A comparative analysis of the use of music in advertisements within the car industry

Crystal Desquitado Mamaril

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project

Part of the Marketing Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/2296

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF MUSIC IN ADVERTISEMENTS WITHIN THE CAR INDUSTRY

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Business Administration:
Marketing Management

by
Crystal Desquitado Mamaril
June 2003
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF MUSIC IN ADVERTISEMENTS WITHIN THE CAR INDUSTRY

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Crystal Desquitado Mamaril
June 2003

Approved by:
Fred Hebein, Chair, Marketing
Sue Green
Jotindas Johnar
ABSTRACT

The use of music in television commercials is becoming an increasing trend among marketing companies. This has especially been apparent in the commercials for the car industry. With each company attempting to find its musical niche, it is important to analyze the successes and failures of each and provide objective criteria which will enable the comparison of completely different advertisements.

For the purpose of this study, four companies were analyzed: Mitsubishi, Volkswagen, Chrysler, and Jaguar. In each case, commercials were downloaded from the internet and watched repeatedly. Thirteen commercials in total were viewed for analysis. Each commercial was rated on a scale of 1 to 4 for attention, retention, message congruency, target market, and use of music. In addition, each commercial was identified as using a well-established artist versus a non-established one. Then, overall scores were assigned to the entire marketing campaign for each of these four companies.

This project reviews the strengths and weaknesses of each marketing campaign. The analysis found there to be no major difference between using a well-established
artist versus a non-established one. It appears to be more important to find a song or singer that corresponds to the company’s desired brand image. In addition, it is believed that message congruency between the music used and the message presented in the ad is highly important to the effectiveness of an advertisement. Message congruency can reiterate and reinforce the desired message of the ad.

Readers of this study will learn how four companies used music to develop their brand image through four very different marketing campaigns.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this time to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Fred Hebein and Dr. Sue Greenfeld. Without their hard work, this graduate project would not be possible. I have had the pleasure of being a student of each and I hope I have done them justice in this paper.

I would like to thank Dr. Hebein for the guidance he has provided throughout the years. In addition, I would like to thank him for the concern he repeatedly shows for my health and overall well-being. It is truly appreciated.

I offer my sincerest gratitude for Dr. Greenfeld’s assistance throughout the development of this project. Despite her busy schedule, she was always willing to provide ideas and direction when needed.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Issue</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Analysis</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria of Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: MUSIC’S PROMOTIONAL GOALS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Marketing</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: SHIFTING ATTITUDES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Artists</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Industry</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR: CAR INDUSTRY’S MUSICAL IDENTITY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cars and Unknown Musicians</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsubishi</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Mitsubishi</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volkswagen</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Volkswagen</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cars and Established Artists ............... 42
Chrysler and Celine Dion .................. 42
Analysis of Chrysler ....................... 47
Jaguar and Sting .......................... 50
Analysis of Jaguar ......................... 50

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY TABLES

Introduction ................................ 53
Final Analysis and Overall Scores ........... 61

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION .................. 63
Limitations of Analysis ...................... 66
Final Conclusion ............................ 67

REFERENCES ................................ 69
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Rating Scale .................................. 3
Table 2. Evaluation Criteria .............................. 4
Table 3. Mitsubishi Song and Campaign ............... 26
Table 4. “Start the Commotion” Evaluation ........... 30
Table 5. “Days Go By” Evaluation ...................... 31
Table 6. “One Week” Evaluation ......................... 32
Table 7. “Breathe” Evaluation ........................... 33
Table 8. Volkswagen Song and Campaign .............. 35
Table 9. “Da Da Da” Evaluation ......................... 39
Table 10. “Pink Moon” Evaluation ....................... 40
Table 11. “Mr.Roboto” Evaluation ....................... 41
Table 12. Evaluation of Celine Dion .................... 47
Table 13. Evaluation of Sting .......................... 50
Table 14. Car Logos ..................................... 53
Table 15. Summary of the Use of Music ............... 58
Table 16. Marketing Objective and Advertising Methods ............................................. 60
Table 17. Overall Scores ................................ 61
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Audio Versus Video Prompt Graphs .... 8
Figure 2. Mitsubishi: Wake Up and Drive ....... 23
Figure 3. Image From "Start the Commotion" .... 25
Figure 4. Image From "Days Go By" .............. 27
Figure 5. Image From "Breathe" ................. 28
Figure 6. Image From "One Week" ............... 32
Figure 7. Volkswagen: Drivers Wanted ........... 34
Figure 8. Image From "Da Da Da" ............... 36
Figure 9. Image From "Pink Moon" .............. 37
Figure 10. Image From "Mr. Roboto" ............. 38
Figure 11. Image Two From "Da Da Da" .......... 40
Figure 12. Image Two From "Pink Moon" ........ 41
Figure 13. Image Two From "Mr. Roboto" ....... 42
Figure 14. Chrysler: Drive and Love ............ 42
Figure 15. Image From "Anthem" ............... 44
Figure 16. Image From "PT Cruiser" ............ 45
Figure 17. Image From "Sebring" ............... 45
Figure 18. Image From "Pacifica" ............... 46
Figure 19. Image From "Crossfire" .............. 47
CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Statement of the Issue

With a greater number of distractions appealing to today's generation, a marketing company is forced to embrace any tool that makes the company's promotional campaign stand out from the rest. Hence, the use of music in the marketing industry has been on a steady rise. Commonly referred to as a "universal language," music can either appeal to a broad range of people or target a specific market. Depending on song choice, music can also be used to bridge generation gaps between young and old consumers.

Faced with a radio industry playing a smaller variety of music than ever before, some musicians are welcoming the partnership of their music and advertisements. Initially thought of as taboo, more artists are now seeing the licensing of their songs as another avenue for getting their music heard. Select artists are now welcoming the idea of their song being recognized as the "Mitsubishi song" or the "Burger King song." By pairing their song with an advertisement,
musicians are recognizing the greater amount of airplay and attention their song will receive. They acknowledge a corporation’s reach in its advertisements extends way beyond that of any musician’s. Commonly hindered by radio and television’s limited playlists, musicians use the licensing of their songs to advertisements as a way of still being heard.

Purpose of the Analysis

Nowhere has the music and marketing partnership been more evident than in the car industry. Though more firms than ever are attempting to use music as a means of increasing effectiveness, notable differences are present among competitors. On one hand, companies such as Chrysler and Jaguar choose to use music from well-established artists like Celine Dion and Sting. On the other hand, Mitsubishi has opted with music from lesser known artists that fit the company’s desired image.

The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the use of music in commercials for Mitsubishi, Volkswagen, Chrysler, and Jaguar. In addition, this paper will also attempt to discover any notable
differences between using a well-established artist versus an unknown one.

To do this analysis, clips and/or storyboards have been downloaded from the Internet for repeated viewing. Each commercial will then be given a score between 1 and 4 according to various criteria such as attention, advertisement retention, and message congruency. Scores will be tallied and used to assign a final overall score to each advertisement. It is important to note that all scores provided are based primarily on personal opinion derived from knowledge gained through literature review.

Criteria of Study

The rating for each criterion will be as follows:

Table 1. Rating Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⬃</td>
<td>Neglects to address or fails to adequately meet criterion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⬂</td>
<td>Visible attempt is made to meet criterion but improvements are necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⬃⌘⌘</td>
<td>Criterion is satisfactorily met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using this scoring system, each commercial will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Table 2. Evaluation Criteria

| Attention: | Advertisement immediately gains the audience's attention and sustains it through the entire commercial. |
| Advertisement Retention: | The commercial is memorable and is notably different from other ads. If asked, consumers will be able to relate the ad to its corresponding brand. |
| Message Congruency: | The messages conveyed through the images, music, and copy of ad are similar or do not contradict. |
| Target Market: | The target market the ad is aiming toward is evident through the images and music used. |
| Use of Music: | Reinforces message of ad and does not distract away from other images or main message of ad. |

CHAPTER TWO

MUSIC’S PROMOTIONAL GOALS

Before delving into the car industry’s use of music in advertisements, it is important to understand the reasons behind the usage of music. While conducting the literature review for this analysis, main ideas were collected which are indicative of a successful usage of music in an advertisement. These ideas are attention, retention, and target market. Each main idea includes excerpts from marketing journals supporting its importance.

Attention

"Of the estimated sixty billion broadcast advertising hours encountered by North Americans each year, approximately three-quarters employ music in some manner" (Huron, 1989). Advertisers typically have different objectives when deciding to use music in their advertisements. One objective could be to simply increase the overall attractiveness of the advertisement. Researchers have long known that music elicits emotional responses from consumers. The use of music can engage
the listener’s attention while camouflaging the appearance of marketing gimmicks.

A 1982 study performed by Gerald J. Gorn suggests the use of music in commercials can make a difference between product choices.

"...[A]n audience may be largely comprised of uninvolved potential consumers rather than cognitively active problem solvers. Reaching them through emotionally arousing background features may make the difference between their choosing and not choosing a brand (Gorn 1982)."

Considering Gorn’s statement, sometimes the decision to purchase an item can be attributed to what commercial a consumer remembers.

Retention

Opinions among researchers differ when addressing how music can influence message reception to an ad. In a survey conducted in 1990 from the *Journal of Advertising Research*,

...consumers’ responses to advertising campaigns were investigated with approximately 3000 subjects with a split of musical and verbal cues. Results showed that 62% of respondents recalled seeing an advertisement for a particular product when given a verbal cue, compared to 83% of the respondents who were given a 10-second musical cue (Stewart, Farmer, Stannard, 1990).
Taylor Nelson Sofres, an advertising company in Australia, adopted Stewart, Farmer, and Stannard’s research technique to evaluate a client’s campaign. As illustrated by the following graphs, the results were similar to that conducted in the *Journal of Advertising Research*.

The first group was prompted with visual cards of the ad. The second group was played a 30 second musical cue with the brand removed from the lyrics. Forty-nine percent of respondents in the first group recognized the client’s ad when prompted with the show cards. In the second group, seventy percent of respondents recognized the ad from the 30 second musical cue even though the brand had been removed from the lyric. This indicates a significantly higher level of reach for the execution through association with the music jingle.

Additionally, sixty percent of audio-prompted respondents branded the ad effectively to the client compared to thirty percent of visually-prompted respondents, which also suggests respondents are effectively linking the client brand with the jingle. This reiterates the important and unique role music plays in advertising by increasing advertising recall amongst respondents and strengthening brand association (Reid 2000).
On the other hand, in the Journal of Marketing's article "The Effect of Background Music on Ad Processing," the authors refer to an "attention gaining paradox." They state that,

A paradox arises, however, in that listeners sometimes attend to the music so closely that the message is not processed. In these cases, music is a distracter that inhibits message reception and processing...As Macklin states 'an individual may attend to the music [and] become so enraptured by [it] that the central message of the advertiser is ignored' (Cox, Cox, Kellaris 1993).

Cox, Cox, Kellaris further contend that music's influence on message reception is affected by the congruency of the
ad’s message and the message the music conveys. Studies conducted by the authors purport that:

Increasing audience attention to message-congruent music will reinforce retention of the message because similar content is being communicated through both spoken works and music-evoked thoughts. However, increasing audience attention to music that evokes message-incongruent thoughts will not enhance message retention, and may actually impede it by distracting the audience from processing the content of the spoken message (Cox A. et al., 1993).

Further attention will be given to the Cox et al. study when examining the individual car commercials later in this report. When considering retention, it is also important to ensure the retention is happening among the brand’s target market.

Target Marketing

To effectively market any product, a firm develops the product’s target market. Usually through a mixed strategy, a firm employs several mediums to reach a product’s target market. Depending on the product itself, the target market could range from being very broad, encompassing many consumers, to being very specialized. Once a target market is developed and proper mediums selected, methods of audience captivation must be chosen. This could include celebrity
endorsements, consumer testimonials, humor, suspense, and music.

It has long been understood that music tends to appeal to specific social and demographic groups. Therefore, the choice of music in an advertisement may aid in targeting a specific market. Differences between consumers within a target market can be bridged through the use of music. The use of certain songs can sometimes appeal to old and young consumers alike. For example, when Microsoft launched its Windows 95 platform, the marketing campaign used the Rolling Stones’ “Start Me Up” in their ads (Seo, 2003). Since the Rolling Stones have been around for more than 20 years, the group appeals to older and younger generations at the same time.

When purely informational commercials are insufficient in gaining consumers, marketers will use music to differentiate from competitors and develop a brand’s image. In these types of commercials, companies will avoid factual claims and instead focus on music and images. “The objective is to portray a particular style or image which elicits strong consumer allegiances but which is also broadly based” (Huron 1989).
Individuals born between 1977 and '84, commonly referred to as “Generation Y” are increasingly the target of ads which use music as a main ingredient. “Generation Y is a generation with $1 trillion in spending power, and it has become the focal point of countless advertising campaigns, many of them built around songs” (Kot 2002). Some companies are riding on the popularity of the songs while others are riding on the incited feelings the song brings on.

After reviewing some of music’s promotional goals, the next chapter builds upon these ideas and explores the shifting attitudes of musical artists and marketing companies toward the growing partnership of music and brands.
CHAPTER THREE

SHIFTING ATTITUDES

The increasing use of music within the marketing industry has resulted in shifting attitudes among musical artists and marketing executives. In the past, it was difficult to find any artist willing to lend their music for corporate use. This attitude is slowly converting to artists who are actually seeking out companies that want to use music for their products. At the same time, the marketing industry has been faced with the increasing challenge of gaining the attention of consumers who are surrounded by great amounts of stimuli all day. In the marketing industry, music has grown from simply being background noise to becoming the primary driver of an advertisement.

Musical Artists

In the past, licensing one’s music was viewed by artists as the ultimate sign of a sell-out. Regardless of increased exposure, some artists would rather fail in record sales than lend their song for corporate use. "Once, rock bands equated selling their music to an advertiser, no matter how benign, with the crassest form
of commercialism, an instant credibility buster if not a career killer” (Kot 2002). When the use of rock music in commercials increased during the 1980’s, Neil Young wrote the song “This Note’s for You” as a response. In the song, he sings, “Ain’t singing for Pepsi, ain’t singing for Coke...I don’t sing for nobody, makes me look like a joke.”

Fourteen years after ‘This Note’s for You,” he still hasn’t had a song appear in a TV commercial or accepted a corporate tour sponsor, but its clear his self-righteous stance no longer speaks for the majority of his peers.

For the media world, yesterday’s whores have become today’s media-savvy visionaries, using the mega-bucks of the advertising industry to get their music in front of listeners who might not otherwise hear it (Kot 2002).

Today, increasingly more artists are welcoming the partnership of music and big business. Rock group Papa Roach recently agreed with Pepsi’s use of their second single “Time and Time Again” to promote the soft-drink manufacturers new beverage “Pepsi Blue.” The artists pushed the music and big business relationship even further by appearing in the commercials for Pepsi Blue. “We think these kinds of commercial and creative relationships are the wave of the future” adds Michael
Ostin, principal executive of Papa Roach’s DreamWorks label (Kot 2002). Seemingly, it looks like the wave of the future is closer than some may realize. Songs used in advertisements include:

- **American Express** – Moby “Find My Baby”
- **Jaguar** – Clash “London Calling”
  Sting “Desert Rose”
- **Nike** – *Beatles “Revolution”
  Fatboy Slim “Praise You”
- **Volkswagen** – *Nick Drake “Pink Moon”
  *The Orb “Little Fluffy Clouds”
- **Mitsubishi** – *The Wiseguys “Start the Commotion”
  *Groove Armada “I See you Baby”
  *Barenaked Ladies “One Week”
  *Telepopmusik “Breathe”
- **J.C. Penney** – *The Apples in Stereo “Shine a Light”
- **Chrysler** – *Celine Dion “I Drove All Night”
- **Powerade** – *The Monks “Monk Time”


The list of songs and commercials go on and on. When examining the list of songs, one observes that it is a mixture of both unknown and well-known artists and songs.
Discussing music licensing would not be complete without mention of musical artist Richard Hall, better known as Moby. In 1999, he proceeded to license all 18 songs of his breakthrough album "Play" to commercials or movies.

Before that, Moby had never sold more than 50,000 albums in his decade-long career, and "Play" was being ignored by commercial radio programmers until advertising execs jumped on its coolly evocative songs and began using them as backdrops to sell everything from perfume to blue jeans. "Play" eventually went on to sell more than 10 million copies worldwide (Kot 2002).

Moby recognized the power of the big business conglomerates and saw music licensing as just another avenue to get his music heard. With no open door available to him in radio at the time, Moby decided to try and open the door himself.

The role of popular music is democratic...I feel I have to do everything in my power to at least make what I’ve done available to people and then trust the wisdom of the democratic consumers to sort it out" (Kot 2002).

Following Moby’s example, unknown artists looking for their first big break heavily consider the licensing of their music. "The consolidation of commercial radio, which has reduced the flow of new music onto the airwaves to a trickle of only the most well-financed artists, has
cast the television advertising world into the role of a surrogate talent-scouting and artist development department” (Kot 2002).

