IMPERATIVES IN ADVERTISEMENTS: A STUDY OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN A

PERSUASIVE GENRE.

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Hannah Elizabeth Dietrich

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DEDICATION

I could not have accomplished this thesis without the great guidance and assistance of my thesis committee. I appreciate all that you have taught me throughout this process. Thank you to my husband, Brandon Dietrich, for your never ending support and encouragement and for listening to me talk about linguistics unendingly for the last few years.

ABSTRACT

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The aim of this research project is to evaluate why the use of direct language, imperatives specifically, in printed advertisements would be considered appropriate when they blatantly meet Leech's (2014) description of the strongest face threatening act and are therefore deemed impolite. I will also evaluate if the regularity of imperatives has shifted in the history of printed advertisements. In order to investigate this usage, I analyze the advertisements in the 1940 January through March, 1960 January through February, 1980 January, 2000 January, as well as the 2016 January through September issues of *Vogue* magazine. Data were collected regarding the number of ads, the number of ads with full sentence written components, and the number of ads using imperatives in order to quantify any change. Building on the research of Zjakic, Han, & Liu (2017) and Simon, & Dejica-Cartis (2015), I analyze the imperatives for both the syntactic context and the surrounding materials. Also, following the research of Harris (2001) I inquire as to justification of directness within the genre of advertising. The results of this study show whether, over time, advertisements, as a genre, are not restricted by the same politeness expectations of other genres, or if various additional politeness techniques are invoked to reduce the face threat of the imperatives.

KEY WORDS: Advertisements, Commands, Directness, Imperatives, Impoliteness, Indirectness, Linguistics, Politeness, Pragmatics, *Vogue*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Critical Problem with Advertisements and Imperatives

In modern society, advertisements pervade nearly every aspect of life. Watching television, listening to the radio, passing billboards, and encountering a myriad of other daily experiences, individuals come across marketing strategies throughout their lives both directly and subliminally. Surprisingly, advertisements gloss past the minds of their readers without raising offense even though advertisements utilize language that a person would rarely consider polite. Culturally, there is a minimum threshold by which people are held accountable for their politeness in conversation. Even ATMs and self-checkout machines use text and audio containing "please" and "thank you." Although the manifestation of politeness may differ in various situations, it is assumed that conversations will adhere to politeness protocol appropriate to each scenario's unique conditions. For example, when at a restaurant, people are expected to order with indirect phrases such as, "I would like a soda," rather than an imperative which is often interpreted as insensitive: "Give me a soda." In group work environments, politeness expectations require that people pretend to ask questions of, or make recommendations to, their collaborators (i.e., "Would you share that document with the team?" or "Sharing that document with the whole team may improve our discussion") rather than dictate commands or orders by using imperative sentences (i.e., "Share that document with the team"). Even in a formal authority position, supervisors, teachers, and political leaders who regularly use imperatives to order their subordinates—rather than cushion their phrases with hedge words and other politeness strategies which involve indirectness—

earn criticisms and lose the support of those who work for them. Yet, despite these consistent expectations, advertising language appears to defy politeness norms through consistent use of imperative sentence structure.

Contrarily, imperatives often provide succinct or urgent information for the audience, making them particularly useful because of their directness. Aikhenvald (2010) comments that since its uses vary, the imperative is "polysemous," referring to a range of uses (p. 198). In addition to giving orders, imperatives can be used to achieve many goals such as giving warnings and providing instructions. The average recipe includes several instructions without causing offense to the reader: "Preheat the oven to 350 degrees." This sentence would not only be accepted but even expected. Because the audience desires to learn the steps for cooking the food from the recipe, the imperative more efficiently achieves this purpose. Likewise, when confronted by a life or death situation, one may shout out an imperative to inform the hearer of the best response quickly: "Get down!" Even though in another situation this may be deemed inappropriate, the aforementioned circumstance warrants this direct language. It even may be considered rude to drag out these directions because the hearer is in danger. What sets advertisements apart in their use of imperatives is the quantity of potentially face-threatening language used without redressive action. People often find themselves in positions where impolite pursuits are necessary or beneficial; however, they regularly reduce the imposition through indirectness, adding additional words or phrases to soften the otherwise potentially impolite direct sentence. Generally, in attempting to persuade an audience, the speaker may reduce impositions and other forms of impoliteness in order to gain the interest, support, or response of the audience; however, advertisements function

differently from other genres because they contain imperative sentences that lack indirect strategies within their persuasive goals.

Marketing strategists repeatedly write advertisements riddled with imperatives. Commonly, people are bombarded with commands such as: "Never stop being an athlete," or "Download the makeup genius app," (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (8), 40; (2), 95). Despite modern society's increased demand of cautionary language, in a world where trigger warnings (brief disclaimers for potentially offensive content) and circumlocutions dictated by political correctness are considered essential, advertisement language rebels against society's trend. This frequency of imperatives appears puzzling because advertisements work to entice their audiences persuasively, even though imperatives so often garner distaste in the hearers since they are frequently perceived as face threats. Ads are written to allure viewers into purchasing or adhering to their campaigns, so the marketers' decisions to intentionally use language that could be considered harassing to their clientele would appear counterintuitive. Therefore, this unlikely marriage of imperatives and advertisements warrants investigation. In this thesis, I will analyze the presentation of imperatives—the realizations of the direct speech acts commanding readers for action—within advertisements to determine why advertisements seem exempted from this politeness norm.

The Relationship between Imperatives and Politeness

The concept of politeness, although used in everyday language, is highly complex and varied in its application and characteristics. Many cultural, environmental, and relational features come into play in order for one individual to determine what is polite and appropriate in a given scenario. Ultimately, Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech

(2014) agree that the phenomenon of politeness consists of the minimization of the speaker's face and bolstering of the hearer's face. Goffman (2003) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims" and "the line others assume [the person] has taken during a particular contact" (306). As these scholars explain, politeness depends on a multitude of factors including, in addition to context, both the presentation and interpretation of language in social interactions. Ideally, speakers would have a thorough understanding of politeness implications and operate with the goal of executing polite interactions in every moment of discourse. Leech (2014) also mentions that deference and camaraderie exemplify two commendable strategies of face maintenance; they increase politeness by refraining from impositions and providing choice. Unfortunately, human needs and ambitions limit face-building. Many daily interactions such as requests inherently threaten the face of the hearer by imposing the speaker's agenda on the hearer.

Tools, Strategies, and Scenarios for Diminishing Face-Threats

People can employ a variety of techniques to avoid blatantly committing face threatening acts (FTAs). Brown and Levinson (1987) outline possible strategies for performing FTAs with minimal intrusion into the hearer's face. First, speakers determine whether or not they will perform the FTA at all. Avoidance of FTAs eliminates their threat; however, many of these interactions are necessary to accomplish tasks and cannot be avoided. In this case, speakers must determine whether they will perform the FTA "on record" or "off record" (69). Speaking off record does not directly address the FTA but allows speakers to hint at their agenda rather than blatantly stating it. Speaking off record leaves the interpretation of the comment ambiguous, and the hearer may choose to

interpret it not to be face threatening at all. Speakers sometimes must be more direct in order to ensure that their hearers fully understand the FTA, especially if it requires action in response, so speaking off record is not always viable. Therefore, if speakers choose to perform the FTA on record, they still have a few more strategies they may practice to reduce the impact against the hearer's face. Spoken on record, the FTA may use "redressive action" or be performed "baldly" (69). A command spoken without redressive action, baldly, could be stated, "Turn on the light." This is the most direct and least polite form of an FTA. Using redressive action, the speaker instead could say, "Please, turn on the light if you don't mind." The added hedge words ("please" and "if you don't mind") protect the hearer from the impoliteness of the direct imperative. In these situations, the author or speaker may choose to use redressive action.

Redressive action can be performed using either positive or negative politeness. Both positive and negative politeness function to support the hearer's face maintenance. Positive politeness accomplishes this task by building the hearer's face. Negative politeness would attempt to reduce the imposition on the hearer's face. A positive politeness approach would promote the hearer's face by using friendly or respectful terms of address, building a sense of camaraderie, and establishing a mutual desire for the act to take place: "Hey, friend, turn on the light." Negative politeness similarly reduces face threat but through a different strategy. Negative politeness redresses the hearer's negative face by providing the hearer with a way out of the face-threatening situation without a positive response: "Would you mind turning on the light?" This, in theory at least, leaves the hearer with the opportunity to refuse without behaving inappropriately. Rarely would a person choose to avoid all politeness strategies when attempting to persuade a stranger

of something out of concern for threatening the hearer's face, but advertisements appear to represent that exact scenario consistently without redress.

Advertisers have many opportunities to utilize the politeness techniques: speaking off record, utilizing redressive action, and incorporating positive or negative politeness approaches. Yet, they frequently use imperative sentences (and, thus, direct speech acts), which could easily threaten the face of their readers. Tserdanelis and Wong (2004) comment that advertisements so frequently utilize implicatures that one might question whether they should be held responsible for the words' implications, the inferred but not directly stated meanings, or only the words themselves, literal rather than inferential meaning. Perhaps the simplest solution to reduce face threat would be to perform the FTA off record, saying "buying this product benefits the environment." In this example, the marketers can no longer be held accountable for the threat dictated because they appear to be stating a fact using a declarative sentence rather than a direct command through imperative sentence structure; however, the average reader would draw the implicature that the ad is communicating that they should buy the product. The advertiser's responsibility for the FTA would then be arguable. Although some audiences may take offense in response to the implied meaning, others may determine that the advertisement is not offensive as a result of its indirectness. Similarly, Blum-Kulka (1987) discusses that indirectness can increase the politeness of an FTA because indirectness provides a greater choice for the hearer and reduces the intensity of the force of the FTA. For example, an indirect statement such as, "The sun is going down, so it seems to be getting rather dark in this room" contains significantly less threat than the direct order, "Turn on the light." The hearer in the indirect situation could simply agree

that the room is getting dark without directly refusing the insinuated desire of the

speaker. This same concept can apply to marketing as well. Rather than using an

imperative sentence, which acts as a direct FTA, "download the app," the advertisement's

author could communicate "off record" by using a different sentence type to hint at the

FTA indirectly: "Downloading this app can save you time and money." This construction

of the sentence is less affronting because it provides the audience with an easy escape.

They could simply agree that the app does save money and do not have to concern

themselves with the refusal of a direct command. Brody (2017) explains that there are

several key ways to rewrite imperatives to reduce their directness: Need Statements (i.e.,

"I need a hug"), Elliptical Imperatives (i.e. "a hug."), Imbedded Imperatives (i.e., "Could

you give me a hug?"), Permissive Directives (i.e., "May I have a hug?"), and Quotation

Directives (i.e., "like hugs?"). Each of these structures lessens the directness of the

directive, therefore lessening the threat. With such diversity of options for reduced face

threat, advertising does not lack opportunity to refrain from FTAs. Still, ads frequently

employ direct imperative utterances.

The Definition and Function of Imperative Sentences

An initial definition of the imperative must be established in order to discuss the

case of advertisement imperatives adequately. According to Brinton (2000) and Kolln

and Funk (2012), imperatives are formed from declarative sentences by deletion of the

subject, "you." A declarative sentence may say, "You turn around," and as a declarative,

it implies a statement of fact, that the person does turn around. However, an imperative

sentence takes the declarative but uses and elliptical "you" subject: i.e., "Turn around."

By deleting "you" the sentence now fulfills the characteristics of an imperative sentence,

which most commonly communicates a command or order. Scholars argue about the

most appropriate description of the relationship between the imperative and command,

order, and request because the structure and function of language do not always align.

Van Olmen and Heinold (2017) comment that "shh!" may be considered an imperative

despite lacking any verb at all because functionally it still achieves effective direction to

the audience; however, what they describe here is the function of communicating an

order despite the structure of "shh" being distinctly an interjection. Herein lies the

shocking reality with advertisements. They persist in using the structure of the imperative

sentences to communicate the function of the order rather than resorting to an alternative

means. Similarly, clear imperative structures such as, "Keep talking and you'll be in

trouble," should not necessary be interpreted as orders since the above sentence, for

instance, functions as a conditional despite its syntactic structure. Its function is that of a

threat. Kaufman (2012) suggests that imperative and declarative sentences are closely

related because "Be quiet" and "You must be quiet" function to achieve the same goal,

and Jary and Kissine (2014) comment that imperatives are more specific because they

consist of a combination of structures that are used for directive functions. Because of the

consistent directness of imperative sentences, the structure of them alone informs people

very clearly of the expected response. Additionally, Jary and Kissine comment that the

imperatives should give the audience reason to act. Ultimately, Aikhenvald (2010) states

most succinctly that an imperative is "a command or injunction—an attempt at the

exercise of the speaker's will upon someone or something outside of himself" (p. 198).

Again, confusion arises regarding the definition of an imperative. Too often, the function

of giving an order is used to define the imperative when really the imperative itself is the sentence structure used, not the function achieved or attempted.

