asserts that the reprimand “must be acceptable to any others who are witnesses”, otherwise it would not be considered a reprimand. If a person is wrongly accused or criticised, the relationship between the speaker and the recipient may be damaged (p.201). Some of these reprimands appear as monologues, and from the meeting talk, it is found that the GM does this, and this is dealt with in the following discussion.

Extract 28 (MM1): Background

This interaction is taken from an AG discursive activity where the topic is on an issue of the uneven crust. It was highlighted by a customer (Miss Gong) and this issue has been noted in the minutes. The Chair now asks her managers the reason for this. There is a q-a sequence and this extract have been analysed earlier (extract 6), however the focus here is on the reprimand. The part that is related to the reprimand is given below.

Beng	/ we we right now ah- where else because when we run the DMP one no problem so only run this-	580 581
GM	=okay don't say that no problem DMP one ah-	582
Beng	=not consistent-	583
GM	=you have to ask your girl that oh <u>really really</u> compare you know ask your QA girl to focus to time a little bit on this because <u>don't forget</u> thin crust pizza is our function now	584 585 586
Beng	=okay	587
GM	if you don't want have thin crust pizza you don't have flatbread line so you better be <u>very very serious</u> in checking all this point we depend on thin crust to survive now unless UMA give us tortilla to run otherwise we will have problem so for you if I were you I would put my priority now on thin crust quality control assurance so you check the two customers specifications <u>really check</u> every spot you know maybe you say you now check four spot you may want to increase say to eight you know <u>more spots</u> so you have a better distributions then you can do a better study and you can really find the root cause is it- how is the trend like is always this- always this side or always that side or based on the previous study is like not able to get the consistent ah kind of result you see it varies er you see SPC <u>really use SPC</u> maybe you can- and how you study I do not know lah you all say cannot your conclusion is cannot but are you using the right method	588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600
Beng	you mean the speeding method	601
GM	=yeah SPC method can be / applied to them I know	602
Samy	/ it can apply one time-	603
GM	=but then how detail are you studying it how critical and all is your erm erm because people also have- if you use the way you use this girl QA girl number one the next day you may use QA girl number two so they themselves also the people also have their own variant both of them so <u>Beng</u> you <u>better</u> study carefully together with R and D one more time but do it really really really very detail this time if you need to change the hot press then we have to change the hot press I do not know	604 605 606 607 608 609 610
Samy	=I think the- we have to create one first almost two that one really got problem that one not at the moment we using casaareala-	611 612

Extract 28 (MM1): Analysis

The Chair reproaches Samy and Beng as they are the managers in charge of the thin crust production. Beng brings in a point in line 581 and says “we run the DMP one no problem” (line 581), implying there is no problem with the product which they produced for DMP (a pseudonym for a name of another company, who is also their customer). He seems to be making the point that there was no complaint from DMP and so Miss Gong should also not have been a problem. But the Chair picks on this point, immediately latches onto the talk, and opposes him directly, saying “don’t say no problem DMP one”.

This seems to show she is not about to accept whatever reason Beng is offering. Beng attempts to explain again and this time he mentions the idea of it being “not consistent” (line 583) but before he could continue, he gets cut off and the Chair gives out the instruction that Beng “...have to ask your girl ask your QA girl to focus...” (lines 584-585). This is followed by a warning (lines 585-586: don’t forget thin crust pizza is our function now”).

The background to this is that Alpane (name of company in this study) is about to be bought over by another firm (refer to field notes). Alpane has two factories: the bun line and the flatbread line. While the bun line in plant A will be managed by a sister company, flatbread line at Plant B will be sold. The current management team will stay on to manage B. So when the GM tells them “don’t forget”, it is to remind them that in future they do not have bun line to bring in profits, it will be flat breads that will be their main product and this is where the profits are to be made.

She also uses directives and then refers to the “girl” from the QA department, implying that as Beng is accountable to her, the QA girl is therefore accountable to Beng. The Chair refers to the QA staff as “your girl” (line 584) to Beng. The use of the word “girl” carries a connotation of a person who is female, and who may be young and therefore needs to be instructed by Beng. The choice of words used by the Chair here appears to be exerting her power over him.

To this Beng just complies with a simple “okay” (line 587) but the Chair seems to have already got into a mood of meting out instructions, warning, and now reprimands, evident in lines 588-600. A more detailed look at her discourse from these lines display the power she enacts over both Beng and Samy. The strategies she uses are:

- repetitive lexis:
 - very very serious (589)
 - really check/ really use (592/598)

- conditional sentences
 - if you don't want have thin crust pizza ...(588)
 - if I were you ...(591)

The instructive utterances come with threats and this implies that she does not trust them enough to do their jobs and she has to order them. The use of “very serious” connotes that they have not been serious enough in carrying out the thin crust production, that is why the crust was uneven. To add, they must “really check”, implying that they did not check it before. The use of conditionals, Hyland (1996) asserts, is a form of hedging, which mitigates the force of the clauses. So its use shows

how the Chair is making her point in an assertive way, and her power enactment is overtly expressed.

After 13 lines of this talk, Samy latches on with wanting a clarification (line 601: “you mean the speeding method”). He does not appear to show any defensive action nor does he attack but it is a mere question to clarify. And to this the Chair responds with an affirmation. Both Beng and Samy seem to accept these reprimands as part of this community’s practice. It may be implied that this CofP the managers accept the way the GM tells them off, and the way she warns them and also spell out precise steps to take to solve the issue.

Another monologue analysed is taken from a segment of talk where more managers are involved.

Extract 29 (MM1): Background

The meeting (MM1) is about to come an end and Suan (Purchasing manager) brings up a point and that is that “brainstorming session” has to be postponed due to their tight schedules. The GM is not happy with the fact that this session has already been delayed a few times. She goes into a monologue of reprimands. The part of the talk that is analysed is reproduced below.

Suan	=the brainstorming we will have to further defer to June lah April is tight	1226
GM	ah no such thing as tight schedule ah everybody tight schedule you know from April ah you move until June har Chai ah	1227 1228
Chai	=(?) (laughs)	1229
GM	can lah if you want if you really think this is top priority ah then why did you allow it to happen in June this one is still top priority mah <u>right</u> so no matter what happen ah you all will find time to it right . don’t give me a reason of tight schedule all the time ah because every one of us are tight schedule if you ask me ah I’m very tight schedule but ah I just receive this one yesterday you know all this whole pile ah I just received from him at <u>what time</u> you know <u>what time</u> tell them	1230 1231 1232 1233 1234 1235 1236
Choo	=seven thirty	1237

GM	=seven something you know and I'm suppose to ah to ask you all this question if you say tight schedule er everything er I don't know how tight is my tight I work Saturday Sunday also I'm Saturday fly to Singapore Sunday whole day meeting Monday whole day meeting er yesterday ah come back got to meet finish with MIT everything letter everything done then this one you give at seven o'clock in the beginning and then I have to finish all the detail reading and ask you all all the questions so I'm sure that how do you do it I don't know lah you see but if you all keep coming back and tell me that you all have very tight schedule might as well don't do anything in anything how perfect can you anything you don't do one is very tight schedule prioritize it lah if you all think this is important and it's going to bring some better profit margin for the company ah you really will work for it if you are talking about volume discount and all this er not something er which is less priority type of work <u>Chai</u> you may not necessarily to begin for starters you can ask your people to start first then you come in review it if if they want to use your schedule I think is if you say you are very tight I also very tight schedule with my if you go for it you will go for it one I tell you	1238 1239 1240 1241 1242 1243 1244 1245 1246 1247 1248 1249 1250 1251 1252 1253 1254
Chai	=because this is more on alignment lah (?) this is	1255
GM	=but alignment ah has been many many times I ask you all have you all ever have the integration meeting at all ever since that day I tell Beng the integration er process integration team leader so ever since I've say that until today is there a meeting about process integration the process integration the meeting has been shift from from Chai to Beng from Beng and then shift back to me again I think so if you people are not going to take it and do it ah	1256 1257 1258 1259 1260 1261
Beng	=we we do not not on a very formal way lah	1262
GM	=er but we did say that you don't need to be formal but every quarterly it has to formal ah then you really sit there and analyze you know what is the common problems that you have because she is here and you are there you know and and and Samy sometimes busy and then if you go and talk to them one by one ah you will not get things done sometimes you just need one	1263 1264 1265 1266 1267

Extract 29 (MM1): Analysis

As soon as Suan mentions the postponement of the session (line 1226), the Chair hits back with “no such thing as tight schedule” (line 1227). In the next turn of talk, Chai responds but it is not audible. However there is some laughter heard. This is probably an attempt on his part to diffuse the tension that is rising. But even as there is some laughter, the Chair already begins her monologue on how she is not happy with their excuses (line 1227: “tight schedule”) and lack of urgency (line 1230: “this one is still top priority”). Then she compares her schedule with theirs and asks them to decide who is having a worse schedule. Interestingly, this part of her talk is not merely to signify a reprimand, it denotes power. The others at the meeting (ten managers in attendance) are listening but Chai appears to be brave enough to speak up followed by Beng, who tries

to justify that they have met on an informal basis. However, their attempts at justification are also played down.

The strategies she uses to reprimand them are:

- the use of imperatives
 - no such thing as tight schedule (1227)
 - don't give me a reason of tight schedule all the time (1232)

- conditional clauses
 - if you ask me ah I'm very tight schedule ...(1238)
 - if you all keep coming back and tell me ...(1245)
 - if you all think this is important and it's going to bring some some better profit margin for the company ah ...(1247-1248)
 - if you are talking about volume discount and all this ...(1249)
 - if you say you are very tight ...(1252)

- narratives

...I'm very tight schedule but ah I just receive this one yesterday you know all this whole pile ah I just received from him at what time you know what time tell them... seven something you know and I'm suppose to ah to ask you all this question if you say tight schedule er everything er I don't know how tight is my tight I work Saturday Sunday also I'm Saturday fly to Singapore Sunday whole day meeting Monday whole day meeting er yesterday ah come back got to meet finish with MIT everything letter everything done then this one you give at seven o'clock in the beginning and then I have to finish all the detail reading and ask you all all the questions ... (1234-1244)

From extract 28, imperatives and conditionals have already been discussed but here the use of a narrative is noted. The Chair brings in her own experience and goes into details of her schedule over the weekend. This monologic discourse used seems to imply that as the boss, she has a tight schedule and despite this she makes it a point to carry out her tasks because she gives it “top priority” (line 1230). It also connotes that if she is the boss who is always busy, why is it that the others cannot be like her, busy and yet able to meet the deadlines and targets.

This narrative is almost like a parent reprimanding her child, and it appears out of place in workplace discourse, yet it is apparent in this particular CofP. Although Beng tries to justify that they have met informally she does not seem receptive to his explanation. She ends this discursive activity basically by giving instructions. The way this part of talk ended is given below:

GM	=is it too much to ask for lah I don't know <u>okay</u> if you all don't want to do it Choo I'll be the person to call for process integration meeting every quarter put my name in then I will I will push it <u>Choo</u> put in my diary I'll push it I'll do it I will get you all to come in I will so we will just do once in a once in a quarter that will do okay quick next one erm so you better try and find another day not too late if you keep changing ah three point	1274 1275 1276 1277 1278 1279
----	---	--

It appears that the Chair offers to take over their tasks as a way to reprimand them and also to show them how inefficient they are as compared to herself. If an analogy is drawn, it is like a parent punishing her child by taking away something. In lines 1275 and 1276, she calls Choo to do up her schedule (Choo is her personal assistant). She is asserting herself and again she uses the if-clause (line 1274: “if you all don't want to do it Choo I'll be the person to call for process integration meeting...”) and note also her choice of lexis seen in “I will push it”, with the phrase used repeatedly. The way she enacts her power is not only personal, it is coercive and legitimate. This discourse of power concurs with Fairclough's (1989) view that the people in position of power has

the right to decide what is correct in an interaction and they also have the “capacity to determine the extent their power will be overtly expressed” (p.52).

Finally the use of pronouns is again a strategy she employs to exert her authority. She places her “I” against the others, who are referred to as “you” and “you all”. The clear classification of the opposing entities is also expressed in the extract 29 as highlighted in the text.

Extract 30 (MM2): Background

This segment of talk appears at the beginning of MM2. The Chair has called the meeting to order and is about to begin and then she notices that one of the managers (HR) is absent. She begins with this monologue that includes a reprimand.

GM	by now you all should know ah ladies and gentlemen by now you all should know ah if you really sick I understand lah but if you sick very often on Monday ah then something is opposite ah I don't like this kind of behaviour lah I have to tell you all I don't like this kind of behaviour so be very mindful of what you all are doing I mean if genuine case I really really appreciate and I really understand the genuine case but if your trend is always- some people have the a very good trend of emergency leave and mc some people records are very good no mc no emergency at all so if you really have something on and you really have to go please plan your leave ah and let us approve lah rather than ah we are suppose to have a meeting suddenly you say you are on emergency leave ah you know if you are sick no problems lah you know genuinely sick okay one I think I also sometime- I also really understand the situation very well what make me very angry is that you know when you have a big meeting like this people just go on mc and leave ah be mindful ah please so we go on to flatbread line today	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
Beng	running through the bunline	15

Extract 30 (MM2): Analysis

The Chair begins with a formality, addressing them as “ladies and gentlemen” (line 1) which is the only time she has said this during meetings. This seems to indicate that it is

used here as a sarcastic remark. She then proceeds to show herself as being an understanding person and explains why she is annoyed at the absence of the HR manager, though she does not mention the name or the position of the person. This is implied from the later part of the meeting talk and the field notes. Finally she closes this segment of talk in an advisory tone but appears more to be a reprimand. The strategies she uses are:

- forthright expressions of displeasure:
 - I don't like this kind of behaviour lah/ I have to tell you all I don't like this kind of behaviour (3-4)
 - what make me very angry is that...(12-13)

- the use of pronouns again "you all" to place the others as opposed to her:
 - but she also tries to show empathy:
 - if you really sick I understand lah (1-2)
 - if genuine case I really really appreciate and I really understand the genuine case (4-5)
 - if you are sick no problems lah you know genuinely sick okay one (10-11)
 - I also really understand the situation very well (12)

When she shows empathy in this way she appears to downplay her power control but she repeatedly uses certain lexis, such as "really". This connotes that there is then a case where it is not "real" such as the manager who is on leave on that Monday of the meeting. She points out that "if you sick very often on Monday ah then something is opposite" (lines 2-3). This may explain her use of the word "really" numerous times in 14 lines. At the end her advice or a soft reprimand is "be mindful ah please" (line 14), a

phrase which she has used earlier in line 4. Finally it is noted that the discourse takes 14 lines, and the others do not interrupt or respond in any other form, an according to the observation notes, some managers were not looking up, while some fiddled with their lap tops. In this CofP, this again appears to be a practice: the Chair goes into monologic speech and no interaction takes place. The others are listening and how they react to this is not verbalised. In the next turn of talk when the Chair closes this segment with indicating a move to a new topic, Beng takes up his turn to speak, and the meeting proceedings move on.

Although the Chair begins with seemingly wanting to reprimand, she also tones it down, probably as the person whom she wants to reproach is not there and at the start of a meeting, she possibly does not want to assert her power so overtly. A last extract of talk to exemplify such overt discourse is given below.

Extract 31(MM2): Background

This extract focuses on the topic “Sample Sent”. The Chair is moving the discussion along and she asks the managers “what else under your area” (line 1108). This begins a new topic and Weng, Samy, Suan and Beng interact with her on this issue. They are talking about a sample sent to a customer known as Jack, and his feedback on the sample.

GM	okay what else- what else under your area	1108
Weng	ah I want to add on generally ASH actually has approved of the palm oil base but we just need is a firm confirmation from (?) cause Jack just wrote back that okay it’s okay but what we wanted now it is the confirmation that at least (?) / hopefully	1109 1110 1111 1112
GM	/ but his reply was very funny ah	1113
Weng	yeah that’s why I just want to make sure it’s palm oil is okay	1114
GM	what did he reply ah Beng you can understand ah	1115
Beng	who	1116
GM	Jack Jack	1117

Beng	some some of it lah	1118
Weng	=basically yeah- basically what he mention is that (?) samples (?)	1119
GM	yeah	1120
Weng	so I told him that (?)	1121
GM	=he was not happy with the sample you send	1122
Weng	yeah it's different	1123
GM	=he say it's different you know	1124
Weng	yes so I explain to him over the phone that this this (?)	1125

Extract 31(MM2): Analysis

It begins with the GM checking with Weng on why Jack has sent a “funny” (line 1113). The three managers (GM, Weng & Beng) then begin a preamble of 15 turns. At turn 16, the main issue is raised by the GM (line 1126-1127: “why did you all send a sample which has such a great variance I just don’t understand lah”).

Samy then selects himself to answer (line 1128), not Beng, even though the Chair has earlier called upon Beng. As Samy tries to explain, she cuts him off (lines 1130-1132). From this portion of talk it is seen that the GM takes up 50% of the total number of turns. She also says the most while the others only make short exchanges.

Craig & Pitts (1990) found that people of higher status in an interaction always talk more. Further, the amount and variation also depends on the purpose of the interaction, and here the GM needs to know what has happened to the sample (that caused Jack to send a funny reply). Weng gives an account of the content of the email communication and Samy tries to justify what they did with the sample. Although it begins as a rather straightforward AG activity, the interaction takes off in a different manner and turns into something unpleasant. She reprimands Beng and Samy.

Samy tries to contest her propositions but she cuts him off. She also directs reprimands at Beng but he does not reciprocate.

GM	but why why did you all send a sample which has such a great variance I just don't understand lah	1126 1127
Samy	actually the production ah running- we want to do the sample we use the manual but only the size a little bit different	1128 1129
GM	quite a lot orh you see / I was like how come	1130
Samy	/ we do explain because they want to test quality not on the size so-	1131
GM	=aiyoh friend you never learn you never learn do you agree with me ah you cannot say like that you know sample is a sample you cannot say samples <i>ah they don't care about the size they care about the texture</i> if I am sending a sample ah I will make sure my samples ah comply with the fact of everything you cannot give me a answer saying that <i>oh they are only testing on the texture they are not on the size</i> aiyoh when you do a mistake you say <i>yes lah you know it's my mistake that I do not look into the size</i> cannot answer people like that you know you agree or not lah agree or not you must agree lah you know why when you all say things like that ah I feel not right lah cannot if you all didn't do the job well ah you tell me lah that <i>I did not check carefully next time it will not happen</i> say <i>oh they don't care about the size they care about the texture</i> <u>Weng</u> what else they say the size is different some some other attributes also not right ah	1132 1133 1134 1135 1136 1137 1138 1139 1140 1141 1142 1143

*italics means the utterances are in a third voice

The GM uses the following strategies in her reprimands:

- lexical choice in expressions:
 - you never learn (twice) (1132)
 - do you agree with me (1132)
 - you agree or not (twice) 1138)
 - you must agree lah (1139)
 - when when you all say things like that I feel not right lah (1139-1140)

- direct imperatives:
 - you cannot say like that (1133)
 - you cannot say samples ah they don't care about the size they care about the texture (twice: 1141-1142)

- you cannot give me a answer saying that oh they are only testing on the texture they are not on the size (1135-1136)
- cannot answer people like that (1138)
- conditional clause:
 - if I am sending a sample ah I will make sure my samples ah comply with the fact of everything (1134-1135)
 - if you all didn't do the job well ah you tell me lah that I did not check carefully next time it will not happen (1140-1141)

Weng	weight and (?)	1144
GM	even weight eh can't you all send sample (?)	1145
Samy	=weight	1146
GM	yes they say like that lah	1147
Weng	(?)	1148
GM	if you all are sending sample can't you all select so now re-do it samples- what did you learn last time I look at the remarks from him ah I also feel ah the same thing again the slack- you all are quite slack one ah sometimes the thing are okay already ah everybody go back early you know what master taught us ah you must always remember <u>Beng</u> every complain eh from the customer ah you really have to follow up it's not my job it's your job to follow up with R and D what else	1149 1150 1151 1152 1153 1154

And finally note the use of pronouns which again reflects the two entities: the boss versus the subordinates. The GM refers to her staff as “you all”, “you”, and she makes her individual stance of “I”. Apart from these, she also uses the possessive: “your job” versus “my job” (line 1154). As discussed in extracts 12-18, the choice of pronouns signal power asymmetry.

What is interesting to note here is she does not reproach Weng, she is directing her remarks to Beng and Samy. In line 1132 she uses the word “friend” towards Samy but it is not as if she is treating him as a friend, rather the word is used probably to emphasize sarcasm. She also uses the word “aiyoh” which is a Malaysian way of making an

exclamation (line 1132: “aiyoh friend you never learn you never learn). This phrase is loaded with sarcasm and reproach. The word “never” connotes that Samy has made such a mistake before and now he is committing the same mistake. From line 1128-1129, 1131 and 1146, Samy attempts to explain and offer his view but he is cut off by the GM. The difference between Samy and Beng is this: whereas Beng remains silent after each reprimand, Samy tries to speak up and justify. It may be implied that Samy dares to resist the GM’s reproach. However the GM puts him down. The way she exerts her power on Samy is aggressive.

To sum up, the one who reprimands, in the four extracts analysed is the GM. She uses a range of discursive and linguistic repertoire to help her balance the inherent contradictions in her role as boss and fellow worker. She seems to exert her power overtly in all four cases and the others (except for Samy) do not appear to show any resistance. Overt and direct attempts are evident from the strategies she employs in the meeting talk, especially in the monologues.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter comprise the analysis of the talk data, its interpretation and findings of 31 extracts. These parts of talk were taken from the four discursive activities which were identified in Chapter Five. Account giving was given most emphasis due to the nature of the talk within accounting episodes, where question-answer sequences were found to be pervasive. By using questions the Chair was able to get her managers to give her the answers she wants, seen as a form of accountability. In a CofP, not only are the members mutually engaged in their shared practices, they also are accountable for each other’s action. So when things do not go right the GM has the right to make them

answer her queries and when feedback given was satisfactory she would continue asking or at some instances, she chooses to close the issue with no resolution. It is noted that when this happens or when the feedback received was unsatisfactory, she ends the discursive activity with a directive, a warning or a reprimand. This could give rise to conflict or tension among them, but even when this happens, the shared repertoire they have maintained over time, allows them to engage meaningfully and achieve the ultimate goal of why they come together in the first place, that is to get work done. To reiterate Lave and Wenger (1991), a CofP is a group of people who relate to one another over time, based on a shared knowledge of their expertise and its social structure which includes power relations. The analysis of the talk in the extracts has shown the power relationship and how each member of the community manages to achieve their communication goals despite the power asymmetry.

The next chapter will draw together the findings of this study and discuss some implications in the field of business discourse. Suggestions on future research will also be explicated.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

7.0 Introduction

This study which situates itself in a real workplace and uses naturally occurring talk at meetings has shown the dynamism of talk at work in a specific community of practice (CofP) in a Malaysian business context. As it seeks to examine verbal interactions at meetings, it looks into the way language is used by managers at internal management meetings. This chapter includes a summary and a discussion of the main findings. Implications of the study are then explicated and finally some suggestions for future research are offered.

7.1 Summary of Findings

The research questions set out in Chapter One have guided the explanation, analysis and interpretation of the data which is laid out in Chapters Five and Six. The questions were formulated from the objective of the study, which were to examine how managers at meetings engage in talk mutually to get work done, and how language is used to achieve their interactional goals. A critical look at language has a way of making the invisible world visible (Hayashi, 1997) and in this way it allows us to observe and question phenomena that we take for granted. From this study it was found that the members in this CofP, brought together by their shared practice, enact power through joint negotiation of meaning and mutual engagement.

The CofP belongs to larger community, which is a manufacturing establishment, and the main driving force behind this business is profitability. To stay competitive means that the business must make profits and these are to be maximised, while losses are to be minimised. Emphasis is also placed on the products it manufactures, which must be of quality so that their customers are given the best that is available in the market. Moreover the services they provide to these customers are equally important. And core to this are the employees, who must perform efficiently and effectively in order for the company to exist and be able to stay competitive in the business arena. The employees therefore are a significant human resource and at work, a way to measure their competence is their key performance index (KPI).

To reiterate, their vision statement is:

to grow our baking business by being leading innovators in contract manufacturing and a focused baked product range and we will provide excellence through customized product and services to our customers, thereby creating mutually beneficial relationships and value for all partners.

Their vision has guided this establishment to always give their customers priority and manufacture products that meet their customers' expectations. The monthly management meetings is one way to check that the production process runs smoothly, and each member of the CofP, who heads the various departments, are held accountable for the work they do. These managers attend the meetings to report, discuss and deliberate on work-related matters to ensure that work is done and work gets done. How

they verbalise these activities at the meetings, and what they do with the language (through talk) is the crux of this study.

A summary of the findings and the conclusion drawn from the findings is given below and will be presented according to the research questions.

Research question 1:

- a) What are the discursive activities evident in the meeting talk?
- b) How are these discursive activities realised in the talk?

The results will be discussed under the following headings:

7.1.1 Discursive Activities

Based on Koester's (2006, p.4) use of the term, discursive activity refers to the types of talk that orient to specific goals of workplace tasks, such as instruction-giving, decision-making, briefing. In this CofP, where the members share common language practices and terminologies, they appear comfortable to weave in and out of the discursive activities, facilitated by the Chair of the meetings. In this study it was found that there are four main discursive activities, and they are:

1. Checking information (CI)
2. Account giving (AG)
3. Giving instructions (GI)
4. Problem solving (PS)

Each of these are accounted for from the data set, and it was found that CI is the highest, with 33 out of 71 (47%) occurrences, followed by almost the same number of AG (19: 27%) and GI (17: 24%), and the least is PS with only 2 (3%) occurrences (see Table 4.1 in Section 4.2).

The evidence of these discursive activities in the CofP supports what Drew and Heritage (1992) mention as the characteristics of institutional talk, that is, the participants orient to specific institutional goals, and apply the institutional framework and procedures in their talk, using specialised terminologies and linguistic routines. This is also evident in the highest use of CI as a discursive activity. It was found that CI is pervasive as the shared practice in this CofP is to report on work done, and verification of whether the work has been done can be found in the minutes of the meetings. The minutes serve as a recording mechanism and checklist for the Chair. Once the matter is checked and is aligned in the minutes, the Chair can then move on to the next discussion.