Advertisements give the artists certainly more exposure than they could ever afford, but sometimes this is all they get. Licensing music to an advertisement does not necessarily guarantee success to an artist. Having heard 15 seconds of an unidentified song hardly guarantees consumers will fall in love with a song. In today’s industry where more and more companies are using licensed music, artists license one song in hopes of getting offers for more.

Another concern for many artists is the idea of their song forever being associated with the brand or movie for which it was used.

Indelibly associated with a sales pitch and a product, the argument goes, the song has less power to reach the listener in a purely musical or emotional way--that brand name keeps rattling around the brain where the rhythm or the melody ought to be. Can a song that reaches us through advertising ever really become a part of the soundtrack of our lives? The entrancing ballad we remember hearing while driving alone at night?...It all remains to be seen, in the current rush of licensing, whether all those licensed songs will someday sound washed up, no more likely to be listened to for pleasure than an ad jingle (Piccoli 2003).
Further cementing a song's life as a jingle, Universal Records released "As seen on TV: Songs from Commercials," in 2001 comprised of 18 songs recently used in TV ads.

On the other hand, other artists such as Telepopmusik are taking advantage of the gained exposure. "On their 'Breathe' CD-single, a sticker taking up nearly a quarter of the disc's cover and featuring the car company's logo reads, '... as featured in the Mitsubishi Motors Outlander SUV commercial'" (D'angelo 2002). When addressing music licensing and the concept of "selling out", Christophe Hetier of Telepopmusik says,

Most of the time they are not musicians and they are not in the music business...As a musician, if you want to have some success these days, you have to do that. I respect Neil Young, but when you have his success, you can decide 'No, I don't want to do that commercial.' But first you have to get the power to decide 'No.' (Darling 2003).

While unknown artists license music in hopes of breaking through, well-known artists are also using the music-licensing avenue for other goals. Some older artists use music licensing as a way of staying alive in the market. The following are two views from David Bowie and Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders:

'I've given music to lots of commercials,' David Bowie says. 'I don't get radio airplay anymore, and I probably never will because I've
passed that magic age. So you start thinking, what do you do to keep a profile so that people are aware you’re still around and making music?’ (Kot 2002).

Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders once considered TV ads a compromise: ‘I saw that aligning our music with a film or certainly an advert would be considered an endorsement.’ But now, ‘bands will give songs to adverts because they think that might be the only place they’ll get heard. There has been a huge shift, and I’ve become a part of it, because I believe it’s better to get heard on television than not get heard at all. I’m just trying to keep my music alive’ (Kot 2002).

One-hit wonder artists are also finding music licensing as their friend. For example, an early 80’s group, “Trio” saw their success revived when Volkswagen decided to use their song “Da Da Da” in its new advertisements for the Volkswagen Golf. After the ad aired, Volkswagen was inundated with phone calls and e-mails asking all asking how to get a copy of the song. “Seizing upon the demand, Polygram re-released the once out-of-print album, and it quickly broke into the Billboard Top 200” (Murphy 1999). Trio never broke through in the USA when the song was originally released in 1982. After the Volkswagen ad, the group sold 300,000 copies in the United States.

In addition to staying alive in the music market, established artists are also using music licensing as an
opportunity to revitalize a dead career. A more recent example of this is Sting’s partnership with Jaguar. During filming for his latest single, “Desert Rose” from his new album “Brand New Day,” the video’s director presented Sting with a number of car options to use. Sting chose to use a black Jaguar S-TYPE. After completion of the video, “...Miles Copeland, Sting’s manager approached Jaguar with the footage to see if there were opportunities for the two organizations to work together to mutual benefit” (“In Rock Stars Dreams—the Jaguar S-Type,” 2002). Jaguar instantly loved the video and collaborated with Sting on the edit of the Desert Rose music video into a 30-second and a 60-second commercial.

...essentially an $18.5 million commercial for Sting’s latest album, which went on to become one of the biggest sellers of his post-Police career. The song became a hit at radio, but only after it connected with listeners through the TV ad (Kot 2002).

Advertising Industry

Faced with a generation raised on television and technology, advertisers are anxious to find any way to gain young consumers. “To the [Generation] ‘Y’ kids, the world of personal computers, video games, movies, music,
media, and advertising is a fluid and ever-changing playground of stimuli vying for their attention" (Kot 2002).

Advertisers will sometimes want to seek a license for use of a song in hopes of drawing off its popularity. This practice though can cost a company a tremendous amount of money. "Licensing fees vary, but music from lesser-known artists generally costs less than a song such as the Rolling Stones' "Start Me Up," for which Microsoft reportedly paid at least $4 million to use in its Windows 95 commercials" (Seo 2003). Because of high licensing fees for established artists, the growing trend now is to use hip, unknown artists who fit the commercial more for the image the song creates rather than any image the band may portray.

The trend of music licensing is so ever-increasing that companies, which some refer to as "a music direction resource," (Wiener 2001) are popping up specifically designed to manage song licensing to advertisers. These companies receive numerous sample CDs from breaking artists along with records from established artists looking for opportunities.
The next chapter explores how Mitsubishi, Volkswagen, Chrysler, and Jaguar have used music licensing to develop their brand’s musical identity.
CHAPTER FOUR

CAR INDUSTRY'S MUSICAL IDENTITY

Introduction

In an industry where brand identity is vital, the car industry has become a prominent user of music licensing. From Mitsubishi to Chrysler, companies are scurrying to find a song, or an artist who can solidify or even create a car’s image. Sometimes a car company will choose an unknown artist and pair it with images to incite a feeling or create an image. Others will go with an established artist who exudes an image they would like to link with their brand. Whether it be unknown or established artists, the trend is clear: music and the automobile industry are partners. The question is not when will a car company embrace music, but rather what type of music it chooses. The race is on to find a car’s musical identity among the hundreds of thousands of songs out there. In this chapter, musical identities are reviewed for Mitsubishi, Volkswagen, Chrysler, and Jaguar.
Cars and Unknown Musicians

Mitsubishi

Figure 2. Mitsubishi: Wake Up and Drive

http://www.zipposusa.com/mitsubishi/mitsubishisongs.html

In an attempt to establish a clear identity with American consumers, Mitsubishi sought the aid of Deutsch LA, an advertising agency in 1998. Mitsubishi wanted to create a memorable marketing campaign that would increase brand recognition and, hopefully, lure potential buyers into the showroom. Deutsch's concept for Mitsubishi was simple: "Show people, especially young people, doing things that drivers and passengers actually do in their car - such as singing along with songs on the radio" (Scott 2002). Deutsch's focus on young people was due to Mitsubishi's desire to target members of Generation Y. Pierre Gagnon, president and chief
operating officer of Mitsubishi Motor Sales of America, stated

"We realized that Generation Y would be reaching driving age soon. We knew if we were going to grow, we needed to reach them."

According to Gagnon, Mitsubishi currently has the second-youngest demographic of all foreign automakers in the United States, behind only Volkswagen at 37. The average age for Mitsubishi owners is 38. Thirty-eight percent of the company's customers are younger than 35 (Scott 2002).

Through the advertising campaign, Deutsch attempted to create the feeling of being a member of a very cool club. Deutsch's "Wake Up and Drive" campaign incorporated infectious, upbeat tunes with images of "young drivers and passengers of different ethnic backgrounds lip-synching, singing and moving to the beat of their music in their Mitsubishi vehicles" (Scott 2002). To ensure they were promoting the right feeling in their advertisements, Deutsch's team members would select the song by listening to numerous songs while driving until they found one that stuck in their heads and fit with the Mitsubishi style.

"Since no one had heard it, it fit in the spirit of what we do. The idea is to have a tune relatively unknown to American audiences become associated with Mitsubishi, rather than have Mitsubishi become associated with an established hit," said Vinny Picardi, vice president and
associate creative director of Deutsch LA (Scott 2002).

![Image](http://www.usatoday.com/money/advertising/adtrack/2001-12-24-ad-track-)

Figure 3. Image From "Start the Commotion"

http://www.usatoday.com/money/advertising/adtrack/2001-12-24-ad-track-

The first prominent spot which brought greater attention to Mitsubishi’s advertising campaign used "Start the Commotion," a 1999 song by the Wiseguys to promote the 2001 Eclipse. The ad features a man driving the Eclipse while his female companion taps her feet to the music. The advertisement’s concept is simply to show a couple enjoying themselves during a night out on the town.

Although the 2001 Eclipse commercial was to first to gain significant attention, music was a part of Deutsch’s campaign for Mitsubishi from the very beginning.

25
List Adapted from Scott, T. (2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>CAMPAIGN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ready to Go&quot;</td>
<td>Republica</td>
<td>1999 Galant Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Lust for Life&quot;</td>
<td>Iggy Pop</td>
<td>1999 Galant Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Crazy Train&quot;</td>
<td>Ozzy Osbourne</td>
<td>1999 Montero Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Pick Up the Pieces&quot;</td>
<td>Average White Band</td>
<td>2000 Eclipse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;In the Meantime&quot;</td>
<td>Spacehog</td>
<td>2000 Eclipse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Spybreak!&quot;</td>
<td>Propellerheads</td>
<td>2000 Galant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Superfly&quot;</td>
<td>Curtis Mayfield</td>
<td>2001 Montero Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ladyshave&quot;</td>
<td>Gus Gus</td>
<td>2001 Eclipse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I See You Baby&quot;</td>
<td>Groove Armada</td>
<td>2001 Eclipse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Shaft&quot;</td>
<td>(Re-recorded)</td>
<td>2001 Eclipse Spyder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Get What you Give&quot;</td>
<td>New Radicals</td>
<td>2001 Montero Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;20th Century Boy&quot;</td>
<td>T-Rex</td>
<td>2001 Montero Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Start the Commotion&quot;</td>
<td>Wiseguys</td>
<td>2001 Eclipse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ooh La La&quot;</td>
<td>(Re-Recorded)</td>
<td>2001 Galant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;One Week&quot;</td>
<td>Barenaked Ladies</td>
<td>2002 Lancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Days Go By&quot;</td>
<td>Dirty Vegas</td>
<td>2003 Eclipse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Breathe&quot;</td>
<td>Telepopmusik</td>
<td>2003 Outlander SUV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clearly obvious through examination of the list that minus a very small number of campaigns,
Mitsubishi and Deutsch prefer to use unknown artists in their advertisements. Deutsch did experiment with established hits but soon realized that the ads were not receiving the audience it desired. Once Mitsubishi gained significant exposure for the “Start the Commotion” ad, Deutsch has since remained with upbeat tunes from unknown artists.

Figure 4. Image From "Days Go By"
http://www.zipposusa.com /mitsubishi/mitsubishiso ngs.htm

The latest commercial to gain attention is Deutsch’s new campaign for the 2003 Eclipse featuring Dirty Vegas’ "Days Go By." Maintaining each advertisement’s youthful feel, this commercial features a young woman performing a breakdancing move known as “popping.” Since this is a dancing style from the 80’s, Deutsch is attempting to
reach two different markets with this ad: younger buyers and older buyers who think young. As homage to Mitsubishi’s use of the song, the video for “Days Go By” prominently includes the Eclipse. The video starts with the members of Dirty Vegas driving up to the main location of the video. During the course of the video, numerous clips of the members sitting in the car are shown. At the conclusion, Dirty Vegas is shown driving away in the Eclipse.

![Figure 5. Image From "Breathe"


Deutsch’s newest commercial is to promote Mitsubishi’s Outlander suburban utility vehicle (SUV). This time around, Picardi “...was aiming for someone on
the cusp of marriage and responsibility" (Darling 2003).
Picardi felt the Outlander would appeal to consumers in serious relationships, thinking about getting married and having kids. To depict these consumers, Deutsch LA devised an advertisement with a male driving down a street while scenes from his life slowly play out in the SUV. With "Breathe" from Telepopmusik playing, there are scenes with guys on a night out, women during dates, and partying. The commercial culminates with shots of the male getting married, driving his pregnant wife to the hospital, and having his little girl in the back seat. The words, "Outlander is Here" and "For the Journey" flash during the commercial.

**Analysis of Mitsubishi**

Deutsch’s ad campaign for Mitsubishi appears to be a success. In 2002,

Eric Hirshberg, managing partner and executive creative director of Deutsch said research with its youthful target shows the campaign is working...Brand awareness has risen from 48% to 60% since Deutsch started on the account in 1998 (Halliday 2003).

*Automotive News* also reported Mitsubishi’s brand sales rose in 2001 to 322,383 vehicles vs. 314,417 in 2000 (Halliday 2003).
Deutsch is not very consistent in maintaining message congruency between the ad’s images and the lyrics of the songs it uses in the ads.

Table 4. "Start the Commotion" Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>⬆⬆⬆️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement Retention</td>
<td>⬆⬆⬆️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Congruency</td>
<td>⬆⬆️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Market</td>
<td>⬆⬆️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Music</td>
<td>⬆⬆️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, in the “Start the Commotion” ad, there are very few lyrics mixed with images of the couple dancing to the beat. In this ad, the message and the lyrics could pass for being somewhat congruent since the only lyric of the song is “Start the Commotion,” something very vague. The use of this song and its lyrics is more to create the desired club feeling rather than message reinforcement. Because of the vagueness of this song, it is not believed that effectiveness is sacrificed. In fact, it is important to note that in this specific case, “Start the Commotion” began to be referred to as the “Mitsubishi song.”
Table 5. "Days Go By" Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>🎵🎵🎵🎵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement Retention</td>
<td>🎵🎵🎵🎵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Congruency</td>
<td>🎵🎵🎵🎵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Market</td>
<td>🎵🎵🎵🎵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Music</td>
<td>🎵🎵🎵🎵</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The "Days Go By" campaign is one where message congruency seems to be completely ignored. The images are consistent with the "club" mentality, but the lyrics from the song do not strengthen this attitude. The commercial is filled with images of friends having fun dancing along to the music playing in the Eclipse. On the other hand, the lyrics, though sung to an up-tempo club beat, tell of a man missing a woman. The lyrics have nothing to do with the desired feeling of the commercial. In fact, the two are very incongruent. Deutsch could be banking on the song's infectious beat, further emphasizing it by timing the commercial's copy with the beat.
Table 6. "One Week" Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>🎶🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>🎶🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>🎶🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Congruency</td>
<td>🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Market</td>
<td>🎶🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Music</td>
<td>🎶🎶</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Image From "One Week"

http://www.zipposusa.com/mitsubishi/mitsubishisongs.htm

Another of Mitsubishi's message incongruent advertisements is its campaign for the 2002 Lancer featuring Barenaked Ladies' "One Week." The ad shows different types of young people singing along with the song. In this commercial, because of the specific nature
of this song, Mitsubishi runs the danger of consumers paying more attention to the song rather than the brand itself. Apparently, this has not seemed to affect sales of the Lancer, which nearly sold out in Mitsubishi dealerships once the ad started to air (McCarthy 2001).

Table 7. "Breathe" Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement Retention</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Congruency</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Market</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Music</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The newest ad for the Outlander SUV featuring Telepopmusik's "Breathe" seems to be the first of the ad campaigns to have message congruency. While the lyrics of the song say "...another day, just breathe, just believe," the man sees different moments of his life pass by. Because of the type of audience targeted for this ad, the genre of dance music is not completely abandoned but the tone of the music has decreased to reinforce the message behind the advertisement's images.
Volkswagen

Volkswagen (VW)'s use of music in their advertisements ranges from one hit wonders to long-forgotten hits. The company has tried to capitalize on the popularity of their spots by releasing a CD containing music from Volkswagen's first commercials, titled "VW Street Mix, Volume 1." The CD's release could also further a consumer's association of a song with a particular Volkswagen car. The track listing of the CD is:
Table 8. Volkswagen Song and Campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>SONG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nick Drake</td>
<td>&quot;Pink Moon&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooverphonic</td>
<td>&quot;Renaissance Affair&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Mingus</td>
<td>&quot;II BS&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Styx</td>
<td>&quot;Mr. Roboto&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Cylinder</td>
<td>&quot;Jung at Heart&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Neill</td>
<td>&quot;Turbonium X&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitchshifter</td>
<td>&quot;Subject to Status&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluke</td>
<td>&quot;Absurd&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritualized</td>
<td>&quot;Ladies and Gentlemen...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trio</td>
<td>&quot;Da Da Da&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velocity Girl</td>
<td>&quot;Sorry Again&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychic TV</td>
<td>&quot;Roman P&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Again, similar to Mitsubishi, VW is more concerned with the feeling behind a song rather than it coming from an established artist. When asked about why VW opts to use music by lesser-known artists, Liz Vanzura, director of marketing for Volkswagen of America says,

We have a brand that we think is best communicated by non-commercial-type bands. We don’t want to be instantly recognized by the song, and get images in the consumer’s head of the band. You know, the Rolling Stones or Madonna—it’s just so
predictable. We tend to pick things that hit the spot and the mood and feel a lot less commercial, and a lot more human (Murphy 1999).