To focus more directly on the function often attributed to imperatives, Searle (1976) systematically classifies illocutionary acts by category and type. Searle's *directives* closely parallel the role and purpose of the imperative sentence I refer to; however, the directives follow a strict structure which does not include all imperatives: "I verb you + you Fut Vol Verb (NP) (Adv)" (p. 17). This structure would appear, for instance, in the following sentence: "I order you to purchase this product." Because of the strictness of this precise and specific wording, it rarely appears in advertisements. The verb *order* falls into the category of performative verbs; in these directive speech acts, the verbs "can be used to perform the acts they name" (p. 244. Tserdanelis and Wong 2004) They accomplish precisely what they say. A statement like, "I order you to listen" accomplishes the speech act merely by the use of a declarative sentence. The use of the performative verb *order*, as Searle (1976) describes, provides an alternative means of being direct, but this form of directness is rarely used in conversation. Similarly, advertisers rarely use performative verbs. More commonly advertisers will use the imperative, "Purchase this product," rather than the performative verbs, "I order you to purchase this product." Searle (1976) determines that a finite number of speech acts is included in all languages (p. 11). *Directives*, "attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something," are among these speech acts (p. 11). In order both to use a directive and to maintain politeness protocol, the individual, according to Leech (2014), must use tact to limit the imposition on the hearer (p. 120). Therefore, *directives* could include *suggestions*, *requests*, or *pleas*, which do not carry as strong of an illocutionary force as

orders (Searle, 1976, p.11). *Commands* or *orders* are specific kinds of *directives* which do not defer to the wishes or desires of the audience. If a person stated, "I suggest that you write this down," the sentence would provide an appropriate alternative to the hearers, they may choose to accept or reject the suggestion. Contrarily, "I order you to write this down" does not provide the same face-maintaining opportunity to reject the directive. As Sbisà (2001) explains, an *order* should be situated from an authority figure to a subordinate to be found appropriate (p. 1796). Most speakers, in an attempt to demonstrate politeness, utilize hedge words such as "probably" in order to "downgrade" the illocutionary force of their orders (p. 1806). In the case of advertisements, the writers often use direct speech acts. Dawson and Phelan (2015) explain: imperative sentence structures naturally lead to being *directives*; however, many speakers choose to imply directives through interrogative or declarative sentence structures instead (p. 296). The frequency of direct directives in the form of imperative sentences in advertisements demonstrates the lack of indirectness for politeness purposes in the genre.

The Difference between Lacking Politeness and Choosing Impoliteness

Despite the lack of overt politeness strategies in most advertisements, it is clear that marketers do not regularly attempt impoliteness. Rahardi (2017) comments that although politeness is determined by the maintenance and building of face, impoliteness requires a more forceful negative than a face threat. True impoliteness consists of face-aggravation. Because the advertisements do not persistently challenge their hearer, their lack of politeness is not great enough to be considered impoliteness. However, Terkourafi (2008) counters that every communication affects face. If the communication does not build, enhance, or support the hearer's face, it must detract from the hearer's face. Even

though some instances of impoliteness may be more intentional or cause greater face threat than others, if the language does not qualify as polite, Terkourafi comments that it must be impolite because politeness and impoliteness effectively make up a dichotomy. Even further, she expounds that impoliteness may extend beyond the speaker's intention. A hearer may interpret an utterance intended to be polite as impolite, altering the speaker's intention and thus the "original categorization" of the utterance. Rudanko (2017) further delineates that a clear distinction should be made between impoliteness and aggravated impoliteness. In the advertisement situation, it does not seem likely that the marketer intends to create conflict with the audience, so any residual impoliteness that stems from the constraints of the genre does not appear to be aggravated impoliteness. However, because speakers cannot ultimately control the interpretation of their writings, many choose to err on the side of caution, pursuing politeness to alleviate potential impoliteness. Yet, advertisements appear to adopt a different approach.

Characteristics and Functions of Advertisements

Advertisements play a significant role in modern societies. Functionally, they provide an opportunity for marketers to communicate important information about their products with their audiences. However, the interactions of advertisements in society extend beyond the basic means of promoting goods and services. Additionally advertisements frequently communicate cultural values, language norms, and other purposes beyond the product being sold. Cook (2001) recommends that advertisements not be defined specifically, but they should utilize a componential or prototype definition in order to account for the wide variation and possibility. Elmer and Jular (2017) comment that advertisements importantly change and maintain cultural norms within a

society. By changing local values, advertisements promote consumerism; however, they also harness and reflect cultural values in order to build camaraderie with their audience. This significant role warrants investigation. Because advertising often reflects cultural and social values, the frequency of potentially rude language may not only reflect a norm of the genre, but a cultural tendency as well.

The Rhetorical Situation in Advertisements

Some may suggest that advertisements have developed an alternative means of minimizing FTAs. Rather than using the language to mitigate FTAs, advertisements contain an additional repertoire of strategies that can be used to engage their audiences meaningfully and without offence. FTAs may be mitigated through careful use of rhetoric. Analyzing the rhetorical situation of the advertisement allows marketers to craft their messages intentionally and could allow the messages to appear responsive rather than imposing. Bitzer (1968) establishes the importance and characteristics of the rhetorical situation. Bitzer concludes that any rhetorical situation consists of three essential components: "exigence," "audience," and "constraints" (p. 6, 7, and 8). Close analysis of these components yields crucial information to evaluate the politeness or impoliteness of the advertisement. The exigence for most advertisements, as Cook (2001) explains, is to promote goods or services. The marketer evaluates the need and timing of the ad in order to make the ad rhetorically appropriate by fulfilling a mature exigence within his or her society. The role of the most appropriate exigence allows the marketer to play into modern culture. Therefore, imperatives such as "Feel beautiful" could be used to direct the hearer toward action without appearing offensive since the mature exigence postulates that people currently seek ways to feel beautiful. By responding to

the appropriate exigence at the appropriate time, direct advertising language may appear less commanding and more responsive, but the exigence only makes up one third of the significant components.

The audience of the advertisements also plays an important role. In this study, the magazine *Vogue* acts as my primary source, and it is important to note that *Vogue's* audience consists primarily of females interested in fashion. Despite this anticipated audience, many readers with a variety of backgrounds and interests also have access. This information and intended audience contribute to the purpose of the advertisements included in the magazine. Finally, some constraints must be considered. Magazine advertisements are generally limited to small spaces and printed text. These are just a few of the characteristics that affect the use of imperatives.

Three Primary Aspects of Advertisements

In addition to the rhetorical situation, Cook (2001) pushes further into the unique circumstance of the advertisement. He discusses the nature and characteristics of advertisements and provides a logical analysis. Cook brings up important questions regarding the classification of advertisements, which he breaks into three primary components: materials, text, and people. Essential aspects of each of these components must be analyzed in order to realize the significance of advertisement details and to understand the rhetorical situation and implications of the ad.

First, the use of materials significantly impacts the appearance of the advertisements. One aspect of the material consists of the advertisement's context. Cook (2001) explains the role of this context. If an advertisement links topically to an article set next to the ad, this proximity will enhance or detract from the advertisement's original

purpose. Next to an advertisement about healthy living, a cigarette advertisement would be poorly placed whereas an advertisement for a farmer's market may fit in perfectly. Therefore, an imperative sentence telling the audience to visit the farmer's market may appear more appropriate since it builds on the credibility of the article rather than being positioned in isolation. The modes of advertisement also significantly contribute. Most magazine advertisements use a combination of images and text which can be manipulated in a variety of ways. Östman (1987) suggests that people and faces are often used to diminish the effect of impolite persuasive language. In addition to linguistic choices, people's dress and appearance influence the impression they make on those around them. In a way, photographs in advertisements play as similar role. Nugroho (2009) comments that the interplay between text and image acts as a primary foundation for meaning making within the advertisement. If the linguistic or visual component of the advertisement were to be isolated, Nugroho argues that the possible meaning of the advertisement would diminish greatly. A variety of strategies may result in the interplay of language and imagery to alter the FTA despite overt linguistic potential for threat. For example, the imperative could appear to be directed toward one of the characters in the image, which would then distance the command from the advertisement's audience as they are merely witnessing a direct order rather than being affected by one. Lastly, Cook suggests that paralanguage takes on a significant role in advertising: the presentation of the word can alter its meaning if it is written to look like another word (this strategy is frequently used in political advertisements as they mildly distort the candidates name to appear like a virtue they stand for) or the letters of the words themselves are manipulated to integrate into or wrap around an image rather than stated boldly on their own.

Second, Cook (2001) suggests that text use varies and affects significantly the outcome of the advertisement. He suggests that the author of advertisement text chooses how to utilize Plato's Trichotomy of Discourse. They may use *scientific* language to "describe" and "inform" in order to "cognitively" engage with their hearer; *poetic* language to "appraise" and "value" the topic in order to earn an "affective" response; or *religious* language to "prescribe" and "incite," and to yield a "conative" response (Cook 102). The choice of approach dramatically alters the response in the reader. Additionally, the text chosen must contribute to the advertisement's overall coherence. To fulfill Grice's (1989) Cooperative Principle, the author must provide relevant and cohesive information, so that the audience can adequately understand the content presented (Dawson and Phelan 2015). Grice's Cooperative Principle claims that people must adhere to four maxims: *quality, quantity, manner,* and *relevance* (Grice (1989) p. 26). Specifically, in discussing relevance, Grice suggests that information should logically build on previous information. If a person asked another what the addressee's favorite show was, and the response was "I like reading books," the relevance maxim claims that the hearer will assume that this directly relates to the question asked, which means the addressees do not have a favorite show because they prefer books. Therefore, an advertisement posed next to a text may play off of the meaning of the article to enhance or detract from its own meaning. Shinde (2016) also suggests that the text takes effect through the potential to be categorized as its own language register. Making unique choices at the stylistic levels (phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic), advertisements use language differently to remain concretely grounded in the mind of the readers and set apart from other language registers. Much like it would be inappropriate

to utilize a social register in an academic setting, the advertisement register presents a unique set of expectations. An imperative fitting with the content of the advertisement and the materials included would still be considered an FTA; however, the preceding text and the audience's preexisting expectations of the genre may mitigate the threat created by the imperative sentence.

Third, Cook's (2001) evaluation of people distinguishes itself from Bitzer's (1968) audience. Rather than evaluating who the audience is, Cook suggests that the advertiser must consider how the audience receives the information. He comments that the most effective means for persuading present themselves within subliminal persuasion. Because subliminal persuasion appears most effective, one would infer that advertisements would logically avoid direct commands since, being direct, they are less likely to maintain a subliminal presentation. Similarly, the marketer must consider voice. Bakhtin and Sollner's (1972) discussion of voice suggests that the author can speak through a variety of voices: political, social, cultural, and more. Using different voices reaches different audiences better and allows the speaker to accomplish a variety of purposes. Additionally, speaking through various voices, the speaker can engage the reader in a dialogic communication, which interacts with the reader, rather than a monologic form of communication, which would speak to the reader rather than integrate the reader into the message. Therefore, the author of the text could engage with the readers and speak dialogically, asking them to engage with society and the advertisement's interaction with the world as well. Using a dialogic voice would incorporate the audience into a conversation about the ideas in the imperatives rather than simply making the readers the targets of directives.

Changes within the Advertisement Genre

Additionally, diachronic changes in the genre of advertisements must be addressed. Advertisements have changed enormously over the course of modern technological advancements, both visually and linguistically. To determine how much the advertisements have changed, one must determine which core characteristics advertisements must share in order to be a part of the advertising genre. Cook (2001) suggests that one of the three most effective approaches to identifying advertisements is the prototype definition: finding a prototypical example of advertisements and adding to the category based on similarities. However, Halmari and Virtanen (2005) comment that "when the linguistic markers change, the genre itself starts to resemble something else— it is no longer a prototypical example of the established genre" (p. 230). As a result of the pervasive use of television and internet advertisement, magazine advertisements experienced a shift which has altered the purpose and strategies for printed advertising. Consumers are less accustomed to reading lengthy advertisement text, visuals have taken a greater role, and magazines have adjusted in order to remain relevant to modern audiences. Because of these changes, magazine advertisements differ dramatically today from their typical appearance seventy years ago. Halmari and Virtanen (2005) evaluate changes in advertisements and note the dramatic shift between the images, language, and overall presentation of two *Coca-Cola* ads. One example of the expansiveness of this shift is the movement from explicit persuasive language to obscured persuasive language. The modern *Coca-Cola* ad hints at the beverage as being a love note whereas the 1930s ad directly states "Drink *Coca-Cola"* in the middle of the advertisement.

Another progression, mentioned in Nugroho (2009), is that modern printed advertisements weigh more heavily on the influence of graphic elements of the page. They incorporate photographs, models, and diagrams which interact with the linguistic elements. The greatest shift in advertising consists of internet sources: viewers can interact with many internet-based ads, and viewers are drawn to both internet and television advertisements because of the moving images. This shift and others like it seem to influence significantly the style and design of print advertisements as well. In order to be competitive, print advertisements had to be creative in how they countered the limitations of their medium. To remain engaging, print advertisements adopt cultural shifts and evolve to reach their audiences better. Elmer and Jular (2017) exemplify the changes in advertisements through their study of Turkish advertisements following forty-nine years of western influence through the Turkish government and media. Their earliest analyses from 1965 and the latest from 2014 follow the cultural trend of increased value in individualism. Culture and advertisements do not operate in isolation, and, therefore, research into advertising archives demonstrates the incredible shifts that occur across time. Many of the previously highlighted components of advertising contribute to these drastic changes in addition to the social and cultural changes which affect all communication.

Possible Explanations for Advertisements Using Imperatives

Through advertisement analysis, the persistence of direct FTAs declares itself as Zjakic, Han, and Liu (2017), Savina (2017), and Simon (2010) all recognize and begin to investigate. Savina (2017) claims that imperatives act as one of the most effective strategies for persuading an audience. Perhaps most relevant to my study is the work of

Zjakic, Han, and Liu (2017), who report on their research into imperative usage in gym

advertisements. Zjakic, Han, and Liu suggest that imperatives may not be inherently

offensive, but that their use may be considered offensive depending upon their purpose.