In Chapter Six, it is shown that CI episodes are straightforward with talk being more predictable and structured (refer to extracts 9, 25, 26 & 27). The more challenging parts of talk belong to account giving (AG). From the analysis, it was found that AG activities are where there were predominantly question-answer sequences. The Chair uses questions to obtain information that she needs and the other managers are expected to provide the answers she wants. However there were occasions when there were no or minimal responses, and the Chair would then close the session with a directive, a warning or a reprimand. The Chair has the final say and this is inevitable as she has the institutional power to do so. She appears to be using question-answer sequences as a way to take control of the meeting events, and as Chair she can stop the flow of

discussion to digress or to pursue an issue further. This concedes with Boden's (1994) observation of the use of question-answer sequences in interaction where

the interactional and structural force of a question demands its answers. Answers derive their status and shape from their immediate placement after a question in the on-going flow of talk, and from their reciprocal recipient design. This one shapes the other, in predictable, precise, and patterned ways. (p.111)

The q-a sequences in AG is most predictable and has shaped the AG discursive activity. The use of q-a sequences are also evident in the discursive activity of giving instructions (GI) but they are not as pervasive. GI basically consists of the use of directives. Next is problem solving activity, which occurred only twice from the meeting talk, and has evidence of the use of various interactional devices such as pronoun use and repair to achieve their goals at the talk. However it is interesting to note studies carried out by Marra (2003), Koester (2006) and Handford (2010) have shown problem solving or decision making to be pervasive at meetings. Their data is obtained in Western and English-speaking contexts (where English is the native language), except for Marra's (2003) work which had participants from non-English speaking countries but worked in New Zealand. In this data, all the managers use English but they are second language users and they also speak the Malaysian variety of English (MalE). It has been found that meetings are sites where people at work discuss problems and attempt to solve these problems, or make decisions. However in this study, PS is the least. This could be because the business context in this study is manufacturing and at management meetings they deal with reports more than problems. The problems are dealt with at production meetings, which are carried out on a daily

and weekly basis. Management level meetings are held once a month and this is the place where the reports on the updates are presented.

To sum up, the current study has adopted a CA approach to analyse the data and this lends itself to a data-driven rather than a theory-driven mode. Thus, from the first question, a second research question was formulated and the section below will proceed to discuss the answer to the two part question.

Research question 2:

- a) What interactional resources within the discursive activities are used by the talk participants?
- b) How do these interactional resources facilitate or impede communication within the talk?

The interactional resources include the turn taking organization as the main frame which then looks at the use of adjacency pair of question-answer sequence, the choice of pronouns and repair as a means to solve interactional problems. The analysis and interpretation also include a discussion of how these interactional devices facilitate or impede communication.

7.1.2 Interactional Resources

From the findings it was noted that the use of the interactional resources extracted a common thread throughout the meeting talk, and that is the discourse on power. The General Manager of this particular CofP exerts authority on her subordinates through language use. It may be concluded that in this particular manufacturing practice, where

asymmetrical relationships exist, coercive power is inevitable. Moreover the GM also chairs all the management meetings, thus her dual role adds to her institutional power. This dual role appears to allow her a status that may not be challenged, in this CofP.

In the data it was observed that the chair has employed a range of strategies to exert power on the other members in the CofP. She has the ultimate power in this local company, but she also has to report to someone higher, because she does not own it. In this company located in Malaysia, she is the boss and therefore source of authority here. However there is a much larger corporation in which she has to also report to (located abroad). In order to ensure that the business she runs makes profits locally, she has the responsibility of ensuring her subordinates do their work and do it well. So when tasks have not been done efficiently she is observed to use the interactional devices to enact her power. The use of her questioning strategy within AG discursive activities reveals her assertiveness. This concedes with Tannen's (1995) view that

although asking the right questions is one of the hallmarks of a good manager, how and when questions are asked can send unintended signals about competence and power. (p.142)

The GM has assertive ways of questioning and also chooses when to use questions. Her competence and power is undeniable. It is also assumed that a chair's role in any meeting comes with a status that she is above the rest, and therefore she has power *over* the others. However in this CofP, the chair takes on more than this power, as being the GM, she appears to have the right and privilege to have the power *to* control the contributions of others in their discussion, and to reprimand with authority. When she reprimands, it is also noticed that the others do not answer back, and instances of this

have been reported in Chapter five (refer to extracts 28-31). Some of the ways in which she uses lexis in the talk display this, and below are a few examples,

from MM1:

- is it a common sense to also check it again (40)
- oh then you say a wrong thing you say revise the measurement (94)
- you didn't put a title here for me ah to know what is your purpose (278)
- why do you take so long to renew a contract (977)
- if you really think this is top priority ah then why did you allow it to happen...no matter what happen ah you all will find time to do it right...don't give me a reason of tight schedule (1230-1233)

from MM2:

- you really slack (258)
- no such thing as wait till you have time (734)
- I do not want to hear any more complain oh of this unevenness (802)
- this is the last chance that I say no more ah in the future (871)
- aiyoh friend you never learn you never learn do you agree with me ah you cannot say like that (1132-1133)

The GM uses legitimate power to exert her authority and a coercive form of power to gain compliance from her members. Often her expertise power is at work as she uses her knowledge of this area of work to justify her actions. For instance when they were

discussing the oven breakdown, she knew exactly which part of the device they were referring to, and she also knew what she they could have done and then she asked why they had not carried out the necessary action (refer to extracts 1, 12 & 19 for a thorough discussion of this part of talk).

However, the GM's power enactment is not done alone, as power relationships are co-constructed. If the other members in the CofP have shown resistance, then she would not be able to exert as much force. There were instances in the talk when some resistance was noted. It came mainly from Chai, the F&A manager, and Samy, the R&D executive. The way they latch onto her talk and also the interplay of pronoun use (from "we" to "I") reveals this (refer to extracts 12-18).

The use of pronouns by members in this CofP has facilitated the talk in the way they choose to exercise their power over one another or downplay the power. One such segment of talk was observed in extract 13 where Beng and Chai are observed to be negotiating their roles through the use of "I" and "we". From Handford's (2010) studies on business meetings, it was noted that pronoun use in such contexts are related to the discursive and professional practices of the speakers. Beng and Chai are the two most significant managers in this CofP and in some parts of the meeting data they are seen to be in conflict but this is the shared practice they have in common, and that also allows them to continue working together, or rather talking together to achieve their interactive goals.

Another emergent pattern of power is observed through the repair work done when there was interactional trouble. Schgeloff (2007) claims that when a more senior person in a meeting initiates a repair, the subordinate would then take the responsibility of completing the repair. This is related to the concept of a division of labour and due to

the asymmetrical relationship between the two parties, there is bound to be power play among the talk participants. Further, Young (2008) also asserts that in institutional talk asymmetries exist as a pre-established feature. Fairclough (1989) states

people in positions of power may decide what is correct or appropriate in an interaction and who also has the power to determine to what extent power will be overtly expressed. (p.72)

In doing repair work during interactional trouble, the members in the CofP show that they have shared responsibility of clearing up misunderstandings and they co-construct their talk to make meaning clearer. In the process they exert or downplay the power, either overtly or covertly. There are many instances of exertion of power by the Chair of the meeting and Chapter Five (extracts 19-27) has offered some detailed analysis of these instances. It may be concluded that the GM is more overt in her display of power while the others take a more covert approach. To sum up, in this particular case study, the pyramid structure of power and decision making is very much visible and power sharing is not extended by the Chair to the subordinates. The subordinates also seem to accept this and do not challenge the Chair.

7.1.3 Reprimands

Reprimands were carried out when the GM or Chair of the meetings was unhappy with the state of her staff's work. She uses various discourse strategies to reproach them, and some of these are the choice of lexis, conditional clauses, use of direct speech, imperatives, narratives and pronouns (refer to extracts 28-31). The use of reprimands may be peculiar to the CofP, and the findings cannot be generalised. However this is

emergent from the data and offers a contribution which may not have been realised in other studies. As mentioned in Chapter One (refer to section 1.9), not many studies have done in Malaysian business contexts. The few stated are Morais (1994), Atan (1998), Paramasivam (2004) and Shanmuganathan (2008). The closest is Paramasivam (2004) who compared the way Malaysians and Japanese businessmen negotiate business at meetings using politeness strategies.

For this study, using a CA-influenced methodology and complemented with ethnography, talk data was analysed and discourse of reprimands stood out. It is however only used by one person, the leader of the business establishment, who is a Malaysian Chinese female corporate leader. However the way reprimands are used is an interesting finding in this study.

This study is significant in that it looks at talk-in-interaction within a real workplace, and it is all about what organizations really are, and their structure, which may not so neatly structured and yet gets work done. In Malaysia, only a few studies have been carried out on talk at meetings, and it is hoped that this project and its findings has filled a gap in the field of language and communication at the workplace.

7.2 Conclusion

This is a study on talk at management meetings within a Malaysian business context (manufacturing) using a discursive approach to data analysis and interpretation. What the study reveals is that real language use in Malaysian business enterprises offers an authentic description of managerial discourse, and this can form a basis for further studies on how these practices can help participants at meetings shape their discourse.

Cameron (2001) asserts that any research which aims at examining “some aspect of reality by studying discourse will end up with data in the form of *language*” (p.17). The findings in this study may contribute to the field of business discourse and communication, and also to the empirical analysis of the social life of language and analysis of human social organization (Duranti, 1992).

Handford (2012, p.34) claims that “meetings embody and provide a platform for various practices that can go on in business, especially management practices” and the findings of this study could also be offered to the researchers in the management domain to carry out studies, such as on how leadership is constructed through talk.

Holmes (2009) in her article titled “Discourse in the workplace: new direction in workplace discourse research” predicted that in the next twenty years, studies in this field will continue to grow and one might see new application to the methodologies, approaches and data collection procedures of workplace discourse. This is possibly due to the fact that at modern day workplaces, spoken and written talk modes are not the only forms of communication used. The increasing use of computer mediated communication have allowed the use of social media such as email, sms, whatsapp, twitter, with skype and video conferencing tools. Thus, where time is a crucial factor in businesses, these tools have enhanced and sped up the communication process, between employers and their employees, and between business owners and their customers. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) also speculate that studies in this context may include more multi-modal data and its corresponding multimodal analysis. This also may result in interdisciplinary studies, and that language or linguistics do not have to be individual fields, but collaborations between language and other fields of knowledge such as

management, leadership, media, sports, science and so forth and hopefully bring new insights and knowledge in the fields.

7.3 Implications of the Study

Some of the findings from this study may be useful for language and communication, specifically in the field of business communication. The lack of authentic material in training manuals and textbooks has been an issue of discussion among practitioners in the field. Findings from such studies may provide authentic resource material, that is, taking real workplace discourse data, and incorporate them into training programmes. This may bring about a new paradigm to the pedagogy, especially for workplace communication skills.

The findings here may also be of use to raise awareness and create a more reflective approach to understanding communication at work. And so pedagogically this research may contribute to the field of training or teaching in the business field. According to Bhatia (2007), in *Language for Specific Purposes*, we need to marry theory and practice.

7.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The study in this research utilised only audio recorded data which was then transcribed. There is definitely a need to bring in non-verbal features to future research as the role and significance of paralinguistic features may reveal other aspects of talk which cannot be tapped in through transcripts alone. This also means bringing in the multi modal perspective where gestures and gazing, are also features to look into. There have been such studies done by scholars abroad (Mondada, 2004) but none so far in Malaysia.

Bhatia (2007), at a keynote lecture in Malaysia, introduced the term “discourse competence” which is defined as “the ability to identify, construct, interpret, and successfully exploit a specific repertoire of professional, disciplinary or workplace genres to participate in the knowledge producing and knowledge consuming activities of a specific CoP”, heralds the need for this concept to be addressed in relation to professional expertise to meet the demands of the new work order.

A study on language and leadership styles in Malaysian business contexts may be worth looking into. Various studies on language and leadership (Hede, 2001; Holmes & Marra 2004) have been carried out with speakers of English but within Malaysia specifically, or Asian contexts, studies of this nature are still lacking, where the context of talk are by non-native English speakers. It would be interesting to conduct some in depth studies in leadership styles in the manufacturing sector and look specifically at language and power vis-à-vis the relationship of leaders and their subordinates in the structure.

Lastly, Suchan and Charles (2006) calls for more research to focus on those with less power in institutional talk as too many studies have already focussed on the “powerful” because “their voices are rarely heard or are muffled” (p.396). The data from this study reveals power discourse, and in this case study, the focus is on the GM, who is the “more powerful” person in all the interactions examined. The “less powerful” persons in the data do attempt to exert some form of power as evident in their language use, but these have not been analysed. Based on Suchan and Charles’s (ibid.) recommendation, there are possibilities of examining the language of the less powerful to compare, and to look at the ways in which the two groups differ.

In the Malaysian context it might also be worthwhile to compare how the various ethnic groups enact their power through talk at work. In this study, the boss is a Malaysian Chinese female. Comparative studies could be done on the other ethnic groups: female leaders in Malaysian SMEs.

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APPENDIX 1

PERMISSION LETTER



Teoh Mei Lin
PhD student (THA040019)
Faculty of Languages and Linguistics
University of Malaya
50603 Kuala Lumpur

teohml@um.edu.my

3 April 2007

To:
The General Manager
HFM
Port Klang
Selangor

Dear Madam,

Permission to conduct a “Communication at Workplace” research

I am Ms Teoh Mei Lin, a PhD candidate attached to University of Malaya, The area of my PhD research is Communication Studies. I need to collect data from a company so that I can study the communication strategies of people at work.

I am writing to seek your permission to carry out a study that would focus on the meetings at your company, and I hope to audio record the meetings, All data collected is for research purposes ONLY. I would also appreciate it if you allow me to observe your company for a period of time, and I am willing to help out in any way I can.

My contact number is 03-79673153 and my email is teohml@um.edu.my. I would be grateful if you allow me to gain access to your company. I would like to request a meeting with you so that you can be briefed on what I intend to do.

Thank you in advance and looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX 2

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTION

Symbol	What it means:
/	marks overlapping utterances. For eg: A: hey what is it / you see there B: / I got to
=	marks when there is no interval between adjacent utterances. For eg: A: if you wish to see her go on to Room 102 B: =102
(.)	a short untimed pause or gap within or between utterances.
...	a longer pause
-	marks a halting abrupt cutoff.
<u>word</u>	underlining marks a word or passage said with emphasis.
(?)	unintelligible speech
()	description of the context. For eg: (laughs)

The transcription system is adapted from Jefferson (1973)

APPENDIX 3

TRANSCRIPTION OF MMI

Speaker	Dialogue	Line
GM	no need to explain the green ah just go on red red one um the third party one is explained already only discuss about the ASA side lah I think the rest are quite alright ah except for number of complaints Beng has already answer there there are three three complaints ah	1 2 3 4
Beng	=yeah	5
GM	two	6
Beng	=err	7
GM	two	8
Beng	=two two not three	9
GM	two complaint one is	10
Beng	big mac slicing the other is corn meal water slit	11
GM	means ah R and M and distributy also same lah	12
Beng	filter bag not feeder bag filter bag not feeder bag (flips pages)	13
GM	I think you have explained that ah <u>but</u> what are you doing with this ah is it okay with you I mean in terms of the oven breakdown is it incidental or because the poor maintenance	14 15 16
Beng	okay the first one partly is because of the er preventive maintenance when they do the preventive maintenance they didn't cover the checking of the tensioning just do a clean up clean up of the shaft	17 18 19
GM	=ah isn't it become er er quite a normal process already why didn't we do that	20
Beng	=yeah because the tension is not ah loose easily one that is for the the trench chain so what happen was ah the first instant when they they discover that the what you call that the latch broken then ah they change it without this wear and tear and then it happen <u>again</u> and then they found out the tensioner / is	21 22 23 24 25
GM	/okay is it quite alright situation for you to- not to check	26 27
Beng	=no it's not alright so now now we redefine the MPBF program to include all those areas	28 29
GM	=if if I mean if what my question here is that isn't it a normal already if you change this you have to check the tension	30 31
Beng	=no this is separate area on the separate area so what do they do on the preventive maintenance program now is mainly the cleaning of the tract and oiling of bearing so this tensioner is inside one of the gearbox	32 33 34
GM	=a common sense for you to actually change actually change check the tension right	35 36
Beng	=ah that is actually once in every few months	37
GM	=yeah all I am asking you is that if you change ah the bag /the bag ah	38
Beng	/huh huh	39
GM	is it a common sense to also check it again	40
Beng	=yes by right they have to check but they thought it's a wear and tear just change without checking the tensioner so that was what happen to the second /group	41 42 43
GM	/ but but by right he has to	44
Beng	=check the tensioner before er install the er the replacement part so what happen was they just change the parts without checking	45 46
GM	so what do we do to him	47
Beng	=so I have to ask him to ah ah what do you call that ah include all this into his normal routine checkup instead of few few ah once in few months do on	48 49

	every month	50
GM	now how often now	51
Beng	=now every month have to do the checking because checking you have to open / up the	52 53
GM	/ so who is verifying the monthly check	54
Beng	=ah I get this er this Siti to do that now basically I ask her to er er do more on the verification process for engineering department	55 56
GM	=you check their record	57
Beng	=ah I do check lah now every week she give me a report and then also I meet up with Zain to discuss on the outstanding things as a progress	58 59
GM	this has caused quite a lot of rejects you know <u>Mat</u> your side regarding the ah discussion on the high cost per unit ah due to lower volume so you say want to revise the budgeted volume can you revise budgeted volume	60 61 62
Chai	I think I- we have checked through ah / through	63
GM	/ budgeted means budgeted how can you revise the work unless the company allowed you to to give you a- I mean you already submitted your budget you do not (?) <u>revise</u> the (?) why revise	64 65 66
Chai	=I think we explain this ah why why it's so high now er / I ask Mat to-	67
GM	=yeah I know it's high	68
Chai	/ take the fixed cost	69
GM	/ <u>ah</u> say it again	70
Chai	we analyze into fixed cost for the transport and the variable cost basically variable cost all those petrol and maintenance and the sub con of the- then in fact the variable are consistent so only the fixed cost per piece actually fluctuated so because ah the budget is one million pieces but compare to actual now just because the volume lower fixed cost actually higher so this price will overall-	71 72 73 74 75 76
GM	yeah you can explain but you <u>cannot revise</u> okay	77
Chai	/ er	78
GM	/ can you revise	79
Chai	=er	80
GM	=no I'm just asking you really (she laughs)	81
Chai	=unless it's simply change lah	82
GM	=huh	83
Chai	=unless it's simply changed	84
GM	=but then the company already accepted your budget for long I mean the last year budget lah this year budget is already fix one	85 86
Chai	=I think he's talking about the BSC measurement lah	87
GM	/ oh BSC	88
Chai	/ not the budget	89
Mat	/ the invoicing	90
GM	/ don't simply say budget budget budget budget ah my mind is budget you know	91
Mat	/ the invoicing	92
Chai	/ not the budget he's talking about the measurement here	93
GM	=oh then you say a wrong thing you should say revise the measurement	94
Chai	=correct	95
GM	oh BSC must be very precise ah because the way you say budget ah should straightaway I jumped into it and oh budget (she laughs) how to revise I'll I'll definitely make noise lah <u>right</u>	96 97 98
Chai	=just to make it er-	99
Mat	=for example the report you see they the (?) it comes from the volumes the budgeted cost for ah ah transport is up here	100 101
GM	can you bring some pick Alpane not so poor mah some the pointer-	102
Choo	no	103
GM	oh don't have ah	104

Mat	so is it (?)	105
GM	/ go and buy one lah	106
Choo	/ hey <u>I thought</u> it comes with the pointer this projector comes with the pointer	107
Lynn	in the bag in the plastic bag (Mat said something but was ignored)	108
GM	<u>hey go</u> and /get one lah otherwise next time people want to use it lah cannot get	109
Choo	/ it comes with it	110
GM	who is taking care of all this better take care of all this <u>small thing lah</u> but then it's nice to be aware that this is difficult for presentation okay say say again can you point	111 112 113
Mat	okay actual cost for the transport er for the past four months ah is maintains about forty-four thousand budgeted cost at forty-eight thousand so in term of transport total cost we are still below budget at least about eleven percent below budget in terms of volumes actual volume per month of April is third party only one hundred seventeen thousand actual MDL's eight hundred forty-four thousand and we still have to reach until roughly pieces but the budget the budget for two oh oh seven for third party is one point zero five million than MDL about one hundred ninety-two thousand five hundred pieces so total about one point two point two against actual that we have average is about one hundred thousand pieces so that's why the volume actually is lower than the one we forecast for the past for the past four months so that contributes to the actual cost per piece higher than budget cost per piece then we also have early analysis through our variable cost-	114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126
GM	I still- okay talk about this changing ah BSC ah still is link to your budget you budgeted this much you just have to explain you cannot link to your budget still it link to your budget even though you say change the target for this ah BSC it still link back to your budget if you have already actual budgeted this much hor we understand lah we know it is it is it is out of your control because it's MDL's volume that has come down	127 128 129 130 131 132 133
Mat	=but here should be made (?)	134
GM	=just have to explain otherwise it become a misleading the report that we thought we are always exceeding the budget it's all in green but in actual fact we know that MDL volume is lower	135 136 137
Mat	third party (?)	138
Chai	/ in fact ah both are-	139
GM	/ third party ah ah	140
Chai	/ compare both MDL and third party compare to last year both are-	141
GM	=ah yeah so it's it's- we just have to accept the fact that our budget ah the figure is on the high side then we just explain lah but it's not your fault we know it's because of ah it's a normal volume right (several turns skipped) third party you budgeted how many pieces	142 143 144 145
Mat	=one zero five zero	146
GM	=actual it's seventy-five	147
Mat	=seventy-six	148
GM	you budgeted the third party the higher the volume actually come from which market	149 150
Mat	=BUK	151
GM	<u>but</u> they didn't do as well lah BUK	152
Mat	BUK actually-	153
GM	=you only budgeted three percent increase ah still didn't achieve ah	154
Mat	=ANW lah especially	155
Chai	=I think overall overall the buns business drop both MDL and all that-	156
Mat	=first quarter because of the health issue	157
Chai	=health issue er advertisement issue issue this this three issues affected the bun business for third party / is quite similar	158 159
GM	/ first quarter but still April already <u>okay lah okay</u> cannot change I think / better not change	160 161
Mat	/ just explain-	162

GM	just explain that's why you are here to explain erm mmm and then the higher maintenance cost for the trucks	163 164
Mat	=currently for the consumer side we have only two trucks plus we use a PK truck for Alpane	165 166
GM	=PK is one ah the new one ah now the new one where you do then the other half of the usage will be-	167 168
Mat	=half	169
GM	=you will doing for which market which the half is for local ah	170
Mat	the SJ one we go outstation this one replace local lah so the truck that going outstation is only ten truck only ten particular trucks so of course it's- so that's why the usage is overuse then we have about rental cost we also have a tyre cost of forty percent every month (?) for the- so now actually we are discussing next week on how much we can actually bring down the cost for repair and maintenance use their their their their their workshop services what we can all- the paper work base on	171 172 173 174 175 176 177
GM	=oh use-	178
Chai	=they are they are having their own team their own maintenance team for the truck-	179 180
GM	=so you are going to ask them to do-	181
Mat	=I will discuss this later in terms of service maintenance they can do for us-	182
GM	=cheaper lah	183
Mat	/ don't know yet no cost yet	184
Chai	/ should be cheaper lah	185
Mat	/ could be cheaper	186
Chai	/ we are waiting for the-	187
Mat	we have now our (?) is not bad we only have two trucks we go and they tend to hire-	188 189
GM	=okay lah we check with them they are willing to help us then we-	190
Mat	and then the third one	191
GM	=can we can we er deal with MFD ah outstation delivery of our bun ah is still go into the truck ah	192 193
Beng	=it's with other products oh it's not only buns-	194
GM	still with other products ah	195
Beng	ah so a bit dangerous	196
GM	ah the volume is too small to go by our own truck	197
Mat	we cannot we cannot use because we don't have the number of certain rules at least certain parts (?) so we can carry that volume-	198 199
Beng	=oh not carry that volume are you saying that we can tumpang	200
Mat	tumpang ah	201
GM	I'm saying that do you all study the- because we can put and keep more erm space for their- so the minute they're asking contractors to do the bun then it is the opportunity for Alpane lah	202 203 204
Mat	/ is other trucks-	205
GM	/ just that lah	206
Mat	/ other trucks	207
GM	they are still mixing our bun into their truck company <u>right</u> so the minute you know that they're using outside truck just to deliver buns that is something that you all may think about / whether you want to do yourself (?)	208 209 210
Beng	/ they they do have occasionally	211
GM	/ or go through the country-	212
Beng	/ because of the two plus one also so two times ah is theirs one time is bun so when it's ah purely buns then probably-	213 214
GM	=only one time bun the the the drop lah	215
Mat	that one we have to cater truck currently our truck use is full-	216
GM	=orh	217
Mat	=in term of capacity in term of capacity it's full	218
GM	okay erm help to evaluate own truck in current business	219
Mat	=okay this is er to cover our own definitely after here change over for the one	220

	truck is okay already we have the truck (?) then somebody else to do for us for the outstation	221 222
GM	oh start local base so you are thinking-	223
Mat	=I'm thinking to ask contractor to do outstation it's better for us so we have less truck maintenance ah but the problem now is still talking about (?) control-	224 225
GM	/ yeah lah that that would be-	226
Chai	/ that's the requirements	227
Mat	/ that requirement	228
GM	/ that would be a bit tough	229
Mat	the conditions are- certain condition you know	230
GM	=you have to do the condition for them lor	231
Chai	=maybe have to put in writing	232
GM	=writing lah how to control do it properly lah okay SJ done ah	233
Chai	eh come back to the maintenance cost ah because for the first four months we exceeded budget (?) for the remaining period we need to really control that-	234 235
GM	=control what	236
Chai	=so that get back to ah whole year budget	237
GM	=budget but ah	238
Beng	right now Siti is er updating me on the weekly basis on expenses on the all the expenses so she must know about the total ah maintenance cost for the buns lah total-	239 240 241
GM	=you may control on the purchasing of things	242
Beng	yeah sometime is because the parts ah they charge her lah so she monitor the spare parts and also the purchasing-	243 244
GM	=did you verify	245
Beng	=ah yes because all the invoice-	246
GM	receipt and damage ah that's the way that is only the way you can control trucks because trucks are so many-	247 248
Beng	=yes	249
GM	=if you don't control this way you may be (?)	250
Chai	so I give you the figures let's say average for the next ah remaining buns how much per bun lah	251 252
GM	hey how come Mutu is not here ah	253
Beng	I think he is ah dealing with this er er oven	254
GM	sometimes it is very good for them to be here-	255
Beng	=yeah I did spoke to him-	256
GM	=to hear the kind of things that we want to do-	257
Beng	=spoke to Abu also this morning-	258
GM	=yeah even Abu even Abu the efficiency and all this they can hear themselves and they will be under the kind of / er ah	259 260
Beng	/ Mutu is because of the oven bearing burn off	261
GM	so er I am a bit- how do I go on this page ah suddenly this page appear do I-	262
Beng	=oh that's the process process-	263
Choo	Chai Chai cost saving	264
GM	do I read this page ah I don't know where to er er- do I ask questions on this page or it is somewhere else	265 266
Beng	=you mention before er every month must have important two two process	267
Choo	process	268
GM	=oh didn't have title also	269
Chai	=you can look at- look at the-	270
GM	=no title so asking what is this whether you want me to (?) you <u>must put</u> a title lah	271 272
Chai	=so you look at the April month items ah-	273
GM	=ah	274
Chai	=did you look at the April month items ah April	275
GM	=I I I look at the April again I did but most of this are related to equipment	276

	mah so I was thinking maybe this is the equipment list that you want me to go through but again (she laughs) you didn't put a title here for me to ah know what is your purpose of submitting / this	277 278 279
Chai	/ this ah process-	280
Beng	=err look at the month-	281
Chai	=number of improvements-	282
GM	=number of improvement then you put a-	283
Chai	=number of process improvement	284
GM	then you put a title here lah then I know oh this is what I have I have to- you all because when look at April month I didn't read after lah	285 286
Beng	okay April / is is-	287
GM	/ okay can I ask what is AP already ah AP what is AP AP	288
Chai	=account payable	289
GM	aiyoh please lah aiyoh	290
Lynn	(she laughs)	291
GM	sometimes ah I'm thinking of equipment sometimes I'm thinking of- (she laughs)	292
Lynn	no I think you should put a ledger (skipped few turns – inaudible)	293
GM	(she laughs) because you people use this kind of short forms in your own mind you know you know you know I don't know you know but-	294 295
Beng	exactly more into (?) forms (he laughs)	296
Lynn	(she laughs)	
GM	I keep thinking and thinking I said don't waste my time lah (she laughs) aiyoh account payable	297 298
Beng	there are there are some changes because Keong put in the wrong one so this is the the right one lah for bunline month of April there are three lah one S two for engineering ah this is account payable lah	299 300 301
GM	this is for the bunline mah	302
Beng	=yeah okay ah in term of engineering the flatbread issue ah when we discuss that carry out the the modification of the trench chain due to the cycle time and also the er ah the conveyor before the oven this one we do not require extra motion-	303 304 305
GM	=is there any good er result	306
Beng	ah this one is basically er before replacing this there are two sections so one guy have to go and put the pan so now no need just put it straightaway	307 308
GM	so you save how many	309
Beng	=save the motion only for several products so the headcount still the same it's just base base on the motion	310 311
GM	but the wall bread after you change that do you feel any improvement	312
Beng	=there is some improvement in term of the pan flow	313
GM	should say your result lah so I don't have to ask report your result as well-	314
Beng	=so that means this one you / can	315
GM	/ you can put either ah	316
Beng	=you can put it as result lah instead of / cost saving oh	317
GM	/ result ah <u>result achieved</u> and what is your account payable er is this better I think now better orh more efficient orh	318 319
Yen	ah nearer lah	320
GM	=huh	321
Yen	=they are nearer to each other-	322
GM	=oh	323
Chai	=no need to walk around right (he laughs)	324
GM	and then the the staff you all get your payment forms already now you submit for claims is it better now	325 326
Chai	better	327
Lynn	(she laughs) delivery is (she laughs) (?)	328
GM	so you all should praise her you know and say something good to them to the department or whatever-	329 330
Lynn	=tell them personally	331

