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Conversational Processes in Television Commercials

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B.A. (Oklahoma City University) 1978

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Conversational Processes in Television Commercials

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Conversational Processes in Television Commercials

Karen Ann Hunold

Abstract

Commercials offer fertile ground for relating linguistic form to specific communicative functions. Conversational processes, like other language features, are exploited in the service of commercial goals. Both individual utterances and sequences of utterances reflect the advertiser's persuasive purpose within a local context established by the commercial itself. This dissertation examines the organization of conversational features in selected commercials.

Television commercials that use conversation to market a product face the communicative challenge of persuading viewers through an onscreen interaction to which the viewer is an eavesdropper rather than an addressee. Two levels of communicative interaction are relevant, the local onscreen interaction between speaking characters and the essential persuasive activity between advertiser and viewer. Advertisers orient commercial talk to the accomplishment of communicative goals on both levels. Individual utterances in conversational commercials accomplish either the local event of simulating natural interaction or the persuasive activity of presenting the product or both. Sequences of utterances exploit conventions of natural conversation while moving the commercials along the lines determined by the advertisers.

Individual utterances reflect four relationships to a commercial's communicative goals. These four utterance types, presenters, supporters, leaders, and contextualizers, reveal the various ways in which the linguistic forms of utterances relate to the functional goals of advertisers. Sequences also structure the flow of talk to serve commercial purposes. Motivated variants of natural behaviors such as mechanical summons-response exchanges and interruptions reflect the advertiser's attention to both the local and the persuasive context. The relationship between a speaking character and the product both constrains and motivates the possible sequences of utterances. External advertising pressures of time and expense also influence the form of conversational commercials.

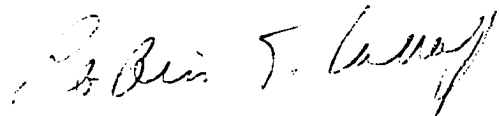
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robin T. Lacey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

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to Manfred Hunold

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Conversational Processes in Television Commercials

Karen Ann Hunold

Conversational exchange, usually expressed as a mini-drama between two onscreen characters, offers advertisers a way to combine product information with user images. But, despite its versatility and persuasive potential, conversation is an underrepresented commercial strategy. Less than 5% of television commercials use the turntaking structure of interaction as a means of marketing a product. Other commercial strategies, such as narratives or announcements, allow advertisers to make direct claims but these claims can easily result in counter-argumentation, a cognitive strategy used by viewers to resist persuasion. Conversational commercials, on the other hand, present the product indirectly and, being indirect, are less likely to engage these defense mechanisms. Conversation has a greater potential than most other commercial strategies to create favorable images about the product and product users without making explicit claims with which viewers might disagree.

Commercials are a very goal-directed form of communication. The advertiser intends that, through the commercial, sales of an advertised product will increase; even those commercials which market services or intangibles (such as corporate images) explicitly address a specific goal. Product recall and brand name recognition have been shown to be crucial factors in a consumer's decision about what product to buy. Thus, commercials are oriented towards increasing product recognition and recall, so that at the moment of purchase, a consumer will choose the advertised product over its

competitors.

The success of any commercial, then, rests in the competent construction of a local event, the commercial itself, through which a meta-event, the persuasive activity between advertiser and consumer, is accomplished. Through the specifics, both visual and verbal, of a particular commercial, the advertiser hopes to influence the viewer's later behavior. Thus, presenting a product in its most favorable light and in a way which improves its chance of being recalled at the crucial moment are the goals which motivate the details of individual commercials.

Conversational commercials offer advertisers certain advantages in accomplishing these goals. Not only do mini-dramas present images of users, by means of the speakers in the commercial, but they model consumer behavior by depicting it on screen. Since these product users and the informal product spokespersons are not official representatives of the product but "objective" and informal advocates of it, conversational commercials are less likely to cause counter-argumentation than more direct strategies. And, being indirect, they engage the viewer by demanding greater attention and more cognitive energy for interpretation than direct strategies do.

Because conversational commercials create situations and characters which highlight the product, they are particularly useful for presenting alluring images of users. Many products, having little or no characteristics which distinguish them from their competitors, rely on the creation of such images to increase sales. The consumer's perception of the product user, a perception based primarily on the marketing strategies of an advertising campaign, controls the success of the strategy. Conversational commercials offer the additional advantage, by using not announcers but characters as

speakers, of developing these images throughout the entire course of the commercial.

Why then is conversation used so infrequently? One reason is the attitude of advertising professionals themselves. Conversational commercials have the image of being old-fashioned, somewhat stodgy; they are not "creative" enough to appeal to copy writers.¹ This attitude is encountered despite the creativity (and success) of many conversational commercials; for example, campaigns for Alka-Seltzer and Life cereal come to mind. And, being indirect, most conversational commercials eschew the "hard sell" techniques of their more brash counterparts. Some advertisers, and some products, demand the more direct approaches that other strategies can offer. This is certainly legitimate; I argue not that conversation is the only appropriate marketing strategy, merely that it is an underrepresented and underappreciated one.

0.1 Natural and commercial conversation

Three major factors lie at the root of differences between natural and commercial conversations: 1) the intent which motivates the verbal behavior; 2) the communicator (individual versus advertiser) and 3) the temporal/spatial characteristics of the discourse type. The same factors also account for many regularities found across commercial conversations.

Persuasion is not usually the sole or even the predominant intent behind a conversational exchange, although speakers frequently use language persuasively in natural conversation. Reciprocal sociability and other factors also play a major role in informal interaction (Lakoff, 1981). Commercials, on the other hand, are explicitly persuasive. If a commercial does not persuade, it fails.

The communicators in natural conversation are free agents, acting on their own

behalf. Although most conversational participants are cooperative, disagreement, insults, and arguments are among the possible consequences of interaction between free agents. But commercial speakers are the advertiser's puppets; the commercial interaction can not go wrong. No unexpected events such as unintended insults or spontaneous arguments, no inadvertent production problems, such as accidental interruptions or overlaps, no misunderstandings can occur. Anything in a commercial which resembles these characteristics of natural conversation is deliberate and intentional. For most commercials, this means the conversational characteristic was conceived of by advertising agency copy writers, approved by the advertiser, researched by a marketing team, rehearsed and taped by professional actors and producers, and again approved before it becomes a candidate for broadcast. Also, the highly commercial-specific voiceover and announcer speaker types have no counterpart in natural conversation.

Natural conversation is constrained by the limitations of time and space and by human ability to process and produce verbal material. Although technological developments such as telephones and home movies have in a limited way broken down these barriers, conversation is generally tied to the local, immediate management of interaction. Commercials, on the other hand, transcend the temporal and spatial limitations of physical reality. Rehearsal polishes the conversation and videotaping frees it to be used at the advertiser's discretion. Perhaps the most important result of advertisers' freedom from real-time language production is the opportunity to carefully plan and prepare the message they present to viewers, an opportunity fully exploited by advertisers. Freedom over time and space also leads, not unexpectedly, to commercial exploitation of devices such as time lapses, flashbacks, and locale changes. These

devices, suitably contextualized, contribute crucially to the commercial's intelligibility by orienting the viewer to the ongoing event.

The substantial communicative advantages enjoyed by advertisers because of these freedoms are offset by equally substantial disadvantages. Commercials face rigid time constraints, a non-reciprocal interactive environment which permits addressees to withdraw their attention without penalization, and a hit-or-miss directing of their message to its intended demographic target. Consequently, attracting and maintaining viewer attention becomes of primary concern to advertisers. The exorbitant expense of advertising has resulted in the careful design of commercials. While speakers engaged in natural conversation are generally unreflective about their use of language, advertisers spend an inordinate amount of time and incredible sums of money planning the commercial down to the last detail,² including the organization of individual utterances and sequences in commercial conversations.

0.2 Theoretical foundations

This linguistic analysis of television commercials focuses on the functional roles of conversational elements. Its theoretical and methodological foundation rests on two distinct analytical traditions which dominate the analysis of natural conversation. These two traditions, here referred to as linguistic pragmatics and conversation analysis, each offer concepts essential to this work.

The linguistic pragmatics tradition grew out of works by language philosophers such as Austin (1975) and Searle (1969, 1975), who claim underlying conversational motivations for utterances. Speakers use language as one way of acting in the world, to

ask questions, give answers, offer advice, congratulate, and so on. Underlying speaker intents account for the production indirect linguistic actions, such as the use of a question to convey a request. Some forms of indirectness are conventional, others are unique. A large body of interpretive analyses on topics ranging from request forms (Ervin-Tripp, 1976a,b) to politeness strategies (Lakoff, 1973; Lakoff and Tannen, 1979; Brown and Levinson, 1978), which are united in their relating of linguistic form to speaker concerns, find their theoretical bases in philosophical treatments of language.

This dissertation builds on the linguistic pragmatic tradition by employing similar interpretive techniques. I presuppose that the advertiser's underlying intents are expressed through deliberately engineered language. Given a specific conversational context, all commercial utterances will relate, directly or indirectly, to the advertiser's goal.

Analyzing the linguistic properties of non-spontaneous conversational texts from a linguistic pragmatics perspective is not original to the study of commercials. Earlier work demonstrating that Achilles' speech exhibits the characteristics of a consistent personal style (Friedrich and Redfield, 1978) and that Marianne and Johan's language patterns in Scenes from a Marriage are carefully coordinated in a conversational strategy (Lakoff and Tannen, 1979) establishes that linguistic techniques can be fruitfully applied to non-spontaneous verbal behavior.

Two major studies (Coleman, 1982; Geis, 1982) pioneered the application of linguistic pragmatics to commercials, a theoretical approach appropriate to a discourse type which operates on two levels, the commercial interaction itself and the advertiser-consumer communication. Coleman's study shows that the viewer's understanding of a commercial depends on the coordinate interpretation of impressions

gained through various linguistic channels. Phonological, prosodic, and semantic properties of television commercials are specifically designed to evoke the viewer's background knowledge. Advertisers rely on the viewer's cooperative participation in the activity of watching commercials, which entails the perception of whole units from truncated forms.

Conveying a communicative intent without direct assertion operates to the advertiser's advantage by reducing counterargumentation by viewers. Many advertisers worry about viewers' tendency to reject commercial messages by internally arguing against them. Indirectly conveyed claims engage fewer cognitive defenses than direct ones, nevertheless conveying substantial information to viewers about the product, the setting, and the participants. Also, viewers (and people in general) tend to remember what they have actively participated in; indirect utterances require greater effort for comprehension on the viewer's part than direct utterances do. Presumably, this results in higher retention rates for indirect utterances.

Grice's cooperative principle and conversational maxims³ are one means of explaining how conveyed meaning can, and usually does, go beyond literal meaning. Michael Geis, in The Language of Television Advertising (1982), applies Gricean principles to television commercials, showing that the cooperative principle and conversational maxims are tools which supplement viewer understanding of commercial claims. Although advertisers exhibit some features of Gricean cooperation, such as a desire to be intelligible, they can not be presumed to be completely cooperative participants. The advertisers' commercial communications are motivated primarily by economic self-interest. Achieving a marketing goal such as increased sales through a carefully constructed commercial message has higher priority than presenting the

consumer with an objective account of the product.

Geis's⁴ analysis draws parallels between natural speech and commercial language. Viewers interpret commercials by employing the familiar strategies that they use to interpret natural conversation. Advertisers often use disparate statements, flawed arguments, and carefully constructed utterances to make strong-sounding claims which only the most attentive viewers will recognize as weak or even misleading claims.

These two linguistic studies of television commercials offer evidence that the intent of a commercial motivates the linguistic shape of its message. Phonological, prosodic, semantic, and syntactic features reflect the underlying motivation of the advertiser. This dissertation extends those works by showing that utterances and sequences of utterances in commercial conversations also reflect the advertiser's underlying intent.

Following Coleman's example in assuming viewer's cooperative interpretation and Geis's in applying Gricean principles to the analysis of television commercials, I assume that viewers interpret commercials cooperatively. This cooperative behavior suggests that viewers employ the Gricean maxim of relevance when viewing commercials, not only in terms of the relevance of the commercial to their personal concerns, as suggested by Geis, but also in terms of the relevance of the commercial utterance to the advertiser's acknowledged persuasive intent.

The conversation analysis tradition differs significantly from the linguistic pragmatic tradition. Rather than look to underlying motivations, conversation analysts hold themselves stringently to the surface analysis of empirical data. Their observations and conclusions about natural language come out of the careful analysis of natural conversations and are presented without looking beyond verbal behavior to putative

underlying speaker motivations or to external socio-cultural knowledge which might influence the participants in an interaction. The minutest surface details of an interaction are available for, if not essential to, the analysis of conversation; interpretive strategies are disallowed. Conversation analysis grew out of the work of Garfinkel (1972), who showed that the acts of individuals reveal of larger social mechanisms. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) related this observation to natural language use, focusing explicitly on verbal interaction as a primary example of the social organization of turntaking behavior. The mechanics of language use in the accomplishment of society's goals, as for example in legal, scholastic, and counselling situations, has attracted the attention of conversation analysts (e.g., Griffin and Mehan, 1981; Erickson, 1976). Analyses may focus on nonverbal characteristics of interaction as well as the verbal accomplishment of social tasks (Goodwin, 1979, 1981).

Some conversation analysts, however, insist that socio-cultural knowledge outside the conversation is not only a legitimate but an essential component of conversation analysis. Smooth interaction results from participant agreement about the activity being engaged in and relies on experience and expectations external to the ongoing event. Signals (whether verbal or nonverbal) known as contextualization cues orient participants to the current activity. Such cues support agreement by providing grit for the participants' interpretation mill; people evaluate and reevaluate the ongoing interaction, sensitive to any changes in the activity (Gumperz, 1982).

The experiential basis of interpretation and participation is at the root of all communicative competence. One way in which humans organize experience is by frames, *gestalts* with multiple features. Tannen (1979) shows that an individual's understanding of a particular context relies on the coordinate interpretation of

co-occurring signals. Drawing on experience, participants construct hypotheses about an interaction once a context has been invoked by contextualization cues.

This dissertation draws from the best of the two analytical traditions for describing conversation. From the conversation analysts, the method of descriptive analysis of empirical data is taken. The linguistic evidence described below originates solely from the commercials themselves. Often, the characteristics of commercial conversation are presented as motivated variants of characteristics of natural conversation as discussed and described by conversation analysts. From the linguistic pragmaticists, the theoretical postulation of an underlying intention to the communicative act is adopted, as is the interpretive strategy of attributing to this underlying intention the motivational source of verbal behavior in commercials and its adherence to or variation from the characteristics of natural conversation. These theoretical and interpretive underpinnings are applied to the linguistic behavior found in the commercials.

An approach such as this for the analysis of conversation in commercials is necessitated by the fundamental differences between natural and commercial discourse types. Commercials are constructed and artificial, exhibiting careful and deliberate (even if apparently spontaneous) interaction which contrasts sharply with the spontaneity of unreflective natural conversation. Conversation analysis's reliance on the real-time occurrence of natural conversation as a source of revelation of its underlying and unconscious mechanisms works precisely because of the unreflective nature of participant behavior.

While looking at what participants actually do (rather than at what they think they do or claim they do) is valid in the analysis of natural conversation, it is not as sound a

technique for the study of constructed conversations. The commercial conversation is a metacommunicative event of advertiser communicating with consumer through a communicative event of the speakers on the screen "communicating" with each other. It is not only legitimate to claim that commercial language serves an underlying persuasive purpose, but mandatory. In fact, to not so claim would be aberrant, flying in the face of common knowledge and beliefs.

Although most approaches to the study of conversation make disparate assumptions and have distinct and separate theoretical bases, they agree on at least two distinctive features of conversation: turntaking and flexibility. A representative definition by Stephen C. Levinson (1983) identifies these features: "Conversation may be taken to be that familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, law courts, classrooms and the like," (p. 284).

Conversation is predicated on a system of communication achieved through the sequential utterances of the participants, a minimum of two participants being required. In other words, conversation entails the organization of utterances in a turntaking system (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974). The topic, timing, turn length, and so on, of utterances are not constrained by the general activity of conversing, although social or conventional expectations explicit to a particular context may arise. Regularities in the opening, maintenance, and closing of conversational interactions, as well as the management of specific kinds of interactions such as service encounters, are examples of the organization of interaction (e.g. Schegloff, 1972; Merritt, 1977).

In other words, participants in an interaction are engaged in a face-to-face encounter and have legitimate rights, privileges, and agendas. They are free to act on

their own behalf. Some interactive regularities in openings, compliment structure, and the like function to maintain individual rights in a social setting. The rules of politeness or rapport which govern interaction also describe ways that individuality is managed in interactions (Lakoff, 1979; Brown and Levinson, 1978), balancing impediments to social harmony against the human need to interact.

The real-time nature of conversation means that adjustments to the interaction are available to participants. Misunderstandings can be repaired (Jefferson, 1974) and talk modified in progress based on addressee feedback (Goodwin, 1979, 1981). Various production problems, such as overlaps and false starts, may occur inadvertently as a result of faulty coordination between participants. Such adjustments are not possible for television commercials, which must be intelligible on a single viewing; however, simple production problems, such as false starts, are eliminated.

Commercials, on the other hand, are neither spontaneous nor flexible. They are constructed and have the explicit or ascribed intent of marketing a product (whether that product is a consumer item, a service, a store, or an image); their message must be broadcast over specific public airwave frequencies (i.e., television and not radio). In addition, each individual commercial markets a specific product, follows a specific marketing strategy, and targets a specific audience; these features influence the linguistic behaviors exhibited by the commercial.

For the purpose of examining conversational traits, I found the usual definition of commercial too broad. In order to ensure that only those commercials which employ features of natural conversation are examined, thereby offering a basis for direct comparison, I developed several criteria to exclude commercials which fail to exhibit the requisite conversational characteristics. Thus, the commercials in this corpus are

conversational in that they resemble conversation more closely than do other commercials.

0.3 Organization and methodology

This dissertation is organized into two parts. The first part examines conversational commercial utterances, showing how they relate to the advertiser's marketing intent. The second part focuses on sequences, showing how they resemble or deviate from sequences in natural conversation and exploring the motivations behind specific sequence types. As the various characteristics of conversation are discussed, relevant literature will be presented. My methodology, discussed below, selected for commercials in which speaking characters engage in a mini-skit, creating the illusion of a spontaneous interaction. An example of a commercial employing this strategy is the Palmolive commercial in which Madge the manicurist informs her client that her hand is soaking in dishwashing liquid.

The selection of the corpus proceeded in the following manner. A pool of over 700 American commercials broadcast between 1978 and 1984 was collected by videotaping programs at random and dubbing out the shows, from which 29 (slightly less than 5%) were selected for analysis. Only commercials of national network airing were eligible for selection, a safeguard to assure careful design of each detail found in the commercial.⁵ Once collected, the commercials were screened for suitability. Five criteria, displayed in Figure 1, allowed only the most conversation-like commercials into the corpus. The first three criteria outline basic parameters of the commercial corpus, while the final two refine it.

Figure 1
Selection Criteria for Commercial Conversations

<u>CRITERION</u>	<u>RESULT OF APPLICATION</u>
Turntaking behavior	eliminates monologues, narratives, etc.
Thematic congruity	eliminates sequential testimonials, monologues
No overt spokesperson	maintains viewer role as audience/eavesdropper
Dyadic	eliminates multiple speaker interactions
Tri-partite interactions	eliminates too brief segments, maintains interactive atmosphere

First, and most obvious given the definition of natural conversation, is that the commercials exhibit verbal turntaking behavior. Utterances are temporally located within a pseudo-interaction in a manner that resembles turn exchange among the speaking characters. This is the single most important criterion, eliminating other commercial speech activities such as monologues or narratives. Second, the turns exhibit thematic congruity. Each turn builds upon the previous turns in the construction of an artificial interaction. This criterion ensures that sequential testimonials with no resemblance to conversational interactions are excluded.

Third, none of the speakers may be an overt product spokesperson. Although speakers may function informally as advocates of a product, the speaker's primary responsibility in these commercials is the portrayal of a character. This eliminates most commercials in which spokespersons directly pitch the product to the viewers and thus maintains a distinction between the viewers' role as addressee and their role as audience/eavesdropper. Commercials with direct pitches, in which a product spokesperson directly addresses viewers, were included in the corpus only when they also exhibit onscreen interaction to which the viewers form an audience/eavesdropper.

The three criteria presented above were at the core of the selection process. Two others refined the corpus, primarily filling in the cracks left by the preceding criteria. Commercial conversations with multiple speakers, due to the brevity of the texts, were deemed unsuitable for inclusion. Since commercials with more than two participants generally have time for only one or two utterances per participant, the conversational characteristics of the interaction become diffuse. Therefore, the corpus was restricted to commercials displaying dyadic interaction.

Similarly, the excessive brevity of some dyadic conversations rendered the interactive impact of the commercial interaction insufficient. A minimum tri-partite exchange of speaker 1-speaker 2-speaker 1 is necessary to create an interactive atmosphere and establish a basis of continuity for interpreting speaker characteristics (Mehan, 1979). For this reason, commercials with one or two conversation-like utterances but without turn exchange were eliminated from the corpus.

The establishment of transcription conventions, common plight of analysts of spoken language, is an inevitable issue. Because I do not analyze prosodic features here, my transcriptions do not include these features (except where otherwise noted).

Instead, I use almost exclusively conventional orthography or well-known variants. Transcripts of the conversational commercials can be found in alphabetical order in the Appendix.

NOTES

¹ One copy writer informed me that not only is this strategy considered uncreative, but it is used only when the advertiser, usually a "conservative" corporation, insists on it.

² Older commercials, from the 1950s and earlier, show that this careful production developed gradually from more casual production. Presumably, as costs rose and the effectiveness of television advertising became more widely appreciated, more sophisticated advertising techniques were developed.

³ Grice (1975, pp.45-6) hypothesized the following:

Cooperative Principle: make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

Conversational Maxims:

1. Quantity -- make your contribution as informative as is required without making it more informative than is required

2. Quality -- do not say what you believe to be false or that for which you lack adequate evidence

3. Relation -- be relevant

4. Manner -- be perspicuous

⁴ A brief discussion by Geis, mainly in terms of social style and register, of commercials similar to those analyzed here, introduces a fascinating but unelaborated concept, "condensation," as a device commercial conversations use to save time. Condensed conversations "leave out 'steps,'" Geis (1982, p. 147). Although I do not elaborate on Geis's notion, some parts of the current work, such as the discussion on mechanical summons-response adjacency pairs, shed light on what "steps" might be left out and why.

⁵ See Coleman (1982) for more. Her argument is that commercials broadcast

nationally, due to the expense of production and broadcast, afford the researcher reasonable assurance that the commercial has been carefully and deliberately produced. Local commercials often lack the production expertise of network commercials, resulting in less deliberately constructed linguistic features than those of national commercials. The collection of network quality commercials was my primary concern; the commercials were collected from a variety of broadcast times, channels, and shows.

Part 1
The component parts:
form and function in conversational commercials

The commercial context, that is, the agreement between advertiser and viewer about the nature of the activity, creates a communicative environment in which each commercial utterance can be shown to relate to the advertiser's goals. The utterances themselves substantiate this hypothesis, revealing four relationship categories between individual utterances and the commercial goals they serve; these relationships are presented below. The utterances occur, of course, in sequences, which will be discussed in part two. Here, the component parts, the individual utterances and the functions they serve, are revealed as the building blocks of a commercial message.

The participant-actors in the conversation produce most of the utterances found in these commercials. However, some commercial conversations also exhibit voiceovers, disembodied voices which directly address the viewer. Generally, voiceover turns are external to the conversational interaction, acting as a summary or coda to the commercial message. Voiceover utterances are an important structural component of these commercials and are therefore analyzed along with participant utterances.

These four commercial relationships between linguistic form and communicative function of utterances are discussed in separate chapters below: the presentation of the product; the support of product presentation; the leading into product presentation; and the contextualization of the commercial conversation in support of its image as an ongoing interaction.

Figure 2
Utterance Functions

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
presenters	present the product to viewers by introducing, evaluating, or describing it
supporters	support product presentation by creating openings and offering responses
leaders	create contexts in which product can be presented; relevance to product is apparent only through subsequent utterances
contextualizers	support the fiction of an ongoing spontaneous interaction

These four relationships, which can combine with each other in infinite permutations, express the means by which advertisers can make their points through conversation-like exchanges. Even those utterances which appear to be spontaneous function as components of the commercial message. Some turns are composed of multiple parts, each of which contributes in its own way to the commercial goal.

The first category, product presenters, encompasses those utterances whose function is to present the product to the viewer, for example, "Palmolive softens hands while you do the dishes." The linguistic means of presenting a product are diverse,

exhibiting various degrees of linguistic directness. Assertions about the product directly relate the commercial function of the utterance to its form, while less direct utterances convey information and impressions about the product.

The second relationship category supports product presentation through the creation of openings which allow the natural delivery of a product presenter by posing questions, making observations, or offering responses to prior comments or external events. A question such as "What can I try?" (Palmolive) supports the marketing purpose of the commercial. Responses to the product are also supportive utterances. Supportive utterances may have either a direct or an indirect linguistic connection to the product.

The relevance of opening utterances to the advertiser's intent is not always immediately clear. The third relationship category includes opening utterances which relate indirectly to the advertiser's purpose. These leaders rely on viewer background knowledge for intelligibility and must be interpreted within the conversational context with the help of other cues. "The client will be here in ten minutes," (Lipton Lite-Lunch) is an example of a leader. The relevance of this utterance to the product is clarified over the course of the commercial. Often, subsequent utterances shape the interpretation of prior ones, constraining the possible interpretations in light of the complete commercial context.

The fourth relationship type is comprised of contextualizing utterances which relate directly to the depicted interaction rather than to the product. They are situationally appropriate turns or turn parts which perform interactive functions, such as greetings, social responses, and so on, or which provide background information about the speakers, their relationship, and the nature of the interaction. Contextualizers such

as "Are those my shoes?" (Diet Pepsi) relate indirectly to the commercial purpose of the conversation, having less to do with product presentation than with supporting the illusion of an ongoing, spontaneous conversation between real people. In so doing, contextualizers contribute crucially to the creation of images of both product and product user.

Commercials can be differentiated by the frequency of the various utterance types over the course of the conversation because they utilize direct and indirect utterances to different degrees. In some commercial conversations, virtually every utterance directly presents the product or supports the marketing purpose; indirect or interactive utterances are infrequent. At the other end of the spectrum, the conversation has only an indirect connection to the product; direct reference to the product is minimal or nonexistent.

1.0 Presentation of product attributes

The most direct means of presenting a product is by making a product claim through an assertion in declarative form, with the product brand name serving as the sentential subject. Certainly, such claims are frequently found in advertising. However, other constructions serve just as well to present the product to the viewer. A product attribute or benefit of product use can serve as sentential subject, in place of the brand name. Syntactic constructions which do not directly assert but conventionally or pragmatically imply also function as product presenters. Indirect constructions such as declaratives with truncated syntax and framed presenters, which convey both social and product information, are an essential tool of product presentation, alongside direct and explicit claims.

Presenters, regardless of the degree of directness, serve the common function of bringing product information to the viewers' attention and, like conventionally direct and indirect utterances, exhibit a range of variants which operate on a continuum of directness. The more direct the presentation, the more likely the speaker is to be considered a(n informal) product spokesperson. Less direct presenters result in a more subtle connection between the speaker and the product. Regardless of the directness of the presenter, however, any speaker who utters a presenter represents the product.

Direct claims, which evaluate, describe, or introduce a product, are examined first. Then, three moderately indirect strategies are presented: conventional indirectness, entailment, and hedging with a small number of non-factive verbs. These presenters are considered moderately indirect since a specific product claim generally

appears. Imperative forms, which offer instruction to the viewer, also focus attention on the product.

Figure 3
Product Presenters

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>SUBCATEGORIES</u>
direct	introducers evaluators describers
moderately indirect	conventional indirections entailments; presuppositions hedges instructors
indirect	truncated presenters framed presenters

Finally, two indirect strategies for presenting products, truncated and framed presenters, are discussed. Truncated presenters are syntactic fragments, used strategically to present product attributes through simple juxtaposition of terms within a conversational context. Framed presenters direct attention to the product by mentioning some trait, activity, or context associated with the product.

1.1 Direct claims

Direct product claims occur frequently in commercial interactions and have the syntactic structure of normal declarative sentences. The product brand name or a product attribute serves as the subject. Three kinds of direct claims, based on

differences in propositional content, occur. Introductory claims focus attention on the product. Evaluative claims respond either to the product itself or to the results of product use. Descriptive claims directly present the product or product attributes.

These direct claims resemble product presenters found in non-conversational commercials. They do not, in and of themselves, take advantage of the unique characteristics of conversation, although they appear to be spontaneous endorsements by "objective" speaking characters operating within an interactive context. The conversational structure frames product presentation, so that within the constructed context the product remains the commercial's focal point.

The following introductory presenters identify the product using deictic pronouns and the brand name; they present the product to viewers by introducing it. Although not all introducers specify product features, they frequently provide information about the product through detailed referential expressions. Introducers occur in various contexts in the interaction in the examples that follow: (1) opens the commercial; (2) is a response to an opening by the other speaker; and (3) is embedded within the conversation. Not surprisingly, introducers do not occur in the closing segment of a commercial.

- (1) This is Vivitar's new point and shoot 35mm camera, the PS:35.
Vivitar
- (2) That's Chef Boyardee's spaghetti and meatballs, dear.
Chef Boyardee.
- (3) That's the Aramis umbrella. Aramis

Evaluative claims either attribute an inherent characteristic or the responsibility for a positive result to the product. Evaluators of both these types occur late in the

commercial conversation. If the commercial has a "before/after" structure, evaluators will usually be found in the "after" segment. Inherent characteristics, invariably of positive connotation, are attributed via stative verbs and adjectives. Evaluators unite the product with the desired attribute.

The following examples typify attribution of a quality and are uttered by one of the participants. Subjects are nominal or pronominal references to the product.

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----------|
| (4) | It's simple [...] | Vivitar |
| (5) | Palmolive's great. | Palmolive |
| (6) | [...] this tastes terrific. | Campbell |

Evaluators which attribute good results to product use also employ a nominal or pronominal reference to the specific product serves as the subject of these utterances. They are usually uttered by a speaking character who was introduced to the product earlier in the commercial. Invariably, this character expressed initial reservations about the product. Thus, the evaluative claim symbolizes the conversion of the speaker to product use and offers a model of consumer behavior which advertisers hope viewers will mimic.

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|------------|
| (7) | Clorox II got this really white. | Clorox II |
| (8) | It really perks up the shine. | Future Wax |
| (9) | Your Pledge looks better. | Pledge |

Product claims which directly describe the product are often used for product presentation. Like introducers and evaluators, the subject of describers may be a brand name, as in (10) and (11). However, other kinds of subjects, including product results, (12), and product attributes, (13) and (14), also occur.

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------|
| (10) | Palmolive softens hands while you do the dishes. | Palmolive |
| (11) | Future works with water, too. | Future Wax |
| (12) | With Feen-a-mint pills, constipation relief is gentle and predictable. | Feen-a-mint |
| (13) | This upper rack tilts ... | Kitchenaid |
| (14) | Each serving costs about 25¢. | Chef Boyardee |

Although direct claims conform to normal communicative standards, they often appear artificial. This impression is created, at least in part, by the frequent occurrence of complete brand names in contexts where they would not be used in natural conversation. Commercials regularly violate the Gricean maxim of quantity by providing more detailed product descriptions than would otherwise be expected.

The uttering of a direct claim is the distinctive feature of a product spokesperson. The very act of uttering a direct claim is evidence of the speaker's knowledgeableability vis-a-vis the product. Generally, such speakers are depicted as product experts, an impression substantiated through multiple cues. Circumstantial and contextual evidence usually implies that a speaker's superior knowledge is based on either occupational expertise or past personal experience with the product (or both). These impressions validate and strengthen the commercial claim by enhancing the perceived credibility of the source. At the same time, being presumably objective characters, they are less likely to trigger counter-argumentation. A few commercials, such as the Diet Pepsi commercials, take another tack by employing direct claims without establishing the expert status of the speaker.

The direct claims presented above occurred within the conversational interaction, being uttered by speaking characters. Direct claims also appeared in voiceover turns

which follow the conversational exchange and close the commercial. These voiceover turns directly present the product. Below is a typical example of a voiceover-uttered direct product claim.