Zjakic, Han, and Liu distinguish categories of imperatives such as "attention focusers,"

"experiencers," "acquisition of product/service," "contact group," and "other" (p. 18). By

evaluating the frequency of different kinds of imperative uses, they are able to determine

if some prevail more frequently and appear more acceptable to use in advertisements.

Imperatives seem impolite when they threaten the face of the hearer; however, some

imperatives may not threaten face at all or their potential for a face threat may be

lessened. This is the case if they are used in accordance with the hearer's desires or

expectations. Simon and Dejica-Cartis (2015) also explain the directions in

advertisements, reaching similar conclusions as Zjakic, Han, and Liu. People may react

differently to the language if they consider the rationale behind its use reasonable.

Another potential explanation for why imperatives appear frequently in

advertisements may be that advertisements, as a genre, warrant the use of imperatives, so

readers view them as appropriate in the situation, or the imperative sentence may be used

to serve a less face-threatening function than a direct command to the audience. Pennock-

Speck and Saz-Rubio (2013) also present a common scenario of imperatives in

advertisements: televised charity advertisements. They conclude that these

advertisements, which directly request a response from the audience, fall into a

subcategory of advertisements in which imperatives are normal. Additionally, these

advertisements tend to follow a consistent structure of how the need is presented and

generosity requested, which allows the viewer to predict the FTAs that will occur,

possibly lessening their effect. Simon (2010) comments that often advertisements that use imperative structures utilize imperative sentences regularly to accomplish at least two purposes. Rather than simply saying "purchase this product," the advertisement may state, "purchase this product by visiting our website." Providing this additional information splits the purpose of the imperative sentence, allowing it to provide a directive and to function informatively at the same time.

Additionally, impoliteness frequents a variety of genres which appear to have grown to accept the FTAs as an essential and defining characteristic. In this way, Harris's (2001) research into the use of impoliteness in the British Prime Minister's Question Time tests a similar hypothesis: overtly impolite language may be considered as a norm for its setting. Although the didactic criticisms and face-threatening linguistic constructions would generally draw offense from the hearers in other scenarios, this political setting provides a different view of politeness. Politeness studies originate in social interaction which works to manage face, but Harris comments that the House of Commons functions to transfer information rather than build interpersonal relationships, so it operates under a different set of expectations. Culpeper (2005) also suggests that politeness is not discernable simply by the language used; other factors must be considered. When evaluating the popular television quiz show, *The Weakest Link*, Culpeper (2005) notes that the show's host frequently utilizes impolite language and intonation. Because the primary purpose for the quiz show is to entertain, the host chooses to violate politeness maxims in order to engage the audience in intrinsic and voyeuristic pleasure while witnessing the hostile interactions of distant characters. Because the audience feels safe from behind their television screens, they are less

offended by the FTAs taking place on stage. Additionally, Brody's (2017) research explains the phenomenon of imperative sentences, potential FTAs, in yoga instruction. She comments that, although yoga philosophy discourages directives in an effort to provide a suitable space for relaxation, imperatives frequent instructional classes for pragmatic purposes. Brody suggests that when students register for a yoga class, they agree to receive directives from their instructor, so the frequency of imperatives does not appear particularly face threatening. Based on these examples of instances, genres, or scenarios in which politeness is not only accepted but expected, I will evaluate the genre of advertisements to see if a consistent norm of FTAs could be the result of a genre-based or purpose-based norm of imperatives in advertisements.

Ultimately, I will draw on the research regarding politeness and advertising in order to conclude evident reasons for the use of potential FTAs in persuasive advertisement writing. As Aikhenvald (2010) notes, imperatives earn a bad reputation because of their overuse in inappropriate circumstances. In particular situations, imperatives may not only be appropriate but using an imperative may be anticipated and expected. Therefore, I will evaluate the idea that imperatives are permissible within advertisements by pursuing the following three possible explanations:

- Imperatives interplay with other advertising materials which diminish their threat.
- Advertisements, as a genre, provide an expectation for imperatives, which minimizes their FTA function.
- Other aspects or functions of the advertisements justify the use of impolite language.

CHAPTER II

Data and Methodology

Selecting Appropriate Data

The data in this study consist of twenty-two issues of *Vogue* magazine, from the

years 1940, 1960, 1980, 2000, and 2016. The choice of *Vogue* as the source of my data

was determined by the following factors: popularity, longevity, and accessibility.

Although it is impossible to cover all of the genres in which advertisements occur, I have

selected this magazine to represent the typical presentation and function of

advertisements. I selected a magazine that had been preserved in readily accessible form

in order to study the use of imperatives diachronically. Additionally, I sought out a source

that could provide a representative sample of its advertisements. I determined that a

magazine would be most effective for collecting representative data because I could

collect a series of consecutive issues which would exemplify the trends of imperative use.

Moreover, the topic and purpose of the magazine would likely yield more consistent

advertisement brands and products, which would aid in analyzing consistent data.

Because of the accessibility of *Vogue*'s archive and its role as a popular and long-

standing magazine in American feminine culture, I have selected *Vogue* as my source for

this research. I evaluate *Vogue* advertisements at five points across nearly eight decades

to view a snapshot of the status of magazine advertising across time. I analyzed

advertisements from January through March of 1940 and then January through

September of 2016. For the years in between (1960, 1980, and 2000) I chose to analyze

the first 100 advertisements from each year. I chose to study advertisements from a wide

range of years to determine whether the trends were consistent in the progression of

advertisements. These data span seventy-six years, which makes them effective for

evaluating advertising trends diachronically. In the 1940s *Vogue* produced two issues

monthly, so this provides a foundation of six issues. For the 2016 set, I selected the most

recent full year of magazine issues available at the time of data collection, 2016 (in 2016

Vogue produced 1 issue per month). More issues are analyzed from 2016 because the

later set of data from the magazines contains fewer advertisements per issue, and it is

necessary to have a comparable number of advertisements in order to draw conclusions

about changes, trends, and consistencies within this genre. In order to have the most

equitable data, I have evaluated 654 advertisements from the first and final years: 1940

and 2016, and I have evaluated 100 advertisements from each of the middle years: 1960,

1980, and 2000. In all, I have collected data on 1,608 advertisements.

Distinguishing Advertisements from Articles within Magazines

In order to discuss advertisements effectively, I must first present the definition of

advertisements that I use in this study. Cook (2001) argues that advertisements, as a

category, are ultimately impossible to define because they are forever in a state of change

as culture shifts (p. 9). A few changes, evident from briefly investigating different eras of

magazines, are the following: a decrease in text, an increase of image size, and an

increased dominance of the advertisement on the individual magazine page (today's

advertisements often fill an entire page or spread within the magazine rather than

outlining the page that centers on an article). Cook suggests that either a *componential*

(an item viewed by its semantic relationships) or a *prototype* (based on an experienced

example) definition would be more effective than a traditional dictionary definition in

which advertisements would be summarized by a brief description that could not truly

encompass the diversity of advertisements. The *componential* approach organizes ideas in comparison to each other. In defining advertisements this approach sets advertisements by their hyponyms (relational notion of inclusion) (Crystal 2005). For example, an "advertisement" would be a hyponym of "information" or "publication," and words such as "commercial" or "sales pitch" would be hyponyms of "advertisement." This approach, although very effective for scientific hierarchies, can become unnecessarily complex when the comparable terms may have different possible interpretations, which renders the componential definition less effective (Cook 2001 p. 13). The prototype definition, in contrast, is much more accessible and therefore more useful. The average viewers of advertisements commonly base their understandings that they are viewing advertisements on the prototypical, well-established features of the genre. Someone who has not thoroughly studied the definition of advertisements would compile a collection of varied advertisement styles and compare new stimuli to these existing samples in order to determine whether the new stimuli can also be considered advertisements. This prototype-based view conveniently provides more flexibility for change and development within the definition as the key components to the prototype may be reinterpreted. *Componential* and *prototype* definitions are able to encompass a wider collection of advertisements (p. 12). However, as Halmari and Virtanen (2005) exemplify with Coca Cola advertisements from 1930 and 2001, the explicit nature of persuasiveness in advertisements may have shifted from highly explicit persuasion (with imperatives) to a much more implicit form of advertising (p. 234). Therefore, in a diachronic study, using a prototype definition for advertisements would be ineffective because modern advertisements frequently sell feelings or ideas rather than directly marketing a product

alone. I use this definition of advertisements in order to decide effectively which items even qualify for being evaluated: "The promotion of goods or services for sale through impersonal media" (*Collins Concise Dictionary*). Today, this definition may not encompass all the advertisement modes as some may argue that the advertisement is selling a feeling or reaction in order to sell a product or service; however, for the purpose of this study, this definition most distinctly clarifies which entries in *Vogue* magazine can be considered advertisements versus other magazine content. Online advertisements have created the opportunity for personalized media to be used as well; however, since my study focuses on magazine advertisements, the above definition adequately encompasses the ads in my data.

Determining the Frequency of Imperative Use in Advertisements

I have assessed the imperative frequency within each advertisement found in each issue of *Vogue*. In order to provide a base number of which advertisements use enough text to potentially include imperatives, I have recorded how many advertisements have sentence-length text. I have compared the number of advertisements with imperative sentence types to the total number of advertisements with any sentence-length writing. Sentence-length writing requires at least an implied subject and a predicate. "Dreaming of feeling young again?" would qualify as sentence-length writing because there is an implied subject (*you*) and auxiliary verb (*are*) even though these are not explicitly stated. However, the word *dreaming* alone would not be considered sentence length because no subject is presented or implied. Likewise, descriptive phrases such as "the brightest skin" would also fail to provide sentence-length text for the advertisement.

First, I have recorded the number of advertisements that contain sentence-length writing. Second, I have separated all those sentence-length writing examples that also contain an imperative. This has allowed me to develop a ratio of sentence-length ads and sentence-length ads which include imperatives. Because many modern advertisements do not rely on text but instead upon images to communicate their ideas, solely representing the number of imperative sentences out of the total number of advertisements would not appropriately demonstrate the frequency of imperative use within those advertisements that rely upon sentences to communicate. Nearly every advertisement from the 1940 collection and the 2016 collection utilizes images; however, some advertisements more significantly rely upon the image to carry the message of the ad. Because older advertisements rely more heavily upon sentence-length text, this evaluation will provide a measurable comparison between 1940 and 2016 use. Recent advertisements utilize fewer words and bigger pictures, so, in order to draw a meaningful comparison between the two eras of advertisement culture, it is essential to categorize the advertisements into those with sentence-length text versus those without. Sentence-length text is significant because it consists of phrases or clauses added beyond minimal identifying information: product name, web address, phone number, and the copyright symbol. This identifying information does not generally make up sentence-length text. Comparing product identification to the use of imperative sentences would falsely portray the frequency of imperatives present. Limiting the scope in this way provides a more accurate understanding of how language is used in advertisements and of the proportion of imperatives in relation to full sentences. After recording how many of the advertisements contain at least one imperative sentence, I compared the number of imperative verbs

within the advertisements to the total number of imperative sentences in all advertisements. These data illustrate whether or not a small number of advertisements use imperatives with incredible frequency or most advertisements follow the trend of using imperative sentences. The results are reported as percentages and by number in three ways:

1. The results show the number of advertisements with sentence-length text out of the total number of advertisements;

2. the number of advertisements with imperatives out of total advertisements with sentence-length text; and

3. the total number of imperative sentences out of the number of advertisements with imperatives.

Evaluating the Role of Imperatives in Advertisements

Sentence Position

In addition to the proportion of imperatives among the text, it is also essential to determine how the imperatives are being placed within the text. I evaluate the advertisements for the sentence position the imperatives fulfill within the written portion of the advertisements. If the imperative verb form is preceded by any other linguistic material, the delayed organization of the imperative verb form may reduce the offensiveness of the order. Saying, "Tired of using the same old product and getting disappointing results, buy our product!"[1] may appear more considerate than simply stating the imperative clause on its own: "Buy our product!" This structure, with the introductory clause, provides justification for why the audience would desire to buy it. Instead of solely and abruptly commanding the audience to purchase the product, in

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[1] Examples with no reference to *Vogue* have been invented to enhance clarity.

addition, some introductory clauses imply an if/then construction of the command.

Kauffman (2012) explains that *conjunctions* which suggest that following the imperative

will lead to a desirable result ("Download the app and find useful resources at your

fingertips") do not carry the same face-threat that an imperative without an outcome may

provide ("Download the app"). This *conjunction* between the two propositions

(download... find...)/if you... then...) is evident because the author associates a positive

outcome with the imperative. The *conjunction* resembles conditional statements which

make the sentence appear indicative rather than truly imperative. Likewise, Kauffman

(2012) discusses *disjunctions*, which suggest that following the imperative could limit a

negative consequence. *Disjunctions* within imperative sentences often resemble

conditional statements (p. 221). For example, "Use it each night to dramatically reduce

key signs of visible aging..." provides a *disjunction* to enhance the imperative for night

use (*Vogue* 2016*, 206* (6), 44-45). The advertisement claims that following the written

imperative will negate a possible undesirable outcome. Again, this strategy can lessen the

face-threat of an imperative by mimicking conditional statements rather than appearing to

be a command. Conditions often provide FTA minimization because readers feel that

they have a choice: the order may or may not apply to them. For example, one

advertisement says, "For more information visit JeffreyFashionCares.com or call 404-

420-2997" (*Vogue* 2016*, 206*, (4) 117). Rather than an initial imperative (*call*) followed

by the prepositional phrase, the advertiser elected to place the prepositional phrase prior

to the command word.