GM	=can motivate the department to do more (she laughs)	332
Beng	tell them personally lah orh-	333
GM	=you can also tell the the department-	344
Beng	=thank you (he laughs)	345
GM	=ah that is the way	346
Chai	=give them a catch you right	347
Beng	=give them a star in <u>Taiwan</u> ah they have the star program lah	348
GM	=catch you right also you never use it-	349
Lynn	=it's actually followed by catch you right	350
Beng	=so	351
Chai	=down there I don't think ah anyone can-	352
GM	=we have catch you right afterwards-	353
Lynn	=yeah the star and catch you right is the same-	354
GM	=okay we will talk about catch you right in the afternoon I'm having a meeting about that / so you are in oh-	355 356
Lynn	/ yup	357
GM	we see how many we can effectively do the catch you right because it is so quiet okay ah any other thing that you want to talk about bunline no ah so we go to minutes for bunline right	358 359 360
Choo	=Beng have to extend one copy of the minutes	361
Beng	=ah okay	362
GM	your your action plan for improvement er should be following the minutes or after minutes ah or now better	363 364
Beng	=we can do the action plan first lor	365
GM	=action plan ah okay okay so I will go through minute the action plan for improvement ah for the bunline	366 367
Beng	March or April	368
GM	actually April just want to know er item number eight no six six er already highlighted the invent ah you said you want to establish the V-O-Q	369 370
Beng	=huh that one is the flatbread line	371
Choo	=you never put the title lah	372
Beng	oh yeah now I put the title	373
GM	I regret whatever I oh yeah ah bunline here bunline by the way I don't have comments lah I feel alright lor I read through-	374 375
Beng	=ah then	376
GM	=ah let me see only the oven lor oven chain breakdown which I already ask you just now er well the question about your staff whether what they do with him	377 378
Beng	=okay	379
GM	=you have include in the procedures and you have ask Siti I think to monitor more often you are doing actually you should write a bit more details here lah you are doing a monthly oven chain tensioning rather than-	380 381 382
Beng	=yeah the the procedure is include-	383
GM	=all included there lah-	384
Beng	=ah procedures yes	385
GM	=but it's good for you to highlight to us oh now these are the good things that I have done in the past they are only doing like this now we are already doing this so I have a person to verify all this so that you know this process will be created like this ah very- you just summarize it lah they don't have to doubt it- did they really do it did they really carry out it is a concern that they have-	386 387 388 389 390
Beng	=okay	391
GM	just the main one you know if you just write like that ah they will again have questions coming out try not to let us ask too many questions if you can	392 393
Beng	okay	394
GM	=if I can read your minutes ah when I see it that's it no need to ask save everybody time okay	395 396
Beng	okay	397
GM	okay next one	398

Beng	=er minutes lah	399
GM	erm	400
Choo	Mira on action improvement do you want to run through the March one	401
GM	=oh March one yes okay can you just let us know March have you done all-	402
Beng	=March ah	403
GM	it is a follow up from from the March month ah whether you have done it if not done you have to carry forward	404 405
Beng	=I think all all have been done	406
GM	ah oh er (flip pages) my one is-	407
Beng	=this one because we need the bun burner now we don't buy the coordinator one can work	408 409
GM	the wall bread okay done ah hmm done and then dough plaster not smooth tossing tossing high return dough-	410 411
Beng	=this part is done already	412
GM	=this is done already right	413
Beng	=done	414
GM	=done ah	415
Beng	=done already	416
GM	=then the wall bread okay done alright done so now we go to the minutes we need to see whether any question or not aiyah-	417 418
Choo	this is all about the action plan which has just come to an end (?)	419
GM	Mat erm what is the status of BUK now	420
Mat	erm we have charge new new price we quoted and we also have sent a letter of that price we offer to revise but they haven't come back on the revise-	421 422
GM	=so you are really charging him so we are on our safe side already right the rest all well prepared	423 424
Chai	=you are very quiet ah	425
Beng	=MBW MBW (a few people laugh)	426
Chai	=the rest okay-	427
GM	=so the two point five I have gone through already right er five-S ah	428
Choo	=we go back to the BUK you charge new price and you send letter to revise price	429 430
Mat	=yes lower price	431
Choo	=you lower it	432
Chai	=we have counter offer lower price	433
Mat	/ counter offer	434
Choo	/ lower	435
GM	=now go back to the five-S er suppose to present to us er monthly ah have you done that	436 437
Beng	=done	438
GM	Lynn to drive it why is bracket- is Chai-	439
Choo	=because Chai is taking care of admin and Beng is taking care of / operation	440
GM	/ operation	441
Choo	=Teong is the IT	442
GM	IT how much have you done the five-S	443
Chai	oh the-	444
GM	=you're suppose to give me a monthly er action plan you know what are the thing you have done so well so apparently for this one you all are not doing yet right	445 446 447
Chai	=but we we have planned out on the the er the outlet agent-	448
GM	=okay I hope that you can really / seriously carry out	449
Chai	=yeah I think we will start to do that	450
Choo	=so who is going to report on or do you want to report / separately or what	451
GM	/ Lynn you ah Beng you report on your production side	452 453
Beng	=hmm	454
GM	Chai you report on admin side Lynn you report on the training of five-S what what have you done to support the training what have you done to help them	455 456

	be aware of all this five-S are they all very clear about what is five-S you see if you as me I myself cannot remember all the the er I can only if you ask me the English one maybe I can lah but in the Japanese one I will not be able to remember everything so now do we want to use English or do we want to to use Japanese because Japanese to us is more difficult to remember if in English form maybe it's clearer-	457 458 459 460 461 462
Lynn	=I still feel English is better because-	463
Chai	=should be both Bahasa and English	464
Lynn	because Bahasa and English is quite okay but not Jap	465
Chai	=only the / the five words ah- (Lynn laughs)	466
GM	/ first we sort it out right am I right sort it out	467
Lynn	=absorb-	468
GM	=then you clean-	469
Lynn	=clean it up-	470
GM	=then you organize-	471
Lynn	=yep arrange-	472
GM	=arrange-	473
Lynn	=arrange then there's another one I forgot	474
GM	English is all better but but you ask me about the Japanese I cannot remember their words maybe you just use English-	475 476
Lynn	=translate it	477
GM	=otherwise people won't remember what is the five-S S I'm the worst in remembering all these words don't tell me about other language even English language I have problems / (she laughs)	478 479 480
Lynn	/ another thing is that ah Mira when you talk about five-S I created a checklist lah probably er Beng you can use that in your department cos it's nice to use it lah checking out to ensure that carry out is being done also by every department-	481 482 483 484
GM	=okay you can help me in this big area lah	485
Lynn	yes	486
GM	=like how do they go about doing it lah but the action will come from both of you oh I have done this this sorting out already maybe there are two for your section it's quite a big area so you may just choose one area first I start with this first or overall you say I start with my production file first there are so many things so I hope that next month we can see something more concrete at least okay	487 488 489 490 491 492
Beng	=okay	493
GM	I'm very patient you know I'm very patient I hope you get the message / (she laughs)	494
Beng	/ thank you very much-	495 495
GM	=now I use this method already settled already but don't don't ignore it ah	497
Beng	=okay	498
Lynn	my side also-	499
GM	=page what	500
Lynn	inside	501
GM	all done ah inside the CFC CFC it's only that erm red colour you need to put up the action	502 503
Lynn	=because ah-	504
GM	=what did you do to improve it	505
Lynn	=I want to brainstorm with the department head on- how to really do it because-	506
GM	=yeah so your action plan might be like what Beng have done yeah I forgot about that your action plan ah you have to do like what Beng have done and March what I do to improve all this problems	507 508 509
Lynn	=yep	510
GM	=it seems that it's quite low ah not even eighty percent	511
Lynn	=nope because the thing like some of them er are fifty fifty in between so I	512

	have remove that already those in between the fence one I can't take it so I take the one extreme group two the extreme bad one so	513 514
GM	=fifty fifty percent means what	515
Lynn	=I mean they can't say whether you know see for example there's a question like erm whether your boss do for you evaluation they will they'll put under fifty percent in the sense that neither yes neither no they can't decide no comments	516 517 518
Chai	(?)	519
Lynn	=so I cannot take that-	520
GM	=ah	521
Lynn	=so I cannot take because they have no comments <u>majority</u> of them comes out from that when I did this-	522 523
GM	=so you have to update your result you see yeah if you just fill in ah red colour ah no result given to me then that is not acceptable you have to give me why they are not happy and what do you do from the HR department to improve it so that you can raise your bar to eighty percent and above do like what Beng has done <u>Beng</u> you have done a good job now then I hope everybody will follow this style after many coaching ah (she laughs) okay	524 525 526 527 528 529
Choo	=I think it's already updated unless the copy that Yen sent earlier doesn't have staff turnover	530 531
Lynn	=everything was given-	532
Choo	=target training target-	533
Lynn	the training targets all was given to the- (?)	534
Choo	staff turnover	535
Lynn	=no no the the targets actual all the targets it was given to you	536
GM	can talk that later on later on not now okay any other thing from the- you all if not go to the flatbread line er (flip pages) flatbread line erm okay from Weng side ah Weng you've sent the sample to WFS world food supply	537 538 539
Weng	=ah yes and ah-	540
GM	=and X the improved X-recipe	541
Weng	ah we will send it next Monday	542
GM	=ah	543
Weng	=next Monday	544
GM	=ah so you all finish	545
Weng	=no they wanted the Y-recipe also so we together-	546
GM	=oh Monday coming Monday lah	547
Weng	=yes	548
GM	=so you mean you says that they are not willing to to order until they we have improved X-recipe lah what do they do in mean time if they don't have stock	549 550
Weng	=ah basically they all concentrate on tortilla	551
GM	oh-	552
Weng	=because tortilla will also contribute to the eighty percent of the (?)	553
GM	=okay	554
Weng	=so ours is only actual depend on us whether or not-	555
GM	=okay Samy and Beng you all have a good job to do Beng I think you all have to focus on the evenness ah	556 557
Beng	ah	558
GM	what else can you do to improve the evenness even the complain from ah Miss Gong also the hot press after pressing ah certain areas is like three mm thick right <u>am I right</u> so is there anything you can do with the hot press the root cause come down from the hot press er maybe the hot press is quite old already or the alignment is out or maybe other (?) (mobile phone rings)	559 560 561 562 563
Beng	=probably be- because the one one piece ah one side is very clear and the one side is (?) but that one is still within the range of the spec-	534 565
GM	=ah	566
Beng	/ so that the-	567
GM	/ ah yeah I know what you are saying is within the spec <u>but</u> ah the complain is like it is as low as even one mm ah is it correct is it correct	568 569

Samy	=this is ah yeah one mm sometimes is is not consistent we check the four spots this one will depend more yield only the minor one another area but the fourth area was like more differences	570 571 572
GM	so the the more thicker one is like how many mm / different from the	573
Samy	/ ah our target-	574
GM	=the lowest and the highest is how many mm different	575
Samy	=we giving the two to three so they are which three plus three point two-	576
GM	=ah that is the thing if you give two to two to three the whole piece ah should be around two to three ah you see but certain area ah higher than three than- that's where the crispiness is affected / so you <u>better</u>	577 578 579
Beng	/ we we right now ah- where else because when we run the DMP one no problem so only run this-	580 581
GM	=okay don't say that no problem DMP one ah-	582
Beng	=not consistent-	583
GM	=you have to ask your girl that oh <u>really really</u> compare you know ask your QA girl to focus that time a little bit on this because <u>don't forget</u> thin crust pizza is our function now	584 585 586
Beng	=okay	587
GM	if you don't want have thin crust pizza you don't have flatbreadline so you better be <u>very very serious</u> in checking all this point we depend on thin crust to survive now unless UMA give us tortilla to run otherwise we will have problem so for you if I were you I would put my priority now on thin crust quality control assurance so you check the two customers specifications <u>really check</u> every spot you know maybe you say you now check four spot you may want to be increase say to eight you know <u>more spots</u> so you have a better distributions then you can do a better study and you can really find the root cause is it- how is the trend like is always this- always this side or always that side or based on the previous study is like not able to get the consistent ah kind of result you see it varies er you use SPC <u>really use SPC</u> maybe you can- and how you study I do not know lah you all say cannot your conclusion is cannot but are you using the right method	588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600
Samy	you mean the speeding method	601
GM	=yeah SPC method can be / applied to them I know	602
Samy	/ it can apply one time-	603
GM	=but then how detail are you studying it how critical and all is your erm erm because people also have- if you use the way you use this girl QA girl number one the next day you may use QA girl number two so they themselves also the people also have their own variant both of them so <u>Beng</u> you <u>better</u> study carefully together with R and D one more time but do it really really really very detail this time if you need to change the hot press then we have to change the hot press I do not know	604 605 606 607 608 609 610
Samy	=I think the- we have to create one first almost two that one really got problem that one not at the moment we using casaareala-	611 612
Beng	=most of the time we are using casaarela so now we need-	613
GM	=casaarela lah ah is good lah	614
Samy	=no that's the one that they need to align every department (?) monitor if they want to continue run then-	615 616
GM	=ah so you have to put your focus there lor Beng you need to <u>really really</u> really <u>really</u> monitor okay I don't know how frequent ah one hour twenty minutes or what so you set this criteria in order that they get a consistent treatment-	617 618 619
Beng	=I'll give you a- a- the trend lah for this purpose	620
GM	=ah so when Miss Gong won't come back and complain I told her personally you know and she was like you know I hope you can really really improve it you are all very supportive whenever I complain you all will come but I also wish that- hope that you all can really ah look into it seriously you know I don't want to keep coming back to tell you that and then you keep telling that I	621 622 623 624 625

	will do it I will do but at the end ah I keep facing the same problem we are very good whenever they complain we'll run to them very supportive but we do not want this to continue waste their time also you go there and waste their time also if you can change it fine without them calling us ah that will be the best waste their time waste our time okay ah this one very important	626 627 628 629 630
Choo	=this hot press ah upgrade all the time	631
Beng	yeah	632
GM	so now talking about X-recipe next one is the efficiency Beng you say that higher percentage of thirty plus fifty five percent discount what do you mean by this ah because I think it's not reflected there	633 634 635
Beng	=whole year one ah	636
GM	=huh (?) where's the minutes	637
Choo	(flip pages) wait a minute under the table the one given by him	638
GM	but I didn't see I didn't see thirty five percent efficiency for thirteen under the title of efficiency higher percentage of thirteen-inch pizza crust fifty five percent this month contributed to lower efficiency fifty five percent of reject is it don't know what you are writing	639 640 641 642
Beng	=no this one is base on that this one is not written by me the Alpane report right	643
Yen	(?)	644
GM	so fifty five percent of rejection rate is it	645
Beng	oh the	646
GM	fifty five percent of rejection rate	647
Beng	er not too sure because of the the higher er er number of thirteen-inch produced in month / of-	648 649
GM	/ oh the proportion	650
Beng	yeah proportion produced in the month of the er April April	651
GM	higher percentage of thirteen-inch pizza crust	652
Chai	compare to last month figure	653
Beng	=yeah	654
GM	=oh okay it's a proportion of the	655
Beng	=the mix lah the mix	656
GM	=of the volume lah	657
Choo	put more (?) thirteen-inch	658
Beng	yes we can only press two (?)	659
GM	my mind cannot switch lah higher percentage (laughs) they won't my mind is thinking about efficiency and your mind is thinking also about volume	660 661
Beng	the mix lah the mix lah	662
GM	=maybe make it clearer to us ah	663
Beng	=okay	664
GM	okay let me see number two under efficiency the comment ah that also when do oh when do you er you cannot stream line the packing line yet right	665 666
Beng	=ah now is er yeah we're placing a few people can do is to (?) and yet to confirm	667
GM	=so your improvement plan there-	668
Beng	=yeah and the	669
GM	but you did not tell me (flip pages) you did not tell me er what is the result	670
Beng	=no we have not finalize yet still er having er once finalize then we will- I'll let you- update	671 672
GM	=oh ah you you will include	673
Beng	=yeah it's now in progress now it's doing	674
GM	=okay ah now it's doing ah	675
Beng	=yeah	676
GM	do not just stop and then er later on ah don't forget / I will follow up	677
Beng	/ definitely because	678
GM	/ I will follow up	679
Beng	/ this one is the bottleneck	680
	one now also we have to clear this bottleneck	681

GM	=because this is- was mentioned last month ah so I want to see what what is the results	682 683
Beng	=okay	684
GM	okay under- so let's see your action plan (laughs) rejection rate (?) I know why you are in the red action plan for flatbread in the month of April April April okay so the first item you have to get back to us on the result then the rest no comment lah number six only lor after slot for the raw material oh that one just now I asked you these questions-	685 686 687 688 689
Beng	=ah	690
GM	=is it already highlighted to the inventory supervisor highlighted so highlight	691
Beng	ah it starts with the inventory on the er billing the raw materials lah because basically sometimes we miss out- miss out the new order and then er at least the	692 693
GM	=if you highlight the name but you cannot	694
Beng	=not I-	695
GM	=give it to him you know you have to come back and tell us we have simply exchange	696 697
Beng	=yeah it would matter earlier but some of their order we miss out and some wrong order as well so we have to improve on that area-	698 699
GM	did you tell him to get the level right	700
Beng	=yeah	701
GM	=DOK do it properly	702
Beng	we are because this one is quite er dynamic	703
GM	=dynamic	704
Beng	=quite dynamic so we can't really gauge lah for instance like their	705
GM	=but if	706
Beng	=their	707
GM	=I know to establish the DOK you say dynamic is very difficult to but again you want him to	708 709
Beng	=the pizza one is quite consistent so it is okay for us but some product ah you order once a while that one is a bit problem because we also have to consider the shelf life of the product-	710 711 712
GM	=okay whatever you can do the EOQ on the minimum and the maximum one you should establish already having	713 714
Beng	=yeah yeah that one already established for the containers one product <u>there's no issue at all</u> just some issues it's er some kind- on those product that is run once in a while	715 716 717
GM	so even those ones once in a while because then it's not the problem of EOQ already so you have already establish all the EOQ for every those products that you are running it's only those once in a while lah and you tell me now that you cannot do EOQ for those then now you are mentioning EOQ	718 719 720 721
Beng	huh no this one is to improve on on those areas lah like like those products that is not running all the time like for example the naan some consideration is put into the materials that have shelf life er issues	722 723 724
GM	establish a proper buffer stock pre-order level and EOQ to minimize the production shortage or changing of product on completion days you read you read and see	725 726 727
Beng	=yeah I know	728
GM	=this sentence	729
Beng	=because sometimes there's ah we plan to run this time and then suddenly we have to change to run another time so the changes actually depend to the raw material stock sometimes this stock don't have so I've er er discuss with Jamil on the areas of changes so basically sometimes we don't capture the of changes because of the communication issues so still I highlighted to him here is to see how to improve on the communication lah	730 731 732 733 734 735
GM	=more of communication rather than EOQ right	736
Beng	=EOQ is something that have to be consistent lah	737
GM	=you say you already have	738

Beng	=yes that already have but pizza one already have	739
GM	=it's not the problem here mah	740
Beng	=yeah that's right	741
GM	=now we talking here is the action plan is to go / with EOQ mah	742
Beng	/ not only EOQ there are other other	742 744
GM	=to establish proper pre-order level EOQ in order level	745
Chai	to improve the stock the minimum stock lah	746
Beng	EOQ economic in order quantity so what is the economic quantity to order is not the minimum stock to order for example you you er want want a good price want a a product which can last in a shelf life so we order according to this factor	747 748 749
GM	=so what have you- so in the whole sentence here er the action plan is to	750
Beng	=to avoid the er shortage of material	751
GM	=to avoid the shortage of material	752
Beng	=ah when when we want to run the production	753
GM	other department are you happy with this you all work with Jamil already is it having any problem with him	754 755
Suan	er on our side basically not much of a problem <u>but</u> it's just that the production-	756
GM	=on your side means that your purchasing side no problem	758
Suan	=ah	759
GM	=just order and then you can just er whatever you want	760
Suan	=yeah we try to actually er we try to accommodate to his price lah but ah we do notice that sometimes the shortage is due to the production schedule change	761 762
GM	=ah huh	763
Suan	=so he has to have sufficient time to accommodate to this er production run that's how insufficient of time I mean comes in	764 765
GM	=like last minute order lah	766
Suan	=ah	767
GM	=more of a last minute order lah	768
Suan	=last minute like er production run like tomorrow only run this but I do not have that so the the time limit to him is very short so he will actually er take him a while lah	769 770 771
GM	so you will always try your best to order as quickly as / possible for him	772
Suan	/ yeah the minute he submit the p.r. or sometimes we will give a call we will order with the suppliers	773 774
GM	=so then can we then er have a kind of er understanding that if we need to change the plan er how many minimum days	775 776
Beng	=if you have order slip time for the customers it's just / (?)	777
GM	/ yeah ah that's why that's why (?)	778
Beng	/ the common one are like PHT and then the is er PAP	779
Suan	yeah but before we actually commit to the supplier	781
GM	usually / we talk to them one mah	782
Suan	/ yeah if we can I mean ah we will not say that if they want like tomorrow we say yes usually we will check our	783 784
GM	usually we will our stock mah right	785
Suan	=yes in fact if we don't have everything we then we will (?) / if we can	786
GM	/ yeah	787
Suan	=otherwise we will not	788
GM	=we don't go and commit it / before you check the stock (?)	789
Suan	/ yeah will not we will check on our side first	790
GM	so if you had done that ah is there / still problem to	791
Beng	/ yes sometimes the that's why I mention just now that sometimes the change of the plan is not a communicated but er-	792 793
GM	=so whose fault whose fault is that they change plan during completing-	794

