AN ANALYSIS OF UPWARD INFLUENCE STRATEGIES USING SPEECH ACT
THEORY AND FACE THREATENING ACTS

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Abstract

This study borrows from sociolinguistic research, specifically Speech Act Theory (SAT),

as a way to analyze and explain how UI strategies are performed. Based on SAT and

considerations of FACE, as explained by Brown and Levinson (1978/1987), we have attempted to provide an explanation for the choice of strategies used by members within the organization. Through qualitative discourse analysis, we suggest that for effective upward influencing, professional communicators need to consider the verbalization of UI strategies.

AN ANALYSIS OF UPWARD INFLUENCE STRATEGIES USING SPEECH ACT THEORY AND FACE THREATENING ACTS

Drake and Moberg made an early attempt to position workplace influence at the discourse level [1]. They state that most of the analysis on influencing focused on rewards or exchange of resources. By emphasizing the importance of linguistic forms in influencing patterns in dyads, these researchers argue that specific linguistic forms have a "sedative" and "palliative" effect on persuading. Language, as viewed by the authors, is not just a medium, but rather it is a **resource** on which speakers can draw to increase the likelihood of persuasion. Other studies on discourse between leader and follower note the mutual building of language and discourse patterns, thus suggesting that influencing is an ongoing two-way process [2], [3].

Existing literature on content analysis focuses on the importance, the feasibility, and the desirability of the influence request [4]. Yukl et al., in a study conducted on 195 MBA students, found that the importance of the request (context) and the element of "enjoyability" to the recipient (content) were higher than type of strategy used or the power of the agent on the target [4]. Beyond these studies, however, the literature in UI research has not focused on linguistic analysis.

This study borrows from sociolinguistic research, specifically Speech Act Theory (SAT), as a way to analyze and explain how UI strategies are performed. This performative view

of language, with emphasis on linguistic action and relevance to the situation [5], rather than comprehension, may contribute to greater understanding of how effective UI strategies are constructed. After reviewing relevant UI research, we discuss SAT and define key terms before using SAT to explain how UI is enacted in workplace conversation.

UI Strategies

UI strategies have been the subject of extensive research. The pioneering and hence frequently referenced work of Kipnis et al. [6] was based on a questionnaire that they developed to measure influence behavior and objectives. The questionnaire was administered to night students who were asked to describe their methods of influencing subordinates, peers, and superiors. In the initial stage, the students reported 14 tactics - explanation, direct requests, clandestine acts, exchange, personal negative actions, coalition, persistence, demand, weak ask, gathering evidence, training, self presentation, administrative sanctions, and reward. Revising this initial study, Kipnis and Schmidt developed the Profiles of Organizational Influence Scale with a 27item sub-scale measuring six tactic categories—rationality/ reason, ingratiation, exchange/ bargaining, assertiveness, coalition, and upward appeal [6]. These six general categories or collective strategies subsumed the original 14 categories. Considerable research has measured the appropriateness of these six UI strategies.

Other types of research questions have been generated using the original questionnaire employed for measuring these six strategies [7], [8]. Research indicates that REASON is the most direct of all strategies [9]. As a rational tactic, it involves the presentation of facts and figures to persuade through logic [10], [11].

INGRATIATION is an informal or nonperformance specific exchange [12]. This strategy takes into account interpersonal attraction, impression management, flattery, and creation of good will [13], [10], [14]. One major reason for choosing this particular strategy could be to create a favorable impression, that is, to begin a process by which the agent exercises control over or manipulates the reactions of others [15], [16], [17]. The

influence tactic of favor rendering has often also been labeled as a form of ingratiation [18], [19]. The agent in this case renders favors with the purpose of ingratiating himself with the target [18], [20]. Some of the tactics that researchers would like to group under this category are "friendliness," "liking," and self-presentation strategies [21, p. 257].

An envisaged reward determines the choice and use of EXCHANGE STRATEGY. Exchange of benefits or favors [10], exchanging resources, or even proposing to make voluntary sacrifices are important exchange tactics. Another example of exchange/bargaining tactic could be indebtedness, a situation that reminds the receiver of promises for exchange of obligations requiring persuasion [22].