(15) Concentrated All concentrates on cleaning.

1.2 Moderately indirect presenters

The preceding voiceover presenter, which closed an All commercial, permits a direct comparison of explicit with conventionally implied product claims. It resembles without echoing the closing voiceover turn in the corpus's other All commercial. Where (15) is a direct product claim in declarative form, (16) makes an indirect claim in imperative form. (Following the example of Geis, the indirect utterance is followed by its conversationally implied counterpart.)

- (16) a. Get it A-L-L clean with the concentrated cleaning power of concentrated All.
 b. Concentrated All with concentrated cleaning power gets laundry A-L-L ("all") clean.

Repetition of key concepts (i.e. "clean"-"clean(ing)") reinforces the commercial message. But example (16), unlike (15), cannot be proven or disproven. Like other imperatives and all questions, it has no truth value because it does not make an assertion. Thus, (16) conveys meaning not through assertion but conventional implicature.¹

Moderately indirect presenters resemble direct product claims by utilizing lexical items which convey information about the product. For example, the bulk of the verbal material in both (15) and (16) directly describes the product. However, conventional implicature is a strategy of presentation which can also be employed when the bulk of the verbal material relates only indirectly to the product. The following example, a voiceover turn from the Ciara perfume commercial, demonstrates this claim.

- (17) a. Ciara. The thoroughly female fragrance. What will it remind you of?
b. Ciara will remind you of "something." (see below)

As (17b) shows, the question (17a) conventionally implies that Ciara will remind you of something. The relationship between the content of this turn and an actual product attribute is minimal. Nevertheless, the presence of the brand name and the identifying "fragrance" makes this utterance one of the most direct claims of the commercial. The Ciara slogan has a further, though not conventional, implication based on the preceding interaction. The commercial sketches, with a few brief images, a romantic encounter which develops into a meaningful relationship. Through association, the viewer interprets "something" as a similar encounter, whose successful outcome is ensured by the use of the product. This marketing style, juxtaposing selected images with the product so that viewers will be drawn to the product through associating it with the images, is a well-documented advertising strategy.²

Voiceover turns in conversational commercials often exhibit conventional implicature. Since conventional implicature is extensively used by voiceovers and announcers in other commercial types, this distribution represents a functional similarity which must be motivated. Conventional implicature is less likely to induce counterargumentation than directness, while having the same (or greater) potential for conveying information. Used as a closing turn which sums up the preceding message, a conventionally indirect utterance has all of the advantages and none of the disadvantages of a direct claim.

Conventional implicature occurs within the commercial conversations as well. The following example from the Feen-a-mint commercial illustrates just such a situation. The second speaker's response to the conventional implicature of the prior

demonstrates the speaker's (and hence the viewer's) understanding and control of conventional implicature as a conversational technique.

- (18) A: ...why do you use these laxative pills instead of Feen-a-mint?
B: I didn't know Feen-a-mint ever made a pill.

The first speaker's question presupposes that Feen-a-mint makes a laxative pill, one which the speaker considers favorably in comparison with its competitor. The second speaker's response addresses this proposition. By disclaiming knowledge of the pills, she demonstrates her recognition of their implied existence. She also manages to suggest that, had she known of their existence, she would have bought the Feen-a-mint pills.

Like conventional implicature, entailment and presupposition are linguistically indirect means of conveying information. Both speaker and voiceover turns exhibit entailment and presupposition, although their use is somewhat limited. The examples below represent virtually all instances found in the corpus. Comparatives and superlatives, forms of entailment frequently found in other commercial types (Geis, 1982), are relatively rare in commercial conversations and are not discussed here.

- (19) a. So we both know what makes Dennison's chili great chili.
b. Something makes Dennison's chili great chili.
(Dennison's chili is great chili.)

- (20) a. Carol, you were right about the way Feen-a-mint relieves.
b. Feen-a-mint relieves.

- (21) a. At least our new Kitchenaid makes cleanup easy.
b. Our new Kitchenaid makes cleanup easy.

- (22) a. I know no detergent gets out everything [...]
b. No detergent gets out everything.

All

The last example, (22), is somewhat anomalous. Not only does it differ from the others by lacking a brand name, it makes a negative claim about the generic category of the product. This a negative claim implicitly indicts the product as a member of that category. A possible motivation for this utterance is suggested when it is viewed in the context of the commercial as a whole. The product apparently removes an oily stain from a blouse; this might mislead some viewers into believing that All can get out any kind of stain. Sometimes, when advertisers make potentially misleading claims, they also present a disclaimer.

Another moderately indirect means of presenting product attributes is a form of hedging which embeds direct claims within a matrix structure, employing superordinate non-factive verbs. These verbs do not presuppose the truth of the embedded proposition. The speakers report or suggest the product claim rather than directly assert it. Like other forms of implicature, this kind of hedging offers the advertiser the advantage of presenting a desirable message to viewers without engaging counterargumentation.

The Kitchenaid commercial exhibits three examples of hedging, each of which embeds a direct claim. Examples (23) and (24) have the structure of a declarative; a product presenter is embedded in a superordinate structure of the verb "say," which is neutral in terms of the truth value of the embedded proposition. Thus, the speakers report rather than assert the proposition.

- (23) a. Look, I know dishwashers (always) say Kitchenaid's the best [...]
 b. Kitchenaid's the best.
- (24) a. Kitchenaid. People say it's the best.
 b. It's [Kitchenaid] the best.

Interestingly, the hedged claim (24) is uttered by the voiceover. Presumably, the advertiser believes that this indirect assertion lends objectivity to the claim: we, the humble advertisers, don't say it; other (presumably unbiased) people do. The indirect claim, superficially weaker than a direct claim, has a stronger effect because of this conveyed impression.

The final example from the Kitchenaid commercial has the syntactic form of a question.

- (25) a. Now do you believe my Kitchenaid'll handle all those dishes?
 b. My Kitchenaid'll handle all those dishes.

This utterance, like some others, is indirect in several ways. In addition to the matrix hedging verb, "believe," again neutral in terms of the truth of the embedded proposition, the utterance has the structure of a question. Questions are one of the two structural formations characterizing conventional implicature. Thus, the utterance is multiply indirect.

Sometimes legitimate product claims are embedded rather than directly asserted. The following example from a Diet Pepsi commercial illustrates this.

- (26) a. Hard to believe that's one calorie.
 b. That's one calorie. Diet Pepsi

Diet soft drink commercials often claim outright that their product has only one calorie. Since such claims must be objectively verified (for product labeling and other purposes), (26a) could have been directly presented. That it was not reflects a deliberate stylization of the utterance rather than an attempt to evade responsibility for its veracity. In fact, (26a) clearly operates as a presentation of taste rather than caloric

content; it indirectly comments on caloric content in order to create a favorable impression about the product's taste.

Hedging is also exhibited in the Atari commercial. "Tell," another matrix verb non-predictive of truth value, embeds direct product claims.

- (27) a. I'll tell them it's [Atari 800XL] got 256 colors and 4 sound channels.
- b. It's got 256 colors and 4 sound channels.
- (28) a. Why don't you tell them it'll help you learn music and art?
- b. It'll help you learn music and art.
- (29) a. Tell 'em it'll help you write term papers.
- b. It'll help you write term papers.³

Atari

Like the Diet Pepsi example, some of the embedded propositions in the Atari commercial are objectively verifiable claims. For example, there is no reason to suspect that (27) could not have been directly asserted. A reasonable conclusion is that the utterance was hedged for reasons other than avoiding responsibility for the claim, perhaps to lend credibility to the parallel but less objective claims, (28) and (29).

Advertisers regularly employ imperatives to direct viewer attention to the product and product use. These imperatives instruct the viewer to use the product or how to acquire the product. Naturally, as one form of conventional implicature, imperatives are an indirect method of presenting the product. These instructors direct viewers to use the product. In fact, "use" is a frequently occurring verb in these directives, although it is not the only one. The following directives figure in the commercial context as suggestions for the solution of the addressee's problem; not surprisingly, the solution to commercial problems is the product.

- (30) [...] and use Palmolive.
- (31) Use Dove, it moisturizes.
- (32) Use Future both ways.
- (33) Whenever it's "there goes lunch," make it Lite-Lunch.

(30) and (31) both occur within the interaction. They are delivered by speakers whose product expertise is occupational in nature, lending credibility to the product-based solutions to their clients' problem. Viewers, although not directly addressed, are exposed to commands to use the product. A voiceover directly addresses viewers with (32), part of the closing summation of the preceding interaction. (32) differs from the other instructors by presupposing product use, directing viewers not so much to use the product as to use it "both ways." (33) is uttered twice, first by a product user who introduces the product to a new user, then repeated in the concluding voiceover turn.

Other imperatives orient viewers to the conversational context, indirectly furthering the commercial purpose by keeping the viewer's attention on some aspect of the product or product use.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| (34) Eat. | Campbell |
| (35) Wash one side with Dove. | Dove |

Both (34) and (35) keep the product in the foreground. Eating is the means of using Campbell's soup. Although no explicit object of "eat" occurs, the context suggests the product as the object. In any case, the verb keeps the activity associated with product use in mind. To wash with Dove also obviously keeps both the product and the product's designed use in the foreground.

Although these instructors are conventionally indirect, their relationship to the product is clear. Other instructors relate less directly to the product. Both of the following commands focus on the negative consequences of not using the product

rather than on the product itself. Here, as elsewhere, the absence of direct objects and brand names suggests shared knowledge.

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|--------|
| (36) | Don't pretreat. | All |
| (37) | Don't waste time just dampmopping. | Future |

In (36), by instructing the other participant (and the viewer) not to pretreat (offering the product as an alternative), the advertiser implies at least two things: that a person has the choice of using the product or pretreating; and that pretreating, as more work, is a undesirable and unnecessary step in cleaning clothes. These inferences are not explicit in the commercial, but call on the viewer to supply a belief system which supports the conveyed message.⁴ A similar reasoning process is mandated through implicature by the Future example. To "just" dampmop (and not "refresh the shine" by using the product in a new way) wastes the user's time and effort.

Instructors can also function to present product attributes. That certainly seems to be the purpose behind the following command from the Kitchenaid commercial.

- (38) Don't forget the energy saver.

This utterance introduces the product feature "energy saver" to viewers.

One final form of instructor provides the viewer, either directly through the voiceover or indirectly within the conversation, with information on how to purchase the product. The San Francisco Chronicle commercial situates (39) within the conversational exchange, while the Ciara example (40) is from a voiceover turn.

- (39) All you have to do is call 777-7000, ask for 2 for 1.
San Francisco Chronicle
- (40) Get the first in beauty from Ultima II with any Ciara or Ultima II purchase
at all Emporium-Capwell stores. Ciara

Although their local functions varied from exhortations to use a product to instructions on its purchase, instructors focus attention on the product, contributing to the presentation of the product.

1.3 Indirect presenters

Many indirect utterances nevertheless convey powerful impressions about the product. Truncated presenters are syntactic fragments and are frequently employed as an indirect means of presenting the product in conversational commercials. A well-placed fragment sometimes makes a stronger pragmatic claim than either direct or moderately indirect claims would, although its linguistic structure is less explicitly related to the product. Framed presenters keep the viewer's attention focused on the product while contextualizing the interaction. They make full use of the conversational structure of the commercial; the viewers' inferencing strategies enable them to understand the conveyed message, the relationship between utterance and product.

Truncated presenters are well-formed constituents of various sorts (adjectival, nominal, verbal, and so on), which are positioned in the conversation so as to appear to describe the product. Through astute placement, fragments convey product information without direct assertion, thereby reducing counter-argumentation while saving precious

time. These dual benefits make fragments an attractive means of product presentation. But fragments offer an additional advantage. In natural conversation, fragments suggest informality, intimacy, and shared knowledge. Similar impressions created by fragments in conversational commercials support the illusion of spontaneous interaction. The frequent occurrence of fragments attests to the popularity of this technique with advertisers.

Truncated presenters occur within the conversational exchange. For example, Madge the manicurist employs truncated presenters to introduce Palmolive to her clients. These fragments follow client inquiries (which created openings for product presentation) and are interpreted as responses to the inquiries.

- | | | |
|------|--|-----------------------|
| (41) | more than mild, makes heaps of suds that last... | |
| (42) | tres mild | |
| (43) | ...makes beaucoup suds that last | Palmolive commercials |

By appearing to be answers to questions, or otherwise responses to prior talk, fragments are interpreted as describing the product. Although these presenters make no linguistically direct claim, never mentioning the brand name, their relationship to the product is never in doubt.

Truncated presenters employ a variety of constituent structures. The Palmolive commercials, (41)-(43), employ adjective and verb phrases; Campbell, (45)-(46), employs both adjectives and noun phrases, and so on.

- | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------|
| (44) | clean natural beauty | Pledge |
| (45) | spicy .. tangy | Campbell |

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------|
| (46) | Zucchini .. Parmesan Cheese | Campbell |
| (47) | beefy meatballs .. spaghetti .. all that tasty sauce | Chef Boyardee |

These fragments describe the product. They are found when a new user tests the product; the product has been introduced and is being used for the first time. This creates the impression that the fragments represent the first-hand observations of the new user. Thus, the fragments stand between the "before" and "after" segments of a commercial, modeling consumer response to the product.

Voiceover-uttered fragments occur either internally, in the body of a commercial, or externally, at its closing. The location of a voiceover fragment determines its behavior. Internal voiceovers describe the product. They resemble speaker-uttered fragments in that they mark the transition from a "before" to an "after" sequence in the commercial, symbolically pointing out what the new user "notices" about the product. Unlike speaker-uttered fragments, however, internal voiceover fragments frequently mention the product brand name. Since, like other truncated presenters, voiceover fragments are constituents of various sorts, brand names are variously positioned, in prepositional phrases, embedded noun phrases, and so on. An advantage of voiceover fragments over speaker-uttered ones is that they can include information of which the new user could not be aware. In (48), for example, the user would not be aware of the product's caloric content simply by sampling the product.

- | | | |
|------|---|-------------------|
| (48) | from Lipton
hot delicious noodles
rich thick sauces
only half the calories of a cheeseburger | Lipton Lite-Lunch |
|------|---|-------------------|

- (49) the perfect way to prove new lemon scent Sunlight outcleans the leading brand on tough starchy food Sunlight
- (50) plus full strength detergent in Fab Fab

Not all voiceover fragments are internal; many occur as the final utterance of the commercial. These closing fragments exhibit less structural variation than internal ones, being constrained in purpose. Unlike internal voiceovers, which simply present the product, external ones provide summaries of the preceding interaction. While this usually entails presentation, such presentation is highly specified, focusing on the brand name and the core of the commercial message. Brand names appear in initial position only and are followed by descriptive fragments. This structure marks the external voiceover as a slogan. This difference in function between internal and closing voiceovers accounts for their different linguistic characteristics

- (51) Ciara. the thoroughly female fragrance.
- (52) Pledge. clean natural beauty every time you dust.

Closely related to fragment slogans are slogans with complete sentential structures, which also occur in closing voiceover turns. Again, the brand name is the initial element. The following structure, however, is not a fragment but a well-formed sentence with pronominal product reference.

- (53) Single Serving Chunky. It's just enough for one.
- (54) Lee Nails. You'll love 'em.
- (55) Kitchenaid. People say it's the best.

One topicalized slogan uttered by a closing voiceover has an initial element which is not the brand name. However, the brand name appears later in the slogan.

(56) Taste. Improved by Diet Pepsi.

This slogan closed both of the Diet Pepsi commercials. The commercials' focus on user images accounts for this slogan's deviation from classic structural expectations

The slogans so far discussed were uttered by closing voiceovers. However, two slogan-like utterances are produced by speakers rather than voiceovers. In both cases, the slogan occurs within the conversational interaction, not at its end.

(57) Diet Pepsi .. great taste .. with Nutrasweet.

Like voiceover slogans, this one follows rigid constraints. The brand name is the initial element, followed by two fragments which present product attributes, one evaluative and one descriptive. Because no elements in the conversation suggest any reason for the speaker to be considered an expert, the turn gives the impression of a spontaneous testimonial by a (presumably objective) satisfied customer.

The other speaker-uttered slogan appears in a Campbell's commercial in which "different" is repeated six times through the course of the commercial. The advertiser evidently wants to emphasize "different" as a product attribute. This slogan, the first of three successive turns beginning with "different," introduces the new user (and the viewer) to the product.

(58) Different. That's Soup for One.

Like the closing Diet Pepsi slogan, in this slogan the product attribute is topicalized, then syntactically connected to the brand name.

While they resemble truncated presenters by being indirectly related to the product, framed presenters are more difficult to systematize. The basic feature identifying framed presenters is that the exhibition of an explicit linguistic connection to the product. This connection is achieved through the mentioning of the brand name, the product category, a product attribute, or some activity or attribute related to the product, use of the product, or the appropriate setting for the use of the product. Although such utterances do not make explicit product claims, they implicitly present some relevant feature of the product, thereby focusing viewer attention on the product. Usually framed presenters occur early in the interaction, where their dual contributions of presenting the product and contextualizing the interaction are most needed.

The possible means of framing the product in a conversational setting are limited only by the imagination of the writer in relating the product to the specific context of a particular interaction. Thus, "framed presenter" encompasses a large and varied set of commercial utterances. They represent a middle stage between moderately indirect utterances (such as conventional implicature or hedges), whose connection to the product is linguistically explicit, and leaders (discussed below), whose connection to the product is not immediately apparent. Framed product presentation reflects local advertising goals by modeling consumer behavior, focusing attention on the product, and setting up situations in which the product can be discussed. Some framed

presenters also introduce product attributes.

Framed presenters, being both an expression and reflection of the conversational structure of the commercial, take full advantage of turntaking and interactive structure. They always appear as personal contributions to the conversation, addressed by one speaker to the other and using one of the three pronouns which relate to conversational participants, "I," "you," and "we [inclusive of other actor/participant]," as subject. Most exceptions to this generalization exhibit some other explicit reference to ongoing interaction.

The two examples below reveal the speakers as product users, modeling desired consumer behavior to the viewer.

- (59) We're going to use A-L-L.
- (60) But we've always used Future straight from the bottle.

Both (59) and (60), through use of the first person plural pronoun, identify the commercial participants as product users. Both sets of speakers "use" the product, which is directly referred to by the brand name. The framework of these presenters conveys contextual information regarding the interaction. For example, (60) implies that there is some other way to use Future than the one mentioned. Since this impression is emphasized through the rest of the commercial, framed presenter has served two purposes, presenting the product and framing further presentation. In addition, (60) serves as an invitation for a direct product claim. Thus, framed presenters, like truncated presenters, perform a variety of commercial functions.

The framed presenter (61) does not mention brand name, referring instead to the context in which the product is used. Although its level of indirectness is greater than those which explicitly refer to the product, it brings the activity associated with the product to viewer attention, thereby framing the forthcoming presentation of the product. The viewer must make the connection between the activity and the product, but the connection is clear and easily made.

(61) Nance, I'm gonna run the dishwasher. Sunlight

Viewers understand that part of running a dishwasher is using dishwasher detergent. When the speaker finally runs the dishwasher, the product is used. The Sunlight commercial is somewhat unique, since neither speaking character refers to the generic product category or the specific brand name. This task is left to the voiceover, who mentions it several times.

A framed presenter from the Aramis commercial, (62) explicitly assumes the product as part of the background of the utterance. The product brand name appears in a question which plays a significant role in the interaction; the purchase of the product is assumed behavior.

(62) You bought Aramis for your ...

In this way, the purchase of the product becomes background information about the behavior of two attractive and socially successful speakers.

Framed presenters frequently embed verbal material which refers to the product or the context of product use. The superordinate material contributes to the contextualization of the conversation, framing the interactive setting by providing significant information about the speaker and the context. Like the preceding examples, these framed presenters occur early in the commercial.

- (63) I am working my way through college selling subscriptions to the
Chronicle newspaper. San Francisco Chronicle
- (64) I hope I can talk my parents into buying me an Atari 800XL.
Atari

While the above examples make neither direct nor indirect product claims, they explicitly mention the product brand name, thereby bringing the product to the viewer's attention. They also expose viewers to commercially relevant notions; "subscription to the Chronicle" and "buy an Atari 800XL," are notions central to the advertiser's purpose.

Some framed presenters explicitly present product attributes to the viewer, as the following example from a Campbell commercial shows. This utterance, a response to the product, also models consumer behavior.

- (65) I do love all those chunks of beef, all those chunks of potatoes, chunks of
carrots. Campbell

The sequence of object noun phrases in (65) presumably describe the product, although this is never directly asserted.

NOTES

- ¹ For a more complete discussion of this sort of conventional implicature use in television commercials, see Geis (1982).
- ² Vestergaard and Schrøder, (1985).
- ³ Geis, (1982) has a very illuminating discussion of "help."
- ⁴ This kind of implicature has been called "theoretical implicature" by Geis (1982).

2.0 Supporting product presentation

Not all utterances related to the commercial message present the product. Some function as supportive mechanisms for product presentation. Three major categories of supportive utterances can be distinguished (see Figure 4 below). The first category creates openings in the conversation for the natural delivery of product presenters. The second category models consumer responses to the product. Echo responses, which make up the third category, create openings and offer responses, in addition to reinforcing selected attributes of the product. Thus, they serve the purposes of both the first and the second categories.

Supportive utterances take full advantage of conversational turntaking characteristics, helping move the conversation along the lines selected by the advertiser. Speakers who produce such utterances are unfamiliar with the product. Their ignorance creates a context in which their conversational partner can provide product information; for example, a customer might ask a salesclerk how to prevent dry hands, offering the clerk an opportunity to suggest a particular product. Once a new user is introduced to the product, some response to it is forthcoming. Supportive responses model the ideal consumer response. Echo responses, as mentioned above, both elicit and present product claims.

Figure 4
Supportive utterances

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>SUBCATEGORY</u>
openers	questions tag questions prompts negative claims contextualizations
responses	evaluators affectors competitors focusers
echoes	openers responses repeaters

2.1 Openers

Openers create conversational openings and thereby permit the natural presentation of product claims. By far the most common means of eliciting product presentation is the question. Questions, by placing responsibility for response on the addressee, are a simple and natural means to turn the floor over to the product spokesperson while constraining the direction of the conversation. However, questions are not the only interactive strategy for eliciting product presenters: tag, prompts, negative product claims, and the like also accomplish this goal. Each of these techniques is discussed in this section.

A general claim that questions elicit product presenters does not reveal the strategic

use of individual questions, which varies with the commercial context. Questions may be either open-ended or directed. Open-ended questions, if removed from their commercial setting, would offer no clue to the nature of the product or even the product category whose marketing they support. However, the careful syntactic construction exhibited by such questions belies this apparent vagueness. A noun phrase slot, corresponding to the product and filled either by "what" or a demonstrative pronoun, inevitably appears. (In the examples below, both the question and the commercial response are presented.)

- (67) A: [...] what will I try?
 B: Everything, and use Palmolive liquid, it softens hands while you do the dishes. Palmolive
- (68) A: Ah, is that for me?
 B: Yes, it's Soup for One from Campbell's, but it's different from other soups. Campbell

The openers in (67) and (68) are referentially indeterminate, offering no clue about the product when removed from their commercial context. Both openers are responded to with a three-part utterance. First comes a general and situationally appropriate response, followed by the product brand name in a product presenter, and then by a direct product claim. In both commercials, the turn elicited by the opener is the first directly product-relevant utterance.

An open-ended question also appears in the Pledge commercial. The setting of this question differs somewhat from those of the above questions. While both the Palmolive and the Campbell questions opened the product presentation, this example appears after the product has already been introduced.

- (69) A: Well, what's the difference?
 B: She'll see. Pledge picks up fingerprints [...] Pledge

Unlike the other examples, in (69) "what" does not hold a syntactic slot for product reference. The question is rhetorical;¹ the speaker does not believe that Pledge will be different from her own furniture polish. The response to her question, interestingly, comes not from the woman's co-participant but from a voiceover who, by referring to the speaker in the third person ("she'll see"), clearly establishes the viewer as the addressee. The voiceover speaks from an omniscient perspective unavailable to the participants, promising that a comparison will reveal a difference between other products and Pledge. A direct product claim follows this promise. Presumably, the traits presented by the voiceover are the ones that the woman encounters in her comparison. Pledge's superiority is recognized and the voiceover's prediction is fulfilled.

Not all opening questions are open-ended. Directed questions, which constrain the conversational topic, also occur. They present product information or reflect concern about a specific product attribute. A directed question from the Pledge commercial serves several functions, framing the situation through which the product will be presented and also introducing the product category to which the product belongs.

- (70) A: Uh, got any furniture polish?
 B: I think so. Pledge

The addressee returns with a can of Pledge, thus suggesting that neighbors are likely to use the product.

Rather than introducing the product category, most directed questions revolve around some specific product attribute.

- (71) A: [...] but can we afford it on our budget?
 B: No problem with Chef Boyardee. You get over five servings in this
 40 oz. can. Chef Boyardee
- (72) A: Are they all soft?
 B: Oh, yeah, they're all *very* soft. Soft & Fretty
- (73) A: But how cleans Palmolive?²
 B: fantastic, makes beaucoup suds that last. Palmolive
- (74) A: How are you gonna get it white with a bleach for colors?
 B: Clorox II does more than clean colors. It gets whites liquid bleach
 white. Clorox II

Each of these directed questions selects some relevant product attribute and focuses attention on it, inviting (and receiving) a direct product claim as a response. Only the Palmolive question is answered with an indirect presenter, a fragment which is pragmatically constrained so that viewers understand it to refer to the product.

Questions, when they do not elicit product presenters, can still support the marketing purpose. For example, the Dove commercials use questions to identify problems which people who do not use the product may encounter. Even so, the talk soon turns to direct product claims.

- (75) client: Liz, how can I be young and my skin look old?
 Liz: That's not age, that's dry skin.
 Are you using soap?
 client: un hum
 Liz: Soap can dry. Use Dove, it moisturizes. Dove
- (76) Liz: Know her secret?
 No soap. She uses Dove.
 client: How come?
 Liz: Soap can dry. Dove moisturizes. Dove

Excerpt (75) employs two questions, neither of which elicits a product claim. Soap use is portrayed as a cause of dry skin and, indirectly, of looking old. These questions contextualize the product discussion, creating a setting in which direct product claims can be made. A similar strategy can be seen in the first turn of excerpt (76). Unlike most questions, this one is answered by the same speaker. The client's follow-up question is open-ended, allowing the product claims to follow.

The Dove commercials treat "soap" and "Dove" as if they were terms of equal significance, thereby maximizing the importance of Dove. The product competes directly with its generic product category, implying that Dove is not "soap."³ Obviously, the marketing strategy of the Dove campaign is to win new users away from rival products. Such a strategy comes as no great surprise, since new markets for handsoap (at least among the viewers of the commercial) are minimal. Negative advertising, against competing items rather than for your own, occurs frequently when advertisers compete for the same market.

Two tag questions elicit evaluative responses to the product. The declarative to which they are attached provides propositional content which reflects the advertiser's image of ideal consumer response. It remains only for the addressee to agree with the inevitably positive proposition.

- | | | |
|------|--|------------|
| (77) | A: I'm sure it will be to your liking, yes?
B: Yes [...] | Diet Pepsi |
| (78) | A: [...] it tastes terrific, hunh?
B: You know, this tastes terrific. | Campbell |

(78) is a somewhat unusual conversational exchange. The addressee of the tag

introduces his response with an attention getting device that suggests that new information is coming. This strategic move indirectly conveys at least two notions. First, it suggests that the addressee is not listening to the speaker; otherwise, he would have been aware that a question had been posed and could have responded appropriately. Second, it implies that the addressee independently arrived at the exact same conclusion about the product's quality, which is so striking that everyone (the viewer) who tries the product will recognize it. An alternative interpretation is that the addressee is so excited about the product that he can't be bothered to obey pragmatic rules. In any case, both speakers make the same product claim, reinforcing the commercial message.

Several commercials use prompts as means of eliciting product-relevant responses. Prompts create openings for either evaluative or affective responses to the product or product results.

- (79) A: so?
 B: so I love Soup for One
 A: because?
 B: It's different. Campbell
- (80) A: Well?
 B: Is that my shirt?
 A: Sure is. All

The above examples offer a nice contrast. The Campbell prompts, being conjunctions, constrain the syntactic form of the following responses. The responses, complete grammatical sentences, conform to conventional expectations arising from the conjunction prompt. These responses are classic evaluative comments. The first belongs to a response category (see below) in which consumers profess love for the

product; as with other affective responses, the product brand name serves as direct object. The second prompted response is a product presenter with pronominal product reference. On the other hand, the All commercial has an open prompt, which places no constraint on the form of the response. An unusual response is elicited, an incredulous question which suggests that All has gotten the shirt so clean that it can hardly be recognized as the same dirty one that went into the washer.

Negative claims about the product also create openings for product presentation. They introduce a product-relevant topic and usually occur early in the conversation, shortly after the opening. Because they also raise objections to the product that viewers might have, negative claims offer the advertiser an opportunity to lay those objections to rest. Thus, negative claims serve at least two purposes: they create openings for product presenters and they forestall possible consumer objections.

- (81) A: [...] but it'll never get all those clean, like that.
 B: You'll see. It will. This upper rack tilts [...] Kitchenaid
- (82) A: Yeah, but ya but butcha⁴ pay extra for simple.
 [...] Vivitar
 B: Nope, it's one of the lowest priced fully automatic cameras you can buy.
 Vivitar

The Kitchenaid commercial has an unusually long product presenter, which responds in detail to the negative claim. Thus, the negative claim allows a lengthy discussion of the product, in order to persuade the speaker (and the viewer) that the negative claim is unfounded. The Vivitar commercial takes a slightly different tack; its negative claim initiates a lengthy interaction which eventually returns to answer the original objection. This response comes late in the conversation, summing up the major point of the

commercial and the digression.

A few other means of creating natural openings for product presentation were employed in the conversational commercials. These examples, although unlike in many ways, are similar in that they introduce contexts in which the product is relevant.

- (83) A: [...] and now I have to pretreat.
 B: Don't pretreat. Use Concentrated All with bleach, borax and brighteners.
 All
- (84) A: Let's start with a drink.
 B: Diet Pepsi?
 A: Diet Pepsi..great taste..with Nutrasweet. Diet Pepsi
- (85) A: Here, hold this.
 B: Diet Pepsi does taste better than it used to. Hard to believe that's one calorie.
 A: They improved it. With Nutrasweet. Diet Pepsi

In the All commercial, a product expert enlightens the new user by offering the product as an alternative to pretreating. The two Diet Pepsi examples resemble each other in that the speakers are not presented as product experts, but instead as ordinary users of the product. The product enters the conversation "naturally," and the product claims appear to be offered almost incidentally. Both segments are embedded within the body of the conversation; the product is mentioned only in these turns and the closing voiceover turn.

2.2 Responses

The presentation of product attributes is also supported by models of the ideal consumer response to the product. These responses, not surprisingly, occur late in the commercial, often immediately prior to the closing voiceover turn. Generally, they are uttered by consumers whose conversion to product use is conveyed through the commercial action. The propositional content of a supportive response may be directly or indirectly related to the product; in this way, they resemble both presenters and openers. Supportive responses include affective responses, positive evaluations of the product, negative evaluations of competing products, and descriptive results of product use.

Affective responses to the product resemble compliments by employing a common compliment structure. They are formulaic, uniformly employing the verb "love" and the product brand name as direct object. Thus, affective responses in commercials are even more highly constrained than compliments, since compliments also employ verbs such as "like."

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| (86) | so I love Soup for One. | Campbell |
| (87) | I love your Pledge. | Pledge |
| (88) | J'adore Palmolive. | Palmolive |
| (89) | Lee Nails. You'll love 'em. | Lee Nails |

(88) is unique among commercial utterances, being the only conversational move in the entire corpus which is not English. Although in French, the utterance is easy enough that most viewers will understand it; the verb "adore," cognate with English "adore," is easily interpretable. This utterance also employs the product brand name as

the direct object, following the constraints for affective responses. Given the context, the meaning of the utterance is predictable. (89) adapts a prediction of affective response to the structure of a slogan. The brand name is preposed; the direct object is its pronominal trace. A voiceover slogan, this utterance closes the commercial.