　　　　Much like the role of conjunctive and disjunctive imperative sentences, the

position of the imperative within the sentence has potential to affect the reception of the

sentence radically. Thus, I have recorded whether the command words within imperative sentences are placed initially, midway through the sentence, or late in the sentence. The following invented examples illustrate the distinction:

- o <u>Initially</u>: "Purchase this product today for best results and to discover your youth again."

- o <u>Midway</u>: "For best results, purchase this product today, and discover your youth again."

- o <u>Delayed</u>: "For best results, and to discover your youth again, purchase this product today."

Although the additional text before or after the imperative does not necessarily diminish the impact of the face-threat, it appears to create a conversation around the imperative which engages the reader before (or after) the face-threatening text, that is, the imperative verb, occurs. Short imperative sentences in isolation or boldly proclaimed without neighboring text (such as reasons why this product would be beneficial) are more likely to be considered offensive as a result of the blatant position they assume.

Interplay

Additionally, I evaluated the advertisements to discover the interplay between the imperative, other text, and the images employed within the advertisement. One important aspect in determining the interplay of various components of the advertisement is the font size of the text itself. Larger, more prominent text containing imperative sentences sends a very different message than imperatives that are tucked away in fine print within the advertisements. To measure and organize the text size adequately, I created four categories for text size: fine, small, medium, and large. Text was labeled as *fine* when it

would generally be referred to as *fine print*. This meant that fine text size was smaller than the more common text size of the articles written in the advertisement and magazine (see fine text in Figure 1). Additionally, this fine text was often tucked away in the corners or at the bottom of an advertisement, which also minimized its role overall. The next category I created for text size is *small text*. I determined that something was small print by comparing it to other text within the magazine. In Figure 1, when the advertisements states, "Face the day with confidence…," this text size matches the size of the general article text in the rest of the magazine. Generally, when imperatives occurred in small text, they were part of a paragraph of text rather than set apart on their own. Next, *medium text* stood notably larger than the small font of the paragraphs, but it was not as great as the size of text used to title the page. *Medium* text is arguably the most varied text size. Being measured by comparison with the largest font size in the advertisement, the *medium text* in one advertisement may even be larger than the *large text* in another. Although this would initially appear to create a problem for analyzing the text, this comparative approach provides a proportional measurement by which to contrast the prominence of the imperative sentences in relation to other information of the advertisement. In Figure 1, the labeled *medium text* remains much larger than the small text and much smaller than the largest text on the page. In Figure 1, the line, "TEINT IDOLE ULTRA 24H" would also be considered medium text since it does not match the largest text provided on the page and is still larger than the standard article font size. This provides a clear example of the variety of text sizes which are categorized as *medium text*. *Large text* matched or acted as the title text size that was used to label the page.

Often product names equal the size of large text. In Figure 1, "Lancôme" is the only word presented in *large text*, so it stands out from the rest of the advertisement content.

Image Description:
This Lancôme advertisement models the variation of text sizes in advertisement by providing a large title alongside of an image, which solely includes the company name. Following, the advertisement includes the product name in a medium text, which is juxtaposed against the size of the company title. Additionally, they include a small text description of the product which matches the size of the text within the magazine's articles. Finally, a fine text size is used for detailed product information along the periphery of the advertisement.

Figure 1. Font Size in Advertisements (Vogue 2016, 206 (3), 10-11).

Beyond text size, I also considered the placement of the text and its relation to the images. This allowed me to evaluate the imperative sentences for its prominence. To determine whether or not the order (expressed by an imperative verb form) was prominent, I analyzed how it fit with other text on the page. Orders, even in initial syntactic placement, which are embedded within a paragraph blend into text blocks minimizing the attention they draw. Isolated orders, set on the page without surrounding text, assume a more prominent role. Additionally, the placement of all objects on the page prioritizes or reduces the impact of the imperative sentences. Isolated text in the bottom left corner of the page will not appear prominent, whereas independent orders placed towards the top or middle of the page will be viewed more immediately. I measured prominence using two factors: text size and text position. To count as prominent, the imperative sentence was presented in a medium or large font and was placed as or alongside the largest image in the advertisement. Most often a position of prominence occurs in the middle of the advertisement or toward the top of the page. One exception is the interplay of text and images. On a few occasions, the imperative was not placed in what would generally be considered a prominent position, but the image guided

the viewers' eyes toward the imperative text. This may occur when a face is placed as the focal point of the advertisement and an imperative is written in medium or large text in a lower left position if the eyes of the person in the advertisement look toward the text to draw the reader's attention. In this unique circumstance, the content of the image creates an unusual position of prominence on the page. Exceptions like these were still considered prominent because the interplay of text and image drew the reader directly to the imperative.

Functional Role

Also, I recorded the function of the imperative because it can impact its potential perceived hostility. Both Simon and Dejica-Cartis (2015) and Zjakic, Han, and Liu (2017) began to analyze what the imperatives command their audiences to achieve. Various command types could potentially be less face threatening than others. Simon and Dejica-Cartis (2015) created four categories for directions given in advertisements: *imperative directions*, which provide how-to information; *interrogative directions*, which request audience information; *appellative directions*, which encourage the audience to consume or learn more about the product; and *indirect appellative directions*, which indirectly achieve the same goal as appellative directions, only utilizing redressive action (p. 241). Not all of these *direction* categories necessarily included imperatives, which prevents them all from applying directly to my research. However, I build on Simon and Dejica-Cartis' and Zjakic, Han, and Liu's initial ideas and am able to use similar categories that I have refined to serve my research goals. I will do so by combining the above *direction* study with an additional source. Directly addressing imperatives in

Facebook gym advertisements, Zjakic, Han, and Liu (2017) also chose to categorize the functions of their imperatives. They created five categories:

1. *attention focusers*, in which the advertisement told the reader to notice something;

2. *experiencers*, in which the advertisement encouraged the reader to use or benefit from the product;

3. *acquisition of product/service*, which encouraged the reader to purchase;

4. *contact group*, which told the reader to reach out to the company through some form of communication; and

5. other (p. 18).

Both studies, Simon and Dejica-Cartis (2015) and Zjakic, Han and Liu (2017), together contributed to my classifications. For each imperative, following the method exemplified by Zjakic, Han, and Liu (2017), I have borrowed and created my own terms for evaluation. I divide the imperatives in my corpus into these categories: *focusers, acquirers*, *contacters, experiencers*, and *directors,* in order to determine how and why the imperatives are implemented. As I gathered data, I sorted the imperatives into these five groupings.

The first group, focusers, functions much like the above example's attention focusers, category 1. These imperatives directed the reader's attention either to something on the page or to another page in the publication. The following is an example: "Please read the adjacent pages for additional patient information" (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (2), 44-47). This sentence clearly directs the audience to focus more intently on nearby information. These often also may appear as "scratch here to smell this perfume." The purpose of

focusers simply points the reader to additional information included within the advertisement.

The second category, acquirers, tells the audience to purchase the product. One example from a *Vogue* advertisement states: "Get this limited edition" (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (7), 59). This imperative directly tells the reader to purchase the product.

The third grouping, contacters, tells the reader to communicate with the company to receive further information on the product. A Geico advertisement states, "See Geico.com for more details," telling the audience to further investigate the product or service by reaching out for more information (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (7), 86).

The fourth group consists of experiencers. My application of experiencers encompasses more than what was addressed by Zjakic, Han, and Liu (2017). My use of *experiencers* includes both direct commands about using the product itself and commands about experiencing a result of the product. This category would include both of the following examples: "experience Black Orchard in a new light" and "Be unstoppable" (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (1), 25-26; *206* (7), 54-55). Both of these examples focus on the experience the reader would undergo in response to the product rather than the product itself. The first example represents an imperative sentence telling the readers to utilize the product directly whereas the second example encourages an experience the audience members would theoretically have if they used the product. By altering the associations of the imperative in this way, the marketer adjusts the effect of the imperative to inspire rather than simply command. Because the function differs, the reception may differ as well. The recipient of an inspirational comment may feel encouraged rather than imposed upon.

The fifth category, *directors,* resorts to imperative sentences to explain to the client how to use the product. One instance of this application is, "Apply Dream Lumi Touch Highlighting Concealer to high points on face to strobe" (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (3), 270-75). In this instance, unlike previous imperatives, this imperative functions primarily to inform the reader of how the product should be used effectively.

A few cases did not cleanly fit into any of the categories. In order to avoid skewing my data, I chose to leave these out of the above four categories, and I ended with a small number of imperatives in my final category "other," which comprises only one percent of imperative uses.

One final aspect of the function of advertisements I chose to analyze consisted of pre-created imperative sentences that were frequently used in association with the product. Unlike the rest of an advertisement, a few components must consistently appear the same. These slogans are not something decided by each advertisement artist. Instead, the advertiser may only choose whether or not to include the relevant slogan within the advertisement, and is often obligated to do so for brand recognition purposes. Therefore, the presentation of an imperative within the slogan carries a unique role within the advertisement as a brand decision rather than simply a text decision for that advertisement. For example, Chevrolet's slogan, "Find new roads," consists of an imperative sentence that is tied to the brand itself rather than unique to the advertisement (*Vogue* 2016*, 206* (7), 69). In modern advertisements, hashtags also pose a unique scenario for imperative sentences to be included with advertisements. Olay's hashtag, "#beageless" also presents an imperative sentence which is tied directly to the company rather than the ad itself (*Vogue* 2016*, 206* (2),127-29). Therefore, I chose to tag the

occasions upon which the author includes imperatives in these unique situations in order

to contrast those imperatives with imperatives included otherwise in the text.

CHAPTER III

Results

The analysis of magazine advertisements showed a development of consistent

patterns and features related to the imperatives used in these advertisements. As Table 1

depicts, out of the 654 advertisements from 1940, 613 contained additional text (text

beyond identifying information for the product), which equals 93.7 percent of the 1940

corpus. In contrast, the 2016 advertisement collection, also containing 654

advertisements, had only 333 advertisements with additional text, approximately 50.9

percent of all the advertisements. Since the lack of additional text in modern

advertisements could otherwise skew the data, I used the 333 advertisements with

additional text as my base number for the next analysis in this study. Figure 2 continues

to outline the progression of this trend as the data from 1960, 1980, and 2000 also show a

steady decline in frequency of lengthy texts within advertising.

Table 1

Number of ads with sentence length text vs. ads with only product identifying text out of

total ads (N=1308).

	1940		2016	
	N	%	N	%
Ads with additional text	613	93.7%	333	50.9%
Ads with no additional text	41	6.3%	321	49.1%
Total Ads	654	100%	654	100%
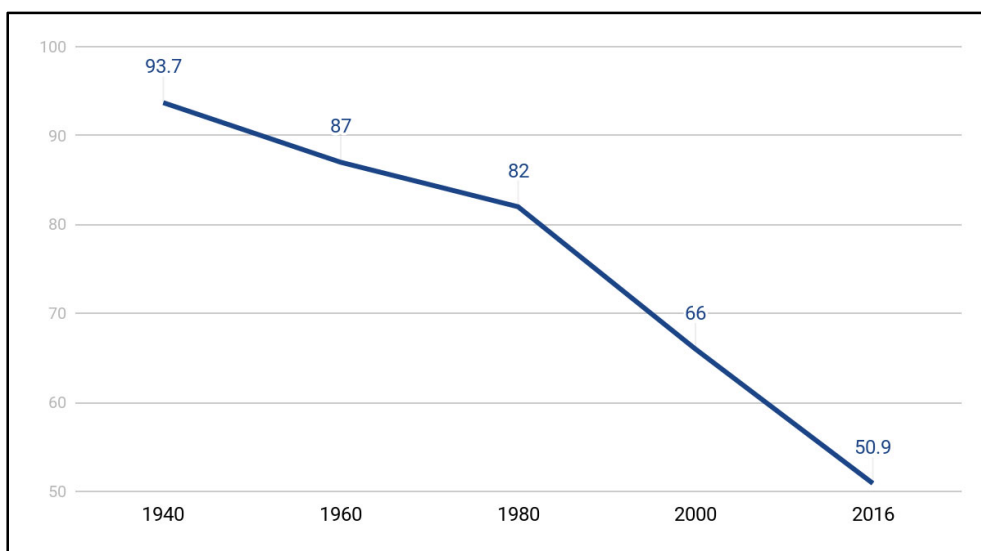
Figure 2. Percent of ads with at least sentence length text (N=1608).

Table 1 and Figure 2 illustrate that most advertisements from 1940 contained lengthier text. Table 2 shows the frequency of imperatives in advertisement text. Of 1940's 613 advertisements with additional text, 41.4 percent contained at least one imperative sentence. These data do not take into consideration that some of the advertisements may contain more than one imperative sentence. 2016's advertisements used additional text only slightly more than half of the time; however, in the 2016 corpus, 67 percent of advertisements with additional text contain imperatives. This shows approximately a 26 percent increase in the number of text-based advertisements utilizing imperatives. From this information, the data highlight that the frequency of text-based advertisements has clearly declined. Yet, when the advertisements' authors choose to use text, they are increasingly likely to include imperatives. The trend in Figure 3 shows that

a slow increase in the frequency of imperatives occurs between 1940 and 1980 followed by steady growth in imperative occurrences by 2016.

Table 2

Number of ads using imperatives vs. ads without imperatives out of total ads with additional text (N=946).