ASSERTIVENESS strategy is generally referred to as the "hard" tactic in which overt and direct strategies are used for upward influencing. Employees who are in complete command of the situation and who have a strong internal locus of control, technical expertise, and information are more likely to use this strategy. Falbe and Yukl refer to this strategy as "pressure" tactic [23]. Demanding, threatening, issuing directives or challenges, persisting or "wearing down" the superior [24], [22], are all part of the assertiveness strategy.

Working with coworkers and developing support among them would encourage COALITION STRATEGY, where more emphasis is laid on numbers, majority opinion, and the ability to associate with the prevailing opinion. In most of his works, Schilit refers to this tactic as "group support" [25], [26].

In UPWARD APPEAL, the manager appeals to the "boss's boss" to get the desired objective. The agent convinces the target of the acceptance of the proposal by higher authorities. This strategy is normally used as a last resort, in cases where all other influencing tactics have failed. It is normally understood as a secondary tactic, as the superior, in the initial stages, resists all other efforts on the part of the agent [27], [22].

In their exclusive study of UI strategies, Schriesheim and Hinkin questioned the content validity of the scale proposed by Kipnis et al. [10], as they felt that certain aspects of upward influence had been neglected [28]. In turn, they proposed a shorter 18 items instrument that would measure all six strategies in upward influence categories.

Yukl and Falbe [29], and Yukl and Tracey [30] replicated the work of Kipnis et al. [10]. Their objective in conducting research along similar lines was two-fold: (a) to determine if the major findings of the Kipnis et al. study could be replicated with differences in methodology; and (b) to extend the research to incorporate additional strategies. Using an open-ended coding system in which their data comprised descriptions of influence incidents, these researchers added two more strategies, i.e., inspirational appeals [29] and consultation tactics [30], to the already existing list of six postulated by Kipnis and his colleagues [10].

According to Yukl and Falbe, the INSPIRATIONAL APPEAL is used to arouse enthusiasm by appealing to the emotions or values of the recipient [28]. This tactic has also been called the "allurement" tactic [30]. This tactic presupposes that the target will eventually benefit by providing happiness to and complying with the wishes of other members within the organization.

CONSULTATION TACTICS indicate involvement of the recipient in the decision making process as a way of securing commitment at a later stage [29]. This strategy involves getting advice from the supervisors in the initial phases so as to involve them in decisions about new work procedures at a later stage [22].

In brief, literature on UI has looked at a variety of strategies that use language to influence behavior. Paradoxically, all these strategies assess influence through survey instruments, measures that imply verbalization, but which do not rely upon actual linguistic data. Moreover, the studies have focused on the strategies themselves rather than on the how the strategies are created through language. SAT provides a way to analyze how the strategies are enacted.

Speech Act Theory

SAT, as postulated by Austin [31] and developed by Searle [32], demonstrates that utterances have the power to do things. Not only do speech acts represent ideas, but they also accomplish tasks, such as requesting – *Please close the door*; and commanding – *Get out!* , that would not otherwise be done as effectively (if at all). For speech act theoreticians, "speaking a language is engaging in a (highly complex) rule-governed form of behavior" [32, p. 12]. SAT provides a way of talking in terms of the surface grammatical structure; the context in which such structures are made; intentions, attitudes, and expectations of the participants; and the unspoken rules and conventions that apply when messages are sent and received. Familiarity with these rules and conventions may help professional communicators be more successful in their UI.

Searle postulates that when a person makes an utterance, it is primarily to perform a speech act [32]. Each speech act has at least two parts, (1) LOCUTIONARY ACTS, the act of speaking or creating an utterance, and (2) ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS, the act that is performed through the force of the utterance, such as apologizing, stating, ordering, etc. A speech act may also have a third aspect, PERLOCUTIONARY ACTS, the act of evoking some effects on the audience through and limited by the circumstances of a specific illocutionary act. Searle focused primarily on illocutionary acts, and these acts hold the most promise for articulating linguistic explanations for UI.