One of Volkswagen's most memorable spots uses a song from the 1980's band Trio called "Da Da Da" to promote the Volkswagen Golf. It features two males who discover what they think is a salvageable chair while driving. They later discover it is in fact trash and dispose of it. The voice-over in the ad says the Golf is there for life, or a lack thereof. "Da Da Da" creates a feeling of travel and carefree spirits. Unlike Mitsubishi though, Volkswagen uses music more as a secondary element in their commercials. The music is simply meant to keep the
pace of the commercial going but generally has no relation to the actual message of the advertisement.

VW's campaign crossed age and gender lines by employing the power of music to extend messaging opportunities. Sure Volkswagen is selling cars. But its brand is based on a lifestyle, and that lifestyle has been successfully communicated in music. By taking these tunes into CD and web environments, VW has successfully extended its message (Murdy 2001).

Figure 9. Image From "Pink Moon"
http://www.eurotuned.com/Multimedia.HTM

In November 1999, Arnold Worldwide, the ad agency holding Volkswagen's account decided to use Nick Drake's "Pink Moon" to introduce ads for the Cabrio model. Arnold Worldwide used the song regardless of the fact that Nick Drake, a British folksinger, had died of a drug overdose in 1974. Shane Hutton, one of the ad's architects says, "It really was the kind of music you would listen to on a
drive” (Wiener 2001). The ad contained no voice-over and simply showed young people driving at night during a full moon.

Demonstrating the power of the commercial, "Nick Drake's 29-year-old album went gold, tripling the total volume of sales during his lifetime” (Wiener 2001). Volkswagen saw a 77 percent increase in sales between December and February versus the same period the previous year. Though VW knows the increase cannot be entirely attributed to the spot, it deemed the campaign a success.

'Companies want to connect emotionally with their customers,' Hutton says. 'As long as someone feels good about your product, it doesn’t matter whether they buy it or not, because someday they might’ (Wiener 2001).

Figure 10. Image From "Mr. Roboto"

http://www.eurotuned.com/Multime dia.HTM
A final Volkswagen commercial to be examined is another advertisement for the Volkswagen Golf featuring Styx's "Mr. Roboto." This ad begins with a man motioning in his car with the audience hearing only sounds of the night. Various shots of the car are shown. Another man approaches and it is only then that the audience finds out that the man is singing along to "Mr. Roboto." The two men proceed to sing along with the song while a voice-over speaks of the stereo system being one of the 40 features which comes standard in the new Golf.

Analysis of Volkswagen

Though to some people, Volkswagen jump-started the use of music in car advertisements, its use is different from its successors. Most companies that followed suit tended to use music more as a primary vehicle. Most advertisements examined focused more on the story behind people in the vehicle rather than the vehicle itself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>🎵🎵ожет</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement Retention</td>
<td>🎵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Congruency</td>
<td>🎵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Market</td>
<td>🎵🎵ожет</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Music</td>
<td>🎵</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. "Da Da Da" Evaluation
In the "Da Da Da" Golf commercial for example, consumers might tend to be drawn into the story of the two men and the song rather than the car since attention is rarely given to features of the Golf. In fact, though the two men are sitting in the car, the Golf's appearance seems very minimal.

Table 10. "Pink Moon" Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement Retention</td>
<td>🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Congruency</td>
<td>🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Market</td>
<td>🎶🎵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Music</td>
<td>🎶</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The same is true for the Cabrio advertisement. It appears like more attention is given to showing the moon to coincide with song lyrics rather than highlighting the Cabrio. There are more close-up shots of the actors and only full-length shots of the car. The ad seems to be more concerned with appearing like a video for "Pink Moon" rather than a commercial for the Cabrio.

Table 11. "Mr. Roboto" Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement Retention</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Congruency</td>
<td>★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Market</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Music</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The only Volkswagen Golf commercial mentioning any features is the other Golf ad featuring Styx's "Mr. Roboto." The audience is shown numerous angles of the car and is told in the end of features which come standard in the Golf. Again, the song has nothing to do with the message of the advertisement.

Cars and Established Artists

Chrysler and Celine Dion

Figure 14. Chrysler: Drive and Love

http://www.geocities.com/celine/download/browser.html
"In the last year, the [Chrysler] group pushed the envelope in its TV commercials, sometimes angering consumers enough that the company either changed or dropped the spots" (Cantwell 2003). In an attempt to improve their brand and upgrade their image to premium status, Chrysler has formed a partnership with Celine Dion. Jim Schroer, executive vice president of global sales and marketing says,

Everything you see from us going forward, you’re going to see the beautifully designed side (of Chrysler vehicles) coming through the music of Celine Dion and the brilliantly engineered side coming through print and the internet (Cantwell 2003).

The three-year contract, worth an estimated 20 million, also makes Chrysler the exclusive sponsor of her concerts at Caesar’s Palace in Las Vegas.

That is the start of an extensive multi-media advertising campaign that will span print, broadcast, and the Internet...Other elements include personal appearances by Ms. Dion, special consumer promotions, dealer tie-ins, interactive communications, owner communications, retail initiatives, television programming and recording tie-in ("Celine Dion to Sing for Chrysler").

For their new line of upper-scale vehicles, such as the 2004 Crossfire Coupe and the 2004 Pacifica sport wagon, Chrysler has targeted 25- to 54-year olds, mostly married with a median household income of $75,000.
'Celine Dion will play an important role in repositioning the Chrysler brand because she embodies the essence of all Chrysler vehicles - beauty, romance, sophistication, and refinement,' said Schroer.

'Celine’s core identity is expressed through music. The core identity of the Chrysler brand is expressed in the drop-dead gorgeous design and engineering innovation inherent in vehicles like the PT Cruiser, Sebring Convertible, and 300M. Because Celine and Chrysler intersect at the same creative space and share the same values, this is a natural and dynamic partnership,' Schroer added ("Celine Dion to sing for Chrysler").

There are currently six Chrysler commercials featuring Celine Dion and her music. The first commercial features Celine’s first single, "I Drove All Night." The advertisement features all of Chrysler’s new cars and is meant more as an introduction to the new campaign and to Celine Dion as a Spokesperson.
The commercial for the PT Cruiser features the single, "Love is All We Need," but Dion is not featured in this video. Rather, this commercial focuses on the Cruiser’s sleek styling and driving maneuverability.
A third commercial for the Chrysler Sebring uses a mixture of Celine's images with scenes of the Sebring's sleek styling and interior. The commercial shows Celine enjoying a drive in the Sebring with the top down as her hair blows in the wind.

Figure 18. Image From "Pacifica"

http://www.geocities.com/celinedownload/browser.html

The newest commercials for 2004 feature the launch of the Chrysler Pacifica and the Chrysler Crossfire. The Pacifica spot features Celine singing an a cappella version of "I Drove All Night," while a passenger in the Pacifica. The Crossfire spot again features the regular version of "I Drove All Night," but shots of Celine are minimal.
More focus is given to showing the features and styling of the Crossfire.

Figure 19. Image From "Crossfire"

http://www.geocities.com/celinedownload/browser.html

Analysis of Chrysler

Table 12. Evaluation of Celine Dion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>🎤🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement Retention</td>
<td>🎤🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Congruency</td>
<td>🎤🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Market</td>
<td>🎤🎶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Music</td>
<td>🎤🎶</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of the similarities among all the commercials in the Drive & Love campaign, the commercials all received the same scores. It appears that the same format was used for each commercial and therefore lacks in the same way in each commercial. For the attention
factor, the commercials get three out of four because of Chrysler's use of Celine Dion. Her voice and image are very recognizable and fans of her work will instantly be attracted to the commercial. Some commercials, like the spot for the Pacifica at sixty-three seconds, seem to run too long and lack anything which could maintain a consumer's attention. Chrysler gets a low score for advertisement retention because of the similarities among each commercial. Though consumers may be able to associate Celine Dion with Chrysler, it may be difficult to differentiate between the commercial for the Pacifica and the commercial for the PT Cruiser.

Message congruency is the greatest strength of the Celine Dion ads. The music and the desired message of the ads are in unison. In addition, various images correspond to lyrics in the songs used. For example, when Celine sings of driving down a long road, an image of a Chrysler going down a long road is shown. Also, highlights of various features are timed according to the sounds of the song to further emphasize them.

It is unclear simply by watching the commercials what target market Chrysler is aiming for. Since it is using Celine Dion, it is assumed that Chrysler is
attempting to go after the same demographic that is attracted to Celine Dion's music: 25 to 50 year old professionals, mid to upper class.

The partnership between Chrysler and Celine Dion is a brilliant move for both parties. Each is gaining off each other to revitalize themselves. The message congruency between all the ads is excellent as well as the congruency of Celine's image and the image Chrysler is aiming for. It was a good idea also to limit Celine's appearances in the first ad and focus more on the new line of Chryslers. It was not until Celine gained increased exposure that she became more visible in the advertisements.

It is important to note that none of the commercials contain any voice-overs speaking of dealer incentives or features included. In fact, there is not even any mention of price in the advertisement. Because of this, it is clearly evident that these commercials are more for brand imagery rather than increasing sales. The use of black and white images rather than color increases the feeling of class and sophistication of the advertisement.
Jaguar and Sting

"Everyone dreams about being a rock star, but what do rock stars dream about?" ("In Stars Rock Dreams," 2000). This simple question became the premise of Jaguar's campaign for the introduction of the 2000 S-Type. In this particular case, the musical artist arranged for the possible collaboration instead of the car company going out in search of a campaign's theme song.

After creation of his video for "Desert Rose," his manager at the time, Miles Copeland approached Jaguar with the footage to see if a partnership could be formed. Jaguar instantly loved the footage of Sting singing the words of the song while in the S-Type. They worked together to edit two commercials from the video. Sting and Jaguar's campaign ran from March 2000 through August 2000 ("In Stars Rock Dreams," 2000).

Analysis of Jaguar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement Retention</td>
<td>⭐⭐⭐⭐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Congruency</td>
<td>⭐⭐⭐⭐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Market</td>
<td>⭐⭐⭐⭐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Music</td>
<td>⭐⭐⭐⭐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. Evaluation of Sting
This partnership seemed to be more beneficial to Sting. After Jaguar's use of his song, Sting's album rose to the top of the charts. Because of Sting's quick rise to the top after previously being ignored by radio, it seems that Sting benefited more from this partnership than did Jaguar.

Unlike Chrysler and Celine, where Chrysler used Celine as a compliment to the ad and brand image, it seems rather that Sting used Jaguar to increase his status. Since the commercial was made out of Sting's video, Sting is the primary focus of the cameras. Attention for this commercial gets three out of four simply because fans of Sting will most likely be attentive to the commercial since it is basically a 30-second clip of his music video. Seeing the commercial may spur consumer's interest in Sting but probably not for Jaguar. Specific features of the car are not shown and Sting's presence seems too overpowering. Retention is rated as low because except for Sting, the commercial does not have anything which differentiates itself from other car ads.

Message congruency is this campaigns greatest weakness. Though Jaguar believed that Sting's image fit
what Jaguar desired, the song chosen has nothing to do with the brand. It is just background music rather than being a primary driver of the advertisement. Again, target market is hard to define since Sting is the only one present in the video. It is then assumed that Jaguar is aiming for those consumers which are part of Sting’s target market.

Finally, Jaguar’s use of music was a bad choice in this situation. The company seemed to get caught up in the moment since Sting had already chosen the S-type for use in his video. It was pleased to receive an offer for a celebrity endorsement. "'To have Sting in our car and the Desert Rose music behind the product is what marketing executives dream about.' said Al Saltiel, general marketing manager of Jaguar" ("In Stars Rock Dreams," 2000).

The next chapter organizes the marketing campaigns of Mitsubishi, Volkswagen, Chrysler, and Jaguar into coherent summary tables and provides insight regarding the similarities and differences of these four marketing campaigns.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY TABLES

Introduction

The following chapter incorporates the information covered previously into a number of tables for easy reference and comparison. The first table summarizes each automobile company's use of music. The second table lists common marketing objectives and the advertising methods available to reach that objective. It also summarizes the marketing objectives of each car company and the methods the companies chose. For purposes of identification, each car company's logo was used in the table.

Table 14. Car Logos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitsubishi</td>
<td>MITSUBISHI MOTORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrysler</td>
<td>CHRYSLER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volkswagen</td>
<td>VOLKSWAGEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaguar</td>
<td>JAGUAR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15 summarizes the use of music, copy, voice-overs, lyrics, message congruency, and the evidence of target marketing. When examining the chart, one can see that the type of music chosen (i.e. dance, pop, or various) for the advertising differs among the car companies. There is no preferred type of music currently being used in the car industry. Chrysler, with Celine Dion, and Jaguar, with Sting, both went with pop music. These two artists attract the same target market because of the similarities of their music styles. Both artists are famous for their love ballads. In general, Celine Dion and Sting reach consumers between the ages of 30 and up. Since Mitsubishi’s marketing campaign was focused on the youth market, Mitsubishi used dance music, which generally appeals to youth under the age of 30. Volkswagen used various types of music in their commercials. The company used different songs fitting the specific mood of each commercial.

“Copy” refers to any text that appears in the commercial. It can cover features of the car or go into pricing and finance specials. In observing the use of copy, most companies, with the exception of Mitsubishi, opted for no copy in their advertisements. In addition,
all companies also stayed away from the use of voice-overs in their clips. This could be related to the fact that all the researched companies used music with lyrics. Perhaps the companies realized the potential for informational overload. It is important to mention that to overcome this possibility, both Chrysler and Mitsubishi used lyricless musical tracks in additional copy-heavy advertisements. In both cases, the car companies opted to use the same music but in a decreased presence. By doing so, consumers would still associate the music with the company but also still be receptive to the copy being displayed.

Companies are still learning the best way to incorporate music into their commercials. Success does not seem directly linked to the type of music chosen. It is very important to consider the target market for the commercial and ensure that the chosen music will appeal or at the least, not alienate the consumers. Copy and voice-overs should be kept at a minimum to prevent any unnecessary distractions. Too much of either could cause information overload for the consumer. If companies choose to use music containing lyrics, it should either be lyrics which are message congruent, or ambiguous
lyrics which do not affect the overall message of the commercial.

There is no definite distinction between the uses of known versus unknown artists in the car commercials. Two of the companies, Chrysler and Jaguar, chose established artists while the other two, Mitsubishi and Volkswagen, selected unknown artists. Though Mitsubishi and Volkswagen did use some established artists in their marketing campaign, their use of unknown artists was dominating. Because the prevalence of using music in commercials is still growing, the opportunity to compare the success of using unknown versus known artists is small.

As for message congruency and the evidence of target marketing, the car companies were split fifty-fifty. Overall, Chrysler and Mitsubishi incorporated message congruency into the musical advertisements in their marketing campaigns. Jaguar and Volkswagen had some message congruent ads but for the most part, neglected to fully intertwine music and message congruency in their ads. Because of this, it is believed by the author that Chrysler and Mitsubishi were more successful in their use of music to influence key consumers buying for their
product. In the future, it is recommended that companies follow in the footsteps of Chrysler and Mitsubishi.

As previously stated, obvious target marketing is difficult to distinguish for Chrysler and Jaguar since the celebrities are the focus of the clips. One must assume that the ad’s target market must be similar to the celebrity’s target market. In the case of Mitsubishi and Volkswagen, target marketing is evidenced by the dominating presence of youth in all of the advertisements. In general, success follows the campaign that aims its messages toward a specific target market. This is because a specific target market provides the marketing campaign with a better sense of direction. Better decisions are made regarding the music used and the corresponding images and messages presented.
Table 15. Summary of the Use of Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF MUSIC</th>
<th>DANCE</th>
<th>POP</th>
<th>VARIOUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="MITSUBISHI MOTORS" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="CHRYSLER" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Volkswagen" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPY</td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>SOME</td>
<td>HEAVY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="CHRYSLER" /></td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="MITSUBISHI MOTORS" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Volkswagen" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOICE-OVERS</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="CHRYSLER" /></td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="MITSUBISHI MOTORS" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Volkswagen" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LYRICS</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="CHRYSLER" /></td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="MITSUBISHI MOTORS" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Volkswagen" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSICIANS</td>
<td>KNOWN</td>
<td>UNKNOWN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="CHRYSLER" /></td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="MITSUBISHI MOTORS" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Volkswagen" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MESSAGE CONGRUENCY</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="CHRYSLER" /></td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="MITSUBISHI MOTORS" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Volkswagen" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVIDENT TARGET MARKET</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="MITSUBISHI MOTORS" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Volkswagen" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="JAGUAR" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident on Table 16 that the researched car companies had two main marketing objectives in their campaigns: to situate the brand socially, and to define the brand image. In targeting the younger generation, Mitsubishi and Volkswagen also chose to situate their brand socially with their advertisements. Both Mitsubishi and Volkswagen used slice-of-life ads in their campaigns. Each commercial showed members of the younger generation doing ordinary things like driving to a party, hanging out, or singing along to a song.