	1940		2016	
	N	%	N	%
Ads using imperatives	254	41.4%	223	67.0%
Ads with no imperatives	359	58.6%	110	33%
Total ads with additional text	613	100%	333	100%
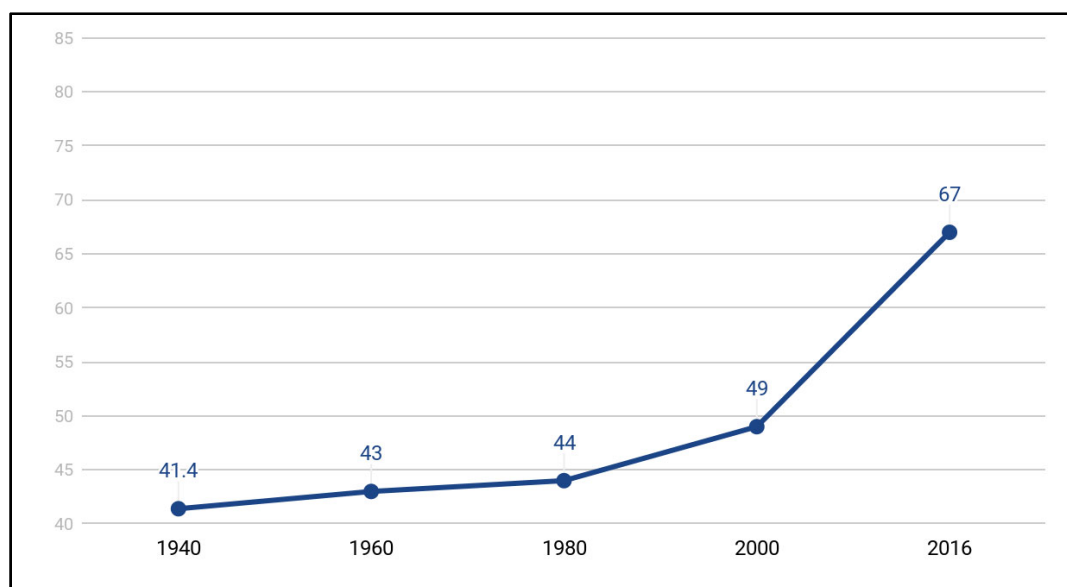
Figure 3. Percent of sentence-length ads using imperatives *(N=1,181).*

To explain the full impact of the imperative usage growth, I have also included Table 3, which shows the total number of imperative sentences used out of the category of advertisements with imperatives. In both collections of data, marketers who resorted to imperatives often used more than one within the same advertisement. Additionally, the

evidence suggests that modern marketing experts are likely to use more imperatives per advertisement than older marketers, proportionally. Commenting on the increase of advertisements that use imperatives at all does not fully explain the relative increase in imperative use. If divided equally, across all 223 advertisements, the 2016 results would contain at least 2 imperative sentences per advertisement whereas the 1940 results would have 1.4 imperative sentences per advertisement. This shows a 46.1% increase in imperative frequency (Figure 4). In Figure 4, there is a less consistent trend. Despite having nearly 1.6 imperatives per ad in 1960, the trend drops back to 1.4 in 1980 before rising again to 1.5 and eventually to more than 2 imperatives per advertisement in the most recent magazines.

Table 3

Number of imperative sentences out of advertisements using imperatives (N=477).

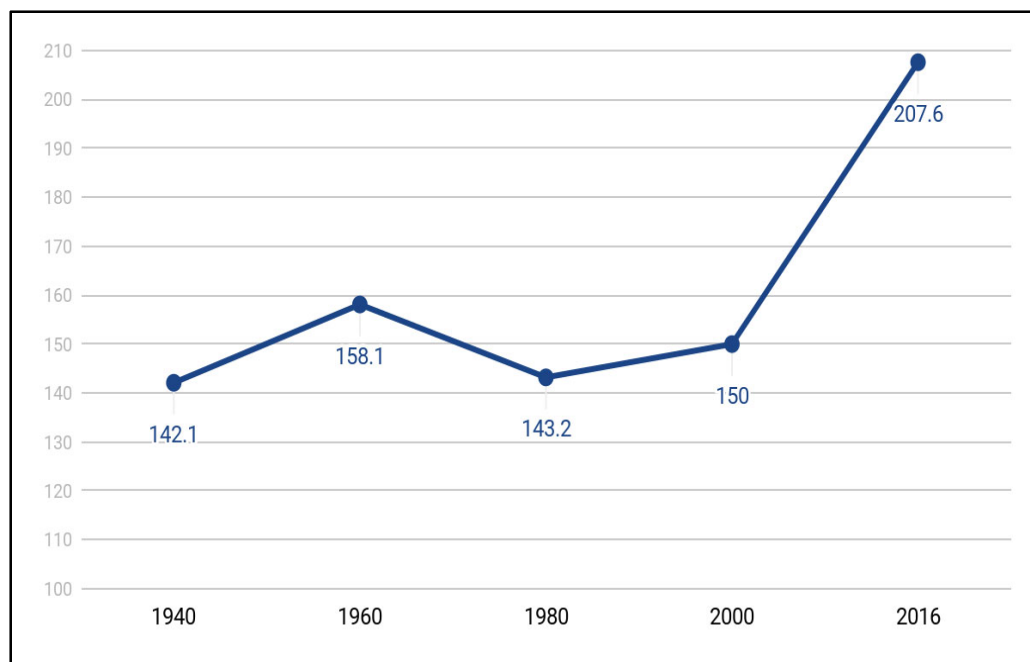|	N (1940)	Ratio (1940)	N (2016)	Ratio (2016)
Total number of imperative sentences	361	1.421	463	2.076
Ads using imperatives	254	1	223	1

Figure 4. Percent of imperatives out of ads containing imperatives *(N=681)*.

Following my investigation of the advertisements for syntactic placement of the

verb in its imperative form, both the 1940 and 2016 advertisement groups contained a

clearly higher number of initially placed command verbs. About eighteen percent more of

the command verbs are placed initially in 2016, as can be seen in Table 4. One

explanation for the lower proportion of initially placed imperative verb forms in 1940 is

the frequency of imperative sentences telling the reader to contact the advertiser via

written response as can be seen later, in Figure 8. The 1940s advertisements often make

statements similar to "If your dealer cannot supply you, write direct" (*Vogue* 1940*, 95*

(3), 17). This conditional imperative naturally delays the onset of the imperative clause.

Commands to contact in 2016 tend to be more direct: "Visit us at Newportpleasure.com"

(*Vogue* 2016*, 206* (5), 171). Middle placement of imperatives appeared 101 times in the

1940 corpus, equaling 28 percent of the total imperative sentences. In contrast, the 2016

advertisements had only 44 middle-placed imperatives, making up 9.5 percent of the total

imperative sentences, as can be seen in Table 4. The middle placement of imperatives often occurred following an introductory phrase or clause, but also when the author chose to add descriptive words initially in order to push the imperative further back into the sentence. Delayed imperatives did not occur in either collection of advertisements. Figure 5 shows a decrease in initial placement of imperatives from 1940 to 1980; however, the trend changes and begins increasing again from 1980 to 2016. The middle placement of imperatives generally trends downward. In 1980, middle placement briefly increases before continuing to trend down again. Consistently, the delayed placement is not used in any of the years.

Table 4

Syntactic placement of command verbs out of total number of imperative sentences (N=824).

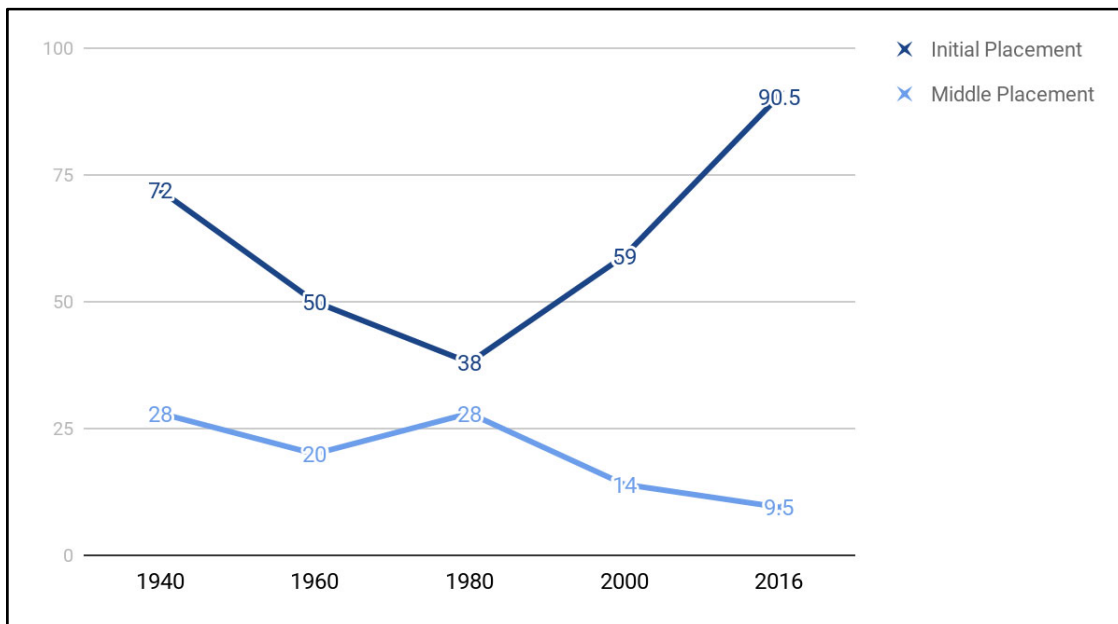|	N (1940)	% (1940)	N (2016)	% (2016)
Initial placement	260	72.0%	419	90.5%
Middle Placement	101	28.0%	44	9.5%
Delayed Placement	0	0%	0	0%
Total imperatives	361	100%	463	100%

Figure 5: Percentage of syntactic placement of command verbs *(N=1,028).*

Additionally, the imperative sentences were categorized by text size (see Table 5).

Today fine print and small text hold the majority with 33 percent and 32.8 percent of

imperative sentences respectively. These two were also more dominant in the 1940s;

however, small print was 12.1 percent more frequent than fine print. In the 1940s, fine

print imperatives made up 35.5 percent and small print made up 47.6 percent. Both of

these numbers are greater than their counterparts in the later magazines. A shift occurs in

the results, however, because the 1940's medium print imperatives made up only 10.2

percent overall, whereas the 2016 issues used medium print 23.8 percent of the time. This

shows an increase in medium print imperatives from 1940 to 2016. The large print

imperatives from 1940 made up only 6.6 percent of the total number of imperative

sentences. This makes up the lowest frequency for any print size in 1940. Similarly, the

2016 advertisements have fewer large print imperatives than any other size; however,

they still make up 10.4 percent of the imperative sentences, showing a 3.8 percent

increase in the use of imperatives as the largest font in the advertisement. Figure 6

highlights the trends of imperative font sizes from 1940 to 2016. Fine print rises slightly

in 1960 and drops abruptly in 2000, but reaches again the low 30s for the rest of the

dates. Small print imperatives trend consistently downward, decreasing in percentage

with every additional year. Imperatives written in medium text generally become more

common after dropping in 1960 until they stabilize in the mid 20s from 2000 to 2016.

Large print appears to rise consistently until 2000 when it drops back to 10.4 percent by

2016.

Table 5

Imperative text size out of total imperative sentences (N=824).

	N (1940)	% (1940)	N (2016)	% (2016)
Fine print	128	35.5%	153	33.0%
Small print	172	47.6%	152	32.8%
Medium print	37	10.2%	110	23.8%
Large print	24	6.6%	48	10.4%
Total Imperatives	361	99.9%	463	100%
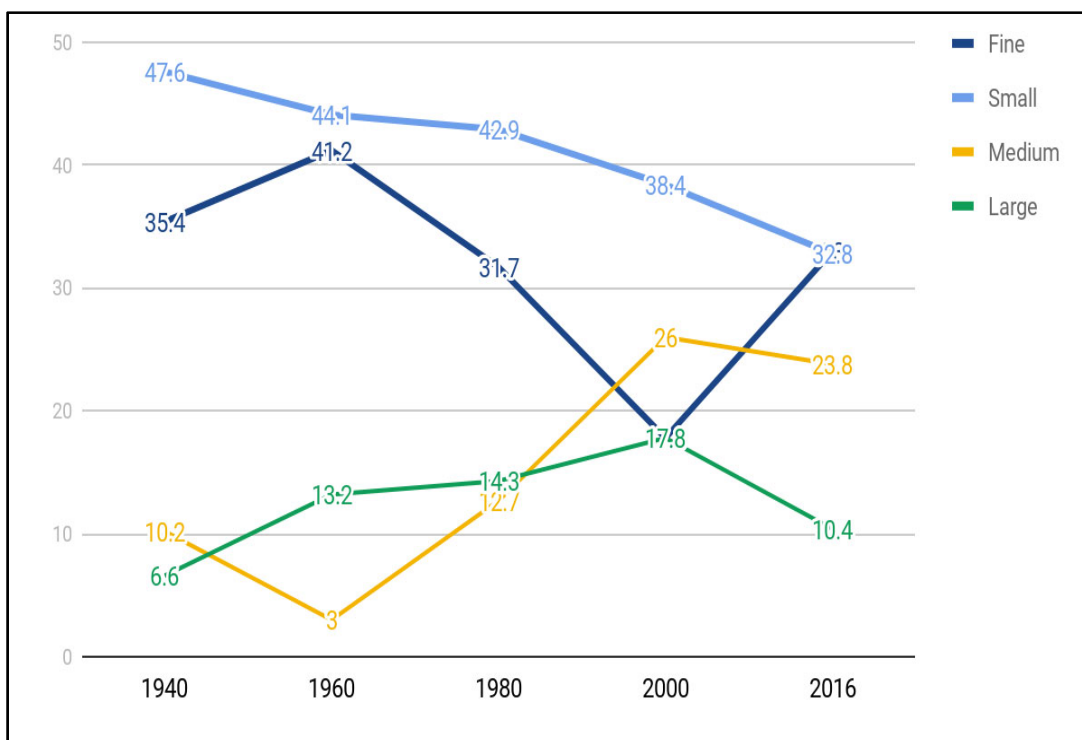
Figure 6. Percent of imperatives by text size *(N=1,028).*

Intriguingly, this leads to the shift of prominence in imperatives as expressed in

Table 6. Only 10.8 percent of imperative sentences in 1940 were given a significant role

in the eye-catching portion of the advertisement or were enhanced by pictures. More

recently, the number of prominent imperatives makes up 20.7 percent of imperative

sentences. Although the 2016 advertisements do not show as stark a contrast with font

size, the shift in prominence provides data regarding the use of the imperative placement

and interplay in relation to the ad and components. Figure 7 confirms the rise in

imperative prominence across the years.

