

Handbook of Persuasive Tactics

A practical language guide

Joan Mulholland



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For J.L.
with thanks

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Acknowledgments

In preparing this collection of persuasive tactics, I have consulted a great many sources of language usage—research reports on composition, rhetoric, and discourse analysis, and grammatical and lexical studies. Many of these are listed in the Further Reading list and Bibliography at the end of the book. I would, however, wish to acknowledge here my debt to Randolph Quirk, and his team from the Survey of English Usage, University College London, whose *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* has made life a good deal easier for scholars in this field, and I would also like to express my indebtedness to the seminal work done on politeness by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson.

Aim of this book

The aim of this book is to present a catalog of the most important persuasive tactics in language. Some 300 of them have been drawn from scholarly studies on rhetoric, and from research studies in communication, linguistics, pragmatics and related fields. Each one has been adapted for practical use either in speech or writing. For each tactic suggestions are offered about the communication tasks for which it is suitable, a descriptive account is given which shows how it works tactically; and a demonstration is given of the ways in which it can be used to good effect by both writers and speakers as they produce communications. Also, of course, by studying the tactics and their persuasive values, readers can equip themselves to enhance their ability to read the communications of others, to improve their interpretation of spoken and written interaction, and to make sense of the communication practices that surround them in their daily lives.

The assumptions on which the book is based are as follows.

- (a) Most people spend a very high percentage of their waking life in communication with others.
- (b) Every communication has a goal or a set of goals that it tries to achieve.
- (c) Everyone communicating with a purpose in mind can use language tactics to try to do it effectively.
- (d) Every act of communication, no matter how apparently trivial or brief, has an effect on others.
- (e) Every communication imposes to a greater or lesser extent on those who receive it.

How to use this book

There are several ways in which this book can be used.

METHOD I

- (a) As an intending writer or speaker, work out what persuasive tasks you have to perform in your next important communication, and think of the problems you might have.
- (b) To help you make the best estimate of your tasks and problems, read the Table of Tasks.
- (c) Follow the references given in the table to the relevant tactics in the alphabetically listed Collection of Tactics.
- (d) Read any you have time for, and then consider how best to use the tactics in the particular circumstances of your communication.

For example

- (a) You work out that you need to apologize to a senior colleague for some fault he or she blames on you, but which was not in fact your fault, while at the same time criticizing the person responsible for the fault.
- (b) The Table of Tasks could suggest to you that you need to think about these tasks—to apologize, not to lose face, to inform the colleague that there has been a mistake, and to do so with no loss of face to him or her, and to criticize some person for the fault.
- (c) Follow the references given in the Table of Tasks to the relevant tactics in the alphabetically listed Collection of Tactics.
- (d) Read any you have time for. Then consider how best to use the tactics in the particular circumstances of your communication.

METHOD II

- (a) As an intending writer or speaker, work out what persuasive tasks you have to perform in your next important communication, and think of the problems you might have.
- (b) Go straight to the Index to Collection of Tactics and check any which appear to be useful.
- (c) Turn to the Collection of Tactics and read the useful ones.
- (d) Consider how best to use them in the particular circumstances of your communication.

For example

- (a) You know you have to put a proposal to your colleagues which they will resist unless you allow them to make some input into it.
- (b) On looking through the Index to Collection Tactics you might think some of the following might prove useful—Argument: choose; Explain; Genre: choose; Handle a difficult topic; Impartiality: present; Leave matter incomplete; Moderation: display; Politeness: make action joint; Self-defense; Sociable language; and Understatement.
- (c) The tactic ‘Argument: choose’ shows what a polarized situation you would set up if you put your proposal as an argument. If this seems a bad idea, then settle for the tactic ‘Explain,’ which makes less of an imposition on those hearing it, and allows more input from them.
- (d) Consider how best to word your proposal so that it avoids argument as much as possible, and aims to be more of an explanation.

METHOD III

The *Handbook* can be used as a general checklist of communication features if the reader skims through the whole Table of Tasks, or the whole Collection of Tactics.

METHOD IV

Students or teachers engaged in communication studies could use the *Handbook* as a course programme.

Introduction

THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION

Many people are prepared to accept that they spend a good deal of time each day in talking with and writing to others, as well as in listening, reading, and replying. They are often less prepared to accept that each of these social encounters is done with some purpose in mind, and that each person involved is trying to achieve some goal. They have no difficulty in recognizing that there is persuasive intent in the language of an advertiser or a politician, and can analyze some of the tactics that are used, but they give much less attention to and even deny the existence of their own purposes and tactics as they meet and talk with friends, as they discuss matters at work, and as they engage in their recreational pastimes.

This dismissal of purpose and tactics in individual communications may have come about because, throughout its long and honored history, rhetorical analysis has focussed on the persuasive tactics of political and legal language, and not on the conversations and discussions, the birthday letters and business memos, that form the bulk of most people's communicational practice, and so for many it is unusual to see these taken seriously, and they may be unclear what method to use to analyze them.

Another reason for resisting the analysis of informal communications may be that the purposes of everyday interaction seem trivial in contrast with the goals of those involved in public life. It would be unfortunate if this were so, since everyday interactions and their purposes form the bulk of most people's experience. To deny the importance of one's daily happenings is to deny one's own importance. It would also be foolish because such happenings make a major contribution to people's understanding of the world, the establishment of their value systems, and their behavioral conduct. The persuasive power of communication in interpersonal relations has effects which last just as long, if not longer, than those of the mass media. For example, harsh words from a teacher at primary school can be remembered

(and have an effect) long after the ad for soap powder has been forgotten. It is at least as important to an individual that he or she can establish a good working relationship with a colleague as that he or she is told that Smith's soap is the best on the market. It is more important that he or she can communicate well with members of the family and create strong bonds with them than that one politician or another is given support in an election.

The important purposes of everyday life include forming group identities, associating well with others, acquiring a sense of one's own identity from the way one communicates with others, and from the ways others communicate with and about one. And to these should be added the more obvious purposes of having one's information accepted, achieving cooperation in getting things done, passing exams and performing well at job interviews, and so on. Persuasive communications make a major contribution to all of these. Some few people, like politicians and advertisers, may use communication to influence masses of people, but for most people communication has a much more reduced domain than this. This fact should not, however, prevent an understanding that ordinary talk and writing has as many persuasive tactics in it as are used in political or advertising language.