According to Searle [33], illocutionary acts can be classified into five categories:

> (1) REPRESENTATIVES—Speakers are committed in varying degrees to the truth of the propositions they utter, e.g., swearing, believing, and reporting.
>
> (2) DIRECTIVES—Speakers try to get hearers to do something, e.g., commanding, requesting, influencing, and urging.
>
> (3) COMMISSIVES—The act commits the speaker to varying degrees of action e.g., vowing, promising, and undertaking.

(4) DECLARATIONS—Speakers alter states of affairs by performing such acts as *I pronounce you man and wife*.

(5) EXPRESSIVES—Speakers express attitudes or emotions, e.g., congratulating, apologizing, and thanking.

Searle postulates two types of rules – regulative and constitutive, which help in gauging the intent of the sender and in differentiating between the different types of speech acts [32]. Regulative acts conform to social conventions and "govern preexisting form of behaviour" [34, p. 193]. Examples of this rule could be table manners or etiquette. Constitutive rules also conform to social conventions; however, they differ from regulative rules in that they **define** and **create** forms of behavior. For example, in the statement *I'm sorry that I hurt your feelings*, the uttered apology is the behavior, assuming appropriateness conditions are met. As per the rules of Searle, all speech acts are governed by constitutive rules that define the conditions which must exist in order for the speech act to take place. To perform a speech act correctly, familiarity with the "appropriateness" or "felicity" conditions is essential. Any violations recorded or observed therein are indicative of erratic behavior on the part of the doer. Thus, in the case of the uttered apology, the apology must be appropriate, in that the speaker has hurt the hearer's feelings, and that the speaker is sincere in making or offering the apology. These would comprise knowledge that users of the language share in understanding the context. Searle proposes that these appropriateness conditions be labeled as preparatory/essential/sincerity conditions [32]. For example, the illocutionary act of making a statement carries the following appropriateness conditions:

" 1. speaker believes p (where p is the proposition)

  2. speaker has evidence for the truth of p (or reasons for believing p)

  3. it is not obvious to both speaker and addressee that the addressee knows p (or does not need to be reminded of p)

  4. speaker has some reason for wanting addressee to know p (or to remember p)" [35, p. 82].

If the illocutionary act is performance of UI, then the appropriateness or felicity conditions for that specific act must be met. If not, the UI is not likely to succeed.

From a linguist's perspective, these appropriateness conditions are more basic in understanding an utterance than probably the explicit verbal construct. Going beyond the lexical and the syntactical format of the words and sentences in order to understand them in the context in which they occur is COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE [36]. While SAT is usually applied to single utterances, it could be expanded to incorporate multi-sentence constructs as would be evidenced in arguing, influencing, persuading etc. [35]. Viewing the speech act of influencing as a communication process would entail:

(1) Familiarity with felicity conditions

(2) Act of making utterances

(3) Receptivity of the audience

(4) Response

The speaker's ability to create appropriate speech acts for UI, what is here termed, INFLUENCING COMPETENCE, can be ascertained only when a desired response is framed.

According to Brown and Levinson, "people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction" [37, p. 61]. In other words, people tend to be "polite," rather than offensive, when interacting with each other so as to show their willingness to respect the face of others and to preserve their own face. This may be especially true when they have a vested interest to do so, as for example in a professional context. FACE, one's "public self-image," has two aspects:

(1) POSITIVE FACE, "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others;" and

(2) NEGATIVE FACE, "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others." [37, p. 62]

Affronts to face or FACE-THREATENING ACTS (FTA), however, are unavoidable in some situations. For example, the power differential that is intrinsic to the workplace threatens negative face. The effects of FTA, as felicity conditions for both the speaker and the listener, must be considered in workplace interactions, perhaps especially in UI

interactions. Failure to mitigate FTA toward superiors could lead to ineffective UI or even dismissal.