Evaluative responses to the product or product use, in the form of either adjective fragments or non-lexical but conventional verbal responses, occur in several commercials. Having no direct relationship to immediately preceding utterances, these utterances cannot be considered responses to prior turns. Instead, they are "spontaneous" responses to the product or to the results of product use. Generally, the supportive function of these "spontaneous" evaluative acclamations is clear. Although neither brand names nor other nominal or pronominal references to the product occur, the response is pragmatically constrained so that it must be interpreted as referring to the product.

(90) Nice.	Sunlight
(91) Fabulous.	Fab
(92) Wow.	Future

The first two examples employ unambiguously approbative adjectives which are among the class of lexical items occurring in compliments (Wolfson, 1981) and as such convey positive assessment to viewers. (92) employs an exclamation which functions identically to the other examples and was uttered by a teenage speaker.⁵

The following examples also convey unambiguous approbation. Each begins with a non-lexical indication of pleasure. Some examples employ subsequent utterances which clarify the enjoyment particle by directing approbation to a specific

product attribute.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| (93) mmm. | Chef Boyardee |
| (94) mmm. delicious. | Lipton Lite-Lunch |
| (95) mmm. You smell terrific. | Ciara |

Unlike (93) and (94), which are direct responses to the product, (95) responds indirectly to the product, assessing the woman addressee. Because (95) opens the commercial, the viewer does not yet know what the product is, and, since the speakers never mention the product, the viewer must infer the relationship of this utterance to the product. However, the implication that the woman smells good because she uses the product (hence, as the result of product use) is clear.

Some responses, rather than positively evaluating the product itself, negatively evaluate the results of using competing products. These evaluative responses occur after the product has been presented and late in the commercial, that is, in the same sequential environment as positive assessments of the product. Several examples from the Dove commercials furnish further evidence that Dove's marketing strategy is to position itself as an alternative to "soap."

- | | |
|--|------|
| (96) The soap side's dry .. tight. | |
| (97) The soap side feels dry .. tight. | |
| (98) No more drying my skin with soap. | Dove |

The similarity between (96) and (97) graphically illustrates the parallel construction of the two commercials. (98) is the resolution to which the new user comes in each of them. Clearly, each of these utterances assesses (negatively) "soap." As a model of consumer behavior, these responses indirectly support the product by castigating competing products.

The next two negative responses are substantially similar to the Dove examples.

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------|--------|
| (99) | Mine doesn't look that good. | Pledge |
| (100) | No more static cling. | Fab |

The Pledge commercial evaluates a nameless competing product by negatively comparing its results to the results of using Pledge. And, by using Fab, the consequence of static cling is avoided. In both cases, the product looks good in comparison with competing products.

The final category of supportive responses is diverse, exhibiting structural variety. Not all of these responses mention the product brand name; instead, the results of product use are the focus.

- | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| (101) | My blouse .. the oil's gone. | All |
| (102) | I never tasted soup like that before. | Campbell |
| (103) | The Dove side's softer and less dry. | Dove |
| (104) | The Dove side is softer .. less dry. | Dove |

(101) implies that the product has effectively cleaned a difficult-to-clean stain, although neither the product nor a product-related activity is mentioned. (102) underscores Campbell's position that their product is "different." The Dove examples are substantially similar; both respond to product use, comparing results to those of soap.

Like the above examples, the Fab response follows the new user's encounter with the product.

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----|
| (105) | A: and look how clean | |
| | B: Blanket's soft | |
| | A: And lemony fresh | Fab |

Although the product is not directly mentioned, this sequence implies that "clean," "soft," and "lemony fresh" are the results of product use. Within the context, no other interpretation is viable.

Indirect supportive utterances must be interpreted by viewers by employing background knowledge and reasoning.

(106) [...] how about a serving of my own? Chef Boyardee

The viewer understands that this utterance reflects the speaker's desire for a serving; the context suggests that his desire is sparked by a positive evaluation of the food he just sampled. Thus, without an evaluative adjective, mention of the product, or use of a complimentary verb, the speaker conveys a positive assessment of the product. His conversion to the product is implicit in his request.

2.3 Echoes

Echoes are a particular kind of supportive utterance. Like naturally occurring echoes, these utterances repeat, in whole or in part, verbal material uttered by the immediately prior speaker. Echoing is a useful advertising technique because the significant portion of a product claim is repeated. Reiteration emphasizes selected product attributes and the main commercial message; the viewer's attention is focused where the advertiser wants it. Some echoes also serve as openers, eliciting product claims. Thus, both functions of supportive utterances presented above, creating openings and offering responses, are performed by echoes.

Some echoes allow natural delivery of product presenters. (These examples are presented in a tri-partite structure, showing an utterance, the echo, and some part of the response to the echo.)

- (107) A: Whoa, Susan. Don't waste time just dampmopping.
 B: Just dampmopping, mom?
 A: Here. Pour some Future in the bucket and refresh the shine at the same time. Future

The above excerpt opens the commercial, a classic example of echoes as a means of moving the conversation where the advertiser wants to go. The opening turn introduces a product-related activity (albeit minus product at this point). This activity is echoed, focusing viewer attention and eliciting an imperative instructing the consumer on how to use the product and what the product will accomplish.

A similar echo strategy is exhibited by the Lipton Lite-Lunch commercial. While this excerpt does not open the commercial conversation, it does occur very early in it.

- (108) A: [...] Wishful thinking.
 B: No .. Lite-Lunch.
 A: Lite-Lunch?
 C: From Lipton hot delicious noodles [...] Lipton Lite-Lunch

The product is offered as an alternative to missing lunch. The product spokesperson produces the product brand name, which is echoed questioningly by her addressee. This echo invites product presentation, supplied by an obliging voiceover.

The Palmolive echo, from the body of the commercial, differs from the previous two since the product has already been introduced.

- (109) A: You're soaking in it.
 B: In dishwashing liquid?
 A: It's Palmolive. Palmolive

(109) is unique in another way as well: the response does not directly echo the preceding turn. The originating utterance employs a pronominal referent, evidence that the product is under discussion. In the echo, reference to a generic product category is recovered. The first speaker corrects the recovered referent, implying that the product is not just any member of the product category, but a special one. This marketing strategy suggests that the product is unique in its product category. More explicit product claims are made following the above excerpt.

Only one clear-cut example of an echo related to product response was found, in the Chef Boyardee commercial. A new user is learning about the product from an experienced user.

- (110) A: [...] Each serving costs about 25¢.
 B: Only 25¢
 A: un huh Chef Boyardee

The new consumer echoes the product claim incredulously, suggesting that it is hard to believe. As such, the echo evaluates the claim; the speaker's incredulous tone indicates surprise at the low price, implying that the product tastes like it is worth more. The first speaker's affirmative response to the echo reasserts the claim. The voiceover reiterates the cost in the commercial closing, establishing beyond doubt the advertiser's desire to focus viewer's attention on this attribute.

Other echoes also repeat product claims but are not responses to the product since the speaker has not yet had first-hand experience. Such echoes occur in various

locations in the conversations but perform the same function of underscoring important product attributes. Attention is focused on the repeated attribute; brand names do not occur.

- (111) A: With Feen-a-mint pills, constipation relief is gentle and predictable.
 B: Gentle and predictable.
 A: And unlike laxatives most people use [...] Feen-a-mint

The echo in (111) repeats the final portion of the prior utterance, focusing attention on the predicted results of product use. The first speaker then continues with additional product claims. In the closing turn of the commercial, the voiceover slogan again focuses attention on "gentle and predictable," substantiating repetition as an indicator of central focus in a commercial.

The following example from Fab resembles the above example only in its repetition of a product attribute. The first speaker, a voiceover, presents a product attribute; the second speaker echoes this attribute and continues with another. This repetition performs its by now familiar function of reinforcing the importance of a specific attribute and preceding further product presentation; it differs only in the participant structure.

- (112) A: [...] Fab with full strength fabric softener.
 B: Full strength fabric softener
 plus full strength detergent in Fab [...] Fab

Again, the closing utterance, repeating the claim, reinforces the commercial importance of the echoed attribute.

The Campbell commercial offers one last example of echoes which repeat product attributes. The importance of "different" in the Soup for One commercial has already

been discussed; this example supports the focus of the commercial strategy.

- (113) A: [...] but it's different from other soups.
B: different
A: Just taste Old World Vegetable.

The echo does not repeat the concluding words of the immediately prior turn. Instead, the focus is on the presented trait itself; the echo repeats the important commercial information of the prior utterance. The conversation, as usual, continues with a product presenter, in this case a command to taste the product.

The supportive utterances examined in this chapter, openers, supporters, and echoes, share the work of supporting the advertiser's purpose by adapting the turntaking structure of natural interaction to the advertiser's commercial needs. Supportive utterances move the conversation along its appointed lines by providing openings for product presentation, by constraining the commercial topic, by focusing viewer attention on selected product attributes, and by modeling consumer behavior. They are produced by speakers whose knowledge of the product is limited but whose conversational partners have and willingly share such knowledge.

NOTES

¹ My findings differ significantly from Geis' (1982, p. 17), who claims that most questions in commercials are rhetorical: I found only a few. I believe this difference in distribution originates in the differences between the speaker types studied. When commercial speakers are engaged in interaction, questions are used in a manner consistent with interaction; when speakers are engaged in monologues or narratives, questions are used in a manner consistent with those discourse types. Thus, the frequency of particular kinds of commercial questions depends on their discourse environment.

² A French woman produces this utterance. The strange syntax is accounted for by her non-native speaker status; in fact, it is through the consistent production of such non-native sequences that the woman's foreign identity is conveyed to viewers. French accents were the only ones found in the original 700 commercial corpus, suggesting that French foreignness is relatively prestigious. Lately a number of Australian accents have also graced commercials.

³ In their attempt to present their competitors in as poor a light as possible, the advertisers hedge their negative evaluation of soap (using "can"); usually such hedges occur in connection with the advertised product.

⁴ This is the only clear example of a false start in the commercials; it plays into the assigned comedic role of the speaker.

⁵ Perhaps the advertiser deliberately used an exclamation, as opposed to an adjective, as a reflection of the perceived general inarticulateness of that age group.

3.0 Leaders

Some conversational commercials open with leaders, utterances whose relationship to the product is initially unclear. The viewer is guided to the proper understanding of the utterance by subsequent turns which constrain its possible interpretation. Leaders furnish evidence for the need to look beyond a single utterance in interpreting commercial conversations.

Leaders have no recognizable linguistic connection to the product at the time of utterance. Subsequent utterances clarify the connection between the leader and the product. The unfolding conversation reinforces one interpretation of the leader above the others, ensuring that the advertiser's point is conveyed to the viewer; the leader often assumes, retroactively, product relevance. Leaders open the commercial and frame a problem to which the product is the solution. The commercial closes once the product solves the problem and a testimonial to that effect has been made.

The first two examples discussed here are from All and Lipton Lite-Lunch commercials. Then, the two Palmolive leaders are examined. All of the leaders are in similarly structured sequences. First, a leader introduces a topic which has no discernible relationship to a product. Each successive utterance is more directly related to the product.

3.1 All

The All commercial uses its leader to set up the situation. A small boy covered with mud and carrying a very dirty puppy delivers the opening utterance.

- (114) boy: Mom, I showed Abercrombie how to roll over.
 mom: Oh, terrific. Now let's teach him how to clean clothes.
 boy: We're going to use A-L-L.
 mom: Watch this, Abercrombie. All cleans everything. All

Together with visual information, the leader contextualizes the conversation. Without mentioning the product or any activity or circumstance directly related to the product, the leader establishes a context in which the product can become relevant. The opening scene is representative of a situation which often occurs: children and their clothes get dirty. A parent cannot predict exactly how this will happen, only that it will. Thus, although the precise circumstances modeled by the commercial might not be duplicated, viewers are expected to understand the significance of the situation.

The mother responds in a two part utterance with good-humored tolerance. The first part is an interactive response to the prior utterance, support for the fiction of the conversation as a spontaneous encounter. The second part of her utterance, a framed product presenter, introduces the activity (cleaning clothes) commercially mandated as a result of the boy's activity. This presenter frames a context which encompasses the boy's abilities and interests; mother and son will jointly teach the puppy to "clean clothes." By fitting the verbal context to the boy's interests, however, the mother does more than bridge the gap between the leader and product presentation. She offers an image of motherly behavior to viewers, an image which does not closely match the more realistic and less patient response that many mothers would have. Even supposing that a mother responded to a child's dirty clothes with similar patience, it is unlikely that she would immediately do a load of laundry just to clean an individual garment. However, implying that doing just that is reasonable action on the part of a

good mother is to the advertiser's advantage.

The child demonstrates his familiarity with the cleaning process by uttering a statement which indicates that he and his mother will use the product. His very familiarity with All and its application not only introduces its product brand name, but implies that the two of them are long-term users. This further suggests that the product has demonstrated its efficacy by successfully cleaning dirty clothes in the past. A reasonable conclusion that could be drawn is that the product has been tested and found suitable under demanding conditions. Obviously, these impressions support the marketing purpose of the advertiser and most likely are deliberately contrived. The woman responds with another two part utterance. Again, the first part is interactively relevant, orienting to the boy's context. The second part is a very strong direct product claim.

Ignoring for the moment the interactive component of the excerpt (which after all exists to support and contextualize the product-relevant components), each of the four opening utterances is sequentially more directly related to product presentation. The leader, as the initial and most indirect turn, sets up the interactive context. The next turn specifies the product-relevant activity mandated by the context. The third turn introduces the product brand name as the inevitable means by which the product-relevant activity is to be achieved. The final utterance makes a direct and explicit product claim, employing the brand name as subject. Thus, the leader is the first step in a sequence which brings viewers to product presentation.

3.2 Lipton Lite-Lunch

The opening exchange in the Lipton Lite-Lunch commercial also creates a situation through which product attributes can be presented. The leader is maximally indirect, with successively more direct subsequent utterances drawing the viewer inextricably to product presentation. The physical setting is a busy fashion design workshop; one woman hangs up the phone and opens the conversation by addressing the other woman.

- (115) A: The client will be here in 10 minutes.
 B: There goes lunch again. I want something hot and delicious. Wishful thinking.
 A: No .. Lite-Lunch.

The leader refers to neither the product nor any product-relevant activity. Its relevance to the commercial message becomes clear only as the succeeding turns further define the situation. In retrospect, the leader assumes relevance as a framed product presenter; "10 minutes" is established as a temporal parameter of product use, implying that the product takes less than 10 minutes to fix and eat. However, this product relevance is not apparent until later in the commercial.

Notice the artificial use of "client" to identify the source of time pressure. In natural settings, a client would be referred to by name, rather than by the generic term used here; "client" provides insufficient information to workers in a natural setting. However, in a commercial, a specific client's name would not provide viewers with the information essential to understanding the interactive and situational significance of the utterance. Hence, the advertising setting directly influences the information structure of non-product-related utterances.¹

The second speaker responds with a three part utterance. The first part briefly interprets for the viewer the significance of the preceding statement and refers to the context (lunch)² appropriate to product use; the approximate time of the conversation is established. This part also implies that the woman would like to eat. The first part of the utterance orients the viewer to the context of the interaction. The second part of the utterance, also a grammatical sentence, directly presents two attributes of the desired lunch. The two attributes later assume product relevance. This statement of desire reinforces the impression of the woman's hunger and interest in lunch. The third part of the utterance, however, dismisses the preceding statement of desire, evaluating the desire in light of the situation. Viewers understand that clients outrank lunch in business priorities; the woman wants lunch but can't have it because there is not enough time.

The first speaker reclaims the floor. Rather than endorsing the prior speaker's evaluation of the situation, she disagrees and offers an alternative, not to the evaluation, but to the situation of "no lunch." By uttering the brand name, she suggests that the product will resolve the difficulty and fulfill the woman's desires. This offering of the product as an alternative to "no lunch" implies that the product can be made and consumed within 10 minutes. The leader has assumed relevance retroactively as a product presenter. That the product is hot and delicious is also implied, since these qualities are part of the frustrated desire which the product will satisfy. If the product is not fast, hot, and delicious, it is not a viable alternative to "no lunch." Thus, the Lipton Lite-Lunch commercial demonstrates an important technique of product presentation. Instead of assertion, the juxtaposition of turns conveys specific claims.

Notice that, as in the All commercial, the succeeding turns become increasingly more related to the product. The leader provides no clues about the product, although it later assumes relevance as a framed product presenter. The next utterance introduces the appropriate context of the product, followed by a specification of two product attributes. The brand name is not mentioned until the third turn, in which the speaker introduces the product, making, with her suggestion, the claim that the product can satisfy the criteria presented in the opening turns. A voiceover enumerating more specific product attributes follows this excerpt. The inevitable commercial ending, that the consumer becomes another satisfied product user, offers indirect evidence that the product does indeed offer the viewer the implicated attributes.

3.3 The Palmolive commercials

The Palmolive commercials also lead slowly into product presentation. The two commercials exhibit significant similarities. Each one begins with a female client entering a busy beauty parlor and addressing a manicurist, Madge. Madge responds to the client's greeting and conversational opening with an indirect allusion to the condition of the woman's hands. The client demonstrates her understanding of this indirect comment and seeks advice for a solution, offering Madge a natural opening for product presentation.

- (116) client: Madame Madge, just flew in from Paris.
 manicurist: Oh, landed on your hands, I see. ((laugh))
 client: Oh, it is dishwashing, what can I try?

Visual information supports the identification of the setting as a business one. The opening turn orients the viewer to the conversational participants. A foreign accent plus the polite and somewhat unusual title-first name address term³ signal that the speaker is not American. The reference to Paris, pronounced in the French manner, offers evidence of the client's country of origin. As the commercial develops, additional evidence supports the identification of the speaker as French; she employs non-standard syntax, makes foreign non-lexical responses to Madge, and even utters a sentence in French.⁴ Thus, the leader offers much information about the speakers as it opens the conversation. It establishes the identity of the speaker and, by addressing Madge, orients the viewer to the product. As the main character of this long-standing Palmolive campaign, Madge is a well-known symbol of the product.

In addition, the leader provides an opportunity for Madge to make a pun-based quip, a word play growing out of the prior utterance. At least two impressions arise from Madge's rejoinder. First, the unexpectedness of the response, together with Madge's laughter at her own joke, indicate that her comment is to be taken humorously. An atmosphere of warmth and camaraderie is created; Madge is established as a character with a lively sense of humor. The humorous word play indirectly refers to an imputed cause of the condition of the woman's hands is made. Although Madge does not directly pass judgement on the client's hands, the impression created through her indirect comment is that the woman's hands are in a deplorable condition. Because Madge, as a manicurist, is an occupational expert on hands, her evaluation is held to have authority.

The client responds seriously to Madge's humorous ploy. She reveals the actual cause of her hands' condition, balancing Madge's humorous probe with a serious account. In doing so, she (and therefore the viewer) must correctly interpret the criticism implicit in Madge's indirect evaluation and respond, not to the surface structure of the prior turn, but to its underlying message. Not unexpectedly, the attributed cause of her hands' condition is the sole problem which the product can remedy. The client then asks the expert for advice, displaying several underlying assumptions: that the problem of dishpan hands is solvable; that the expert will know the appropriate solution; and that the solution is something that a person can "try" (as opposed to "do," "buy," etc.)⁵ The object of "try" is not specified; from the context, the viewer is expected to understand that the unstated material of the question is something like "to improve the condition of my hands?"

The opening of the second Palmolive commercial closely resembles the first; the interaction follows surprisingly similar lines. This structural similarity, together with identical setting and product spokesperson (Madge), marks the commercials as members of the same campaign; they employ the same marketing strategy.

(117) client: Madge I just got engaged=
 manicurist: mmm =oh, I can't believe anyone asked
 for this hand.
 client: Oh, it's dishwashing, what will I try?

Again, the leader opens the conversation, orienting viewers to pertinent background information about the client. Employing Madge's name, it signals viewers that the product is Palmolive. This utterance also serves as the basis of Madge's pun-based quip. The functions of the leader exactly parallel those of the other Palmolive

commercial.

Madge creates humor and fosters a sense of camaraderie with her unexpected response. Appropriately building on the client's announcement of a recent engagement, she utilizes the formulaic expression, "asking for someone's hand (in marriage)." Viewers know that engagements occur after an agreement to marry has been reached; the traditional means of achieving this is a man's proposal to a woman. Humor arises out of "hand" being meant both figuratively and literally at the same time. Viewers will understand this turn as an indirect reference to the condition of the client's hands. The other interpretation would be extremely insulting to the client and at odds with Madge's laugh, her non-verbal behavior, and the commercial purpose. In fact, part of the humor arises out of just this discrepancy; the insulting words are not insulting. Madge the manicurist expertly evaluates hands with a pun-based quip; her utterance performs the same functions, in the same way, as the parallel utterance in the first commercial.

As demonstrated by her response to Madge's evaluation, the client (and therefore the viewer) has no trouble interpreting the ambiguous quip. She uncovers the underlying message and responds to it rather than to the surface construction. Like her counter-part in the other Palmolive commercial, the cause of her hands' condition is attributed to the only problem for which the product can supply a remedy, dishwashing. She seeks Madge's professional advice for a solution to the problem, relying on the same assumptions as the parallel commercial. Again, the utterance directly corresponds to a parallel one in the other commercial.

Like other commercials that use leaders, the Palmolive commercials become sequentially more product-relevant. The opening utterance provides background

information, suggesting that the speakers are real people and providing the basis for a pun. This pun indirectly introduces (what the advertiser would like the viewer to believe is) a product-relevant problem, dishpan hands. Then, a supportive utterance provides an opening for direct product presentation. In both commercials, Madge takes advantage of this supportive opening to present the product.

The discussion above shows that leaders open commercial conversations, fully exploiting the resources of conversational structure to contextualize a discussion of the product. A natural context for presenting the product results from having participants of unequal knowledge or status regarding the product as speakers in the interaction. The leader establishes a problem and is followed by increasingly product-relevant utterances. This sequence of utterances draws the viewer into a discussion of the product, moving the conversation along its appointed lines.

NOTES

¹ This example suggests that Gricean maxims which describe commercial conversation would look different from those which describe natural conversation. This commercial violates the Gricean maxim of quantity negatively, by not providing information that would be necessary in natural conversation. Most commercials provide more information than is expected, mentioning brand names, etc., where they would not occur in natural conversation. However, in both commercial cases, the deviation from the norms of natural conversation are motivated by structural differences between the two discourse types.

² The relevance of lunch as a contextual setting for the product was significant enough for the advertiser to make it a part of the brand name.

³ Perhaps this unusual address term is the advertiser's attempt to fuse European reservation with American informality; simple first names are too informal for the French, but title-last name is too formal for the viewers. A blend of title-first name offers a compromise. The use of a title, at any rate, differentiates this speaker from others, contributing to her identification as a foreigner.

⁴ Madge claims to speak French in her last turn. Surely this claim of linguistic prowess is designed to help viewers identify the immediately prior utterance as a French one. The target audience, women with dishpan hands, also get an ego boost by being identified with a continental, world-traveling woman who has the same mundane problems and concerns as an everyday housewife.

⁵ "Try" seems a bit odd in this context, but, being used in both Palmolive commercials, it certainly represents a deliberate lexical choice. Unlike the less marked

verb "do," which inquires about actions, "try" asks about things. It requires a concrete noun phrase (i.e. the product name) for completion. "Buy," which also requires an concrete object, is more overtly commercial and "use" would take the punch out of Madge's advice to "use Palmolive." "Try" offers a middle ground for the advertiser.

4.0 Contextualizers

Contextualizing utterances and utterance parts comprise the fourth and final category of relationships between the form of an utterance and its commercial function. These contextualizers demonstrate both the advertisers' orientation to the sequential organization of talk in conversation and their desire to present an interaction which resembles conversation enough to be interpreted as (an imitation of) spontaneous interaction. Interactively relevant verbal behaviors fall readily into two subcategories: 1) the generally monosyllabic interactive particles which signal how a forthcoming utterance is to be interpreted in light of prior talk and 2) the syntactically structured, often formulaic turns which orient the viewer to the relationship between speakers and to the interactive context. Both subcategories contribute to the commercial's intelligibility by constraining the range of possible inferences which can be drawn from the interaction, reflecting the advertiser's need to convey a comprehensible message, and by evoking stereotypical images of the speakers and interaction so that viewers can readily identify them.

4.1 Interactive particles

Several kinds of interactive particles signal coherence between sequences of utterances in natural conversation, organizing information about the setting and participants. These interactive particles, either lexical or conventionally non-lexical (e.g. *un un*), range from attention-getting interjections or exclamations to vocative forms and various responses. Most vocative forms and attention-getting particles occur in

commercial openings and are discussed elsewhere (see chapter 5, "the first four seconds"). A variety of techniques are used, including attention-focusing but non-introductory particles, "now," various means of signaling affirmative or negative responses, "why," and "well".

The interjections in the following examples focus attention on the speaker's forthcoming utterance. They are used not as summons, nor as signals of the speaker's interest in initiating interaction, but as ways of focusing attention on the forthcoming observations and of signalling emotional involvement. Each occurs in the body of an on-going conversation.

- | | | |
|-------|---|---------------|
| (118) | Hey, I never tasted soup like that before. | Campbell |
| (119) | Look, I know dishwashers (always) say Kitchenaid's the best, but it'll never get all those clean like that. | Kitchenaid |
| (120) | See, only one kind of Soft & Pretty. | Soft & Pretty |

"Hey" commonly expresses surprise or attracts attention. In (118), it precedes an evaluative utterance and resembles a spontaneous acclamation by the speaker. Thus, consumer responses to products are being modeled in part by interactive particles. "Look" and "see" are both frequently used in disagreement situations, situations in which the speaker particularly wants to convey an assertion. "Look" directs the listener's attention to what follows, in this case a negative product claim (which is refuted in the following turns). "See" suggests recognition or understanding; here it is used in an argument, as if to say that the other speaker must concede the following point. The interactive particles precede product presenters, on which the viewer's attention is then focused.

"Now" is a lexical item of surprising frequency in these commercials. Conveying immediacy, "now" occurs in turn-initial position preceding the structured constituent (although in one case it appears as the first element in the second part of a conjunct). It is used temporally (122)-(123), to refer to present circumstances or the immediate future¹, as well as non-temporally, as an expletive (121). "Now" precedes both product-relevant and contextualizing utterances. When it occurs together with contextualizers, it is generally found in the last speaker turn of the commercial, preceding the (optional) voiceover closing.

- | | | |
|-------|--|------------|
| (121) | Now, who eats chili with a fork? | Dennison's |
| (122) | Now you can empty it [dishwasher]. | Sunlight |
| (123) | Now I'm going to teach Abercrombie how to spell. | All |

When "now" occurs with product-relevant utterances, it either precedes a product presenter which leads into a description of the product (124-6) or it follows product presentation (127-8), usually in a direct voiceover turn which closes the commercial.

- | | | |
|-------|---|---------------|
| (124) | Now let's teach him how to clean clothes. | All |
| (125) | [...] and now I have to pretreat. | All |
| (126) | Now I am prepared to offer you two months of the Chronicle for the price of one [...] | SF Chronicle |
| (127) | Now at all Emporium-Capwell stores. | Aramis |
| (128) | Now about 25¢ a serving. | Chef Boyardee |

Thus, "now" is used frequently and in a variety of ways in conversational commercials.

Various means of expressing affirmative and negative responses can be also found in commercial conversations. These responses occur in the environment of both product-relevant and interactive utterances and contribute to the impression of a spontaneous interaction. Over half (15 out of 29) of the commercials employed at least one affirmative response, while only 4 exhibited negative responses. This reflects a general tendency of commercials to focus on positive rather than negative imagery. Most of the few negative responses refute a negative claim about the product. Below are some examples of affirmative and negative responses found in conversational commercials.

(129) affirmative responses:
yes, yeah, uh huh, okay, sure, right, absolutely

(130) negative responses:
no, nope, un un

A few commercials exhibit other kinds of interactively relevant responses. Three commercials use backchannel responses to signal active listenership. These backchannels mimic their natural counterparts.

(131) A: Madge I just got engaged
B: mmm Palmolive

(132) A: Her skin's gorgeous and she's got to be [...]
B: mmm Dove

(133) A: I do love all those chunks of beef all those chunks [...]
B: yes Campbell

The first two backchannels are pure listenership markers, "mmm," signalling that the addressee is listening and attentive; the speaker maintains control of the floor and

continues speaking. "Yes," on the other hand, is more actively involving; it is found in the Campbell commercial, in which the speaker tries to claim the floor as well as display listenership (see p.).

Both "why" and "well" signal some insufficiency in natural interactive sequences (Lakoff, 1973). These interactive particles signal information about the relationship of the forthcoming utterance to prior ones within the established context. Providing information on how utterances fit together in a larger interaction, such particles are useful tools for advertisers in creating coherent and streamlined sequences.

Only two commercials use "why" as an interjection preceding a complete syntactic construction.² One occurred in an interactive sequence, the other in a product-relevant context.

- (134) woman: What college are you going to?
 man: Vassar.
 woman: Why, that's a girl's school.
 man: .. Yea::h. SF Chronicle
- (135) woman: [...] What a selection of vanities and medicine cabinets.
 man: and beautiful quality, too. Why, look at that oak [...] Simon's

(134) communicates the woman's surprise at the man's inappropriate claim. In (135), the man focuses on product attributes which had not been mentioned, as if to indicate that those attributes should have been noticed. Both examples, therefore, signal that the speaker finds something surprising or inappropriate about the context. "Why" is not used innovatively in conversational commercials, but conventionally, as a standard signal relating the forthcoming utterance to the prior discourse.

"Well" is also a cohesive device. In natural conversation, it is employed in a spectrum of situations, preceding utterances that in some way violate contextual expectations (Schiffrin, 1985). Like "why," "well" is not used innovatively in commercial conversations, but only in contexts that resemble natural ones. A substantial percentage of the commercials (11 out of 29) employed "well;" in each case, it conformed to the behavior of "well" in natural settings, in the achievement of everything from a self-selected pre-closing, disagreement, and conciliation to coherence marking (selected examples are below).

- (136) man: Terrific show.
 woman: Oh, it was wonderful. Well, it was nice talking to you.
 Aramis

In the Aramis commercial, the woman uses "well" to signal a changed interactive activity, moving away from the established conversational topic (the show). In doing so, she uses an utterance with little real content but substantial interactive force, a formulaic construction which indicates her intention to close the interaction. Closing a conversation, as an activity distinct from discussing a show, requires some device to orient the addressee (and here, the viewer) to the change of conversational activity.

- (137) client: Madge [...] I'm your fan.
 Madge: Well, thanks, but I've already got a fan. Palmolive
- (138) man 1: I've been cooking chili for 20 years.
 man 2: Well, I've been eating it for 25. Dennison
- (139) man 1: See, only one kind of Soft & Pretty.
 man 2: Well, yeah, but there's blue, pink, yellow [...]
 Soft & Pretty

- (140) woman: Oh, yeah, but honey, what's important is all the styles Simon's has to choose from.
 man: Well, I'd say that 20% off their entire stock of Vanity Flair was right up there.
- Simon's

Each of the above examples display disagreement between speakers. "Well," as indication that the following utterance violates contextual expectations, is one signal of that disagreement. In (137), for example, Madge uses "well" preceding an utterance which (with its inevitable pun) essentially contradicts the immediately prior utterance. Similarly, the second speaker of (138), although not contradicting the content of the prior utterance, interactively suggests that eating is more relevant than cooking; the contradiction is on the level of conversational relevance rather than propositional content. Both of these examples occur in the first two turns of the interaction.³

(139) and (140), on the other hand, both occur within on-going interactions. Evidence of disagreement appears in the first utterance. "See" and "Oh, yeah, but honey" call attention to their speakers' points (both product presenters), while implying that that point contradicts previous assertions by the addressee. In the next turns, "well" precedes the response, redirecting attention to a competing point (again, a product presenter). Thus, "well" preceding contradictions and counter-assertions in disagreement settings.

One final example completes this discussion of "well" as an interactive device. In (141), "well" is used as a cohesion marker.