It may also be difficult to accept that ordinary talk and writing are tactically rich, because they are denied social value, and attention, in the courses of study in Western education systems. But also it may be difficult because they are so familiar people hardly notice the detail of their production.

Some people even consider that it is unnecessary to analyze ordinary communications because they believe that if an idea is good enough in itself, this alone will persuade others to accept it, and it needs no persuasive 'embellishment.' But it is not true that having a good idea means that it will win approval and support in and of itself without any persuasive planning to produce it in the best possible way, and taking advantage of what is known of the other person's preferences, habits of mind, and opinions. For example, any good idea which is new, and which needs to be substituted for a familiar old one, will have to be very well expressed, and repeated often, before it is accepted. Equally it is not true that a good person's qualities are always recognized and his or her word valued as a consequence; it is necessary to work hard at acquiring a good reputation, and this includes presenting oneself well.

And finally, people resist analyzing ordinary talk because they fear that analysis could mean they would be inhibited from taking part in it as 'naturally' as before. Certainly it is likely that on first looking into the nature of ordinary talk, there could be a period of awkwardness and self-consciousness, but once that stage has passed people would be left with an increase in knowledge about the communicative practices of their daily lives,

and an enhanced potential to communicate successfully. This is surely a good goal and worth a little initial discomfort.

If it seems that analysis might destroy the spontaneity or naturalness of ordinary talk, then perhaps it is right that it should do so, if only because the spontaneity is often only apparent and not real, and it is certainly not an indication of untactical language, but rather just a sign that the tactics used are very familiar to all concerned.

Ordinary talk and writing, then, are worth close scrutiny, however awkward it may seem. And this is particularly so because whether people like it or not, others are using persuasive tactics on them, and these should be studied in order to know how to counter them or whether to agree to them. Power, sometimes mildly and sometimes strongly, in some form, is exercised in every communication: for example, in the ways in which some people dominate the speaking role and so force others to listen; or the way they set the tone of an interaction and make it difficult for others to change it; as well as the way they assert strong opinions and thereby influence others to agree with them; and so on. Speakers and writers involved in ordinary engagements can constrain other people's actions, affect others' interpretations of things, they can set up discussions and close them, start embarrassing topics, and so on.

The power of such everyday persuasions can be felt in the strength of feelings that can arise from them. So, for example, a failure to get a straight answer to a straight question from a friend in a casual chat can cause the questioner severe and lasting irritation. Or there could be feelings that last for years because as a child one was hurt by unkind words. A knowledge of the tactical possibilities of language can lead to the empowerment of anyone as a communicator. The more people know of what can be done through language, the more they can try to do with it; and the more knowledge they have about what is being done to them through language, the more they can make informed decisions to accept or reject it. Such tactical knowledge will only have a bad result, and lead to the unacceptable manipulation of others, or to personal hypocrisy, if a person makes a deliberate decision to use it in this way: it is not inherent in the knowledge itself.

THE NATURE OF PERSUASION

'Persuasion' for some people is associated with the misuse of powerful tactics and the exerting of improper influence over others at a mass national, or cultural, level. It is seen as manipulation of others' minds and therefore as unethical. People perceive of it as 'the manufacturing of consent,' that is, an artificial activity, and one which covertly limits the options of those receiving it. (Note that the artificiality of the notion is made persuasive by the

metaphor of ‘manufacturing.’) These associations are, however, more suitably applied to propaganda than to persuasion.

Propaganda uses strong and mainly covert tactics, and hardly allows for resistance to its influence, and has as its goal an absolute imposition of its own wishes on others. If it meets with opposition it simply increases the pressure on others to accept what it seeks. It insists that its message be accepted, and further that it be acted on. It can and does fail if its tactics are inappropriate or badly used, but in the hands of experts it more often succeeds than not. It can work quickly, as in agitation propagandas which seek an instant result, or it can permeate social life slowly as in integration propagandas which are used to impose a steady long-term adherence to a certain view of life.

Persuasion is quite a different activity. It differs in its aims, in the means it uses, in the pressure it exerts, and in the range of people it affects. Persuasion is a factor of ordinary everyday life, and it is what can make people feel more or less comfortable, improve or weaken cooperation between colleagues and friends, and maintain relations with family and the community. By persuasion one may be able to avoid an unpleasant task, or to arrange a better one; one can win a point at a meeting, or one can be the life and soul of a party. Persuasion certainly seeks to achieve the goals of the person using it, but unlike propaganda, if it proves unsuccessful or meets too much opposition, the persuasion may be withdrawn. Also, persuasion acts rather to encourage the other person to share the view of the user, than to insist on imposing it; the persuader simply presents the best case possible, and then leaves it to the other to accept or reject it. Moreover, persuasion will take into account and allow for differences in viewpoint. Unlike propaganda which either succeeds or fails, persuasion can be partially successful. Like propaganda, persuasion can either work quickly or can only gradually increase its influence, but unlike propaganda, persuasion can be quite open and aboveboard in the tactics it uses (though it can employ covert tactics as well).

When the more overt tactics are used in persuasion they provide an opportunity for all participants to recognize that persuasion is intended, and indeed it may be useful at times to let people know what one wants: ‘I want you all to come to dinner on Saturday.’ The more covert tactics can work towards subtler goals, as when one person wants to know just how a friend judges a meeting they have just been to, while the other person will not reveal this without some expression of judgment by the first person.

It is very important to understand that persuasion can be a joint activity as people with similar aims work together to achieve them: it is not just what one person does to another. One such joint maneuver might occur in the case of a teenager, just returning home from college, who uses a baby voice to ask Mommy’s permission to take a cookie, just as she did in the distant past

when she was a child. She adopts this role not just to get the cookie, but because she knows Mommy enjoys it when her daughter acts persuasively in this way, and can herself respond as she did in the past, and the whole interaction evokes happy memories. This could be the daughter's aim in setting it up, and her mother's in joining in, forming a joint exercise in reinforcing the family bond which is at risk by the daughter's absence from home.

The joint nature of persuasive activity, and the sophisticated maneuvering it can cause in interactions, is an important truth about its character, and one which can be overlooked if the only persuasions studied are the one-way enticements of the mass media. Joint persuasion, as in conversation, can use delicate discriminations in language to aim for a particular goal at any one time, or in order to build up slowly the quality and kind of relationship with someone which can be used, as a pre-persuasion, for other attempts at influence in future interactions.