Morand argues that power is embedded in speech used in everyday interaction between superiors and subordinates [38]. Politeness, used to demonstrate regard and consideration for others, is sensitive to power distribution in the organization. Authority and equality can be measured in terms of politeness used everyday in face-to-face interaction. In an extension of that research, Morand demonstrates through a laboratory study that power can be communicated through specific linguistic gestures, which are used differently by superiors and subordinates in the course of the interaction [39].

According to Smeltzer, a model can be used for announcing organization-wide change within a SAT framework, a model that takes into account the change and organizational dynamics that influence the communication strategy, including the message, the channel, and the timing [40]. Inaccurate rumors about change and employees learning about change from a source other than management were two factors that differentiated between effective and ineffective strategies. Moreover, he found that timing was an important criterion in transmitting messages and that employees reacted negatively to overly positive statements.

Responding to negative messages [41], or hostile questions [42], albeit politely, to lessen the social threat of refusing, is facilitated with an understanding and application of the six UI strategies based on propositional and sincerity conditions. The authors stress that familiarity with these strategies can aid in either declining to respond or responding amicably to hostile questions. SAT provides both insight into discussing these conventions and a practical method of analyzing individual messages.

Using SAT to Explore UI

SAT and its concept of linguistic action can be useful in explicating how UI occurs. In the tradition of ordinary language, as in communication, the intent/motive of the speaker is fundamental in understanding any utterance. Let us consider the utterance

Let's go made by a subordinate to his superior. Whether it is understood as a request, a command, or some other illocutionary act, the propositional content remains the same; the speaker refers to a present or future action to be undertaken by the hearer, i.e., to go somewhere with the speaker. However, an understanding of the felicity conditions and the intent of the speaker reveal that if the utterance is made by a subordinate to a superior, it cannot be a command and, hence, must be viewed as a request or possibly as an agreement. What changes the understanding of the utterance is the intent of the speaker and the appropriateness conditions. In using SAT to explicate the performance of UI, it is necessary to state the CONSTITUTIVE RULES, rules that link illocutionary force with corresponding illocutionary acts [43, p. 238]. The propositional rule remains the same for all UI strategies discussed below, viz. speaker refers to a present or future action to be undertaken by hearer.

The constitutive rules for UI could be designed as shown in fig. 1.

FIG. 1. Constitutive rules for UI. Modulated from adaptation of Searle's[32] Constitutive Rules for the Speech Act of Requesting, as presented in [34, p. 194].

Type of Rule	Enumeration
Propositional Content Rule	speaker (s) refers to a present or future action to be undertaken by hearer (h)
Preparatory rules	
Need for Action	s perceives that there is a reason for influencing and subsequent action to be taken along utterances with overt or covert intentions
Need for Influencing	It should not be evident that h was intending to carry out the act prior to influencing act of s
Ability	s believes and is convinced of the ability of h to perform the task

| | Willingness | s believes that h, subsequent to usage of appropriate strategies would be willing to perform the act |
| | Sincerity rule | s sincerely wants to influence h for fructification of personal or organizational goals. |

If one were to consider a strategy that could be used for the set of constitutive rules explicated in fig. 1, one could think of reason or rationality. However, difference in preparatory and sincerity conditions require strategies with different illocutionary force. For example, if the employee is convinced of the unwillingness of the manager to be influenced, he would not use reason or rationality but would probably resort to coalition, ingratiation, or upward appeal. Constitutive rules for some UI strategies are provided in the table below. Understanding the rules may help professionals facilitate their UI attempts.

Table I. UI strategies with constitutive rules.-

STRATEGIES		
	Preparatory	Sincerity/Appropriateness conditions
Rationality/ Reason *Strategy 1*	a. Accept respondent's willingness to acquiesce and b. Present in detail facts and reasons	Relevant
Ingratiation *Strategy 2*	a. Understand respondent's unwillingness to be persuaded b. Refuse to state or recognize, in explicit terms, that the requested act is a future act. c. Use of token or gifts to gratify/oblige	Infelicitous conditions
Exchange/ Bargaining *Strategy 3*	a. Recognize respondent's willingness to be persuaded with obligations b. Comprehend the stakes involved c. Negotiate to influence	Infelicitous conditions

Assertiveness Strategy 4	a. Accept respondent's partial willingness to acquiesce b. Forcefully present technically sound details c. Pressure the respondent into accepting	Relevant
Coalition Strategy 5	a. Recognize the need for group or team influence b. Collectively influence the target c. Use turn taking system	Relevant
Upward Appeal Strategy 6	a. Understand willingness of "boss's boss" to be influenced b. Use strategy 1	Relevant

In the next section, we apply the constitutive rules to language in use and demonstrate that understanding the concepts of SAT can facilitate UI.