- (141) man: [...] Why don't you tell them it'll help you learn music and art?
 boy: Well, and there's integrated software for word processing, spread sheets, forecasting.
- Atari

Normally, questions are expected to elicit answers. In (141), the response to the question is not an answer, but an assertion, a product presenter. Signalling that the following response will violate normal expectations for this conversational slot, "well" orients the addressee (and viewer) to the forthcoming presenter.

"Well" is used in commercial conversations in the same sorts of interactive situations in which it occurs naturally. Because it does not contribute to the semantic content of an interaction but to conversational cohesion, "well" is useful to advertisers for its ability to gloss over problems in the orderly flow of product information, as in (141); the advertiser is able to get on with the job of presenting the product. Disagreements also employ "well" in presenting different aspects of the product, as in (139) and (140).

4.2 Formulaic utterances

Sometimes contextualized information is conveyed via formulaic constructions which create strong impressions about the situations in which they occur. The use of such utterances permits advertisers to evoke stock cultural images or stereotypes, saving them the trouble of creating specialized images for the commercial. Because they are well-known expressions from natural conversation, formulas bring to commercials a rich store of associated socio-cultural images. Formulaic utterances play an important role in associating a product with a particular lifestyle or relationship. In other cases, formulas orient viewers to a change in conversational activity, as in (143). Thus, formulaic utterances contextualize the interactions and flavor the personality of the participants.

- (142) woman: So I finally get to meet him. [...] I'll probably steal him from
you during dinner. Diet Pepsi
- (143) woman: Well, it was nice talking to you. Aramis
- (144) man: I am working my way through college selling subscriptions [...] SF Chronicle

Each of these examples conveys information about the participants involved in the interaction, about speakers and addressees alike. For example, (142) is a formulaic utterance stereotypically used by a man-grubbing woman to another woman who "has" a man; even if said in jest, this formula tells the viewer something about both participants. (144), on the other hand, is appropriate from a "cold-call" salesperson to a potential customer.

Although formulaic utterances contextualize the interaction, they generally do not play a direct role in presenting the product. However, some commercials, such as Diet Pepsi, are comprised mainly of contextualizers. Such commercials do not market the product as much as they cultivate an image of product users. In many commercials which focus more directly on the product, such as Clorox II or Pledge, contextualizers typically occur in a final speaker turn. This positioning serves two functions in the commercial, signalling closure and indicating resolution of the product-relevant talk through topic change. Generally humorous, these final contextualizers also convey a positive image of product users, who enjoy bantering with each other or making good-natured friendly remarks.

- (145) woman: A star is born. Clorox II
- (146) man: Knock anytime! Pledge

(145), uttered by a mother whose daughter approves of the way Clorox II got her recital leotard whiter-than-white, is an indirect comment on the behavior of children, an invitation to viewers to smile at the intensity of youth. (146), on the other hand, conveys neighborliness and friendliness, an open invitation to future interaction. Addressed to a woman neighbor by a man, it might also suggest romance to some viewers. Final contextualizers show the conversation moving away from a discussion of the product as a topic and into a different interpersonal activity, thereby signalling that the commercial message is complete.

Contextualizers are used to various extents by conversational commercials. Every commercial employs at least one contextualizer, an utterance or utterance part which has no relationship to the product but which exists to support the illusion of interaction. Some commercials use them almost exclusively, often with direct voiceover turns (as if to balance the indirectness of the interaction). Stock images, evoked by the use of well-known formulas, tap on viewers' background knowledge to contextualize the interaction. Formulaic utterances orient viewers to the speakers and their relationship, revealing who the participants are and what the interactive activity is. Particles like "well" occur frequently, usually in ways which directly reflect their distribution in natural conversation, contributing to the coherence of utterance sequences. A form of conversational shorthand, contextualizers simplify the advertiser's task of creating a sequence that is intelligible and that is recognizable as an interaction.

These first four chapters show that each utterance, each utterance part, contributes to the commercial purpose of a conversational commercial. Some utterances

focus on presenting the product, others support that process, while still others contribute to the illusion of spontaneous interaction, contextualizing the conversation and providing coherence between utterances. Many utterances incorporate several features, serving more than one of these functions simultaneously. These individual utterances, however, do not exist in a vacuum but in conversation-like sequences. These sequences are structured so as to contribute to the commercial message. Part Two discusses a few of the issues raised by sequencing in conversational commercials.

NOTES

- ¹ As opposed to, for instance, signaling immediate past (as in "just now," and so on).
- ² Naturally, "why" also appears in questions. Only the interjective use of "why" is discussed here.
- ³ Although example (137) is uttered in the closing episode of the commercial, it nevertheless opens that segment.

Part 2
Sequences of utterances
in conversational commercials

Relating individual utterances to an advertiser's commercial intent addresses only a small part of a conversational commercial's linguistic design. Like other speech events, conversational commercials are made up of sequences of utterances, each contributing to the larger discourse unit. The second part of this dissertation focuses on a few of the many ways in which sequencing supports the advertiser's goals. Commercial openings and the interrelationship of speaker roles in sequences incorporate the two communicative levels of commercial interaction. Both the local conversation-like exchange and the product-relevant purpose constrain the sequencing of utterances, just as they constrained the individual utterances themselves. Consequently, these sequences deliberately mimic some features of spontaneous conversation as a strategy for structuring the commercial message.

5.0 The first four seconds

Copywriters and other advertising professionals operate by the maxim that the first four seconds of a television commercial are crucial in attracting the viewer's attention.¹ Therefore, advertisers carefully prepare commercial openings to attract as much attention (and hence as many viewers) as possible. In conversational commercials, openings must serve several goals; not only must they attract viewer attention, they must also contextualize the interactive context and introduce the speaking characters to the viewer. In other words, the opening must orient the viewer

to the conversational setting. The background social information necessary for understanding the conversation is evoked by a stereotyped framework in the first four seconds.

Every commercial must have an opening. A distinction must be made, however, between commercial openings which depict the initiation of interaction and those which depict ongoing conversation. Verbal and nonverbal behaviors, such as greetings or entrance into a room, signal that the conversation is opened as the viewer watches. Other cues, such as formulaic expressions appropriate to closing conversations, show that the participants are engaged in an ongoing interaction. In either case, attracting viewer attention and contextualizing the interaction remain crucial functions of the opening.

The manner in which commercial interaction is initiated must, therefore, provide social information about the setting and participants as well as regulate the opening. The simultaneous accomplishment of framing and contextualizing a conversational exchange, of attracting attention and orienting viewers, must be both efficient and comprehensible. Thus, openings display many redundant contextualization cues. Redundancy facilitates intelligibility by reinforcing viewer hypotheses about the nature of the onscreen interaction.

In the paradoxical service of maximal intelligibility and time economy, the openings of conversational commercials may ignore interactive behaviors which would be mandatory in parallel natural settings. Social pleasantries which grease the wheels of interpersonal interaction but which are extraneous to commercial purposes can safely be eliminated. Because commercial openings are not tailored to the reciprocal

face requirements of human participants, socially obligatory utterances can be omitted without penalty. Often, variation between natural and commercial openings can be traced to this fundamental difference between the participants of commercials and those of conversation, combined of course with the temporal and economic pressures on advertisers to package commercial information persuasively.

Most commercial openings employ conventional means of initiating conversation; the same techniques which open natural conversation open commercial conversation. Standard summonses, including mechanical summonses such as phone calls and doorbells, and verbal summonses such as vocatives or attention-getting particles, are frequently used techniques. In addition, formulaic expressions, such as "excuse me," or gestures, such as raising a hand may signal a desire to initiate conversation. In essence, natural summonses are verbal or nonverbal means of attracting the addressee's attention and are used to signal the summoner's desire for interaction (Schegloff, 1972). Commercial summonses create the impression of spontaneous openings by appearing, through astute sequencing of utterances, to achieve the same effects.

Utterances which respond to summonses perform a special interactive function in natural openings: they indicate to the summoner that the addressee is available for interaction. Some examples of standard verbal responses are "what?," "yes?," "uh huh?;" nonverbal behaviors such as changing gaze direction also indicate response. Like summonses, responses structure the opening of a conversation by acknowledging the summoner's bid for attention and establishing that attention has indeed been granted. Responses, therefore, are an essential element in the generation of an

interactive turntaking sequence. A summons-response sequence forms an adjacency pair with two pair parts, the summons and the response (Schegloff, 1972).

A requisite component of a well-formed summons-response adjacency pair is a continuation of the interaction. The summoner is obliged, after eliciting a response, to provide some follow-up which justifies the summons. The form of this justification varies: requests, observations, questions, and so on are among the appropriate follow-ups in natural conversation. This justification for claiming the addressee's attention is an obligatory verbal event; if it is not present, it is officially absent. Thus, a summons-response adjacency pair does not stand alone, but functions as an organizer of and a prelude to a subsequent conversational exchange (Schegloff, 1972).

When the summoner is not in the physical presence of the addressee, a mechanical means of issuing a summons can be used to attract an addressee's attention. The ringing of a phone constitutes a summons; the answerer is the respondent, even though the answerer speaks first. A parallel mechanical summons not discussed by Schegloff is the doorbell. Like phone interactions, the answerer of a doorbell is the respondent. Unlike phone calls, however, the response need not be verbal; either summoner or respondent can be first speaker. This is because door summons provide visual information at the time of response; the respondent's attention can be rendered nonverbally as well as verbally.

Summons-response adjacency pairs, whether mechanical or verbal, require both pair parts (the summons and the response) to establish that participants are available for interaction. These adjacency pairs are a frequent method of opening conversations, but are not the only means of doing so. Although alternatives have not been much

studied by theoretical linguists, a less formal body of literature suggests a variety of non-summons openers to individuals who desire to improve their social skills.² Generally, these suggestions presuppose that people who are physically proximate (and hence require no summons) are potential interlocutors. Thus, simply beginning to speak to someone nearby is an appropriate way to initiate conversation. Commercial openings also employ some unconventional means of attracting attention. Specific syntactic constructions (questions, commands, and truncated declaratives) occur with unusual frequency, suggesting that advertisers perceive these constructions as ones which will attract viewer attention.

The following discussion of openings examines commercial variants of conventional means of opening conversations, including the use of vocative forms, introductory particles, and mechanical summons. The latter part of this chapter focuses on syntactic constructions that occur frequently in openings and suggests that such constructions demand a high degree of addressee involvement. Both kinds of openings organize and regulate the first four seconds of a commercial conversations in order to attract viewer attention, contextualize the commercial interaction, and mimic natural conversation.

5.1 Vocative forms

One common verbal means of attracting attention in natural conversation is through vocative forms, which direct an utterance to a particular addressee. Conversational commercials frequently identify one or more of the speaking participants through either personal (proper names) or functional (endearments, honorifics) vocative

forms. In openings, one speaker addresses another, signalling viewers that an interaction is about to begin. By using a vocative to address a co-participant, a speaker reveals the relationship between them; the viewer's attention is directed to this contextualizing information. Vocatives endow a participant with an identity, thereby personalizing the commercial interaction and making the speakers seem more like real people.

Most commercial vocatives are attention-getting devices found in the commercial's four second introduction. Opening vocatives typically occur in a speaker's first turn, whether the speaker speaks first or second in the interaction. They signal that the summoner wants to initiate interaction or, if uttered by the second speaker, that the addressee has granted attention to the initiator. As mentioned above, the vocatives reveal the relationship between the speakers.

Some vocatives do not occur in the commercial opening but at some point within the body of the interaction. These address terms are often motivated by a change in time or location following product presentation; such vocatives generally function as introductory particles to a second interaction, a continuation of the conversation. They follow product presentation and precede responses, which are usually positive evaluations of the product. As the first turn in a second conversational segment, these vocatives perform the same function as opening vocatives. However, some address terms occur in the midst of an ongoing conversation; they do not function as introductory particles. Instead, such vocative forms focus attention in a different way than the introductory segments: rather than contextualizing the interaction or signaling that interaction is about to begin, they direct attention to a particular utterance within the

commercial. Often, this utterance is a product presenter.

The remaining occurrences of proper names in conversational commercials are not vocatives but simply third person referents. These referents, naturally, perform a very different function than vocatives. However, being few in number and resembling vocatives in form, they are discussed below.

5.1.1 Proper names

Proper names occur more frequently in conversational commercials than either endearments or honorifics. First name, title-first name, and title-last name are the three forms of vocatives found in the commercials. Five commercials open with vocatives in the initial turn of the commercial conversation.

- | | | |
|------------|---|-----------|
| (1) woman: | Liz, how can I be young and my skin look old? | Dove |
| (2) woman: | Whoa, Susan, don't waste time just dampmopping. | Future |
| (3) man: | Nance, I'm gonna run the dishwasher. | Sunlight |
| (4) woman: | Madge [...] I just got engaged. | Palmolive |
| (5) woman: | Madame Madge, just flew in from Paris [pari]. | Palmolive |

In these examples, the vocative occurs as the initial element of the opening turn, preceding the syntactically structured component of the turn. The Future commercial violates this generalization only minimally by preposing an introductory particle before the vocative. At least two motivations for initial position of vocatives can be suggested.

First, address terms which function as summonses often occur initially in natural conversation; viewers are familiar with vocatives being used to attract an addressee's

attention. An initial vocative, directed from one speaking character to another, sets up viewer expectations about the commercial format: a conversational commercial, rather a testimonial or narrative (or whatever) commercial, follows this opening. Thus, the distribution of vocatives as initial elements in commercial conversations orients viewers to conversation as the commercial strategy. And, as summons in natural conversation are generally followed by a justification of the summons, an expectation of some contentful forthcoming utterance is created.

Second, the attention of selected viewers is attracted by these vocatives, which reflect the commercial's demographic target. For example, whether occurring initially or medially, vocative forms found in commercials for household products are somewhat ordinary women's names or nicknames, representative of the women who purchase such items: Susan, Liz, Nance, Kathy, Carol, Joan. While viewers might not feel personally addressed by vocative forms used in commercial conversation, the selection of a particular vocative reflects the advertiser's decision about which viewers should pay attention to the commercial.³

In two commercials, a first name vocative is used in the first turn of the second speaker. The phone summons of the Pacific Bell commercial exhibits a straightforward usage of a vocative form; it personalizes the participants, fills the conversational slot open to the speaker, and establishes that the speakers are on familiar footing.

(6) A: hello?
 B: Kathy? Pacific Bell

The second example occurs in a commercial for Vivitar; it merits deeper examination, as it differs from other vocatives in several ways. The actors in this

commercial are the well-known comedy team, the Smothers Brothers. Thus, unlike the preceding examples, the addressee of the vocative is not a fictional character, but a celebrity known to viewers from another context. Obviously, the use of a vocative assists the viewer in identifying the speakers as the Smothers Brothers. Making sure that viewers recognize the speakers may also account for this being one of only two commercials in which both speakers are identified by name.

- (7) Dick: This is Vivitar's new point and shoot 35mm camera, the PS:35.
 Tom: I'll take it, Dick. Vivitar

This vocative follows, rather than precedes, the utterance. This placement makes it unique among introductory address terms and suggests that the participants are already engaged in interaction. The addressee's attention has already been granted to the speaker.

Four first name vocatives occur in the first turn after product presentation, in a second conversational exchange. In each case, the content of the following utterance represents the conversion of the speaker from a non-user to a new user of the advertised product. In three out of the four cases, some time has elapsed after the presentation, time during which the new user tries the product. In the fourth case, the new user tried the product during the onscreen interaction.

- (8) woman: Carol, you were right about the way Feen-a-mint relieves. Feen-a-mint
 (9) woman: Madame Madge, j'adore Palmolive. Palmolive
 (10) woman: Madge [...] Palmolive's great. I'm your fan. Palmolive
 (11) man: Joan. How 'bout a serving of my own? Chef Boyardee

reinforces the images of both speakers and relationship. The vocative functions to attract attention and is closely latched with both the preceding and following utterances.

- (13) woman: all those chunks of potatoes, chunks of carrots=
 man: =oh, Mrs. Whitley=
 woman: =so
 I was wondering, could you sell me half a can?
 Campbell

This vocative is a non-introductory correlate of a summons, a signal by the man that he desires speaker status. A proper response to it would be a display of listenership. However, as an attention-getting device, it fails. The requisite indication of listenership is not produced and the summons is unsuccessful.

The Campbell commercial is not the only commercial with non-introductory vocative forms. However, the other medial vocatives are not part of an abortive summons-response exchange. Instead, they focus attention on the forthcoming utterance, highlighting it as somehow important in the interaction.

The Dennison commercial vocative focuses attention on the following statement, which is the first utterance in the commercial not directly relevant to the product. Because this following utterance has a heavy functional load in the commercial, it is emphasized.

- (14) man: Larry, all you know about beef is ropin' it. Dennison

The vocative "Larry" precedes an indirect complaint which objects to the addressee's conversational behavior by casting aspersions on the addressee's credentials. Although the utterance does not advance the commercial message, it helps structure the interaction so that viewers can identify the participants and their relationship.

The All commercial also focuses attention in the middle of an interaction by using a vocative form. This vocative does not act as an introductory particle.

(15) woman: Watch this, Abercrombie. All

Abercrombie is a small Dalmatian puppy, indirectly introduced by his young master in the opening line.

(16) boy: Mom, I showed Abercrombie how to roll over.

The puppy is clearly the addressee of the woman's utterance, as indicated not only through direct verbal address, but also through nonverbal body orientation and eye gaze. This vocative term is somewhat unusual among conversational commercials, in that it addresses a non-human; however, it is well-formed and pragmatically appropriate since the conversation between mother and child develops around showing things to Abercrombie.

"Abercrombie" is the only proper name, other than "Dick" (Vivitar), which follows the syntactic component of an utterance. This distribution differentiates proper names from endearments and honorifics (see below), which frequently follow as well as precede the syntactic component of the utterance. The placement of an address term relative to an utterance seems to do with the utterance's role in the interaction. Vocatives adjacent to introductory utterances inevitably precede the syntactic portion, while vocatives adjacent to medial utterances either precede or follow it.

One final example of a proper name used as a non-introductory vocative is in the Fab commercial. The addressee (even more unconventional than All's non-human one) is the product. The vocative occurs outside of the interactive exchange, in the closing

jingle, and is a primary example of a purely commercial vocative form.

- (17) singers: Oh Fab, we're glad
 there's full strength fabric softener
 in you. Fab

In the jingle, the singers directly address the product, evident not only through the use of the product name as a vocative, but also by the use of the second person pronoun to refer to the product.

Virtually every proper name in the conversational commercials is a vocative form. Only three exceptions, in commercials for Sunlight, Chef Boyardee, and Vivitar, used proper names as third person referents. Each of these referents occurs in a different conversational context. One possible explanation of the rare occurrence of third person referents in conversations is that the limited time restricts the topics. These commercials are immediately concerned with promoting the product or its image; in a conversation, first and second person are more involving than third person.

In the Sunlight commercial, two speakers interact across several intervals of time. Between intervals, a voiceover speaks, interpreting and focusing the interactions for the viewer.

- (18) man: Nance, I'm gonna run the dishwasher.
 woman: Not full.
 voice: Nancy Waverly's never run a dishwasher till it's full.
 Sunlight

The voiceover directs the viewer's interpretation of the interaction. By using both first and last name, the voiceover personifies the speaker, suggesting that she is a real woman and not an actress.

In the Chef Boyardee commercial, a man and a young girl are seated at a kitchen

table. A woman puts a plate in front of the girl. The man watches and observes,

(19) man: Gee, Suzie's spaghetti and meatballs look delicious.
Chef Boyardee

The girl is identified indirectly, although she is neither addressee nor speaker in the commercial. Her presence creates the context for the man's product presenter, which opens a discussion of the product. The reference to the child also legitimizes her onscreen presence. In fact, the girl's presence is highly unusual, one of only two examples of a non-speaker appearing in a commercial. In both cases, the non-speaker is a child. Perhaps a non-speaking child's presence functions as a cue to viewers about the intended demographic target: families with children.

The Vivitar commercial offers the third and final variant of a third person referent in commercial conversations. The name of one participant is uttered in his presence, with the audience functioning as the overt addressee (see p.). As mentioned above, the well-known comedy team the Smothers Brothers are the speakers.

(20) Dick: This is Vivitar's new point and shoot 35mm camera, the PS 35.
 Tom: I'll take it, Dick.
 Dick: It's simple .. just like Tom. Vivitar

Again, the third person reference occurs in a product-relevant utterance. In this case, since part of the Smothers Brothers' comedic routine requires that Tom be considered slightly moronic, the presenter implies that anyone can use the product.

5.1.2 Familiar and distant vocatives

In addition to proper names, both familiar and distant vocatives occur. Familiar forms include endearments and familial terms of address; distant forms consist mainly of honorifics. The distribution of familiar and distant forms of address, with one notable exception, parallels a personal-business distinction in the relationship between speakers. These vocatives, like personal ones, perform an introductory function and convey information about the relationship between the speakers. When they occur medially, within an interaction, they focus attention on a particular utterance.

Three endearments, "hon," "dear," and "honey," are employed in commercials which depict married couples. Four familial terms, "mom," "mommy," "dad," and "sis," indicate that the participants are related. These seven terms reveal that an intimate relationship between the speakers exists.

The first endearment examined is addressed by a man to a woman in the Kitchenaid commercial. This utterance, a formulaic compliment addressed to a woman, is the first speaker's first turn.

(21) man: Tuh⁵.. nice party, hon.

Kitchenaid

The vocative's position following the syntactic component shows that it is not a summons; rather, it addresses someone already in the interaction. The endearment reveals the relationship between the speakers; it lends authenticity to the suggestion of intimacy, resulting in a pervasive aura of married life.

The Chef Boyardee commercial also exhibits a postposed endearment. Here, the form is appended to the first turn of the second speaker, clearly addressed to someone already engaged in the interaction.

- (22) man: Gee, Suzie's spaghetti and meatballs look delicious.
 woman: That's Chef Boyardee's spaghetti and meatballs, dear.
Chef Boyardee

Again, multiple indications of domesticity suggest the endearment as an indicator of the speakers' intimate relationship.

The third endearment occurs in the Simon's Furniture commercial. Unlike the two prior examples, this endearment occurs well within the interaction; the nature of the speaker's relationship as intimate has already been established. The endearment, "honey," is used twice in the commercial by the same speaker.

- (23) man: Why look at that oak finish and a marble top.
 woman: Oh, yeah, but honey, what's important is all the styles Simon's has to choose from.
 man: Well, I'd say that 20% off their entire stock of vanity flair was right up there.
 woman: But the variety. Oh honey, you'll never understand. Women like to have a choice.
Simon's

The vocative precedes the adjacent utterance. Like "Larry" in the Dennison commercial, "honey" has the interactive function of focusing attention on the forthcoming utterance. In both cases, the utterance which follows depicts incipient conflict; in the Simon's commercial, the woman insistently presents her opinion.

In addition to endearments, familial terms signal familiarity and establish the blood relationships between speakers. Three commercial use these vocatives as

summons (all three summons are directed to the speaker's mother), while the remainder merely reveal the speakers' relationship. The products advertised in the commercials which employ familial summons are used by caretakers. Most mothers are the caretakers of both children and the household. Thus, the vocative summons not only reveals the relationship between speakers, but addresses the demographic target as well.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| (24) girl: Mommy, do blankets have feet? | Fab |
| (25) girl: Mom, that white leotard's for my recital. | Clorox II |
| (26) boy: Mom, I showed Abercrombie how to roll over. | All |

One final example of "mom" as a vocative comes from a Future commercial, in the first turn of the second speaker.

- | | |
|---|--------|
| (27) woman: Whoa, Susan, don't waste time just dampmopping. | |
| girl: Just dampmopping, mom? | Future |

This vocative occurs in the introductory segment, but not as a summons or attention-getting device; instead, it follows an echo question. The vocative specifies the relationship and perhaps adds to the conversation's authenticity by suggesting a minor disagreement with a parent.

The sole man addressed with a familial term, in the Diet Pepsi commercial, is not a conversational participant. The vocative occurs as the response segment of a summons-response exchange which closes the commercial. The sole purpose of this vocative is to identify the summoner.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------|
| (28) woman: Hi, daddy. | Diet Pepsi |
|------------------------|------------|

Although she is an adult living on her own, the woman in the Diet Pepsi commercial still uses "daddy." The daughters shown with a parent ranged in age from very young to adults. The only boy shown with a parent was very young. This suggests greater dependence of female offspring on parents, relative to males. "Mommy" was used by the youngest girl; otherwise, "mom" was used by children of various ages. This distribution of vocatives reflects the advertisers' perception of the parent-child relationship. Although mothers are frequently depicted, their children (even the very young) are presented as independent. Fathers, although presented rarely, occasion greater involvement even by adult children.⁶

The two remaining familial vocatives, both "sis," occur as identifying address terms. Interestingly, commercials which use "sis" rather than "mom" are for products unrelated to household caretaking. Rather than household products, we find an advertisement for the family (which is what Pacific Bell is selling) and for laxatives. The relationship of female siblings could be considered intimate enough to discuss the delicate issue of constipation.

- (29) woman: Tell me, sis, why do you use these laxative pills instead of
 Feen-a-mint? Feen-a-mint
- (30) A: Hello?
 B: Kathy?
 A: Oh, hi, sis. Pacific Bell

Although the Pacific Bell endearment is officially in the first speaker's second turn, it is her first turn in the interaction; her opening utterance is an impersonal reply to the phone summons.

Three commercials exhibit the vocative terms "ma'am," "madam," or "sir." These vocatives signal social distance between the speakers. Two of the commercials, Campbell and San Francisco Chronicle, depict an interaction between non-intimates, people who are engaged in a business interaction. The third example, from Diet Pepsi, is an unusual honorific, employed between speakers who know each other.

The Campbell honorific complements the respectful relationship established through title-last name address terms. The establishment of a distant business relationship, like familiar personal ones, requires multiple congruous cues reinforcing the image of the participants' relationship.

(31) man: Yes, ma'am. Campbell

The honorific follows the response; it is not used to attract the addressee's attention. Occurring in the first speaker's second turn, this vocative resembles that of the Pacific Bell opening; in both phone summons, the vocative appears in the respondent's first turn following the initial response. Thus, viewers are provided with sufficient cues about the relationship between phone speakers to identify it. Because phone speakers are not in the same setting, thereby reducing the available contextualization cues, vocative forms are particularly important in signalling speaker relationships.

The San Francisco Chronicle exhibits two vocative terms, "madam" and "toots." "Madam" occurs twice, in the second speaker's first turn (therefore playing a role in the commercial opening) and again shortly thereafter. (Only relevant sections are presented.)

(32) woman: yes?
man: Good Morning, Madam.

[...]
 man: You're never too old to learn, Madam. Now, I am prepared to offer you two months of the Chronicle for the price of one. That's half price, toots. SF Chronicle

The first "madam," like that of the Campbell commercial, reveals the speakers' relationship. The second instance of "madam" is part of a pointed, ironic rejoinder to an objection the woman raises regarding an earlier assertion.

Shortly after the second "madam," as part of the same turn, in fact, the man addresses the woman with "toots". "Toots," although an affectionate term between intimates, is inappropriate between non-intimates; especially when addressed from a man to a woman, it connotes inappropriate familiarity. "Toots" is the only non-honorific used between non-intimates in the corpus. Its inappropriate familiarity contrasts markedly with the speaker's earlier formality, paralleling the newspaper salesman's rapid degeneration from extreme politeness to blatant rascality. Thus, the man's tattered appearance, initially incongruent with his polite speech, is a significant cue to the viewer regarding the participant's unconventional persona.

The signals of distance versus familiarity, of personal versus impersonal relationships, are congruent and consistent across these commercials. In the San Francisco Chronicle commercial, for example, a distant response, a polite greeting, and a polite formal honorific appear in the opening two turns. In the opening turns of the Campbell commercial, a distant response, a title-last name address, and an honorific proved cues about the speakers' relationship. These harmonious cues contrast with the inharmonious cues found in the Diet Pepsi commercial, in which a woman uses a polite honorific ("sir") to address her partner. All other cues in the commercial, however, indicate that the speakers have a personal relationship. For example, the opening turn

(37) woman: Whoa, Susan, don't waste time just dampmopping. Future

(38) man: Hey, be ready in half an hour? Lee Nails

The particles are not only explicitly attention-getting devices; for example, although "hey" is often used to attract the attention of an addressee, "mmm" can be used in a variety of situations. Despite the variety exhibited by these introductory particles, they all signal that an interaction will follow.

5.3 Mechanical summons-response sequences

Five commercials employ mechanical summons-response adjacency pairs. Of these, four employ the mechanical summons to initiate the commercial conversation: Campbell, Pacific Bell, Pledge, and San Francisco Chronicle. The fifth, Diet Pepsi, employs it elsewhere. Summons were issued either by phone or at the door.

The Campbell commercial opens as a phone call initiates a conversation. On one side of a split screen, a woman holds the receiver; on the other side, a man behind a grocery store counter answers the phone in response to its ring.

(39) ((phone rings))

man: yes?

woman: Mr. Higgins, I'd like some Campbell's Chunky Beef Soup.
Campbell

The respondent speaks first. "Yes," one standard response to a summons in natural interaction, signals that he has granted attention to the summoner. The summoner accepts his response as an appropriate expression of listenership and proceeds with the requisite follow-up. In this case, her motivating purpose simultaneously presents the

product; the summons is justified by her desire for a particular product. On the surface, the Campbell opening satisfies the basic criteria of ordinary mechanical summons-response sequences: it employs a standard phone summons, a standard response, and an appropriate justification of the summons.

Nevertheless, this constructed summons-response differs in several particulars from natural openings in similar settings. Unlike natural business phone interactions, the respondent identifies neither himself nor his place of business. Standard practice, however, mandates such a response on answering a business phone. Occasionally, a polite greeting such as "good morning" is present in addition to identifying information. When such identifying information is not provided at the initial business response to the client, it is officially absent. Thus, in the Campbell commercial, the obligatory self-identification of the respondent is officially absent.

Instead of identifying himself, the respondent merely responds "yes." "Yes" is an appropriate response by personnel in service encounters (Merritt, 1977), indicating a willingness to assist the customer. But although "yes" is an appropriate response in many face-to-face business encounters, it is atypical as the *initial* business response to a telephone summons. Nevertheless, the viewer is likely to accept the response as one which is appropriate to the "service encounter" setting, despite the man's failure to identify himself.

Thus, the Campbell opening exchange differs in two crucial ways from natural telephone summons-responses in business settings. First, the self-identification of the business respondent is officially absent; second, a standard service encounter response is employed outside its normal distribution. Time constraints and high broadcasting

costs motivate this variation. The advertiser is under a powerful incentive to eliminate inessential talk. "Yes" is sufficient as a skeletal indication of "business talk;" the exchange is sufficiently informative to be comprehensible while still being acceptable as "conversation." By moving the conversation along at an unnatural rate, the advertiser loses nothing yet saves precious time.⁷

Although the man did not identify himself, the summoner is able to address him by name. This circumstance conveys social information about the participants, their relationship, and the setting. For instance, the woman appears to know her addressee personally. The title-last name vocative signals a public, not a personal, relationship. These two cues, together with visual ones, suggest that the speakers are members of a neighborhood community. Even the advertiser's choice of name for the grocer, "Higgins," evokes the stock image of a friendly proprietor of a local family-run store.

A phone summons-response sequence also opens the Pacific Bell commercial. The speakers' conversation is overheard while an onscreen drama between two children plays out.

(40) ((phone rings))
 woman 1: Hello?
 woman 2: Kathy?
 woman 1: Oh, hi, sis.
 woman 2: When did you get home? Pacific Bell

Unlike the truncated Campbell exchange, this opening is more typical of an informal telephone conversation than a business exchange. Participants' identities are made available in a short opening exchange of turns. Nevertheless, the advertiser's hand is at work, dictating the flow of information. The first speaker offers a standard greeting. "Hello," a frequent response to at-home telephone summons, signals that attention has

been granted to the summoner, who does not identify herself. Instead, she utters a first name with rising intonation, a conversational technique for verifying the suspected identity of the respondent. The first name vocative, together with the greeting response ("hello") and the setting, suggests a personal rather than public relationship between the speakers. The respondent, now in her second turn, produces a confident identification of the summoner rather than confirming her own identity. Thus, the absence of a complete greeting exchange and the identification of the co-participant contextualizes the interaction and saves time without hampering intelligibility. Her second, more informal greeting reinforces the impression of intimacy between the speakers.