Persuasion also has other qualities which are often absent from communication analyses. Where the mass media is taken as the model of social influence it sets up a slant of thought which focusses on its agents—the advertisers and politicians, and on its audience—the passive masses. This is a poor model and mode of thought to use on the very different daily interactions of ordinary life. First, in daily talk, quite ordinary people can be the agents of persuasion and influence. Second, the use of everyday-talk persuasive tactics can occasionally rebound on the users, and can even cause them to change their own views even as they are in the process of imposing them on others. This can happen because the process of putting one's ideas into words so that others can see their value may reveal that the ideas have some faults in logic, or some inconsistencies, or a lack of evidence, or even a lack of value, and so the communicator is forced to rethink or withdraw his or her support for them.

A third aspect of persuasion which is often ignored by analysts, is the fact that not one but many tactics can be employed at a time to achieve influence. And in many cases the use of multiple tactics can be more successful than using just one. And lastly, in talk, tactics have to be constantly adjusted during an interaction. Though at the start one tactic may appear to be working well, this is no guarantee that it will continue to do so. This is because of the interactive quality of daily talk: the copresence of others as communicators ensures that it will often happen that tactics have to be adjusted in the light of developing circumstances.

Though persuasion can and does exert a powerful influence on all aspects of life, neither in mass communications nor in individual interactions can it alter people's fixed prejudices or long-term habits, nor can it easily modify a belief to which someone has been committed for a long time. But it can

influence them, for example, it can influence the cultural perception of suitable matters for communication so as to exclude the topics or actions which support the habits of such people, for example, it can make the expression of some prejudices quite unacceptable in public communication, and so can prevent such people from representing their opinions. For example, though many men still hold a poor opinion of women, and will not change it, it has become less socially acceptable to utter this view in public. If it remains unsaid, perhaps one day, because it has not been heard for a long time, people will forget that it was ever current.

PERSUASION AND LANGUAGE

One major tool in the achievement of persuasion is language. It is not the only one, of course, because people can be persuaded by bribery, by family affection, by high-status social influence, and so on, but it is certainly important even for those able to bribe people, or utilize family affection or social influence that they be able to handle the persuasive qualities of language as they do it, a badly communicated bribe may not be correctly recognized.

Language is influential because of the many powers it has: it can represent any single thing in many different ways; it can vary the mental representations of matters in the world to suit people's beliefs; it can mention or omit things, or repeat them till they are accepted as normal (and perhaps true); and hence can construct matters in a way which suits the user's purposes. Many of the most influential aspects of life—people's beliefs, ideologies, assumptions, and values—depend for their construction and maintenance on language. So language can influence thought itself, and can also be used to offer opinions, state facts, suggest attitudes, create moods, attack or defend views, and so on, any of which could be persuasively used for some purpose.

Language also has the power to bring about and affect personal relationships, to set up good interactions, or bad ones, to damage, or repair damage to social interactivity, and to terminate friendships. In short, language can supply people with both the means to interpret the world, and a set of methods by which to influence their own and others' perceptions of the world; and it can help them to manage the interactions they have with others.

Every aspect of language use can represent the world and also form and sustain relationships. Our concepts are selected and represented in language. Our language structures ideas into texts, by grammatical and compositional strategies. Our attitudes to the world and emotions about it are expressed through words, grammar, and such extra-language factors as voice qualities and body language. And our use of language enables us to interpret the

communications we receive. Many of the most important actions and interactions of people's life are found in the exchanges of speech and the speech acts they perform in communication.

PERSUASION AND RHETORIC

For the Ancient Greeks the name for persuasion in communication was 'rhetoric,' and during Greek and Roman times the study of rhetoric as the means by which a person could achieve his or her persuasive goals was held in high regard, and used as a foundation course in education. The main aspects of persuasion as they saw it were: the finding of ideas 'invention,' the arrangement of materials into compositions, selection of an appropriate style, retaining the ideas and the arrangement in mind 'memory,' and delivery of the communication. But after Roman times, as rhetorical studies continued through the medieval period, the focus narrowed dramatically to only the first three of these, and in some cases to only style. Within style it became an exercise in classification of grammatical arrangements (called 'figures'), and the selection of words and ideas (called 'tropes'). As it lost touch with practical applications, it lost strength as a study, and the term 'rhetoric' itself lost status.

In this century, however, and particularly in the U.S.A., there has been a revitalization of rhetoric, an increase of flexibility in its use, and a return to the original breadth of the subject, though the term itself has not altogether regained its original high status in the perception of the general public. Today's rhetoric has developed its own special characteristics, in each of the classical areas of study using the developments in contemporary sociological, psychological, and language studies to enhance the rhetorical enterprise; allowing greater flexibility in the use of tactics than was permitted in the rigid models of the classical period, and shifting the focus of study from those of classical times.

For example, 'invention' now incorporates an understanding that the choice of materials involves an adjustment and re-presentation of them; and now covers not only the search for ideas and arguments, but also the choice of genres and media, and the implications of choosing one or another of them. It also covers far more of the context in which a communication occurs, since we now recognize the power exerted by situation on an individual communicator, and we know it is important to consider the involvement of one communication with those which precede it, both for a communicator, and his or her audience. We also know that context is not just brought into texts by, for example, an explicit reference to an external authority's support for one's argument, but that it could be implicitly incorporated into a text through the pervasive use of, for example, a stereotype found in the media.

‘Arrangement’ now includes the design of informal speech and writing where classical rhetoric focussed exclusively on formality. And it has had to come to terms with studying dialog in addition to treating the classical monolog.

‘Style’ has broadened its scope considerably. While language is still a very important aspect of rhetoric study, and even the sometimes dry categorization of ‘tropes’ and ‘figures’ is still studied, for example, in ads, poetry, and political speeches; there is much more awareness of the importance of language choice as it is affected by and affects the relationship between the communicator and his or her audience. This has given rise to major studies on tact and politeness, gender, and cross-cultural communications.

‘Memory,’ always an under-examined aspect of communication, is now receiving attention from the cognitive scientists and those who work in artificial intelligence, and new insights have been found to show how meanings are made in the mind, which will eventually prove useful for the analysis of communicational rhetoric.

‘Delivery’ has flourished as students have explored the minutiae of body language and non-verbal communications, and the intonational and pronounciational features of vocal communications.

