

## Interactional Styles Used by Team Leader in The Six Key Moments *GitLab's Product Marketing Meeting*

**Firda Nur Firgiyanti**

English Department, Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, Petra Christian University,  
Siwalankerto 121-131, Surabaya 60236, Indonesia  
E-mail: a11210076@john.petra.ac.id

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to find the types of interactional styles that are often used in six key moments by Sid as a team leader when talking to employees on the GitLab YouTube entitled *Product Marketing Meeting (Weekly) 2021-06-28*. The writer uses a qualitative approach by using Holmes' (2006) main theory of interactional styles and supporting theory of Holmes (2013) of status scale. In this study, Sid's utterances in the use of interactional style at six key moments show that Sid uses indirect, collaborative, referentially oriented, facilitative, and task or outcome-oriented. Based on the findings of Sid's utterances, it uses six feminine interactional styles for building relationships and encouraging team engagement, and three masculine interactional styles for task completion and to ensure clarity. This shows that Sid often uses more feminine interactional styles than masculine interactional styles, even though he is a team leader.

**Keywords:** interactional styles, meeting, status scale

### INTRODUCTION

According to Holmes (2006), feminine Interactional style is characterized by frequent use of mitigation strategies to soften potentially negative speech acts and build positive relationships (p. 80). Holmes (2006), mentions that feminine interactional styles are identified by their emphasis on facilitative, soft communication, and cooperation (p. 171). Feminine interactional styles are seven features such as facilitative, supportive feedback, conciliatory, indirect, collaborative, person or process-oriented, and affectively oriented (Holmes, 2006, p. 6). There are seven features of masculine interactional styles such as competitive, aggressive interruptions, confrontational, direct, autonomous, task or outcome-oriented, and referentially oriented (Holmes, 2006, p. 6).

The writer chose a Zoom meeting video entitled *Product Marketing Meeting (Weekly) 28-06-2021* on the *GitLab* YouTube channel as a data source because this company has contributed to the development of technology with more than 30,000 codes produced (*GitLab*, 2024). This video has received 2.1 million likes and 579,965 views, showing public interest in the relationship between team and employees. The many likes and views reflect the importance of dialogue in creating effective interaction and cooperation in the technology sector.

The writer chose the team leader in this study because the dialogue between Sid and the employees represents important professional communication in an organization, which is relevant to the status scale. The status scale in sociolinguistic theory shows the relationship of power and authority in interaction (Holmes, 2013). The research focuses on six key moments in the virtual meeting that showcase Sid's utterances and interactional styles with the employees, as described in a video by *GitLab* (n.d.).

### METHODS

In this study, the writer employed a qualitative approach. The writer analyzed the data using Holmes' (2006) feminine and masculine interactional style. The source of the data was Sid's

utterances in the transcript of the YouTube video entitled *GitLab Product Marketing Meeting (Weekly) 2021-06-28*. The data in this study are all of Sid's utterances to employees with a minimum duration of 10 seconds to two minutes.

To collect the data, the writer conducted several steps. First, the writer watched it several times to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the content. Second, the writer copied the link and put it into ScribeTube. Third, the writer downloaded a video transcript through ScribeTube. Then, the writer checked the transcript with the video to ensure the downloaded transcript was correct. The writer chose and highlighted the utterances in yellow at six key moments. Each key moment was selected based on a duration criterion of a minimum of ten seconds to a maximum of two minutes and a numbering system for easy identification. Sid's utterances at these six key moments were measured using a stopwatch and, after fulfilling the duration criteria, were marked with a highlight and number. This numbering system used the initial letter of the speaker's name, followed by a number indicating the order of the utterances. For example, S1 indicated the first utterance from Sid as a team leader to an employee. This numbering system was designed to facilitate further analysis of the different interactional styles used by Sid. All marked utterances were then recorded and entered into a table for analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses feminine and masculine interactional styles Sid used as a team leader in six key moments. This section shows words or phrases Sid used when talking in the meeting.