Analysis of Sample Dialogues using Constitutive Rules of SAT

In a study on UI strategies, employed within a multinational company, the first author recorded and transcribed 30 pieces of conversation. In this section, we have taken excerpts from the recorded dialogues and discuss them in terms of SAT and the constitutive rules. Familiarity with these rules can help technical communicators strategize UI attempts and use appropriate tactics for maximum gain in minimum time.

Strategy 1/ Reason: (see Table I)

The Human Resource manager approaches the General Manager with a plea to hire more people. While he has been trying for some time to impress his viewpoint, so far he has not met with success. Finally, in a formal face-to-face interaction with the GM, he uses reason to convince his superior to accept the proposal. A portion of the dialogue appears below.

You know the sales are dipping. We need to recruit fresh MBAs to aggressively market the drink. Last week the marketing department had made a presentation on the market survey. Going by their analysis ...

In this example, the subordinate tries to persuade the superior that new recruits need to be hired in order to improve the company's financial position. The perlocutionary act of persuading results from several illocutionary acts that are based on the presupposition that the superior already knows or will acknowledge that sales are declining and that this situation in undesirable. First, the subordinate asserts *You know the sales are dipping* as a way of acknowledging the superior's agreement that sales have dropped and also as a way of preparing the superior to hear the rest of the message, the directive *We need to recruit.*

Application of Constitutive Rules: Because the subordinate expects the superior to acquiesce to his assertions and believes that the superior is capable of taking the suggested action, the subordinate can present his proposition and support it with specific facts that will appeal to the superior's rational side. Note that the speaker refers to the research conducted by the marketing department to add substance to his persuasion. Relevancy, however, will not be effective unless felicity conditions are also met. In this case, the subordinate wants the superior to take appropriate action to obtain organizational goals, namely improve corporate sales.

Face Considerations: While the subordinate is attempting UI, he must also be mindful of the power differential in order to avoid threatening the superior's face (see [37]). In this example, the superior switches from the second person *you* to the inclusive third person *we* to soften the directive, making it apply not only to the superior but also to himself, and to illustrate that he identifies with the company and its interests. The directive is further softened by the verb *need* which implies that the final decision has not been made; the superior has the final say. The verbs *must* or *will* would have been more direct and possibly offensive or face-threatening to the superior. Finally, the subordinate deflects some responsibility or blame by giving details about the marketing department's report. In similar circumstances, professional communicators may increase the likelihood of success if they shape directives as advice, allowing superiors to see the supporting rationale. In doing so, they show influencing competence.

Strategy 2/ Ingratiation: (see Table I)

The GM, Research and Development (R&D), wishes to get a project worth 25 lakhs sanctioned by the organization. He feels that the organization would benefit from the program; however, he is not sure the board members will be receptive to a project this large that is to be handled by him alone. To improve the chances of his project being approved by the board, the GM wants to influence all the board members, indirectly and informally, before they take a collective decision on the project. One such dialogue with the Vice President (VP) has been recorded, and its excerpt is presented below.