Many of these areas of study are no longer called ‘rhetoric,’ passing now as linguistics, psychology, speech and drama, cultural studies, literature, or English studies, but they rightfully belong to the study of the means of achieving good communication. Ideas on the persuasive use of language from all of them have been incorporated here as they were found relevant.

And it is very much a twentieth-century view that sees this as a proper way to present rhetorical tactics. Nowadays, at least in democratic societies, ordinary people have many occasions in which they need to be persuasive, and they should be supplied with the language tools to help them do so. It is no longer a world in which rhetorical tools, and the rights to use them, belong only to the rich and powerful.

The Collection of Tactics presented in this book includes some which have been credentialled by centuries of rhetorical study and others which are quite newly seen as rhetorical. In some cases the presentation in this book is the first articulation of a tactic, as in the instance of ‘Minimalism,’ or ‘Reveal thought processes.’ In others it is the first presentation of a mass tactic, like gatekeeping, Stereotyping, or Slogans, for use by individuals, showing how a tactic used by the powerful communicators can be adapted to empower ordinary folk. The tactics are a distillation from classical rhetoric and pragmatic studies, and from contemporary research into language, cognition, discourse analysis, and communication and cultural studies. In every case, the pragmatic information on each tactic’s value for communication has been stripped down to its essentials, and is here presented in such a form that any

reader who has to perform persuasive work can make use of them. They come with practical examples, collected from real-life instances, to show the tactics in operation and provide a comprehensive means of dealing with a wide spectrum of persuasive aims in the ordinary occasions of practical life. Together they form a comprehensive coverage of the most important persuasive tactics that could be used in spoken and written communications.

(Should any reader wish for more information about a particular tactic than is supplied in the Collection of Tactics, suggestions for further reading are offered, and a reference list is appended.)

While other texts on communication list language tactics, some of them do no more than name them, as, for example, 'be brief,' 'do not use technical terms;' and those which do describe the tactics in more detail do not explain how they might work in specific cases, nor do they give examples. Other texts on language in communication totally ignore the social value of the tactics; while yet others issue rules for the use of a tactic which imply that a tactic could work anywhere and anytime. This text differs significantly from these in that it comprehensively names and describes the tactics, states the persuasive tasks for which they are suited, explains their persuasive value(s), and gives examples of the different ways in which they could be used.

The book supplies information about the persuasive potential of some 300 language tactics which might be of use, and also provides an index to the tasks for which they could be used. The tasks cover three basic aspects of persuasive communication.

- (a) The preparation of material.
- (b) The production of a well-constructed text.
- (c) Considerations of the relationship between the persuader and his or her audience.

There are tactics which can assist in the choice of genre, for example, explaining the relative pragmatic merits of account, argument, or description, since these set up a particular framework which influences the whole way a person reads or listens to the ensuing communication. There are tactics on the best way to take advantage of the special qualities of speech or writing as a mode of persuasion. There are tactics on the best way to present a topic, how to introduce it, or to change it if it seems to be harmful to the persuasive intention, and how to avoid others' topics. Some tactical rules for interpreting the communications of others are supplied. Useful tactics for the management of personal presentation, the achievement of a good working relationship, are given, and ways of successfully managing some of the most persuasively difficult speech acts, such as apologize, request, and reprimand, are offered.

And ways of using words and grammar, figures of speech, and logical argument to the best advantage are presented.

THE READER

Readers of this book, it is assumed, are already practicing communicators, and have some experience in communication, though they may lack experience in the analysis of communication. The book is designed to give them help to examine their own practice, and that of the others they work with or who share their daily lives. They can discover the factors involved in persuasion and the means by which it can be successfully produced, and so can use the tactics in their own practice. The book assumes that readers want practical information and advice on persuasive matters, but neither particular instruction nor rigid rules. So this book will not declare any tactics to be the ‘correct’ ones for a particular encounter or goal. Nor should it do so, since this can only be done when all the details of the specific circumstances—the participants, their relationships with one another, the changing moods and attitudes of the people involved in an encounter—are known, and only a participant can hope to be the best judge of these factors, and so decide which tactic should be used.

The book has had to take the tactics out of their contexts to some degree in order to show that their applicability is wide ranging, and that their uses can be multiple, but concrete and contextualized examples are supplied which should remind readers of circumstances in their own lives where the tactics could be applicable, so that in this way they can be restored to a contextual reality.

The *Handbook*, then, has been designed to allow readers to make their own decisions about what might prove useful in the many different communication situations they encounter. Indeed, this writer recognizes that the first task for any communicator is to consider the particularities of a situation and its communication needs and only then to examine what tactics the language can offer to achieve the desired results. What this book supplies is a repertory of tactics to be called on when needed. All the tactics are here because they could be valuable for anyone with a persuasive task to perform.

Design of this *Handbook*

The *Handbook* has the following sections:

1 Table of Tasks

From page 1 to page 15 the Table of Tasks lists the persuasive tasks which the reader might need to do. It is arranged in an order which reflects as far as

possible the way such tasks might occur during the chronology of the communication process. It proceeds roughly from macro matters to micro ones; that is, it begins with general considerations of the communication as a whole, and to what kind of audience it is directed, and continues by giving specific attention to the details of presentation in words and sentences.

2 Index to the Collection of Tactics

From page 17 to page 21 is a standard, alphabetized, index to the tactics.

3 Collection of Tactics

Beginning on page 23, the tactics are arranged in alphabetical order. Each tactic begins by naming some of the tasks for which it may be useful. Then follows a description of the use of the tactic. To help the reader understand the particular use to which such tactics can be put, examples are supplied showing the tactic in use. For some tactics warnings are given of the dangers involved in handling the tactic badly. Cross-references to other relevant tactics, and suggestions for further reading, are supplied.

Table of tasks

INTRODUCTION

This table offers a comprehensive taxonomic plan for designing and executing communications. It does so by naming the important tasks that are involved in preparing for a communication. For each task the table then refers the reader to at least one tactic from the Collection of Tactics which could improve the performance of that task.

The table could be used in several ways. For example, the reader who wishes to make a general study of the elements of communication could use it as a guide to matters of significance, slowly working through all the tasks mentioned; while the reader who has a specific communication to prepare could search through it for those relevant to the occasion.