The familial nickname ("sis") simultaneously reveals the relationship between the speakers. With this recognition of the summoner, an indirect confirmation of her own identity is given. The summons-response sequence concludes with a question by the summoner, the requisite justification of summons. This continuation of the conversation offers interactive evidence that the identification was successful on both sides. Interestingly, neither participant identifies herself; each identifies the other. This creates a powerful impression about the degree of intimacy between the speakers. Each one is familiar enough with the other's voice to recognize it on the basis of a single word. The speakers' identification of each other, rather than themselves, evokes a sense of informality and spontaneity. The identification of others rather than self also occurred in the Campbell commercial (see above). Although the relationship between the participants of that commercial differs from that of the Pacific Bell speakers, both commercials ensure that participants in phone conversations are verbally identified. This conforms to viewer expectations, based on natural interactions, that participants in

phone conversations be identified.

Thus, Pacific Bell's summons-response sequence paints a picture of intimacy and closeness. Their recognition of each other's voices, the second and more informal greeting which follows identification, and a revealed familial relationship establish a context in which intimacy is both expected and accounted for. Through these linguistic devices, a model sibling relationship is created.

Like the Campbell and the Pacific Bell commercials, the Pledge commercial informs viewers of the participants through a summons-response sequence. However, rather than a mechanical ring, this summons is issued by a manual knock. The summoner steps into her back yard and knocks on a fence; her neighbor, who is in his yard, responds. Again, the setting creates a framework for identifying the participants' probable relationship as neighbors.

- (41) ((knock))
 woman: Hi.
 man: Hi.
 woman: Uh, got any furniture polish? Pledge

The woman, initiating the interaction through her summons, opens the conversation by addressing a standard informal greeting, "hi," to her respondent, who returns the greeting; thus, the two participants exchange greetings. Unlike the Campbell and Pacific Bell summons-response sequences, the summoner not only issues the summons but initiates the verbal interaction, uttering the first greeting. A touch of awkwardness surrounds the interaction. The woman resumes speech with a conventionally indirect request, thus providing the respondent (and the viewing audience) with information regarding the purpose of her summons. Her truncated syntax suggests awkwardness.

She violates politeness constraints with her blunt request;⁸ such cues create the impression of speakers who are unfamiliar with each other. By the end of the commercial, however, the interaction has become smooth, all trace of awkwardness gone. Such a speedy switch from awkward to harmonious interaction suggests a growth of interpersonal intimacy matched in speed only by other commercials and, possibly, the fantasies of some viewers.

The final summons-response adjacency pair which functions as a commercial opening comes from the San Francisco Chronicle. A newspaper salesman issues the summons by ringing the bell; a woman opens the door and responds with a standard acknowledgement.

(42) ((doorbell rings))

woman: yes?

man: Good Morning, madam. I am working my way through college[...] SF Chronicle

The respondent is the first speaker; her "yes" is uttered on opening the door and seeing the summoner. Based on the repertoire of appropriate responses to summons, the nature of the speakers' relationship can already be inferred. A more personal, a friendlier, or a more welcoming response would have suggested that the summoner was known or expected. The simple "yes" indicates impersonal attention appropriately addressed to strangers. The man's turn substantiates this inference; he opens with a greeting marked by formal characteristics. Not only is the greeting itself formal, to it is appended a polite title as a vocative. Thus, the first two speaking turns swiftly establish that the interaction is a relatively formal and impersonal encounter between complete strangers. The summoner then initiates a validation of his summons with a

self-disclosing statement, contextualizing the product presentation.

Although the man offers functionally identifying information, he does not introduce himself. Like the Pledge summons, no identification ritual (such as the two phone openings exhibited) is found. This distribution of identification rituals reflects behavior in natural settings. Phone summons offer fewer cues for participant identification than door summons. This background knowledge is incorporated into commercial sequences; participants in phone conversations are overtly identified, while participants in door summons are not.

The four summons-response sequences discussed thus far opened both the commercial and the conversation. The Diet Pepsi commercial differs from these; it exhibits a summons-response encounter which closes, rather than opens, the commercial.

- (43) ((doorbell rings))
 woman 1: Here he is.
 woman 2: I'm ready.
 woman 1: I'll probably steal him from you during dinner.
 woman 2: Not a chance.
 ((opens door))
 woman 2: Hi, Daddy.
 woman 1: Hi. Diet Pepsi

The speakers in the conversation are not the summoner and the respondent, but instead two respondents. This difference in speaker roles also accounts for the intervention of speaking turns between the summons and the response. The continuing interaction shows the participants orienting to the summons; the summoner is expected. The summons-response exchange, however, is not complete. Although there is a summons, and the respondents offer attention to the summoner, the commercial ends

before the summoner speaks. The justification for the summons would be entirely absent, except that the respondents discuss dinner plans. By ending with an opening, the commercial suggests that the interaction will continue. On another note, the identification of the summoner as the woman's father violates expectations generated by the preceding talk; a more risqué scenario had been suggested. This confounding of viewer expectations parallels that of the use of "sir" in another Diet Pepsi commercial (discussed above, p. 110)

5.4 Greetings and responses

The five mechanical summons-response sequences demonstrate that advertisers convey significant contextualizing information in the opening turns of a commercial conversation. Part of this contextualization relies on the creation of stock characters or stereotypes and on the use of formulaic language to evoke impressions about the speakers or the setting. Greetings and responses in these sequences also contribute to the contextualization of speakers and setting by exploiting viewer knowledge about the appropriateness of various greetings and responses to particular contexts. Naturally, the adaptation of natural behavior to the commercial context results in some differences from natural conversation as well. For example, the speakers in commercial phone conversations identified each other rather than themselves.

The distribution of greetings in conversational commercials represents another such difference. In natural encounters, greetings are an expected, even obligatory feature, while in commercials their function is more constrained. Greetings in conversational commercials occur exclusively in the environment of mechanical

summons-response adjacency pairs, representing a significant departure from the conventions of natural conversation, in which greetings are appropriate openers under many circumstances. The distribution of commercial greetings suggests that they are generally unnecessary; they merely consume time without contributing to the commercial message. Hence, their elimination from conversational commercials is predictable. Why then do greetings occur in mechanical summons-response adjacency pairs? At least two possible reasons for this distribution can be suggested.

First, mechanical summons-response adjacency pairs overtly open a conversation. They are less casual openers than merely speaking to someone physically proximate. Perhaps the very overtness of the mechanical summons-response method of initiating conversation demands a verbal acknowledgement of the interactive activity. In other words, greetings might be more obligatory in mechanical summons-response openings than elsewhere in natural conversation. Their absence from such settings is more noticeable, more artificial, and more awkward than is their absence from settings in which a smile or gesture might adequately substitute for a verbal greeting.

Second, the greetings provide the viewer with sociocultural cues regarding the participants, their relationship, and the conversational setting. The San Francisco Chronicle's "Good Morning, Madam" signals an impersonal relationship, while the Diet Pepsi's "Hi, Daddy" and the Pacific Bell's "Oh, hi, sis" indicate a personal relationship. Since phone calls and door summons are inherently ambiguous settings (as opposed to the unambiguous settings of most commercials),⁹ these cues are especially important. It is no accident that commercial greetings in mechanical summons openings include vocative forms which clearly convey the nature of the

relationship between the speakers.

Often, these greetings function simultaneously as responses. The "response" pair part of the mechanical summons-response sequences is expressed through "yes" or through a greeting "hi" or "hello." Both "hello" and "hi" are standard greetings which are also responses in natural openings. "Yes," on the other hand, is more specifically a response; its use as a greeting is highly constrained. The various responses reveal two degrees of closeness between speakers, familiar and distant, which correspond to the degree of intimacy attributable to the relationships from other verbal or nonverbal cues. In conversational commercials, personal and intimate relationships are verbally marked by a greeting response ("hi" or "hello"), while business relationships are marked by a non-greeting response ("yes").

In two of the three informal greeting responses, the participants are revealed as blood relatives, based on the appearance of kinship terms used as vocatives. The third informal response, in the Pledge commercial, reveals the participants as neighbors with a hint of romantic interest between them; such a relationship, though less intimate than a familial connection, is nevertheless personal. Thus, all three informal greetings employed as responses to summons occur in contexts in which participants have relationships that suggest informal, ongoing, and familiar interaction.

The relationship between the participants in commercials which exhibit impersonal responses, Campbell and SF Chronicle, is explicitly businesslike. Although the details differ greatly between the two commercials, both depict a business encounter between a female customer and a male salesman/proprietor; both commercials also employ "yes" as the immediate response to a mechanical summons.

Thus, greetings and responses are an important means of orienting the viewer to the relationship between the speakers in mechanical summons-response openings. The verbal response cues are consistent with the relationship being depicted and express a basic distinction between personal and business relationships. Congruity between visual and verbal signals orients the viewer to the nature of the speakers' relationship, contributing crucially to the commercial's intelligibility. The response to a summons in a mechanical summons-response sequence assumes the contextualizing role played by settings in other conversational commercials.

5.5 Questions, commands, and truncated declaratives

Many openings in conversational commercials employ syntactic constructions which reflect a high degree of speaker or addressee involvement. These constructions consequently foster a higher degree of viewer involvement and are, therefore, a primary means of attracting attention and stimulating interest. Two major syntactic constructions found in openings are questions and commands; these constructions need not have the speech act force of questions or commands, merely their form. Both constructions place explicit interactive demands on the addressee: even questions which are not sincere attempts to gain information require answers; even commands which are not sincere attempts to get action demand responses. Viewers, aware of the requirements that such constructions place on conversational participants in natural conversation, anticipate the appearance of appropriate responses in commercials settings as well. Advertisers, having engaged the viewer's expectations, can proceed with product presentation.

Declaratives with truncated structures also occur in openings. These sentence fragments involve the addressee less conventionally than the other two techniques; nevertheless, like questions and commands, they require a high degree of involvement. The interpretation of incomplete utterances demands greater cognitive involvement than do complete ones. Fragments also perform a contextualizing function in openings. Not only do they demand increased viewer cognitive involvement and save the advertiser precious time, but they convey informality and suggest naturalness and spontaneity.

The following questions occurred in the first or second turn of the commercial, that is, within the commercial's four second introduction.

- | | | | |
|------|--------|--|------------|
| (44) | man: | Ah, is that for me? | Campbell's |
| (45) | woman: | Liz, how can I be young and my skin look old? | Dove |
| (46) | girl: | Mom, that white leotard's for my recital. How are you gonna get it white with a bleach for whites? | Clorox II |
| (47) | girl: | Mommy, do blankets have feet? | Fab |
| (48) | woman: | Who says the bathroom can't be as beautiful as the rest of the house? | Simon's |
| (49) | man: | mmm, you smell terrific. | |
| | woman: | Remember when we first met? | Ciara |
| (50) | girl: | Mommy, do blankets have feet? | |
| | woman: | What? | Fab |
| (51) | woman: | Whoa, Susan, don't waste time just dampmopping. | |
| | girl: | Just dampmopping, mom? | Future |

In addition to these questions, other utterances which resemble questions by exhibiting question intonation or inverted subject-auxiliary word order also occur in openings. While the following examples differ from true questions in not seeking an answer, their

distribution in openings seems to reflect an advertising belief that the form, rather than the speech act force, of utterances attracts viewer attention.

- (52) man: Hey, be ready in half an hour? Lee Nails
- (53) A: Hello?
B: Kathy? Pacific Bell
- (54) man: When you invite a man out to a nice place for lunch, you really mean it.
woman: May I show you to your seat, sir? Diet Pepsi

Commands also occur in the first or second turn of the commercial. Like questions, both true directives and utterances resembling directives through conventional syntactic constructions are found.

- (55) woman: Whoa, Susan, don't waste time just dampmopping. Future
- (56) boy: I hope I can talk my parents into buying me an Atari 800XL.
man: Well, tell them all the things it can do for you. Atari

Truncated declaratives are also used as openings, occurring in the first or second turn of the following commercials.

- (57) man: Machine's fine now. All
- (58) man: Terrific show. Aramis
- (59) man: Tuh .. nice party, hon. Kitchenaid
- (60) man: Hey, be ready in half an hour? Lee Nails
- (61) (boy: Mom, I showed Abercrombie how to roll over.)
woman: Oh, terrific. Now let's teach him how to clean clothes.
All

- (62) (man: Machine's fine now.)
 woman: Good. After vacation, I need it. All
- (63) (man: mmm, you smell terrific.)
 woman: Remember when we first met? Ciara
- (64) (woman: Who says the bathroom can't be as beautiful as the rest of the house?)
 man: Not me. Simon's
- (65) (man: Nance, I'm gonna run the dishwasher.)
 woman: Not full. Sunlight

The truncated declaratives contribute to the impression of informality. Most of the above examples occur in interactions between intimate speakers. Only (62) is an exception, occurring in an interaction between a repairman and a housewife. However, this interaction is set informally in the woman's home.

It is apparent from the above examples that many commercials employ multiple techniques for attracting attention in their four second conversational openings. For example, the Feen-a-mint opening exhibits several different strategies.

- (66) woman: Tell me, sis, why do you use these laxatives pills instead of
 Feen-a-mint? Feen-a-mint

This opening employs three involvement devices -- an attention-getting command, a vocative, and a question. Presumably, if one device is good, more are even better.

5.6 Other openings

Only three commercial openings do not employ a summons (whether verbal or mechanical) or a characteristic syntactic construction. These three commercials attract attention and interest with a dramatic opening interaction. Soft & Pretty and Dennison's

Chili open with the speakers disagreeing with each other (discussed in chapter).

Lipton Lite-Lunch creates interest by raising a problem that viewers might identify with.

(67) A: The client will be here in ten minutes.

B: There goes lunch again.

Lipton Lite-Lunch

The urgency of business conflicts with personal desire, setting up a situation inherently interesting.

In summary, then, commercial openings serve several purposes. They compete for viewer attention against many possible distractions. Openings in conversational commercials must arouse interest while contextualizing the interaction so that viewers can identify the setting, participants, and interpersonal activity and thereby understand the commercial message. Contextualization is accomplished by the employment of multiple and redundant cues. The unsophisticated differentiation of relationship types simplifies this task. The primary distinction between relationship types in conversational commercials is "familiar" versus "distant," expressed linguistically through address terms and responses to mechanical summons. Commercial devices for attracting attention mimic (with some differences) natural ones: vocatives, introductory particles, and mechanical summons are employed. Syntactic constructions which involve the addressee in natural conversation (and presumably the viewer in commercial conversation) frequently appear in openings. Many conversational commercials employ multiple attention-getting strategies in their first four seconds.

NOTES

¹ Personal communication with advertising professionals revealed their belief that if the commercial has not attracted the viewer's attention within four seconds, some competing attraction (whether companions, sandwiches, and so on) has won it. The viewer is unlikely at that point to direct attention to the commercial.

² Every social skills manual offers advice of this kind.

³ A professional copy writer, when asked about who these vocatives address, felt that they address the viewers who comprise the intended market. Although only a portion of that market will have the same name as a commercial participant, viewers recognize and respond to a range of names which correspond to their demographic characteristics. Naturally, the advertiser relies on stereotyped images which are associated with those names. So, for example, the woman who uses detergent is "Nance" and not "Carlotta" or "Tiffany."

⁴ In fact, some people I talked to have encountered the name "Madge" only in this commercial setting; it has no associations for them other than the Palmolive manicurist.

⁵ This is an unusually inarticulate opener; it is possible that "tuh" is a false start for "terrific." An alternative explanation is that the man is expressing his relief that the business of hosting is over.

⁶ A comparison of these findings with Hinton (1981) shows that vocatives in commercials parallel natural distribution.

⁷ Geis's (1982) notion of "compression" is actuated in part by the elimination of redundant features which would be essential in a natural encounter.

⁸ And, of course, contributing to the awkwardness of the moment is the speakers'

assigned gender; she, a woman, must ask a man for a cleaning product.

⁹ Most settings are clearly business or clearly personal. The inferences created by the setting are supported by the speakers' verbal and nonverbal behavior. Since mechanical summons-response adjacency pairs, especially phone summons, do not constrain the setting, the contextualizing cues of a shared setting are lost; hence, the greetings take over some of the responsibility for contextualizing the interaction.

6.0 Cooperative interruptions

Some conversational commercials exhibit sequences in which one speaker appears to break into the other's turn to take control of the floor. Although this interruptive behavior is not spontaneous, it appears to be. This chapter examines commercial interruptions to discover why and how advertisers recreate sequences in which the turntaking organization of conversation fails. The resemblance of constructed interruptions to natural ones, through turn change at non-ratified transition-relevance positions, creates the illusion of spontaneity. Notwithstanding this resemblance, commercial interruptions are essentially cooperative. Even when speakers appear to compete for control of the floor, interruptive sequences are smoothly coordinated and frequently contribute to the commercial goal by presenting the product, forestalling objections, or contextualizing the interaction.

Natural conversation presupposes turntaking behavior; it is a cooperative and highly coordinated system of verbal behavior. The relative infrequency of significant overlaps or pauses in natural conversation (Sacks, et al., 1974) demonstrates the joint orientation of participants to the smooth transition of the speaker role, of the current speaker to the production of a turn and of the next speaker to the projection of appropriate "transition relevance places," or possible completion points of the current speaker's turn. These transition relevance places correspond to the natural boundaries of syntactic constituents uttered by the current speaker. This orderly exchange of speaker role occasionally breaks down. Significant overlaps or interruptions, whether deliberate or inadvertent, demand the expansion of turn change analysis beyond

syntactic considerations to context-specific participant expectations, speaker's rights to control the floor, and inferred speaker intent (Bennett, 1981). These factors also influence the identification of a sequence as an interruption.

The identification of interruptions originally relied on syntactic characteristics (Schegloff, 1973)¹, or "the proximity [of turn change] to a legitimate point of speaker alternation." (Zimmerman and West, 1975, p. 114) In other words, a current speaker has the right to complete a turn at talk. If a next speaker claims the floor at an inappropriate location, such as the middle of a syntactic constituent, an interruption has occurred.

Bennett shows that this notion of interruption, which depends solely on syntactic criteria, is simplistic. Participant expectations, perceived speaker rights, and the inferred intent of speakers crucially affect the interpretation of a turn change as an interruption. One speaker, having accomplished the communicative intent of an utterance without the concomitant completion of a syntactic unit, might not feel interrupted if the next speaker claims the floor. Conversely, another speaker may have completed a grammatical constituent without having accomplished the communicative intent; if the next speaker claims the floor at this point, an interruption has taken place. Thus, although constituent completion often signals a transition relevance place, these syntactic landmarks must be augmented by context-specific information when they are used to identify interruptions. Only by incorporating external cues in the interpretation of a speaker's communicative intent can a particular turn change be identified as an interruption. Successful interruptions result in the interrupter gaining the floor, while unsuccessful ones do not, resulting instead in a brief period of overlap.

Most interruptions in commercials occur, predictably, at unratified turn change locations, the same contextual environment in which many natural interruptions occur. Incomplete constituents offer primary evidence of interruption. For example, when definite articles without following nouns or subjects without following verbs are latched by the next speaker's turn, the sequence appears to be an interruption. Commercial interruptions are characterized by the next speaker claiming the floor while the current speaker is mid-constituent. This syntactic definition of an interruption, however, must be augmented by inferences regarding speaker intent; a purely mechanical syntactic identification of interruptions overlooks the interrelationship of turn change and floor control. A purely mechanical definition of "interruption" can not fully account for the interruptive turn change behavior in conversational commercials. These interruptions are more cooperative than their resemblance to natural interruptions might suggest. Although the constituent is incomplete, an appropriate conclusion is usually predictable within the interactive context. Interrupting speakers generally address the content of their turns to this projected completion. Virtually all of the interruptions are smoothly accomplished, with neither gap nor overlap.

As in natural conversation, context-specific cues in conversational commercials suggest that syntactically identified interruptions are not less cooperative than interruptions which occur at transition relevance places. Instead, the second kind of interruption demonstrates a clearer struggle between speakers for conversational control. The element of conflict is of crucial significance in natural interruptions. Because interruptions pit one speaker's desire to speak against another's, the potential for face threats (Brown and Levinson, 1978) is high. Conversational commercials

exploit this aspect of interruptions while maintaining an underlyingly cooperative strategy.

Two kinds of interruptive behavior are found in conversational commercials. Turn change at unratiſed locations represents a clear intrusion on another speaker's control of the floor. Turn change at ratiſed locations signals a struggle for conversational control. Then, the example of a natural interruption offers a point of comparison with constructed ones. Finally, a brief discussion of commercial manipulation of syntactic constituents, made possible by the medium of television, highlights the differences between natural and commercial verbal possibilities.

6.1 Transition relevance places

The interruptions in this section share the characteristic of turn change at unconventional transition relevance places. In other words, the turn change occurs in the middle of a syntactic constituent; one speaker has the floor but loses it. Examples come from All, San Francisco Chronicle, Aramis, and Palmolive. The exception, from Pledge, is a rare case of speaker overlap.

An All commercial exhibits an interruption with fairly obvious characteristics. In this excerpt, a repairman offers a housewife advice on laundry detergents; the relevant sequence illustrates turn timing behavior which mimics natural interruption.

- (68) man: Don't pretreat. Use concentrated ALL with bleach, borax and brighteners.
 woman: But no=
 man: =I know no detergent gets out everything, but concentrated ALL has extra cleaning power. All

The repairman first addresses a direct command to the housewife to avert her from her stated intention to pretreat dirty clothes. His turn focuses attention on the product through a product presenter, a list of three attributes. The presence of the conjunction "and" before the last item, based on its normal distribution, indicates that the listing is complete. Thus, the woman begins her turn at a conversational location where she could reasonably expect to gain access to the floor. She gets no further than "but no" before the repairman begins to speak, reclaiming the floor before she has completed her utterance. The man's regaining of the floor is smoothly accomplished, with neither gap nor overlap. He steps in immediately following her "no," latching his utterance to hers and giving every appearance of having cut off the rest of her turn.

Although the woman has not said much, she says enough that some predictions regarding the probable conclusion of her turn can be suggested. Both elements of the woman's interrupted utterance suggest a probable objection. "But" often expresses the speaker's taking exception to something; "no" indicates that some negative generalization will follow. Since the man has just made a product claim, the linguistic and pragmatic implication is that the woman is about to express an objection to something about the product.

The man's violation of normal turn change expectations, as demonstrated by his failure to wait for an appropriate transition relevance place to begin speaking, expresses more than a simple reclaiming of the floor. He offers a response to the woman's implied (but unuttered) objection. With "I know," he forestalls her objection, indicating that he already knows its content. This impression is strengthened by following proposition, which begins with the same word ("no") that the woman used in

opening her objection. The man's interruption, therefore, is not a delayed continuation of his original turn but a new turn that responds to the woman's incomplete utterance.

Thus, All's interruptive sequence suggests the possibility of a negative evaluation of the product, but does so in a manner which actually avoids a negative claim. The man's disclaimer is so vague that it can not represent a criticism of the product per se, or even of the product category; instead, it merely makes a general and uncontroversial assertion. In fact, his utterance indirectly suggests that All comes closest to the impossible task of "getting out everything," an impression obviously advantageous to the advertiser; the advertiser's persuasive intent clearly motivates this sequence. Not only are the negative connotations of the woman's objection minimized, but the sequence also models consumer belief: it suggests that the worst objection to the product that can be made is a bland assertion which does not negatively reflect on the product. And, since the man's utterance is framed so that All appears to be the only product which comes close to "cleaning everything," the sequence actually results in a favorable impression of the product.

The subsequent interaction in the All commercial is structured so that the man's interpretation of the woman's objection is borne out by the development of the conversation. Viewers know from natural conversation that if an interrupter makes a false inference, conversational repair usually occurs in the interrupted speaker's next turn (see below). However, the woman continues in her next turn as if the man had indeed taken the words of her objection right out of her mouth.

The commercial for the San Francisco Chronicle exhibits two interruptions substantially similar in timing and conversational characteristics to the All interruption.

A newspaper salesman speaks to a potential customer at her door.

- (69) man: I am working my way through college selling subscriptions to the
Chronicle newspaper. Now the Chronicle=
woman: =Aren't you rather old to be
going=
man: =You're never too old to learn, Madam. SF Chronicle

The salesman opens his sales pitch with a statement of his purpose in selling the product, backgrounding the interaction while simultaneously presenting the brand name. He then begins his next syntactic constituent; the brand name in subject position suggests that the forthcoming utterance will be a product presenter. Before he completes this constituent, however, the woman claims the floor. Although he has not achieved his communicative intent, the man relinquishes the floor immediately, without overlap.

Although the man's interrupted utterance does not offer many cues for potential completion, it does indicate that a product presenter was on its way. Since an advertiser is unlikely to prevent a spokesperson from presenting the product, it is a safe assumption that the man will eventually get around to presenting the product, as indeed he does in his next turn. Thus, although a specific product claim can not be projected from the man's utterance, the fragment introduces the topic and pragmatically constrains the imputed function of the interrupted utterance.

The woman's interruption responds not to the interrupted product presenter, but to a prior claim, and is itself interrupted by the salesman. An inverted subject-auxiliary sequence, heralding a standard yes-no question, opens her turn. Enough of it is uttered that its probable completion can be predicted: both the matrix sentence and the verbal

component of its complement are complete; only a directional preposition, predictable within the context, is missing. Intonation also indicates that the woman's turn is incomplete; the characteristic falling "completion" contour is not present. The tempo of her utterance leads the listener to expect another beat. Thus, both syntactic and prosodic factors suggest that her question is incomplete; the context and listener knowledge suggest its probable completion.

To infer the projected conclusion of the woman's turn as one which questions the man's claim of being a college student, the viewer relies on two contextualizing features. First, "college" is established as part of the discourse in the immediately prior turn; its retrieval as background information is not problematic. Second, the man's physical appearance violates expectations about college students. The woman's question, which could be considered a challenge, is situationally appropriate for a participant who wishes to address a questionable assertion. She asks if he isn't "rather old" to be what he claims. Before she completes her turn, but after she has said enough that its conclusion can be predicted, the man reclaims the floor. Again, turn change occurs at an unratified transition relevance place and is accomplished smoothly, without overlap. The man responds to the probable conclusion to the woman's challenge. Once he responds, he leaves that topic and returns to his original interrupted intent, presenting the product. The woman does not attempt to regain the floor until the end of the commercial, when she again indicates her skepticism about his opening claim.

Both the All and the San Francisco Chronicle interruptions had cooperative and uncooperative components. Snatching another speaker's turn in mid stream is normally considered somewhat impolite in natural conversation (although there may be times

when it is entirely appropriate). However, the flip side of these commercial interruptions is more cooperative than one might expect. Both male interrupters anticipate the completion of their partner's utterance, using techniques of conversational inference also accessible to the viewer. They direct their interrupting comment toward this projected content of the incomplete utterance. The interruptions resolve the women's respective objections and thus permit the conversations to continue -- facilitating, in a sense, the smooth flow of the commercial interaction.

Of course, despite these similarities, the two interruptions are quite different. In the All commercial, both participants have the same goal, getting the oily stain out of the woman's blouse. In the San Francisco commercial, the participants have quite different goals and the speakers are in competition; the woman challenges the man's claim of college student status, while the man presents the product. Also, in the All commercial, the remainder of the conversation supports the interpretation that the woman's objection was safely laid to rest. In the San Francisco Chronicle commercial, the woman's objection is not resolved; she later reiterates her disbelief in the man's initial claim.

The Aramis interruption clearly exhibits the cooperative basis of commercial turn management. The interruptive sequence, similar in some particulars to the above examples, is understood as the interrupting speaker's cooperative participation and interest in the conversation. When the man hesitates, he invites the woman to initiate a turn. When she responds, she claims the floor within the man's syntactic constituent.

As with many commercials advertising personal products, the Aramis commercial focuses on an implied lifestyle rather than the product itself (Vestergaard and Schröder, 1985). Two characters emerge from an art gallery into the rain. The setting and some

preceding turns (not shown) contextualize the interruption.

- (70) woman: Well, it was nice talking to you.
 man: That's the Aramis umbrella.
 woman: So is that.
 man: You bought Aramis for your=
 woman: =uh uh
 voice: The Aramis umbrella.

The woman makes a bid to end the conversation with the formulaic pre-closing, "it was nice talking to you." Her comment orients the viewer to the relationship between the two speakers, providing good evidence that the two speakers are non-intimates who are not in daily contact. Given the public setting and the physical behavior of the speakers, her move suggests a chance, perhaps even an initial, encounter. The viewer's evaluation of the speaker's relationship is crucial to maintaining conversational coherence; the hypotheses that a listener constructs based on these contextualization cues are tested against subsequent developments in the conversation, which clearly reinforce one set of interpretations.

The man observes the woman opening her umbrella, and introduces a new topic of conversation by commenting on it; he employs a product presenter. He recognizes her umbrella as being related to Aramis; she reciprocates with a parallel identification. Even people who do not recognize the brand name Aramis as a man's scent will be able to construct some inferences based on the context. Often, objects such as umbrellas are offered as promotional items on the purchase of a product; since the umbrellas are identified with a product name, they appear to be promotional items. In fact, the Aramis commercial seems to market the umbrellas rather than Aramis itself.²

Thus, in addition to visiting art galleries, the participants have their possession of the Aramis umbrella in common. Out of this common ground arises the potential for a romantic relationship; the conversation, which had been closed, reopens. Since the only way to acquire a promotional object is by purchasing a product, a reasonable inference is that both speakers have purchased Aramis. Viewers who recognize the Aramis brand name may construct some further tentative inferences about the speakers. The man probably purchased the product for his personal use. The woman would not have purchased the product for her own use; however, if she chose Aramis as a present for someone else, there is a high probability that she likes it. Thus, the man is likely to be wearing a scent that the woman likes.

With his next turn, the man seems to have reached at least some of the same conclusions. His incomplete question presupposes that the woman purchased the product for some male person in her life. His question is not of the man's existence, but of the man's relationship to her. When he hesitates at the possessive "your," he invites interruption or completion. The woman cooperates, accepting the invitation by stepping smoothly into his turn without gap or overlap. She responds appropriately to his turn even while denying him the information he wants; although her reply suggests that she is free, it addresses only the purchase of the product and therefore is open to other interpretations. This Aramis sequence satisfies the syntactic criteria for interruptions, but its cooperative basis is undeniable. The man invites interruption by hesitating. The woman, by claiming the floor mid-constituent, merely cooperates with him. She predicts the conclusion of the man's utterance and responds to it.

The advertiser relies heavily on viewer inferences to maintain logical development in the commercial. That the man's incomplete utterance is a question must be partially inferred. The syntactic structure does not exhibit the characteristic auxiliary inversion of yes-no questions or any other cue identifying the utterance as a question. Since the utterance is incomplete, the rising intonation which is characteristic of questions in assertion form is not in evidence. Therefore, less direct prosodic and syntactic cues project the probable conclusion to this utterance. The intonation, beginning to rise during "your," suggests a question. Syntactic and contextual constraints also limit possible conclusions to the man's turn. English syntax requires a noun to follow a modifier; semantically, this noun must be possessable. The nature of the product constrains the candidates for completion even further. Since a men's cologne is used by men, the possessive modifier can only be followed by one of the set of nominals which refer to the possible relationships of a man to a woman: father, brother, son, friend, employee, lover, husband, etc.

The viewer has undergone an extensive inferences process to narrow the field of completion possibilities to this extent. However, the range of human relationships which could serve as grammatical conclusions to the man's question is still broader than can justify the woman's negative response without taking other features of the interaction into account. Keeping the woman's answer from being conversationally anomalous are contextual factors and background sociocultural knowledge, which together constrain the possible completions to the question.

The viewer therefore draws on social as well as linguistic knowledge to evaluate the situation. Earlier evidence established that the male speaker is a non-intimate, who

would not be expected to know for whom the woman buys men's colognes. He follows the woman out of a building and pursues a conversation despite her bid to close it. The most ready interpretation of the his behavior (within this commercial context) is that he is romantically interested in the woman. His question suggests an indirect inquiry into her availability for such a relationship, offering her an opportunity to afford encouragement. The man discreetly leaves unexpressed the precise nature of the relationship which could limit her availability.

The woman responds cooperatively to his indirectness. Not only does she infer the man's intent and address her answer to his indirect inquiry, she does so without forcing him to commit himself. Her negative response is a tacit statement of reciprocal interest, an indication of her availability. The woman's about-face, confirmed later in the interaction, suggests that the common ground of the (promotional) product has provided the basis for a more intimate relationship.