Table 6

Prominent imperatives out of total imperative sentences (N=824).

	N (1940)	% (1940)	N (2016)	% (2016)
Prominent Imperatives	39	10.8%	96	20.7%
Total Imperatives	361	100%	463	100%
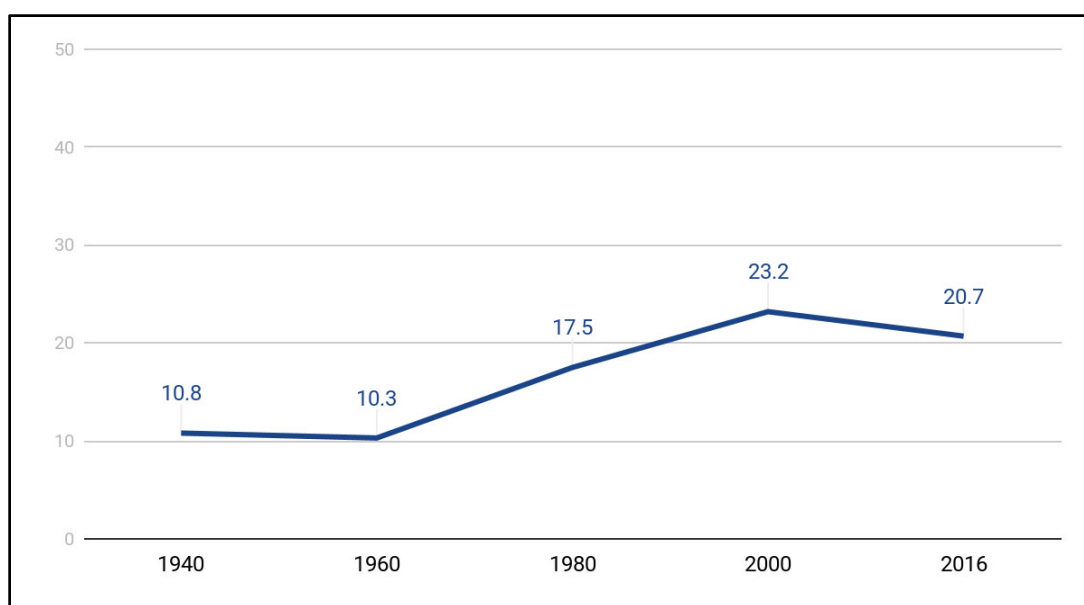
Figure 7. Percent of imperatives in prominent positions *(N=1,028).*

Additionally, Table 7 recounts the results of the slogan and hashtag imperatives that were used in the advertisements. In the 1940s none of the imperatives was written in either slogans or hashtags. The older marketers developed each imperative sentence for the advertisement itself whereas newer marketing tendencies show a greater trend toward using prewritten, conventionalized imperative sentences. In the 2016 advertisements, imperatives occurred 19 times in hashtags which made up 4.1 percent of the total imperatives in the 2016 data. Slogans using imperatives occurred 27 times making up 12.1 percent; therefore, in the more recent advertisements, 20.6 percent of imperative

occurrences were company or product phrases rather than being originally drafted for the advertisement itself. Figure 8 demonstrates that both of these uses of imperatives are newer. In the data collected, no slogans use imperatives until 2000. Then, they increase in frequency in 2016. Hashtags, similarly, do not begin to appear until much later; however, their entrance does not occur until the 2016 data because of the novelty of the hashtag as a recent advertising strategy.

Table 7

Imperatives used in company or product phrases out of total imperatives (N=824).

	N (1940)	% (1940)	N (2016)	% (2016)
Hashtags	0	0%	19	4.1%
Slogans	0	0%	27	5.8%
Total advertisements using imperatives	361	100%	463	100%
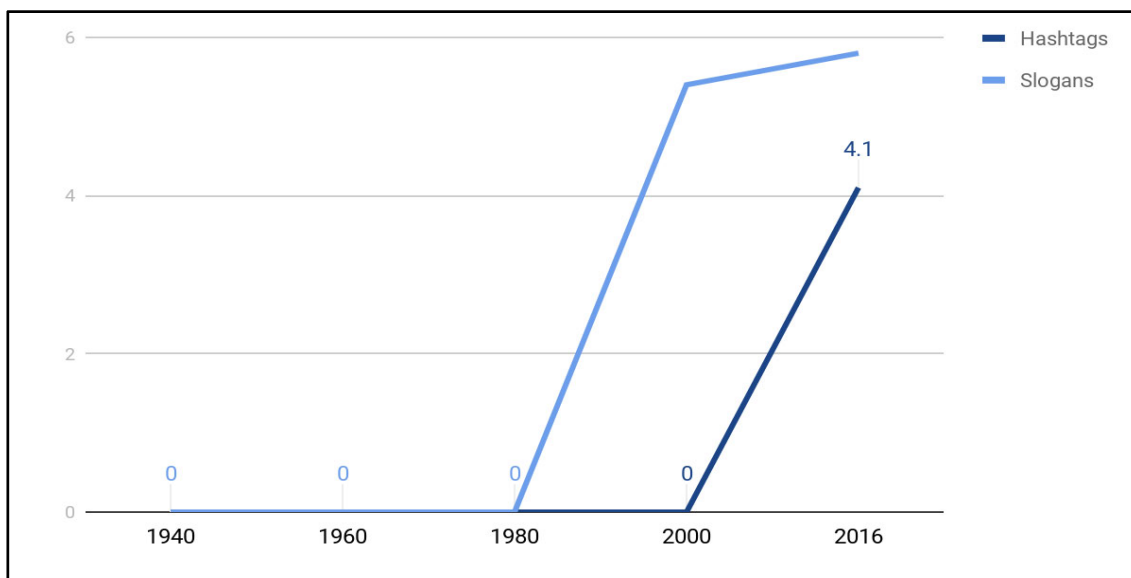
Figure 8. Percent of imperatives in hashtags and slogans *(N=1,028).*

Last, I determined the functions of the imperative sentences. The most notable difference between the two eras of advertisements, which can be seen in Table 8, is that the majority of 1940's imperative sentences told the reader to contact (44.6%), but, today, most advertisements tell the reader to experience the product (44.1%). Acquirers also more commonly appeared in the earlier advertisements with more than twice the percent of modern acquirers. Acquirers (e.g., "Purchase your copy at bit.ly/SportingGuide" [*Vogue* 2016*, 206* (1), 47]), increase the potential face threat made in an advertisement. This could be attributed to the frequency of paragraph embedded imperatives as well because the 1940s advertisements have a strong tendency to present the imperative sentences in line with the text of an informational paragraph rather than present it on its own within the text. Today's magazine audiences might be offended by the direct command to purchase the product whereas the experiencer imperatives (e.g., "Have a love affair with your hair" [*Vogue* 2016, *206* (3), 369]) could be interpreted as inspirational, encouraging, or informative, and therefore inoffensive. Experiencers show a dramatic increase from 20.5 percent of imperatives in 1940 to 44.1 percent of all imperatives in 2016. Explainers (e.g., "Fill in gaps with colored powder") and focusers (e.g., "Please read the adjacent pages for additional patient information") both remain less frequent than most other functions, but they are relatively consistent across time (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (2), 54; *206* (1), 29). Figure 9 shows that focusers have a minimal and slightly dwindling role in imperative function. Acquirers begin to decrease in 1980 showing a distinct decrease in 2000 before slightly increasing by 2016 percent to 8.6 percent. Experiencers appear to increase notably. The most astounding year in this trend is 2000, which shows a large spike in experiencer frequency before returning to the

aforementioned trend in 2016. Contacters have slightly decreased over the course of the

years as evidenced above, and explainers, which decreased greatly following the 1940

data, have begun a slight rise which continues through the 2016 data.

Table 8

Imperative functions out of total imperative sentences (N=824).

	N (1940)	% (1940)	N (2016)	% (2016)
Focusers	31	8.6%	27	5.8%
Acquirers	73	20.2%	40	8.6%
Experiencers	74	20.5%	204	44.1%
Contacters	161	44.6%	149	32.2%
Explainers	20	5.5%	41	8.9%
Other	2	0.6%	2	0.4%
Total Imperatives	361	100%	463	100%
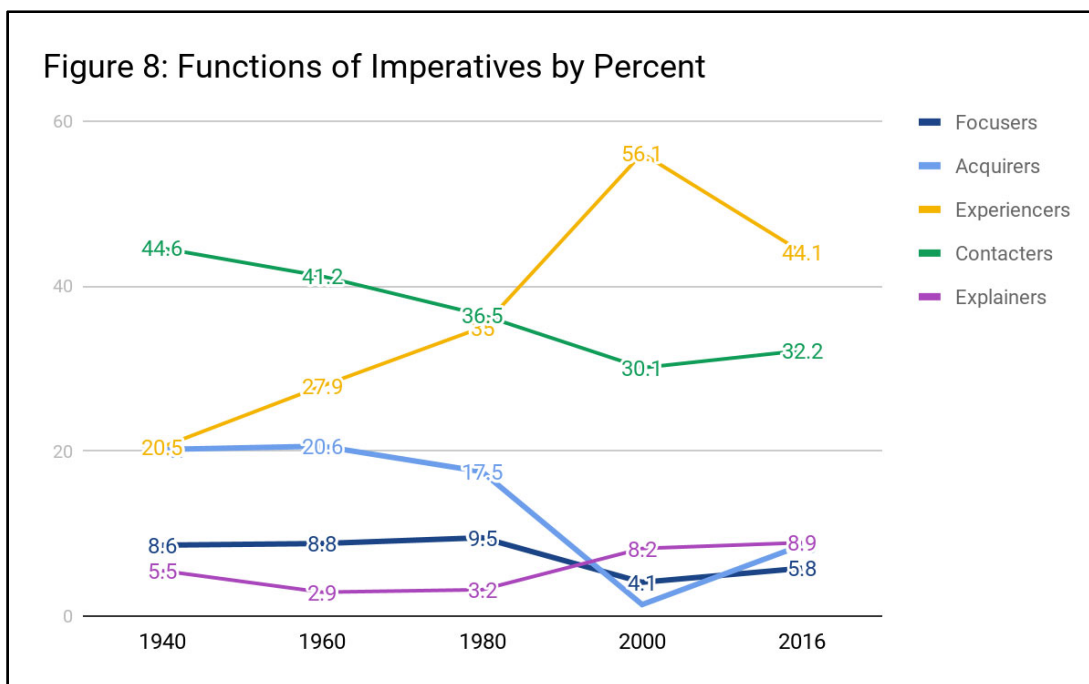
Figure 9. Functions of imperatives by percent *(N=1,028).*

These charts and tables draw together the trends and figures of the characteristics of *Vogue* advertisement across seventy-six years. As can be concluded from the above data, many of the characteristics of imperatives provide clear patterns of increase or decrease across the decades and begin to draw together an image of changes in advertisement.

In the next chapter, I will look at the findings reported here in more detail and discuss what kinds of societal trends they might reflect.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

Implications of Research: Increased Prominence of Imperatives in Advertisements

The data from this research imply that the use of imperatives in advertisements has become increasingly prominent. Despite the interest that marketers have in persuading their audiences, the results of this study demonstrate that they continue to choose to utilize imperatives, which are frequently interpreted as face threatening. This face threat is often attributed as the result of the explicit nature of imperatives. Östman (1987) explains that explicit, overt, persuasion is dispreferred in comparison to the implicit persuasive strategies with also allow speakers to reach conversational goals efficiently. Östman discusses that the use of imperative sentences loses some of the persuasive potential when compared with the subtle persuasive tactics of their counterpart of overt persuasive tactics. Imperatives, as a persuasive tool, function distinctly on-record, which means that the use of an imperative does not provide enough ambiguity for the author to claim a different message. As Brown and Levinson (1987) explain, choosing to speak off-record is one means by which a speaker can increase the politeness of an otherwise face-threatening comment. Persuasive writers "face a difficult balancing act" between enough clarity to communicate their message unambiguously and avoiding so much directness in their message that their audiences withdraw (Halmari and Virtanen 2005, p. 230). Because of the persuasive preference for indirectness, the frequent use of imperatives within the *Vogue* data may appear surprising.