Goal	Task	Tactic
1 General issues in communication	<p>Match another's style _____</p> <p>Observe the conventions about who has a right to communicate, who has a right to choose a topic _____</p> <p>Consider the context features _____</p> <p>Adapt one's style to others _____</p> <p>Use educated language _____</p> <p>Decide whether matters should be presented _____</p> <p>Observe the conventions that one should be clear, concise, and tidy, that one should tell the truth, that one should give the right amount of information, and which should be relevant _____</p> <p>Use one's life as support for material _____</p> <p>Do not make others work hard at interpretation _____</p> <p>Consider the general goals of communication _____</p> <p>Understand the process of reading communications _____</p> <p>Use the language of close relationship _____</p> <p>Choose an interesting topic _____</p> <p>Use language primarily for bonding _____</p> <p>Select best topic for bonding _____</p> <p>Consider the topic options involved _____</p> <p>Note what gives an impression of weakness _____</p> <p>Consider the word options involved _____</p> <p>Impress others with wit and language knowledge _____</p> <p>Put people at ease _____</p> <p>Put matters in familiar terms _____</p> <p>Set a hidden agenda _____</p> <p>Discover a hidden agenda _____</p> <p>Assess the information others offer _____</p>	<p>Accommodation</p> <p>Communication conventions tactics</p> <p>Communication context</p> <p>Compensation</p> <p>Elaborated code</p> <p>Information control</p> <p>Social conventions tactics</p> <p>Testimony of own experience</p> <p>Principle of least effort</p> <p>Rapport versus report: choose</p> <p>Reading: use</p> <p>Restricted code</p> <p>Tellable topic: choose</p> <p>Sociable language</p> <p>Sociable language: topics</p> <p>Topic</p> <p>Weak expressions</p> <p>Word choice</p> <p>Archaisms</p> <p>Clichés</p> <p>Metaphor</p> <p>Information: assess</p>
<p>1.1 Supporting one's communication in general ways</p>		
<p>1.2 Finding useful support from outside oneself in general social and community considerations</p>		

Bring general cultural support for one's ideas _____	Myth
Direct attention to useful matters _____	Quotation
Bring cultural support for one's ideas _____	Proverbs
Bring figures as evidence for one's ideas _____	Reference to texts
Indicate the degree of reliability of one's material	Referring terms: external
Show how firmly one believes in one's material	Slogans
Show how generally applicable one's material is	Stereotypes
Set a way of reading for one's communications _____	Statistical support
Choose a suitable type of communication _____	Validation of material
Insert an argument into another type of communication _____	Genre: choose
Prepare others that one is about to argue _____	Account: choose
Choose to aim primarily at friendliness and cooperation _____	Argument: choose
Choose to create a definition _____	Casual chat: choose
Create a description which is covertly subjective _____	Explain
Reduce or increase others' uncertainty _____	Explanation: choose
Form one's material into a narrative design _____	Information: choose
Convert one's material into communicable elements _____	Lecture: choose
Make a report _____	Narrative: choose
	Argument insertion
	Argument preamble
	Casual chat: choose
	Definition
	Describe subjectively
	Informing
	Narrative: design
	Narrative: elements
	Reporting
	Report speech tactics

1.3 Using genre (or type) of communication

Goal	Task	Tactic
1.4 Using the mode of communication	<p>Choose to use a particular act _____</p> <p>Respond to another's interviewing tactics _____</p> <p>Use one's gestures, movements, bodily orientation, and distance from others to create meaning _____</p> <p>Using the phone, make a good beginning _____</p> <p>Interrupt another person _____</p> <p>Use one's voice to support one's meaning _____</p> <p>Use pause effectively _____</p> <p>Use one's voice pitch to support one's meaning _____</p> <p>Use one's voice to give emphasis to one's material _____</p> <p>Understand how the listening process works _____</p> <p>Prepare a text to be easily listened to _____</p> <p>Demonstrate emotion _____</p> <p>Add emphasis by using the voice _____</p> <p>Hold an audience interested _____</p> <p>Correct oneself with least damage _____</p> <p>Avoid unfriendly silence _____</p> <p>Understand the silence of others _____</p> <p>Make one's words and sentences echo the meaning _____</p> <p>Understand the social values of spoken communication _____</p> <p>Maintain smooth exchange of turns at speaking _____</p> <p>Avoid silence _____</p> <p>Use one's turn to control who speaks next _____</p> <p>Hold onto one's speaking turn _____</p> <p>Try to gain a speaking turn _____</p>	<p>Command/request</p> <p>Questioning</p> <p>State</p> <p>Interview: respond to</p> <p>Body language</p> <p>Greeting: by phone</p> <p>Interruption of other</p> <p>Intonation</p> <p>Intonation: pause</p> <p>Intonation: pitch choice</p> <p>Intonation: tone units</p> <p>Intonation: voice stress</p> <p>Listening: use</p> <p>Lecture: design</p> <p>Voice quality</p> <p>Self-interruption</p> <p>Silence</p> <p>Sounds and sense</p> <p>Spoken communication: choose</p> <p>Turntaking</p> <p>Turn: select next speaker</p> <p>Turn: refuse</p> <p>Turn: request</p>