The main reason for the use of music in advertisements for the four car companies is to define the brand image. The majority of all commercials evaluated showed a lack of hard product information and concentrated more on the development of brand image though visual and musical elements. Chrysler and Jaguar preferred to use a celebrity to enhance their product’s image while Mitsubishi and Volkswagen relied on images associated with the playing music to define their image.
Table 16. Marketing Objectives and Advertising Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>ADVERTISING METHOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote brand recall</td>
<td>Repetition ads, slogan jingle ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link a key attribute to the brand name</td>
<td>Unique selling position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instill a brand preference</td>
<td>Feel-good, humor, sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situate the brand socially</td>
<td>Slice of life, light fantasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define the brand image</td>
<td>Image ad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuade the consumer</td>
<td>Reason why, hard sell, comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoke a direct response</td>
<td>Call click now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scare the consumer into action</td>
<td>Fear appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change behavior by inducing anxiety</td>
<td>Anxiety ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transform consumption experience</td>
<td>Transformational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Analysis and Overall Scores

After close examination of each company’s marketing campaign, each was given an overall score by the author.

Table 17. Overall Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAR COMPANY</th>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
<th>OVERALL SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chrysler</td>
<td>High message congruency, Seamless partnership of Celine and Chrysler’s image</td>
<td>Length of commercials, Little differentiation between commercials</td>
<td>⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsubishi</td>
<td>Strong aim at target market</td>
<td>Inconsistent message congruency</td>
<td>⭐⭐⭐⭐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volkswagen</td>
<td>Use of memorable songs which stick in consumer’s heads</td>
<td>Minimal focus on cars</td>
<td>⭐⭐⭐⭐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaguar</td>
<td>Momentary association with Sting</td>
<td>Very weak message congruency</td>
<td>⭐⭐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When examining scores, one is able to determine that the use of an established versus an unknown artist has little bearing overall. For instance, Mitsubishi has succeeded in using unknown artists to promote their cars though Volkswagen did not receive the same praise. Jaguar’s partnership seems to be a failure while Chrysler’s partnership with Celine Dion is a success.
The lesson to be learned is that it is more important to choose the right music rather than the right artist.

The next chapter includes a summary of the information gathered, conclusions reached, and explains the usefulness of this project.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter covers a synopsis of information collected, derived conclusions, and the limitations of this project follow. The paper closes with a summary of what this project covered, and the reasons the paper provides value and usefulness to other students and the marketing community.

In today's marketing field, the question is not whether a company should use music in ads. Rather, it should be on what type of music is most appropriate for the vehicle. Because Volkswagen and Mitsubishi were looking to target a younger audience, both companies opted for unknown musicians. Their ads were more about the images created and the feeling generated by the music in the background rather than the artists themselves. The commercials main themes revolved around the music and were never about the artists who performed the song.

On the other hand, Chrysler and Jaguar were banking on the popularity of their spokesperson to gain brand recognition. Both companies hoped using the celebrity in the ad would gain the brand significant exposure.
The standouts for their use of music have to be Mitsubishi and Chrysler. Mitsubishi has continued to succeed in creating a virtual club for Mitsubishi owners. Every subsequent commercial builds upon the success of the first. The company's use of electronica music has increased brand recognition among the younger generation. Though Chrysler paid a significant amount of money to Celine Dion, this money is well-spent because the fit between Celine and Chrysler appears seamless. The success of one creates success or recognition for the other.

For future companies looking to use music in advertisements, it is highly recommended that a great amount of research is conducted beforehand. The purpose of this research would be to determine what messages various musical elements portray and what brand images the company would like to create.

Because of the negative stigma associated with rap music, its use in advertisements in the near future is unlikely. Right now, most companies are staying away from using rap music in their advertisements because of the danger of offending their consumers. Unlike other genres of music, rap music is commonly regarded as
offensive by non-listeners. Rap music is one type of music where target market must be thoroughly researched because rap music runs a greater risk of alienating many consumers. On the other hand, car companies should look into using urban artists to attract that particular market. It is an untapped area that could be beneficial to a company like Saturn or Kia, simply to capture a greater segment of the urban market away from Honda and Toyota.

It is believed that message congruency is highly important to the effectiveness of an advertisement. In addition, it is not recommended than ads include music which could possibly be too distracting to the consumer. The company runs the danger of information overload if leaving the consumer with complex lyrics and information heavy voice-overs. Companies should limit the use of voice-overs when using music with lyrics. Because this is so important, a company should use lyrics that coincide either with the general image the company desires or the images depicted in the advertisement.

For the most part, the use of music is beneficial to a marketing campaign. It can create continuity between a number of ads or can simply reinforce the message
depicted. As long as a sufficient amount of research into the various options of music additions available is conducted, it is recommended that all advertisements should incorporate music into their ads.

Limitations of the Analysis

The competitiveness of the advertising world limits the publishing of successes and failures among marketing campaigns on a product-by-product basis. Sometimes the success of a marketing campaign is derived from an advertising company's vast research. If companies were to publish what aspects of each commercial worked, other companies could gather this information and use it to its advantage without the costly expense of conducting more research.

The measures presented are centered solely on the author's opinion. The analysis conducted is based on data gathered through repeated observation of commercial clips. In addition, it is virtually impossible to attribute changes in sales to specific commercials. Even if a company reports an increase in sales, there are many other factors which could have played a part besides the musical commercials.
Final Conclusion

In sum, this project covered the use of music in advertisements by four car companies: Chrysler, Jaguar, Mitsubishi, and Volkswagen. The major findings are that music is rapidly becoming a primary driver for companies aiming to develop their brand image. Currently, there is no dominance in the type of music being used in the commercials. Moreover, there is no distinction between the use of known versus unknown artists. Copy and voiceovers should be completely eliminated or kept minimal if lyrical music is used to prevent informational overload. In addition, there are an increasing number of musical artists welcoming the partnership of their music and marketing - something regarded as taboo only a few years ago.

The author added value to the area of marketing research by developing a rating scale using various criteria such as message congruency, attention, and advertisement retention. This scale can be used to evaluate future commercials and their use of music. It provides objective criteria that make it possible to compare completely different advertisements. This study could be useful for those wanting to discover the rising
trend of music and marketing partnerships. Readers will learn how four companies started with the same objective of developing a brand image but ended with four very different marketing campaigns using music.

The coalition of marketing and music will only continue to grow as each year passes. The four companies covered may soon be regarded as the pioneers for the use of music in the car industry. It is no longer of question of if but when music will become the dominant driver in the car industry.
REFERENCES


Separator Sheet
Thesis Scanning
THE AVOIDANCE OF ABSOLUTE COMMITMENT

IN SPEECH ACTS: MODALITY

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition:
Teaching English as a Second Language

by
Deborah Kay Leavell

June 2003
THE AVOIDANCE OF ABSOLUTE COMMITMENT
IN SPEECH ACTS: MODALITY

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Deborah Kay Leavell
June 2003

Approved by:

Dr. Ron Chen, Chair, English
Dr. Sunny Hyon
Dr. Elinore Partridge

Date 6-5-03
ABSTRACT

Grice (1990), in his Cooperative Principle, proposes that speakers engaged in discourse may assume mutually cooperative truth. Yet, in daily discourse, we observe occasions in which speakers of English seemingly attempt to avoid absolute commitment to the propositional truth in their speech. In this context, I propose that speakers of English intend to avoid absolute commitment through their use of modality.

After defining speaker commitment as it pertains to propositional truth in speech acts and exploring influences and motivations that may affect speaker commitment, this thesis will introduce and define modality in the context of actual speech. The scope of modality will then be narrowed to a focus on core and periphrastic modals. Specifically, discussion of these modals will include their identification and meanings/functions. Finally, a survey of commitment and truth in common modal usage will be presented. The survey’s findings will particularly address the following questions: Do speakers express absolute commitment through modal usage? What modals do speakers perceive to convey the strongest and weakest
degrees/meanings of commitment? Do speakers prefer the directness of the positive assertion can or the distant, albeit polite form could when speaking commitment? Does the usage of can versus could change the degree/meaning of commitment in speech? How do speakers' perceptions of commitment through the use of the modal will relate to relationships between speakers and hearers? Are age, gender, native language, and/or occupation relational to the degree and/or propositional truth of commitment in speech? Is the speaker's perception of his/her level of commitments consistent with or variant to the speaker's reported actual keeping of commitments? Lastly, is the phrasal modal need to spoken consistently in daily discourse to mean literally necessity? Following survey Findings and Summary, a Discussion of General and Teaching English as a Second Language implications is presented. Key words: commitment, modality, relationship, gender, age, native language, and statistics.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although thank you does not seem enough, I would like to extend a most heartfelt Thank You to my professors, Dr. Ron Chen, Dr. Sunny Hyon, and Dr. Elinore Partridge, without whose teaching, patience, and encouragement, this project could not have been completed.

For their love, support, and prayers throughout my coursework and research, Thank you, Dad and Mom!

Finally, grateful acknowledgement is given to Natalie Hasler, CSUSB marketing graduate, for her assistance with the SPSS application to this project's research.
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: COMMITMENT IN SPEECH ACTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences and Motivations</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: MODALS: TRUTH AND COMMITMENT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meanings and Functions</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: SURVEY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching English as a Second Language</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A: SURVEY</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1. Politeness Superstrategies .................. 18
Table 1.2. Gender: Tag Questions ...................... 31
Table 2.1. Core Modals .................................. 36
Table 2.2. Modal Counterparts .......................... 38
Table 2.3. Epistemic Usages .............................. 45
Table 2.4. Deontic Usages ............................... 47
Table 3.1. Commitment Strength I ....................... 57
Table 3.2. Commitment Strength II ...................... 59
Table 3.3. Theoretical Commitment Strength .......... 60
Table 3.4. Relationship Correlation .................... 61
Table 3.5. Broken Commitment(s) To Whom? .......... 63
Table 3.6. Age Range: Spoken Commitment To Employer 65
Table 3.7. Age Range: Spoken Commitment To Co-worker 66
Table 3.8. Age Range: Failed Commitment(s) To Friends 66
Table 3.9. Gender: When Saying, “I Could” ........ 67
Table 3.10. Gender: Said, “I Will,” But Didn’t ........ 68
Table 3.11. Gender: Frequency to Say, “I Will,” But Don’t 69
Table 3.12. Native Language: Commitments To Acquaintances 70
Table 3.13. To Employer: “Need To” .................. 71
CHAPTER ONE

COMMITMENT IN SPEECH ACTS

When we speak or write, we are rarely very clear, precise, or explicit about what we mean...but are, on the contrary, vague, indirect, and unclear about just what we are committed to. (Stubbs, 1986, p.1)

Introduction

The axiom "A man is as good as his word" and the Biblical admonition "Let your yea be yea, and your nea, nea" (James 5:12) traditionally have been common principles governing daily English conversation. Accordingly, Grice (1990), in his Cooperative Principle, proposes that speakers engaged in discourse may assume mutually cooperative truth. Yet, in daily discourse, we observe occasions in which speakers of English seemingly attempt to avoid absolute commitment to the propositional truth in their speech. Consider the following examples of actual speech. On December 12, 2001 (5:00 PM), Peter Jennings presaged his evening topic for ABC's World News Tonight, "Tanzanite, the popular gem that may be funding terrorism." Effectively, Jennings implies to his audience a plausible link between tanzanite and terrorism without committing
himself to the truth of an actual link. Similarly, in a conversation between two musicians, Musician A apprises her colleague (B), "Practice is Saturday morning at 9:00, but don’t quote me." Thus, Musician A overtly states that practice is scheduled for 9:00 AM, while seemingly attempting to elude commitment to the truth of a 9:00 AM practice by adding to her statement "but don’t quote me." In yet a third example, a middle-aged lady (C) tells a friend, "I will be there (a friend’s birthday celebration)." Not long after, (C) tells a co-worker that she will be going to the birthday party (referenced above) unless she can get tickets to a concert, which is the same night as the party. Upon contemplation of these given examples, I set forth two questions: if, as in the first two examples, we as speakers of English (SsE) circumvent commitment to propositional truth in our speech, do we genuinely practice speaking cooperatively in mutual commitment to truth? Further, if, as in the third example, we speak commitment, but do not intend commitment, do we subtly lie?

In this context, I propose that speakers of English intend to avoid absolute commitment in their use of modality. Further, 1) I will specifically demonstrate that
speakers of English use will, the modal to which "absolute commitment" is ascribed in linguistic theory, for an intended meaning of relative commitment; moreover, sociocultural variables such as speaker-addressee relationship and age significantly impact speaker commitment in his/her speech acts. 2) I will investigate how speakers apply modality in order to distance themselves from an absolute commitment to the verity of their speech.

Within this first chapter, I will define speaker commitment as it directly relates to propositional truthfulness in speech acts and progress to a discussion of pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors that may influence a speaker's commitment in his/her speech acts.

In chapter 2, modality will be introduced and defined in the context of actual speech surrounding the 2000 Presidential Election. The scope of modality will then be narrowed to the identification and function/meaning of core and periphrastic modals. The discussion will present current grammar and research theory that asserts absolute poles of commitment in modal usage.

Chapter 3 will present the results of a survey of commitment and truth in common modal usage obtained by sampling in a variety of contexts will be presented. The
survey's findings will particularly address the following questions: Do speakers express absolute commitment through modal usage? What modals do speakers perceive to convey the strongest and weakest degrees/meaning of commitment? Do speakers prefer the directness of the positive assertion can or the distant, albeit polite form could when speaking commitment? Does the usage of can versus could change the degree/meaning of commitment in speech? How do speakers' perceptions of commitment through the use of the modal will relate to relationships between speakers and hearers? Are age, gender, native language, and/or occupation relational to the degree and/or propositional truth of commitment in speech? Are speakers' perceptions of their level of commitments consistent with or variant to their reported actual keeping of commitments? Secondarily, to investigate propositional truth in modal usage, I ask, is the phrasal modal need to spoken consistently in daily discourse to mean literally necessity?

**Commitment**

A discussion of commitment in speech acts would be remiss without careful definition and pragmatic examination of commitment as it pertains to propositional truthfulness
in speech acts. Therefore, I posit and strive to answer the following: What is commitment? What constitutes commitment in speech acts? What pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors influence a speaker’s commitment to truth in his/her speech? Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary (1959) defines commitment as “a promise or pledge” (p. 166). The American Heritage Dictionary (1997) further explicates that commitment, in addition to a pledge, is “the state of being bound emotionally or intellectually...” (p. 281). Moreover, Webster’s Collegiate Thesaurus (1988) assigns “obligation” (p. 141) as the primary synonym to commitment. Thus, by definition, commitment includes a promise or pledge, and as such, is binding as an obligation. Further, commitment, as a promise, “gives to the person to whom it is made a right to expect or to claim” that which is promised (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, 1959, p. 676). By extending this definition into speech act theory, I submit that speaker commitment may be defined as a speaker’s promise to the propositional truth of his/her utterance, the promise to which the speaker is emotionally or intellectually bound and obligated in his/her speech. Thereby, the addressee expects or claims that the proposition(s) of the speaker’s
utterance(s) is true. Comparatively, Grice (1990) proposes that rational conversation requires three cooperative elements: co-operative effort(s), common purpose(s), and mutually accepted direction between speaker(s) and hearer(s) (p. 27). Under the umbrella of this Co-operative Principle, Grice, moreover, asserts a maxim of Quality, “Try to make your contribution one that is true...Do not say what you believe to be false” and “Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence” (p. 28). Thus, co-operative speakers of English engaged in rational conversation expect mutually co-operative truth; i.e., speaker commitment to the propositional truth in his/her speech. In stark contrast, Aristotle defines the antithesis of commitment to truth, i.e., a lie, as “a statement of that which is that it is not, or of that which is not that it is” (Washington, 1991, p. 28). Citing Frege (1981), Lyon observes diametric antagonists, truth versus lies, in daily conversation and asserts that our words and sentences relate “to truth or falsity, rather than to situations that they purport to describe” (p. 161). Further, Lyon (1981) writes that commitment is “a modal component of factuality versus desirability” (p. 191). However, in pragmatic observation of daily conversation, is
Speaker commitment merely an utterance of truth or falsity? Factuality or desirability? What constitutes speaker commitment in our speech acts?

Speaker commitment may be expressed through two primary means. First, and most obviously, speaker commitment may be expressed through the illocutionary act of making a promise. How does a speaker accomplish this act? Searle (1965) posits that all speech acts are governed by constitutive and regulative rules. The former is a system of semantic rules under which speech acts are performed in the form of "If x, then y;" the latter, resembling the equation "X counts as y," regulates existing forms of behavior and interpersonal relationships (p. 117). The speech act of making a promise creates an obligation under regulative rules in the form of X counts as y, i.e., certain conditions must obtain. Searle proposes the following requisites for making a sincere promise.