Thus, the Aramis question/answer sequence, which also exhibits characteristics of interruptions, can only be interpreted through inferences based on knowledge external to the commercial. The surface level alone is not informative enough to provide coherence. However, the sequence only constrains the range of possible interpretations, but endorses a particular interpretation; the inferences process is supported by both verbal and nonverbal cues. The participation required of viewers in understanding the commercial mandates a greater cognitive effort, presumably resulting in a more memorable commercial.

Conversational commercials employ interruptive sequences only when the conclusion to the interrupted turn is easily predictable. Interruptions are both

cooperative and non-confrontational. Linguistic and pragmatic knowledge are relied on in the Aramis commercial. In the San Francisco Chronicle commercial, one probable conclusion to the interrupted utterance was easily formulated. Although the other San Francisco Chronicle and the All interruptions provide fewer cues to project a specific completion, contextual evidence was sufficient to convey the turns' probable content as well as reveal the turns' interactive function.

The predictive, cooperative nature of commercial interruptions is also apparent in the following excerpt from a Palmolive commercial. As in other Palmolive commercials, a client with dishpan hands consults Madge for advice in keeping hands nice. Madge's reply is interrupted by the client.

- (71) client: What can I try?
 Madge: Everything, and use=
 client: =ah, Palmolive liquid.
 Madge: You're soaking in it.

Madge responds to her client's supportive opener with a product presenter. After an initially vague reply, Madge singles out one solution to the woman's problem. Madge expresses her suggestion as a command, using a verb ("use") that grammatically requires a direct object. However, she does not get a chance to complete the constituency requirements of her utterance before her partner breaks in, smoothly, without gap or overlap. The client supplies the requisite noun phrase which she prevented Madge from uttering. Thus, the client anticipates the probable conclusion of her partner's utterance and, in supplying that conclusion herself, responds to the utterance by participating in it. Implicitly revealing her familiarity with the product, she spares Madge the trouble of completing a turn; her interruption signals a high degree of

involvement in the interaction. By correctly predicting its conclusion, the client shows that understood Madge's intended message, an effect enhanced by Madge's response to the interruption. Madge not only endorses the interrupter's conclusion by not challenging it, she builds on it in her next statement. By pronominalizing the brand name uttered by the client, Madge clearly establishes that the product is indeed the topic that she had intended to raise.

The commercial interruptions so far discussed exhibited latched turns at inappropriate turn change locations, characterized by the absence of pause and overlap. In fact, overlapping of any kind occurs only rarely in commercials. This indicates a relative difference from conversations, in which slight overlapping occurs regularly. One of the few examples of overlap appears in the following interruption from a Pledge commercial, illustrating how this feature of natural conversation is appropriated by commercials. The overlap represents a problem of participant negotiation of control of the floor. The commercial begins with a woman asking her male neighbor for some furniture polish. The neighbor returns with a can of polish.

- (72) man: Here you go.
 woman: Oh, oh I don't dust with Pledge
 man: Oh well
 woman: [well, what's the difference?

Unlike the prior commercial interruptions, this one does not occur in mid-constituent. The woman responds to the man's furniture polish with a negative claim which, however, does not reflect a negative product trait. The man reacts to this response with not one but two introductory particles, evidently preparatory to a more complex grammatical constituent. Meanwhile, he reaches out as if to retrieve the polish. On the

whole, his behavior indicates his acceptance of her inferred rejection of his brand, his assumption that she does not want the polish. However, he has misinterpreted the situation.

The woman appears oblivious to both introductory particles. Gaze direction and body posture indicate absorption in examining the can of Pledge. She reaches a decision just as the man begins to talk. Without acknowledging that her partner has initiated a turn, she begins to speak. A slight overlap results and the man relinquishes the floor immediately. Unlike our other interrupters, the woman in the Pledge commercial responds not to her conversational partner, but to the product. She does not acknowledge him (she appears not to notice him at all) and ignores rather than predicts what he will say. In fact, she seems to be talking to herself. Thus, her behavior is not in keeping with the cooperative principle; she has disconnected herself from the interaction. It is no accident that, unlike the other interruptions, the conversation ends at this point, resuming only after she has been converted to the product.

The overlap lasts only for the duration of a single word. Unlike most natural overlaps, both speakers happen to be saying the same word; although this happens occasionally in natural conversation, it is not typical. Perhaps this coincidence represents the advertiser's attempt to preserve intelligibility. Overlaps present a processing challenge, as listeners are faced with the task of decoding two speakers at once. If both speakers say the same word, and that word is one of frequent occurrence, the viewer's processing task is greatly simplified.

As the above examples show, commercial interruptions are sequences in which one speaker clearly intrudes on another speaker's control of the floor. They are identified primarily by syntactic characteristics, by the interrupter's claiming of the floor before the speaker has completed a grammatical constituent. Another characteristic of commercial interruptions is the speaker's response to the content of the interrupted utterance. In the Pledge commercial, a response to the product rather than to the other speaker appears; in this case, the cooperative basis of conversation breaks down and the interaction ends.

6.2 Controlling the floor

Conversational commercials also exhibit less transparent cases of turn management violations. Like some natural interruptions, these turn changes occur at appropriate transition relevance places. Negotiated claiming of the floor and the right to speak are issues that control the flow of interaction in these commercial sequences. Examples from Campbell and Dennison demonstrate the exploitation of turn sequence management as a means of maintaining viewer interest while presenting the product.

In the Campbell Soup for One commercial, a woman has control of the floor by virtue of being speaker; her male addressee makes repeated but unsuccessful attempts to gain the floor. The excerpt below shows the man bidding for the floor at several appropriate transition relevance places. He desists when the woman does not yield the floor.

- (73) woman: But a whole can is really too big for just little old me=
 man: =I'll tell ya=
 woman: =I do
 love all those chunks of beef=
 man: =yes=
 woman: =all those chunks of potatoes,
 chunks of carrots=
 man: =Oh, Mrs. Whitley=
 woman: =so I was wondering, could you
 sell me half a can?
 man: Sure!
 woman: You can! Campbell

The impression gained from this interaction is of a somewhat rambling woman and a polite patient man. This impression results from the content and timing of the utterances.

By the time the woman completes the clause which begins this excerpt, the essential factors of her problem are already outlined. The man prepares to offer a solution to the woman's problem by self-selecting as next speaker. He starts out with "I'll tell ya," indicating that he has information relevant to her concern. This conversational bid comes at an appropriate turn change location; doubly so in that not only has the woman completed a well-formed grammatical utterance, but has also imparted the relevant parts of a problem which her addressee is expected to solve. Mrs. Whitley, however, resumes speaking, cutting the man's turn short. By continuing to speak, not in response to him, but in elaboration of her previous turn, she indicates that the earlier transition relevance place was not, as it might have been, the end of her turn. She merely delayed continuation of that turn. By right of controlling of the floor as speaker, she reclaims it.

In doing so, however, she prevents her addressee from responding to her problem, as he seemed prepared to do. She interrupts him, though in a different way than the above examples. Rather than breaking into his turn while he has clear control of the floor, she exercises her right as speaker to continue, thereby cutting him off. In this way, the interruption resembles the Pledge commercial, for there too, the woman reclaims speaker status without responding to the man. In the Pledge commercial, however, the man had not yet begun the content portion of his turn. This differs from the Campbell commercial, in which the man's verbal behavior clearly indicates that he has something relevant to contribute. Another difference between the two commercials is that the woman opts out of the interaction in the Pledge commercial. Her comment is general and not necessarily addressed directly to her conversational partner; the conversation ends. In the Campbell commercial, the woman clearly continues to address her partner in an ongoing interaction.

The man shows himself to be a cooperative conversational partner by allowing the woman to retain her turn as speaker until she is ready to relinquish it. He stops talking and waits for the next transition relevance place, here associated with the completion of the woman's next clausal unit. Eventually, the man makes a more substantial effort to gain the floor by employing a standard attention-getting device to attract her attention, a vocative. Calling a person by name is usually one of the most successful means of attracting that person's attention. This move, however, has no effect on the speaker but is ignored as were all prior attention-getting attempts.

Finally the woman sums up her turn with a transition particle, "so," and an explicit though conventionally indirect request for her addressee to provide a solution to

her problem. This request overtly selects her addressee as next speaker and grants him the floor, a clear signal that the woman is ready to relinquish it. The man utters an unambiguous affirmative in response to her request. When the woman responds to this response in her next turn, she indicates that the man has finally succeeded in getting her attention and solving her problem.

The Campbell commercial exhibits a series of highly coordinated utterances that resemble a well-mannered fight for conversational control. The woman has control of the floor and defends this position against the man's efforts to become speaker. The man's attempts to gain the floor do not violate turn management expectations but invite the speaker to relinquish her role by employing attention-getting conversational devices. So, based on the criteria used for the other commercial interruptions, he does not interrupt her; she interrupts him.

During her continued tenure as speaker, the woman adds nothing to the content of her problem. She elaborates on her affective response to the product, but does not address the original problem. Through the character's dogged control of the floor, the advertiser presents the product. Obviously, the intent behind the woman's continuing in the speaker role is to focus viewer attention on the product. The man's attempts to gain the floor have no directly relevant commercial role. Through his repeated, apparently sincere but nevertheless spurious, attempts to claim the floor, the man maintains an interactive atmosphere, contributes to the social contextualization created by the interaction, and heightens interest in the solution to the woman's problem by delaying its appearance. In short, although he later presents the product, in this portion of the interaction he plays a supportive role.

The Dennison Chili commercial deals with control of the floor in a different context but with similar maneuvering for speaker's rights. Two male speakers contend for the floor, with each one claiming it away from the other. The speakers, in a crowded bar-restaurant, are identified onscreen (by subscripts) as rodeo riders, creating the atmosphere of "real life," as in a documentary. (For convenience, the lines are numbered.)

(74)

- 1 man 1: I've been cooking chili for 20 years.
- 2 man 2: Well, I've been eating it for 25.
- 3 m1: So we both know what makes Dennison's chili great chili.
- 4 It's those firm tender beans.
- 5 m2: It's that lean juicy beef.
- 6 m1: Larry, all you know about beef is ropin' it.
- 7 voice: People can get awfully hot over chili,
- 8 but on one thing they do agree
- 9 m1: It's gotta be rich=
- 10 m2: =and thick=
- 11 m1: =like Dennison's.

The commercial begins with one man (m1) directly addressing the viewer, asserting his credentials as an authority on the art of cooking chili. Before he can continue with why this might be relevant information, his partner (m2) begins to speak. Although m1 has completed a fully grammatical constituent, he has not yet established its relevance; he is interrupted.

M2 claims the floor at an appropriate turn change location, making an assertion parallel to that of his partner. Despite this syntactically less intrusive strategy, the interruption is less cooperative than the others. M2's right to participate in the interaction has not yet been established. His comment is disruptive, off m1's topic, rather than contributing or responding to it. The impression of interruption, of the

second speaker's turn as an intrusion on the first, originates in this interplay, as well as the closely coordinated turn changes, which are made without gap or overlaps. When he reclaims the floor after m2 makes his uninvited contribution, m1 overtly incorporates m2's contribution into the establishment of the relevancy of his opening utterance.

The second round of the conversation now begins. M1 identifies a specific attribute of Dennison chili as the source of its greatness. M2 claims the floor, offering a competing attribute as the source of product excellence. A comparison of lines 4 and 5 shows that m2's contribution is parallel to that of m1, as were lines 1 and 2. In both sets of utterances, the essential grammatical structure is identical for each man's contribution; thus, m2 directly contradicts m1. The commercial relevance of the speakers' strategies is clear; each presents product attributes.

At this point, in a somewhat exasperated tone, m1 insults m2, employing a formulaic construction. The formulaicity of compliments (Wolfson, 1981) has a counterpart in the formulaic construction of insults. In both cases, the formula clearly signals the interactive function of the utterance, so that the addressee understands the speaker's intent. M1's exasperation is a response to m2's intrusive claiming of the floor. When m1 is interrupted for the second time, he redresses m2's face threatening behavior by casting aspersions on m2's credentials. Going on record with this insult, he reciprocally threatens his partner's face. Thus, the battle for control of the floor escalates into bald attacks. Just as the interaction is on the verge of explosion, the voiceover breaks in, defusing the interactive tension while alluding to it and smoothing it over.

Following the voiceover, m1 resumes speaking in line 9. He makes an assertion about the product. Once again, m2 claims the floor from m1, his interruption semantically paralleling m1's preceding comment; the conjunct and adjective are inserted smoothly into m1's stream of speech. In line 11, m1 concludes the comment he began in line 9, after the intrusive offering of m2 in line 10.

The Dennison interruptions demand a more complex, less mechanistic conception of interruptions than the earlier, syntactically based ones do. Like some natural interruptions, the interruptions exhibit no overlap, no claiming of the floor mid-constituent. Instead, smoothly orchestrated turn changes occur at transition relevance places; the interruptive utterances intrude on the speaker's control of the floor. In more cooperative interruptions, the interrupter responds to the projected conclusion of the interrupted utterance. In Dennison's, the interrupter responds to the preceding, rather than to the anticipated, utterance. In the other interruptions, the interrupted speaker acted cooperatively by not challenging the interrupter's right to participate; in the Dennison's interruption, the speaker registers his blunt objection to the interruptions with a retaliatory and formulaic insult.

The imminent altercation is prevented by the voiceover. Voiceover interference in face-threatening behavior does not happen in natural interruptions. The results of a natural interruption may be quite hostile. Even commercial interruptions such as Dennison's, where speakers interrupt and insult each other, function cooperatively; the interruptions are subservient to the advertiser's intent. In natural conversation, however, speakers are free agents, not puppets. Participants often have very different ideas about the purpose of individual utterances in a conversation.

6.3 A contrastive example from natural conversation

In the following natural interruption, one speaker anticipates the completion of another's utterance, but with very different results from commercial interruptions. Three speaking participants (A, B, C) are waiting for a fourth, in order to interview a fifth person, (D). A casual conversation is in progress.

- (75) A to D: What I really wanted to ask you was=
 B to A: =don't you think we should wait
 for Larry?
 A to B: Can I talk?
 C to A: She thought you were serious.

The conversation resumes with A posing a humorous question to D. The interruption was achieved smoothly, without overlap and without pause, at an inappropriate turn change location. Speaker B cuts into A's pre-question opening in mid-constituent, anticipating an interview question from A. B does not wish to start the interview before all members are present and registers an objection with Speaker A. Speaker A, however, had no intention of starting the interview but was leading into a humorous question, presumably to set the interviewee at ease. Part of Speaker B's anticipation was correct; speaker A did intend to ask a question. The contingent anticipation that the question would be seriously related to the interview was incorrect, not matching speaker A's intention. As inferences is an interpersonal process subject by its nature to inaccuracy, misunderstandings like this in natural conversation are not infrequent.³

Actions by listeners which base themselves on false inferences are inherently

face-threatening, as they put a burden on the speaker. Accordingly, it is not surprising that A replied directly to B, reorienting her body posture and gaze direction away from D to B. However, A replied in a way which threatened B's face, thereby escalating the exchange and generating tension. C, a bystander to this exchange, felt uncomfortable enough to interfere, offering an explanation of the (easily recoverable) intentions of speaker B.

It is worth pointing out that similarly tense episodes, whether in misunderstandings or in arguments, do not occur in commercials. The effect of the Dennison challenges and insults is humorous rather than hostile; the apparently spontaneous (but constructed) interruptions are carefully contrived to avoid tension which might alienate viewers. The local management of interruptions, which entail the violation of a participant's face concerns, can easily generate tension among onlookers. The generally cooperative nature of interruptions in conversational commercials minimizes the face threatening nature of the sequence, and hence the potential for viewer discomfort. Also, uncooperative commercials would waste time by impeding the presentation of the commercial message in a way which, by not focusing on the product, does not support the advertiser's purpose.

6.4 Unnatural turn sequences

Most of these commercial interruptions simulate natural ones. The medium of television also permits the construction of events which have no natural counterparts. Less natural sequences function as structural or literary devices in the commercial. Thus, a subroutine related to the product can be embedded within another speaker's

turn. Such embeddings resemble episodes found in other media in which time and events can be manipulated, such as written literature, films, and television shows. To find such devices in television commercials, which share some creative characteristics with these other media, is not surprising. These "interruptions" are not turn sequences as much as they are part of the commercial's rhetorical structure. They establish the parameters of the communicative event, rather than simply comprising part of it.

A good example of unnatural embedding appears in the Pacific Bell commercial. Singing voices complete a grammatical unit begun by the voiceover and pause mid-utterance so that a conversational exchange between two women speakers can occur.

- (76) voice: Whether you live out of town or just a few minutes away
 singers: There's so much left to say
 woman 1: Do you think our kids are ever going to like each other?
 woman 2: I grew up to like you, didn't I?
 singers: don't drift away. Pacific Bell

The embedded conversational exchange between (made possible by the product) is highlighted by the framework provided by the singers. The advertiser exploits television's ability to handle unnatural temporal and spatial behavior.

The excerpt is highly unrealistic. Similar embeddings cannot occur in natural conversation. The speaker types of voiceover and singer have no relevance to natural interaction. And, although an interrupted speaker might resume speech at the point of interruption, in a manner similar to the singers' completion of a grammatical unit after an interruption, events rarely happen so conveniently in natural conversation.

Natural interruptions pit one speaker's will against another's; both speakers attempt to control the floor. An interrupter often claims the floor while the other speaker is still talking (mid-constituent); the completion of an interrupted commercial utterance is easily inferred and recoverable. This is certainly not the only means of achieving an interruption. Some interruptions violate no overt turn change expectations but occur without overlap at an appropriate transition relevance place before a speaker's communicative intent has been realized.

Preservation of intelligibility in commercials obviously presents a powerful motivation for some differences between natural and unnatural interruptions; the advertiser's inability to repair a viewer's misunderstanding mandates intelligibility, motivating multiple linguistic cues in the creation and reinforcement of contextualized interaction. Thus, both linguistic and contextual cues orient the viewer to the desired inferences. Mistaken inferences leading to interruptions can easily cause conflict by threatening a speaker's face and arousing intense emotions. Overlap is uncommon, and undesirable conflicts do not arise. The interruptions are essentially cooperative.

The motivation behind commercial interruptions varies. Commercials in which two speakers vie for control of the floor (Campbell, Dennison) use the drama of the struggle as a means of presenting the product. Mid-constituent turn changes either support product presentation (Pledge), present the product (All, Palmolive), or contextualize the speakers and the interaction (San Francisco Chronicle, Aramis).

NOTES

- 1 The primary source of this claim was not available; however, credit is given Schegloff in Bennett [1981. pp. 172-3.].
- 2 A professional copy writer substantiated this impression by referring to the Aramis umbrella as the product of the commercial (personal conversation).
- 3 Natural conversation differs from commercial conversations in this way. Advertisers are careful to constrain commercial inferences; no ambiguity exists to muddy the waters.

7.0 Speaker role and product presentation: speakers of equal status

Conversational commercials are sequentially organized to perform both the local event of mimicing natural interaction and the meta-event of presenting the product. Each speaker's assigned role reflects these dual functions; speaker roles create the image of a participant in an spontaneous interaction while contributing to product presentation. Utterances occur in sequences which mimic conversation. Two possible relationships between speaking participants exist: either each speaker has equal knowledge of the product (and both speakers present it) or the speakers have unequal knowledge of the product. The speaker without knowledge elicits product presenters from the speaker with knowledge. Each interaction in a conversational commercial employs one of these two relationship types.

The advertiser must decide which of the two speaker relationships to use. This decision dictates the structure of the interaction and the organization of product presentation by determining the sequencing of product information. In addition, it sets the tone of the interaction. When two speakers of equal status are the commercial participants, each represents a different product attribute. The speakers sequentially present the product in their alternating turns. To style this strategy of product presentation as a spontaneous conversation, most advertisers use the structure of a disagreement or conflict. And indeed, the commercial conversations in which speakers share responsibility for presenting the product exhibit features of confrontation. The speakers agree that the product is wonderful, but for different reasons. Naturally, despite overt signals that the co-participant is the speaker's sanctioned addressee, the

disagreements present multiple product attributes to the viewer.

Many conversational commercials take a different approach and use speakers of unequal status to present the product. In these cases, the conversation runs along more explicitly didactic lines. The new user has a problem and solicits advice from an informal product spokesperson. This spokesperson (whether by occupation or experience) seems to be a credible source of product information. The new user intersperses supportive utterances into the presentation to maintain the interactive quality of the sequence and to signal interest and attention. Thus, the tone of conversational commercials that use unequal speakers is one of cooperation rather than confrontation.

The next two chapters analyze commercials according to the relationship between speakers. This chapter presents three commercials in which two speakers of equal status interact: Simon's furniture store, Soft & Pretty bathroom tissue, and Dennison's Chili. Each of these commercials exhibits linguistic features which clearly indicate disagreement. Commercials in which speakers of unequal status discuss the product, with one speaker eliciting claims from the other, are presented in the next chapter.

In the Simon's furniture store commercial, a man and a woman converse in a bathroom. Each of three separate segments performs a specific commercial function. The introductory segment establishes both the commercial topic and the speakers' roles, orienting the viewer to the product and contextualizing the interaction. The body of the commercial presents the product and reinforces speaker roles. The final segment signals closure, using several devices, including topic change and humor. Although the body of the commercial directly reveals the speakers' commercial roles, the opening and closing segments situate the disagreement and structure the interaction.

- (77) woman: Who says the bathroom can't be as beautiful as the rest of the house?
 man: Not me.
 woman: ((laugh)) I'm so glad we went to Simon's. What a selection of vanities and medicine cabinets.
 man: And beautiful quality, too. Why, look at that oak finish and a marble top.
 woman: Oh, yeah, but honey, what's important is all the styles Simon's has to choose from.
 man: Well, I'd say that 20% off their entire stock of Vanity Flair was right up there.
 woman: But the variety. Oh, honey, you'll never understand. Women like to have a choice.
 man: OK. Shall we try the floral pattern this week or the solid?

Simon's

Interactive particles such as "well" and "oh" demonstrate that the utterances responds to prior ones; the overt addressee of the utterance is the onscreen co-participant rather than the viewer. Both speakers use such particles in posturing the sequence of utterances as a conversational exchange. The commercial opens with the woman addressing a question to the man, which he answers. The formulaic construction of the question expresses a challenge and implies, based on its normal distribution, that the utterer is not in agreement with the semantic content of the embedded proposition. The man's response, an appropriate second pair part, refuses the challenge by denying membership in the disagreed-with group. Hence, the opening exchange suggests that the speakers are in agreement, sharing an opinion that is in polar opposition to the one expresses in the challenge. The speakers identify a series of product attributes whose combined weight presumably demonstrates that the bathroom can indeed be "as beautiful as the rest of the house."

This opening simultaneously establishes the speakers' conversational style as well as the commercial theme. For example, the woman, by issuing a challenge where none is needed, is cast in a contentious light. In the course of the product presentation,

the speakers move from their initial agreement through a sequence of utterances which indicate increasing disagreement. Finally, in the closing, the man resolves the conflict by evoking a humorous response.

The image of an intimate relationship between the two speakers, implied by the setting, is reinforced via verbal cues. The woman's second turn indirectly asserts that a purchase at Simon's has been made (thereby reinforcing the implication that their bathroom is now as beautiful as the rest of their house). The inclusive "we," together with viewer knowledge about who buys bathroom furnishings together, points toward the speakers being a married couple. The informal style, the formulaic constructions (which evoke a sense of familiarity), the endearments, and the almost-arguing turn behaviors all contribute to the appearance of intimacy.

The woman continues her turn with formulaic construction that highlights the unusual or striking nature of something, "what an X!" This construction is unbiased about the positive or negative quality of "X." However, the expectation that commercials emphasize positive attributes constrains the interpretation of the exclamation as a positive one: a large selection presumably increases the likelihood of customer satisfaction.

The man indirectly supports the woman's position, indicating agreement by employing a conjunction. He appends an attribute, postposing "too," which clearly acknowledges of her point. Agreement through conjunction, however, can be an active avoidance of disagreement.¹ "Why" suggests that there is some insufficiency in the prior context (Lakoff, 1973) which the forthcoming utterance will address. With this utterance, the first indication of a difference of opinion appears. The man mentions two

specific product attributes to buttress his argument.

The woman's response to the man's claims exhibits two verbal elements, "oh" and "yeah," which demonstrate the woman's orientation to the prior utterance. They contribute to the impression that this sequence of utterances is occurring spontaneously between the speakers. Like the man, the woman displays overt agreement signals at the beginning of an utterance which essentially signals disagreement. In fact, the rest of her preface, "but, honey," suggests impending disagreement. The syntactic structure of her disagreement, a formulaic clefting construction, highlights a consideration ("importance") which the following constituent specifies "styles"); the woman's opinion is in direct contrast with the man's. Since the woman makes essentially the same point as she did previously, the couple appears to be in less accord than appearances previously indicated. The woman's disagreement displays the difference between her conversational style and his: her bald and explicit disagreement contrasts with his active avoidance of disagreement.

The man's next turn confirms the impression that the couple is not of one mind. The opening "well" indicates that the following utterance deviates in some way from normal expectations (Lakoff, 1973). Following this 'potential disagreement' marker is a competing attribute for the product's "most important" one, "price," obviously a relevant concern for both viewer and advertiser. The man prefaces the syntactic component of his turn with the performative, "I'd say," emphasizing that his is an opinion rather than a general truth; again, his style of disagreement is unfrontative. The man continues with a presenter that is followed by his assessment of the importance of this attribute, another signal of implicit disagreement.

In the closing segment, the woman restates her point, this time providing an external justification of her reiteration. The man, assenting to her point, concludes the commercial with a humorous pun based on the ambiguity of her justification. He holds up two rolls of toilet paper; if women like to "have a choice" in making the bathroom a beautiful place, they can choose between different designs of toilet paper.

The sequence of utterances in the body of the commercial conveys product information. Each speaker is responsible for presenting certain attributes; the two speakers jointly convey important marketing information. Through the interactive structure of disagreement, the advertiser creates a context in which reiteration of the same point (that Simon's has a large selection) is situationally appropriate. This repetition is creatively exploited to underscore the importance of a selected product trait. At the same time, the advertiser incorporates other positive product attributes (such as quality and price) into the sequence of utterances. The hint of marital conflict and the comforting humorous resolution maintain viewer interest while justifying the focus on product attributes. Thus, the disagreement structure occasioned by the use of speakers of equal status, allows the advertiser to attract and sustain viewer attention while focusing on multiple product attributes.

The disagreement structure also creates social impressions tangential to the advertiser's marketing purpose. For example, the woman recycles the same point several times. Her repeated use of endearments highlights the impression of insistence and friction. In the opening challenge and the turn in which she initiates a disagreement display, the woman indicates willingness to initiate an altercation, inviting an argument. On the other hand, the man refuses the first invitation to disagree by disavowing

membership in the challenged category. He actively avoids another possible opening for disagreement by using a conjoined structure. The woman's second overt disagreement invitation is accepted, but even while disagreeing, the man clearly presents his opinion rather than baldly asserting a truth. He therefore mitigates his disagreement. When faced with yet another bid for disagreement, the man takes a different tack and, by redefining her referent, injects humor into the situation to defuse the tension of disagreement.

Thus, the woman's conversational style is insistent and contentious while the man's is flexible, accommodating, diplomatic and humorous. Her continued recycling of the same point seems to show that she awaits an agreement response (which is not forthcoming) from her conversational partner. When the desired agreement fails to materialize, she interprets the problem as one of gender rather than of difference of opinion. The man will "never understand" because "women like to have a choice." The woman looks not to local problems (which might have to be faced and addressed) but to global problems, which are "part of the way things are," to account for her failure to elicit the man's validation of her viewpoint through her continued point-making. The actual cause of the disagreement, of course, is neither a local nor a global problem but the advertiser's desire to present multiple attributes to the viewer.

A shorter Simon's furniture store commercial reflects the speaker roles established in the commercial above. Each speaker presents a product attribute. There is not sufficient evidence of disagreement in this two-utterance sequence to claim it; however, "but" indicates at least the potential for disagreement.

- (78) woman: We've spent hours choosing from Simon's huge selection of vanities.
 man: I know. But at 20% off their entire stock of Vanity Flair, we've also spent less. Simon's

This commercial, so short that it normally would not be discussed here, mirrors the longer version of the commercial. Overt indications that the sanctioned addressee is the onscreen participant and not the viewer are displayed; the woman employs the inclusive "we" pronoun while the man responds overtly to the woman's claim with "I know." And, the roles established for each speaker in the longer commercial are neatly epitomized. The shorter version, not surprisingly, presents the product attributes which are singled out in the longer version: the woman presents variety while the man presents price. Thus, both commercials highlight important product attributes through an interaction in which the speaker characters are of equal status. The couple agrees that Simon's is great; both commercials depict the two as satisfied customers of bathroom furnishings. They merely disagree on the source of Simon's greatness. Thus, the speakers model consumer satisfaction while presenting product attributes in a way that reflects their importance.

Like the Simon's furniture store commercial, the Soft & Pretty commercial employs two speakers, each of whom represents a product attribute. In this commercial, the speakers maintain advocacy of a single attribute throughout the entire interaction, from the first to the last utterance. The structure of overt disagreement is again exploited as a means of motivating a conversational sequence which reiterates product attributes. The first speaker delivers Soft & Pretty to the second speaker, a grocery store clerk.

- (79) delivery man: Here's your nine kinds of Soft & Pretty bathroom tissue.
 store clerk: There's only one kind of Soft & Pretty.
 delivery man: Whaddya mean, one kind? There's white, 4 pretty pastels, and
 4 pretty flowers. That makes nine.
 store clerk: Are they all soft?
 delivery man: Oh, yeah, they're all *very* soft.
 store clerk: See, only one kind of Soft & Pretty.
 delivery man: Well, yeah, but there's blue, pink, green, yellow .. nine
 kinds.
 store clerk: One kind, they're all soft.
 male voiceover: The Soft & Pretty selection.
 delivery man: Nine kinds of pretty.
 store clerk: One kind of soft.

The overt function of the delivery man's opening turn is to provide the clerk with essential information regarding the speaker's activity: the delivery man fulfills his occupational obligations. This utterance orients the viewer to the setting, context, and ongoing activity; it also establishes that the relationship between the speakers is a business and not a personal one.

The opening utterance simultaneously brings a product attribute, variety, to the viewer's attention. The first speaker does not directly claim variety, but his quantifier ("nine") presupposes it. The deliberate vagueness of the man's utterance creates an opening for the second speaker's disagreement with its implicit claim. The clerk does not address the overt situation, the delivery of stock, by verbally acknowledging it. Instead, he delivers a direct unmitigated contradiction of the prior utterance. The directness of this counterassertion rests in its identical syntactic construction but contrasting quantifier ("one"). With this counterassertion, the clerk initiates the disagreement. These first two turns establish both the commercial theme and the speakers' commercial roles, which are supported by subsequent utterances as the conversation develops.

The delivery man responds to the contradiction with a demand for substantiation. In support of his own assertion, hence arguing against the clerk's contradiction, the delivery man offers evidence which clarifies his claim, not-so-coincidentally elaborating on the product's characteristics around the attribute "pretty." The commercial focus on "pretty" is clearly revealed through repetition of the lexical item.

Rather than respond directly to the delivery man's demand for substantiation, the clerk poses a question of his own. The prominence of the product attribute "soft" clearly indicates the clerk's commercial role in the conversational sequence. This countermove to the delivery man's demand for substantiation is a yes-no question, whose forced-choice format restricts the range of preferred form of answers; a wh-question, with its open-ended nature, would have a different effect. Notice that the clerk's use of the quantifier "all" in his question implicitly acknowledges the existence of more than one variety of Soft & Pretty. Notice also the unusual appearance of a supportive utterance, an opener, in a sequence structured by disagreement; generally, only product presenters appear.