1.5 Considering matters of cooperative bonding with others

Give up one's turn at speaking _____

Understand the social values of written communication _____

Avoid risking cooperative bond with others _____

Preserve one's self-image _____

Support others in their self-image _____

Avoid endangering the self-esteem of others _____

Avoid intruding on another's freedom of action _____

Avoid damage to another's self-esteem _____

Understand how social acts can be best performed through language _____

Interpret the communication of others _____

Turn: yield

Written communication: choose

Politeness tactics

Politeness indirection tactics

Face: sustain

Face threats: recognize

Face: sustain

Face threats: recognize

Politeness tactics

Cooperative principle

2 Designing a communication structure

2.1 Overall structuring of the interaction, and of one's own communication

Perform greetings to advantage _____

Begin an interaction to advantage _____

Design one's speech or writing to advantage _____

Handle a complex argument _____

Design an interview _____

Design one's narrative to begin to one's advantage _____

Arrange points to be argued to best advantage _____

End a speech interaction to advantage _____

Maintain the bond with others beyond an interaction _____

Influence others' memories of one's contribution _____

Maintain the bond with others beyond an interaction _____

Influence others' memories of one's contribution _____

Greeting

Greeting: by phone

Interaction: begin

Spoken communication: design

Written communication: design

Argument: complex propositions

Interview: conduct

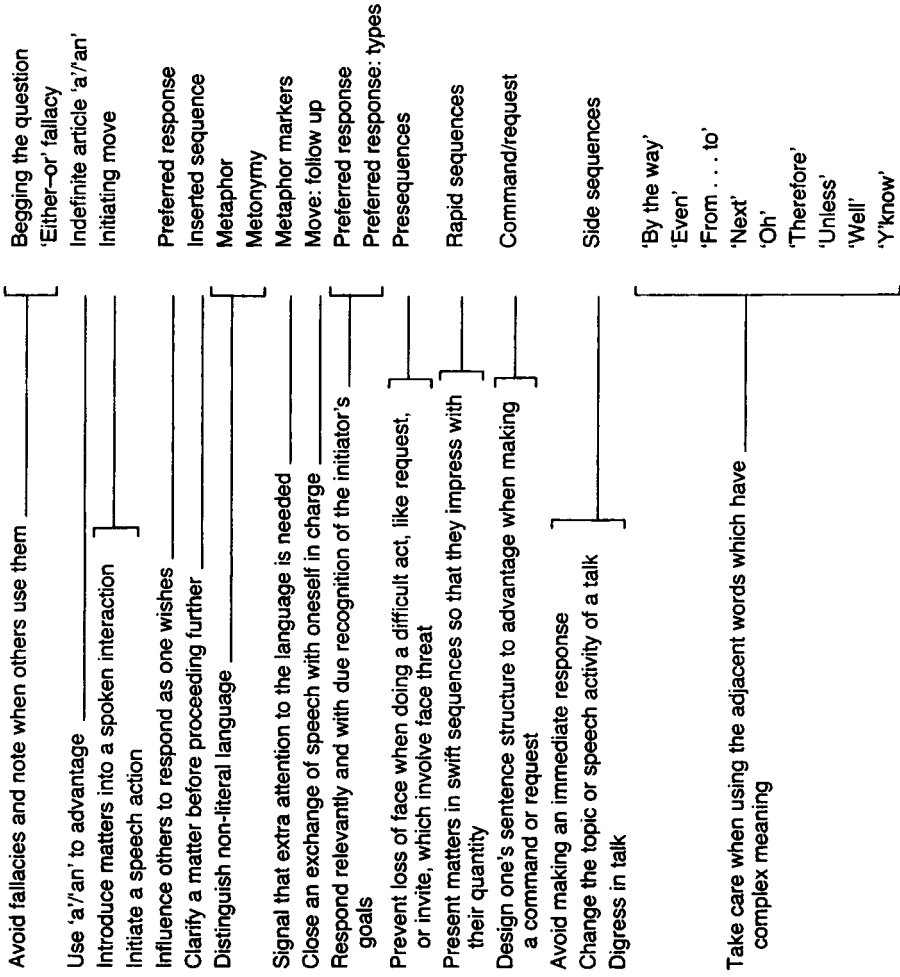
Narrative: begin

Argument design tactics

Interaction closure: spoken

Interaction closure tactics

Goal	Task	Tactic
2.2 Middle-level structuring	<p>End a written interaction to advantage _____</p> <p>Design one's narrative to end to one's advantage _____</p> <p>Handle the movement of topic through an interaction _____</p> <p>Mark the change of topic _____</p> <p>Present one's material to end on a high note _____</p> <p>Divide one's material to suit one's purposes _____</p> <p>Highlight one item of one's material _____</p> <p>Focus attention on some matters other than others _____</p> <p>Arrange one's ideas to best advantage _____</p> <p>Ensure that others can handle the amount of information one wishes to give _____</p> <p>Adjust the pace of one's information if it is too fast or slow for others _____</p>	<p>Interaction closure: written</p> <p>Narrative: end</p> <p>Topic movement</p> <p>Topic: change</p> <p>Climax: create</p> <p>Division of material: create</p> <p>Emphasis</p> <p>Foregrounding</p> <p>Idea arrangement</p> <p>Information flow</p> <p>Information flow: adjustments</p>
2.3 Micro-level structuring	<p>Interrupt oneself to adjust what one is saying _____</p> <p>Interrupt another person with least damage to bonding _____</p> <p>Arrange one's material in paragraphs and link them _____</p> <p>Arrange one's material in sentences _____</p> <p>Effect a change in activity in the interaction _____</p> <p>Provide a brief, and persuasive summary of a complex matter _____</p> <p>Keep to the subject, and keep others to it _____</p> <p>Use words that belong together and will be easily understood _____</p> <p>Clarify reference to other parts of the text _____</p> <p>Use 'to advantage' _____</p> <p>Address one's audience to effect _____</p> <p>Understand the importance of individual speech exchanges _____</p> <p>Pack complexity of information, opinion, and self-presentation into the written sentence form _____</p>	<p>Self-interruption</p> <p>Interruption of other</p> <p>Paragraph design tactics</p> <p>Sentence structure tactics</p> <p>Phase change</p> <p>Sum up</p> <p>Topic coherence tactics</p> <p>Word combinations</p> <p>Concord</p> <p>Definite article 'the'</p> <p>Direct address</p> <p>Exchange of speech</p> <p>Information: add</p>



Goal	Task	Tactic
3 Representing one's subject matter	3.1 Ordering the different parts of the material	Accumulation Idea arrangement Link material tactics
3.2 Ranking the elements of the material	<p>Persuade by sheer weight of evidence _____</p> <p>Arrange one's ideas to best advantage _____</p> <p>Show there are links between the matters one presents to one's advantage _____</p> <p>Bring together two opposed ideas to give each one a richer meaning _____</p> <p>Admit a fault in one's argument, but neutralize its effect by balancing it with a virtue _____</p> <p>Criticize, but neutralize its effect with praise _____</p> <p>Put together two contrary ideas in such a way that their opposition seems reduced _____</p> <p>Show strong feeling _____</p> <p>Show some matters are more important than others _____</p> <p>Choose the information most likely to be accepted _____</p> <p>Show importance of material _____</p> <p>Show there are links within one's subject matter, to one's advantage _____</p> <p>Present matters as separate items linked into a set _____</p> <p>Have a matter accepted as being two or more alternatives _____</p> <p>Present a set of matters ranked in importance _____</p> <p>Have a matter and one's explanation of it accepted _____</p> <p>Present a matter in two or more versions to have it properly understood _____</p> <p>Bring two things into a reciprocal relationship to enrich their meaning _____</p>	<p>Antithesis</p> <p>Balanced representation</p> <p>Bring contraries together</p> <p>Emphasis</p> <p>Foregrounding</p> <p>Information: choose</p> <p>Ironic understatement/overstatement</p> <p>Link material</p> <p>Link material: addition</p> <p>Link material: alternatives</p> <p>Link material: rank matters as they are added</p> <p>Link material: subject and explanation</p> <p>Link material: substitution</p> <p>Reciprocals</p>

