

Communication Assessment Tool (CAT)

An Adapted Participatory Methods Tool

SIL International Media Services, 2022

In order to strategize in a culturally appropriate way for the best way to communicate the message/information in any community there must be an understanding of the different Communication Genres as well as the Communication Technology commonly used in the community.

The *Communication Assessment Tool (CAT)* should be administered by a facilitator, or a group of facilitators. They should be willing and able to work through this document with representatives of the community. The facilitator(s) may be members of a translation team, church leaders, village elders or other people of respect.

Purpose:

1. To raise awareness about the various **Communication Genres (CG)** used in a specific community's life. E.g. song, dance, chant, poetry, drama, video, riddles, storytelling, etc.
2. To document the CGs of the community.
3. To provide accurate information that can be used to assess which CGs would best be used to communicate the desired information.
4. To document the various kinds of **Communication Technology (CT)** tools being used in the community. E.g. smart or cell/mobile phone, radio, TV, computer, etc.
5. To provide accurate information that can be used to analyze which combinations of CG and CT would best be used to communicate the desired information and meet the needs/goals of the language program.

Preferred participants: Community members.

Time required: At least 1 hour, but often more. The time needed also depends on size and interest of the group.

Step 1. Communication Genres

Under guidance from the facilitator(s), gather a group that is a cross-representation of the community, i.e. men, women, musicians, artists, etc.

Have members of the group **call out** the CGs that are used in a community's daily life. **Identify** as many different genres as they can and have a 'scribe' **identify with symbolic items** or **write** each CG on Individual slips of paper and place the **identifier**/paper on the floor/ground. They should

think of CGs used at any time, and in all different social contexts. Allow all suggestions even if the suggestion doesn't fall under the CGs that are being sought as everything identified will be sorted in the next step.

Step 2. Sort the Communication Genres

If they have listed 'genres' that don't fall into the traditional CGs they will need to sort/group them to bring out the (traditional) genres important to the decision-making outcome. Possibly sort by 'used for generations, most recent and everything else'.

If there is still a mix of 'genres' that includes technology (radio may have been 'used for generations') ask them to sort by genres they use 'face to face' and 'other'.

Once the CGs are separated into the above suggested groupings there is a further sort. Each grouping needs to be sorted according to CGs that are used on a daily basis, then secondly, the types of CG that are used weekly, thirdly the types of CG that are used monthly, then yearly, then more rarely. A duplicate identifier may be needed if the same CG falls in more than one designation. With paper or some marker designate the breaks between 'daily,' 'weekly,' etc., from top to bottom or left to right, right to left, whatever suits the community.

Record information received. This is their property so ask their permission to TAKE A PICTURE, a VIDEO or AUDIO recording or write down what has been laid out in the order they are on the floor/ground, as archive material. It may be best to offer them a copy.

The group can **add** any other CGs they think of at any time.

Step 3. Factors affecting the Communication Genres

For each Communication Genre that is used, the following information needs to be identified.

Factors	Possible examples
Who can be the presenter/communicator?	Man, woman, elder, child, special individual, etc.
What kinds of information are communicated?	History, religion, genealogy, news, morals, etc.
Who is the recipient, or, for whose benefit?	Men, women, children, mixed, etc.
Where does this happen?	Anywhere, garden, market, special gathering, etc.
When does this happen?	Night time, any time, after harvest
How often does this occur (frequency)?	Already given but needs to be noted. More detail may come out.
What status is associated with being the presenter?	
How is the presenter selected?	

All the groupings from Step 2 are now picked up but kept in the order they were in on the ground. The following process will need to happen to each group.

The top CG identifier from the 'daily' group is then laid down with space left beside it on the floor. Then an identifier/piece of paper for the first Factor, 'who', from the Step 3 table is laid next to the CG identified and the 'scribe', **with symbolic items** or **writing**, lists each response to the 'who'. As the information for/under each Factor is completed an identifier with the next Factor on the list is placed beside the Factor just completed and information for that new Factor is gathered. Continue in this way working through the full 'Factor' list.