> GM: *In the next board meeting I would like to present my project and get the support of the board members. You too would be there?*
>
> B: *Yes.*
>
> A: *That was just by the by. I have not come here to talk to you about the board meeting. What are you doing in the evening? Why don't you and your family join us for dinner? We could go to the club, play billiards and have good Italian or Indian food.*

Application of Constitutive Rules: Because the UI attempt in this example is directed to a personal cause, the GM is aware of the unwillingness of the VP to accede the request/influence, and thus the subordinate GM adopts ingratiation as a strategy. Specifically, the subordinate does not explicitly refer to a future action to be taken by the superior, but rather he solicits information from the superior concerning his intended presence/absence at the next board meeting. Subsequent to confirmation, he explicitly denies interest in the future act (attendance at the meeting) to be performed; he does this even though he has stated his intention to present his proposal at the next meeting. One implication is that he is merely expressing interest in whether the superior will be at the meeting because they are "friends," and as friends, the GM has more justification in expecting the VP to vote for the project. To enhance the obligation of friendship (especially since obliging the superior with gifts for influencing is unacceptable), the GM resorts to gratifying by inviting the VP and his family to *join us for dinner.*

Face Considerations: By avoiding any explicit request to support the project, the GM creates a scenario that is not face-threatening to the VP and is minimally face-threatening

to himself. If his **friend** the VP does not want to have dinner with him, it is not a significant threat; friends sometimes tell other friends "no" and still remain friends. The discrepancy, however, between the implicit (*I'm taking you out because I want you to support my project*) and the explicit (*I have not come here to talk to you about the board meeting*) statements violate the sincerity condition, and thus the utterance performs an infelicitous request. The GM fails at UI.

Strategy 3/Exchange/Bargaining: (see Table I)

For the last few months, the Finance Manager (FM) has been pursuing a transfer because, several years earlier, his wife was transferred to an office 600 kms away. Knowing that his office is under immense pressure and that his transfer is a distant possibility, the FM still approaches the GM, HR for the transfer. In an attempt to influence the GM, HR, he tries to use exchange as a UI strategy:

> FM: *I have been staying in this lousy place for the last 7 years. You promised that if I completed 5 years you would transfer me.*
>
> GM, HR: *How can you ask for a transfer at this stage? You know we are in the midst of a project.*
>
> FM: *My wife has also been transferred; I can't carry on in this place.*
>
> GM, HR: *You know we have been short of staff. There can be no relocations at this stage.*
>
> FM: *Okay, so if you transfer me, I would take charge of 2 departments. That would definitely ease the pressure off your back.*

Application of Constitutive Rules: The FM wants the GM to honor an earlier **promise** to give him a transfer. By couching the request in these terms, the FM attempts to remind the GM of his **obligation** to grant him the transfer that is now past due. The FM also establishes that he has **bargained** with the GM in good faith by working two years beyond the original five year agreement, and he emphasizes that he has honored his deal despite considerable personal imposition: *My wife has also been transferred; I can't carry on in this place.* The FM seems convinced that the GM could, if so motivated, grant the transfer. His final bargaining attempt, with the explicitly

conditional *if*, *Okay, so if you transfer me, I would take charge of 2 departments,* ignores the GM's direct assertion that *There can be no relocations at this stage.*

Face Considerations: FM's proposition is infelicitous for several reasons. First, the proposition seems contradictory to the situation in that the illocutionary force does not match the illocutionary act of the directive *You promised that if I completed 5 years you would transfer me*. If the GM has not granted a promised transfer after seven years, he probably has no intention of granting the transfer: bargaining is not likely to change his mind. Secondly, the FM seems aware of the GM's unwillingness (indeed, his refusal!) to grant the transfer. His attempts to bargain for the transfer are more like acts of desperation than attempts at sincere negotiation. For example, the FM begins the conversation by threatening the GM's face. He tries to put pressure on the GM to honor his promise. This threatens both the GM's negative face, by putting pressure on him to act and by reminding him of his promise, and his positive face, by implying that the GM is not an honorable person because he does not keep his word [37, pp. 65-67]. Of course, the GM also threatens the FM's face, first by not honoring his promise while expecting the FM to continue working and then by ignoring any sacrifice the FM has made for the organization, implying instead that the FM is simply being selfish and unreasonable: *How can you ask for a transfer at this stage?* The GM then exerts his authority over the FM by his direct assertion that *There can be no relocations at this stage.* Finally, the FM threatens his own negative face by offering to work twice as hard if he gets the transfer. This offer is not legitimate because the FM does not want to work more for the organization; he wants to reduce his commitment to the organization. Perhaps the FM fails at obtaining the coveted transfer for so long because he lacks influencing competence.