From 1940 through 2016, the data exemplify that imperatives increase not only in frequency but also in font size and prominence. If the advertisement's audience were

opposed to the presence of imperatives in marketing, the data would likely show evidence of decreases in the frequency and prominence of imperatives. As a result of these trends, it becomes apparent that advertisement viewers accept the message of the advertisements delivered via imperatives without taking offense. In addition, this acceptance of imperatives within advertising continues to grow. Unlike the 1940s data, which embedded imperatives within large text blocks and refrained from drawing attention to the imperatives, more recent advertisements boldly place their imperatives in significant positions that attract the reader's eye and blatantly state the message of the advertisement.

Possible Explanations

Immediacy of Crucial Information

One explanation for the acceptability of imperatives resides in their increased frequency. Unlike paragraph block texts, which used to provide ample information regarding product and purchasing, recent advertisements no longer use as much sentence-length text. From 93.7 percent of all advertisements containing sentence-length text in 1940, the frequency diminished to only 50.9 percent by 2016. These data can be found in table 1 which delineates a consistent decrease in sentence-length text and Figure 1 which demonstrates the trend of decrease across the seven decades. Originally, in the 1940 data, advertisements contained large quantities of text in a paragraph format; however, the most recent set of advertisements, from 2016, spreads the text across the page, intermingles the text within the advertisement, and places sentences or phrases apart from each other. One consistent conclusion to be drawn from the data is that the 1980 data often function pivotally. The trend lines across the provided tables in chapter three show consistent progressions upward or downward; however, the 1980 data frequently appear

as an outlier by either stalling out the progression temporarily or reversing the trend. This role of the 1980s data may result from the increase of digital media and the growth of the internet. As the United States' population continues to grow less accustomed to waiting out lengthy texts to yield information (Landau 2015), advertisements adjust similarly. Unlike their predecessors, the modern magazine viewers prefer to brush quickly past the various images and information to glean snapshots of information rather than dig deeply into an informative paragraph. Because of this shift, now magazine advertisements are competing more frequently with internet commercials, which are often interactive or contain multiple images. Over the course of the seventy-six years evaluated in this study, lengthy text (text provided beyond the minimal product or service identifying information) diminished nearly by half.

These results may provide a possible explanation for the increase in imperative usage. When the advertisement's designer begins to plan out the content and arrangement of the advertisement, the reduced text quantity provides little opportunity for wasted space. Landau (2015) explains that research from the year 2000 to 2013 shows a decrease in average attention spans from twelve down to eight seconds. In response, television, and even internet, advertisements have shortened from a previous average of thirty to sixty seconds to a current average of fifteen seconds at a time. The modern advertiser, compelled by marketing trends and shorter attention spans, finds no alternative but to provide the most pertinent information to persuade the customer in the smallest quantity of text. As a result, imperative sentences are often chosen. Messages such as "Explore new heights" or "Get glowing" quickly and minimally provide the most crucial and appealing information regarding the product (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (1) 11; 54-57). Of course,

the marketers could have approached this differently. Instead of "Explore new heights," they could have written, "This product will allow you to have longer lashes than ever before," but the shorter imperative sentence more poignantly executes the advertiser's purpose. Another alternative to the imperative strategy would be to provide hedging in order to reduce face threat. As Leech (2014) discusses, *neg-politeness* consists of the use of hedges or downgraders to minimize the imposition of the face-threatening comment. Adding "Would you mind?" or "just" to the comment could alter the perception and make the comment more pleasant to the recipient (p. 120). In the genre of advertising, however, expanding the intended message with extra unnecessary additions can actually be interpreted as more imposing than the more direct message as a result of the cumbersome nature of the excess words or phrases as well as being more costly for the advertiser.

One important characteristic of technical writing, such as advertising, is the need for brevity. People simply refuse to read long texts that they are not required to read (Tebeaux and Dragga 2015). Consequently, marketers hoping to communicate with their intended audiences must consider the accessibility and length of their text. Simply, there is a courtesy to directness: it shows respect for the hearer's time. Advertisements may choose to frequent their messages with imperatives in order to avoid wasting the time of potential customers. In fact, advertising tends to follow Grice's (1975) cooperative principle and, specifically, his maxim of quantity, by maintaining the anticipated brevity for the speech scenario. People generally expect a certain amount of response based on the kind of conversation occurring. Conversations on a date night with a significant other dramatically differ from conversations occurring in response to a spontaneous encounter

with a friend or coworker in the mall. Most offices and workplaces have those undesirable coworkers who frequent the copy machine or break room waiting to hijack someone's quick trip to the coffee pot in order to vent about their life struggles or extrapolate on their weekend plans. Although social norms encourage a brief greeting in these scenarios, the excessive conversation thrust upon a person in the midst of a work routine frequently appears unwanted or even offensive. People are expected to consider the other demands on their audience's time in order to show respect. As Ide and Lakoff (2005) comment, politeness necessarily requires "consideration for others" (p. 4). A conversation in passing thrives when both parties acknowledge and consider the other's trajectory in order to avoid imposing unwanted dialogue on them. Likewise, advertisements, in addition to having a limited window to maintain their audience's attention spans, must consider their audience's time rather than unnecessarily imposing upon them.

Audience is Accustomed to Imperative Use

Another apparent conclusion which can be drawn from the data resides with the imperative use. As Figure 2 depicts, imperative use increases steadily but slowly from 1940 to 1980; however, the growth appears nearly exponential as it starts to increase in the 2000 data and then grows significantly by 2016. On the other hand, Figure 3 shows that there is not a consistent pattern of increase or decrease in the number of imperatives per advertisement. The frequency of imperatives fluctuates regularly around one and a half imperatives per advertisement until 2016, when the frequency of imperatives spikes from one and a half to two imperatives per advertisement, a thirty-three percent increase in imperative usage per advertisement than in 1940.

One of the reasons for the surge of imperatives per advertisement is likely to reside in the use of slogans. Prior to 1980, every example of imperative usage within the advertisement was solely a part of the created text for the advertisement alone. Between 1980 and 2000, the frequency of imperatives in slogans increases from zero percent to nine percent. This change coincides with the slight increase in imperatives per advertisement in the same period of time. Following 2000, the slogan imperatives increase to twelve percent, which probably explains a portion of the increase to two imperatives per advertisement. One of Maybelline's 2016 advertisements actually includes three imperative sentences within one advertisement. One of these imperative sentences is a slogan. First, the marketer wrote, "Dare to rock nude" (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (2) 2). Later in the advertisement, the imperative, "Get expert tips at Maybelline.com/brow" is also included, and finally the ad includes the slogan: "Make it happen" (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (2) 3, 5). Although slogans cannot account for the entirety of the growth in imperative use within advertisements, their presence undoubtedly contributes to the increase.

One other significant influence on the frequency of imperatives is the use of hashtags. Hashtags were not used prior to the 2016 data. Companies often use their hashtags, at time repeatedly, within their advertisements. For example, *Chanel* frequently uses "#TakeYourChance" and *Lancôme* frequently uses "#loveyourage" (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (2) 88, 2). Even though the *Chanel* ad uses minimal text preferring an image-dominant approach to the advertisement, it boldly places its hashtag in a large font in the center of the second page. In this way, the hashtag has created a context for the imperative to assume a different role. Even though it functions as an imperative, it is a

tool used to access more information about the product. In a way, the hashtag imperative functions as an experiencer and a contacter through a non-threatening social norm. On a multi-page ad, companies may use the hashtag once per page. At times, the same advertisement may even use a slogan imperative, a hashtag imperative, and an imperative within the text they created specifically for that advertisement. The combination of these imperative uses comes together to increase the total frequency of imperatives.

Although scholars have frequently commented on the persistence of imperatives within the advertising genre (see, e.g., Zjakic, Han, and Liu 2017; Simon and Dejica-Cartis 2015; Pennock-Speck and Saz-Rubio 2013; Simon 2010), the increase of imperative use within these two categories of writing, slogans and hashtags, has not been discussed or analyzed. The data demonstrate that a sudden increase in the use of both imperative uses directly coincides with the increase in imperatives per advertisement, which begins to explain the sudden increase in frequency with the 2016 data. Otherwise the fluctuation prior to the 2016 data between 1.4 and 1.5 imperatives per advertisement does not show notable or consistent variation in order to provide a trend of imperative usage. Ultimately, because of the frequency of imperative use in slogans and hashtags, these two factors alone have significantly increased the total number of imperatives present in advertising. Also, as these trends continue to increase, the audience grows more accustomed to encountering imperatives within advertisements. Their increased frequency may reduce the potential face threat of the imperative sentence because they have become more commonplace as markers of the genre "advertisement."

Another reason why audiences appear to have grown more accustomed to the presence of imperatives within an advertisement is that these imperatives continue to

increase in size and prominence. Small print imperatives have consistently been in decline from the 1940s data all the way through the 2016 data. In contrast, medium and large print imperatives have generally increased. These trends communicate that placing an imperative in a clear and visible location within the advertisement is becoming more commonplace, which means that it likely is considered acceptable. Additionally, Figure 6 depicts the increase in prominent imperatives within advertisements. Not only are the marketers utilizing larger text sizes, but they also are choosing more regularly to organize the advertisement to direct the reader's attention to the imperative itself. Sales people, intent upon winning over their audiences to their causes, are not likely to emphasize a comment or sentence that threatens the face of their audience; therefore, when advertisers consistently increase the size and prominence of imperatives within the text, this behavior shows a clear acceptance of imperatives in advertisements.

Imperative Functions are more Indirect

One of the most surprising trends within the imperative use in advertisements is the function of the imperative. Authors choose to use imperatives frequently, but their purpose behind using the imperative appears to have changed considerably over the course of seventy-six years. One possible explanation for the increase of imperatives in advertisements may reside within the functions. Much like the receipt of constructive feedback, the function matters nearly as much as the use. When constructive feedback is given for the purpose of helping or encouraging friends to accomplish their full potential, the feedback can often be interpreted as non-threatening; however, constructive criticism from a competitor or stranger frequently appears face-threatening. When the advertisement appears to be commanding the reader because of the advertiser's self-

product or company), the imperative may be interpreted as more face-threatening than when the imperative pretends to consider the interests of the reader. Therefore, a possible reason why imperative use in advertisements may be increasingly acceptable to audiences is that the new functions of imperatives are considered less face-threatening.

The most dominant function of imperatives in the 1940s data was for the purpose of contact. As a result of the communication systems in place when the 1940s ads were presented, the most effective means of contact between the advertiser and the consumer was to respond via mail; therefore, many advertisements from this era concluded with something like "Send for free style book" (*Vogue* 1940 (95). 21). An imperative like this one is potentially face-threatening because the speaker is imposing upon the desires and actions of the readers by commanding them to respond in writing. If the readers do not want to write to *Vitality Shoes Co*., they may have taken offense of the direct command, may have found it at least annoying, or may have ignored the command altogether. Other readers, however, may interpret this type of order as a piece of advice instead. As Figure 8 depicts, the role of contacters within advertisements consistently decreases following the 1940 data until it stays relatively consistent in 2000 and 2016. It appears from the data that marketers began to neglect contacters as their primary use of imperatives within advertisements.

In a similar way, acquirers follow a declining trend from 1940 to 2000. Using imperatives to tell the audience directly to purchase the product became a less popular choice. This also follows with politeness studies as the most direct forms of commands are considered to have the highest likelihood for being interpreted as offensive (Brown and Levinson 1987; Kaufmann 2012; Aikhenvald 2010). Rather than boldly stating the

need for the audience to respond by purchasing their product or contacting the company, marketers increased their tendency to encourage their customers toward an experience rather than an action.

People commonly interpret a variety of imperatives as offensive because of their imposition; however, using an imperative sentence can also be done to encourage the hearer. For instance, an individual who may be offended by being told, "purchase this shirt," may not be offended by being told, "feel beautiful." In a way, the imperative takes on a role of well-wishing for the audience. Rather than appearing face-threatening or cold, the advertisement may take on an empathetic tone, which relates more strongly to the reader.

Experiencers generally appeal to the audience's emotions, drawing on the audience's desires or aspirations rather than emphasizing the product as a physical object or the service that is offered. By using these experiencers, the advertisement may also appear to be taking a step back. Speaking highly about oneself is considered rather ostentatious, but complimenting or speaking positively about others is culturally acceptable. When the advertisement directly calls upon the reader to respond through contact or acquisition, the audience may encounter difficulty when attempting to interpret the message as considering what is best for them. A Ford advertisement that simply uses an imperative to direct the reader to buy a product does not provide any distance of respect between the company speaking and the addressee. One of the ways to increase politeness is by providing hearers with an opportunity to abstain from a request, offer, or command without having to harm their own face (Leech 2014). So, when the Ford advertisement instead says, "Go further," it seems as though Ford is recommending an

idea which they are not necessarily invested in, making the imperative less offensive for the audience to turn down (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (7) 2). There is little offensive about a companies encouraging their audiences to reach their full potential; therefore, this alternative presentation of recommending the product may often be considered less offensive.

Ultimately, experiencers play upon the idea that indirectness is often considered less offensive. Leech (2014) explains that "an indirective beginning" *Would/Can/Could you* is usually much preferred (p. 147). Even in a restaurant scenario where a customer asks for something from the server, people are expected to use a minimum of "please" to reduce the imposition of the request. More often, rather than phrasing the question as "Please, bring me a menu," the guest should say something more along the lines of "Would you bring me a menu, please?" in order to fulfill the norm of politeness through indirect directives. Although it is considered more polite to add hedge words to sentences or phrases in order to lessen the face threat, advertisers find themselves confined within a small space (Bruthiaux 1996) and limited by short attention spans in an audience that generally prefers to gather information quickly. It would be ineffective for advertisers to use "please" or "thank you" within their imperative sentences to reduce imposition. Conveniently, imperatives that function as experiencers accomplish the indirectness goal without requiring additional space or time. Even though Chevrolet's advertisement focuses on "Find new roads," the audience will likely understand the implicature that they should purchase the vehicle in order to "find new roads" (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (7) 69). In this way the advertisement draws upon the interplay of multiple media by pairing the imperative and slogan, "Find new roads," with an image of a vehicle with Chevrolet's

logo. Readers make the connection between the image, symbol, and slogan to understand the message that they should purchase a car from Chevrolet in order to partake in the experience. Resorting to Grice's maxim of relevance, the audience generally assumes that the text provided within the advertisement must relate to the topic provided in the ad much like a comment in conversation should directly relate to the conversation taking place; the connection creates an effective implicature which allows the advertiser to sidestep the face threat of a direct acquirer (Grice 1989).