Table 1

Findings: Types of Feminine and Masculine Interactional Styles Used By Sid As a Team Leader In Six Key Moments

| Team Leader |                                                 |                              |   |    |    |   |   |   |                               |   |    |   |   |     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|----|----|---|---|---|-------------------------------|---|----|---|---|-----|
| No.         | Key Moments                                     | Interactional Styles         |   |    |    |   |   |   |                               |   |    |   |   |     |
|             |                                                 | Feminine Interactional Style |   |    |    |   |   |   | Masculine Interactional Style |   |    |   |   |     |
|             |                                                 | F                            | S | CO | IN | C | P | A | CO                            | A | CO | D | A | T   |
|             |                                                 | F                            | F | N  | D  | O | O | O | M                             | I | NF |   | U | O   |
| 1.          | Corporate events                                | 2                            | 1 |    | 3  | 1 |   | 1 |                               | 2 |    |   |   | 2   |
| 2.          | Product announcements                           | 1                            |   |    | 2  | 1 |   |   |                               |   |    |   |   |     |
| 3.          | What kind of announcements do we make           | 1                            |   |    |    | 2 |   |   |                               |   |    |   |   | 1 2 |
| 4.          | Vs code                                         | 1                            |   |    | 1  |   |   |   |                               |   |    |   |   |     |
| 5.          | How are we measuring excitement levels          | 5                            |   | 1  | 5  | 3 |   |   |                               |   |    |   |   | 6   |
| 6.          | Do we need to add a line item for <i>GitLab</i> | 2                            | 3 | 1  | 3  | 2 |   | 1 |                               |   |    |   |   | 7 7 |

**Firgiyanti: Interactional Styles Used by Team Leader in The Six Key Moments**  
*GitLab's Product Marketing Meeting*

Abbreviations :

|     |                              |      |                            |
|-----|------------------------------|------|----------------------------|
| F   | : Facilitative               | COM  | : Competitive              |
| SF  | : Supportive Feedback        | AI   | : Aggressive Interruptions |
| CON | : Conciliatory               | CONF | : Confrontational          |
| IND | : Indirect                   | D    | : Direct                   |
| C   | : Collaborative              | AU   | : Autonomous               |
| PO  | : Person or Process Oriented | TO   | : Task/Outcome-Oriented    |
| AO  | : Affectively Oriented       | RO   | : Referentially Oriented   |

From the table read horizontally, it can be concluded that in the *GitLab's* product marketing meeting video, Sid as the team leader, uses feminine interactional styles and masculine interactional styles in six key moments. Here is the analysis:

### 1. Corporate Event

At this moment, Sid uses feminine interactional styles of two facilitative, one supportive feedback, three indirect, one collaborative, and one affectively oriented. Meanwhile, in masculine interactional styles, Sid presented two aggressive interruptions and two task or outcome-oriented. Based on this analysis, the interactional style feature that Sid used most frequently was indirect. Here is one example of indirect.

**Sid:** *They **I think** I saw a little. I put this in Slack, and I saw a little bit of, uh, kind of noise around it, which was good. Um....*

The use of “**I think**” shows that Sid is open to other views from team members. This indirect style helps keep the discussion friendly and inclusive, allowing the employees to feel valued for their participation without feeling pressured by an over-forceful tone.

### 2. Product Announcement

At this moment, Sid uses feminine interactional style with one facilitative, two indirect, and one collaborative. Sid does not use masculine interactional styles. Based on this analysis, the interactional feature that Sid used most frequently was indirect. Below is one example of indirectness.

**Sid:** *I'm not totally sure of all of the kind of the interplay here but **I think** this is kind of the general gist of this assignment is okay we have a commitment coming up.*

This is demonstrated through the use of hedging like “**I think**”, which appears intentionally uncertain. This is an opportunity for the team to actively participate and give their input.

### 3. What Kind of Announcements Do We Make

At this moment, Sid uses feminine interactional styles with one facilitative and two collaborative. In masculine interaction, there is one task or outcome-oriented and two referentially oriented. Based on this analysis, the interactional feature that Sid used most frequently in this part was collaborative and referentially oriented. Here is one of the examples of Sid's collaboration utterance.

**Sid:** *So it takes a while, so if you look back over the past year and say, okay, like what started in the last year but.... Sid speaks in a soft and careful tone, as reflected by the use of phrases such as “**it takes a while**” and “**if you look back over the past year**”.*

This shows that Sid is not only conveying his views but also encouraging team members to reflect an inclusive discussion environment, where all team members feel encouraged to give their input and actively contribute to the meeting.

Sid's referentially oriented utterance is as follows.