Beng	=actually the planner and also er maybe quality control lah this is more (?)	795
GM	=under your area orh	796
Beng	=ah to to work closely with us	797
GM	=so Meena is leaving who is going to be your planner	798
Beng	=er at the moment	799
Suan	=Abu	800
Beng	=Abu will take over first until the new person will come in on the first of June	801
GM	=ah someone is coming in lah	802
Lynn	=first of June only	803
GM	=so if not if if you feel that this is a bit havoc in terms of communication	804
Beng	=ah just to highlight the (?) of the communication because	805
Suan	=in fact the the production planning ah we don't get this copy anymore	806
Beng	/ that's why	807
GM	/ but that's important for her	808
Beng	=I know because it's been highlighted / many times to Meena	809
GM	/ to whom	810
Beng	=to send out all the changes whenever they say	811
GM	=but this is very easy one mah their name is always	812
Beng	=she didn't ah ah actually do even-	813
Suan	=the report is not done so we do not know like you ask what is running today you wouldn't know tomorrow also you wouldn't know	814 815
GM	=you cannot keep quiet ah	816
Suan	=ah we observe	817
GM	=if you keep quiet ah it's your fault if you don't receive and you keep quiet-	818
Beng	=we receive probably there's a change they don't receive the change so that is the er-	819 820
Suan	=I don't know how is the frequency that you send out lah but sometimes once in a month we receive	821 822
Beng	=if that there is suppose to send out when there's changes to the schedule	823
Suan	=it won't be like one on the er er first of the month ah	824
Beng	=other than changes or update probably one / or two	825
GM	/ so how to avoid that when there's a change ah	826 827
Beng	=actually	828
GM	=what is the best way maybe every	829
Beng	=when there's a change they send out only	830
GM	=yeah yeah I know but in order to avoid this you know is it good for you to just er every day just try to align with the department again in the morning eh what are you all running every day is too late-	831 832 833
Samy	=we have a morning discussion and normally we share what (?)	834
Beng	=but today the part is not ah ah-	835
GM	=but it's too late also	836
Beng	=by right has to send out	837
GM	=on the day she knows ah on the day of production is too late she needs to know at least two three days in advance in order that she make sure that she has enough of raw material	838 839 840
Beng	=the material checking is by er Jamil	841
GM	=Jamil lah but she needs to know also that erm that she needs to order or not so your your morning discussion includes Jamil as well right	842 843
Beng	=yes	844
GM	=but then your people should be more involved lah who is involving in the morning discussion every week	845 846
Suan	=for now we don't we don't	847
GM	=can you get this communication flow out	848
Suan	=sure	849
GM	the morning discussion thing you see lah on that day if Jamil is there and your people is there they talk already	850 851
Samy	=normally we won't be too (?)	852

GM	=ah	853
Samy	=I said isn't it possible for / definitely (?)	854
GM	/ yeah yeah I know I know we will discuss because both of your department focus more on the raw material and inventory control so every morning just have a fifteen minute meet ah then it will be there already	855 856 857
Chai	=normally what time you all start	858
GM	=if you don't get ah if I'm trying to avoid that you see	859
Beng	=I think we can er I will send the / (?)	860
GM	/ if you have to plan	861
Beng	=based on the changes whenever there a change they will send out to all parties because some of the events	862 863
GM	=the thing is if they receive is only sometimes when the planner forget you see	864
Beng	=no it's- yeah it's obviously (?)	865
GM	=for example human error sometimes lah but if they have the morning session everyday ah it will be brought up already just a few	866 867
Beng	I'm afraid they will be bogged with other operational issues	868
Chai	=I think what we can do is er let's say nine thirty start you can first let them have the first ten minutes to cover the er shipment schedule for customs	869 870
GM	=you put it in the board lor	871
Beng	=yeah	872
Chai	/ so after that we have this er	873
GM	/ like last time you put on the white board ah	874
Beng	in front of this board actually is the schedule	875
GM	=ah then then no need to discuss you just have to walk past there and you must make sure that the planner update it ah every change lah so you don't have to be worried that during the	876 877 878
Beng	=not only that even engineer also needs the schedule to plan their work / so suppose to be up	879 880
GM	lah / just place it there	881
Suan	=it's just like what Mat did whenever / there's any change ah	882
Beng	/ yeah that suppose to be but we don't get (?)	883
Suan	=but we don't have that initial copy	884
GM	=so who is at fault that is not initiative	885
Suan	up to her	886
GM	so who is at fault	887
Beng	=mine mine mine	888
GM	=okay when can if it's your fault	889
Beng	=the new planner will will have the the port er er folio	890
GM	=yeah but then in order to put that thing on the eve of board who is suppose to do it	891 892
Beng	=the planner is doing the update	893
GM	=okay who is suppose to ask the planner to do it	894
Beng	=I suppose to	895
GM	=er okay do it if you don't do it you'll continue with the	896
Beng	=the board I receive it's just that e-mail and update	897
GM	=okay go ahead do do even if you print it out from the e-mail and paste it there also good enough if you don't have the time to write writing on the board is very difficult you manually have to change it since now you have this er just print it out ask change it if she forgot to do it you look after her go and look for her whatever whoever lah why haven't you update today	898 899 900 901 902
Chai	=you have to think about the up there one lah	903
Beng	(?)	904
GM	so there shouldn't be any problem anymore keep doing doing doing doing until ah you do it don't leave any chance okay ah now we discuss all this will	905 906

	not be a problem in the future	907
Chai	so will the morning session still still continue	908
GM	=I mean of course it's good if they can align lah you know it's all about communication and alignment but this thing if you paste it out it will help also not necessarily you stock	909 910 911
Beng	=I think er what Jamil do er is to (?) then he can monitor the stock from there	912
Chai	=but this one is the whole month right	913
Beng	=yes	914
Chai	=the whole month lah er I I notice the production office you have a daily one daily form	915 916
Beng	=daily is to record down from time to time	917
Chai	=from time to time	918
GM	=that's why we say everyday we have to update lah	919
Beng	=daily one everyday have to update	920
Chai	=(?) daily update	921
GM	=yeah we talk about that already just now he was worried that if they are bogged down with their own work they may not (?) without it so finally we say in order to avoid that is to update the planner has to place on the board if the planner did not paste on the board go look for her <u>Beng</u> will go and look for her so it will not be a problem lor even if they are busy with their work no time to have the fifteen minute meet since you have the time you take in the discussion (?) is there anything I miss out today (?) (GM answers a call) ahem okay er next one er I think this one no other question do you all have questions do you all have question nobody	922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930
Beng	=the	931
GM	=oh you very kind to each other	932
Beng	=the contract for the ah	933
GM	=no question	934
Beng	=er Chai the contact for er- the air cond the (?)	935
GM	(?)	936
Beng	=we talk to the (?)	937
GM	=you are suppose to do- I will talk to you	938
Beng	=because this one is already overdue the thing is now I have two breakdown ah it will affect my output and the the er GR also raise is it going to be send out because they need to repair the for the er er	939 940 941
Chai	/ er I suppose to	942
Beng	/ this one suppose to review ah before the contract expire it's not that after expire	943
GM	=I don't know what you all are talking about (she laughs)	945
Beng	=no because there's er er	946
GM	=huh	947
Beng	=there's er er	948
GM	=ECO Tech	949
Choo	=ECO Tech	950
Beng	=there is a meeting for the air cond er	951
Chai	maybe I give him a call later I mean the contract still can be signed	952
Beng	=but the thing is not to say lah because they are er actually er concern because they don't want to have the (?) job in case they highlight to them so the contract actually can er can	953 954 955
GM	=what is the problem can you tell me I don't understand it	956
Chai	=we have a contract between ECO Tech and Alpane for the normal maintenance of air cond	957 958
GM	=okay	959
Chai	=about the er (?) so ah this contract actually expire April	960
Beng	=February and March	961
Chai	so actually before before we sign again er actually we involve reviewing (?)	962
GM	=involve in- you are reviewing the contract	963
Chai	=reviewing the contract	964

GM	=but it take so long now April already	965
Beng	=yes before the expiry not after the expiry	966
Chai	(?)	967
GM	=so what is your problem now they don't want to do for us	968
Beng	=now ah there are some reluctancy from them all call also they don't come	969
Chai	=because of the delay they have er-	970
Beng	=but the contract not sign	971
GM	=but did they come and do it did they come and do the service	972
Beng	=if we force them they come lah you know if you don't force they don't come and some of the case that regular one they come often now they have some leak	973 974
GM	=it's true also lah what they say	975
Chai	=maybe I give him a call later to see-	976
GM	=why do you take so long to renew a contract contract should be review renewed before its expiry otherwise there's no contract why should I do for you I will do like that you are reviewing the cost and all these I understand but it should be done much earlier so your your time line ah instead of finishing in April you should put it in because now it's already February it should be finish in January so why did you run into this kind of situation can you all do it faster but you give him a call first give him a call first	977 978 980 981 982 983 984
Chai	=yeah we have fax him also	985
GM	=but don't delay it anymore because it's May already	986
Beng	=because yesterday I call him for the two er units that is down he say no p.o. I cannot do	987 988
GM	it's true what running a business so I won't I won't	989
Beng	=two air cond units for the smartline so now if I- the temperature is out of (?) it's taking of the / (?)	990 991
Chai	/ because still can issue p.o. mah no problem	992
GM	=no no no it's not related to contract already	993
Beng	/ yeah (?)	994
GM	/ he is saying that ah a lot of work is actually stop stop there you see no need just	995 996
Beng	=even the meal room checking I don't I don't force him lah I just forget about it	997
GM	he's saying that you know er p.o. is still somewhere where is it where is the p.o	998
Suan	=you have given up the p.r. is it so p.o. has to (?)	999
GM	=but why the p.r. give so late	1000
Beng	=p.o. not yesterday	1001
Suan	=is it	1002
Beng	=on Monday	1003
Suan	=I only receive yesterday	1004
Beng	=I pass on Monday because Mutu receive it last week when I was not around	1005
Suan	(?)	1005
Beng	on the eighteenth	1006
GM	so is- it (?)	1007
Chai	=so we we (?)	1008
Beng	=sign and pass it normally when I receive any p.r. I sign and pass it	1009
GM	so still boil down to the communication lah the outflow	1010
Suan	=normally we take this and (?)	1011
GM	just put a chop there	1012
Suan	=ah near there	1013
GM	=and ask the (?) to send to you this time	1014
Suan	=ah	1015
GM	=no dispute ah sometimes working ah you all ah	1016
Beng	=er er on the er program cost saving program base waste reduction so each one for me I feel that we focus more on cost saving a lot a lot of pressure to the supplier eventually waste reduction is something that we focus on we cannot	1017 1018 1019

	control (?) whatever savings is actually come from the come / from the	1020
GM	/ both side both teams must do you see but how they do it ah	1021 1022
Beng	=because eventually cost saving also may lead to waste because for example	1023
GM	=Beng you have to open your mind and think this way you see cost saving though you don't like to use the word cost saving you like to use the word waste reduction but this talk negotiations about the lower price by moving about purchase in / recently (?)	1024 1025 1026 1027
Beng	/ but sometimes there's a change of material	1028
GM	=if there is a change of material you do not know whether the the the the the that at the end boils down to your QA department to check that the specification from the raw material sent to us is according to the previous one	1029 1030 1031
Beng	but / (?)	1032
GM	/ so they can give me a lower price but they cannot short cut the quality so	1033
Beng	=this one is very subjective / because we won't be able to	1034
GM	/ so now the carton come back to us ah it has to be separate it has to be used lah you won't allow them to change the carton immediately you say give me two months before I change I want to make sure that you get the price of twenty percent reduction in the cost of carton that has got no impact to my quality and you have to give two months I know you are rushing into getting er better performance financial performance you know but the thing here is I need to make sure that the quality of the carton the integrity of the carton is still there so I have to ask my QA girl to study the strength of the carton so it all lies in your hands you know lies in your hand depending on how you control and manage it you see you don't you cannot allow other department for example to do what they want until you say yes it's proven that quality has no problem now go ahead and then how do you monitor that the quality is still consistent you put in your checking lah you know because your carton monitoring strength monitoring should be still there you see it's it's eventually you know after using actually using for two months ah it collapsed then you check again eh is this the same as the last quality last time the quality is like that now after three months now there is a change you should know the movement you see so the thing here is you have a say in this not other department so you can use waste reduction use it use the word waste reduction can use it	1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 1041 1042 1043 1044 1045 1046 1047 1048 1049 1050 1051 1052 1053
Beng	because / it's not only	1054
GM	/ but all their efforts	1055
Beng	=not only the word it's it's the effort also because sometimes-	1056
GM	=so just like what I say all their efforts that they do is actually er also thinking about the company wise lah	1057 1058
Beng	=yes of course	1059
GM	it's not for their own individual department so so you have to work together with them but don't rush into it don't rush into it that is my (?) the thing is you do your evaluation make sure things are alright you comply with the quality halal certification HACCP you know specification everything is there then only allow them to change it will take some time lah but this is very specific	1060 1061 1062 1063 1064
Chai	=but I think quality should not be affected	1065
GM	=ah quality should not be affected lah so from now you all just look on this concept lah shouldn't go very far off so if if if cost saving is not the right word use waste reduction same thing will go back to still with the progress write down the cost right that's how okay	1066 1067 1068 1069
Beng	=cost of reduction production cost	1070
GM	yeah there are a lot of other things lah you know but for the other individual departments they have their own task if not it is also our objectives to them to get down the cost definitely they / will go very	1071 1072 1073
Beng	/ that's why I agree to get down the cost but the (?)	1074 1075

GM	eh eh eh don't go back to the circle again (she laughs) don't go back to the same again have the right er the concept that is most important	1076 1077
Chai	I think we need to work together (?) er er so when we-	1078
GM	=I'm not saying that no no they shouldn't no no they shouldn't alignment	1080
Beng	=no my my my meaning of this is for example is not only the material only let's say / (?)	1081 1082
GM	/ we understand you already we understand the circumstance of reduction	1083
Beng	=no it's not the surface more for example the installation of the panel last time this one is cheaper we go for this eventually we have to waste more more time to er er er to do it waste more money to get it right and so on this is something that what I call is a waste although at the start we get the cheaper okay this is cheap but in the end we have to get extra resources to get it right	1084 1085 1086 1087 1088
GM	why can't we do one more training on waste reduction I think if you all still don't understand the concept of waste please attend his training again on the waste reduction and everybody has the same concept of waste reduction and better go for it	1089 1090 1091 1092
Chai	=that one is related to business operational kind of activity of traditional how do we feel if we supplier when it comes to quotation when it comes to evaluation	1093 1094
GM	before you all agree also let me know lah so I will be the neutral person I'll be the person who make the decision whether to change or not to change he will have his own say and you will have your own say so let me know then I can I can be the judge to say yes all area of this has been considered on waste reduction two of you must agree to me that okay let's go it's the best way when you say your point you say your point until at the end three of us okay let's go together and do it no dispute in the future okay er then we go into- I think just the you're your the minute am I right March March improvement plan all done	1095 1096 1097 1098 1099 1100 1101 1102
Beng	ah ah	1103
GM	=number two	1104
Beng	number two is not er not been proven yet because after solving the front part the center connecting one there are some problem er with this the conveyor the connecting conveyor so the pizza base stuck at the center drive so they're looking into the internal conveyor which is without the center drive	1105 1106 1107 1108
GM	okay	1109
Beng	=so the rest is er-	1110
GM	=number six er	1111
Beng	the number six now they recover back the former product with the tray	1112
GM	with the tray ah	1113
Beng	=erm so	1114
GM	=saving of one head count right	1115
Beng	er this one no head count	1116
GM	=no head count lah	1117
Beng	=er no head count fully actually it's a waste lah because when you drop on the floor you cannot use	1118 1119
GM	=but you use back lah	1120
Beng	=now we put the collection tray when we drop then it slip	1121
GM	=but how often people go back and take it out if too long it dries	1122
Beng	=no er whenever there's a fall	1123
GM	=ah okay	1124
Beng	eleven and twelve not done because just happened	1125
GM	=huh	1126
Beng	=this happen recently lah only the twelve one we discuss yesterday so we will go ahead	1127 1128
GM	the (?) side Chai ah have you spoken to <u>Chai</u> ah have you spoken to (?) er	1129
Beng	p.r. not raise yet because er	1130
GM	=you better raise it now we go	1131
Beng	=so the spare part motor for the center (?)	1132

GM	=that one is HACCP related lah so we don't want to take chance lah	1133
Beng	and then we have to we have to er	1134
GM	=you have to er Chai ah I finally is the person to take care of HACCP and any complain ah from the overseas customers if you quickly say no ah I have to go back to Larry lah then it's only four thousand ringgit only	1135 1136 1137
Beng	=the the other one is the spare part (?)	1138
GM	=so this one must go ah mmm the flatbread the minute Beng you say first er the thing the matter arising three point one the girl has not done ah hey don't do it like that lah month after month store survey by the	1139 1140 1141
Beng	store survey we we will do er er once we have utilizing the palm oil unit er pizza because er I went with Keong er to do the trial with them- to accept the pizza with palm oil so after that we can do a follow up / follow up on that in being consider	1142 1143 1144 1145
GM	/ oh so when is your next stop going	1146 1147
Beng	=ah this week this week is following up so we we will be seeing next week	1148
GM	=at least you follow up lah	1149
Beng	=yeah yeah	1150
GM	=don't say too tight schedule everybody also tight	1151
Beng	=definitely because that testing also I make myself available with Keong so we have tested it they accepted it	1152 1153
GM	so three point two I think it's not already done er Chai	1154
Chai	=not yet not yet	1155
GM	=huh	1156
Mei	=er the tortilla and the er pizza rate is er quite reasonable lah because the cost is of purchasing er	1157 1158
GM	=huh	1159
Mei	=but the foldover the price is not so	1160
GM	=why ah	1161
Mei	=correct yet	1162
GM	=ah so maybe we are still adjusting lah	1163
Chai	we have to study on this first	1164
GM	ah	1165
Chai	=basically er currently we already use four months based on the pieces so I think we need to look at the pieces or kg and then we compare kg and pieces to see how how close er the outcome if it's quite consistent then	1166 1167 1168
GM	=so how soon can you finish it bila bila	1169
Mei	next month will see	1170
GM	=next month next BSC ah and move on to staff turnover data for March	1171
Chai	=I suggest fully efficient	1172
GM	=huh	1173
Mei	we still use pizza I put in another ten kg	1174
GM	=ah okay (?) staff turnover rate for er Lynn	1175
Beng	she put in the (?) but the target she didn't (?) we thought it's best target did not indicate that	1176 1177
GM	=updated er updated har okay er and then the training and development er Lynn you include the target really can I see	1178 1179
Lynn	ah	1180
GM	ah so the percentage should be there right you know lah right that the percentage should be here only forty percent for the middle management and seventy percent for front line er so Lynn if you	1181 1182 1183
Lynn	=not front line forty percent is on the management so er HACCP management then I will fit into (?) after this straight away	1184 1185
GM	and then if you don't achieve you are in the red you have to report <u>why</u> ah you have to report <u>why</u> ah and what did you do that will be arrange yellow or green review the objective for training for training lah this one just to put in ah to use the KPI establish the KPI and will be in the objective	1186 1187 1188 1189
Lynn	KPI (?)	1190

Beng	oh this part	1191
GM	=I think this is something to do with your leader there right the target	1192
Lynn	=before the reduction plan (?) instead of two hundred	1193
Mei	no other reduction plan	1194
GM	=ah okay you track it track it put it here	1195
Mei	=yeah	1196
GM	everybody will receive this one right this training so now where am I	1197
Choo	track under the table lah	1198
GM	okay three point five er under my name the DMP Korea and so (?) the palm oiling you don't want to increase price just change the palm oiling maybe they are willing to so the er er	1199 1200 1201
Weng	=the cost to re-price ah ah	1202
GM	=huh	1203
Weng	=cost of re-price within these two days	1204
GM	=Korea one Korea the	1205
Weng	(?)	1206
GM	=together lah orh okay	1207
Weng	=the normal food still maintain ah because Derrick send the e-mail asking about the (?)	1208 1209
Chai	=the price	1210
Beng	=so still maintain	1211
GM	=the price will be maintain	1212
Beng	=ah so (?)	1213
Chai	bearing in mind I think we need to start from (?)	1214
GM	=increase again	1215
Beng	(?)	1216
GM	=huh	1217
Beng	=increase again going up trend	1218
mei	=yeah yeah	1219
Chai	(laughs)	1220
GM	=they should know also we indicate to them keep indicating to them	1221
Suan	=because DMP Korea normal (?)	1222
GM	=they are willing to change to the palm oil but not to the er	1223
Beng	=ya still on the testing	1224
GM	=we are sending sample for them to test	1225
Suan	=the brainstorming we will have to further defer to June lah April is tight	1226
GM	ah no such thing as tight schedule ah everybody tight schedule you know from April ah you move until June har Chai ah	1227 1228
Chai	=(?) (laughs)	1229
GM	can lah if you want if you really think this is top priority ah then why did you allow it to happen in June this one is still top priority mah <u>right</u> so no matter what happen ah you all will find time to it right . don't give me a reason of tight schedule all the time ah because every one of us are tight schedule if you ask me ah I'm very tight schedule but ah I just receive this one yesterday you know all this whole pile ah I just received from him at <u>what time</u> you know <u>what time</u> tell them	1230 1231 1232 1233 1234 1235 1236
Choo	=seven thirty	1237
GM	=seven something you know and I'm suppose to ah to ask you all this question if you say tight schedule er everything er I don't know how tight is my tight I work Saturday Sunday also I'm Saturday fly to Singapore Sunday whole day meeting Monday whole day meeting er yesterday ah come back got to meet finish with MIT everything letter everything done then this one you give at seven o'clock in the beginning and then I have to finish all the detail reading and ask you all all the questions so I'm sure that how do you do it I don't know lah you see but if you all keep coming back and tell me that you all have very tight schedule might as well don't do anything in anything how perfect can you anything you don't do one is very tight schedule prioritize it lah if you all think this is important and it's going to bring some some better profit	1238 1239 1240 1241 1242 1243 1244 1245 1246 1247 1248

	margin for the company ah you really will work for it if you are talking about volume discount and all this er not something er which is less priority type of work <u>Chai</u> you may not necessarily to begin for starters you can ask your people to start first then you come in review it if if they want to use your schedule I think is if you say you are very tight I also very tight schedule with my if you go for it you will go for it one I tell you	1249 1250 1251 1252 1253 1254
Chai	=because this is more on alignment lah (?) this is	1255
GM	=but alignment ah has been many many times I ask you all have you all ever have the integration meeting at all ever since that day I tell Beng the integration er process integration team leader so ever since I've say that until today is there a meeting about process integration the process integration the meeting has been shift from from Chai to Beng from Beng and then shift back to me again I think so if you people are not going to take it and do it ah	1256 1257 1258 1259 1260 1261
Beng	=we we do not not on a very formal way lah	1262
GM	=er but we did say that you don't need to be formal but every quarterly it has to formal ah then you really sit there and analyze you know what is the common problems that you have because she is here and you are there you know and and and Samy sometimes busy and then if you go and talk to them one by one ah you will not get things done sometimes you just need one	1263 1264 1265 1266 1267
Beng	=yes for instance we do have a session on the on the process of the costing we do it on the e-mail now instead of passing around all those thing / so this is	1268 1269
GM	/ yeah I know	1270
Beng	=(?) this kind of discussion	1271
GM	=is it once every quarter is it too much to ask for	1272
Beng	but they	1273
GM	=is it too much to ask for lah I don't know okay if you all don't want to do it Choo I'll be the person to call for process integration meeting every quarter put my name in then I will I will push it <u>Choo</u> put in my diary I'll push it I'll do it I will get you all to come in I will so we will just do once in a once in a quarter that will do okay quick next one erm so you better try and find another day not too late if you keep changing ah three point	1274 1275 1276 1277 1278 1279
Choo	three point eight is correction	1280
GM	and then three point one three innovation	1281
Beng	=er engineering	1282
GM	=engineering side	1282
Beng	=engineering need the er oven to be down for them to study the circuit so right now the oven is still quite busy regarding er the bun and macarabia because this month MDL Malaysia is having promotion for macarabia er which start today start promotion	1284 1285 1286 1287
GM	=this month May May May May May May May so far what is the sales like ah Weng	1288 1289
Weng	=sorry	1290
GM	=May month	1291
Weng	=er around equals around one point one	1292
GM	=one point one only ah	1293
Weng	=roughly around one point one	1294
GM	=no new one coming in ah	1295
Weng	no	1296
GM	no wait for a few more days maybe	1297
Weng	tortilla-	1298
GM	=actually tortilla they want it to be here as soon as possible lah it can be within these seven days ah erm you say seven days right	1299 1300
Beng	=seven days four days apart we have it on the dot	1301
GM	=no it's change	1302
Beng	=change	1303
GM	=change to to eight inch pan (?) ah he has to confirm with me whether the PB and the laminated DE ECDC ECCE is alright	1304 1305

Chai	=DE	1307
Beng	=alright	1308
GM	=you say it's alright then you let me know as soon as possible lah that's / the only confirmation you find out	1309 1310
Beng	give me er you give me in writing lah / you	1311 1312
GM	=ah once the packaging just ah you all think about it once the packaging is alright we have to go already so now we think what are the things to do now	1313 1314
Beng	/ I think the (?)	1315
GM	/ raw material ah make sure got ah and er based on the two thousand forty-footer containers kind of raw material please go and do it already go do the counting I take it to you this matter ah so you will be putting two thousands cartons of six inch and	1316 1317 1318 1319
Beng	=eight inch	1320
GM	eight inch	1321
Beng	=plus four hundred and twenty	1322
GM	=four hundred and fifty ah ah	1323
Beng	=twenty	1324
GM	=ah ah go and plan for raw material already the minute he says go ah do already packaging what else carton	1325 1326
Beng	packages they will send in lor	1327
GM	=packages they will send in so as soon as possible okay the next one is under others under others under Beng ah three point one five meanwhile we want Beng to evaluate the reduction reduction	1328 1329 1330
Beng	=this one you said hold on first until UMA come in	1331
GM	=ah	1332
Beng	=you said hold on first until UMA come in	1333
GM	=okay until UMA come in ah okay that's it lor that's it lor for today you all got any other things	1334 1335
Lynn	I'd like to share you guys a video clip on the work progress	1336
GM	=okay from (?) (the rest is post meeting talk)	1337