His question successfully elicits a product presenter, an affirmative response which endorses the quality "soft." The extreme emphasis on the delivery man's response signals his unqualified support of this product attribute. The clerk takes this agreement as direct evidence supporting his original claim of "one kind" and restates his original assertion almost word-for-word; the delivery man's agreement proves the clerk's point. The delivery man then indicates that his endorsement of "soft" does not negate his opinion that "pretty" better defines the quantity ("nine kinds") of Soft & Pretty varieties. He enumerates color varieties as support for his opinion and concludes

the product presenter with a reiteration of the number of varieties available. The clerk again immediately contradicts the delivery man's assertion, employing truncated syntax; he repeats only the crucial point of his position, "one kind." The disagreement is escalated by the elimination of extraneous structure.

The sequencing of these two turns represents their central importance to the commercial message. The structure of disagreement specifies the two important product traits: "pretty," based on color and pattern, and "soft," based on tactile quality. There are, therefore, at least two ways to quantify Soft & Pretty. Both speakers are right, because the product has more than one attribute. The viewer is expected to recognize this and perhaps feel superior to the characters by understanding the apparent paradox.

As in the Simon's commercial, the speakers employ radically different conversational styles. The clerk acknowledges his partner's points (with, for example, his use of "all") indirectly, if at all. His commercial role is to focus attention on the attribute "soft;" the utterance sequence is motivated by his reiteration of this one point. On the other hand, the delivery man does most of the interactive work: he initiates the conversation and then, by requesting clarification and continuing the disagreement, maintains it. The delivery man understands his partner's message and responds to it, even if in disagreement. He actively seeks agreement from the other speaker; his turns first respond then assert.

The impression of the delivery man doing more than his share of the interactive work is reinforced by his use of nonverbal signals of involvement. He looks directly at his conversational partner and employs gestures, while the clerk avoids eye contact and

stands stiffly. The clerk proves to be a less flexible conversational partner than the first speaker; his commercial role resembles that of the Simon furniture store's woman. By being insistent, reiterating the same point, he motivates a continuing interaction around the product and justifies the sequences.

Again, speakers of equal status highlight separate product attributes. Each speaker presents the product in a disagreement sequence; each speaker endorses the product, differing only in the reason for doing so. Repetition of the product attributes "soft" and "pretty" clearly signals their commercial importance; "soft" occurs eight times, and "pretty" seven times, in a commercial of less than ninety words. The brand name itself draws attention to them. The repetition of "one kind" and "nine kinds" underscores the parallel significance of the product attributes. Including the enumeration of the product's colors and patterns, the bulk of the commercial directly presents the product.

In the Dennison's commercial, two men are among the patrons of a busy restaurant-bar. This commercial was extensively discussed in the section on interruptions; here it is examined from the point of view of speaker roles. Each speaker presents the product. Thus, although the speakers have unequal rights to the floor, they have equal status in their commercial function of presenting the product.

- (80)
- 1 man 1: I've been cooking chili for 20 years.
 2 man 2: Well, I've been eating it for 25.
 3 m1: So we both know what makes Dennison's chili great chili. It's
 those firm tender beans.
 4 m2: It's that lean juicy beef.
 5 m1: Larry, all you know about beef is ropin' it.
 6 voice: People can get awfully hot over chili but on one thing they do
 agree.
 7 m1: It's gotta be rich=
 8 m2: =and thick=
 9 m1: =like Dennison's. See how my fork
 stands up in it?
 10 m2: fork? Now, who eats chili with a fork?
 ((general laughter))
 11 vo: Dennison's. So thick and rich, there's no room for argument.
 Dennison

The first speaker (m1) opens with a general assertion that introduces the product topic. The second speaker (m2) interrupts with a framed presenter whose syntactic structure mirrors the immediately prior one. Different lexical items hold the place of the gerundive and quantitative expressions. Both turns advance the advertiser's purpose, focusing attention on the product-relevant activities of cooking and eating chili. As we have seen, utterances with identical constructions but different lexical items function as challenges when they are adjacent. Once again, the disagreement sequence is prefaced by an interactive particle (here, "well") which indicates the speaker's orientation to the prior utterance. The viewer listens to an apparently spontaneous sequence of utterances.

M1 does not respond directly to the interruption but continues with a second product presenter. He also verbally indicates responsiveness to the interactive context; he switches from first person singular "I," to plural form "we," thereby incorporating m2's prior utterance. He implicitly validates m2's claim of expertness in the field of

chili, even while smoothing over his partner's turntaking violation.² M1 then suggests a candidate for Dennison's greatest attribute, employing a frame sentence with a multiply modified noun. A parallel response is elicited from his interrupting partner, who baldly challenges the claim. Contradiction through parallel construction results in multiple claims being sequentially presented to the viewer. The direct challenge successfully diverts m1, who physically reorients himself to his new addressee, m2. His use of a vocative form clearly indicates that he addressees his partner, on whom he launches an attack. By questioning the foundation of m2's knowledge, he challenges his right to speak. The disagreement escalates. Moving away from product presentation lends authenticity to the spontaneity of the sequence.

Clearly, the conflict between speakers attracts and maintains viewer attention. Conflict, however, is a dual-edged sword which can also create viewer discomfort; it must be controlled. A third and impartial speaker distracts the participants from their conflict. The voiceover "defuses" the tension before the argument gets out of hand. In doing so, the voiceover explicitly acknowledges the developing conflict by alluding to "getting hot." This formulaic expression for "getting angry" plays on the homophony of "hot," as a designator of a famous trait of chili. The voiceover suggests that, despite their differences, the two speakers will agree; emphatic "do" and inverted word order focus attention on the alleged agreement while acknowledging that disagreement exists.

The first speaker reclaims to the floor, suggesting an attribute ("rich") as one on which he and his partner can agree. Interestingly, his utterance is appropriate in the context of the voiceover turn. In an unusual twist, the speaker in this commercial has access to the voiceover's conversational contribution. Generally, voiceovers occur

outside the interaction, neither strategically intervening in the conversation, as this one did, nor having any impact on the depicted speakers. Nevertheless, the first speaker's turn is relevant to the immediately prior voiceover utterance. The second speaker, fulfilling his commercial role, makes a competing claim ("and thick") for most desirable product attribute.

The interjection of this turn occurs smoothly, with neither pause nor overlap between the speakers' turns. This insertion of verbal material into another's turn functions interactively in two ways. First, it maintains continuity of conversational style for m2, who has now belied each of two claims twice.³ Second, with its bald disagreement, it maintains a conflict situation between the two speakers (and belies the voiceover's prediction of agreement).

In the closing segment, m1 causes his fork to stand upright in a bowl of chili. His partner incredulously echoes "fork" and holds up his partner for ridicule. This ridicule appears retaliatory for m1's earlier insult, or could be seen as further evidence of m2's determination to needle m1. The voiceover sums up the commercial's main point in the closing utterance, highlighting both "rich" and "thick." This formally establishes the attributes (and the speakers) as of equal commercial importance. The disagreement structure of the sequencing validates each speaker's role and explicitly focuses attention on the product attributes.

Another parallelism in this very parallel commercial can be seen between the two halves of the commercial separated by the voiceover. In each, m1 first addresses the viewer, while m2 addresses m1 in a manner which finally demands response. And, each section closes with a pre-voiceover contextualizing utterance.

Like the other commercials with disagreement sequences as a means of sequencing claims, Dennison has one speaker doing more interactive work, while the other appears more insistent. M2 is insistent, not through his reiteration of a particular product attribute, but through the consistency of his confrontations and rule-violating turntaking. M1 tries to gloss over the other's violations to maintain conversational coherence, but m2 lets no opportunity to challenge go by. Again, conflict is exploited as a means of presenting different product attributes while generating viewer interest and structuring an interaction.

NOTES

¹ See Jefferson (1986).

² This turn provides good support of Geis's (1982) claim that entailment allows the "medium to be the message" in advertising language. By using "know," the writers imply that what follows is a fact. Also, the embedded clause presupposes that Dennison's is great chili. Thus, two factors imply a product attribute without directly asserting it.

³ The first belied statement was that the speakers would agree (in both lines 3 and 6). The second one was that they would regard the same specific product attribute as most important (in both lines 3 and 7).

8.0 Speaker role and product presentation: speakers of unequal status

Another way of structuring turntaking for commercial purposes is by using speakers of unequal knowledge of the product. Each such commercial has two participants, of course, one of whom is familiar with the product and the other of whom is not. The person with greater knowledge presents the product, usually in direct response to the other's eliciting (i.e., supporting) questions and comments. Like the conversations between speakers of equal status, these commercials have three segments: the introduction establishes the speakers' roles and contextualizes the interaction, the body of the conversation presents the product, and the conclusion summarizes the commercial message. The difference, of course, is that in the body of conversations between speakers of unequal status, only one speaker officially presents the product rather than both speakers. The other speaker, usually a new user introduced to the product, supports presentation through openers, responses, and echoes; the supporting utterances in Chapter Two, "Supporting Product Presentation," come from commercial interactions between speakers of unequal status. In the conclusion, the new user demonstrates conversion to the product, generally exhibited linguistically in the concluding utterances. Two commercials discussed below, Vivitar and All, are among those which exploit the unequal status between speakers.

The Vivitar commercial is somewhat unique among conversational commercials, drawing on a particular kind of background knowledge. The two speakers are the celebrity comedy duo, the Smothers Brothers. Thus, the introduction segment allows

viewers to properly identify the speakers instead of creating new commercial personas. In addition, the sequencing which expresses the speakers' comedic roles in some ways blurs the speakers' commercial roles.

- (81) Dick: This is Vivitar's new point and shoot 35mm camera, the PS 35.
 Tom: I'll take it, Dick.
 Dick: It's simple .. just like Tom= ((shoots glance at Tom))
 Tom: =oh, yeah
 Dick: It has auto-load, auto-focus, auto-everything.
 Tom: Yeah, but ya but butcha pay extra for simple.
 Dick: Oh, yeah?
 Tom: Yeah.
 Dick: Guess what it sells for.
 Tom: Uh, 272 dollars.
 Dick: No, much lower.
 Tom: Ah, 272 dollars ((lowered pitch and bent knees))
 Dick: un un ((laugh)) Nope, it's one of the lowest priced fully automatic cameras you can buy. It's under a hundred dollars.
 Tom: It should cost more. Vivitar

Because the speakers and their stage characters are already familiar to most viewers, the conversation need provide verbal clues to neither the social identity of the two speakers nor their relationship. Instead, an equivalent evocation of the specific background knowledge of their comedic roles is mandated. For example, each speaker's name occurs early in the commercial, surely serving to confirm viewer recognition of the speakers as the Smothers Brothers.

In the opening turn, Dick presents the product, speaking directly to the viewer. Tom, who is standing beside Dick, addresses him and takes the product for closer examination. Dick resumes speaking, responding nonverbally to Tom's command with compliance but no overt verbal response. Dick presents a product attribute and, via a meaning shift, extends the attribute to Tom. This word play, which indirectly insults

his conversational partner, creates humor and generates interest; with this utterance, Dick both specifies the product and reminds viewers of Tom's comedic role. In fact, interactively, it is difficult to determine the addressee of the second half of this utterance. Overtly, Dick addresses the viewer. However, by shooting a glance at Tom, Dick seems to calculate that Tom is listening and covertly orients his utterance to this eavesdropper. Even so, the interaction is structured with the viewer in mind; the covert addressee of the indirect addressing of Tom is the viewer. Thus, there are wrinkles upon wrinkles in this commercial.

Tom responds to Dick's indirect insult with two interactive particles which demonstrate his responsiveness to the prior utterance, but which lack semantic content. His inarticulateness suits his assigned comedic role. Despite its lack of semantic content, this turn accomplishes two conversational objectives: it fills Tom's turntaking slot and it registers Tom's objection to the insult. Once again, Tom's overt addressee is Dick, who, in his next turn, continues to address the viewer while enumerating product attributes.

Tom responds inarticulately to this presenter, with Dick as his overt addressee. Three times Tom attempts to deliver a challenge, in what is virtually the only example of a false start in the entire corpus. While displaying the inarticulateness which characterizes his comedic role, Tom produces a supportive utterance. He contextualizes his character within the overt commercial structure. Tom models a possible consumer objection to the product. He raises a new topic, price, in an assertion which functions as a challenge. The assertion also indirectly responds to the prior insult, implying that to be simple is to be valuable. Thus, Tom acquiesces in being simple; it is part of his

comedic identity.

The following turn exchange confirms Tom's challenge. Dick's countering "oh, yeah" focuses attention on the challenge and also echoes Tom's earlier response. This formulaic move signals, through its position and delivery, that Dick has knowledge which may contradict Tom's claim. It additionally provides Tom with an opportunity to recant his prior utterance, thereby focusing attention on a developing disagreement. At this point, Tom succeeded in diverting Dick's attention from the viewer, becoming his overt addressee. Tom responds to Dick's counterchallenge with a reiterated affirmation of his claim. The conflict situation between Dick and Tom differs from the other commercial disagreement sequences. It is implied throughout the Vivitar commercial that Dick is more knowledgeable about the camera than Tom. This turn in particular suggests that Dick has pricing information that Tom does not. Thus, viewer know from the beginning that Dick is right and that Tom's challenge is foolhardy. Again, the sequence depends on the speakers' comedic roles to deliver the commercial message.

Both speakers are now committed to disagreeing positions regarding price. Instead of divulging pricing information, however, Dick directs Tom to estimate the product's price. In essence, Dick demands from Tom a more specific elaboration of his claim that the price must be higher for a camera with automatic features. Dick's command to Tom is strategically similar to a turn in the Soft & Pretty commercial, in which the clerk demands to know whether the product is soft. Presumably, the speaker already knows the answer; the turn is designed to get the other participant to reveal what *he* knows about the product. The supportive opener is uttered not by the speaker without product knowledge, but by the speaker with it.

Tom obliges Dick by specifying a dollar estimate. Dick evaluates this estimate. Since Dick knows the camera's price (just as teachers know the answers of questions posed to pupils), he can determine the accuracy of Tom's guess. By indicating the direction ("lower") of the product's actual price relative to Tom's estimate, Dick indirectly solicits another guess. Tom again obliges, but instead of lowering the dollar amount of his guess, he bends his knees and says the same amount with deeper pitch. Thus, he "lowers" both a visual and a verbal parameter of his answer, but not the content.

The unexpectedness of Tom's literal interpretation of Dick's evaluation creates humor, epitomizing the simple-mindedness which characterizes Tom's comedic persona and reinforcing this image for the viewer. It also creates the impression that he cannot imagine the product's price being lower than his original guess. Dick, who again negatively evaluates Tom's response, laughs, perhaps to model viewer response to Tom's behavior. Dick continues with a presenter; he recaps product attributes and emphasizes the camera's favorable price. Tom reacts to this pricing information with an evaluation of his own, apparently a spontaneous response to Dick's remarks.

As in the Dennison commercial, in the Vivitar commercial one of the speakers distracts the other from his original audience. Although Dick originally addresses the viewer, he turns his attention to Tom, who forces the conversational topic to price, where it remains for the rest of the commercial. Thus, Tom's commercial role resembles that of those speakers of equal status whose insistent behavior controls the direction of the conversation. However, Vivitar's participants, of unequal knowledge, demonstrate their inequality throughout the commercial. And, following general

woman: -----/
But no=

man: -----
=I know no detergent gets out everything /

but concentrated All has *dec* extra cleaning power //

woman: -----
To get out oily dirt //

man: *acc* Better than other leading detergents //

((later))

woman: *f dec* My blouse // The oil's gone //

man ((to camera)):

+++++
Concentrated All concentrates on cleaning //

The setting contextualizes the participants' identity before the first word is spoken; what remains to be revealed is their commercial role in presenting the product. The man's opening turn contributes to this necessary revelation. The "machine" in question is taken to be the washing machine which just occupied the man's attention, signalled through nonverbal behavior including eye gaze and body orientation as the commercial opens. Contrastive emphasis on "fine," together with conventional use of the temporal "now," suggests that, although the machine is fine, it recently was not.

Already the form of the commercial is established as conversational, i.e. speaking characters addressing each other in an pseudo-interaction. The normal expectations of natural conversation (of cooperative speakers, Gricean maxims, and so on) are thereby

invoked.² The man's opening comment is assumed to be cooperative: to be relevant to its context, truthful, and so on. Only by transferring the reliance on the cooperative principle from natural to commercial interaction can the above inference be reached. In addition to the cooperative principle, the role of framing in the creation of an intelligible commercial must be acknowledged. A few salient components (washing machine, dirty laundry, man with tool box by his side) enable the advertiser to suggest a natural setting. In order to explain the viewer's recognition of these components as coherent factors in the contextualization of the commercial conversation, as components crucial to its interpretability rather than as random elements, the notion of frames is essential. The frame, or the aggregate effect of visual information, movement of characters, and contrastive prosody of the opening comment identifies the man as a repairman. This role justifies his presence in the woman's home and suggests the (probably) business-like, impersonal relationship between himself and the woman. The man's credentials as an expert are established.

These inferences are substantiated by the woman's response. Her opening, emphatic "good" signals that the preceding comment was welcome, implying that the reported state of affairs (a "fine," i.e., "working" machine) is both new and desired, thereby reinforcing the characterization of the man as repairman and herself as grateful client. In a softer voice, as if confiding the reason for her enthusiastic response, the woman continues with her reason for particularly needing the washing machine at that moment. Since people regularly return from vacations with loads of unwashed laundry, and little time to wash it in, viewers are likely to be sympathetic to the woman's relief at her machine's restored good health.

These introductory turns suffice to convey the conversational roles of the two speakers and to set the context: the washing machine has been repaired and the woman, just returned from vacation, needs to use it. "Vacation" serves no direct commercial purpose but contextualizes the setting in which the product can be discussed. The vacation also provides the basis of the man's next utterance, which, together with part of the woman's following response, turns the conversation to a product-relevant activity. This turn looks almost like a legitimate question about the location of the woman's vacation; a felicitous inquiry would be appropriate under similar, natural circumstances. However, the appended "dirtyland" (which echoes the popular vacation spot "Disneyland") focuses attention on "dirty." The utterance functions more as a gentle teasing of the woman for having returned from vacation with dirty laundry than as a serious inquiry into the location of her vacation.

This utterance accomplishes several goals. For example, the good-natured teasing implies a pleasant, friendly relationship between the speakers. The stress on "go," picking up from "vacation," linguistically relates this utterance and the prior one. Such elements contribute to the illusion of spontaneous interaction. The emphasis on "dirty" in "dirtyland" highlights a product-relevant notion and combines with the washing machine, laundry basket, and laundry to signal viewers the commercial topic of conversation.

The first part of the woman's rejoinder picks up and plays off the man's teasing comment, bantering and joking for a humorous effect. This contributes to the impression of spontaneous interaction; further, it demonstrates the woman's understanding that the man's question is not a literal request for information.

"Oilyland," created in analogy to and echoing "dirtyland," specifies a particular kind of soiling; together with the woman's nonverbal behavior (holding up a soiled garment), the utterance focuses attention on oily dirt, thereby moving the conversation along its commercial lines.

The woman continues her utterance with the first conversational move into the commercial's didactic message. Her emphasis on "now" relates the utterance to the established context: as a result of visiting "oilyland" (a way of conveying that the relevant problem is ridding garments of oily dirt), she must pretreat. The unusual stress on "pretreat," with each syllable stressed and the tempo slowing, focuses viewer attention on that activity while conveying the impression of reluctance on the woman's part.

In the man's next turn, the emphasis on product-relevant activities continues. The man picks up on "pretreat" and offers the product as an alternative for removing of oily dirt. He produces from his toolcase a box of All, which the camera prominently displays. As he verbally presents the product, the man's tempo slows, drawing attention to the product and its attributes. The repairman suggests that, in addition to being an expert on washing machines, he is an expert on the products used in them. His convenient display of All suggests that he so endorses it, as repairman, that he carries a box of it with his tools; his behavior contributes to the commercial message. This product presenter is the kernel of that message. Verbal, nonverbal, and visual components combine to focus viewer attention on All. The linguistic features of slowed production and overcommunication of product traits signal the status of the utterance within the commercial. The man's behavior and the visual prominence of the product

support the commercial message by maintaining the focus on the product, minimizing intra-commercial competition for attention, and distorting the naturalness of the interaction without destroying it. The commercial topic has been fully established.

The woman begins to raise an objection to the man's claim that All is an alternative to pretreating. He breaks into her utterance and guts her objection. His stress on "know" signals, in effect, an objection to her objection: the man disagrees with her objection's (inferred) content and forestalls it with what in natural conversation would be a counterargument to her objection. Thus, the advertiser disclaims full responsibility for the product's efficacy by using a vague factive claim that the product category will not "get out everything," but nevertheless implies that All has attributes which bring it closer to that goal than its competitors. Again, the prosodic features of slowed tempo and repeated stress signal a product-related didactic claim. The woman focuses on this claim by relating it directly to her concern with removing oily dirt. The man responds with a comparison of the product with its competitors, in effect claiming better performance for All than for its competitors. This presenter concludes the didactic portion of the commercial's persuasive message, in which the sequence of utterances consisted of the new user's supportive comments and the spokesperson's presentation of the product.

Product demonstration and evaluation, designed to establish that All delivers what it promises, comes with a time shift; the woman removes her blouse from the washing machine and, holding it up, exclaims that "the oil's gone." Stress on "blouse" suggests surprise related to that garment. The emphasis on "oil's gone" explicitly models idealized product results; the product exceeded her expectations. The woman is

converted to the product. The repairman then summarizes the commercial message by addressing a slogan directly to the viewer.

The Ail commercial reveals the close relationship between the advertiser's marketing strategy, persuasive intent, and the local occurrence of talk within a commercial conversation. The opening sequence orients viewers to the commercial setting, participants, and topic. Once the framework is established, the body of the conversation turns to product attributes and the didactic presentation of the product; a knowledgeable spokesperson introduces the product to a new user. In the conclusion, the results of product use are modeled: the woman's garment, now sans stain, was the same one she visited "oilyland" in. The woman is converted to the product and the commercial message is summarized in the closing slogan.

NOTES

- ¹ Transcription conventions are detailed in the Appendix.
- ² I do not claim that non-conversational commercials never invoke the cooperative principle, but that it does, must, feature critically in commercial conversations.

9.0 Jointly produced presenters

Both commercial strategies for structuring sequences employ joint product presenters, in which the two speakers cooperate in creating a single coherent claim. Whether the speakers are of equal or unequal status, they construct a sequence which presents the product, with each contributing equally in its formation. In some jointly produced presenters, no syntactic or conversational evidence such as could be represented in a transcript indicates that more than one speaker has held the floor. In this way, joint presenters resemble the duets in natural conversation.¹ Other joint presenters exhibit overt response to the local conversational environment. Joint presenters tend to occur in the closing segment of a commercial, whether in a commercial with speakers of equal or of unequal status. The joint presenter is a linguistic display of understanding and unity between the participants and demonstrates that both speakers support the product. Below, joint presenters found in commercials using speakers of unequal status are discussed, with examples from Palmolive, All, and Lipton Lite-Lunch. Then joint presenters from commercials using speakers of equal status will be presented, with examples from Simon's furniture store, Soft & Pretty bathroom tissue, and Dennison's Chili.

9.1 Joint presenters by speakers of unequal status

The examples below show that jointly produced presenters in interactions between speakers of unequal status serve multiple purposes in a commercial. By modeling consumer response, they indirectly demonstrate the persuasiveness of preceding

semantic and syntactic interdependence of the speakers' turns, signals interpersonal cooperation.

The linguistic features of the joint presenter support this image of harmonious cooperation. The woman's remark is subjectless, requiring an antecedent phrase or contextual setting for semantic reference for the subject. This relevant information is provided by the man's prior utterance; thus, her turn can be understood only in the context of his. Her utterance, in turn, is used by the man as the basis for a comparison of the product with its competitors, a comparison unintelligible but for her provision of a referent. Thus, each utterance in the sequence depends on the immediately prior one for semantic reference.

Thus, the harmonious production of the joint presenter sends both interpersonal and commercial signals to the viewer. The woman demonstrates her understanding of the commercial message, obviously a desirable depiction from the advertiser's point of view. Through her participation in the sequence, she indicates interest and involvement. She also relates the product attribute to earlier conversational segments, lending coherence to the conversation. Like the Palmolive, the All commercial depicts an interaction between a product spokesperson and a new user; the new user's participation in the joint presenter symbolizes her conversion to the product.

The substantial work load of the joint presenter in contextualizing the interaction is added to by its commercial function: it brings a product attribute into focus. The viewers therefore a smoothly coordinated commercial message which focuses on product attributes and advances the commercial purpose. Thus, the joint presenter in the All commercial serves at least three relevant functions: it models consumer behavior,

it creates the image of interpersonal harmony (especially important in this context), and it delivers a commercial message. The brevity of commercial interactions demands that sequences of utterances, like other strategic commercial uses of language, carry a heavy functional load. The joint production of a product presenter is an efficient strategy for the accomplishment of multiple goals.

Lipton Lite-Lunch exhibits two joint presenters, one with unexpected characteristics. The presenter constructed by the two speakers occurs late in the commercial and models consumer response to the product. It also brings two varieties of the product to viewer attention and directs the viewer to use the product.

(86) woman 1:	mmm delicious. Taste the Oriental,	
woman 2:	taste the a la king.	Lipton Lite-Lunch

The speakers, one a spokesperson and the other a new user, overtly address these parallel commands to each other, orienting their body posture and actions to each other. With the command, the new user verbally demonstrates her conversion to the product; she now endorses it. The parallel commands offer graphic evidence that the original inequality between speakers has disappeared. Both speakers now support the product.

Two varieties of Lipton Lite-Lunch are specified, overtly bringing them to the viewer's attention and thereby satisfying a marketing consideration. Attention is focused on the product. In constructing the sequence this way, viewers hear a pair of commands to taste the product. In addition to focusing attention on the product, these commands make a direct pitch to viewers to use the product is made.

The Lipton Lite-Lunch commercial exhibits another sequence in which two voices jointly produce a grammatical product presenter. However, this joint presenter

is constructed not by the co-participants of the interaction, with one speaker addressing the other, but by a speaker and a voiceover.

- (87) woman: Lite-Lunch
 voiceover: from Lipton
 hot delicious noodles [...]

The constituency of the prepositional phrase, "from Lipton," is theoretically ambiguous; it could conceivably constitute an element of either the preceding or the following noun phrase. Constituency to the preceding utterance (resulting in this "joint presenter" analysis), is more easily assigned than constituency to the following segment. Two main arguments can be advanced to support this interpretation. First, this would be the unmarked syntactic construction. Constituency to the following segment would entail a more complex grammatical explanation. Exactly what the source of the prepositional phrase would be is indeterminate, since the voiceover does not speak in well-formed sentences. Second, consumers are accustomed to companies being more closely associated with brand names than with specific product attributes. Thus, the first part of the voiceover's turn combines with the prior utterance to jointly present the product.

The voiceover's turn is unavailable to the speakers. They remain unaware of it; the viewer is the voiceover's sole addressee. The usually covert nature of joint presentation is not so deeply hidden in this sequence, which offers unsurprising corroborative evidence that the actual addressee of all commercial talk is the viewer. Whether the joint presenter appears in an apparently spontaneous sequence or in an unnatural one, the viewer is exposed to a single commercial message.

In most jointly produced presenters, speakers produce sequences overtly addressed to each other but covertly creating a single commercial message to the viewer. Every appearance of spontaneity is exhibited: interactive particles, body posture, and so on. The speakers display no awareness of the possible effect of their conversation on eavesdroppers. In some cases, syntactic evidence establishes the cooperative collaboration of the speakers.

9.2 Joint presenters by speakers of equal status

Jointly produced presenters are also found in conversational commercials in which both speakers present the product. Sometimes, in the course of their interaction, the two speakers construct a joint utterance which, like those of the speakers of unequal status, presents a unified product claim. Despite their disagreement, the speakers cooperate in presenting a commercial message. Three examples, from Simon's furniture store, Soft & Pretty, and Dennison's Chili, support these claims.

The Simon's furniture store speakers are satisfied customers. Throughout most of the commercial, they disagree with each other about why Simon's is a great place to shop. In the following excerpt, however, they appear to agree.

- (88) woman: ((laugh)) I'm so glad we went to Simon's. What a selection of vanities
and medicine cabinets.
man: And beautiful quality, too. Why, look at that oak finish and a marble
top. Simon's

Viewers hear a perfectly orchestrated sequence extolling the product. The coordinating conjunction "and" joins these two utterances together in a unified product claim.

Although I argue elsewhere that the man actively avoids disagreement with "and," his use of a conjunct is a commercial strategy which supports the commercial message.

The Soft & Pretty commercial likewise offers a coherent presentation of the product. Here, the sequence follows the closing voiceover; it recapitulates the commercial message.

(89) male voiceover:	The Soft & Pretty selection.	
delivery man:	Nine kinds of pretty	
store clerk:	One kind of soft.	Soft & Pretty

A male voiceover intones the brand name, prefacing the joint presenter, which here is a sequence in which each speaker sums up his side of the argument. The continuing disagreement between speakers, apparent in these closing turns, epitomizes the speakers' commercial roles as established throughout the commercial.

Dennison Chili's joint presenter focuses attention on two product attributes. One speaker smoothly interrupts the other, contributing to the commercial message by adding to the description of the product.

(90) voice:	People can get awfully hot over chili, but on one thing they do agree . .
man 1:	It's gotta be rich=
man 2:	=and thick=
man 1:	=like Dennison's.

Man 1 continues as if he had not been interrupted, concluding with the brand name. Thus, the apparent interruption of man 2 results in a jointly produced presenter; the two attributes figure in a single well-formed structure which is jointly constructed by the speakers. Despite the disagreeing nature of their interaction, the speakers' joint utterance cooperatively presents the product.

The conversational quality of the commercials is a result, at least in part, of the "turntaking" sequences exhibited by the speakers. That is, the speakers alternately produce utterances which create a sequence that imitates natural conversation. Usually, this turntaking reflects the speakers' roles as assigned by the commercial marketing strategy. Sometimes, however the sequencing reflects the speakers' joint responsibility for representing the advertiser and presenting the product. In these cases, the two speakers cooperate in the joint production of a product claim. Even when the interaction is styled as a disagreement, the speakers cooperate in producing a joint presenter. When speakers are of unequal status, the joint presentation graphically reflects, through a linguistic construction, the new user's conversion to the product.

In many cases, the joint utterance models consumer behavior as well as presents the product, because both speakers endorse it. Whether a satisfied customer of Simon's furniture store or a new user of Lipton Lite-Lunch, the speakers model desired consumer response to the product. These user images contribute to and support the marketing purpose of the commercial.

Jointly produced presenters frequently reflect the interactive styles of the speakers which are established elsewhere in the commercial. If the speaker tends to interrupt, as in the Dennison commercial, or avoid disagreement, as in the Simon's furniture store commercial, that speaker's contribution to the joint presentation continues in the same vein. Thus, jointly produced utterances contribute also to the construction and maintenance of a speaker's interactive style.

By simultaneously addressing so many advertising concerns, joint presenters are an efficient linguistic strategy for conversational commercials. Regardless of the

relationship between the speakers, jointly produced presenters serve at least three functions: they present the product; they support presentation by modeling consumer behavior; and, finally, they contribute to the contextualization of the speakers and the tone of the interaction.

NOTES

¹ In natural conversation, one kind of interactive event in which two or more speakers share the speaker role is the "duet" (Falk, 1979). The "single speaker" impression is based on syntactic, pragmatic, and thematic congruity exhibited by the duetters' adjacent utterances and on the sharing of a single audience. Particles which indicate the relationship of an utterance to prior discourse, such as "oh," or "well," as well as other linguistic features that address an utterance to prior ones, are lacking between adjacent turns in a duet. This absence of verbal evidence of addressed response to prior turns is one indication that co-participants do not address each other, but instead jointly address a third party or parties.

Indirectly, all conversational commercials could be considered duets, since both speakers represent the voice of the advertiser and therefore, whatever the commercial strategy, address the viewer. Indeed, many of the analyses throughout this dissertation address the way that utterances and sequences do just that.

10.0 Conclusion

Conversational commercials, like other commercials (indeed, like all forms of advertising), seek to attract and engage the consumer's attention with an eye towards influencing the consumer's later behavior. The extent to which consumers, at the moment of purchase, recall the advertised product and select that product over its competitors measures the commercial's success. Previous linguistic research (e.g. Coleman, 1982; Geis, 1982) establishes that semantics, prosody, morphology, syntax -- in short, the linguistic resources of a language -- are exploited by advertisers in order to influence target consumers. In this dissertation, I have shown that the heretofore overlooked conversational features of commercials also contribute to the accomplishment of commercial purposes.

