

## Characteristics of Incident Reports

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### ABSTRACT

Professional communication does not exist in isolation. It is highly dependent on aspects such as professional cultures, practices and genres. They are interwoven in order to realize the purpose of communication. This paper highlights the characteristics incident reports based on the analysis of the reports obtained from an oil and gas company.

**KEYWORDS:** Interdiscursivity, Incident Reports, Professional Communication, Professional World, Professional Culture, Professional Genre, Discourse Analysis.

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### INTRODUCTION

Studies on professional genres have shown that they contain certain characteristics exclusive to the genres under study. They also highlighted that certain discourse types were used to carry different functions in a genre. For example, a professional genre such as press release can have the following functions: to inform, to persuade and to promote. Reports are an important genre in the professional world because they are formal documents which record important record of organizations. Since the literature on incident reports are scarce, the paper will discuss various types of reports in relation to the present study. By doing this, it will highlight the importance of this particular genre in translating organizational objectives.

To start off the discussion, medical case reports dealing with a clinical condition and its care such as new diseases or first reports of virus mutations and related therapies and prognoses of unexpected symptoms evidenced in patients' treatment, descriptions or examples of best practices [1]. The author further contended that medical experts considered this report as the cornerstone of medical literature with a strong educational value in present day evidence-based medical practice for students and medical practitioners. The reports served as early warning signals of adverse effects in therapies, provided detailed accounts of what could go wrong in medical practice or they could offer a description of groundbreaking experimental techniques.

The next type of report was a corporate annual report which referred to a report of the company's activities during the preceding fiscal year [2]. The author explained the report were intended to provide shareholders as well as the company's other stakeholder groups with information concerning the health and performance of the company. Bhatia further added that for stock-listed companies, the preparation and disclosure of corporate annual reports were required by the law.

Another type of reporting genre which was gaining importance was news reports [3]. The authors attested that this type of report was grounded in communicative events such as speeches, interviews and press releases. They acted primarily to represent the points of view of various external sources. They were classified as communicatively-based rather than event based. The authors further asserted that a news report should strive to remain objective and should use neutral language while presenting a diversity of opinions, voices, perspectives of the event, incident or issue under discussion as the main communicative purpose of the news reports was informative.

Damage reports [4] referred to the damage suffered by a ship when it was involved in an accident. Dzeverdanovic further stated that since surveyors prepared the reports, the surveyor's task could be sometimes compared with that carried out by police inspectors, investigating the scene of the crime. After the ship has suffered damage, it was the surveyor who must take into consideration a variety of facts and took a rather forensic approach to the whole situation.

Moving on, business reports were taught primarily based on the model of scientific reports using a standardized format, complete with Summary, Introduction, Objectives, Methods, Results, Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations sections [5]. The author further stressed that in line with scientific reports, the style of business reports was supposed to be stark, concise, and objective, following the same tenets as the hard sciences. The author further contended that a particular discourse community normally evolved its own style and patterns of communication and the business community may have rather dissimilar communicative needs to those of the academic disciplines. The business community may have developed a genre that was very

different than research article which was developed for the particular audience of scientific academia. Although there have been calls for research, the teaching materials used for business report writing have been dependent on intuition and professional experience, rather than led by research [6].

### CHARACTERISTICS OF INCIDENT REPORTS

The reports analyzed in this study were obtained from an international oil and gas company based in Texas. It undertook projects for well-known clients in the oil and gas industry around the world. The company was identified from a business directory for the industries listed in Johor [7]. Incident reports referred to reports produced when the incidents happened. The incidents could be equipment failure, injury or natural disaster.

The reports contained details such as the date the report was written and the type of incident. From the reports obtained, a few characteristics were observed. Firstly, the structure of the reports. The reports contained between 2-4 sections. They were Description of Incident, Causes of Incident, Precautionary Measures and Potential Consequences.

Secondly, the reports contained terminologies exclusive to the oil and gas industry. For example, Report 1 contained terminology such as “Wire line operators” and “Winch man” to indicate the type of job performed by the employees. Report 2 also contained terminologies such as “Spring loaded safety slide”, “Adjusting buckle” and “Spring loaded tensioner”. Other terminologies such as “Rigger” (Report 6) and “Fitter” (Report 10) were also found to explain the job title of employees and the type of work they performed.