APPENDIX 4

TRANSCRIPTION OF MM2

Speaker	Dialogue	Line
GM	By no by now you all should know ah ladies and gentlemen by now you all should know ah if you really sick I understand lah but if you sick very often on Monday ah then something is opposite ah I don't like this kind of behaviour lah I have to tell you all I don't like this kind of behaviour so be very mindful of what you all are doing I mean if genuine case I really really appreciate and I really understand the genuine case but if your trend is always- some people have the a very good trend of emergency leave and mc some people records are very good no mc no emergency at all so if you really have something on and you really have to go please plan your leave ah and let us approve lah rather than ah we are suppose to have a meeting suddenly you say you are on emergency leave ah you know if you are sick no problems lah you know genuinely sick okay one I think I also sometime- I also really understand the situation very well what make me very angry is that you know when you have a big meeting like this people just go on mc and leave ah be mindful ah please so we go on to flatbread line today	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
Beng	running through the bunline	15
GM	are you all prepared	16
Beng	flatbread line	17
GM	if you want to do you can do ah if you want to do you can do ah I have already told you no need to do you still ask me you want to do it you can go ahead and do (she laughs) I told you many time already no need to do but you are asking me (she laughs) you want to do (she laughs) please go ahead	18 19 20 21
Yen	Mei (?)	22
GM	you very keen to do you can do it Beng you prepare already ah ah Beng you prepare the flatbread line ah	23 24
Beng	(?)	25
GM	if you have anything to tell you can just do lah because what I am doing here is that this is the follow up you see the people who are taking over are not here might as well brief them	26 27 28
Beng	(?)	29
GM	you might as well brief them when you go back to the SJ there Chai you have- ah the- anything important to talk on SJ no ah bunline	30 31
Chai	(nods his head to mean 'nothing to say')	32
GM	nothing ah unless you all really have important thing to highlight	33
Chai	quite consistent last month compared to May	34
GM	huh	35
Chai	except bunline last month we have the- eh imported buns	36
GM	huh	37
Chai	imported buns from Singapore so the impact on the cost ah is very high	38
GM	you take out	39
Chai	take out (?)	40
GM	you are measuring against this the MIP that side (?) maybe no one to take out	41
Chai	MIP we adjusted / that is	42
GM	/ quite good ah	43
Chai	ah above our (?)	44
GM	for bunline flatbread also ah	45
Chai	flatbread has been achieving (?)	46
GM	huh	47
Chai	average about twenty-four percent now ah if I look back the repeat of the flour is (?) should be (?)	48 49

Beng	(?)	50
Chai	maybe I refer later	51
GM	sales leh sales leh	52
Chai	eh I look at the budget lah the budget exclude the DMP UK compare to the- the six-month actual which is lesser loss lah (he laughs)	53 54
GM	then the sale we have achieve	55
Weng	I would suggest that we take out the (?) high volume	56
GM	you take out and see whether you achieved the sales	57
Weng	the DMP itself is around one thousand (?)	58
GM	so you are almost there lah because you are short of / one point	59
Chai	/ that (?) should be comparable	60 61
GM	huh Chai we are short of one point something million right	62
Chai	(?)	63
GM	why projector got problem ah or we go through the minute's first lah since we adjusting huh	64 65
Chai	include seven point five UK is eighty and above for the six month period January to June if I take out the UK ah the budgeted sale is seven million compared to Asia now / is eight million	66 67 68
GM	/ so Weng is quite safe already lah (she laughs)	69
Weng	now more on (?)	70
Chai	no problem no problem	71
GM	you got you got	72
Chai	no problem	73
GM	you got four orh if it is one one zero ah percent ah so should be <u>there</u> already what you calculate one divide by seven is how much how many percent you got one one four already you just take out one ah (?)	74 75 76
Weng	(?) (everyone laughs)	77
GM	huh what is it	78
Weng	already got (?)	79
GM	but if it is justifiable to take out you have to explain lah ah because you know lah our boss they will look at all this if he feels that ah because of all this	80 81
Chai	I take out then you approve the 'rojak' (<i>a type of local food</i>) (he laughs)	82
GM	but the ah- you have to buy us lunch ah all (laughs)	83
Weng	(?)	84
GM	oh good idea okay start ah if you can go through but you didn't do a copy without ah this one is still with the UK volume ah	85 86
Chai	yeah	87
GM	okay sales we understand lah ah because we didn't pursue the UK volume so Yen maybe you go through quickly	88 89
Yen	ah (?) switch overall is color forty-one percent	90
GM	forty-one ah but if you say that if you if you achieve the CM what's the CM	91
Yen	the budgeted is forty-six percent and this is after the transportation is thirty-five percent (?) is about thirty-four percent	92 93
GM	transportation eh is good because of less more forty-footer containers	94
Yen	yeah and the DMP UK because we budgeted for UK business which is supposed to be better mah	95 96
GM	oh yeah	97
Yen	(?)	98
GM	so you are going to report thirty-four percent lah right am I right okay	99
Chai	in July we expect ah how much the-	100
GM	what is the sale so far ah Suan	101
Suan	ah one point five	102
GM	wah not bad ah July	103
Suan	one point five seven	104
GM	good for Alpane and do one good eh (she laughs) before closing something to cheer	105 106

Chai	huh	107
GM	okay good	108
Chai	ya (he laughs)	109
GM	aiyah sayang lah	110
Yen	okay move on to rejected the- Beng one rejected	111
GM	okay this one Beng can you do one up-to-date for us your rejection rate for your flatbread line you have to report to date up till June lah and then those area which are justifiable one ah due to some contingency or whatever you let me know I see if I can adjust it for you it's not due to your problem or fault those you are not able to control ah then you can justify to me	112 113 114 115 116
Beng	(?)	117
GM	for the	118
Beng	ah six point two	119
GM	six point two percent tortilla	120
Beng	no overall	121
GM	overall but I think your MIP is by product type Beng	122
Beng	ah	123
GM	your MIP is by product you know not by total so you have to look out by product ah	124 125
Beng	okay	126
GM	and then if you feel that something is eh uncontrollable by you ah you justify and let me see	127 128
Beng	what if er the pizza three point six four (?) so that (?)	129
GM	which one is red actual to date	130
Beng	red	131
GM	ah four point four percent this will be green right and then six point two percent should be yellow ah but it's over already over over seven now yellow now yellow what ah greater than six (phone rings)	132 133 134
Yen	greater than six	135
GM	tortilla this one target six percent ah Beng where got_have have we ever put six percent here ah	136 137
Yen	the budget is one one (?)	138
GM	internal ah except for one product is eight percent ah Beng Beng your MIP is it correct	139 140
Beng	(?)	141
GM	all five except one eight percent right	142
Beng	yeah this (?)	143
GM	this is your internal measurement ah your pie chart so far here to date is er seven point four percent ah so high ah	144 145
Yen	it's between January and March	146
GM	towards the June month June month is how many	147
Yen	June one is ah six point two	148
GM	six point two cannot be green what	149
Yen	cause it's the target is eight percent	150
GM	ah oh oh correct Beng your explanation for higher return	151
Beng	ah it's in the er action plan (she laughs)	152
GM	ah ah can you go through a little bit so that we get it	153
Beng	okay overall for month of June maybe due to er casa breakdown the oven base on the (?) for bunline (?) out of control we have change to the valve er calibration for the smartline there is a few occasion of motor er we are taking down how long can this- so we are still checking and from there we will change before (?)	154 155 156 157 158
GM	ah a few times it broke down right why you took quite a long time for you to find out the reason	159 160
Beng	=no the reason is camouflage we just want to find out the timing how often it breaks down	161 162
GM	so has this been already erm rectified for sure that it won't happen again	163

Beng	=it will happen because dc motor I check if I can change to ac motor they say cannot because the control is based on dc motor because dc motor is a common to have a camouflage wear out-	164 165 166
GM	=so what do we do to prevent this	167
Beng	=we need to change the camouflage before the breakdown so we have to find out how long it last average for all the-	168 169
GM	=how long have you monitored this	170
Beng	=only one month	171
GM	no long term solution ah just do like that ah	172
Beng	=no long term is / to get this	173
GM	/ change it before-	174
Beng	=no average time and change before this average time	175
GM	but we run this this line for so long already	176
Beng	=(?) after talking to the supplier they say / we have to check this	177
GM	/ I mean the	178
Beng	=only last month we check this	179
GM	=this kind of problem started how long ago	180
Beng	er very much earlier earlier we thought that long production it cannot last then we check with the motor supplier why is the (?) how long it last	181 182
GM	they should tell us or you all should find out it find it out earlier	183
Beng	who	184
GM	the engineer department ah should know it right	185
Beng	=yeah but after talking to different supplier only we know the current supplier just say okay change this part that's all	186 187
GM	take too long lah what I mean- should have been known earlier so you have less rejection rate ah	188 189
Chai	(?)	190
GM	=who is that who is that	191
Chai	ah (?)	192
Beng	ah cannot recall their name they say this is very common one and we have to find out how long it break down	193 194
GM	wah tell you ah if you all take so long to find out I think you have / to knowledge with the engineering	195 196
Beng	/ check with	197
	check with the ah ah eh smartline supplier he also also eh say (?)	198
GM	well its pro-activity lah it's like you have to really go and from now you really have to go and find out lah if happen one time two time ah-	199 200
Beng	=no no not the same machine because there are so many dc motor sometimes it happen here sometimes it happen because there are so many that ac motor it's not everything that particular ac motor we got sometimes this one sometimes that one so we have to deal with the breakdown	201 202 203 204
GM	=I'm sure they have many people using this kind of erm (?) line / everywhere	205
Beng	/ earlier we thought of- okay air cond just for two units then we thought it was too hot that's why (?) but then it still still happen but now the (?)	206 207 208
GM	so from now you monitor every single motor how many motor you have to monitor	209 210
Beng	=oh we have every basic unit the same kind of motor	211
GM	so I would foresee that the record will be set up for this	212
Beng	=yeah they are setting up (?) see what the average life span (?)	213
GM	=is it very expensive ah this one	214
Beng	=no the price is cheap but the type of motor is their nature is like that unless it is ac motor but ac motor can't-	215 216
GM	=can't what ah	217
Beng	=cannot fit in different function the control is based on dc motor	218
GM	so in this case their equipment are not built to last / for quite a while ah	219
Beng	/ this dc motor is built to- is used for this purpose control the the er (?) so we can't change ac motor it	220 221

	won't function er er the controller won't respond to this	222
GM	so next month can you ask Mutu to show us his record every-	223
Beng	=yeah we've just got the record for / monitoring purpose	224
GM	/ monitoring purpose lah I want to make sure that this is not the the same problem would not occur again the casa hotpress is	225 226
Beng	=casa hotpress is break down on er	227
GM	but this one is saving people / the repositioning	228
Beng	/ no ah the casa hotpress is because the heater in running so we change the heater then it's okay the ah the saving people one is the same position we do the repositioning er of the hot press (?)	229 230 231
GM	anyway this is nothing to do with rejection rate lah	232
Beng	ah we save one headcount	233
GM	how is your labour you save ah one headcount your labour for	234
Beng	=no none none for month of er June (?)	235
GM	actually now labour wah labour all red color oh	236
Beng	because of the downtime for the saving the labour for the hot press we only started on the (?)	237 238
GM	by the way er your labour cost ah under the production cost per piece ah er is a lot of red color er raw material and packaging for die hard red and then die hard red knowing that ah yeah I keep telling you all draw line ah but you all don't want to refuse to draw for me see straight line this one ah Choo	239 240 241 242
Choo	yeah after that that is labour	243
GM	labour ah your overall labour also higher than budget	244
Beng	because of the lower efficiency	245
GM	yeah that's why you really have to control / your efficiency	246
Beng	/ downtime	247
GM	=your efficiency is still not satisfactory you know	248
Beng	=yeah because none of them downtime	249
GM	we cannot let them continue to have such high downtime your preventive maintenance perhaps is very slack now lah the reason why you- downtime is high is related to your preventive maintenance so you have to get your people to really work hard for it lah cannot month after month ah continue to be red ah Beng	250 251 252 253
Beng	=yeah	254
GM	=the whole stretch is red ah you know I really can't help you ah if you didn't do a good job of this even your pizza base ah tortilla ah is also red lah labour tortilla usually labour should be green most of the time earlier month are all green but in the month of June you really slack	255 256 257 258
Beng	in the month of June because / of of the ah	259
GM	/ May and June	260
Beng	of the spiral cooler ah (?) we have to down the time to change it	261
GM	but normally you don't down the time to change it during production hour right	262
Beng	=no not the production hour (?) already show a problem (?) then on a Sunday change the rest	263 264
GM	we can give zero point eight (?) and die hard flatbread flatbread pizza base also the budget is zero point zero eight seven per piece the whole stretch ah red color what is the reason is it because our budget too tight Yen	265 266 267
Yen	ah because partly also the output also different from the actual output	268
GM	what is the output er that you put in this budget output was given by Beng mah	269
Yen	this ah three thousand after BSC is three thousand one	270
GM	this one is the-	271
Yen	=foldover bread	272
GM	=foldover bread ah	273
Yen	=ah	274
GM	actual	275
Yen	actual is in pieces	276
GM	ah	277

Chai	daily use average lah the foldover bread but in in the BSC report we use the the percentage achieved for the er targeted output because the radius output is different	278 279 280
GM	Beng but your efficient- because your efficiency is quite low if you look at the efficiency side ah rejection rate efficiency what is up ah	281 282
Beng	=back up	283
GM	=ah backup ah you doing eighty-one ah backup T-two is it okay to draw line like this	284 285
Yen	(?)	286
GM	=in the future	287
Yen	=dot dot ah	288
GM	how many time I told you all to put some dot you know why because ah it's so small ah sometimes if you don't put the paper correctly it run	289 290
Yen	=yeah yeah	291
GM	so it's eighty-one percent Beng for T-two die cut when you put eighty-one percent Beng how many your your achievement of eighty-one is how many pieces per hour need to go through one more time with you ah now since I don't have SJ plant I can be very detail with you all already this one got to be very detail	292 293 294 295
Chai	this one-	296
Beng	=flatbread line	297
GM	ah what is your achievement Yen you have their number of pieces on the actual one	298 299
Yen	yeah	300
Beng	ah six point three seven six hundred	301
GM	if you want me to if you all don't want me to do waste a lot of time here ah what Beng you can do is give me- is give me the actual	302 303
Beng	=pieces	304
GM	=yes pieces lah	305
Beng	six one three one seven two	306
GM	you just put in your report lah how many pieces that you achieve per hour compare to the target so that when I see this I know er okay	307 308
Beng	(?)	309
GM	you have the efficiency report one mah everyday you do right	310
Beng	=yeah daily report lah (?)	311
GM	ah if you just write in eighty-one ah okay I ask you earlier one eighty-six percent on the T-two er T-one T-one or T-two ah	312 313
Yen	T-one	314
GM	T-one ah so what do you mean by eighty-six percent how many pieces you are using Mei you er got that report or not Chai can you get get someone-	315 316
Beng	=four point four er	317
GM	=no no I am not asking that I am saying that you say you achieve eighty-six percent efficiency per hour efficiency	318 319
Beng	ah	320
GM	so I am asking you do have a target for tortilla you have a target of how many pieces per hour	321 322
Beng	=yeah different size different pieces per hour	323
Mei	for foldover bread ah the tortilla one	324
GM	=okay let me go to T-one tortilla	325
Mei	tortilla T-one er individual products	326
GM	individual products	327
Mei	ah	328
GM	=okay	329
Mei	=okay for T-one for example if base on (?) daily our target is six four two six pieces per hour	330 331
GM	six four two six	332
Mei	=so for this four products for (?) daily ah the highest is that we produce in the month of June is six two two eight	333 334

GM	ah huh	335
Mei	=the lowest is five seven seven six	336
GM	so do you all take average	337
Mei	ah what do you mean when we take average	338
GM	in the- in the production report Beng do you take average of the whole month	339
Mei	=this is the whole month / the whole month average for each product	340
GM	/ ah	341
Mei	so	342
Chai	you mention it's a range of er how (?) from fifty-seven (?)	343
Mei	mmm yes six thousand for hundred	344
GM	so it's after eighty-five right	345
Mei	=yes	346
Chai	so Beng Beng report should is on average	347
Beng	yeah	348
Mei	yeah average on the month of production lah for this particular product	349
Beng	=the whole month	350
GM	so eighty-six is still only eighty-six percent of the six four something-	351
Beng	=because tortilla last month is the problem of the oven	352
GM	=no no no don't talk about that one first I am asking you is in the table- on the table you give us ah we calculated eighty-five percent by right you should achieve a hundred percent	353 354 355
Beng	=some some of it we achieve ninety ninety-six percent ninety-three ninety-two one hundred percent also got of individual but if you average it up that's why got er	356 357 358
GM	so in this case you are <u>still</u> erm like what we talk about it Andy case ah	359
Beng	ah huh	360
GM	you have already deduct away the fifty percent er down time at the end we are still not able to achieve hundred percent of the- after taking into consideration of the downtime	361 362 363
Beng	ah huh	364
GM	we are still only achieving eighty-six lah	365
Beng	ah on average	366
GM	=can you can you work towards ninety percent	367
Beng	some product er (?)	368
GM	=I I think we should work on average because eighty-five percent has been- we've given the allowances up to eighty-five percent lah so now we're eighty-five percent of eighty-five percent you know am I right to say that for example you achieve eighty-six percent of the eighty-five percent still have big gap ah in a way you are allowing you- yourself about thirty percent huh almost thirty percent down time justifiable <u>Beng</u> thirty percent down time / you	369 370 371 372 373 374
Beng	/ we only have (?) to run (?) the problem last month is the oven breakdown some some product is so low because of the (?)	375 376 377
GM	eighty-five percent of eighty-five can you- you continue to monitor the trend lah for the next year we still ah have to set our target I can understand lah now you say a lot of breakdown but if you can make sure that your maintenance department eh work hard on this lah so that you have less downtime lah you see the problem is downtime then you work on the downtime hopefully you are able to achieve ninety percent of eighty-five percent now we have eighty-six percent oh the ah eighty-five ah allowance for the- because July month is last month under Alpane (she laughs) so at least this is the month for you to consolidate lah Beng so maybe August month ah we try our best to work better better result lah huh	378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387
Beng	(?)	388
GM	okay hmm where are we ah number of erm going through a little bit of on your efficiency area your labour cost need to look into it and then red color is what ah another one utility	389 390 391

Mei	=tortilla	392
GM	=why tortilla is sometimes red sometimes green only one green ah	393
Yen	ah earlier one	394
GM	how many green	395
Yen	fifty	396
GM	=ah fifty fifty percent ah	397
Yen	only one green one- the rest is yellow two yellow and the rest-	398
GM	=if you can achieve yellow still not too bad lah but then now you are much more higher than zero point zero I mean I'm comparing you with yellow color lah	399 400
Beng	=the tortilla one is for April and May is low compare to (?) for a change over	401
GM	you apportion base on what Yen	402
Yen	the apportion production time	403
GM	base on production time ah	404
Yen	production time	405
GM	is there a better measurement for you Beng base on production time to give er the result is base on the production time this total total utility and then the apportion base on the num- number of hours you don't have a meter right	406 407 408
Beng	no (?)	409
GM	=don't have	410
Beng	=overall	411
GM	so okay let me see the overall utility er within the month for the er-	412
Beng	(?)	413
GM	=can I see June eh June overall utility	414
Yen	zero point zero two five	415
GM	zero point zero two five ah okay lor at least not too bad because could be due to the proportionate problem lah labour overall is red raw material overall is green okay ah repair and maintenance overall is green right	416 417 418
Yen	yeah	419
GM	and supply also green okay most of them it's the labour lah or so you look at the labour side ah	420 421
Beng	now we try to cut the labour already for the month of July (?) because of the repositioning and then er the conveyor (?)	422 423
GM	okay alright so finish Beng one- er then we go into gross margin finish excellence excellence start with what customer satisfaction right hey where's your excellence growth then excellence no complaint ah	424 425 426
Yen	no complaint	427
Beng	no complaint	428
GM	=okay good delivery	429
Yen	no issue	430
GM	PERF is what ah performance	431
Yen	performance	432
GM	okay no issue good okay go through again this one we go through already er right under following one is the- I think we go down maintenance downtime okay ah your maintenance downtime is- how come three point six in-	433 434 435
Yen	(?)	436
GM	huh you're- your target is	437
Yen	three	438
GM	=three or but you three point six orh	439
Yen	but the other is too high	440
Beng	huh	441
GM	you you what is your target	442
Yen	=three	443
GM	=three percent	444
Yen	yeah the other (?)	445
GM	=yeah too high ah	446

Yen	(?)	447
GM	huh Beng you agree or not (she coughs)	448
Beng	agree	449
GM	=you must agree ah otherwise we (?)	450
Choo	The positive cannot be six right	451
GM	both also positive one how come <u>your your your your</u> title	452
Choo	negative oh yeah you are right	453
GM	which is positive which is negative maybe both also positive but is greater than positive	454 455
Beng	greater	456
GM	=no the the / (?)	457
Choo	/ positive negative positive	458
GM	just put negative lah	459
Chai	(?)	460
GM	ah	461
Chai	no need to put positive or negative actually it's the budget (he laughs) (?)	462
GM	we have the up side and down side	463
Beng	(?)	464
GM	ah	465
Chai	(?)	466
Beng	downtime (?)	467
GM	but your trend is quite okay June one is three point six ah	468
Yen	(?)	469
GM	hmm so Beng you better look into <u>your trend</u> ah it's increasing huh	470
Yen	highest is	471
GM	preventive maintenance what is your budget	472
Yen	five	473
GM	=huh	474
Yen	=five percent	475
GM	internal measurement lah what is your definition of preventive maintenance time already ah	476 477
Beng	we plan to stop the line (?)	478
GM	then stop the line to do lah	479
Beng	honestly preventive maintenance (?)	480
GM	=orh okay come down again er under customer comparing work environment er what is the- there's a report <u>right</u> on this	481 482
Choo	(?)	483
GM	I thought I read somewhere (?) Lynn	484
Choo	the one she submitted for SQMS	485
GM	the problem is Lynn is not here again for meeting so we are not able to to check the performance if you all need her then you write to- you all to explain I think we make her explain one more round to all the people here every time we go into this section she is not in to explain this is the third time I think okay Choo please write there that she has to explain to all the staff herself through the email	486 487 488 489 490
Choo	which one	491
GM	the whole of this one she is suppose to give us the details analysis of all the issues	492 493
Choo	(?) in the SQMS there is a table so-	494
Chai	=give us a phone call lah / (?)	495
GM	/ ask her to forward the file	496
Chai	which file (?) some action plan	497
Choo	this one is not the (?) (phone rings) I thought you wanted the response very quickly	498 499
GM	don't you all have this one	500
Choo	yeah she sent to everybody	501
Beng	yeah	502
GM	you all have ah there are two area which is very low opportunity and	503

	management confidence but anyway everything is low lah here we are suppose to score eighty-five percent but all are below eighty-five the most glaring one is the opportunity and management confidence- opportunity is they say the pay I get for the job I do is not fair they feel that their pay is not fair who are those people who say that it's not fair we didn't hear from her yet we haven't really- she has not updated to us who feel- so is it the production team or management team management confidence- I do not I do not manage to complete my work or assignment on time HR provide training on time management have you all attended the time management manager to ensure a follow up is done on task to ensure time line met do you all know about this- all the managers all the managers do you all know about this	504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514
Chai	(?)	515
GM	have you all attended the time management training no can you put there all of you all have not attended the time management who is writing ah Choo what are the negative comments here anything if you see the next step ah how do you all feel about Alpane what happen my opinion is not value the job is not recognized and appreciated thirty-nine percent of twenty-nine percent of the people feel so lah twenty-nine percent of the people feel that their job are not appreciated and recognized manager to take subordinate feedback and value their input need to show to the employees what do you all think about this	516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523
Mat	=very very subjective (?) which area- what department on what specific things they feel like this	524 525
GM	=can you request HR department to do that Choo can you write down to her and say that people request individual department details to give it to them	526 527
Mat	(?) can follow up	528
GM	Beng you have the largest team of people what would you what would you want her to do for you	529 530
Beng	(?) for example (?)	531
GM	I think you should ask her who are my staff you want to talk to them personally at least I mean she has all the people this one with name right with name right	532 533
Mat	no names	534
GM	without names then how would you be able to find out / which	535
Mat	/ by department	536
GM	=by department so you have to get to talk to her lah why don't we put name ah they are afraid that they they-	537 538
Chai	=in survey normally / (?)	539
GM	/ huh but if that person is not so happy we do not know lah	540
Chai	we want to make sure that they have openness when they are answering	541
GM	orh so in this case we ask her to break down by department those people who are not happy ah come from which department ah	542 543
Chai	=I suggest all departments we can have a session with Lynn to see what are details she has with respect of the department	544 545
GM	=but would you all do it (?) (she laughs) this one come out for so long already if you all are concern better go and see her	546 547
Choo	actually we receive (?) flatbread line and the bunline (?) there is detail in terms of percentage lah (?) base the form- remember the form remember the form you all receive that is different (?) it has been compiled in that manner	548 549 550
GM	our SQMS is on	551
Choo	=twenty-fifth	552
GM	=twenty-fifth lah have you all receive it SQMS material	553
Choo	=not complete I have not received from every department	554
GM	SQMS is on the twenty-fifth so twenty-fifth I think Choo why don't you send it out to them before they come into SQMS but I hope we we can get the feedback on that day lah in this case I do not want to go through details here because Lynn is not here you all hear her on the SQMS review lah but if you have question you better go ah why don't you just send it out to them just on the- so the manager can work on it and come back to us for the SQMS review key	555 556 557 558 559 560

	performance er on the staff turnover rate two percent following that training and development you need to find out- do you have the training that you have done	561 562
Yen	(?)	563
GM	June what training have <u>we</u> conducted or we we we don't go through here or we go through during SQMS Lynn is / not here to update right	564 565
Yen	/ submit (?)	566
GM	she submit or not training on five-S ah (phone rings) leave it on that day lah	567 568
Yen	ah June	569
GM	what are done what are planned and not done	570
Mat	(?)	571
GM	what are planned but not done	572
Yen	I think she will answer better lah not sure	573
GM	=because she is suppose to have a plan	574
Choo	plan is yellow colour	575
Yen	we look at this (?)	576
Choo	what is green ah	577
Yen	postpone	578
GM	huh	579
Yen	postpone green color is postpone	580
Choo	green color is postpone	581
Mat	(?)	582
Yen	ah okay postpone (?)	583
Mat	yellow is planning mah (?)	584
GM	=so now <u>now</u> she completed the percentage is ah overall sixty something percent	585
Yen	=yeah sixty-four	586
GM	sixty-four middle management seven percent management- seven percent middle management fifty-seven percent operators zero percent am I right	587 588
Yen	=yep	589
GM	=so how you get sixty-four	590
Yen	I think she just added that up and then get sixty-four	591
GM	aiyoh cannot do like that right it should be average Chai can you teach how to do calculation cannot do like that one what you have to do is- what is the total plan what is the- never mind this one we leave it to her to come back during SQMS Chai can you highlight to her the calculation according to percentage how to calculate lah so that actual ah when you all see this kind of thing you should tell her already not wait until the day ah learn a little bit calculation (flips pages) I think that's all right	592 593 594 595 596 597 598
Yen	yeah	599
GM	any other thing to update please- your cost saving seems to be moving okay ah am I <u>right</u> to say that Suan	600 601
Yen	Suan	602
GM	Suan you achieve your target ah	603
Suan	I achieve the target	604
GM	congratulations you all are suppose to do eighty ah	605
Suan	ah eighty this one actually (?)	606
GM	yeah compute and show	607
Suan	ah (?) SQMS	608
GM	yeah okay so the rest of the project under June your your continuous process improvement	609 610
Suan	ah (?)	611
GM	process improvement only one ah which is five-S	612
Suan	(?)	613
GM	who who has got any improvement done any feedback nobody nobody has more- any improvement in the month of June	614 615
Beng	(?)	616