- Highlight some matter _____
- Present some things as important _____
- Refer coherently to matters in the communication _____
- Produce a brief covering comment on a matter to one's advantage _____
- Make a comparison of one matter with another _____
- Supply one's own comment on a matter _____
- Supply the causes of a matter where these are to one's advantage _____
- Supply detail of the frequency of a matter's occurrence, where this is to one's advantage _____
- Show the manner in which the matter occurred _____
- Show the instrument or means by which a matter came about _____
- Show the time of the matter's occurrence _____
- Present two versions of a thing side by side so that the two are accepted as joined and equivalent in meaning _____
- Prioritize points to suit oneself _____
- Be accurate and specific in stating the basis of one's argument _____
- Give details of qualities a thing has, to suit one's purposes _____
- Compare and contrast two matters for effect _____
- Provide examples to support one's points _____
- Leave a matter incomplete as the best way of stating it to one's advantage _____
- Avoid naming who did an act so as to avoid something against one's purposes _____
- Avoid naming the process by which something occurred to suit one's purposes _____
- Avoid mention of the results of an act, to suit one's purposes _____
- Subordinate a matter to others _____
- Downgrade some people to suit one's purposes _____

3.3 Expanding on or reducing the material

- Repetition
- Generic 'the'
- Referring terms: internal
- Sum up
- Analogy
- Adverbs: add comments
- Adverbs: state causes
- Adverbs: state frequency
- Adverbs: state manner
- Adverbs: state means
- Adverbs: state time
- Apposition
- Apposition: types
- Argument proposition: form
- Attribute degree of quality
- Comparison
- Exemplification
- Leave matter incomplete
- Omit agent
- Omit process
- Omit results
- Parenthesis
- People presented as things

Goal	Task	Tactic
	<p>Show whether one is being general or specific in attributing a meaning to something</p> <p>Avoid a damaging silence</p> <p>Understand the meaning of a silence</p> <p>Make a point obliquely</p>	<p>Restrictive meaning</p> <p>Silence</p> <p>Understatement</p>
3.4 Selecting names for the material	<p>Influence others' perceptions of matters</p> <p>Influence others' perceptions of people</p> <p>Influence how people interpret one's text</p> <p>Describe obliquely or covertly</p>	<p>Naming</p> <p>Naming: text</p> <p>Naming: people</p> <p>Naming: substitute phrase</p> <p>Substitutes for names</p> <p>Title choice</p>
3.5 Enriching and elaborating on the material	<p>Build a whole section of one's text on a metaphor for covert influence</p> <p>Lighten the mood of an interaction</p> <p>Present a matter without penalty</p> <p>Make covert meaning in one's communication</p> <p>Appear to involve another person</p> <p>Set or influence the agenda</p> <p>Enrich one's meaning and influence the interpretation of one's material</p> <p>Understand something communicated to one</p> <p>Select the best way to represent some matter</p> <p>Guide the answer to one's question</p> <p>Show an attitude of annoyance by a question</p>	<p>Describe subjectively</p> <p>Descriptive phrases</p> <p>Metaphor: extended</p> <p>Humor</p> <p>Jokes</p> <p>Hypothesize</p> <p>Irony</p> <p>Ironic understatement/overstatement</p> <p>Questions: rhetorical</p> <p>Reflexive comment</p> <p>Metaphor</p> <p>Metaquestions</p> <p>Metonymy</p> <p>Questions: closed</p> <p>Questions: negative</p> <p>Questions: negative</p>

Show an attitude of annoyance by a question _____
 Introduce an attitude or judgment covertly _____
 Find the covert attitudes of others _____
 Add one's attitudes covertly in a way which is hard to reject _____
 Lighten the mood of one's communication _____
 Influence others to accept one's ideas as they are presented _____
 Make one's words echo one's meaning _____
 Ensure that people know when one is ending a section of one's communication _____
 Make explicit the degree of accuracy with which the material is being presented _____
 Have people accept something without it actually being put into words _____
 Express one's detachment from a matter for effect _____
 Express strong feeling _____
 Express strong feeling without naming it _____
 Focus one's mind _____
 Check one's memory _____
 Have a dialog with oneself as a way of sharing oneself with another _____

Questions: negative
 Personification
 Proposed adjectives
 Puns
 Set a refrain
 Sounds and sense
 Triplets
 Accuracy: show degree of
 Oblique representation
 Express personal detachment
 Postponement tactics
 Express emotion
 Exclaim
 Questions: rhetorical
 Questions: self-addressed

3.6 Adding one's attitude to the material

4 Presenting oneself

Name oneself to best advantage _____
 Show that one is attending to another _____
 Improve the chance of a generalization being accepted by acknowledging some exceptions _____
 Reduce the chances of others objecting to one's material by anticipating and answering potential objections _____
 Avoid commitment to a view being expressed _____

Naming: oneself
 Listening: active
 Exception: allow
 Objections: anticipate
 Avoid responsibility
 Impartiality: present

4.1 Presenting oneself to advantage

Notice when others try to avoid blame	Avoid responsibility
Use one's gestures, movements, bodily orientation, and distance from others to support one's meaning	Body language
Avoid trouble by claiming that one communicates by necessity	Claim necessity
Avoid trouble when performing a difficult social act	Codeswitching: role-playing in difficult tasks
Concede points that cannot be won	Concession
Concede the good points of others	Express personal detachment
Show that one is objective in what one says	Impartiality: present
Show that one is thoroughly involved in what one says	Postponement tactics
Present oneself as a guardian of information, keeping others out or letting them in	Express personal involvement
Avoid upsetting the susceptibilities of others	Information: control
Present oneself as witty and entertaining	Grammatical 'errors'
Show that one is moderate	Humor
Counter extremism in others	Jokes
Present oneself to suit one's purposes	Jokes: types
Avoid damage to another's self-esteem when performing socially difficult tasks	Moderation: display
Understand the ways in which people interpret communications	Naming: oneself
Understand the social role of bluntness	Politeness tactics
Share one's thoughts with others, to effect	Principle of least effort
Correct oneself to suggest one is being honest	Bluntness: choose
Anticipate when others might correct one, and prevent it	Reveal thought processes
Support one's views	Self-correction
Reveal oneself for bonding purposes	Self-repair
	Testimony of own experience