Once all the Factors for the first CG are worked through place the next CG identifier on the floor and work through it having the 'scribe' **identify with symbolic items** or **writing** responses to all appropriate Factors. Do this with each of the CGs that have been identified.

We need to realize that there may be multiple responses to any one of the 'Factor' questions.

When there are multiple responses then each of those responses need to have all the 'Factor' questions that come after asked of each response.

For example, the question 'Who...' does DRAMA may elicit the two responses **old men** and **everyone**.

Then the, what, audience, where, when, frequency, status and how 'Factors' need to be worked through for each of the 'old men' and 'everyone' such as:

Old men – what? audience? where? when? frequency? status? how?

Everyone – what? audience? where? when? frequency? status? how?

If any one of those 'Factors' brings a multiple response then each of those responses need to have all the 'Factor' questions following asked of each response such as:

<u>Genre</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Where</u> 'formal'	<u>When</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Status</u>
DRAMA	Old Men	history	everyone	gathering	evening	monthly	none
	Anyone	Everything	everyone	'formal'	evening	monthly	none
		but history		gathering			
				market	day market	weekly	none
					night market	monthly	none

Record information received. This is their property so ask their permission to TAKE A PICTURE, a VIDEO or AUDIO recording or write down what has been laid out in the order they are on the floor/ground, as archive material. It may be best to offer them a copy.

Suggestion: Only work the session through Step 3 and plan to carry on another day so the genre session does not get too big.

Enter the information received from Steps 1-3 into a table such as below.

Results of Steps 1 & 2	Song, dance, chant, poetry, drama, riddles, etc.							
Step 3 Factors	Used for generations	A Who presents	B Information communicated	C Who is audience	D Where	E When	F Etc.	
1.Solicit list under each factor for each genre 2.They sort list with most used, most important at top	Song	Presenter 1	What is communicated in the songs that each A sings	Who is the audience for each B listed that each A sings	Where does each C receive each B from each A	When does		
		Presenter 2	*	*	*			
		Presenter 3	*	*	*			
1.Solicit list under each factor for each genre 2.They sort list with most used, most important at top	Dance, etc.							
	Newer	Who	Info	audience	Where	When	Etc.	
	Etc.							

(*Different information may be presented by different 'presenters' in any given genre but there may be overlaps. e.g. a woman would never sing about X or a man sing about Y but you can have both women and men sing about W.)

Step 4. Analyze collected information

This solicited information of genres and factors may then be analyzed to see which genres appear to best meet the needs/goals of the language program for communication of information. The factors affecting each CG will potentially be pivotal information in the decision process.

Step 5. Communication Technology (CT) tools

Members of the group **call out** the CT tools that members of the community use in daily life. **Identify** as many different CT tools as they can and have a scribe **identify with symbolic items** or **write** one slip of paper for each CT and place the identifier/paper on the floor/ground. They should think of CTs used at any time, and in all different social contexts.

Step 6. Sort the Communication Technology

The identifiers/papers need to be sorted according to CTs that are used on a daily basis, then secondly, the types of CT that are used weekly, thirdly the types of CTs that are used more rarely. In the case of the CTs there may not be an actual group beyond weekly. With paper or some marker designate the breaks between 'Daily,' 'Weekly,' etc.

Record information received. This is their property so ask their permission to TAKE A PICTURE, a VIDEO or AUDIO recording or write down what has been laid out in the order they are on the floor/ground, as archive material. It may be best to offer them a copy.

Step 7. Factors affecting the Communication Technologies

For each CT tool that is used the following information needs to be identified.