As for technical information, it was used to explain the type of work undertaken and the equipment used. For instance, in Report 1, technical information such as “hand jarring 1 x 3.688” RR Type 2 plug set at 105 m RKB” was used to inform the readers of the equipment used when servicing an onshore well. Incident Report 6 contained other technical information “Column C206 on DF2” to refer to a deck frame found in an engineering drawing.

Besides terminologies and technical information, the reports contained codes to explain the classification of injury. This can be seen in Report 1 which used codes such as “HR3/4” and “HP4” to refer to the injury suffered by the employee. Report 14 also contained codes “C3P” to indicate consequences of the incident.

Finally, the use of phrases instead of complete sentence was prevalent in all the reports. As an illustration, Report 3 stated the cause of the incident as “Incorrect method of slinging was used” and “Hazard not recognized by rigging crew”. Similarly, Report 4 used the phrase “Hand Amputation” to state the consequences of the incident.

These characteristics suggested that they were common features of incident-reporting genre. Therefore, they should contain technical information and terminologies. The characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of Incident Reports 1-15

Report	No. of Sections	Terminology	Technical Information	Codes
1	3	Wire line operators Hand jarring Winch man Lubricator L1 vertebra Tension cable Cat walk Well pad Chief operator Rig floor Triangle Wire line unit Pre-job safety Meeting Risk assessment briefing Down-hole Equipment design	1 x 3.688” RR R lock	Real severity HR3/4  Potential severity HP4
2	2	NM safety harness adjusting latch Derrick Roller cam Personal protection Equipment EE (employee)	-	-

Report	No. of Sections	Terminology	Technical Information	Codes
		Spring loaded safety slide Adjusting buckle Spring loaded Tensioner	-	-
3	4	Purpose-built Container Bulk transport tank	2 x 1 legged slings	-
			HEMP Hazard Register	-
4	4	Standby operator Vibro unit Pulley Toolbox meeting	Job Safety Analysis	-
5	4	Furnace exhaust Fumes Warning systems	-	-
6	1	Scaffolding levels Procedural and systemic elements	Column C206 and DF2	-
7	3	Contract crew Flowline riser Nylon sling Turbine generator Crane operator Pre-lift procedure	-	-

Report	No. of Sections	Terminology	Technical Information	Codes
8	4	Lead rigger Stringer work Platform Toolbox meeting Guide roller for Cable Sheave Arrangement Hazard awareness training Toolbox meeting	24' general electric panel 1.5" Steel wire	-
9	3	Oil cavalier FSO Dock Stern Outboard engines Bow Breakwater	-	-
10	4	Fitter Chequered plate Acetylene valve Cutting torch Acetylene regulator flashback arrestor Cylinder valve	-	-

Report	No. of Sections	Terminology	Technical Information	Codes
11	6	Sheet piles Wrapped chains Rigger Toolbox talk Demobilization Plan Remobilising Shutdown site Construction spread	-	-
12	3	Deck Slings Boat and barge crew Loading and off loading Single-point entry	4 x 9 5/8 casing	-
13	4	Surge bar Retrofit Earth-leakage Devices Single fatality	-	-

Report	No. ofSections	Terminology	Technical Information	Codes
14	4	Gas turbine exhaust frame Webbing slings Bracket Lifting slings BRES Job safety analysis Sharp corner Snagging	-	C3P
15	4	Pipe offloading Pipe carrier Pipe transfer crane Fly jib cable Sheave Outer strands of Lifting wire Pipe carrier Keeper pin Check plate Block protection Frame Anti-collision protection Toolbox talks	-	-

### CONCLUSION

From the reports analyzed, it was clear that the reports have set characteristics in determining further actions to be taken to prevent future incidents and proposed improvement plans to be taken based on the incident. In general, reports are important in the professional world as they are used to record progress in achieving organizational goals. Furthermore, they are written for monitoring, evaluation, improvement and accountability purposes. A written record is required in the professional world in order to ease the everyday operation of an organization.

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