GM	did you give or not Beng	617
Beng	(?)	618
Yen	(?)	619
GM	can you all highlight	620
Yen	(?)	622
GM	so how do you all want me to give you all the / (?)	623
Yen	/ send out the preliminary BSC (?)	624
GM	why didn't you give Beng ah this is your fault you didn't give her the format	625
Yen	(?) report (?) format (?)	626
Beng	=you can take the copy and put in then send out (?)	627
GM	=why don't you just give this one and then they just key in themselves	628
Yen	together (?)	629
GM	=rather than she she do an additional work ah	630
Yen	=because I thought I could get it from here I think last month I took it wrongly so	631 632
Beng	=you mean row action one ah	633
GM	since she gives you the format ah you just key it into the format otherwise ah she has to find one by one	634 635
Beng	=the file is ready (?)	636
GM	but you expect her to key in-	637
Yen	=which one (?)	638
Beng	(?)	639
GM	okay so these are the improvement that you have done ah Beng under innovation	640
Beng	yeah	641
GM	install the water tank and R and D for trainig this one process is improvement certain thing ah is too small to say it is a process improvement if you ask me some of the job ah is job that you have to do to in order that your your process is smooth lah but process improvement is something that you do (?)	642 643 644 645
Beng	=no because water tank one (?)	646
GM	oh following that is fabricate and new oil collecting container at main oil saucepan avoiding oil dripping on the floor breaking of main started so you all agree ah all this are improvement process ah (phone rings) anybody feel some are not you all agree with it or not it seems that all of you agree ah so we go to the next one no answer means agree any other area that we-	647 648 649 650 651
Choo	we put pictures of five-S before the time lapse happens and then after the time lapse happen (?)	652 653
GM	picture of five- go through the minute lah minute- today is very er everybody mind is not so ready to talk all of you still Monday blue very blue I hope that sometime at meeting you all talk Chai can you chair for me ah	654 655 656
Chai	okay	657
GM	I don't want to talk anymore (she laughs) you talk	658
Chai	shall we go through the minutes er first-	659
GM	=I think we skip the bunline the follow-up will be under Ken Lee ah we go through the matter arising for flatbread and can you speak a bit louder	660 661
Chai	er first item three point one sales er store survey of DMP store	662
Beng	er er (?) DMP (?) in fact this afternoon she is going out (?)	663
GM	do you have a plan a- a schedule store survey every month	664
Beng	for DMP they haven't the only store we can go is the USJ one the rest er we have to wait for Richard	665 666
GM	=so how often do you plan for that	667
Beng	so when Richard (?)	668
GM	=huh	669
Beng	=Richard-	670
GM	=how often do you plan for that	671
Beng	this one we have no plan for er-	672
GM	=can you come up with a schedule to put it in a plan so that Richard is aware	673

	that- how often we go there to do the survey you see	674
Beng	so far we (?)	675
GM	=yeah but doesn't matter as long as you tell him we want to come here every quarterly to do a store er check you know to do product checking you can do it quarterly lah if he is happy with quarterly then it is okay if he say no I want you to come and do alternate then you have to see whether we can do alternate mah come up with a agreed plan because now your focus is in this flatbread line then you really have to do a very good job to make sure the customer are happy ahem hem the other thing is MCD foldover bread you all also have to do a kind of erproduct check with their QA department just like bun at least you know what is happening in the store so you probably in in the MCD you do er ABCQ right	676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684
Beng	yeah that one they have a specification for foldover so they have to finalize the specs (?) he say he will check with Ping ah looks like (?)	685 686
GM	=but you don't have to wait till the specification is done to do a store test right	687
Beng	=store test we are doing / right now	688
GM	/ yeah	689
Beng	just the ABCQ one we don't have the spec to do-	690
GM	=yeah can you plan a schedule with her also also alternate month or every quarter	691
Beng	for flatbread now ah we can't plan yet because nothing is set for now-	692
GM	=it doesn't matter whether set or no set on the specification you are a supplier right now	693 694
Beng	=yeah now got two type er folded and unfolded because she's looking on the folded one-	695 696
GM	=but currently we are using our bread what- can't you also ask Noor to also go to the store buy some product try it out just like we do for MCD er product bun product- check it out talk to them	697 698 699
Beng	yeah er er-	700
GM	=feedback any complain about our product it need not necessary just for the- you know it could be a temperature problem it could be a- a product not pack properly there are so many feedback you can get from the customer	701 702 703
Beng	but they really rely on the (?) if we buy they say it's hot but (?)	704
GM	=but you rather don't go lah	705
Beng	=no not to say don't go we are going now to finalize the spec	706
GM	=then go lah (she laughs)	707
Beng	=we are at the stage of finalizing the specs	708
GM	=it's okay you can still finalize the spec I'm not saying you cannot you you don't have to wait for the spec to finish then only you go the store right you can go now also I am asking you to set a schedule still set a schedule to go can I go your store every quarterly check on the product quality	709 710 711 712
Beng	(?)	713
Chai	I would say this can be part of a programme for all the locals	714
GM	=local customer lah	715
Chai	customer like / MCD DMP	716
GM	/ so far MCD DMP who else local	717
Weng	=PHT	718
Chai	=PHT	719
GM	=ah PHT CFK	720
Weng	CFK	721
Chai	(?) now stop already	722
Weng	they are still buying (?)	723
GM	quarterly lah I think it's quite fair at least you go you see unless they request more often lah but I don't think so they have time for us to go- too often you have to get feedback from them lah do like what we do for our bun line you see get feedback from your customer okay next one Chai	724 725 726 727
Chai	er this one has been started today I think we monitor for a few more months lah	728

	I think eventually it's good that we can convert to (?) especially-	729
GM	=yeah yeah	730
Chai	=now we are changing to (?)	731
GM	=so actually by the month of er August ah it's very dynamic already you know all your reports ah everything is daily already you know no more ah wait till you got time no such thing as wait till you have time you know because all this report will be send to their head office ah they will just	732 733 734 735
Chai	they can access to it	736
GM	=you just key in they want to see your performance they will just see it if you are slow I do not know what kind of thing- you will (?) get you all better don't delay ah (she laughs) I do not know what kind of thing you will get from them ah so if you don't have enough of people to do all the- now you need to have someclerks	737 738 739 740 741
Chai	we haven't got yet / we need to get	742
GM	/ people who can key in report properly properly you cannot say today my girl are on mc lah nobody to key er Beng you better er train a few people er if this person on mc that person can key everyone of you lah train them up if they don't have time- nobody Beng you have to key (she laughs)	743 744 745 746
Chai	maybe er during their coming visit we need to get their approval ah to recruit lah	747
GM	you can go and advertise already	748
Chai	(?) may not be easy	749
GM	=huh you say it's not easy but you better start now	750
Chai	yeah	751
GM	=you better start now if you say it's not easy- you are just sitting here not easy by the time you want it er difficult-	752 753
Chai	(?) accounts (?) (he laughs)	754
GM	though they cannot get in people but the minute they say you can ah you straight away got people already you can start interviewing people already what if you need people you interview people the minute they say can you just give them the appointment letter	755 756 757 758
Beng	=I got two people pending	759
GM	Chai you better work out the offer rate how much you have to give	760
Beng	the offer er-	761
GM	=the minute they say okay on the twenty-third they will come here already go ahead and employ what you need then you might as well get their offer letter ready now okay ah get the offer letter all of you on the twenty-third they are coming in if you need people you can interview now the minute they say okay offer letter ready next one Chai bunline one no need- no need to go through ah	762 763 764 765 766 767
Chai	er er innovation three point six	768
Beng	this one still pending on the oven it's not the er er- all the er (?)	769
Samy	three point seven haven't check the tested product (?) no any significant difference in terms of the reduction we requested on the twenty-eighth of June	770 771
GM	=who did the product testing	772
Samy	erm Keong and Heng and also Weng also went together-	773
GM	=to the restaurant lah Weng	774
Weng	=yeah	775
GM	=they happy no- not significant	776
Weng	er not much	777
GM	any report ah	778
Samy	we already have-	779
GM	=didn't you show us the report wah you all do thing ah wah quiet quiet do already then okay already ah shelf it put in the drawer this is not the way you should do thing you should send a report out and inform everybody we have	780 781 782

	already completed this project the- the- the texture taste what is the evaluation of the result the report conclude this project and then said done_not until now ah you still haven't send out the report <u>Chai</u>	783 784 785
Chai	three point nine sales (?) samples	786
Weng	(?) samples (?) as regards to (?) pending lah	787
GM	at the end the (?) system they use X-eleven oh the price they agree right at the end	788 789
Weng	ah (?)	790
GM	=at the end the price they agree ah	791
Weng	yes	792
GM	(she laughs) after your last letter given to them they agree	793
Weng	yeah they say they will absorb the er cost so less profit lah so er we actually prepare the samples (?)	794 795
GM	=so with this product what is their requirement can you brief it to the production and QA and R and D department their expectation of the product quality	796 797 798
Weng	you mean their (?)	799
GM	yeah what is their expectation emphasize one more time to all the-	800
Weng	(?) no perhaps even er (?) and er (?) in terms of texture wise (?)	801
GM	so <u>Beng</u> with this X-eleven eh I do not want to hear any more complain oh of unevenness er would you be able to er ensure that during the production of this for new product X-eleven you have people to ensure the thickness are even	802 803 804
Beng	=one one thing is the (?) breads have to check whether ah (?) range of (?)	805
GM	= but your R and D finish already	806
Beng	that's why have to do revision of the (?)	807
GM	so you mean to say that the R and D has not completed their job yet in terms / of product (?)	808 809
Beng		/ er 810
	because the range that they gave us we can't run er hundred percent	811
GM	=but you agree with this product already	812
Beng	product is okay the dough range the range-	813
GM	=something wrong again because er the dough weight has already been given to er-	814 815
Beng	=yeah but when we run actual production it's too high	816
GM	haven't you try running the actual production the trial run before	817
Samy	earlier we committed ourselves using the die mould in the early stage that's why we are- the range also is a little bit narrow due to we using the die mould so that time when we run the production test is already review and accept after some time they feel the die mould not really good so they start to use back as a free press which is without the die mould and they are facing difficulty on the cap that er on the dough and they increase some dough weight on that so lately after the X recipe we also- I mean revise the dough weight a little percentage lah I mean-	818 819 820 821 822 823 824
GM	=so the revised dough weight has been given (?) / for the costing lah	825
Samy		/ we already submitted the last 826
	time (?)	827
GM	=so the revised dough weight is without the die one so it should be alright	828
Samy	=should be alright	829
GM	=should be alright	830
Samy	should be because-	831
GM	should lah	832
Beng	production only	833
GM	but didn't you do a production run a bigger batch production run before you give the dough weight	834 835
Samy	=no we need- we need to test (?) and the the production already currently they using the (?)	836 837
GM	=how big batch is the trial run	838
Samy	we use about thirty forty kilo on the batch-	839

GM	=thirty kilo forty kilo when you do the trial runs er did you involve production people	840 841
Samy	yes the supervisors	842
GM	=who are those only supervisors	843
Samy	=only supervisor	844
GM	=only supervisors Beng and Abu is not around	845
Samy	I mean the Abu and the supervisors and also QA department involve then the review and everybody agree on this / (?)	846 847
GM	/ yeah you are agreeable or not QA and production department	848
Samy	the latest one everybody agree that's why we submit	849
GM	=can you show me the report on that please show me the report on that- did people agreed on that batch on that day on that batch the variants of the product thickness and er-	850 851 852
Samy	=what I am requesting is	853
GM	=and er Beng you are suppose to be in the loop you are supposed to know this trial run because ultimately you are the final person to- you are the owner of the process at the end of it so if you all after submission of the samples er after so much of work done with the customers now you say that oh the dough weight we have to increase ah is quite shocking to us lah	854 855 856 857 858
Beng	=no that's before X-eleven	859
GM	=huh	860
Beng	that's before the X-eleven	861
GM	=no no I'm talking about X-eleven	862
Beng	X-eleven I have to-	863
GM	=I'm talking about X-eleven not before what just X-eleven huh	864
Chai	have you given samples to them	865
Beng	yes	866
Chai	given right (?)	867
GM	can you re-do the same er trial run exactly the same what Dr Wong say er must be able to re- reproduce-able	868 869
Chai	I suggest do together now / (?)	870
GM	/ Beng you and Samy work together er if you still- this is one last chance that I say no more ah in the future saying that need to adjust again need to do this again I am very surprised because ah all this thing has already been given to her for costing ah and then at the end you all say that oh still need to agree then my cost will increase again before anything else you all should agree on everything already then only give the dough weight to the costing department to do the costing then at this stage ah you all have seen so many of the email that Weng has been writing to Tom and if you all are not agreeable to anything ah you better stop it half way and approach R and D department and say that you know I'm not agreeable with the dough weight I'm not agreeable because I'm not here I'm not agreeable because I didn't see you run the trial run and don't let it happen again now only in the meeting you are telling me this this is totally unacceptable you know so this is the last chance ah I give er Rand D ah and production department ah to be able to work together ah and agree on the formulation and weight everything before giving to the costing department so how many more trial run you all think you all want to conduct before the actual- when is the next order for this recipe already done already	871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887
Weng	ah yes (?) one hundred kilo (?)	888
GM	=that is for their-	889
Weng	(?) so the order will come in sometime in August	890
GM	August	891
Weng	after the specification	892
GM	=so can you all do a few more trial runs to ensure that this can be reproducible repeatable lah if there is any change you all better settle down before actual	893 894

	production for Tom you know ah Tom is so difficult he is such a difficult customer and if you people ah take it lightly ah (she sighs) I don't know what to say lah huh <u>Weng</u> can please ah cc every email to Beng	895 896 897
Weng	=yeah	898
GM	=all the discussion that you have with Tom to Beng to R and D as well and then they will appreciate how difficult it is Chai continue	899 900
Chai	three point ten three point eleven we leave it three point twelve hot press casaarela consistency report	901 902
GM	consistency report	903
Chai	=R and D has (?)	904
Samy	Beng already assigns (?)	905
Beng	(?) still er (?)	906
GM	so what is your recommendation on the thickness Beng mm because now is the er- what I want to say here is er after you have run this er this consistency study if you you continuously to find that you know there is no correlation at all-	907 908 909
Beng	<u>no</u> we have to see er the er machine / (?)	910
GM	/ yeah	911
Beng	do the ah ah how is the er the er if it's suitable and then how can we streamline (?)	912
GM	so when will you finish this report	913
Beng	need a number of data in order to get-	914
GM	=how many data you need	915
Beng	at least one hundred and twenty	916
GM	let us know how long is the report is going to come out	917
Beng	so right now we are testing our GSS one once we run GSS (?)	918
GM	okay you need one hundred fifty data one day how many data you can get	919
Beng	one day twenty data er (?)	920
GM	twenty batches one hundred fifty one hundred fifty data so one day you can get twenty data	921 922
Beng	let's say twenty batches means twenty data	923
GM	divide by twenty is how many days can I get the data	924
Chai	seven point five	925
GM	about seven point five days you should be able to get all the data so can I give you up to two weeks to get the-	926 927
Beng	=now I am collecting the data already even the form are are designed to collect	928
GM	=okay okay we we we give ourselves two weeks to get the data out sixteenth okay end of the month I should get the data of the consistency report and let me know ah out of all this press ah this hot press ah can this hot press to able to use some more we have to let-	929 930 931 932
Beng	=right now I'm using casa or you want me / to (?)	933
GM	/ doesn't matter lah you see every hot press has its problem you see so if you are able to give me a justification of the press problems perhaps we can recommend this to Andy in MMF so they can do something for us you see the equipment manufacturers- so what are the things we need from them that our press will give a good quality product you see so by all this data we send to them when Andy come on the twenty-third I hope lah that's why you are a bit too late you see by the time they come just show that I have collected so many data I have done so much of work you know I continuously to get the consistent figures so I would like to change the plate or I would like to change the hydraulic we have to recommend to them mah so that you won't leave the inconsistency- the product inconsistency- continue to leave like that you see they are able to do equipment for us nowadays so just go ahead and do it problem solving lah think a bit proactively okay	934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946
Chai	(?)	947
GM	=if you can collect the data faster I'm sure you have done quite a lot of data perhaps by end of this week you can give me the report so twenty-third when he come ah-	948 949 950

Beng	=yeah	951
GM	we can be able to give him some results and show him you know these are our problems next one is what production	952 953
Chai	=schedule	954
GM	=schedule mm	955
Choo	no issue	956
GM	okay next one method- complaint by WSI	957
Weng	(?)	958
GM	this one he he he say that you wrote to him what did he say did he come back to us	959 960
Weng	nothing much (?) just went through the the (?) probably on the nineteenth (?)	961
GM	he's coming on the nineteen	962
Weng	=yes	963
GM	at er-	964
Weng	nine a.m.	965
GM	on the nineteenth at nine a.m. ah	966
Weng	=yeah (?) probably er-	967
GM	=I do not know er maybe we we some- the letters- there will be people in this plant you know for MMF	968 969
Weng	right	970
GM	er probably they will be here seventeen eighteen nineteen for us to talk to	971
Choo	=Mira latest update I think you haven't seen you- your e-mail I just receive a mail from Lance saying that this er-	972 973
GM	=from who ah	974
Choo	=Lance	975
GM	ah	976
Choo	saying that Mike originally suppose to come in arrive here on eighteenth night come into the office on the nineteenth but he just drop a mail to say there is further change to Mike schedule no new dates yet	977 978 979
GM	so nobody is here / to sit in to discuss before we sign our letter lah	980
Choo	/ yeah	981
Choo	=at the moment lah because his first email says he is arriving on eighteenth night ask us ask me to find someone to take him to the plant on the nineteenth then he drop another mail soon after that he say change his schedule don't do anything yet	982 983 984 985
GM	=so so Llyod should be-	986
Choo	Llyod is coming in on the seventeenth	987
GM	oh was- he cc that the mail	988
Choo	no	989
GM	in this case we have to ask Llyod to defer the date lor maybe not nineteenth to sign the letter nobody to talk to us you all may have something to discuss with them okay I will Llyod know in this case I'm sure he can defer ah	990 991 992
WM	so I probably check with you (?)	993
GM	=yeah yeah I will check with Llyod or maybe I will check with them	994
WM	=worse come to worse I will (?)	995
GM	action plan for improvement done oh	996
Choo	(?) went to that page first- (flips pages)	997
GM	he has briefed us already only up to number four ah Beng ah your action plan for June just now we talk until number three right number four is the macarabia Malaysia oil applicator too high rate excess oil	998 999 1000
Beng	ah excess oil from (?) what other type of (?)	1001
GM	so you you you better be fast oh because your rejection rate is high	1002
Beng	no oil base	1003
GM	but you still use more oil than seed lah	1004
Beng	ah yes because of the dryness in the first place we actually manage to sell (?)	1005
GM	=yeah lah but it's better not to lah	1006
Beng	(?)	1007

GM	better not lah better not to waste lor make sure look at the er- better make sure the first time is always right lah otherwise you have to waste the oil / when sell it	1008 1009
Beng	/ (?)	1010
GM	how soon you can do that	1011
Beng	depends on the er (?)	1012
GM	push lah push up ah okay I think that's it oh Chai anything you want to highlight	1013
Chai	I think Suan side their order for August under MMF-	1015
GM	ah ah	1016
Chai	er	1017
Weng	just update us lah	1018
GM	yeah yeah yeah	1019
Chai	so Suan your (?)	1020
GM	=what do you need ah Suan for the August order under MMF what do you need	1021
Suan	er first thing is the QSS that we have to prepare the nutritional value	1022
GM	the nutritional value	1023
Suan	still (?)	1024
Beng	about five days-	1025
Suan	=I actually going to write to them and see if it is mandatory or not if not can we actually er (?)	1021 1026
GM	oh	1027
Suan	=and at the same time I will also let her know because by the time if take too long we may miss the registration so today (?)	1028 1029
Chai	still manageable	1030
Suan	er hopefully lah and we also at the same time ask for waiver I requested them to send because it is not clear and one more thing to clarify can we actually on MMF name the name word Malaysia can we use in bracket	1031 1032 1033
GM	Ah	1034
Suan	=because that is what they actually use on the label so I just want to clarify that's All	1035 1036
GM	=who use it on the label	1037
Suan	er (?) they actually prepare the initial actual art work and they actually put MMF in bracket but could be too long for the label will be too long but our registration is actually MMF	1037 1038 1039
GM	this one er maybe can check with the-	1040
Chai	=check with lawyer see whether- any legal aspect	1041
GM	=check with Wong and partner already lor Chai can you talk to them Chai	1042
Chai	okay okay	1043
GM	say is it alright ah okay	1044
Suan	if can't I will ask them to change and er the other one is the cost analysis because this one we actually have the price of the tax which is in order for them to get the lower tax we have to submit under MMF	1045 1046 1047
Chai	(?)	1048
GM	the the the other one is on the way lah still working on it lah it's not like very critical time line or what	1049 1050
Suan	it is quite because we will need the form for the August shipment	1051
GM	so how soon do you have to do finish doing this	1052
Suan	the cost analysis will actually take about seven working days for them to approve	1053
GM	seven working days	1054
Suan	=ah seven working days for them to approve base on the cost analysis	1055
GM	=so do you count today in	1056
Suan	no I have not actually receive the- I will write to the-	1057
Mei	this you are talking about the BSI right	1058
Suan	no (?) under MMF so we have to submit again because the earlier one we submitted we actually submitted under Alpane	1059 1060

Mei	so you need another- it's the same as the earlier one	1061
Suan	=yes so this round because we have actually approved on the palm oil we have to submit the palm oil as well	1062 1063
Chai	I think we settle it by today lah	1064
GM	okay if you settle by today er you give them tomorrow one two three four five six seven oh twenty-fifth give yourself one more day twenty-sixth just nice oh you must finish today and submit tomorrow	1065 1066 1067
Chai	base on schedule should be the same	1068
Mat	(?)	1069
GM	wah then you you must do it by today finish by today and get it out to Suan they will get back to us only either twenty-fifth allow one day lah twenty-fifth delay if delay twenty-sixth come back production thirtieth	1070 1071 1072
Suan	so whether they can er (?) if that is okay then I can actually proceed with the-	1073
GM	=this one to check with who which department	1074
Suan	=QA no I'm checking with the er-	1075
Beng	=supplier no customer	1076
Suan	=the coordinator	1077
GM	but in the past Keong was not in also	1078
Suan	=ah was not in because right now it's a new requirement they actually need a very detail with the breakdown because in the past we only give them by fats only one but now they need the saturated fats unsaturated fats all this in detail	1079 1080 1081
GM	=yeah that one you put in in in detail but er last time we didn't give them detail also	1082 1083
Suan	=no that's why I am asking her it is mandatory or not for them if it is not we just want to waive it you see	1084 1085
GM	so er printing of carton- when do you have to get the carton in	1086
Suan	before the production on the thirtieth that's why I am rushing	1087
GM	thirtieth er- so you-	1088
Beng	(?)	1089
GM	so twenty-seventh you have to get it	1090
Beng	=(?) MMF team	1091
GM	how many days twenty-seventh you have to get your carton out so you calculate seven days ah for printing right	1092 1093
Suan	mm five working days or or one week (?)	1094
GM	so by twentieth you have to confirm everything orh	1095
Suan	yeah I only have this week to work on the (?)	1096
GM	by twentieth everything has to be settled and give it to the printer you know ah	1097
Suan	=yes	1098
GM	can you just give us all this timeline ah <u>Suan</u> can you write down just now carton to be ready just now we also say the- just now you say about the SAP one that one tax what ah	1099 1100 1101
Suan	oh that is the cost analysis on their (?)	1102
GM	=because you need to use on the thirtieth	1103
Suan	ah	1104
GM	=right	1105
Suan	that one can be a little bit er later only when (?) send out the shipment we do not know how sometimes they delay on the process that's why I want to check on the situation	1106 1106 1107
GM	okay what else- what else under your area	1108
Weng	ah I want to add on generally ASH actually has approved of the palm oil base but we just need is a firm confirmation from (?) cause Jack just wrote back that okay it's okay but what we wanted now it is the confirmation that at least (?) / hopefully	1109 1110 1111 1112
GM	/ but his reply was very funny ah	1113
Weng	yeah that's why I just want to make sure it's palm oil is okay	1114
GM	what did he reply ah Beng you can understand ah	1115

Beng	who	1116
GM	Jack Jack	1117
Beng	some some of it lah	1118
Weng	=basically yeah- basically what he mention is that (?) samples (?)	1119
GM	yeah	1120
Weng	so I told him that (?)	1121
GM	=he was not happy with the sample you send	1122
Weng	yeah it's different	1123
GM	=he say it's different you know	1124
Weng	yes so I explain to him over the phone that this this (?)	1125
GM	but why why did you all send a sample which has such a great variance I just don't understand lah	1126 1127
Samy	actually the production ah running- we want to do the sample we use the manual but only the size a little bit different	1128 1129
GM	quite a lot orh you see / I was like how come	1130
Samy	/ we do explain because they want to test quality not on the size so-	1131
GM	=aiyoh friend you never learn you never learn do you agree with me ah you cannot say like that you know sample is a sample you cannot say samples ah they don't care about the size they care about the texture if I am sending a sample ah I will make sure my samples ah comply with the fact of everything you cannot give me a answer saying that oh they are only testing on the texture they are not on the size aiyoh when you do a mistake you say yes lah you know it's my mistake that I do not look into the size cannot answer people like that you know you agree or not lah agree or not you must agree lah you know why when you all say things like that ah I feel not right lah cannot if you all didn't do the job well ah you tell me lah that I did not check carefully next time it will not happen say oh they don't care about the size they care about the texture <u>Weng</u> what else they say the size is different some some other attributes also not right ah	1132 1133 1134 1135 1136 1137 1138 1139 1140 1141 1142 1143
Weng	weight and (?)	1144
GM	even weight eh can't you all send sample (?)	1145
Samy	=weight	1146
GM	yes they say like that lah	1147
Weng	(?)	1148
GM	if you all are sending sample can't you all select so now re-do it samples- what did you learn last time I look at the remarks from him ah I also feel ah the same thing again the slack- you all are quite slack one ah sometimes the thing are okay already ah everybody go back early you know what master taught us ah you must always remember <u>Beng</u> every complain eh from the customer ah you really have to follow up it's not my job it's your job to follow up with R and D what else	1149 1150 1151 1152 1153 1154
Suan	got one more thing to highlight is that(?) accept the palm oil (?) have one thousand tins soya oil currently I am checking (?)	1155 1156
GM	=say one more time please	1157
Suan	after this er the excess when we are going to produce under MMF so say for example if they were to start or agree on the palm oil depending on the following shipment we will have one thousand twenty tins of soya oil because this soya oil is only meant for thin crust pizza so-	1158 1159 1160 1161
Beng	=Weng already change	1162
Suan	Weng already change	1163
GM	=never mind lah use it up lah	1164
Suan	already change	1165
GM	use it up lah what do you do with the-	1167
Weng	(?)	1168
Beng	the evaluation is base on	1169
GM	huh	1170