Factors	Possible examples
Who owns the CT?	Man, woman, elder, child, special individual, etc.
Are they freely shared?	Yes, no
Who uses them?	Men, women, children, mixed, etc.
For what purpose is the CT used?	Educational, professional, entertainment, maintaining relationships, etc.
What is the motivation for using the CT?	Peer pressure, educational, professional, entertainment, maintaining relationships, etc.
From where can you acquire this CT?	Local market, next village, big city, mission organizations, NGOs, etc.
Where is the cell/mobile phone signal accessible?	Everywhere, top of hill, nowhere, etc.
What is the availability of consumables?	Every kiosk/shop, local market, hard to come by, etc.
Are the consumables affordable?	Only when purchased in the city, yes, etc.
What expertise is needed to operate the CT?	None, minimal, training needed, etc.
What maintenance is necessary?	Minimal so low skill needed, moderate so some training is needed, etc.
If computers, tablets or smartphones are one/some of the CTs noted you may need a factor that asks 'What is accessible via the devices?'	E-books, radio, internet, games, etc.

All the groupings from Step 6 are now picked up but kept in the order they were in on the ground. The following process will need to happen to each group.

The top CT identifier from the 'daily' group is then laid down with space left beside it on the floor. Then, an identifier/piece of paper for the first Factor, 'who', from the Step 7 table is laid next to the CT identified and the 'scribe', **with symbolic items** or **writing**, lists each response to the 'who'. As the information for/under each Factor is completed an identifier with the next Factor on the list is placed beside the Factor just completed and information for that new Factor is gathered. Continue in this way working through the full 'Factor' list.

Once all the Factors for the first CT are worked through place the next CT identifier on the floor and work through it having the 'scribe' **identify with symbolic items** or **writing** responses to all appropriate Factors. Do this with each of the CTs that have been identified.

Record information received. This is their property so ask their permission to TAKE A PICTURE, a VIDEO or AUDIO recording or write down what has been laid out in the order they are on the floor/ground, as archive material.

Suggestion: Only work the session through Step 7 and plan to carry on another day so the tool session does not get too big.

Step 8. Analyze collected information

This information of CTs and their factors will then be analyzed to see which tools appear to best meet the needs/goals of the language program for communication of information.

Enter the information received from Steps 5-7 into a table such as below.

Results of Steps 5 & 6	Cell/mobile phone, radio, TV, computer, etc.					
Step 7 Factors		A Who owns	B freely shared	C Who uses	D What purpose	E Etc.
Solicit list under each factor for each CT They sort list with most used, most important at top	Cell/ Mobile phone					

		A Who owns	B freely shared	C Who uses	D What purpose	E Etc.
	Radio					
	Etc.					

Step 9. Analyze the information from both the CG and CT results

The Communication Technology information combined, compared, contrasted with the Communication Genre information will help the project team determine which combinations of CGs and CTs will be the best combinations for meeting the needs/goals of the language program for communication of information.

Such as using the above example here:

<u>Genre</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Status</u>
DRAMA	Old Men	history	everyone	'formal' gathering	evening	monthly	none
	Anyone	Everything but history	everyone	'formal' gathering	evening	monthly	none
				market	day market	weekly	none
					night market	monthly	none

This shows that one genre, drama, is done by everyone, you can address everything but history through it, everyone appreciates drama, and it is presented in the day market every week.

This shows up a genre that impacts everyone weekly. If the CT information shows that cell/mobile phones are regularly used by everyone then the dramas could be videoed ahead of time and rendered for cell phone use. Then when the drama is presented in the day market a copy of it could be shared around by cell/mobile phone. And for the sake of example, if the CT information also showed radio usage was high then the dramas could be offered to the radio station.

In this example the information from the CG and CT analysis highlights a widely used, open to everyone, frequently presented genre that can be distributed through cell phone and radio to potentially connect with and impact a large part of the community.

Cautions

As you go about searching out the Communication Genres keep in mind the following questions.

- How does one ask what are the Communication Genres (song, dance, chant, poetry, drama, riddles, etc.) when those designations may not mean anything in that community?
- What are the correct questions to ask to elicit the disclosure of the different Communication Genres in any given community?

- c) How does one ask how the wisdom/truth/information is shared in the community?
- d) How is it ascertained if communication actually comes about through a mix of genres?

When you start looking at the 'Factors' in Steps 3 & 7, you will need to determine what other factors are important to the decision-making process beyond those listed? How many factors need to be there? We want a valid tool but we don't want a tool so large that no one uses it.