**Sid:** *The world and we'll get some amount of press attention because we're having an event, right? What kind of announcements do we make at GitLab? **It's really, really tough to make product announcements** because **our entire roadmap is completely public**, yada.*

These utterances reflect a referentially oriented interactional style, which aims to convey factual and relevant information. Sid provides clear context regarding the challenges of making product announcements at *GitLab*.

#### 4. Vs Code

At this moment, Sid uses feminine interactional styles with one facilitative and one indirect. Below are examples of more detailed explanations of the use of facilitative and indirect in Sid's utterances at *VS Code* (*key moments*).

**Sid:** *So that's that, you know, that can be the line, yes or no, whether you can use the thing. Uh, for a lot of businesses. So I think that's a good one too*

Sid's utterances reflect his typical facilitative and indirect interactional style. Facilitative with the use of phrases such as “**You know**,” Sid seeks to actively involve the listener in the conversation. These phrases encourage the listener to consider or agree with the point of view presented.

In addition, indirect with the use of phrases such as “**whether you can use the thing**” This utterance is indirect, as Sid does not explicitly state their opinion or make a strong statement. “**I think that's a good one too**.” It expresses the speaker's opinion in a way that invites agreement or further discussion. Sid acknowledges their own perspective while leaving room for others to contribute.

#### 5. How Are we Measuring Excitement Levels

At this moment, Sid uses a lot of feminine interactional styles, including five facilitative, one conciliatory, five indirect, and three collaborative. Sid also uses masculine interactional styles, with one direct and six task or outcome-oriented. From this analysis, the most frequently used interactional style features *were task* or outcome- oriented. Below is one of the example tasks or outcome-oriented.

**Sid:** *Uh, cool. Well, you know, let's try to, uh. This is due Tuesday. I think we want to try to get this. Done!! Um, so.*

The phrases “**This is due Tuesday**” and “we want to try to get this done” show a focus on completing a task by a certain deadline. In addition, the phrase “*let's try to*” shows encouragement to take the necessary steps to complete the task.

#### 6. Do We Need to Add a Line Item for *GitLab*

At this last moment, Sid uses feminine interactional styles with two facilitative, three supportive feedback, one conciliatory, three indirect, two collaborative, and one affectively oriented. Meanwhile, in masculine interactional styles, there are seven task or outcome-oriented and seven referentially oriented. From this analysis, the interactional features Sid used most frequently were task or outcome-oriented and referentially oriented. Here is one of the example tasks or outcome-oriented.

**Sid:** *Ideally, when we picked, like the 10 to 15 features, though some of those. We like to get only some of those. We're like GitLab didn't have it well.*

This utterance shows a focus on selecting and analyzing features “10 to 15 features”—that” are relevant for *GitLab*. Sid **talks about comparing features that are available in *GitLab* and those that are not**, which shows task orientation and objectivity.

Here is one of the examples of referential oriented.

**Sid:** *Then we should specifically call out that they have zero. So, GitHub builds itself as a platform it sells itself that way um same with Azure DevOps same with J Frog.*

**Firgiyanti: Interactional Styles Used by Team Leader in The Six Key Moments**  
*GitLab's Product Marketing Meeting*

Sid's utterance specifically **compared GitHub, Azure DevOps, and J frog**, highlighting an orientation towards facts and analysis to move the discussion towards data-driven decision making. Based on this analysis, it can be seen that Sid uses feminine interactional styles more often than masculine interactional styles, even though Sid's position is team leader, and Sid is a man.

### Words or Phrases in the Interactional Style Often Used by Sid

This section explores the effect of Sid's interactional style used by Sid when speaking to employees in recorded online Zoom meetings by applying theory Holmes (2006). According to Holmes (2006), there are two types of interactional styles, namely feminine interactional style, masculine interactional style.

### Feminine Interactional Style

Table 2

Findings: Words or Phrases of Sid's Utterances in Feminine Interactional Style

| Types                | Words or Phrases                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Facilitative         | - You know                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Supportive Feedback  | - Yeah                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Conciliatory         | - Might<br>- Could                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Indirect             | - Probably<br>- I think<br>- Maybe<br>- Can                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Collaborative        | - We don't have a ton of items to get to<br>- Candidly this is always a little bit tough<br>- It takes a while<br>- Did I see a couple head nods<br>- It's like a bucket of capabilities<br>- This is my attempt to channel my inner ash withers |
| Affectively Oriented | - Good<br>- What is your feeling based on...<br>- is super good at it.                                                                                                                                                                           |

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that Sid only uses feminine interactional styles types such as facilitative, conciliatory, indirect, collaborative, and affectively oriented. However, Sid does not use person or process oriented. The next subsection presents a detailed analysis of Sid's Utterances when speaking to the employees.