1. Input and Output. "Normal input and output conditions obtain" (p. 121), i.e., the utterance must be intelligible speaker output and understood hearer input.

2. Propositional Content. "S (the speaker) expresses that p (the proposition) in the utterance of T (the
sentence)," and "in expressing that p, S predicates a future act A of S" (p. 121).

3. Preparatory Conditions. "H (the hearer) would prefer S's doing A to his not doing A, and S believes H would prefer his doing A to his not doing A. Additionally, "It is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events" (p. 122).


5. Essential Condition. "S intends that the utterance of T will place him under an obligation to do A" (p. 123).

6. Explication. "S intends that the utterance of T will produce in H a belief that conditions (sincerity and essential) obtain by means of the recognition of the intention to produce that belief, and he intends this recognition to be achieved by means of the recognition of the sentence as one conventionally used to preface such beliefs" (p. 123).

7. Semantic Rules. "The semantical rules of the dialect spoken by S and H are such that T is correctly and sincerely uttered if and only if (all previous) conditions obtain (p. 123).
Of the afore conditions, condition #4 qualifies such promises as sincere. However, we observe in daily English conversation occasions in which an insincere promise is uttered, i.e., the speaker does not intend to do A. For example, S affirms to H, "I promise I will be there (H’s party) tomorrow," although, S has other plans and does not intend to go to the party. In such occurrences, does S’s insincerity void the uttered commitment? It does not.

In addition to the act of making a sincere promise, speakers of English also make a promise or commitment to the truth of their speech by the mere utterance of their words, regardless of the speaker’s sincerity or insincerity, i.e., the very illocution of an utterance obligates the speaker to his/her speech (exception: irony, implicature, sarcasm, metaphors, and the like—See Grice, 1990). Searle (1965) asserts:

To say “I promise to do A” is to take responsibility for intending to do A, and this condition holds whether the utterance was sincere or insincere (p. 124).

Stubbs (1986; cf. Kempson 1977) likewise writes,

Performatives (e.g. I promise, I guarantee) can be analyzed naturally as reporting propositions, which
are true by virtue of being uttered. If I say that I have promised, even if I have no intention of keeping my promise; the commitment has been made (p. 18).

Moreover, Grice’s Co-operative Principle and maxim of Quality may be extended such that the theory of a speaker’s obligation to the truth of his/her speech by mere utterance applies not only to performative speech acts, but to non-performative speech acts as well; if I say that \( p \) is or is not, even if I do not believe that it is or is not, I have verbally made a commitment to the propositional truth in my speech by virtue of its utterance. Consider the following:

1) I promise I will come.

2) I will come.

3) I promise the package was mailed yesterday.

4) The package was mailed yesterday.

5) I guarantee rehearsal is at 8:00 PM.

6) Rehearsal is at 8:00 PM.

Although the illocutionary force, by use of performatives in sentences #1, 3, and 5 above, is stronger than that of sentences #2, 4, and 6; under the Co-operative Principle and the maxim of Quality, the speaker is obligated to utter only that which he/she believes to be true and the hearer expects that the speaker’s utterance is true in all six
examples, regardless whether the speaker utters performative or non-performative verbs. Thus, we observe that the act of mere utterance obligates, or promises, the speaker's commitment to his/her speech. Further, drawing upon Searle, I submit that when a speaker utters T containing that p, and thereby promises to the truth of the speech act, the following conditions obtain regulatively in the form of X counts as y.

1. Input and Output. "Normal input and output conditions obtain" (Searle, 1965, p. 121), i.e., the utterance is intelligible speaker output and understood hearer input.

2. Propositional Content. "S (the speaker) expresses that p (the proposition) in the utterance of T (the sentence)," and "in expressing that p, S predicates..." p (Searle, 1965, p. 121).

3. Preparatory Condition. H does not have reason to believe that S is speaking uncooperatively or untruthfully.

4. Sincerity Condition. S does not intend that p to be implicature, figure of speech, indirect speech, or the like.
5. Essential Condition. Under the maxim of Quality, S’s utterance of that \( p \) in T obligates S to the truth of his/her speech, regardless whether S intends that \( p \) as truth or not.

6. Explication. S utters that \( p \) in T; such utterance of T produces in H the belief that S intends his/her speech to be cooperative and truthful, and therefore, also produces in H the belief that S is committed to the truth of his/her speech. S’s utterance T is a sentence conventionally used to convey T as truth, thereby leading H to expect S’s utterance to be true.

7. Semantic Rules. The semantic rules of the language or dialect spoken by S and H are such that T uttered is a speaker’s promise to the truth of T if the previous conditions obtain.

Thus, in accordance with the Co-operative Principle, its supermaxims, and regulative rules which govern speech acts, I conclude that a speaker of English pledges commitment through two observed means: 1) the performative act of making a promise and 2) the mere utterance of non-performative T that \( p \). Reciprocally, the addressee expects speaker commitment when either illocutor mean has been uttered.
Influences and Motivations

Having defined speaker commitment as it pertains to propositional truth, and having examined the conditions that constitute such commitment, we turn our attention to explore influences and motivations that may be related to speaker commitment in our speech acts. Sociolinguistically, why might speakers endeavor to circumvent commitment in their speech and to its truth? Pragmatically, upon what occasion(s) and under what circumstance(s) do illocutors intend to elude speaker commitment? What might be achieved or gained when a speaker avoids commitment in his/her speech?

First, the compelling consideration of politeness may be observed in daily English conversation. Chen (2001) proposes, “Politeness is a factor that determines what a speaker says and how she says it” (p. 95). Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1987), assert that speakers employ “linguistic strategies” to “face-oriented ends,” i.e., politeness (p. 58).

Of politeness, Leech (1983) posits two forms of illocution: self-politeness (a speaker’s politeness toward himself/herself) and other-politeness (a speaker’s politeness toward the hearer). Additionally, the theorist
notes that politeness may be expressed toward a third party (present or absent) as an extension of self or other. Whether the third party is perceived as an extension of self or other is culturally relative; i.e., constrained by cultural expectations and norms of language. Moreover, cultural expectations influence the manner of expressing politeness, including esteem versus denigration. For example, an English-speaking host may graciously accept a compliment on a deliciously cooked meal with a “Thank You.” However, a Chinese Mandarin speaking host must not only humbly decline the compliment, but also demonstrate politeness by denigrating the quality of the meal (viewed culturally as an extension of self) with a response such as It’s not so good or It’s nothing. In this case, the latter host may or may not be committed to his/her speech of politeness, inwardly knowing that a very generous, extraordinarily delicious meal indeed was served and being most appreciative of the compliment.

Contemporary with Leech, Brown and Levinson (1987) observe that politeness is contingent upon two elements: rationality and face, specifically other-face, i.e., the face of the hearer. Rationality is defined as that "precisely definable mode of reasoning from ends to the
means that will achieve those ends” (p. 58). Face relates both to the positive desire of a person to be accepted and approved of in specific communicative, social situations as well as to a person’s negative desire to be unimpeded, which includes “the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction — i.e., to freedom of action and freedom from imposition” (p. 61). Moreover, Brown and Levinson emphasize: “Face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction” (p. 61). Thus, face is an “high stakes” politeness component, which greatly influences the content of a speaker’s utterance as well as the manner in which propositional content is illocuted, including commitment versus non-commitment.

However, in daily conversation, we frequently observe occasions in which a speaker imposes upon his/her hearer’s face by uttering a Face-Threatening Act (FTA). For example, a family member’s car is in the shop. I live nearby; consequently, this family member asks,

Would you give me a ride to work tomorrow morning?

Her request, though seemingly reasonable, imposes her desire or need upon me, thereby threatening my negative
face and potentially impeding my plan to leave early in the morning for San Diego.

In addition to a speaker's having potential to threaten the face of the hearer (other-face), Chen (2001) observes that the reciprocal also holds true, i.e. the hearer potentially can threaten the face of the speaker or self-face can be threatened. Thus, Chen proposes (in polite modesty), an essential complement to Levinson and Brown's other-politeness, the theory of self-politeness: "When having to do speech acts that threaten self-face or when self-face is attacked by others, speakers will make efforts to maintain, protect, or enhance self-face, resulting in utterances for the sake of self-politeness." (p. 90) In this context, self is defined as the speaker and those with whom the speaker is associated. [e.g., A teacher is one entity among the plurality of aids, fellow colleagues, and administrators of a learning institution; therefore, a teacher's associates and colleagues, as well as the institution itself, may be included in that teacher's concept of "self." ] Speech acts that threaten self-face (positive or negative) are known as Self-Face Threatening Acts (SFTA's). Consider the following example. A high school principal asks,
Will you (an English teacher) consider giving extra time after school next semester to tutor students in English and math?

However, the teacher has been looking forward to taking piano lessons during that time. A response in the negative, i.e., I do not agree to commit, would be potentially self-face threatening; for it might contribute to the principal's perceiving the teacher as being non-cooperative or a non-team player (positive self-face threatening). On the other hand, an utterance to commit to tutoring after school would require that the teacher give up treasured personal time and plans to study music (negative self-face threatening).

To further explicate their politeness theories, Brown and Levinson (1987, p.60) and Chen (2001, p.96) assert that speakers employ superstrategies of politeness to determine 1) whether or not they will utter a face-threatening act at all, and if so, 2) the content and manner in which they will illocute the speech act. Table 1.1 below explicates.
Table 1.1. Politeness Superstrategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brown and Levinson</th>
<th>Chen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Relevance: S asks H for commitment in speech act.)</td>
<td>(Relevance: S makes a choice: to commit or not in speech act.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less Face Threat
4. Off record.
5. Withhold FTA.

Great Face Threat

Superstrategy determined by estimation of:

1. The want to communicate the content of FTA x.
2. The want to be efficient/urgent.
3. The want to maintain Hearer’s face to any degree.

(Brown and Levinson, 1987)

Less Face Threat
3. Off record.
4. Withhold SFTA.

Great Face Threat

Superstrategy determined by estimation of:

1. Degree self-face is threatened by other.
   A. Degree of confrontation (continuum).
   B. Gravity of FTA threat by other.
   1) FTA Severity.
   2) FTA Directness.
2. Degree self-face threatened by SFTA.
   A. SFTA Severity.
   B. SFTA Consequence.

(Chen, 2001)

(*Chen does not distinguish between negative and positive face, a distinction of kind, rather than degree. Additionally, Chen notes that negative and positive face apply to all superstrategies whether on or off record.)

In Table 1.1 above, we observe that the superstrategies for other and self-politeness are complementary. In situations which speakers perceive to be non-confrontational or minimally consequential, speakers may choose to utter
"baldly" FTA’s or SFTA’s; e.g. a congenial, “Excuse me,” (SFTA) or a simple request/reply:

A: When you get a moment, could you lend me a quick hand? (FTA)

B: I’d be happy to. (SFTA)

From the latter example, we note specifically that B’s speech act is a baldly uttered commitment to help A.

In a situation of slightly increased potential for face threat, speakers may choose to utter FTA’s or SFTA’s “with redress” in an attempt to mitigate unfavorable and unwanted positive or negative-face results. Chen suggests that such redress may include, but not be limited to, the following: justification, contradiction, hedging, impersonalization, humor, confident speech, modest speech, hesitation, or conditions appended to the SFTA to the utterance (p. 99). [Note: All but direct contradiction may apply to an FTA.] Specific to SFTA’s, Chen notes that the first five speaker options (justification, contradiction, hedging, impersonalization, and humor) are positive strategies employed usually when a speaker has acted thoughtlessly or committed a faux pas. In such utterances a speaker will admit to the offence, adding to the admission justification, a humorous remark, etc. When
needing to portray a strong, capable self-image, such as at a job interview, the speaker attempts to use speech that suggests self-confidence. On the other hand, a speaker who does not want to seem arrogant (which also might be perceived as a threat to other—a potential for other attack against self) may choose to modestly minimize himself/herself. Hesitation and conditional addendums are negative strategies used by a speaker (self) when other imposes upon self, such that self would potentially lose self-face or realize unfavorable consequences should self not agree to the imposition, e.g. a university administrator strongly urges a professor of English to speak at a CATESOL conference forum, rather than to attend a long anticipated L.A. Laker's game. In response, the professor may hedge or hesitate to commit to speaking at the conference, or the professor may commit on the condition “If my job depends on it, I will do it” or “Only if no one else is available will I do it.”

Of particular relevance to the present thesis, each of the previous nine options of Chen’s second superstrategy are particularly applicable to commitment in speech acts. The following examples illustrate.
Justification: We’re sorry that it’s taking a little longer than expected. We will have it finished by 5:00; we’ve just been swamped today.

Contradiction: I said that I would go, but I really didn’t commit to it.

Hedge: We will probably go to the game.

Impersonalization: Boss: Will you please see that this project gets done correctly?

Employee: It will be tough to meet these specifications.

Humor: Supervisor: Can you fix it?

Worker: Did Greenbay win the Superbowl?

Confidence: I will take care of the matter; I know the client well.

Modesty: Student: I don’t understand this concept.

Can you help me?

Tutor: I might know a little about it.
Hesitation: I have a 9:00 and a 10:00 (appointment); I'll see if I can swing by about 11:30.

Conditions:

Parent: It's time to do your homework.

Child: I'll do it only because I have to.

Upon occasions in which the threat to face is high, speakers may opt to employ a third super strategy, that is, to utter FTA's or SFTA's "off-record" or to be elusive on-record. As a primary means of doing so, Chen asserts that speakers strive to implement implicature and other implied speech, flouting Grice's maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and/or Manner. The purpose, Chen writes, "is obvious: by doing the SFTA at the what-is-implied level rather than at the what-is-said level, the speaker would avoid damaging self-face" (p. 101).

Additionally, as the degree of threat to face increases, I propose that speakers specifically use modality as a means to circumvent commitment in their implied speech. Peter Jennings' statement, "Tanzanite, the popular gem that may be funding terrorism," (quoted in this paper's opening paragraph) illustrates well Chen's argument.
of elusiveness and the use of modality to achieve that end. As a journalist, Jennings is cognizant that he and his television network (self) are liable for the accuracy or inaccuracy of his statement(s). Moreover, being on-record and not desiring to lose face for violating the maxim of Quality (i.e., stating as fact that for which one lacks sufficient evidence to declare to be true), Jennings chooses to distance himself from the truth of his proposition by using the modal may rather than baldly committing, "Tanzanite, the popular gem that is funding terrorism." Thus, Jennings 1) effectively proposes by implication, through the use of modality, a link between tanzanite and terrorism, 2) escapes accountability for the truthfulness of his proposition, and thereby, 3) preserves self-face, i.e., precludes or mitigates other attack against self. In sum, following a non-committal politeness superstrategy was less self-face threatening than absolute commitment in his speech.

When estimating the weightiness of an FTA, Brown and Levinson suggest that the speaker factors three sociological variables: social distance, relative power,
and the *ranking of impositions in the particular culture* expressed through the following formula:

\[ Wx = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + Rx. \]

In other words, the weight of the face-threatening act \( x \) equals the social distance (\( D \)) of the speaker (\( S \)) to the hearer (\( H \)), plus the relative power (\( P \)) of the hearer over the speaker, plus the absolute ranking (\( R \)) of impositions in the particular culture. In this equation, social distance is a non-power, horizontal measurement of speaker/hearer identity and relationship (friend/friend, acquaintance/acquaintance, colleague/colleague, parent/parent, etc.), whereas relative power indicates the vertical or hierarchical role value of one participant over the other (captain/private, employer/employee, parent/child, teacher/student, etc.). Additionally, the appropriateness of a speech act according to cultural expectations for a particular office/occupation, age, gender, expertise, etc., is calculated as \( Rx \).

While we observe that the collective addends of the previous equation influence politeness, and thus commitment, in our speech acts, can we also say that each addend independently influences commitment in our speech? Further, if one or more do independently affect commitment
in our speech, do they affect commitment equally or disproportionately?

As a horizontal measurement of speaker/hearer relationship, social distance is a non-power continuum of interactive symmetry. Brown and Levinson assert that this measurement of symmetrical likenesses and/or contrasts is calculated according to “frequency of interaction” and “the kinds of material or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between S and H” (p. 77). On one end of the spectrum is greater social distance that includes speaker/hearer relationships having the least frequency of interaction and the greatest contrast of exchanged goods (such as might occur between speakers with contrastive dialects, ethnic values, ages, occupations, etc.). At the opposite end of the continuum, social closeness, speaker/hearer relationships have the greatest commonality and frequency of exchanges. “The reflex of social closeness,” Brown and Levinson propose, “is, generally, the giving and receiving of positive face” (p. 77). By applying the previous reflex principle to commitment in our speech (with deference to Chen’s unification of positive and negative face superstrategies), I propose that speakers of greater social distance will tend to utter greater positive
and negative SFTA's, taking wide latitude to avoid (even not to keep) absolute commitment. In contrast, speakers of strong social propinquity will tend to utter (and to keep) commitment to other as a face-giving reflex. For example, upon my best friend's request, I would be inclined to utter absolute commitment, whereas upon the request of an acquaintance, I might have greater tendency to decline commitment, either baldly or with redress. Thus, I hypothesize that social distance, or horizontal relationship, does independently influence commitment in our speech.