Beng	the evaluation	1171
Suan	or can we actually defer	1172
GM	defer lah	1173
Suan	ah	1174
GM	=use it up lah and defer lah can why cannot	1175
Beng	so can the supplier sell off the (?)	1176
Suan	that's why we are checking you see have to get the management approval lah	1177
GM	if the suppliers can then / you	1178
Suan	/ yes that one I no issue but let's say if you don't agree see whether we want to efer or-	1179 1180
GM	=if you want to defer better do it now	1181
Beng	I prefer to change (?) for (?)	1182
Suan	the ideal is yes lah change lah	1183
Chai	how fast can you contact the supplier	1184
Suan	yeah today	1185
GM	=actually the supplier will like it you know cheaper	1186
Suan	yes-	1187
GM	=they make some money	1188
Suan	because I am asking them whether they can / (?)	1189
Beng	/ in bun line (?) to (?) last time change from oil to shortening so (?)	1190 1191
GM	they will be happy then they will make some money	1192
Suan	yeah	1193
GM	so you come back to us these two days lah if cannot then we have to defer lah so Weng have to write to Korea to defer for the payments don't mind you calculate lah what else	1194 1195 1196
Suan	mmm basically is that for MCF we have already receive the order ah for the August month so that one no issue because we start off this month lah or and the PHT lah-	1197 1198 1199
Beng	=(?) one carton (?)	1200
Suan	=ah yes	1201
Beng	because there are some er unfolded one also (?)	1202
Suan	but unfolded is ah because we are not aware of this lah we actually change the carton size right	1203 1204
Beng	it's still the same the only thing different is ah (?)	1205
Suan	so will it affect the packing (?)	1206
Beng	later ah it will not because they want us to stay in the same (?) it's only the design to change this one pending (?)	1207 1208
GM	which means that the carton may change	1209
Beng	(?)	1210
GM	=yeah lah / that's why she ask mah	1211
Mat	/(?)	1212
Beng	today (?)	1213
Mat	(?)	1214
Beng	but today one is different-	1215
GM	=how many old cartons you have the old cartons	1216
Beng	not much	1217
GM	you better keep them in the loop ah so / that if they need to change	1218
Beng	/(?)	1219
Mat	(?)	1220
Beng	if we want to change we will have to inform DCM okay I have this kind of carton (?) nowadays printing carton is for the store	1221 1222
Suan	so that means very likely they may change to the (?)	1223
GM	but how soon- how long more to go ah	1224
Beng	they say ah two months	1225
GM	how many store two stores only ah	1226
Beng	these fifty cartons for actually- for two stores	1227

GM	now they make for you how many store already	1228
Beng	ah now ah about twenty over by middle of two oh oh eight (?)	1229
GM	middle of two oh oh eight lah but before they change all to make for you ah you cannot do all open one- all open door	1230 1231
Beng	=this open one is (?)	1232
GM	no if their their toaster ah	1233
Beng	ah ha they still have big mac toaster	1234
GM	yeah I know if they you open up ah	1235
Beng	=ah ha	1236
GM	=they will fold in the restaurant themselves / old toaster I am talking about	1237
Beng	/ no need to fold no this is for (?) toaster	1238 1239
GM	oh this but which means you have to make two types of products lah one is fold for the big mac toaster-	1240 1241
Beng	=that means whatever we need now is we still need we only need extra fifty cartons	1242 1243
GM	for them every time you have to label lah need extra fifty cartons lah for two months	1244 1245
Beng	(?)	1246
Suan	then (?)	1247
Beng	the same quality so (?)	1248
GM	but you cannot / (?) lah	1249
Beng	/ (?) I ask approval of that	1250
GM	=then this kind of thing happening you have to be thinking ahead that you know which department / will be affected	1251 1252
Beng	/ no what we are going to do is like DMP (?) because they don't give me a p.o. I can't tell them-	1253 1254
GM	=but pre-empt them lah then they know this is going to happen lah okay what else	1255 1256
Weng	with regards to DCM they need agreement (?)	1257
GM	what kind of agreement	1258
Weng	of the (?) supplier (?)	1259
GM	oh that one ah-	1260
Weng	=(?) whether we still can supply	1261
GM	we can supply now but the agreement all this will come later because ah you remember Luke always tell us they don't sign confidentiality agreement they will have to read through just like Alpane lah whatever you give we cannot sign here they want to know send it to their corporate-	1262 1263 1264 1265
Weng	=(?) supply even without (?)	1266
GM	can lah	1267
Suan	CFK would like to have (?) to show verification letter because currently err without that they can't actually open a new file for MMF and I actually ask them to send a bill under Alpane so that just / to (?)	1268 1269 1270
GM	/ we will give them the letter only on the twenty thirtieth ah	1271
Chai	we give one week earlier twenty-third	1272
GM	(she laughs) unless everything approve lah (she laughs)	1273
Chai	subject to lah-	1274
GM	=subject to lah you want to put subject to ah cannot lah I mean as Llyod say it's ninety something percent already ninety-five percent we still got some percentage you see so twenty-third	1275 1276 1277
Weng	can we advise (?)	1278
GM	anyway Gerard will be here lah he is the man who can say yes or no straight away okay lah I will try give it one- one -maybe in this week lah twenty-third the week of twenty-third when they are here all the MMF people are here they will be here on the twenty-third ah Andy will be here Gerard will be here the finance people will be here the whole team will be here IT people will be here	1279 1280 1281 1282 1283

	so I have got all your question already on that day we will sit down with them and discuss what to do with all these questions ah	1284 1285
Chai	it's more concern for (?)	1286
GM	they haven't they haven't even prepared the new one for you ah	1287
Weng	it's the the existing one (?) ah	1288
GM	yeah yeah I saw your email lah they still haven't reply you ah didn't you call him	1289
Weng	because it's not finalize yet unless (?)	1290
Chai	(?)	1291
GM	no not finalize by which side	1292
Weng	(?) what my concern here is that under the Alpane one they may drag until probably (?)	1293 1294
Chai	they still need (?) for MMF-	1295
GM	=yeah / you cannot use Alpane one	1296
Chai	/ at the same time Alpane's one will be cancel until (?)	1297
GM	=yeah Alpane one cannot cancel	1298
Chai	it continue	1299
Weng	so (?)	1300
GM	you cannot say er we use Alpane one but but on the day you better chase him already oh	1301 1302
Chai	(?) negotiable-	1303
GM	=maybe maybe ah he doesn't want to use KLT anymore maybe he just use (?)	1304
Chai	(?)	1305
GM	maybe he will- I mean the contingency is C and E right the contingency will be C and E right	1306 1307
Weng	=C and E is more like the other customers like (?)	1308
Mat	bank	1309
Weng	bank (?)	1310
GM	but he himself can use the same system mah	1311
Chai	(?)	1312
GM	=ah say again	1313
Weng	if C and E at least / he can get sixty days	1314
GM	/ yeah lah I know I know	1315
Chai	(?)	1316
GM	like for him if he doesn't give money we don't produce lah we can work out afterwards lah Chai ah ah see what's the best way for him lah ah after lunch ah Chai and Weng we discuss this one what is the best way for him any other thing <u>Suan Mat</u> your area no problem ah stock balance they are going to take stock on the twenty on the twenty-eight ah you all make sure ah in your area- <u>Chai</u> okay ah <u>Choo</u> okay ah that's all thank you	1317 1318 1319 1320 1321 1322

APPENDIX 5

ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELD NOTES

DAILY JOURNAL ENTRY AT ALPANE (Data Site)

Key to abbreviations used in this notes

mtg	- meeting	&	-and	A	- Plant A
appt	- appointment	w	-with	B	- Plant B
mins	- minutes	abt	-about		
comm.	- committee	ard	-around		
mngt	- manager	hr	-hour		
mngt	- management	ppl	-people		
mth	- month	antr	-another		
exec	-executive	msg	-message		
sr	-senior	cos	-because		
prod	-production	altho	-although		
Eng	-English				

Day	Field Notes
1	<p>At Plant B: Had my first mtg with Choo, the GM’s personal assistant Her job portfolio: manager at GM’s office, takes minutes of meetings, takes care of GM’s schedules, & handle all correspondences at GM’s office. A Chinese lady in her 40s, speaks English fluently & clearly. We talked for an hour, & I outlined what I intended to do. She told me a few things about the company, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the company produces buns, crusts, tortilla, pizza base, have 2 factories: always busy • GM has tight schedules • workers aren’t very competent in their English, especially their written work • sometimes they remain quiet throughout meetings. <p>The GM will be informed and once GM approves, I can begin the field work. She also briefed me on what the company does.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monthly management mtgs held once a month, usually on the 14th or any nearest available date, attended by the top management people • quarterly there is a SQMS mtg • there 2 factories: flatbread line & bun Line • GM also chairs marketing & the R&D meetings • there are adhoc mtgs, for eg. urgent matters • production mtgs – at A: once a month, usually at end of the month, & at B daily brief mtgs
2	<p>At B: My mtg with GM went well and she approved of the field work and allowed me to be at both premise: plant A & B to record their meetings and observe their work routines. GM is a Chinese female, early 50s. Wears very formal attire & speaks fluent English with slight Chinese accent. I briefed the GM on the aim of the study:</p>

	<p>purpose of visit/time frame/ expectation/ confidentiality issues/ focus of study on spoken communication.</p> <p>She is friendly & open to my proposal of looking at the employees' language use. She feels they aren't able to communicate very effectively. She says:</p> <p>"we are not mindful of what we say"</p> <p>"we assume too much"</p> <p>"lack of attention"</p> <p>'use of wrong words"</p> <p>"unutilized capacity – not precise enough"</p> <p>She comments that she too doesn't have a wide range of words to use, & often w overseas work, she can't catch their accents.</p> <p>I felt she speaks well, w a tinge of chinese accent, speaks clearly and confidently, w assertiveness, knows what she wants & is talking about.</p>
3	<p>At B: attended their monthly mngt mtg at 10 am. Not sure if the GM has told the staff, therefore not recording the session in case I infringe on their privacy. However since I was invited to sit in I did & took notes of the proceedings.</p> <p>After the mtg, lunch was provided: buffet, a celebration over some recent achievement & was invited to stay. I did & used the opportunity to get to know some of the managers, esp the HRM (Lynn).</p> <p>Before this mtg Choo told a little bit about Alpane:</p> <p>Flat bread started market survey in 1998. R & D in 1999. 2000 pilot plant in Shah Alam. 2005 at North Port.</p> <p>Due to changes in market environment, began production of flatbread line. Capacity: what improvisation can be done to improve efficiency, to ensure can make three 40-footer a month for MMF.</p>
4	<p>At Plant A: had made arrangements w Choo to visit this site, so 1st time: it's a place smaller than B & buildings are older but site is strategically located. I was told mngt level managers are the same group of pple for both plants. While some of them have individual office space in both, a few are stationed at A, while some at B. All mngt level mtgs are held at B.</p> <p>Was introduced to some key people at the office area: Yen (I met her at yesterday's mtg) so she knows why I am here. Other Accounts dept people: Macy & Rozi. The office area is small and less formal looking than B.</p> <p>After lunch met up w Lynn to check on other mtgs schedule: she said she will confirm & let me know by email. She appears very busy.</p> <p>Was given a room to sit (medium sized) which is their meeting room, and just outside this room is Mat's (Customer service mngt) desk & his assistant sits next to him. He takes & makes a lot of calls, speaks in both English & Malay. His assistant uses more Malay but when it comes to names of products, clients & places, these terms are in English.</p>
5	<p>At A: Choo passed me 2 documents on background of Alpane. I spent time reading as there were no mtgs to attend in the morning. Stayed on to observe the pple at work.</p> <p>Afternoon: Operations Meeting (OPM) w the Operations team (consists of Prod, M&E, and QA). OPM is held once a week & chaired by Minah (senior production exec). The others: Sim, Jeng, Dina, Su, Saras, & Zain. Minah takes minutes as well (she uses a template), & mtg lasts abt an hr. She tells me after the mtg, she would type the minutes & send out through email. I also asked if I can get a tour of the factory operations. She will check w mngt & get back to me. She reports direct to Beng. Her schedule: mornings brief factory staff on production matters, afternoon she does the paper work.</p>
6	<p>At A: familiarize myself to more people at this factory, esp the factory execs and supervisors: Minah, Sim, Jien, Dina, Su, Saras, & Zain</p> <p>Found out that:</p> <p>Working hours: 8.30 – 5.30 /Mon – Fri, lunch break – 1 hour.</p> <p>I see notice boards ard, all in English, hardly anything written in BM.</p> <p>Invited to sit in at mtg called by the Social Club Committee. It's not very formal, the room is too small for the number of pple attending, so some had to stand. Some walked in and out. Lynn chaired.</p>

7	At B: Observe the routine of the pple here. Read the posters and notices around the office. Most are in English with a few written in Malay. Met Patsy & June: 2 management trainees from local universities. Had social chat at pantry. Both speak English relatively well. Met Ning (HR assistant) is based at B, while Lynn is more often at A. Ning just joined (2 wks ago) and still on probation.
8	At B: a mtg 10-12. Choo announce mtg delay by ½ hour bec. Lynn has to deal w a staff problem. It was a HR mtg: interesting listening to them speak on all kinds of HR matters. GM was present to chair. Recorded and transcribed.
9	At A: chat with Macy, who assists Yen with accounts. Had coffee. Spoke briefly with Choo. Suppose to have 10 am mtg for brainstorming matters under Suan but postponed to a week later. Minah told me I could visit the factory as she got clearance from mgnt. We looked at our schedules & slotted in Day 14. We had an informal chat where she asked me how to improve her English & I gave her some tips.
10	At A: on days when there are no mtgs, I sit & observe and also catch up on document preparation. Observe that staff are generally friendly, helpful, always offering drinks. Makes sure visitor is comfortable. They speak a variety of languages and when they use English it's mostly of the Malaysian variety (MalE). Malay, Chinese dialects & Tamil are used freely, & they code switch with ease. Have asked that when Lynn is free, I need to have a session w her: ask her a few things, so waited for her to call for me. The challenge of doing research in a real workplace is getting the mngt pple to provide information as they are busy all the time & especially in this company when the mngt pple have to move from plant A to B, sometimes within the same day.
11	At A: observe pple & transcribe recorded meeting (HRM) as a trial run. There was a mtg to discuss the company trip, I sat in to observe: rather informal, but interesting. Lots of overlapping talk, noisy as pple talking across, laughter etc. I decided not to transcribe: many parts can't be heard. Furthermore I decided to look at mtgs which are more formal & work related.
12	At A: Lynn on leave, so have not got the mtg schedule yet. But Choo is ard, & I read the mins she provided but she told me it cannot be taken out or duplicated. I just needed to verify some acronyms & terms used at their mtgs. Had opportunity to talk to Sim & Jeng, prod sups. They wear company t-shirts & always w caps when they come upstairs (where office is) from the factory below. These are the "hands-on" pple. They are busy either with files which has forms for them to fill in. Also had a chance to see hear how the QA sups: Dina & Saras speak. They use Malay more than English. Sat in at their OPM: Minah chairs with these sups & some choose to stand so they can walk in & out to attend to the factory matters. Today's mtg was longer (1 ½ hrs) as a few urgent matters were raised.
13	At A: continuing observation here & when there's tea break I get to talk to some of them informally. Most mgnt level managers are in B. Some are on the move so they don't stay in. Minah narrated an interesting event that happened at the factory recently: a truck delivered some ram materials and over a misunderstanding, the truck drive (not Alpane's) got down outside the premise and asked the staff member (a prod worker) to go out and they had a fist fight. Minah's job is now to write a report of the incident.
14	At A: Able to visit factory floor with Minah walking me thro. I now get a better picture of what it takes to produce the buns: the procedures & the processes. She showed me the equipment used & the chronological steps of making the buns. She showed me the raw materials they use & where these are stored. Most factory operators are foreign workers. Hygiene & safety are 2 key issues emphasized. Procedure: First clean self, wash hands, sanitise, wear coat & glove, & hair cap, walk in & out of a blower, hot: to kill germs. Then to each process, from dough mixing to formulation, to mixer, then drier. Equipment: dough mixer, sponge mixer. Some points from Minah: Work starts at 830. Morning briefing 9-915, standing around

	the area outside factory. Check email. Post to boss urgent matters. That's her work communication with Beng.
15	At A: a mtg on IT matters but I was not prepared as I was not informed earlier & the mtg already started. But I sat in to observe. Only 4 pple attended, under Tien the IT exec. Chai, Yen & Macy as they are discussing upgrading IT systems for the company, so finance pple are in this mtg with Tien. It is conducted fully in English and in between a Chinese dialect is used (Cantonese) as it appears they use this dialect. Spoke briefly with Choo & I ask her about the books on the shelf in the mtg room. She mentions they are some Alpane's documents (history of the company, mission & vision statement, policies etc) & she said I was most welcome to refer to them which I did in the whole time I was there. Lynn dropped by to say hi, then she leaves for a mtg w suppliers. She's appears to be busy & hasn't given me the mtg schedule so I reminded her & she promised by tomorrow.
16	At A: Lynn gave me the mtg schedule & also passed me the staff profile which is to be kept confidential. This list is the profile of the local Malaysian staff. It has information on their educational background, the year they joined Alpane, their designation & mobile numbers. I started to give pseudonyms to each of them to be used in the data transcription. This is listed into a table for future reference. Afternoon the Social Club mtg was on & I again sat in to observe.
17	At A: observing Mat working on his computer. Phone calls. Activity in the other room. GM & Lynn ard but not Choo, later saw GM at meeting with Chai & antr guy. Sat in usual room, Mat very frustrated this morning, dealing with a problem, apparently sorting out the bun issues: frozen or not? Uses phone frequently, spoke English when necessary & Malay to Malay. Minah had an audit mtg but I did not record cos too technical. I sat in to observe.
18	At A: Choo updated me. She said many things which I now must remember. So am writing down. <u>Use of English</u> : Exec level – not wanting to learn, seem to take line of least resistance, initially she used to correct their language in letters but at times don't know whether to correct language or re-write whole thing, but knowing if GM is to sign how can the language be given that way so she re-writes. Her work is abandoned and she has to attend to those letters first. Sometimes the way they write is like the way they speak. They don't think very much. <u>Rank & File</u> Training is provided. And if they wish to they can take up more courses, company sponsor. <u>Emailing</u> Sometimes bad language. Sometimes GM ask to vet the emails cos there were times when she didn't, & these got sent to international offices, or other regions & customers, the replies come back with "I don't understand" or "I'm confused" & this reflects poorly on their pple here. The GM is very concerned abt this.
19	At A: have been coming to A for a longer stretch so that I can observe and note the common and standard work routines. OPM mtg in the afternoon, Minah chaired.
20	At A: there was a briefing for factory operators: Saras, Dina & Jeng in charge and all 3 took turns to speak. They used various codes of languages, but mainly Malay (bazaar), a smattering of English (especially for specific terms) & a lot of sign language cos the operators were mainly foreign workers from Bangladesh, India & Nepal, who are more familiar with basic Malay. Everyone was standing in the mtg room at the factory floor. Many had their caps and gloves still on & it was only a 15 min brief.
21	At A: observe pple. Did some transcription work. Not much going on.
22	At B: realise I also need to stay on at B for a stretch of time to know the pple and observe their daily routines. Pple seem busy today w so many others around. The mngrs & execs are all here. Also met Abu (sr. production exec at B) & asked if I can visit the factory floor at B. He also said, like Minah that he has to ask mngt first. Will get back to me. Point to note: they both follow protocol & abide by the hierachical structure OSH (Occupational, Safety hazards) mtg, chaired by Beng & Lynn. Attended by production, QA and M& E teams on occupational and safety issues.

23	At B: antr day to observe pple at work. Since it's a bigger factory, the office space is larger. I only get to meet pple at the pantry. Otherwise I sit in Choo's room (whenever she is not around in B). When she is here I sit outside with the clerks at an empty desk. I use my laptop & write out transcripts & notes (from the company's documents)
24	At B: decided to move down to the factory floor cos there was no place for me today. It's the factory floor so lots of activities. I see more pple at work: factory sups & operators. Afternoon they had a adhoc mtg. Sit in to observe. It's about the moving of new mixer into factory, chaired by Beng.
25	At B: Was able to sit in Choo's room, Observe the exexs at work: Patsy & June: both use more English in their conversations. They are assisting with customer service & purchasing so they talk to customers & suppliers on the phone & emails. Abu told me mgnt gave clearance for me to visit the factory floor & will take me through on Day 35.
26	At B: met Noor (Abu's assistant) & since Abu appears more distant I felt it was easier to talk to her for more background info on factory matters. I conveyed my interest to observe their OPM, & she said they meet every morning (15-30 mins) to discuss operations matter. So I could sit in once she checks w Abu on this. Again note the protocol.
27	At B: Had free lunch as the mgnt occasionally give free lunches when the factory operators meet mgnt staff. Today is such a day. It's a pre packed lunch box. The operators just collect & go back downstairs to the factory floor & after that the briefing takes place, ½ hr. Beng is there. Everyone stands around, & in between Abu & Noor also briefs them on work matters. They use Malay & where terms are concerned, it's in English, for eg words like dough, crust, naan, tortilla, flour. Also sign language to help factory operators who aren't proficient in Malay.
28	At B: Today is the day for the new equipment to come in, so prod was halted for half a day. Los of movement going on while the schedule was already planned ahead for the factory to shut down for a few hrs. Beng is ard to see to the whole installation process. Pple upstairs continue with their work tasks.
29	At B: observe and record the monthly mgnt mtg (MM1). More notes on this in Appendix 5. Afternoon was quiet so I sat in to write out the notes taken for MM1.
30	At B: A quiet day & pple do their own things. There is always work to do, as prod doesn't stop. It is operational 24 hr, and so there is shift work: 2 batches. The prod execs handle the scheduling.
31	At B: rather quiet & normal going-ons. As usual spent the day typing out notes, transcribing & during lunch & tea breaks, I try to get to know some of them. They have a small canteen just outside the factory premise so a few would go there & I join them. Social chats help to provide more info on their work routines.
32	At A: Not many pple around, & observe those in prod: can hear jovial laughter & bantering. Some use of Cantonese. Upstairs: accounts pple are busy with their paper work. The atmosphere here differs from B. Here it is smaller so it's easier to see from where I sit. And the pantry is an open area hence there are many opportunities for socials throughout the day. At B, there is a pantry room, and I also sit in a room which doesn't allow me to see everyone so easily.
33	At A: Had OPM & recorded. Chatted w Minah & ask her abt the job and how she copes. Being a Malay lady & having to handle quite a big group of operators who are mostly men, she says she accepts it as part of the job & stays firm. With her Malaysian team of execs & sups, she is the most senior so she helps them along the way as most are still learning. She is a food tech grad from local uni.
34	At A: The usual work going on and I sit in the mtg room to read, write & observe pple. Met 2 trainees here for internship – food engineering students from local uni. They are eager to learn and have been given the company t-shirts. I thought this is a positive move, to show they already belong and they are welcomed. Minah has instructions for them and basically they help the QA sups.
35	At B: Was told by Abu to meet him downstairs. Then he walked me thro factory. I donned the gear as in A: mask, gloves, coat, cap. Went thro a compartment to clean (air shower). Then into clean area. Then went into their office. The office is located inside

	<p>the factory floor. So anyone who wants to go into this office have to go thro the “cleaning” process. He briefed someone there & then we went to the factory area: similar to A, they have a store to keep raw materials & Abu showed me this first. Jamil is in charge of inventory so he keeps tab of the supplies. Then we went to the prod line, one for crust, one for naan & tortilla. Their ovens are huge and definitely this is a bigger prod plant than A cos their products are mostly for exports. Beside the factory is a warehouse where they store the products for export which is to be kept in a freezer. The reason why this plant is located in North Port area, is to make the shipment process easier.</p>
36	<p>At B: many pple (mgnt team) around, but can’t see them, they are busy. Just sit at the desk with the clerical staff & did my work but I hv opportunity to observe more going-ons as I am sitting outside, not confined to the room. Mgnt team in their respective rooms, Lynn hv discussion w several pple as she is here today: Nisa is w her most of the time to follow thro the work she has for her to do.</p> <p>I see Weng coming and going. Since he is the Sales & marketing mngr his job is to go out and get the sales and follow up too. Suan is the Purchasing and she clocks in early and leaves punctually. These 2 managers are more in the background, as I don’t see much of them and in the meeting talk, they don’t get so much talk time. Beng and Chai has more.</p>
37	<p>At B: Compared to yesterday it’s quieter today. I am back in the room & spent the day typing out notes, transcribing & observing the going-ons.</p>
38	<p>At B: Was quiet in the morning but later Beng had a mtg ad-hoc regarding QA matters. Patsy & June & Ms Leng (customer service & R&D staff) sat in. I observe them. They use English & sometimes code switch to Cantonese. Very task focused talk.</p>
39	<p>At B: spent the day typing out notes, transcribing & observing the going-ons, had lunch with Patsy & June, and found out that they are still new at the job & is under training with the older staff.</p>
40	<p>At A: back to meet the Accounts group, Macy & Rozy. They have jobs which are more desk bound so always in. They don’t move around like the prod execs, or QA pple. Nor do they go to B as their top execs (Chai & Yen) goes to mtg in B. Later the Social club mtg was on to discuss annual dinner. I sat in & observe.</p>
41	<p>At A: observe pple. Did some transcription work. Not much going on.</p>
42	<p>At A: Minah & team started auditing process discussion in this room, I just sat in w them to observe. They brought in many ring files & sorted out the papers & organise it for audit purposes. As they do they chat, and uses Malay in social chat. The prod team (Sim & Jeng) would walk in & out cos they have to attend to prod matters.</p>
43	<p>At A: Met Minah & she asked me some English matters. The word “inconvenience”. I explained using Malay. Very few pple around, most of them at B cos of foreign visitors & they hold most briefings at B. I read some documents & did some transcription. When I came across terms I don’t understand I check with Minah who is most helpful.</p>
44	<p>At B: Observe the physical environment more carefully as I walk around. They have a sign board at the factory that says: “104 Hari Tanpa Kemalangan – means 104 days accident free. (why in Malay when most notice boards have been in Eng?). Asked Noor who says this is info for their foreign workers and it is to highlight safety. The target is not to have any accidents within the year but in factory set ups this is not possible, accidents (sometimes minor ones) do occur.</p> <p>Noor informed me that I can sit in at their OPM so we worked out a schedule for the recording. I will sit in tomorrow as a preliminary.</p>
45	<p>At B: observe what happens at OPN in B. At the mtg: some sit, some stand, & I sat & recorded & took short notes. The door keeps opening & closing, whenever it opens, noise from factory comes in, rather annoying. Jamil (inventory supervisor) sits at his computer at the corner & multi task, do his work & take part in discussion. M&E pple stand. Abu himself stands all the time & he chairs the mtg. Hardly anything is written down. Some things are written on the board. In the room there are 7 desks, a rather informal working environment. Those who come in, they have to wear the gear: mask and cap, cos this office is located btw the factory. Anyone who enters the factory must go thro the “sanitising” process.</p>