### Facilitative

In the utterances to the employees, Sid delivers ten utterances that reflect the facilitative feature in his utterances to employees. Here is one of the examples.

**Sid:** *Sid: “**You know**” the features out of we looked at 14.00. So I think yeah this is like let’s take the stuff from 14.00 and then maybe add a few more so that we can hit kind of different areas of press.*

In this utterance, Sid used the pragmatic particle “**you know**” which belongs to the interactional type facilitative, according to Holmes (2006). This is to convey ideas in a softer tone, aims to engage the employees and ensure they understand the context. This soft tone reflects and agrees or provides additional insights, creating a shared understanding within the group.

### Supportive Feedback

In Sid’s dialogue with employees, there are two utterances that use the supportive feedback feature. Here is one of the examples.

**Sid:** *Yeah, do y’all—um, does anybody have, like a regular sink still are those all been cancelled or are there.*

Sid’s use of a minimal response, such as “**yeah**”, shows Sid’s concern and provides supportive feedback, thus fostering a cooperative atmosphere. Sid’s supportive tone highlights the importance of maintaining open and collaborative communication.

### Conciliatory

In the utterances to the employees, Sid delivers two utterances that reflect the indirect feature in his utterances to employees. Here is one of the examples.

**Sid:** *Yeah, **I might even constrain this**. We’re not going to highlight log segments, but we want to see the full spectrum, especially in this case.*

Sid’s utterance belongs to the conciliatory category because it aims to maintain a good and positive relationship with the listener and avoid potential conflict or tension in the discussion. The word “**might**” is intentionally made less assertive. This reflects Sid’s attitude of being open to other opinions and perspectives. Sid utilizes the conciliatory to emphasize the importance of cooperation and maintaining a harmonious atmosphere in the interaction.

### Indirect

In the utterances to the employees, Sid delivers fourteen utterances that reflect the indirect feature in his utterances to employees. Here is one of the examples.

**Sid:** *From your campaign managers hey, like, we’re signing up for Kubecon you know **can you comment on the issue that, yes, I can commit** to this, etc., etc., etc., you know, um...*

These utterances reflect an indirect interactional style, through phrases like “**Can you comment on the issue?**” and “**Yes, I can commit to this,**” Sid encourages the active participation of the team members, creating an atmosphere that supports collaboration. It helps build a sense of shared responsibility but also strengthens interpersonal relationships within the team.

### Collaborative

In the utterances to the employees, Sid delivers nine utterances that reflect the collaborative feature in his utterances to employees. Here is one of the examples.

**Sid:** *When we started a beta program in this last year, what would we be announcing as GA at commit? That’s kind of my thought on it. Did I see a couple of head nods? What do you think, Cindy?*

In this utterance, Sid uses “What do you think, Cindy?” to encourage team members participation, engage them in the discussion, and provide space for them to express their opinions. In

**Firgiyanti: Interactional Styles Used by Team Leader in The Six Key Moments**  
*GitLab's Product Marketing Meeting*

addition, the question “*Did I see a couple of head nods?*” is used to confirm responses from team members, creating a more dynamic two-way interaction. Sid also seeks to build collaboration by including others in his thought process through utterances like “*That's kind of my thought on it,*” which shows that he is open to other perspectives and does not dominate the discussion.

### **Affectively Oriented**

In the utterances to the employees, Sid delivers two utterances that reflect the affectively oriented feature in his utterances to employees. Here is one of the examples.

*Sid: So, I guess the next, so it looks like tai put in some folks it looks like this looks **good**.*

Sid conveys appreciation of team members' contributions, particularly in organizing or distributing tasks. This affectivity is evident in how Sid uses words of approval and implicit appreciation. This is important element in building harmonious working relationships.