In addition to horizontal relationships, we also observe vertical, or power relationships between interlocutors (Brown and Levinson's second addend, P). These asymmetrical relationships are based upon "material control (over economic distribution and physical force)" and "metaphysical control (over the actions of others, by virtue of metaphysical forces subscribed to by those others)" (p. 77), whether sanctioned or unsanctioned, intersecting or non-intersecting. Accordingly, Scollon and Scollon (1981) refer to power manifestations among speakers as "superordinate" over "subordinate" roles in the presentation of self [e.g., elder over younger, teacher
over student, employer over employee, husband over wife (traditionally), parent over child, etc. Moreover, Scollon and Scollon assert that the superordinate role entails dominance and spectatorship of the subordinate, whereas the expectation of the subordinate role is exhibitionism and dependence. Therefore, "as S’s power over H increases, the weightiness of (an) FTA diminishes" (Brown and Levinson, p. 78). For as the speaker or superordinate’s power increases over the subordinate hearer, so does the dominant’s imposition upon and expectation from the hearer, e.g. employer/employee relationship.

Building upon the preceding foundation, I propose that as the power of the speaker (superordinate) over the hearer (subordinate) increases, so does the weightiness of the SFTA to the hearer. Of application to commitment in our speech, I hypothesize the following: as the power of the speaker requesting commitment increases over the hearer, the greater the hearer will tend to make (and to keep) absolute commitment. Conversely, however, I ask: would the superordinate’s commitment toward the subordinate be the same? If not, how would commitment vary?

Thirdly, Brown and Levinson’s politeness equation includes the element of cultural significance in our
speech. Hudson (1996) asserts a merger between "language" and "social constraints on speech" (p. 108). Moreover, he maintains,

Society controls our speech in two ways. Firstly, by providing a set of norms . . . Secondly, society provides the motivation for adhering to these norms . . . In addition to controlling it in these two ways, society takes a great interest in speech, and in particular provides a set of concepts for thinking and talking about it (pp. 119-120).

Specific to commitment in our speech, cultural norms, as referred to by Hudson, constrain explicitness in language. For example, Keenan (1974) observes intentional ambiguity as a norm in Malagasy society. New information is perceived as a peculiar treasure, giving prestige to the person who solely possesses it. Thus, specific information generally is not provided upon request; rather, an elusive response is the norm. Further, the uttering of specific identities and references is believed to bring bad omen upon that which is specified and "tsiny" guilt upon the speaker. The consequence of this belief upon Malagasy explicitness is three fold. First, Malagasy speakers avoid addressing persons and identifying sources by given name.

28
Second, speakers hesitate to talk specifically about past events. Third, speakers are extremely reluctant to utter future commitments. In sum, Keenan's research suggests that Malagasy speakers seemingly prefer to use non-committal speech.

Similarly, Scollon and Scollon (1981) observe contrasts between American English and Athabaskan speakers. The researchers report that whereas explicitness and commitment to past and future events is culturally appropriate among American English speakers, Athabaskan speech reflects the practice of a Reduction Principle, i.e., the reduction of self. Thereby, Athabaskan speakers perceive illocutions that directly state or commit to future events to be culturally unacceptable, bringing "bad luck". Specific favorable recounting of past events is also avoided.

Thus, in light of the previous Malagasy and Athabaskan linguistic contrasts to English discourse and given that language acquisition theory affirms the phenomenon of first language transfer into second languages (Gass & Selinker, 2001), I hypothesize that native language influences speaker commitment among English speakers.
Finally, the merger of cultural constraints and language (Hudson, 1996, previously cited) also imposes expectations of gender in language. Hudson writes, "As far as speakers are concerned, the commonest characteristics to be reflected by specific linguistic items is sex" (p. 121). Further, he asserts that male speakers are oriented toward power. In contrast, female speakers are solidarity purposed. Interestingly, the researcher considers the motivation of power to disadvantage the male speaker in the home where "rapport-speaking" is key to private family relationships, and perceives the solidarity motivation of the female speaker to be disadvantageous in the workplace wherein oral presentations and committee deliberations are required. Accordingly, Coates (1986) asserts that men and women "differ...in their sense of what is appropriate for them as speakers" (p. 123). Citing Lakoff (1975), she additionally states, "Women are perceived as expressing themselves in a more tentative way than men," i.e. less committal (P. 103).

However, the "tentativeness" of female speech in sociolinguistic theory is highly controversial. O'Barr and Atkins (1980; cited in Coates, 1986) refute Lakoff's (1975) assertion regarding the so-called female tentativeness
(modality) in speech. For O'Barr and Atkins observe that courtroom speech is influenced by two primary factors: a speaker’s social status and previous courtroom experience, not by gender. As further argument against predominate tentativeness in female speech, Holmes (1984) reports greater modality and mitigation in men’s tag questions than in women’s (see Table 1.2 below). Further, the women’s speech contains nearly twice the percentage of affective tags as the men’s.

Table 1.2. Gender: Tag Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Epistemic</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Mitigative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Modality)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Holmes, 1984)

Does, then, gender truly influence tentativeness or, contrastively, commitment in our speech? I hypothesize that it does, but only for isolated occasions or functions.
CHAPTER TWO

MODALS: TRUTH AND COMMITMENT

"There is, perhaps, no area of English grammar that is both more important and more difficult than the system of modals." (Palmer, 1979, cited in Washington, 1991, p. 1)

"Modality, like negation or questions, is apparently a linguistic universal. One can say that it appears in all languages (in different ways) or even that any language without it would be 'impossible'." (Washington, 1991, p.1)

Introduction

In chapter one, we defined speaker commitment in speech acts and examined various influences and constraints upon our commitment to our speech. Certainly and practically, however, the entirety of our speech is not comprised exclusively of absolute commitment. For example, consider the following excerpts/citations from the historical 2000 Presidential Election campaign speeches and debates (Note: italics are my emphasis). George W. Bush argued the need to improve education, "We must not leave one child behind" (Republican National Convention, televised August 3, 2000). He further asserted in the first Presidential Debate, "I believe that if we find poor children trapped in schools that won't teach, we need to free the parents," (New York Times, October 5, 2000) to
which Al Gore rebutted, "I don't think private schools should have a right to take taxpayer money away from public schools." Concerning gun control, Al Gore postured, "None of my proposals would have an effect on hunters or people who use rifles" (New York Times, October 19, 2000). On the issue of medical care Mr. Gore proposed, "I think we ought to have a patients' bill of rights." Mr. Bush countered, "If I'm the president, we're going to have emergency room care, we're going to have gag orders, women will have direct access to OB-GYN, people will be able to take their insurance company to court" (New York Times, October 18, 2000). When questioned regarding the selection of U.S. Supreme Court justices Governor Bush declared, "I believe in strict constructionists, and those are the kind of judges I will appoint." Vice President Gore contested, "The constitution ought to be interpreted as a document that grows with our country and our history (New York Times, October 5, 2000).

In similar discourse following the election, on November 21, 2000, the Supreme Court of Florida ruled on arguments which hinged upon two words, shall and may, in Florida's statutes and election rules. Effectively, the Justices ruled unanimously that may in relationship to the
discretionary provision of authority granted to Florida's Secretary of State supersedes shall referent to Florida's Constitutional mandate to certify votes (Hannity and Colmes, November 21, 2000).

Woven throughout the previous rhetorical garment of the 2000 Presidential Election is a common grammatical and elocutionary thread, modality. Modality is defined as "that classification of propositions based on whether they assert or deny the possibility, impossibility, contingency, or necessity of their content" (American Heritage College Dictionary, 1997, p. 876). Rhetorically, modality may be expressed in diverse constructions including, but not limited to, 1) Core modals and/or semi-auxiliaries, 2) Lexical verbs (particularly opinion referents), 3) Adverbs and sentence modifiers, 4) Imperative and/or subjunctive moods, 5) Non-linguistic cues, 6) Vocal inflection, and 7) Truth-opposition statements such as sarcasm, etc. (Berk, 1999; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Grice, 1990; Shiffrin, 1990). Thus, it follows that modality in the English language is applied multifariously: to speculate, hedge, mitigate, predict, suggest or assert advice, mandate, request, and express hopes and/or desires.
The focus of this chapter, however, will be narrowed in scope to the first of modality constructions listed, core modals and semi-auxiliaries such as those highlighted in the afore political context. Specifically, I will present their identification and meanings/functions followed by a pragmatic survey of commitment and truth in modal usage in Chapter 3.

Identification

We have already observed that modals play an integral part in the political context of promises, debate, and law. Moreover, Washington (1991) asserts that it is impossible to express making plans, predicting future events, or creating possible worlds (irrealis) without modals. Thus, the question follows, how then can we aptly identify and appropriate modals in daily discourse?

Modals may be divided into two classifications, core modals (true modals) and semi-auxiliaries, also referred to as phrasal, periphrastic, pseudo and quasi-modals (Berk, 1999; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Jacobs, 1995). Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) define core modals as "tenseless auxiliaries that take no subject-verb agreement and no infinitive to before the following verb" (p. 137).
Berk (1999) characterizes these modals as "semantically rich and inflectionally impoverished...(they) carry no third person present {-s} ending...and they have no past participle forms, no present participle forms, and no infinitive forms" (p. 132).

Core modals traditionally have been divided into two forms, those that historically were present tense and their historically past tense forms. These terms currently imply semantic purpose (to be discussed later) rather than standard tense.

Table 2.1. Core Modals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historically Present Tense</th>
<th>Historically Past Tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shall</td>
<td>should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will</td>
<td>would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can</td>
<td>could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td>might</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mot' (lost during Middle English)</td>
<td>must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>ought (to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[need]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[dare]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: [] requires negative and/or interrogative constructions
In Table 2.1 above, we observe that the historically past tense was constructed by Old English "root vowel alternation" (Matthews, 1996, p. 364) and the appendage of {-d} or {-t} past tense suffixes to the historical present (Berk, 1999). Hence, The historically past tense of shall is should and the historically past tense of will is would, etc.

For every core modal there is a phrasal modal (PM) counterpart as illustrated in Table 2.2 below. Jacobs (1995) refers to these modal counterparts as periphrastic modals because they "paraphrase (core) modal meanings" (p. 217). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) best define phrasal modals as "multiword forms ending in infinitive to, which function semantically like true modals (in certain of their meanings)" (p. 138). Berk (1999) adds that such modals usually begin with be, carry tense and subject-verb agreement (with the exception of used to and had better), and allow the present and past participle forms of aspect. The tense and subject-verb agreement is inflected on be, have, or the head verb (except PM's that have incorporated the true modal would). Further, tense and modality may be added on the same verb form. Adverbs other than the negative not may not separate PM word components.
Table 2.2. Modal Counterparts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Phrasal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shall</td>
<td>obliged to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will</td>
<td>be going to, be about to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may, might</td>
<td>be allowed to, be permitted to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can, could</td>
<td>be able to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must</td>
<td>have to, have got to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>should, ought (to)</td>
<td>be to, be supposed to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would (past habit)</td>
<td>used to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other semi-auxiliaries that have been accepted as modals in contemporary English include: be sure to, be bound to, be (un)likely to, be certain to, be (un)willing to, be due to, seems to, appears to be, need to, want to, had better, had best, would rather, would prefer to, and would like to. (Berk, 1999; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; and Jacobs, 1995)

Remarkably, phrasal modals, particularly those ending in to, possess a strong enough semantic tie between to and the word immediately preceding, that the two words actually become one lexical unit in casual daily speech. Thereby, have to becomes "hafta," got to becomes "gotta," going to converts to "gonna," and need to is often spoken "needsta," etc. (Jacobs, 1995)

Meanings and Functions

Having identified modals, we turn our attention to their meaning and function. Modals present five semantic
potentials: 1) alternative state(s) of the subject, 2) intimation of time, 3) antithesis of tense, 4) epistemic inference, and 5) deontic assertion. First, Washington (1991) informs that modals project alternative subject states (states that are non-existent at the present place and time) that regular verbs do not. Regular verbs present the subject of a sentence in its actual state. Further, a regular verb limits its subject to only one actual state. For example, John is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Larson. The former sentence expresses that John, the subject, clearly belongs to the Larsons. His belonging to the Larsons is his sole actual state. The verb is neither implies or allows any other state for John. In contrast, modals can imply a representation of many possible alternative subject states. For example, John may be the son of Dr. and Mrs. Larson. The modal may in this example allows multiple alternative states of the subject. For it is possible that John is the Larson's son; it is also possible that John is not. Moreover, he may be the son of any number of people, i.e. the Smith's, the Blake's, the Teller's, etc.

Not only do modals have the ability to imply possible alternative states, but they can also suggest necessary alternative states "different from the present, actual one"
(Washington, 1991, p. 4; see also Hinkel, 1995). Consider the following sentences:

(1) Dan and Shelley must make a shopping list before going to Albertson's.

(2) Mary should do her homework.

Both sentences express the need for a subject state other than the present, actual one. In sentence 1, Dan and Shelley have not actually made a shopping list. However, must suggests a necessary change of state prior to shopping, i.e., the making of a shopping list. Sentence 2 represents Mary's present actual state as not having done her homework. Should manifests a necessary, different state for Mary, i.e., doing her homework. The suggested alternative state also implies alternative outcome(s). For example, sentence 2 expresses that Mary's necessary alternative state, doing homework, would have different results (i.e., better grades, different responses from her parents and teacher, etc.) than her present actual state of not having done her homework. Conclusively, having observed the semantic implications of the possible versus the necessary alternative states, "deciding between the
possible and necessary," then, is "basic to the way a writer (or speaker) chooses to represent the alternate state" (Washington, 1991, p. 9).

In addition to presenting alternative states, modals also intimate time—past, present and future—for such states. Past modality may be expressed by usage of a modal followed by have and a main verb in {-en} or {-ed} past participle construction (perfect aspect). For example, Dan might have gone home. As previously demonstrated, might expresses alternative states for the subject, Dan. Additionally, the modal might in conjunction with have gone (the present perfect aspect of go) expresses that the alternative states of going home or going somewhere else occurred in the indefinite past.

Traditionally, present time has generally been indicated by the use of an historically past tense modal followed by a bare infinitive (infinitive without to), although contemporary English is incorporating historically present forms also. Consider the sentence, That could be Dan at the door. Again, the modal could suggests alternative states for That. Furthermore, historically past could followed by the bare infinitive be intimates the present tense for those alternative states. For we may
insert an adverb of present time and maintain the exact sentence meaning: *That could be Dan at the door (now).*

The third meaning of time, the *future*, is expressed by the use of an historically present tense modal immediately followed by a bare infinitive. In the sentence, *Darla will have to leave soon in order to get to the library before it closes,* Darla is not at the library at the present time. *Will have to* presents an alternative state of necessity for Darla (i.e., getting to the library before it closes), which if it is actually to take place, will take place in the indefinite future. Thus, we observe that commitment in speech acts may include a modal referent to past, present, or future time.

Although we have observed time referents for modality, modals are *antithetical to regular tensed verbs, semantically.* For modals uniquely enable the speaker to interpose subjective interjections of his/her perception, proposition and/or perspective on discourse that the use of regular present or past tense verbs does not allow. Modals may convey the speaker's attitudes, politeness, indirect inferences (such as indirect requests), assertiveness (e.g., advice), consent/approval, alternatives to yes or no responses, and degree of probability/possibility,
certainty, or commitment (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Washington, 1991). Contrast the following sentences:

(3) Sam is an engineer.

(4) Sam might be an engineer.

The tense inflected copula in sentence (3) states only present fact that Sam's occupation indeed is that of an engineer. However, the modal might in sentence (4) interjects the speaker's degree of certainty/uncertainty that Sam is an engineer. And in so doing, the statement moves from a factual account to a proposition of the speaker's subjective conjecture, which lacks speaker commitment to the proposition as being truth.