For legitimate exchange or bargaining to take place, both the speaker and the listener must see value in the potential exchange. For professional communicators, this means we must be conscious of what our audience wants and find ways to fulfill those wants while also bargaining for what we want, whether it is flexible time schedules or more compensation.

Strategy 4/ Assertiveness: (see Table I)

In this example, a Marketing Manager (MM) approaches his GM for a two-week extension on a project that is due for completion in one week.

> MM: *You want us to complete this project by mid-April? It is just not possible. We need two extra weeks. Let me give you the project plan, the day-to day execution [...] will help you to understand that it is not possible and we need to ask the clients for extension in deadline.*

Application of Constitutive Rules: The MM chooses to assertively implement UI by directly stating his proposition: *We need two extra weeks.* As the marketing expert, the MM expects the GM to acquiesce once the GM "understands" that the extension is not optional. The MM then projects his confidence by providing concrete details as to why the two-week extension is **required.**

Face Considerations: The initial dismissal of the original completion date threatens the GM's positive face by practically ridiculing him (not unlike the common USA quip *You want it when?,* followed by intense laughter). Similarly, the MM implies that if the GM does not act appropriately, that is fails to extend the deadline, then he will be acting irrationally. The MM sincerely believes the extension is necessary in order to perfect the project and uphold (or maybe enhance) the organization's image, and because he has influencing competence, he is able to convince the GM to ask for the extension. The illocutionary force of his directive *We need two extra weeks* coupled with the representative supporting details matches the illocutionary act of influencing the GM to extend the project deadline, a dilemma with which many professional communicators can identify.

Strategy 5/ Coalition: (see Table I)

Sometimes, subordinates recognize that effective UI requires collaborative effort that is similar to traditional uses of labor unions and collective bargaining groups. In this example, three managers from a marketing team try to influence the GM, Marketing to adopt unethical methods for marketing a product.

Mgr.A: *Going by history we can say that if we were to reduce the price of each bottle by two rupees, we would be able to strengthen our customer base.*

Mgr.B: *What we can do is reduce the quantity of the product inside the bottle.*

Mgr.C: *Reference to the quantity in the bottle can be made in small print so that no legal issues are involved.*

Mgr.B: *We could market the product with claims to reduction in price.*

Mgr.A: *We are sure to capture the attention of the consumer.*

Application of Constitutive Rules: Because the GM is known to oppose any marketing strategy that could harm the company's reputation, the subordinate managers recognize that their best chance at successful UI is to work together, focusing on **why** the unethical strategy is in the company's best interest. All three team members take turns using indirect directives to explain the validity of their proposal. Mgr. A focuses on the company's customer, specifically *to strengthen our customer base* and to enhance the company's image (*to capture the attention of the consumer*). Furthermore, Mgr. A legitimizes the strategy *to reduce the price of each bottle* as historically sound marketing practice. Mgr. B then tells **how** the strategy will work: *What we can do is reduce the quantity of the product inside the bottle.* Once the first part of the unethical strategy is voiced, however, Mgr. C quickly provides a way for the company to avoid negatives that could adversely affect it: *Reference to the quantity in the bottle can be made in small print so that no legal issues are involved.* Mgr. B then drops the second part of the strategy: to market the bottle with fewer pills as a *reduction in price*. Even this misrepresentation is juxtaposed with a desirable increase in market share. The subordinate managers seem genuinely sold on the strategy as a way to increase market share and help the company to achieve its goals. The illocutionary force of the collective speech act is felicitous.

Face Considerations: By collectively arguing for the new strategy, the subordinate managers minimize face-threatening (not to mention job threatening) risk. No one manager can be blamed if the superior rejects the idea, and at least to some degree, their positive face is protected by the collective approach, in that others already agree on the proposal. Similarly, the collective approach may mitigate threats to their negative face in

that even if the superior does not accept the proposal, other competent people have. The superior GM, however, experiences a higher level of threat to his face: (1) other presumably competent adults will disagree if he rejects the proposal, and (2) at least three adults agree with this proposal. If he rejects the proposal, he must do so alone. His power differential may or may not mitigate these threats to his face.