### **Masculine Interactional style**

Table 3

Findings: Words or Phrases of Sid Utterances In Masculine Interactional Style

| Types                    | Words or Phrases                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aggressive Interruptions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The event support isn't as nailed down as</li> <li>- I don't see the header update yet</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Task or Outcome-Oriented | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Go-to-market team signs up and kind of sponsors that event</li> <li>- Add manage</li> <li>- Not going to highlight log segments</li> <li>- The stack ranking</li> <li>- Just do this like top five overall.</li> <li>- Some level of like an announcement</li> <li>- This is due Tuesday</li> <li>- To add at a top five plan</li> <li>- Comparing 10 to 15 features</li> <li>- Presentation layer from data layer</li> <li>- Need to get something live but in the next iteration</li> <li>- The goal is to have a comparison comparing DevOps tools</li> </ul>                                                                                            |
| Referentially Oriented   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our entire roadmap is completely public</li> <li>- New feature come out, but not really usable</li> <li>- GitHub, Azure devops, and Jfrog</li> <li>- Although Atlassian's, we still need to figure</li> <li>- The search is so fast</li> <li>- Getting built is off of a data model</li> <li>- So fast and somebody holds out the sign</li> <li>- The engineer in me says there's never no trade-offs</li> <li>- The assignment here that I took was to write a pithy few words like a punchy statement for each of these three things</li> <li>- Ended up with a single source of truth countless possibilities</li> <li>- More speed less risk</li> </ul> |

Based on the table above, it can be seen that in Sid's utterances, Sid uses the aggressive interruption, task or outcome - oriented, and referentially oriented types. However, Sid does not use

competitive, confrontational, direct, or autonomous types. The next subsection presents a detailed analysis of Sid's utterances when speaking to the employees.

### **Aggressive Interruption**

In utterances to the employees, Sid delivers two utterances that reflect the aggressive interruption feature in his utterances to employees. Here is one of the examples.

***Sid:** So, you support it as a... umm... your campaign manager does the campaigns for that event, et cetera et cetera, et cetera Uh, I don't see anyone in the, uh, maybe their comments in the issue. I don't see the header updated yet*

Highlight the missing elements, as in the utterance **"I don't see the header update yet."** This style is categorized as aggressive interruption, as Sid cuts the flow of the conversation to highlight a specific issue with a firm tone, thus demonstrating his authority as a team leader while ensuring the focus.

### **Task or Outcome-Oriented**

In the utterances to the employees, Sid delivers fifteen utterances that reflect the task or outcome-oriented feature in his utterances to employees. Here is one of the examples.

*Sid; uh cool well let's you know let's try to uh. This is due Tuesday. I think we want to try to get this. Done!! Um so. "Its due on Tuesday" and **"we want to try to get it done"** show a focus on completing a task by a specific deadline. In addition, the phrase **"let's try"** shows encouragement to take the necessary steps to complete the task.*

By using this phrase, Sid not only sets realistic expectations but also creates a collaborative atmosphere with his team. This style balances giving specific instruction with motivating team members to work together toward a set goal, demonstrating effectiveness in management during meetings.

### **Referentially Oriented**

In the utterances to employees, Sid delivers ten utterances that reflect the referentially oriented feature in his utterances to employees. Here is one of the examples.

***Sid:** Then we should specifically call out that they have zero. So, GitHub builds itself as a platform it sells itself that way Um, same with azure DevOps same with Jfrog*

Sid's utterance demonstrates a referentially oriented interactional style, as it focuses on delivering clear, fact-based information to support the competitor analysis (to ensure clarity).

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrated the interactional styles used by Sid as team leader. Sid employed both feminine and masculine interactional styles. Sid utilized nine interactional styles, such as facilitative, supportive feedback, conciliatory, indirect, collaborative, affectively oriented, aggressive interruption, task/outcome-oriented and referentially oriented. He uses feminine style to encourage team engagement or encourage collaboration, building relationships and uses masculine interactional style for task completion and ensuring clarity. This shows that Sid often uses more feminine interactional styles than masculine interactional styles, even though he is a team leader. This study shows that interactional style is more influenced by the need for teamwork effectiveness than the higher position of the speaker.

**Firgiyanti:** Interactional Styles Used by Team Leader in The Six Key Moments  
*GitLab's Product Marketing Meeting*

**REFERENCES**

- Holmes, J (2006). *Gendered talk at work: Constructing social identity through workplace interaction*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Holmes, J. (2013). *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. (4th ed.). Routledge.