"The ways in which speakers indicate their degree of commitment to the truth of a given proposition" is referred to as epistemic meaning (Berk, 1999, p. 130). Commitment to the truth may take the form of absolute modality [Matthews' (1996) poles of necessity, certainty and impossibility] or relative modality (degrees of possibility, probability and improbability that exist between the absolute poles). In the sentence Mike will win the race, the modal will expresses the speaker's positive assertion of high probability. In contrast, Mike could win the race suggests, through the modal could, the speaker's
positive assertion of low probability. Relative modality between the two degrees of commitment is expressed by statements such as Mike should win the race, Mike may win the race, and Mike might win the race (from highest to lowest probability). Negative assertions of uncertainty, improbability and impossibility are stated with the adverb not or prefixes such as {un-} and {im-}, as in the phrasal modal is unlikely to. The package might not arrive on time expresses negative assertion of low possibility. The negative assertion of impossibility is stated The package can't arrive on time. Modality between these extremes may be expressed (from highest to lowest possibility) The package may not arrive on time, The package is unlikely to arrive on time, and The package won't arrive on time. The following model (Table 2.3) is a helpful characterization of epistemic usage.
Table 2.3. Epistemic Usages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>predict.</th>
<th>potentialis</th>
<th>subjective</th>
<th>relative modality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td>concess.</td>
<td>potentialis</td>
<td>subjective</td>
<td>relative modality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can</td>
<td>realis</td>
<td>objective</td>
<td>relative modality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will</td>
<td>potentialis</td>
<td>subjective</td>
<td>positive assertion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must</td>
<td>potentialis</td>
<td>subjective</td>
<td>absolute modality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have/got to</td>
<td>realis</td>
<td>objective</td>
<td>absolute modality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>might</td>
<td>irrealis</td>
<td>subjective</td>
<td>relative modality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>potentialis</td>
<td>subjective</td>
<td>-relative modality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>could</td>
<td>potentialis/irrealis</td>
<td>objective</td>
<td>relative modality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would</td>
<td>irrealis</td>
<td>(?)</td>
<td>positive assertion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>should</td>
<td>potentialis</td>
<td>subjective</td>
<td>-absolute modality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ought</td>
<td>potentialis</td>
<td>objective</td>
<td>-modality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Matthews, 1996, p. 373) (- =downgraded)

In contrast to epistemic meaning and function, modals may also be used to express deontic meaning (also called root modality) by asserting directives or volition for potential action. Berk (1999) defines directives as "any utterance in which a speaker tries to get someone else to behave in a particular way" (p. 131). Examples include giving or requesting advice or permission; soliciting commitment; and asserting mandate/prohibition, instruction, or reprimand.
Examples: (6) What should/can I do? (requesting advice)
(7) You should/could invest in long-term options. (giving advice)
(8) May I leave now? (requesting permission)
(9) You may take a break. (giving permission)
(10) Will you go with me? (soliciting commitment)
(11) You must/will do your homework. (mandate)
(12) You should circle the correct answer. (instruction)
(13) You should have called. (reprimand)

Deontic volition encompasses the utterance of commitment (agreement or promise), intention (including threats), desire, willingness (i.e., making an offer or invitation), or preference.

Examples: (14) I will pick you up at 8:00. (commitment)
(15) I'm going to keep trying. (intention)
(16) She would like to order now. (desire)
(17) I would be happy to help you. (willingness)
(18) Carla would rather sleep than eat. (preference)
Matthews (1996) reports the following representation of deontic usage (p. 373).

![Table 2.4. Deontic Usages](image)

(*) used deontically only

As a noteworthy exception to Matthew’s representation (Figure 2.4), not only does will imply positive assertion, will also carries meaning of absolute modality. Coates (1983) attributes meanings of intention and willingness to deontic, volitional will. Jacobs (1995) also asserts, “will indicates intention,” and continues, “Intention is the imposition upon ‘oneself’ of an obligation to take some
action" (P. 227). For example, Will you marry me? Yes, I will marry you. As (self or other) imposed obligation, i.e., promise or commitment, will is absolute modality.

Lastly, in the discussion of meanings/functions of modals, consideration is given to the contrastive function of modals in quoted versus reported speech. Historically present modals are used to quote actual speech of others for the purpose of preserving the speech integrity (perception, propositional intent, and/or perspective) of the one being quoted (Berk, 1999; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Matthews, 1996). For example, Miss Reeves said, "I will collect your assignment at the beginning of class tomorrow." Herein, the quoter commits him/herself to a representation of truth to the other's speech.

Contrastively, modals that were historically past tense, are applied to reported speech (Berk, 1999; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Matthews, 1996). The speaker chooses to assign reported speech to another's discourse in order to create a means through which he/she may interpose his/her personal opinion, emotion, and inferences about the other's speech. Reported speech, then, is relayed in the form David told me that he would help if he weren't too busy on Monday. We may observe from
this example that reported speech allows the reporter 1) to
distance him/herself from a commitment to truth of the
other's speech and 2) to incorporate relativity and
subjectivity into the same.
CHAPTER THREE
SURVEY

Introduction

In a televised discussion with Fox News host Tony Snow (November 25, 2000), regarding the ongoing Presidential contest, Jim Pinkerton of Newsday compared current American values to Einstein's "Theory of Relativity." He states, "There are no absolutes! ... The relative of the circumstance and the moment dictates the truth." Having contemplated Mr. Pinkerton's statement, I ponder whether his assertion regarding current American values might accurately reflect our spoken American English language with particular respect to modal usage. Accordingly, as an experiment of research to investigate propositional truth and commitment in modal usage, I pose the following questions for survey:

1. Do speakers express absolute commitment through modal usage? If culture is reflected in language (Hinkel, 1995), do Matthew's (1996) poles of absolute modality and Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman's (1999) modal commitment to certainty remain?
2. What modals do speakers perceive to convey the strongest and weakest degree/meanings of commitment?

3. Do speakers prefer the directness of the positive assertion can or the distancing, yet polite form could when speaking commitment?

4. Does the usage of can versus could change the degree/meaning of a speaker’s commitment in speech?

5. How do speakers’ perceptions of commitment through the use of the modal will relate to relationships between speakers and hearers?

6. Are age, gender, occupation, and/or native language relational to the degree and/or propositional truth of commitment in speech?

7. Are speakers’ perceptions of their level of commitments consistent with or variant to their reported actual keeping of commitments?

8. Do speakers use the phrasal modal need to consistently in daily discourse to mean literally necessity?
Method

As a medium to acquire unprejudiced data, a 16-question written survey, primarily multiple choice, was created. (See Appendix A) In an effort not to bias or limit speakers' preference, in each of the multiple choice survey questions respondents are asked whether they prefer to say other/write in, as well as to write the reason for their stated preference. To elicit an answer to research question 1, Do speakers use modals to express absolute commitment?, the survey's multiple-choice questions offer the following options: absolute commitment, relative degrees of commitment between absolute commitment and non-commitment, and other/write in (Exception: these options are non-applicable to multiple-choice question #13). In order to observe which modals speakers perceive to convey the strongest and weakest degrees/meanings of commitment (research question 2), survey questions #1 and 7 ask the respondents to rate modals from the strongest to the weakest meaning of commitment as they would use the modals in daily speech. To inquire whether speakers prefer to utter commitment by direct assertion or polite distancing (research question 3), survey question #3 directly asks respondents their preference for saying can or could when
speaking commitment. Survey questions #5 and 10 are devoted to answering research question 4 with respect to the respondent's intended degree/meaning of commitment through the use of can versus could in daily conversation. Survey question #5 asks the respondents what degree of commitment they mean when saying I can help you tomorrow; likewise survey question #10 asks the respondents what degree of commitment they mean when saying I could help you tomorrow. In effort to answer research question 5, How do speakers' perceptions of commitment through the use of the modal "will" relate to relationships between speakers and hearers, survey questions #2, 6, 8, and 11 ask the respondents what they mean when saying I will do it respectively to an employer, employee, friend or co-worker, and casual acquaintance. Survey question #15 directly asks respondents their age, gender, occupation, and native language; responses have been crosstabbed against each responses to each question in the survey in order to answer research question 6, Are age, gender, occupation, and/or native language relational to the degree and/or propositional truth of commitment in speech. In an attempt to evaluate whether speakers' perceptions of their level of commitments are consistent with or variant to their
reported actual keeping of commitments (research question 7), survey questions #12, 14, and 16 respectively ask respondents whether in the past year they have uttered commitment but failed to keep their commitment, the frequency that they utter commitment but fail to keep their commitment, and the degree of commitment that they prefer to make. The responses to survey questions #12, 14, and 16 are compared/contrasted. Finally, the aim of research question 8 was to observe whether need to is consistently spoken with the literal intended meaning of necessity; accordingly, survey question #9 asks respondents what they meant by need to the last time they told their employer that they needed to take time off. The survey was reviewed by two California State University (San Bernardino, CA) English professors and graduate peers prior to distribution to the public.

A total of sixty-eight persons were surveyed; of the sixty-eight surveys returned, three were incomplete and were necessarily set aside. Thus, the percentages and numbers of this report are based on a total population of 65 persons. This population is defined by the following: 43% ages 18-25, 37% ages 26-45, 19% ages 46 or older; 40% male and 60% female; non-native English speakers 19% (1.5%
Chech, 3% Spanish, 3% Korean, 1.5% Japanese, 5% Chinese, 1.5% Russian, 1.5% Vietnamese). Three percent declined to answer native language.

Sampling of five populations and/or sites was chosen in an attempt to gather an honest, integrous representation of the general public. Sites selected for survey include Wal-mart's main exit (Hemet, CA; 17 persons surveyed) and California State University's Student Commons (20 persons surveyed) and University Hall (10 persons surveyed). Persons surveyed at the Student Commons and University Hall are of diverse majors/disciplines other than English. Additional respondents include acquaintances and friends (non-university, 6 persons surveyed) and volunteers of a graduate multilingual English class (12 persons surveyed). These volunteers are English proficient, but have not been biased by classroom instruction specific to modals.

Surveys were distributed and collected by myself; there were no intermediaries. Respondents completed the surveys in my presence at the time of distribution to them. Further, individuals did not collaborate or discuss the questions with others.

Findings were hand calculated twice for accuracy. Additionally, statistical frequencies and Pearson chi-
square cross tab probabilities (seeking P=0.05 or less) were tabulated using SPSS 10.0 application.

Findings

To test the respondents' perceptions of which modals convey the strongest and weakest degree/meanings of commitment, question one of the survey asks participants to rate the modals can, will, and may, in the order of probability and/or commitment as the participant would use them in daily conversation. In Table 3.1 below, we notice that greater than three-fourths of the surveyed population perceive will as meaning the strongest commitment of the three modals, which is consistent with Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) and Jacobs (1995).

However, we observe particular disparity with regard to can. Whereas Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman and Jacobs ascribe greater certainty to may over can, three-fifths of the surveyed participants attribute greater certainty to can over may. Moreover, an unexpected 20.6% of the participants evaluate can as communicating stronger commitment than will.
Table 3.1. Commitment Strength I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongest</th>
<th></th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th></th>
<th>Weakest</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Valid %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Valid %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Valid %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, with respect to can and in response to question #5 of the survey, When saying, "I 'can' help you tomorrow," what do you mean?, an overwhelming 69.2% replied absolute commitment, rather than probable or possible commitment.

Moreover, in question #3, participants were asked their preferences for saying can or could in daily conversation. Deference (nearly 70%) was given to the directness of the positive assertion I can over the distant, albeit polite form, I could (10.8%). [The remaining participants answered other.] However, in answer to question 10, When saying, "I 'could' help you tomorrow," what do you mean?, forty percent still indicated absolute commitment, as opposed to lesser commitment.

Desiring to be cautious about generalizations, I question whether the divergence of can from published theory and grammar texts is an isolated movement among survey participants or whether the disparity would extend
beyond the population surveyed. Future study of the modal may be warranted to determine if there is a moving trend from weak to strong commitment in the practical meaning and usage of can.

To further test the respondents' perceptions of which modals convey the strongest and weakest degree of commitment in speech, question #7 of the survey was set forth. Similar to question #1 (previously discussed), participants were asked to rate the modals could, should, might, ought, and must from strongest to weakest probability and commitment used in their daily language. In Table 3.2 below, we first observe discordant use of must. The majority (55.2%) of respondents use must in their daily speech as the strongest commitment modal among the five. On the other hand, must also is used as the weakest modal by approximately one-third (32.8%) of the participants surveyed. Second, reiterating the unanticipated strength of can, nearly one-fourth (23.3%) surveyed use could, the historically past tense of can, as meaning stronger commitment than must. In fact, nearly 75% of respondents use can (the modal to which weakness is theoretically attributed) to mean mid to strongest certainty and commitment of the five modals. Whereas half
(51.7%) of the respondents use should for speaking strong self-commitment (slightly less than the absolute certainty attributed to must), 25% use can for stronger commitment than should. Fourth, ought is congruently spoken as mid to weak commitment. Lastly, the most frequent (nearly 75%) use of might is equably spread throughout the mid to weakest end of the continuum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongest</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparison, Jacobs (1995) and Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) suggest the following parallel continuums (Table 3.3 below) for the previous modals, attributing strongest commitment and certainty to must, and conversely, weakest commitment to could (can) and might.
Table 3.3. Theoretical Commitment Strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongest</th>
<th>Larsen-Freeman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>Must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should</td>
<td>Should, ought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought</td>
<td>Could, might</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could</td>
<td>Low Certainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weakest

Having reviewed the participants' stated evaluation of modals as they pertain to probability and commitment in their daily speech, we now turn our attention to survey questions #2, 6, 8, and 11 to examine any relationships between commitment and speaker/hearer relationship. Table 3.4 on the following page illustrates the diverse speaker commitment toward hearers of four differing relationships with the speaker: employer, co-worker/friend, family, and casual acquaintance. The results were obtained by asking What do you mean by "I will?" when speaking to persons of each relationship. In the speech of 55% of participants surveyed, commitment is affected by speaker/addressee relationship.
Table 3.4. Relationship Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2 To Employer</th>
<th>Q6 To Friend/Co-worker</th>
<th>Q8 To Family</th>
<th>Q11 To Casual Acquaintance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F  VP</td>
<td>F  VP</td>
<td>F  VP</td>
<td>F  VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>43  67.2%</td>
<td>38  58.5%</td>
<td>37  56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>20  31.3%</td>
<td>26  40.0%</td>
<td>21  32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing...</td>
<td>0   0.0%</td>
<td>1   1.5%</td>
<td>5   7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>0   0.0%</td>
<td>0   0.0%</td>
<td>2   3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>1   1.6%</td>
<td>0   0.0%</td>
<td>0   0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4 above suggests a decline of absolute commitment as the relationship between speaker and addressee becomes more familiar and less power oriented. First, we observe that the greatest frequency (67.2%) of absolute commitment occurs in the vertical, power relationship of an employee (subordinate) speaking to an employer (superordinate). We also note the absence of relative (i.e., probable and possible) commitment to the employer. Comparatively, absolute commitment spoken to a friend/co-worker, declines by nearly ten percent—from a percentage of 67% (to employer) to 58.5% (to friend/co-worker), whereas frequency of provisional commitment to a friend/co-worker reciprocally increases by approximately the same percentage.
from 31.3% (to employer) to 40% (to friend/co-worker). Thus, among the surveyed participants, we observe a relationship between power and speaker commitment.

Additionally, a link between speaker commitment and horizontal, powerless relationships is notable among survey participants. Absolute commitment to addressees with whom the speaker has more frequent and intimate interaction and/or exchange (i.e., family, friends/co-workers) exceeds absolute commitment to socially distanced acquaintances by greater than 15%. Curiously, a greater frequency of tentative, provisional commitment is meant when speaking to friends/co-workers (40.0%) and casual acquaintances (35.4%) than when speaking to family members (32.3%). Also, commitment meanings of lesser degree, i.e., probable and possible, are intended when speaking to family and acquaintances; however, probable and possible commitments are essentially non-intended when speaking to friends/co-workers and employers.

In the previous paragraphs, we have discriminated the types of commitments spoken by respondents. However, do these speakers of English utter commitment truthfully? Do they keep their commitments? In answer to question 12 of the survey, nearly 75% admit to having broken commitments.
spoken in the past year. (Note: One could reasonably argue an interpretive flexibility of 5% for unforeseen, uncontrollable events that might truly preclude a person from keeping a commitment.) When asked in question #13 to whom did you not keep your commitment(s), the greatest percentage was to family and friends, i.e., the more intimate relationships. On the other hand, power relationships in the workplace have the least frequency of broken commitments, of which, the percentage to employers is slightly higher than to employees. See Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5. Broken Commitment(s) To Whom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>VP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To family member</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To friend</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To acquaintance</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To co-worker</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Employer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Employee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To compare and contrast participants' perception of the degree/meaning of their spoken commitments against the actual degree/meaning of respondents' spoken commitments, two additional questions were asked: question 14, What is
the frequency that you tell someone "I will," but do not carry out the action? and question 16, Which (kind of commitment) do you generally prefer to make? An astounding 77.8% of participants state that they rarely break a spoken I "will" commitment (although 75% previously disclosed their actually having broken an I "will" commitment recently); 4.8% assert never. In comparison, nearly 70% of persons surveyed indicate their preference to make definite commitments, whereas 25% prefer to commit tentatively. Interestingly, approximately 5% state a preference for speaking no commitment(s).

Finally, we turn our attention to observe four variables: age, gender, occupation, and native language in relation to commitment in speech. Each variable has been cross-tabbed throughout the survey to explore correlation, if any, between the variable and spoken commitment among the population surveyed.