Strategy 6/ Upward Appeal: (see Table I)

A subordinate manager, HR has been trying, unsuccessfully, to convince his GM to honor his previously approved leave. He finally circumvents the GM and approaches the VP:

> *I had applied for annual leave from 6 May through 31 May. Ramesh [immediate boss] says that our team has recently got a very prestigious project, which needs to be completed by mid June so I can't travel in the month of May. However, I had planned my leave six months in advance. I fully understand the importance of the project. Have done the preliminary round of work, am delegating responsibility to my colleague, will also stay in touch over email and have promised to complete the task when I get back. If you tell Ramesh, he will sanction my leave…*

Application of Constitutive Rules: This risky UI attempt is for a personal cause. Circumventing direct superiors can be face threatening and tantamount to "career suicide." Application of this strategy becomes relevant when the culture within the organization is open: when superiors are willing to listen to subordinates, and subordinates are at liberty to approach their superiors regardless of status/hierarchy. In this example, the subordinate manager believes that the VP will listen to his side and may be persuaded to intervene on his behalf; thus, the manager tries to find reasons to help the VP make the decision to let him go on his planned leave. The sequential arrangement of the utterances is as follows: (1) three representative statements (a presentation of facts, a summary of discussion with immediate boss, and presentation of personal viewpoint in an objective manner), (2) an expressive statement of appreciation for Ramesh's need, and then (3) a directive that presents an alternative course of action. The presupposition trigger "if" softens the illocutionary force of the directive *you tell Ramesh* making the directive more palatable for the VP.

Face Considerations: The subordinate manager willingly incurs debt, a threat to his negative face, by offering to work while he is on leave (checking email while he is away and completing the project upon return) as a way of showing his commitment to the organization. At the same time, he also encroaches on the VP's negative face by putting pressure on him to authorize the leave. It also may strain the VP's relationship with the GM. That said, however, the proposition is sincere, satisfies all felicity requirements, and while risky, shows influencing competence.

Conclusions

This article has imported linguistic research into the domain of UI strategies. Relatively recent emphasis on social construction of organizations highlights the importance of appropriate language use in professional communication. SAT provides a unique way of analyzing language in use within organizations. Based on SAT, we have attempted to provide an explanation for the choice of strategies by members within the organization. We suggest that for effective upward influencing, technical communicators need to consider the verbalization of UI strategies.

Borrowing from the findings of Searle, the paper proposes that UI is a linguistic act of influencing. The subordinate, by making an utterance or series of utterances, performs the act of persuading and securing the approval from the superior. Understanding constitutive rules, namely, propositional, preparatory, and sincerity, explained in this paper, can help professionals select appropriate strategies in the UI game within organizations. The preparatory conditions are the most important as they enable the speaker to gauge the receptivity/willingness of the respondent to the proposition. A misunderstanding or break of any one of the rules, however, followed by an incorrect choice of strategy can lead to an unsuccessful UI attempt**.**

For our purposes here, we restricted the application of SAT to six strategies (reason, ingratiation, exchange/bargaining, assertiveness, coalition, and upward appeal) that are frequently used in organizations. The application of constitutive rules indicates that the propositional rule for all six is the same, namely, speaker refers to a future action to be

undertaken by hearer. Unlike the propositional rule, preparatory conditions varied in all six cases. Understanding the level of willingness of the respondent to be influenced, and the dictates of the situation help in strategizing. Even the slightest change in the anticipated degree of willingness or receptivity of the receiver necessitates a change in the strategy to be adopted. The sincerity conditions in application of four of the strategies, specifically, reason, assertiveness, coalition, and upward appeal, are relevant. In the last two strategies (ingratiation and exchange), the sincerity conditions are violated and the utterance is infelicitous.

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