	<p>Later I asked Noor a few questions: why they don't take notes, why they stand – no mins to refer to. Noor corrected me to say they do note down in their clip files and QA ladies are the ones who follow up on discussion whereas prod matters, Abu attends to them immediately.</p>
46	<p>At B: after yesterday I felt it was better if I observe & record their OPM for a week so I decided to sit in for 5 working days: OPM 1: observation - Samy makes effort to speak carefully, very strong Tamil accented words in Eng. Sometimes he leads & direct discussion but Abu is the chair. Abu is fluent, clear & speaks assertively. Mutu doesn't speak much, Jamil is soft spoken. The 2 QA ladies (Noor & Aisa) speaks well. There is no agenda to guide discussion, and no minutes taken. Informal, Its more reporting & giving information.</p>
47	<p>At B: OPM 2 – observation, the same as before. The 2 QA ladies brief them on 3 issues arising. Later the place was quiet, one team went for customers' audit.</p>
48	<p>At B: OPM 3 – more or less the same as yesterday. These mtgs last btw 15-30 mins. Busy day upstairs, bustling with activity, surprised to see so much going on. Mgnt pple all here. Foreign workers were waiting at lounge, & some foreign visitors (execs) were in the training room for discussion.</p>
49	<p>At B: OPM 4 - more or less the same as yesterday. Discussion on prod matters, very hands on. Observe that they have a "write-off note": <i>Procedure. Record the rejected products that confirm to be disposed, QA personnel need to verify it & get approval from Bakery Manager before disposing it.</i> <i>Date Item Quantity Batch Code Reason</i> <i>Disposed by Verified by Approved by..</i> All written in Eng. I suppose all factory matters are recorded, with templates. They do not need to write long reports. This is enough, so Noor did say that this language level is manageable, but when it comes to writing a proper report, she faces language problems. I notice her spoken Eng is good. Foreign visitors around, they are going installing new software. The foreign staff presence doesn't affect their work routines.</p>
50	<p>At B: OPM 5 – last mtg to record. Samy excused himself half way through the mtg to attend to something urgent at R&D. Jamil as usual very soft, & coughing all the time. Mutu is louder. Yesterday Noor mentioned tension often exists btw production & QA: the quantity & quality pple. Quantity says control rejects, quality says has to reject if quality is not up to standard. Mahmud spoke a lot today cos he had to talk abt the engineering problems. Abu codeswitches a lot (MalE & Malay). Later was upstairs, many pple ard so no place to sit. I was in the open space with the clerks.</p>
51	<p>At B: Mgnt team ard, no place for me. Met Choo at the pantry. She tells me all of them base here, can't run & hence people are unhappy over at A. Possible restructuring taking place. Alpane is being bought over by XYZ. This is quite an unexpected turn of events & they aren't sure what's going to happen but looks like A will be taken over by the regional group (a new mngr to lead A will join & take over there). As for B, the parent company has decided to sell to XYZ & they are beginning the negotiation of the take over. Choo mentions that the GM is aware of my study that needs to be completed & requested that I finish up within 3 mths instead of 6. I am shocked but cant do much except accept what I have & continue recording their mtgs till then.</p>
52	<p>At B: Had a good 10-20 mins chat w GM. Had this chat cos of the news of the takeover & I have to end the project earlier. I gave her some ffeedback from my observations, she was open to my comments & wants improvement for her staff. Told me of their future plans. But its not to be included in the study.</p>
53	<p>At B: Met a few factory execs, one of them - Meena who is leaving after 3 years as prod exec. She finds the job demanding & is leaving for greener pastures. Later Beng had a briefing with the OPM team.</p>
54	<p>At B: no mgnt pple ard, its quieter today. Spent the day typing out notes, transcribing & observing the going-ons. Got to talk to Samy, who speaks Eng w a heavy Tamil accent. I asked him abt what he does in R & D.</p>
55	<p>At B: monthly mgnt mtg (MM2), recorded and more notes on this mtg is in Appendix 5.</p>

	After the mtg had a short chat with the GM who appears annoyed and gave me some feedback of the mtg.
56	At B. Some thots & observations of the pple today: Beng converses with someone openly & loudly in office, in English. Samy & Ms Long uses Eng. Ning at work talks to Noor & Abu in Malay & on phone too. Can hear Beng, using bazaar Malay. When pple walk up & down, the floor boards vibrate, Sound of alarm below.
57	AT B: Nisa speaks to the 2 new recruits : Sofia & Shima. They are helping Patsy with customer services work. Mgnt pple are also here. Different discussions going on & since they are not mtgs I didn't attend.
58	At B: Ning was busy distributing shoes, company t-shirts & pants to the factory operators. Every year they get a new set of shoes, company t-shirts & pants. It is their practice to have them wear these as their uniform. Ning records against their names and make them sign. The other staff, are as usual, busy with their work. I sat in to do my notes, transcription & mingle during their breaks.
59	At A: I finally get to see Mat chair a mtg: a brief one on customer service matter. Minah, Jeng, Dina & Sim attended, he uses English, and Malay. Later went down to factory floor: QA room & chatted w Minah. She's a busy person as she takes care of all operations but mainly she does paper work in the afternoon.
60	At A: Similar to what happened at B, Minah today is distributing shoes, company t-shirts & pants to the sups. They then collect & give to the factory operators: each one take charge of a cohort of 20 workers. Minah gives them the forms to distribute & get their signatures to verify collection. Other than this the usual routine at office.
61	At B: Mat chairs a brief mtg, I sat in to observe. It's regarding a customer's complaint. He has to deal with their complaints & if it is regarding the product he will inform QA pple. A wk ago there was hair found inside the crust. QA had to trace back to which batch of prod and who on operating the machine at that point in time, as all this are traceable. At which point would an operator's hair get into the crust will be checked against the packaging & coding of that batch of products. If the person is found to be careless, a warning letter will be issued and after 3 warnings, the operator's services will be terminated.
62	At B: mgnt pple came and attend R & D mtg, issues to raise regarding the development of new product. GM chairs, and Samy, Abu, Keong are those from prod who attends. Beng & Weng also. Later they left while Beng stayed on to conduct antr small team mtg with prod, QA & M&E staff.
63	At B: No mtgs and spent the day typing out notes, transcribing & during lunch & tea breaks. Continue to find out more about the company processes. Basically Eng is our language of communication.
64	At A: Minah is busy today as she has many tasks to do. I observe the other QA staff, they have their desks upstairs & they would come up, sit for ½ hr or so, then back down to factory floor. They are always carrying their clip files (Jeng & Dina). The rest of the office – everyone is doing their work as usual.
65	At A: The office is quieter as mgnt staff are based at B to sort out the details for the takeover. The new company will be assessing each of them & re-offering them similar positions. New contracts will be drawn up. Lynn is the one in discussion with the new director from XYZ. Over at A pple just continue to their jobs as plant A is not going to undergo major changes.
66	At A: work routine as usual. I focus on my transcription & when I have things to clarify I consult Minah. The usual QA & prod team pple are always having chats and they move up & down, while the office pple do their desk jobs.
67	At A: Almost the end of my observation period, so finalising the organizational chart. Choo is here today so I get her to verify the information but she is busy so we didn't have much time to dwell on other things.
68	At A: as usual pple go about their work routines.
69	At A: a quiet day with routine work.

70	<p>At B: today such a hive of activity, as groups of workers kept coming up to be briefed & asked to sign documents about the takeover. Another grp of pple ard, i.e. IT, mostly XYZ personnel. And just now heard them having their briefing in the mtg roo, can hear their heavy foreign accents.</p> <p>The rest of the office staff carry on their tasks as usual.</p>
71	<p>At A: It's probably my last wk with Alpane & I had a long stretch at B so this few days to continue observing & noting the pple & their work here. The 2 trainees on internship have been given a number of tasks to do by Minah & everyday I see Minah briefing them & then she records their performance on a template. She is the one to finally write a report to their uni sup.</p>
72	<p>At A: at the office Mat is busy dealing w customers, he also writes emails to Middle East clients. Sometimes he has to go out to visit the customers (in Klang Valley) where there are stores: they supply buns, foldover breads, pizza crusts & naan to these customers.</p>
73	<p>At A: Lynn is busy working through documents & I checked with her briefly on the profile of the staff before I leave. Unsure matters were clarified.</p> <p>Later I just sit in the mtg room & observe & do my own work.</p>
74	<p>At A: Minah is again checking with me on the use of terms in Eng as she has to write a report. I obliged to help her & in the process I get to know her better, her working & leadership style. She is ambitious & shares how she wants to be prod mngr in 3 yrs time. The only thing she needs to work on is her Eng level. She has been sent to Taiwan before she see how the sister company runs their factory & she was impressed but found she couldn't communicate very well cos her Eng was still weak.</p> <p>In the few wks spent with these staff like Minah has helped me bond with them & knowing them & their aspirations is enriching.</p>
75	<p>At A: work routine as usual, I managed to chat a little bit longer with Dina & Jeng, They are both always together & see them carrying out their tasks well. They are 2 young ladies (in their early 30s) who are handling a group of male foreign workers & they exude confidence & are capable in what they do. Both received training from local institutions with diploma in food technology.</p>
76	<p>At A: work routine as usual and I am also tying up all the loose ends – verifying terms & issues I don't understand. Mat is helpful resource as he is most of the time in this office. And Minah as usual, has become an impnt link for me to undertand the factory processes.</p>
77	<p>At A: last day at A, managed to see the GM and had a ½ hr chat. Gave her some general feedback abt the staff's communication skills, and as we both agreed, some of them do need to brush up their Eng proficiency while some their comm skills, not necessarily language issues but lack of confidence. Had some time with Choo to run thro things that I didn't understand while recording & she has left the door open for me to call her in future if I still need clarification (altho she doesn't know if the new company will need her services). We exchange email addresses.</p> <p>Lynn also had a brief chat with me and I realise how tight a HRM schedule is, as she only has Ning to help her in the dept & she has to handle both plants, not only local but the foreign staff too. That includes dealing with visa & work permits & looking into housing for them. Mat was there to say bye and the accounts pple. I thanked all whom I met today & gave out some souvenirs as a token of appreciation.</p>
78	<p>At B: last day, not many pple around. Mgnt at A to tie up matters for takeover. Met the operations pple, thank those I met personally and said my goodbyes. Gave out some souvenirs as a token of appreciation.</p> <p>Abu & Noor on behalf the team thanked me and wished me good luck. At the office I was able to see Ning and thanked her too for her assistance & cooperation. The rest of the ladies too. As usual they all have their work to do and so life goes on for them too. Just as I was about to leave Beng came in & I finally get to personally thank himn for his support. He is a significant person in this company & I realise both Minah & Abu had to ask his approval for me to take the factory tour. However since he is the one who has to take charge of 2 teams comprising of 3 depts each, his schedule is more hectic than the GM in Malaysia. & while GM sometimes leave the country for mtgs, he is always here & also on call since both plants run 24 hours. For any emergency he has to</p>

	go to the plant to solve it, even if its midnight. He tells me he has a stressful life but he enjoys what he does. I see that Chai & Beng are the two impt mngrs to whom the GM depends on. Hence a lot fo talk at mngt level mtgs deal with these 2 mngrs.
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*The field work at Alpane took three months and taking away the weekdays it came up to 78 days.

APPENDIX 6

MEETING NOTES

MM1

Observation Notes:

I went in early, 10mins before 10 am when meeting was supposed to start. The conference room is relatively big and has a big rectangular table, to sit at least 15. It is fully air- conditioned. Managers arrived individually or in pairs, some with notebooks & files, some with lap tops.

I had my note book to jot down my observation: some preliminary notes about the meeting:

The GM chairs and sits at the head of the table.

Those present: Beng, Yen, Chai, Lynn, Mat, Suan, Weng, Choo, Samy & Weng.

At 3:05 the GM begins without an official opening. There is no formal greeting or opening, she just begins with a comment about the chart which was beamed onto the wall.

The meeting ends with small talk, and matters not related to the meeting though it was work related. Ends at 1:41:44

Beng can be very soft and not so fluent in speech, stammers a bit. His English is okay but he seems to be groping for words at times Chai not fluent and uses a lot of hand gestures to complement his lack

of fluency. At one point he even walks to the screen (wall) & pointed at the picture. Also uses some Cantonese. Lynn, also quite soft but more fluent than the rest although she makes a number of syntactical mistakes and uses MalE structures, similar to Mat. Choo is very clear and only speaks when she needs to clarify matter as her role is to take minutes. Yen is an observant person, in control of the situation. She has the language & knows her area well (accounts). She multi tasks a lot too. Those who appear most in the interaction in MM1 are Beng & Chai. Some other things noted through my observation:

- people leave their mobile phones on & when it rings, they pick up to answer (they leave the room)
- laughter at times help diffuse boredom & tension
- GM is focused and gets the discussion moving, seldom digress

A detailed description of the meeting talk:

No.	Description of talk	Comments
1	Preamble : small talk	
2	GM gives some instructions as she looks at the minutes (indicating start of meeting proper)	GM instructs on something simple: no need to explain ...just go on to...
3	GM poses the question of what the ME team has been doing about the oven breakdown (which has resulted in high rejection rates) Before GM moves on she concluded this section with an evaluative statement: 'this has caused a lot of rejects you know'	As a result Beng began an AG segment: there is reporting involved but it was not a report per se, more like a q-a session to find out what had been done to solve the problem of the oven breakdown. GM evaluates
4	GM selects Mat to speak, to give a clarification on the matter: R.B.V To end she accepts the clarification but also gave a strong directive: 'don't simply say budget' & gives advice	Issue: GM seeks clarification and Chai explains. Later Mat continues to give clarification. GM instructs and advises
5	There is an aside: on pointer for LCD	Aside segment: not work related
6	Mat continues providing explanation reg transport matters	GM comments and gives advice & also instructs with reg to budget and transport
7	An issue raised: are there enough trucks?	Discussion taking place btw Mat, GM & Chai
8	GM asks about the follow up work on costing with maintenance	GM seeks clarification while Chai explains
9	Aside: where is Mutu?	Non work related but asking for absent member and Beng gives reason for absence
10	GM seeks to understand a section of the minutes	GM seeks clarification and Chai provides expln. GM ends with sarcasm (laughter which probably cynical)
11	Beng begins with reporting on engineering matters	Report giving. As Beng reports GM seeks clarification with Q-A session
12	A light hearted moment : payment forms	Small talk on HR matters
13	Aside: extend minutes	
14	Minutes refer to Action plan and GM is asking Beng what they want to look at. Beng gives report.	Discussion on what to look at. GM gives advice and also instructs. There is AG too.
15	Aside: minutes – to run through the March one?	
16	BUK – pricing status	GM wants info on the status of BUK Mat gives info while Choo clarifies matters for minute keeping
17	5-S	GM checks on the work done: asks for update Various mngrs gives update and GM instructs each one specifically.
18	Aside – being patient with them	

19	CFC & improvement of HR matters	GM questions Lynn on improvement plans. Lynn gives account of what she has done. AG episode: GM asks a no of q. GM also directs & compliments
20	Flat breadline – there is a problem of the crust being uneven. How to solve this problem of unevenness?	PS episode on evenness issue. GM raise the issue, mngrs discuss. Most of the talk GM offers solutions. Reprimands, instructs, warns.
21	Efficiency	Seeks clarification on the matter. Sarcasm is seen. Some parts as Beng explains she also is figuring out the stuff. She accepts expln and also instructs. She accuses also. And then instructs/ directs.
22	Inventory supervisor : orders are missed out	GM enters active discussion with Beng, seeks clarification and also wants to know what Beng is doing. Beng is AG. Finally GM accepts expln
23	Problem with inventory supervisor (IS)	GM wants to know if any more problems with IS. She asks and various mngrs answers. Some issues were raised. PS going on, discussion quite active. Again see GM offering more solution than the rest. Finally GM instructs and looks at preventive measures so that pbm with IS not occur again
24	Aside: GM makes a light comment	
25	Air cond contract expires	AG. GM asks questions to be in the know while Chai & Beng is giving the account. Collaborative talk is evident as the story unfolds. GM instructs as she reprimands too. In the process of finding out who is responsible and why the contract was not renewed, she draws a conclusion “so still boil down to comm”.
26	Cost saving program (CSP)	Beng raises a new topic (CSP) and pursues but GM gives strong advice/instructs. There is a very long discourse where she instructs/ advise/ reprimands. She directs most of the time, not much negotiation going on. Later again confronted with Beng, she then makes suggestion. Is this a PS? She clearly ends this long session with a strong command, she is in control of the mtg flow.
27	Improvement plan for march, no 2	Beng reports on problem with conveyor. No discussion. It was accepted.
28	Improvement plan for march, no 6	Short exchanges btw GM and Beng (same as above)
29	Improvement plan for march, no 11 & 12	Same as above but GM selects Chai tho he does not respond. BG continues to report and answers GM questions, AG.

		Then she begins a reprimand on 'tight schedule'.
30	3.2	The GM now directs her exchange to Chai and Mei comes into the picture (all mostly Q/A)
31	Staff turnover & KPI	The GM now directs her exchange to Lynn (Q/A)
32	3.5: DMP Korea	Exchange btw GM & Weng and then followed by very short exchanges btw various parties.
33	Brainstorming	No discussion, GM reprimands and goes into a long tirade on 'tight schedule'. There appears to be times when she goes into emotional talk. Almost at the verge of mother scolding children.
34	3.8 & 3.13	A number of matters discussed, short exchanges.
35	On video viewing – small talk, post meeting talk	Light talk

MM2

Observation Notes:

When I entered the mtg room, no one arrived yet. Only Mat was working on the computer, then Yen arrives. I chatted with Tien for a while outside. Before start of the mtg Choo adjusted the air conditioning temperature. Beng and Yen was talking, he uses some Cantonese. Mat & Yen discusses in English. Suan comes in with Weng, doing small talk on business in English. Then Mei comes in. Finally the GM arrives. There is some pre-amble to the mtg proper, because she was not happy that Lynn has taken leave, and so she asks Choo to get Ning to attend. Ning appears but says that she has to attend to staff problems. Then the chair begins with the admonishing about staff going on emergency leave, especially on a Monday.

The mtg supposed to begin at 10 but it began at 10:27am. GM didn't seem to be in a good mood when she started as she began with some admonishing. She was quite sarcastic but guised it with laughter. Noted that half way through, she asks Chai to take over as chair. However within a few turns she was in charge again and instead now she directs the discussion and pauses and then instructs Chai to carry on.

As the GM speaks, some execs are typing on their laptops. Chai takes a call on his mobile and speaks for quite a while in the room. At one point Yen goes out to get Tien to sort the out computer problem. Tien comes in. Yen says no red on computer, instead black.

Minutes are projected on screen (on wall), figures too, so always referring to the screen when they are discussing. Mtg ended at 11:55.

A detailed description of the meeting talk:

No.	Description of Talk	Comments
1	On sick leave	Reprimanding the pple but the person she is referring to is absent
2	Flat breadline or bunline?	Beng checks with her if she wants to run thro the bunline altho she already told him before no, but since he raised it, she got irritated but allowed the exchange on bunline & then FBL
3	Sales target	Chai reports on sales Exchanges btw GM, Chai & Weng. q/a session, reporting. Laughter on "rojak"
4	Budget report	GM and Yen: short exchanges, just keeping informed about the figures.
5	Rejection rate for FBL	She instructs Beng for update, she passes comments. Not so many questions. Dealing with figures

6	Action plan : June/1 Casa breakdown Action plan : June/2 Casa breakdown Somewhat press: heater, saving head count and labour costs	She instructs Beng and he gives acc on casa breakdown. She uses Q/A. directed and focus. Gives instruction & evaluates negatively and uses sarcasm. AG with Q/A session btw GM & Beng and also lots of instructions to Beng. Making judgment that they slack in mth of June. Beng tries to justify their actions. Still she instructs and shows dissatisfaction over their work – long discourse
7	T-1 tortilla	Discussion : Mei reports on production figures: targets. GM asks q & also instructs, gives directives & make suggestions. Able also to identify problems which resulted in them not able to achieve the target
8	Customer Satisfaction Performance	Short exchanges: Q/A, mostly GM with Yen, very short and curt
9	Preventive maintenance : budget SQMS, HR matters	Questions & directs. Also reprimands Lynn who is absent, Checks on HR matters. Seeks clarification Mngrs try to answer in LN's absence She also instructs
10	Cost saving Continuous process improvement (CPI) -innovation	Discussion. Q/A a lot Shows her control. She got tired and hands over chair to Chai
11	Store survey	GI. She tells them off.
12	Staff shortage (v. short seg)	She trouble shoots and offers solutions but in form of directives
13	Following the minutes: 3.6,3.7,3.9 On 3.9: X-11	GM refers to R&D, discuss about X11. GI and reprimands a lot
14	Still on minutes:3.11 & 3.12 hotpress	Checking on when the report will be ready
15	Still on minutes: some cursory treatment: -prod -WSI	Just short Q/A sessions
16	Still on minutes: some cursory treatment: -action plan -aug plans by SS	As usual Q/A. GI and very task oriented talk
17	Palm oil sample	An interesting episode, which resulted in reperi.
18	Soya oil & cartons	As usual Q/A. GI and very task oriented talk
19	Agreement	

APPENDIX 7

NOTES ON MALAYSIAN VARIETY OF SPOKEN ENGLISH

Some notes on features of Malaysian English (MalE) for reference purposes:

The study is set in a Malaysian context and inevitably the spoken English Language at use is of a mixed variety, and the English commonly found at many workplaces is Malaysian English (MalE). As mentioned earlier Malaysia is a multi-cultural country where its people come from a wide array of ethnic backgrounds. With this comes a myriad range of mother-tongue languages too. But English is taught as a second language in schools and remains a strong language in the fields of commerce and technology. According to Azirah (2002: 86)

“The English used in Malaysia reflects the experiences of the people living in the country and can be considered different from others in that it has emerged to suit the culture and the identity of the people.”

It is noted that there is no universal definition on what MalE is but many studies have been done in this area by various researchers such as Tongue (1974), Platt & Weber (1980), and Baskaran (1987), Venugopal (2000), and Azirah (2002). Some of these scholars have developed various taxonomies to describe this variety. MalE obviously differs from Standard British English and has a character of its own.

The data obtained comprise of talk at meetings by Malaysian speakers of English who come from various ethnic backgrounds. Though they are able to use English to converse and be understood, the syntactical and grammatical structures do not comply with the standard English accepted globally. The use of a MalE is a norm in the daily lives of Malaysians.

According to Baskaran (1987), this group of speakers belong to the educated group who may use either be at the acrolect or mesolect level. The acrolect tends towards Standard British English with some local influence evident in the use of lexical and phonological forms while the mesolect is very commonly used in informal settings. It is not surprising to have MalE speakers using an almost International English at one instance and then switching into the mesolectal MalE on another instance (Baskaran 1987, p.1036). This has arisen also because the status of English as a strong second language has been inculcated in the education system of Malaysia especially in businesses which has international links.

Some instances of how MalE works can be seen at the syntactical and lexical levels, and examples provided and adapted from Baskaran (1987, p.1038) and Azirah (2002, p. 87).

	Official MaE	Unofficial MaE	Broken MaE
General characteristics	Standard MaE Spoken and written form; formal use; international intelligibility	Dialectical MaE Spoken and written form; informal use; national intelligibility	Patois MaE Spoken only; colloquial use; patois and intelligibility and currency
Syntax	No deviation	Some deviation present	Substantial variation/deviation.
Lexis	Variation acceptable especially for words not substitutable in an international context (or to give a more localized context)	Lexicalizations quite prevalent even for words having international English substitutes	Major lexicalization – heavily infused with local language items.

Characteristics of the 3 sub-varieties of ME: some examples are given below:

Syntactical Level

Lack of inversion in *wh*-questions:

- What you got here?
- She go where

Tagged Y/N question:

- He can work or not

Ellipsis of expletive *it/there+be*

- No point wasting my time
- Got no people there

Question form:

- This one you think you can report or not

Absence of auxiliary verb ‘do’

- Can just put here. (found in most colloq ME, does not result in incomprehension of the meaning of the sentence)

Lexical level

Borrowing words from mother tongue (these words are often untranslatable into English and it is used in the English discourse to authenticate the item.

- Tumpang (means get a lift)

Particles: 'ah' and 'lah' (high frequency in data obtained)

- Fillers ah and lah, used to convey emotive or affective attitudes of speaker.
- By adding "lah" the speaker is placing emphasis in his statement. Asmah (1986) noted that 'lah' functions as a softener and can change from a command to a request.
- 'Ah' is used to place stress on what is said and to make the speaker appear more
- convincing. It can also be used to indicate disbelief or surprise, and to soften a request.