5 Achieving cooperation and bonding

5.1 General bonding

Note the adverse effect of not paying attention to others' self-esteem

Communicate in a style which matches another's

Choose a way of communication that bonds some people and excludes others

Show where one's opponents are wrong, without damage to bonding

Select language that does not offend

Show that one is not antisocial

Note when others are being antisocial

Get the attention of a person without offense

Select questions that will not cause offense

Use casual chat and friendly language to support and maintain one's bond's with others

Present a matter in a way which prevents potential trouble

Handle any conflict of topic to good effect

Select the right response to another

5.2 Preserving the self-esteem ('face') of others

Attend to one's self-esteem, and that of others

Notice the acts which involve face threats to oneself or to others

Avoid intruding on another's freedom of action

Show recognition of another's self-esteem

Politeness: principle and tactics

Bluntness: choose

Accommodation

Antilanguage

Attack opponent's argument

Words: acceptability

Euphemism

Minimalism

Name: call

Questions: closed

Questions: open

Questions: tag

Sociable language

Sociable language: types

Handle a difficult topic

Topic conflict

Preferred response

Responses

Face: sustain

Face threats: recognize

Politeness tactics

6 Performing socially difficult communication acts

6.1 Performing difficult communication acts

Raising a matter of wrongdoing

Bring a claim of wrongdoing against someone

Accusation: choose

Accuse

Goal/	Task	Tactic
	Give counsel to someone _____	Advise
	Indicate that a course of action is good or bad _____	
	Express regret for a past action _____	Apologize
	Avoid blame for a future act _____	
	Seek help to prevent something bad happening _____	Appeal
	State something good about oneself _____	Boast
	Praise oneself _____	
	Seek to have someone do something or to cause something _____ to be done _____	Command/request
	Express unease, dissatisfaction, or censure _____	Complain
	Communicate something bad about oneself without loss of face _____	Confess
	Criticize other people, ideas, opinions _____	Criticize
	Claim that something that someone else has said is not true _____	
	Claim that something bad attributed to oneself is not true _____	Deny
	Prevent people believing something bad about one is true _____	
	Require someone to not do something _____	Forbid
	Influence others indirectly to be critical of something by _____ contrasting it with an ideal or by suggesting it has the _____ wrong priorities _____	Indirect criticism
	Persuade someone to think something bad about a matter, _____ without noticing how this has happened _____	Insinuate
	Be critical without others noticing _____	
	Communicate obliquely as a test of bonding _____	
	Communicate ironically _____	Irony
	Present something for acceptance or rejection _____	Offer
	Make another person feel good _____	
	Present oneself as generous spirited _____	Praise: use

Give some praise to another person _____	Praising another person
Make someone pleased with one, and with life _____	
Present oneself as generous natured _____	
Declare a commitment to undertake some action _____	
Ask a question _____	Promise
Refuse to do something requested of one without damage _____	Questioning
to bonding _____	Refuse
Reject advice without giving offense _____	Reject advice
Offer a serious adverse judgment to another _____	Reprimand
Note what caused a complaint _____	Respond to complaint
Respond appropriately to a complaint _____	
Defend oneself against real or expected attacks _____	Self-defense
Produce an opinion, idea, or fact, which is formulated as _____	State
a statement to be accepted as true information _____	
Show fellow feeling with others over some trouble they have _____	Sympathize

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Terms employed in the text

C.=The communicator

A.=The reader or hearer

F.T.A.=Face-threatening act

Within the text of the Collection of Tactics subjects in **bold face** are crossreferences to other tactics in the section.

Collection of tactics

ACCOMMODATION

Task

To create and maintain bonding.

Description

When people communicate they often accommodate themselves in some degree to the language and associated communicative behaviors of the other, adjusting their words and grammar, pace, pronunciation, pauses and turn length to resemble the way the other participants act. There is a strong need for accommodation when communicating with children, people from other cultures, members of the other sex, superiors or inferiors, etc. All communicators should be able to adjust their communication in this way; it is a sign of a wish to be cooperative and help others understand.

Persuasive value

Accommodation occurs because there is a perceived need to decrease any discrepancies between people if good communication (and persuasion) are to take place. There is a lot of evidence that people dislike divergence, as witness such critical phrases as 'She doesn't talk like people round here,' 'He's always trying to be different,' or 'We never seem to be on the same wave length.' It can be based on differences in grammatical usage, in sentence structure, the use of technical or lay language, the wrong tone, and an unspecified sense of difference.

Accommodating one's communicating style to the other person improves an interaction because C.s try to put themselves in the other's place, and use the language in ways the other is likeliest to understand.

Persuasion can occur because C.s can show they ‘belong’ to the same world of experience as A. Consequently A. will be attracted to them as persons, and more inclined to heed what they say. The more A. is attracted by the general familiarity of what they say or how they say it the more likely he or she is to agree with it. ‘He’s just like me and he says the book is good so I’ll read it.’

Though the similarities that are created by accommodation may only reside in the superficial aspects of language—word choice, pronunciations, etc., their depth of effect belies this.

Contrary tactic Sometimes people can be persuaded not by similarity but by difference, because it is exciting, glamorous, or startlingly new. In such cases their awareness of difference prepares them to listen attentively, and this can result in a fuller adherence to what C. offers.

Further reading Giles and Smith (1979)

ACCOUNT: CHOOSE

Tasks

To have an interpretation of an event accepted as true.

To present a communication as if C.’s goal is only to inform.

Description

An account presents information about an event. It differs from explanation in that C.s do not always understand everything about the material, do not vouch for its validity, but, as far as it is within their power to do so, give an honest account of something they have experienced. C.s can present themselves as merely a conduit through which information is passed: ‘It’s no use asking me what it means, I am just telling you what I experienced.’ C.’s understanding of the material of the account can range from total certainty to puzzlement—so C. could give an account of a meal eaten, accurately, detail by detail, or could speak of a car accident: ‘All I know is one minute I was driving along and then wham, and I woke up in hospital. I think the brakes must have failed, or perhaps the steering went.’

C.s can indicate their own involvement in what is being stated, that is, how far they are prepared to vouch for the account material, or they can leave the material to stand by itself.