Pearson chi-square testing indicates correlation between age range and the meaning/degree of commitment(s) spoken to employers and co-workers. First, we observe Table 3.6 below. When saying I will to an employer, nearly 83% of respondents in the age range 26-45 and 77% in the age range 46+ mean absolute commitment. Contrastively,
participants ages 18-25 intend nearly equal absolute (48%) and provisional (52%) commitment to their employers.

Table 3.6. Age Range: Spoken Commitment To Employer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages 18-25</th>
<th>Ages 26-45</th>
<th>Ages 46+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=27</td>
<td>N=23</td>
<td>N=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment, providing...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>13 48.1%</td>
<td>19 82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also significant, when saying I will to co-workers, approximately 70% of respondents in the age ranges of 26-45 and 46+ mean absolute commitment, compared to 39% of those ages 18-25, who intend absolute commitment and nearly 60% who mean relative commitment. (See Table 3.7 below.)
Table 3.7. Age Range: Spoken Commitment To Co-worker

\[ N=64 \quad P=0.018 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages 18-25</th>
<th>Ages 26-45</th>
<th>Ages 46+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=28</td>
<td>N=23</td>
<td>N=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>11 39.2%</td>
<td>17 73.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment, providing...</td>
<td>17 60.7%</td>
<td>6 26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, age range is related to commitment kept to friends: As Table 3.8 below illustrates, the percentage of failed commitment declines as age range increases.

Table 3.8. Age Range: Failed Commitment(s) To Friends

\[ N=63 \quad P=0.01 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages 18-25</th>
<th>Ages 26-45</th>
<th>Ages 46+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=28</td>
<td>N=23</td>
<td>N=12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 50.0%</td>
<td>8 34.8%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to age range, responses to question 10 of the survey suggest that a relationship exists between gender and commitment when using the “polite” modal could
When saying, *I could help you tomorrow*, approximately 50% of the females surveyed mean absolute commitment. Contrastively, only 25% of the males speak with the same intended meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.9. Gender: When Saying, &quot;I Could&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can count on my help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My help is probable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My help is possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm considering helping you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm saying this to appease you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, the intended meaning of stated commitments is congruent between male and female; however, the consistency between the females' perception of keeping commitments and their reported actual fulfillment of commitments is greater than that of males, whose *perception* of keeping their commitments is higher than their reported *actual* keeping of commitments. In Table 3.10 below, we find in response to
question 12 that nearly 80% of men surveyed admit to having broken a spoken commitment in the past year.

Table 3.10. Gender: Said, "I Will," But Didn't

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F VP</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>F VP</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, in the following table (3.11), we observe that over 91% percent of males state that they never or rarely break a spoken commitment. In contrast, 70% of females surveyed admit to saying, "I will," in the past year, but did not keep the commitment (Table 3.10 above), which is closely consistent with 77.5% of females stating that they rarely say, "I will," but do not keep the commitment (Table 3.11 below). Interestingly though, no female respondents report never saying, "I will," but not keeping the commitment.
Table 3.11. Gender: Frequency to Say, "I Will," But Don't

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=23</td>
<td>N=40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% of time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often (Greater than 50% of time)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A third variable, native language, seemingly influences the keeping of commitment to casual acquaintance among respondents. Table 3.12 below illustrates that whereas 75% of native English speaking respondents reported keeping spoken commitments to acquaintances in the previous year, only 42% of non-native English speaking respondents did so. (Note: The number of non-English speaking respondents totaled 12 or one-fifth of the respondents surveyed, a small, yet valid sample.) Variances in commitments to other relationships and modal meanings were not significant.
Table 3.12. Native Language: Commitments To Acquaintances

N=60  \( P=.026 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Native Ss of English</th>
<th>Non-native Ss of English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=48</td>
<td>N=12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F        VP</td>
<td>F        VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept</td>
<td>36       75.0%</td>
<td>5         41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken</td>
<td>12       25.0%</td>
<td>7         58.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourth, no notable correlation between occupation and commitment in speech is observed; rather, strong correlation occurs between vertical, power relationships and participants’ commitments as previously discussed.

Finally, we observe among respondents a divergence from a commitment to truth with regard to the literal, spoken usage of need to. Table 3.13 below illustrates that when last saying to employer, “I need to take time off,” only 52.3% of the respondents meant necessity, whereas 40% last used the modal to mean desire or want. Subsequent studies would be required to determine if the afore findings would extend beyond the present population and/or demographics.
Table 3.13. To Employer: “Need To”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>VP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Necessary circumstances (health, death, etc.)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired a break     (day off or vacation)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to go elsewhere (e.g., to a ballgame)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Operatively, among a small majority (56%) of respondents, speaking and intending absolute commitment is a norm. The reciprocal, however, is that the meaning of will as a positively asserted absolute pole or a commitment to certainty has diminished to relative commitment (provisional, probable, possible, and other) among 44% of respondents surveyed. The intended degree/meaning of spoken commitment of 55% of respondents surveyed is affected by the relationship between the respondent and his/her hearer. Moreover, a vast discrepancy exists between the stated meaning/degree of commitment and the actual reported keeping of commitment. The stated preference of commitment type is congruent to the stated degree/meaning
of commitment to an employer only. Notwithstanding, incongruity appears between the respondents' perception of their keeping commitments and their reported actual reported fulfillment of commitments. (Conceivably, however, it is possible to break a commitment once in a year and accurately report rarely failing to keep one's commitments.)

We have observed through a study of variables that age range plays a significant role in both the degree/meaning of commitments expressed through the modal will and the respondents' perceptions of their actual keeping of commitments. Adults over the age of 26 demonstrate a higher degree/meaning of commitments through the modal will. Further, the frequency of commitments spoken and kept to a friend increases as age range increases.

Gender is a limited imposing variable. The intended meaning of stated commitments expressed through the modal will is congruent between male and female. However, when using the "polite," former past tense of can, i.e., could, the majority of females intend absolute commitment, whereas the greater majority of males intend relative commitment. Additionally, the consistency between the females' perception of keeping commitments and their
reported actual fulfillment of commitments is greater than that of males, whose perception of their keeping commitments is higher than their actual keeping of commitments. (As previously noted: conceivably, it is possible to break a commitment once in a year and accurately report rarely failing to keep one’s commitments.)

With respect to the modal will, correlation is noted between native language and the respondents’ reported keeping of commitments to acquaintances, although sampling is small. Whereas a greater majority of native English speaking participants reported keeping their commitments to acquaintances in the previous year, approximately the same percentage of non-native English speaking respondents reported their not keeping spoken commitments to casual acquaintances.

Occupation as a correlation variable has proven insignificant in this study.

However, relationships, power-oriented and social, draw considerable correlation with higher intended degree/meaning of commitments in speech as well as with a greater frequency of commitments kept.
The most striking find of the present research is the divergence of the respondents' daily usage of can from published theory and grammar texts. Almost one-fourth of persons surveyed use can as the strongest modal of speaker commitment; in other words, respondents employ its usage to mean stronger speaker commitment than will. Additionally, could, the modal that historically was the past tense of can, is used by nearly 25% of respondents to mean stronger speaker commitment than must. Further, approximately 70% of respondents mean mid to strongest commitment when they say, "I could." Desiring to be cautious about generalizations, I question whether this divergence of the meaning of can and its former past tense could from published theory and grammar texts is an isolated movement among survey participants, or whether the disparity extends beyond the surveyed population. Further study of can and could is warranted.

Discussion

General

In the introduction of the present thesis, two questions were posed: 1) If we as speakers of English circumvent commitment to the propositional truth in our
speech, do we genuinely practice speaking cooperatively in mutual commitment to truth? and 2) If we speak commitment but do not intend commitment, do we subtly speak lies? Moreover, we have discussed Grice's Co-operative Principle which states that conversation requires three co-operative elements: co-operative effort(s), common purpose(s), and mutually accepted direction between speaker(s) and hearer(s). Further, the Co-operative Principle includes a supermaxim of Quality which states, "make your contribution one that is true . . . Do not say what you believe to be false" and "Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence" (Grice, 1990). Therefore, speakers engaged in discourse assume mutually co-operative truth in exchanged utterances. The findings of this survey, however, reflect daily conversation that is contrary to the principles of co-operative truth. In fact, 75% of those surveyed admit to having spoken commitment in the last year, but not having kept it; 55% indicate that although they say I will (the modal to which absolute commitment is ascribed in modern theory), their intended meaning/degree (and consequently, propositional truth) of their spoken commitment(s) changes (without indication to the hearer) according to their relationship with the addressee. Thus,
we must acknowledge that we as speakers of English do not always demonstrate co-operative truth in our speech. Our individual speaker strategies, which are influenced and/or motivated by self or other-politeness, age, gender, native language/culture, and speaker-hearer relationship, seemingly lead us to variable effort(s), diverse purpose(s) and divergent direction(s). We speak one thing, yet we intend another meaning. However, the addressee hears the actual spoken word(s) and expects propositional truth, and thus, the fulfillment of that commitment which is spoken.

In addition to a divergence from co-operative truth, we observe discrepancies among respondents in modal meanings used in daily conversation. The two greatest examples in the survey findings are can and must. Although 77% of respondents use will as the strongest modal of commitment (among can, will, and may), more than 20% use can to mean strongest commitment. Of the modals must, could, might, should, and ought, only 55% use must to indicate strongest commitment, while nearly 33% use must to mean weakest commitment. Therefore, it is pragmatically conceivable in daily conversation that a speaker may use can as a modal of relative commitment, yet the hearer encodes can to mean absolute commitment, and so the
reciprocal (See Table 3.1). Likewise, a speaker may say must meaning strongest commitment while the hearer encodes must as weakest commitment (see Table 3.2). In such instances we would observe miscommunication rather than cooperative speech. Thus, sociolinguistically, implications for potential interpersonal and interethnic conflict become numerous if we cannot commonly discern whether a statement such as I will... is meant to be absolute or relative commitment.

Teaching English as a Second Language

Why should a study of modality and the avoidance of absolute commitment in speech acts be important to pedagogy, particularly to TESL? Palmer (1979) states, "There is, perhaps, no area of English grammar that is both more important and more difficult than the system of modals" (cited in Washington, 1991, p.1). Further, Washington (1991) proposes, "Modality [i.e., 'that classification of propositions based on whether they assert or deny the possibility, impossibility, contingency, or necessity of their content' (American Heritage College Dictionary, 1997, p. 876)], like negation or questions, is apparently a linguistic universal. One can say that it
appears in all languages (in different ways) or even that any language without it would be 'impossible'" (p.1). Pragmatically, in the common workplace, which includes both native and non-native speakers of English, Willing (1997) asserts that "modality is a crucially important enabling competence," particularly for problem solving; however, his study finds that non-native speakers "tended very often to be less sharply articulated than they could have been, due in large part to only rudimentary control of the indicators of modality" (p. 33). Thus, the need for second language learners' acquisition of modals is compelling.

Specific to modal acquisition, Linnell (1991), in her study of non-instructed versus instructed non-native speakers of English finds that ESL instruction is significant to the acquisition of complex grammars, specifically modals; instruction proved remarkably more effective than interaction. However, she asserts that ESL texts present a pragmatic instructional problem: current texts give grammatical instruction, but fail to include sociolinguistic appropriateness of grammatical structures such as modals. Hinkel (1995) also addresses the problem of sociolinguistic application and context. Citing Kasper (1997) Hinkel states, "German students of English are not
always aware of modality as a pragmatic category and often translate modal verb meanings from German into English without accounting for their differing contextual implication" (P. 326).

While I concur with the previous theorists and do not wish to minimize their concern, the present study may reflect (pending additional research and demographics) a more basic challenge for pedagogy: textbook modal meaning versus current practical daily usage of modals. If spoken words of commitment such as I will . . . are sometimes uttered to mean absolute commitment, yet at other times are intended to mean relative commitment, which model of speaker commitment will we set forth to students in the classroom—absolute or relative commitment? In practical daily application, which will we teach ESL students to enable them to express their own volition, intentions, and self-obligated commitments? How will we teach our students to discriminate whether absolute or relative commitment is intended by other?

In further pedagogical consideration, we observe that the semantics of modals differ greatly from other grammatical structures such as nouns, verbs, articles, and conjunctions, etc. which have commonly accepted, specific
and/or dedicated meanings. If I say the word house, I the speaker and the hearer as a general rule bear in mind a common schemata or definition of the noun. We know that a house consists of a floor, walls, a roof, window(s), and door(s); additionally, we commonly encode that it is a dwelling place for people (unless specified for dogs or birds). Likewise, a verb suggests a particular, definite action or state of being. An article discriminates nouns. A conjunction indicates defined co-ordination or subordination. On the other hand, modals -- unlike any other part of speech -- represent a continuum of degree, subjectivity and values, speaker intent, circumstance(s), and consequently, meaning. Thus, I ask, Whose continuum do modals represent? The speaker's? The hearer's? The grammarian's? Although current grammar texts suggest a standard continuum for modals, the present research indicates that respondents employ variant continuums 1) amongst themselves and 2) with particular disparity to recent grammar texts. At this juncture, advocates for a "textless" TESL classroom foreseeably might use the present research to argue against the accuracy, relevancy, and therefore, effectiveness of grammar text usage. However, before the pendulum is swung far left, I ask, without a
standard of common meaning (such as in grammar texts) can we teach co-operative discourse? Moreover, I ponder whether the absence of grammar texts in many classrooms during the past two and a half decades (survey age range 18-25) has contributed to the inconsistency of modal meaning in daily usage and/or in the keeping of commitments.
APPENDIX A:

SURVEY
SURVEY

1. Please rate the following in order of probability and/or commitment that you would mean when speaking. (strongest=1, weakest=3. If any mean the same to you, please mark them with the same number.)

_____ I can attend the event.
_____ I will attend the event.
_____ I may attend the event.

2. When saying to your employer, “I will do it,” what do you mean by “I will”? (Please circle one.)

a. Absolute binding commitment
b. Commitment, providing other circumstances do not arise
c. A probable commitment
d. Other _______________________

3. Which do you prefer to say in daily conversation?

a. I can help you.
b. I could help you.
c. Other _______________________

4. Why do you prefer the above choice?

5. When saying, “I can help you tomorrow,” what do you mean? (Please circle one.)

a. You can count on my help.
b. My help is probable.
c. My help is possible.
d. I’m considering helping you.
e. I’m saying this to appease you at the moment, but I really don’t want or intend to help.
6. When saying to a family member, “I will do it,” what do you mean by “I will”? (Please circle one.)

   a. Absolute binding commitment
   b. Commitment, providing other circumstances do not arise
   c. A probable commitment
   d. A possible commitment
   e. Other ________________________________________

7. Please rate the following in order of probability and/or commitment that you would mean when speaking. (strongest=1, weakest=5. If any mean the same to you, please rate them with the same number.)

   _____ I could attend the event.
   _____ I should be able to attend the event.
   _____ I might attend the event.
   _____ I ought to be able to attend the event.
   _____ I must attend the event.

8. When saying to a friend or co-worker, “I will do it,” what do you mean by “I will”? (Please circle one.)

   a. Absolute binding commitment
   b. Commitment, providing other circumstances do not arise
   c. A probable commitment
   d. A possible commitment
   e. Other ________________________________________

9. The last time that you told your employer that you “needed to take time off,” what did you mean? (Please circle one.)

   a. Other circumstance(s), such as health or a death, necessitated time away from the job.
   b. You desired a break (day off or vacation) from the job.
   c. You wanted to go elsewhere (e.g. to a ball game).
   d. Other ________________________________________
10. When saying, "I could help you tomorrow," what do you mean? (Please circle one.)

a. You can count on my help.
b. My help is probable.
c. My help is possible.
d. I'm considering helping you.
e. I'm saying this to appease you at the moment, but I really don't want or intend to help.
f. Other _____________________________

11. When saying to a casual acquaintance, "I will do it," what do you mean by "I will"?

a. Absolute binding commitment
b. Commitment, providing other circumstances do not arise
c. A probable commitment
d. A possible commitment
e. Other______________________________

12. Have you in the past year told anyone "I will," but did not carry out the action? YES/NO (Please circle your answer.)

13. If your answer was YES, to whom did you say "I will," but did not carry out the action? (Please circle all that apply.)

a. Family member
b. Friend
c. Acquaintance
d. Co-worker
e. Employer
f. Employee

14. What is the frequency that you tell someone "I will," but do not carry out the action? (Please circle one.)

a. Never
b. Rarely
c. Occasionally
d. 50% of the time
e. Often (greater than 50% of the time)
15. What is your age? ____ Sex? Male ____ or Female ____
Occupation? ________ Native language? ________

16. Which do you generally prefer to make? (Please circle one.)

a. Definite commitments
b. Tentative commitments
c. Indefinite commitments
d. No commitments
e. Other ________________________________
REFERENCES