In comparison with other forms of advertising language, conversational commercials exhibit both traditional and unique linguistic features. Like other commercials, they must operate on two communicative levels simultaneously: the advertiser-consumer interaction takes place via a local commercial interaction between onscreen speaking characters. But, whereas non-conversational commercials often employ direct claims which do not require a coherent interactive context, conversational commercials inevitably require significant contextualization of the local event, the creation of an apparently spontaneous interaction between two speaking characters.

The language used in conversational commercials reflects these similarities and differences to other commercial forms. The linguistic consequences of the communication between advertiser and consumer are traditional commercial

characteristics: topics constrained to product-relevant themes; viewer attention focused on the product by frequent use of brand names, reference to product attributes; and so on. Conversational commercials share these linguistic features with other commercials. The unique linguistic qualities of conversational commercials result in apparently spontaneous and reciprocal interaction between onscreen characters. Utterances are designed so as to appear to respond to the local interactive environment: responses follow summonses, answers follow questions, and so on. Not only do sequences of utterances play a crucial role in creating a conversational environment, but the utterances themselves exhibit interactive particles, vocative forms, formulaic expressions, and other features of natural conversation, in ways which mirror natural interactions. Thus, conversational commercials combine both traditional and unique linguistic means of achieving a commercial purpose.

What commercial advantages and disadvantages attend this special combination of linguistic features? Given that conversation is but one commercial strategy among many, the specific consequences of using conversation as a strategy demand examination. One of the most salient differences between conversational and non-conversational commercials is the directness of the communication between advertiser and consumer. The speakers in a conversational commercial, who are not overt product spokespersons, appear to be objective presenters of the product. They represent the advertiser but, because they appear to be ordinary people who spontaneously endorse the product, they divert attention away from the advertiser. Coming as they do from indirect spokespersons, product claims are less likely to trigger cognitive defenses, with the result that viewers will engage in less

counterargumentation. Also, because the speakers always appear to be friendly people, the conversational commercial has a friendlier and more sympathetic viewer appeal than commercials which employ other speaker types (e.g., authority figures). In conversational commercials, both informal spokespersons and new users endorse and use the product. Thus, ideal consumer attitudes and behaviors are modeled for the viewer. Through the evocation of viewer background knowledge to contextualize the interaction, the advertiser draws on strong cultural images to present the commercial message.

Indirectness is the strength of conversational commercials. The extent to which the commercial interaction suspends the viewer's disbelief determines the credibility of the interaction. The more the viewer's attention is focused on the interactants, the more subtle the persuasion. When the commercial catches up the viewer in the ongoing interaction, the product becomes an assumed background feature of the context; the product's role in the context becomes implicitly stronger and more natural. This image of product inevitability profoundly but subtly influences the viewer. The challenge facing conversational commercials, then, is to construct a pseudo-interaction which resonates with viewer experiences. The more convincingly the conversation taps on cultural images important to the target market, the more powerful, persuasive, and memorable the commercial will be.

Of course, some advertisers intentionally avoid indirectness. A direct, hard sell strategy saves advertisers a lot of work. To simply present the product takes less time and less effort than to convincingly create a(n apparently) spontaneous context in which the product is discussed. Also, since conversational commercials require at least two

speakers, rather than the single speaker needed for direct strategies, they can result in greater expense. So, despite the advantages of conversation, advertisers often use other commercial strategies.

As far as the commercials themselves go, most have three functionally distinct, if overlapping, segments: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Conversational commercials conform to this conventional arrangement, promoting intelligibility. Each segment of the commercial serves a particular purpose and is characterized by specific linguistic features: the commercial introduction must attract viewer attention immediately and contextualize the interaction; the body presents the product; and the conclusion summarizes the commercial message and signals closure.

In openings, conversational commercials employ various attention-getting devices, such as summons (whether mechanical or verbal), vocative forms, and syntactic constructions which are highly involving. Presumably these devices serve multiple functions. Not only do they attract viewer attention, but they indicate conversation is to be the commercial strategy. By contributing vital information about the setting and speakers, they contextualize the interaction. Leaders, for example, evoke interactive frames; once the context is established, the conversation quickly moves to product presentation.

In the body of the commercial, the unidirectional communication from advertiser to consumer accounts for the product being the linguistic focal point. The frequent occurrence of brand names and product attributes demonstrates this commercial concern. These references occur in product presenters, which introduce, describe, or evaluate the product. Supporting utterances, especially echoes, often repeat

commercially important claims. Many commercials also employ negative claims about their competitors or somehow indicate the superiority of the product to competing products.

These presenters occur in sequences which mimic spontaneous conversation by using one of two possible combinations of speaker roles to motivate the interaction. Speakers with equal knowledge of the product alternately produce presenters of various kinds, in an interaction motivated by disagreement. Speakers of unequal knowledge presented the product in sequences of supportive and presenting utterances; one speaker elicits presenters by the other, using supportive devices such as questions or echoes. Thus, the speakers have assigned commercial roles which motivate turn change.

Sequences which mimic turntaking difficulties, such as interruptions, also contribute to the commercial concerns. Commercial interruptions are cooperatively achieved, serve the marketing purpose, and even model consumer behavior. In other sequences, speakers jointly produce product claims while appearing to interact. These joint presenters, in commercials exhibiting speakers of unequal status, symbolically model conversion of a new user to the product. In other commercials, they represent the two speakers as the advertiser's voice, modeling consumer behavior by endorsing the product.

Much of the commercial work is done by evoking contexts through either visual or verbal means. Conversational devices used for contextualization include opening devices such as leaders or vocatives. Interactive particles, formulas, and framed presenters also contribute to contextualization. The speakers have simplistic

relationships with each other, either distant or familiar. They are stock characters, simple frames on which viewers hang their extensive contextualizing knowledge. Rituals can be truncated, occurring with just enough substance to make them recognizable, to evoke the proper context. This truncation serves the additional purpose of saving precious time for the advertiser.

Closings, which function to drive the commercial message home, provide resolution to the commercial interaction. Final utterances often are slogans or some other summing up of the commercial message. Joint presenters and responses to the product generally come at the closing of the commercial. Slogans, usually voiceover uttered, and final contextualizers, both of which signal closure, also occur as part of the conclusion.

These features of conversation contribute crucially to the advertiser's achievement of the commercial goal. Just as morphological innovation or the exploitation of prosodic resources contributes to the commercial message, so do conversational features. The sequential organization of utterances not only mimics natural conversation, but subtly and persuasively contextualizes the commercial interaction, models consumer behavior, and presents the product.

APPENDIX I
Alphabetical List of Commercials

1. All laundry detergent, 1st of 2
2. All laundry detergent, 2nd of 2
3. Aramis men's cologne
4. Atari 800XL
5. Campbell's Chunky Soup
6. Campbell's Soup for One
7. Chef Boyardee spaghetti and meatballs
8. Ciara women's perfume
9. Clorox II bleach
10. Dennison's Chili
11. Diet Pepsi, 1st of 2
12. Diet Pepsi, 2nd of 2
13. Dove, 1st of 2
14. Dove, 2nd of 2
15. Fab laundry detergent
16. Feen-a-mint laxative pills
17. Future Wax
18. Kitchenaid dishwashers
19. Lee Nails
20. Lipton Lite-Lunch
21. Pacific Bell
22. Palmolive dishwashing liquid, 1st of 2
23. Palmolive dishwashing liquid, 2nd of 2
24. Pledge furniture polish
25. San Francisco Chronicle
- 26a. Simon's Furniture Store, 1st of 2
- 26b. Simon's Furniture Store, 2nd of 2
27. Soft & Pretty bathroom tissue
28. Sunlight dishwasher detergent
29. Vivitar PS 35mm camera

APPENDIX II Transcriptions

Any transcription presents a distillation, a selection of features of spoken data and, by virtue of its characteristics, expresses the interests and biases of the researcher. Television commercials, as a complex form of verbal and nonverbal communication, present a challenge to any transcriber.

Transcriptions must satisfy two needs to be appropriate to a particular task: 1) they must present adequately the features of the interaction which are the focus of the researcher's work and 2) they must avoid, in the accomplishment of 1), the misrepresentation of detail. Roughly speaking, transcripts should not be too sparse or too detailed, but just right.

Using this as my guiding philosophy, I made the following decisions about the transcription method. Settings and participants, as features which contribute to the formulation of viewer inferences, are relevant aspects of these commercials. Therefore, basic information about settings and participants, including changes in time, location, and speakers, is specified. Since prosodic or phonological analysis of the data is not undertaken, these features are not transcribed here; however, since some prosodic analysis appears in Chapter 8, transcription conventions for detailed prosodic analysis are also presented below. Spelling, with few exceptions, follows orthodox conventions.

The following symbols indicate relevant features:

- () uncertain reading; gender of voiceover
- (()) external information about the talk which is presented in the transcription
- [] features of the verbal component not otherwise indicated
- [...] in the body of the dissertation indicates a continuation beyond the example segment
- = latching
- ++++ above transcribed utterance, signals visual prominence given product
- above transcribed utterance, signals visibility of product
- . or , indicates a pause of one beat; "," is used where it would be appropriate orthographically; multiples indicate pauses of greater length
- . tone group/conventional punctuation
- ? question intonation/conventional punctuation

Prosody transcription conventions:

1. Marked either above vowel or to left of syllable, all significant pitch changes, both nuclear and non-nuclear, are recorded (following Coleman (1982)).

↗ low rise	↘ low fall
↖ high rise	↙ high fall
^ rise-fall	∨ fall-rise
ˉ high pitch (unchanging)	ˉ low pitch (unchanging)

2. Marked to left of affected segment:

↑ indicates shift in pitch register upwards
 ↓ indicates shift in pitch register downwards

/ minor tone group boundary
 // major tone group boundary

3. Subscripts indicate changes (from the characteristics established by the speaker as unmarked in other turns) which, unless otherwise noted, are maintained throughout the current turn; each turn is considered a new beginning from the speaker's base line.

f increased loudness
p decreased loudness
acc faster
dec slower

ALL
(first of two)

A dirty child and puppy enter the laundry room, where the mother is.

child: Mom, I showed Abercrombie how to roll over.

woman: Oh, terrific. Now let's teach him how to clean clothes.

child: +++++
We're going to use A - L - L

woman: Watch this, Abercrombie. A - L - L cleans everything.

voice: +++++
(male) ALL has concentrated cleaning power to get out even rubbed in dirt and
+++++
grease stains so everything comes out clean.

woman: Well?

child: Is that my shirt?

woman: Sure is.

child: Now I'm going to show Abercrombie how to spell.

voice: +++++
(male) Get it A - L - L clean with the concentrated cleaning power of
+++++
concentrated All.

ALL
(second of 2)

A child is sitting on a washing machine which a repairman has just repaired; a woman with a basket of laundry enters.

man: Machine's fine now.

woman: Good. After vacation, I need it.

man: Where'd you go, dirtyland? ((child laughs))

woman: And oilyland. And now I have to pretreat.

+++++
man: Don't pretreat. Use concentrated All with bleach, borax, and brighteners.

woman: But no=

man: =I know no detergent gets out everything, but concentrated All has

extra cleaning power.

woman: To get out oily dirt.

man: Better than other leading detergents.

-----((later))

woman: My blouse. The oil's gone.

man: Concentrated All concentrates on cleaning.
(to camera)

ARAMIS

A woman and a man exit an art gallery.

man: -----
Terrific show

woman: -----
Oh, it was wonderful. Well, it was nice talking to you.

man: ++++++
That's the Aramis umbrella.

woman: ++++++
So is that.

man: You bought Aramis for your=

woman: =un un

man: -----
How about a cup of coffee?

woman: Your umbrella or mine?

voice 1:
(male) ++++++
The Aramis umbrella. Your gift with any \$10 purchase
+++++((bottles))
of Aramis, Devon, Aramis 900 or JHL.

voice 2:
(male) ++++++((umbrella))
Now at all Emporium Capwell stores.

ATARI

A teenage boy is at a desk working on a computer. Whenever the man speaks (he is recognizable as Alan Alda), the camera focuses on him; otherwise it shows the boy and the computer.

boy: -----
I hope I can talk my parents into buying me an Atari 800XL.

man: Well, tell them all the things it can do for you.

boy: -----+++++
Right. I'll tell them it's got 256 colors and 4 sound channels.

man: I don't know, that's a little technical. Why don't you tell them it'll help
you learn music and art?

boy: -----
Well, and there's integrated software for word processing, spread sheets,

forecasting.

man: Tell 'em it'll help you write term papers.

boy: -----
I'll tell them it's expandable. with serially linked peripherals like modems

and disk drives.

man: Tell them it's your birthday.

+++++
((written)) Discover what you and Atari can do.

Campbell's Chunky Soup
continued

_____((woman shown eating product))

voice: -----
(male) Single Serving Chunky. It's just enough for one.

woman: Maybe tomorrow I'll get half a can of Chunky Chicken.

CAMPBELL'S SOUP FOR ONE

A drawing of a man's face talks to a drawing of a woman's face. In the background, the product in various forms (can, bowl, and spoon) appears.

+++++
man: Ah, is that for me?

+++++
woman: Yes, it's soup for one from Campbell's, but it's different from other

++++
soups.

+++++
man: different

woman: Just taste old world vegetable.

man: Hey, I never tasted soup like that before.

woman: Different. That's Soup for One.

man: spicy .. tangy ..

woman: Different, just as I told you.

man: Zucchini Parmesan Cheese

woman: Different, and it tastes terrific, huh?

+++++
man: You know, this tastes terrific.

++
woman: so?

CONTINUED on next page

Campbell's Soup for One
continued

man: ++++++
so I love Soup for One

woman: ++++++
because?

man: ++++++
It's different.

woman: +++
Eat.

CHEF BOYARDEE

A man and a girl are seated at a dining table in a kitchen. A woman serves the girl a plate of Chef Boyardee. The product also appears as canned. The girl does not speak.

 man: Gee, Suzie's spaghetti and meatballs look delicious.

+++++
 woman: That's Chef Boyardee's spaghetti and meatballs, dear.

+++++
 man: mmm beefy meatballs, spaghetti, all that tasty sauce.

+++++
 But can we afford it on our budget?

 woman: No problem with Chef Boyardee. You get over five servings in this 40 oz.

 can. Each serving costs about 25 cents.

 man: Only 25 cents even with these meatballs?
 ((eating))

woman: um hum um hum

 man: Joan. How about a serving of my own?

+++++
 voice: Chef Boyardee's spaghetti and meatballs. Now about 25 cents a serving.
 (male)

CIARA

A man and woman dance closely on a crowded floor to romantic music. During the second utterance, the scene changes to a rainy street at night, where the woman joins the man under a canopy for shelter.

man: mmm you smell terrific

woman: Remember when we first met?

((change of time and locale))

man: Come on in .. plenty of room.

woman: Looks like it's never going to stop.

man: I sure hope not

voice: -----
(male) Ciara. The thoroughly female fragrance. What will it remind you of?

voice: +++++
(female) Get the first in beauty from Ultima II with any Ciara or Ultima II purchase

+++++
at all Emporium-Capwell stores.

CLOROX II

A girl rushes in the laundry room, where her mother is cleaning clothes. A time lapse follows the internal voiceover.

girl: -----
Mom. That white leotard is for my recital. How are you gonna get white

with a bleach for colors?

mother: -----
Clorox II does more than clean colors. It gets whites liquid bleach white.

girl: -----
It'd better .. or my career.

mother: -----
Really.

voice: ++++++
(male) Clorox II safe bleaching system cleans both whites and colors and

++++++
activates high intensity whiteners to get the whites liquid bleach white.

girl: -----
Clorox II got this really white.

woman: -----
A star is born.

voice: ++++++
(male) Clorox II all fabric bleach safely cleans colors, gets whites liquid bleach

+++++
white.

DENNISON'S CHILI

A man is seated at a table in a crowded bar-restaurant with a bowl of chili in front of him. Another man (the first speaker) carries his bowl to join him at the table.

man 1: -----
I've been cooking chili for 20 years.

man 2: -----
Well, I've been eating it for 25.

man 1: -----+++++++
So we both know what makes Dennison's chili great chi^{li}. It's those
+++++++
firm tender beans.

man 2: ++++++
It's that lean juicy beef.

man 1: -----
Larry, all you know about beef is ropin' it.

voice: -----
(male) People can get awfully hot over chili but on one thing they do agree..

man 1: -----
It's gotta be rich= =like Dennison's.

man 2: -----
=and thick=

man 1: ++++++
See how my fork stands up=

man 2: =fork! Now, who eats chili with a fork?
((general laughter))

voice: ++++++
(male) Dennison's. So thick and rich, there's no room for argument.

DIET PEPSI
(first of 2)

After an opening panorama of a picnic setting under a tree in the great outdoors, pieces of a man, a woman and a picnic lunch are seen.

man: When you invite a man out to a nice place for lunch, you really mean it.

woman: May I show you to your seat, sir? This is our most popular patch of
sunshine.

man: Let's start with a drink.

woman: -----
Diet Pepsi?

man: ++++++
Diet Pepsi .. great taste.. with Nutrasweet.

woman: ++++++ ((man drinks))
I'm sure it'll be to your liking .. yes?

man: Yes .. to everything .. with no reservations

woman: ((laughs)) you don't need reservations .. sir.

voice: -----
(male) Taste. Improved by Diet Pepsi.

DIET PEPSI
(second of 2)

Two young women are in a bedroom in an apartment. Pieces of the setting and the women are seen; the product appears in its entirety. When the doorbell rings, the women dash to the door, open it, and greet the summoner, a man who does not speak.

woman 1: So I finally get to meet him.

woman 2: He'll be here any minute.

woman 1: You've been keeping him a secret.

woman 2: Aw, come on. Here, hold this.

woman 1: Diet Pepsi does taste better than it used to. Hard to believe that's one calorie.

woman 2: They improved it..with Nutrasweet. Don't drink it all!

woman 1: Are those my shoes?

woman 2: No.
((doorbell rings))

woman 1: Here he is.

woman 2: I'm ready.

woman 1: I'll probably steal him from you during dinner.

CONTINUED on next page

Diet Pepsi
(second of 2)
continued

woman 2: Not a chance.
((opens door))

woman 2: Hi, daddy.

woman 1: Hi.

voice: -----
(male) Taste. Improved by Diet Pepsi.

DOVE
(first of 2)

Two women are in a storefront. The client addresses the salesclerk and both retire to a sink in the back room to test the product. They return to the storefront at the end of the commercial.

client: Her skin's gorgeous

clerk: mmm

client: And she's got to be my mother's age. My skin's so dry.

clerk: Know her secret? No soap. She uses Dove.

client: How come?
((they move to sink in back room))

clerk: Soap can dry. Dove moisturizes. Wash one side with soap, the other with

Dove.

client: The soap side's dry, tight. The Dove side's softer and less dry.

clerk: Dove is one quarter cleansing cream.
((they return to the storefront))

client: No more drying my skin with soap.

clerk: Right. Help keep it younger-looking with Dove.

DOVE
(second of 2)

Two women are in a storefront. The client addresses the salesclerk and both retire to a sink in the back room to test the product. They return to the storefront at the end of the commercial.

client: Liz, how can I be young and my skin look old?

clerk: That's not age. That's dry skin. Are you using soap?

client: un hum

clerk: Soap can dry. Use Dove, it moisturizes. Come on, wash this side with
((they move to the back room))

-----+++++++
soap, the other with Dove

client: The soap side feels dry, tight. The Dove side is softer, less dry.

+++++

clerk: Dove is one quarter cleansing cream.
((they return to the storefront))

client: No more drying my skin with soap.

-----+++++

clerk: Help keep your skin younger-looking with Dove.

FAB

A little girl is in a laundry room with her mother. "!" is a loud sound resembling a jet breaking the sound barrier.

girl: Mommy, do blankets have feet?

woman: What?

girl: Mine's wearing socks.

woman: Static cling again.

voice: ++++++
(male) Get the only lemon freshened detergent for a clean that ! breaks the static

++++++
barrier. Fab with full strength fabric softener.

woman: ++++++
full strength fabric softener plus full strength detergent in Fab ... fabulous

.... no more static cling and look how clean.

girl: Blanket's soft.

woman: and lemony fresh.

voice: ++++++
(male) Get a clean that ! breaks the static barrier.

++++++
singers: Oh Fab, we're glad, there's full strength fabric softener in you.

FEEN-A-MINT

Two women are unloading groceries in a kitchen. Later, they are seen riding bikes outside.

woman 1: Tell me, sis, why do you use these laxative pills instead of
Feen-a-mint?

woman 2: I didn't know Feen-a-mint ever made a pill.

woman 1: Absolutely. With Feen-a-mint pills, constipation relief is gentle and
predictable.

woman 2: Gentle and predictable.

woman 1: And unlike laxatives most people use, Feen-a-mint pills give you both
a mild stimulant and a gentle softening agent, too.

((time and location change))

woman 2: Carol, you were right about the way Feen-a-mint relieves.

voice:
(male) With Feen-a-mint pills, relief is gentle and predictable.

FUTURE WAX

A woman, carrying Future, joins her daughter in the kitchen.

 woman: Whoa, Susan. Don't waste time just dampmopping.

 girl: Just dampmopping, mom?

 woman: Here. Pour some Future in the bucket and refresh the shine at the

 same time.

girl: But we've always used Future straight from the bottle.

-----++++
 woman: We still do, but watch. Future works with water, too. As you damp
 +++++
 mop it, it refreshes the shine with no added work. Dries fast as water, too.

girl: Wow. It really perks up the shine.

woman: It sure does.

++++
 voice: Use Future both ways. Get a tougher than wax shine and refresh that
 (male)
 +++++
 and refresh that shine whenever you dampmop.

KITCHENAID

A man comes into the kitchen where a woman is loading the dishwasher.

man: -----
Tuh .. nice party, hon.

woman: -----
At least our new Kitchenaid makes clean up easy.

man: -----
Look, I know dishwashers (always) say Kitchenaid's the best, but it'll

never get all those clean, like that.

woman: -----++++
You'll see. It will. This upper rack tilts and you can fold the prongs
++++
down too. Kitchenaid dishwashers get things clean, no matter where
++:++++
you put them.

man: We'll see. Don't forget the energy saver.

woman: -----
Now do you believe my Kitchenaid'll handle all those dishes?

man: Almost. ((holding up a dish he had been hoarding))

woman: oooh.

voice: -----
(male) Kitchenaid. People say it's the best.

LEE NAILS

A woman in her robe is addressed by a man straightening his tie. Later, the two are seen fully dressed. The time is highly visible on a clock which confirm the 1/2 hour time context.

man: ++++++
Hey, be ready in half an hour?

woman: ++++++
Almost ready now. Tonight I'm not rushing. Oh, no

man: What's wrong?

woman: Oh, I broke a nail. Why tonight?

voice: ++++++
(male) Finally, a nail mender and lengthener that works. Brush-applied Lee

+++++
Nails. Mend a chipped or torn nail or lengthen one or all ten to create

+++++; ++++++
longer stronger natural looking nails.

((time change))

man: Hey, too bad about your nail.

woman: Oh, not too bad.

man: You grew another one.

woman: almost.

voice: ++++++
(male) Lee Nails. You'll love 'em.

LIPTON LITE-LUNCH

Two women are in a busy fashion design workshop. One hangs up the phone and addresses the other.

woman 1: The client will be here in 10 minutes.

woman 2: There goes lunch again. I want something hot and delicious. Wishful
thinking.

woman 1: no .. Lite-Lunch.

woman 2: Lite Lunch?

voice:
(male) +++++
From Lipton. hot delicious noodles. rich thick sauces. only half the
+++++
calories of a cheeseburger. try all seven kinds.

woman 1: +++++
Whenever it's "there goes lunch," make it Lite-Lunch.

woman 2: -----
mmm delicious. Taste the Oriental.

woman 1: -----
Taste the a la King.

voice:
(male) +++++
Whenever it's "there goes lunch," make it Lite-Lunch.

PACIFIC BELL

While the women talk, the video shows children at a birthday party, one gleefully dumping ice cream on the another's lap. The speakers are shown talking only during their final two turns.

((phone rings))

Kathy: Hello?

Sis: Kathy?

Kathy: Oh, hi, sis.

Sis: When did you get home?

Kathy: We just walked in the door.

Sis: I still can't believe that Lindsay did that to Ann.

Kathy: ((laughs)) Forget it. Don't you remember when I used to call you?

Sis: Yeah, I guess I do.

Kathy: ((laughs)) Well, we're even now.

voice: Whether you live out of town or just a few minutes away .
(male)

CONTINUED on next page

Pacific Bell
continued

singers: There's so much left to say

Sis: Do you think our kids are ever going to like each other?

Kathy: I grew up to like you, didn't I?

+++++++
singers: Don't drift away.

PALMOLIVE
(first of 2)

A woman enters a busy beauty parlor, approaches and addresses a manicurist. They seat themselves at the manicurist's worktable. The second episode, according to information flashed on screen, occurs two weeks later.

client: Madame Madge, just flew in from Paris [pari].

Madge: Oh, landed on your hands, I see. ((laughs))

client: Oh, it is dishwashing. What can I try?

Madge: Everything, and use=

client: ++++++
=ah, Palmolive liquid

Madge: ++++++
You're soaking in it.

client: ++++++
uu, soft like lotion, mild, huh

Madge: ++++++
tres mild

client: But how cleans Palmolive?

Madge: ++++++
fantastic makes beaucoup suds that last

client: ++++++
bon, bon.

Madge: And Palmolive softens hands while you do dishes.

CONTINUED on next page

Palmolive
(first of 2)
continued

((time lapse))

client: Madame Madge, j'adore Palmolive

Madge: Good thing I speak French.

++++
Palmolive softens hands while you do dishes.
((to viewers))

PALMOLIVE
(second of 2)

A woman enters a busy beauty parlor, approaches a manicurist seated at a table, and sits down. The second part of the commercial begins similarly, with an onscreen note that two weeks have elapsed.

client: -----
Madge I just got engaged.

Madge: -----
mmm Oh, I can't believe

anyone asked for this hand. ((laughs))

client: -----
Oh, it's dishwashing, what will I try?

Madge: -----++++
Everything and use Palmolive liquid, it softens your hands while you

++++-----
hands while you do the dishes. You're soaking in it.

client: +++++
In dishwashing liquid?

Madge: +++++
It's Palmolive.

client: mild

Madge: more than mild, makes heaps of suds that last and Palmolive softens

hands while you do the dishes.

CONTINUED on next page

Palmolive
(second of 2)
continued

((two weeks later))

client: -----
Madge Palmolive's great. I'm your fan.

Madge: mmm -----
Well, thanks, but I've already got a fan.

((laughter))

PLEDGE

A woman enters her back yard and knocks on the fence. A man responds.

((she knocks))

woman: Hi.

man: Hi.

woman: Uh, got any furniture polish?

man: I think so.

woman: Oh, I just ran out.

((short lapse))

man: -----
Here you go.

woman: -----
Oh, oh I don't dust with Pledge.

man: -----
Oh, well

woman: -----
Well, what's the difference?

voice: ++++++
(male) She'll see. Pledge picks up fingerprints, smudges. See. Really

++++++
highlights the natural beauty of wood.

woman: ++++++
Mine doesn't look that good. Your Pledge looks better. Clean natural

CONTINUED on next page

Pledge
continued

woman: +++++ -----
 beauty. ((louder)) I love your Pledge.

man: -----
 Knock anytime!

voice: +++++
(male) Pledge. Clean natural beauty, everytime you dust.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

An older man dressed like a bum approaches a stately home and rings the doorbell. A well-dressed matron answers.

((man rings doorbell))

woman: ----
Yes?

man: -----
Good Morning, Madam. I am working my way through college

selling subscriptions to the Chronicle newspaper. Now the

Chronicle=

woman: -----
=Aren't you a little old to be going=

man: -----
=You're never too old to

learn, Madam. Now I am prepared to offer you two months of the
-----+++++++
Chronicle for the price of one. That's half price, toots. All you have
+++++++
to do is call 777-7000, ask for two for one.

woman: What college are you going to?

man: Vassar.

woman: Why, that's a girls' school.

man: -----
.. Yea::h ((laughs))

SIMON'S FURNITURE STORE
(first of 2)

A man and a woman are conversing in a bathroom.

woman: Who says the bathroom can't be as beautiful as the rest of the house?

man: Not me.

woman: -----
((laughs)) I'm so glad we went to Simon's. What a selection of

vanities and medicine cabinets.

man: +++++
And beautiful quality, too. Why, look at that oak finish and a marble
+++
top.

woman: -----
Oh, yeah, but honey, what's important is all the styles Simon's has to

choose from.

man: Well, I'd say that 20% off their entire stock of Vanity Flair was right

up there.

woman: -----
But the variety. Oh, honey, you'll never understand. Women like to

have a choice.

man: -----+++++
Okay. Shall we try the floral pattern this week or the solid?
((holding up two roles of toilet paper))

Simon's Furniture Store

(second of 2)

Normally, this commercial would not be considered suitable for analysis; it is too brief. It is included here *only* because it sheds light on the longer Simon's Furniture Store commercial. Again, a man and a woman converse in a bathroom.

woman: -----
We've spent hours choosing from Simon's huge selection of vanities.

man: +++++
I know. But at 20% off their entire stock of Vanity Flair, we've also

+++++
spent less.

SOFT & PRETTY

A delivery man brings the product to a store clerk in front of a large product display.

delivery man: -----
Here's your nine kinds of Soft & Pretty bathroom tissue.

clerk: -----
There's only one kind of Soft & Pretty.

delivery man: -----
Whaddya mean, one kind? There's white, 4 pretty

pastels, and 4 pretty flowers. That makes nine.

clerk: -----
Are they all soft?

delivery man: -----++++++
Oh, yeah, they're all *very* soft.

clerk: ++++++
See, only one kind of Soft & Pretty.

delivery man: ++++++-----
Well, yeah, but there's blue, pink, green, yellow. nine kinds

clerk: -----
One kind, they're all soft.

male voice: ++++++
The Soft & Pretty selection

delivery man: ++++++
Nine kinds of pretty

clerk: ++++++
One kind of soft.

SUNLIGHT

The man is shown at the dishwasher, loading it as he speaks. Each voiceover turn represents a time lapse. The time difference is also indicated by the man's attire, which changes with each of the first three lapses. The woman is never seen.

man: Nance, I'm gonna run the dishwasher.

 woman: Not full.

 voice: Nancy Waverly's never run a dishwasher until it's full.

 man: Another bowl, three more plates.

 woman: Not full.

-----+++++
 voice: The perfect way to prove new lemon scent Sunlight outcleans the leading
 (male) +++++
 brand on tough starchy food.

man: Four bowls and a platter.

woman: Now it's full.

-----+++++
 voice: After sitting all day they really need new Sunlight. In tests against the
 (male) +++++
 leading brand on tough starchy food, Sunlight cleaned better.

man: Nice.

CONTINUED on next page

Sunlight
continued

woman: Now you can empty it.

voice: ++++++
(male) New lemon Sunlight really stands up to dishes that sit.

VIVITAR

The Smothers Brothers, in black tie apparel, are on screen. Dick begins, addressing the viewer. Tom addresses Dick except for his last turn.

Dick: -----
This is Vivitar's new point and shoot 35mm camera, the PS:35.

Tom: -----
I'll take it , Dick.

Dick: -----
It's simple .. just like Tom ((shoots glance at Tom))

Tom: -----
oh, yeah

Dick: -----+++++
It has auto-load, auto-focus, auto-everything.

Tom: -----
Yeah, but ya but butcha pay extra for simple.

Dick: -----
((addressing Tom)) Oh, yeah?

Tom: -----
yeah

Dick: -----
Guess what it sells for.

Tom: -----
Uh, 272 dollars.

Dick: -----
No, much lower.

Tom: -----
Ah, 272 dollars. ((spoken with lower pitch and bent knees))

Dick: -----
un un ((laughs)) Nope, it's one of the lowest priced fully automatic

CONTINUED on next page

Vivitar
continued

cameras you can buy. It's under a hundred dollars.

Tom: It should cost more. ((to audience))

((written)) Vivitar PS:35

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