The Genre of Advertisements Operates under a Different Set of Expectations

Considering the variety of strategies used to provide imperatives in a more positive light within the advertisements, the high frequency of imperatives may surprise readers. The frequency of potential face threats is much higher in advertising, an inherently persuasive genre, than it is within regular conversational situations. As discussed in chapter 1, Harris (2001) determined that unlike other social interactions and situations where politeness is expected, the dynamics and expectations in the British House of Parliament created a different politeness norm. In a similar way, I believe that the genre of advertisements has expectations that differ from other forms of communication. In fact, advertisements, because of their tendency to threaten face by valuing their own interests over their audiences', may often be considered obnoxious or intrusive. All it takes is a night drive past a Casino to be affronted by the bright and frustrating lights of the billboards or the opening of a web page to be driven mad by a bouncing advertisement that you cannot seem to track well enough with the mouse to close. In the end, it seems that audiences anticipate that advertisements will be somewhat face-threatening.

As a result, advertisements may be omitted from the extent of politeness expectations that apply in other genres and situations. Clearly, the imperatives in advertisements are not entirely welcomed: the shifts in the data demonstrate a distinct movement away from more face-threatening imperative statements. However, the persistence of bold, large text being used to spell out imperatives makes it apparent that the advertisement differs from its peers. Figures 9, 10, and 11 demonstrate the progression from a typical advertisement in the 1940s (Figure 9) to the two most common styles in 2016 (Figures 10 and 11). Apparent from the images is the conclusion that imperatives continue to exist within text but that the genre of advertisements has radically altered. In the earlier data, the text of an advertisement paralleled the style of a variety of typed paragraphs. Although the information was often crowded into a box around the frame of the page, the text appears as though it could have been taken directly from a typical essay or brochure. In contrast, the advertisement of the new millennium has redefined the genre. The lengthy descriptions and side-bar status of 1940s print advertisements no longer remain the standard in comparison to the sleek and elegant image-driven genre which showcases its imperatives. Figure 10 represents the image-driven advertisements with minimal text that include imperative sentences in their fine print. Figure 11 models the showcased imperative used as a focal point of the advertisement. As a result of these changes, readers may conclude that the advertisement genre has distinguished itself from others, creating a scenario where imperatives may be considered more appropriate and acceptable, therefore, reducing their face threat.

Image Description: This Antoine advertisement is a prototypical example of 1940s advertisement from *Vogue* magazine. The title is in large text size paired with an image of the product. Descriptive text about the product's purpose is written in medium text to draw in the reader. The text description of the product is written in paragraph format in small text size.

Figure 10. Representative 1940s Advertisement (*Vogue* 1940, *94* (4), 29).

Image Description: This Van Cleef & Arpels advertisement models one of the two 2016 advertisement styles. Focusing the advertisement around a large image of the necklace they are trying to sell, the company name is in large text, but they then provide only minimal descriptive information about the product and its accessibility in fine text around periphery of the advertisement.

Figure 11. Representative 2016 Minimal Text Advertisement (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (5), 38-38, 39.)

Image Description: This Lancôme advertisement models the other style common to advertisements in 2016. Much like the previous advertisement, it focuses around a focal image; however it also utilizes a combination of large and medium text to promote the best qualities of the product. Below the eye catching text, this advertisement also provides some small text with additional description. This is more common in makeup advertisements in *Vogue* magazine.

Figure 12. Representative 2016 Sentence-Length Text Advertisement (*Vogue* 2016, *206* (5), 80-80, 81)

Influence of Technological Advancements

Finally, various non-print media greatly influence and affect the progression and changes of recent advertisements. Although this study does not directly evaluate the function and use of imperatives in non-print advertisements, a few distinct communication norms related to advertisements are likely to have an effect on the printed ad as well. For example, modern television advertisements frequently present a story rather than a product (Pennock-Speck and Saz-Rubio 2013). As a result, the printed advertisement must be able to compete. This may explain the movement toward characters within advertisements: models and celebrities are hired to demonstrate product

use and showcase emotions of happiness and love to allure the audience in the same way as the television advertisement.

Another way that technological advancements have affected advertisement norms is through internet-based ads. Whereas previous advertisement communication was one-sided, always precreated for an audience that may or may not receive it, internet advertisements have provided an opportunity for immediate communication between customer and product. Presenting a single idea on an advertisement along the edge of a website may lure the audience to click on a link which provides for an additional abundance of information. This speedy interaction back and forth questions the effectiveness of the print advertisement, encouraging the older form of communication to allow itself to shift in order not to become outdated. It logically follows that marketing presented in magazines no longer follows the same pattern as it would have seventy-six years earlier.

Advertising Language

Although scholars previously have analyzed advertisements, a true diachronic study has not yet been performed to show the progression of these trends. This study builds on the foundational works by Simon and Dejica-Cartis (2015) and Zjakic, Han, and Liu (2017), who analyze imperatives in advertisements in a different and more specific situation. Simon and Dejica-Cartis analyze print advertisements in magazines and newspapers that were produced between 2002 and 2006. Zjakic, Han, and Liu explain possible functions of imperatives within gym advertisements on digital media. Both of these works have played a significant part in the development of this research, and because of these studies, I have been able to continue this line of research within

print advertisements across the course of seventy-six years. Unlike previous studies, this

research provides data that reflect trends across time to help determine patterns in the

uses of imperative sentences in print advertisements.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

***Vogue* Magazine and Its Unique Qualities**

This study is an analysis of the use and frequency of imperatives within magazine advertisements, specifically through *Vogue* magazine. *Vogue* functions as a strong example of magazine advertisements over time since it has been published since 1892. Throughout its existence, *Vogue* has remained a notable and popular magazine, yielding a significant audience and maintaining its role as a familiar publication in many American homes. Unique to *Vogue* is its role as a fashion magazine. Frequently looked to as a forerunner of popular styles, *Vogue*'s note of approval carries significant weight for many of its viewers. In this way, *Vogue* can be equated with *Sports Illustrated*, *Game Informer*, or *National Geographic* in regard to its popularity within its topic. This prevalence of *Vogue* speaks to its value as a source of study; however, it must be set apart for its unique qualities as well.

Unlike many popular magazines of today, *Vogue*, in particular, serves as a placeholder for advertisements. Magazines like *National Geographic* or *Sports Illustrated* devote many pages to articles related to their topics; therefore, their readers frequently purchase the magazines in order to read about new discoveries related to their areas of interest. In contrast, *Vogue* audiences should not anticipate lengthy text unpacking the pros and cons of various stylistic decisions. This magazine, instead, serves as a advertisement hub, and people who choose to read it often approach the pages with shoppers' mindsets. The significance of the advertisements within a shopping magazine makes *Vogue* as uniquely suitable for advertisement analysis; however, one must also

consider that the reader intends to review possible purchases. Therefore, *Vogue*'s audiences may also tend to be more comfortable with directness in advertising language because they anticipate encountering it.

Data Collection

Throughout this study, I have monitored and coded several aspects of the imperatives (font size, sentence position, prominence, function, and frequency) in order to evaluate effectively the characteristics of imperatives in advertisements; however, a few things could be done to increase the precision of the data collection. One uniquely difficult codifying situation encountered through this research consisted of developing an appropriate means to evaluate the size of various texts. As explained in chapter two, I used relational measurements in order to determine fine, small, medium, and large text sizes. In order to be even more precise, I could have determined an objective measurement scale to classify each of the font styles rather than evaluating them comparatively. On the other hand, it could be argued that an objective measurement tool would be less effective because it would not account for the scale of an advertisement which was printed on the edge of a page compared to a full-page advertisement.

Rather than determining the number of imperatives per advertisement, some may prefer a ratio of words in imperative sentences versus words in sentences that do not include imperatives. This would account more consistently for the presence of identifying information such as product name, company, and contact information. Further investigation of the ratio of words in imperative sentences versus words in other sentences may yield intriguing results about the frequency that are not accounted for within this study. By studying the number of words between imperative and non-

imperative sentences, it may also become more apparent how much of the text is taken up by imperatives overall. Since imperative sentences can often be much shorter (using an implied "you" as the subject), it would be interesting to see if the total number of words in imperative sentences was significantly smaller than their counterparts. Advertisers may justify the persistence of direct language through imperative sentences if they believed that the overall language of the advertisement was more politely appropriate for their audiences. This study could also lead to an evaluation of the function of non-imperative sentences which could contrast with the function of imperative sentences to determine whether or not other sentence types are ever used to fulfill the same purposes as imperative sentences or if they serve different purposes altogether. This would allow a stronger conclusion to be made regarding the nature of directness in advertisements, answering the following question: do advertisers use imperative sentences in order to more directly state something that would otherwise require a much greater amount of space in the advertisement or a much larger duration of attention from the viewer?

Furthermore, the dates selected for study were carefully chosen but could always be enhanced. Through the provided data, a range consisting of seventy-six years of *Vogue* magazines was analyzed, and the publications were evaluated in twenty-year intervals. To strengthen the trend analysis further, I could extend the study to evaluate the progression of imperative usage every ten years instead of twenty. As a result of the consistency within the current trend lines on most of the topics, I do not anticipate that a ten-year interval would show significant differences; however, it would fortify the results with additional data that support the same conclusions.

Contributions to the Research Community

One particular strength of this study is the breadth of foundational research. Rather than limiting the scope of literature review to those directly dealing with impoliteness in advertisements, this study builds on the politeness research of Leech (2014), Brown and Levinson (1987), Goffman (2003), Terkourafi (2008), and many others. Beyond the bounds of advertisements alone, the critical works in other genres such as television politeness (Pennock-Speck and Saz-Rubio 2013 and Culpeper 2005), yoga instructions (Brody 2017), and British Parliament discourse (Harris 2001) provide a greater understanding of politeness use across genres. This breadth allows this study to consider more global ideas about politeness and couch the additional research in context appropriately.

Intergenre Strategies and the Influence of Image and Text Interplay

Building upon the ideas of Cook (2001), my research also supports a substantial influence of message and media interplay. Cook comments that advertisements often use images to interact with the text altering its interpretation or prepare an advertisement in such a way that it appears to share qualities with different genres (legal documents, stories, or other forms). This practice of intermingling genres leads to the development of intergenres. The process consists of "selling one genre as another one by mixing elements of both" (Halmari and Virtanen 2005 p. 242). As Bhatia (2018) explains, all genres, including that of advertising, are constructs which respond to their purpose rather than a single prototypical style. Halmari and Virtanen (2005) add that because implicit persuasion is often more effective that explicit persuasion, a persuasive genre necessarily undergoes change over time in order to maintain effectiveness. Being presented as

intergenres, advertisements may increase their ability to gain the attention of potential audiences. As a result, marketers frequently incorporate images to interplay with text in order to accomplish an intergenre presentation or to present an appealing image that garners interest from readers. Television infomercials frequently utilize this strategy. As I have argued through this study, imperatives are often given a prominent role, and they commonly interact with the images on the page in order to appear prominently. Additionally, the use of images within advertisements has greatly increased in quantity and in prominence as more recent advertisements often cover full pages or multiple pages with images, followed by only a few words. Since Cook's study in 2001, this prevalence of grand images covering the pages has only increased. My research builds upon his study by commenting on the nature and function of the imperative within these scenarios and covering a significant span of time, seventy-six years, in the process.

Why Directness in Advertisements is not Impolite

One way this study contributes to the field of pragmatics is through the explanation for acceptable impoliteness. Although the genre and means of this study may more closely exemplify Zjakic, Han, and Liu's (2017) or Simon and Dejica-Cartis's (2015) research on the function of imperatives within advertisements, the most significant relationship probably remains between the explanations I have provided about imperative use and the study of British Parliament by Harris (2001). Harris makes an intriguing argument regarding the function of conversation and professional interaction within the Prime Minister's question hour, suggesting that individuals are held to a different standard for politeness protocols than they would be elsewhere. Despite the regular functioning of politeness norms outside of this context, the atmosphere, setting, and

group norms provide a unique anticipation for impolite behavior. In fact, listeners not only expect impoliteness to occur, but would be greatly surprised or even disappointed with the speakers if they did not treat the opposition with hostility. In a similar way, I have, after having analyzed a myriad of variables, also suggested that particular genres are set apart from general politeness norms. Although, over time, shifts have occurred regarding the presentation and boldness of imperative sentences within advertisement texts, their presence and function persist. If presented in conversation or via office memo, a similar use of imperatives would often be interpreted as face-threatening and offensive.

Future Research

This study indicates that there is a strong tradition for the use of imperatives in advertisements. Following this research, it would be beneficial to move in a few additional directions to reach a more comprehensive understanding of the function of directness in advertisements as well as the relationship between the imperative sentence and the advertisement as a whole. One way to accomplish this would be by expanding the print advertisements analyzed. Collecting data on advertisements written for different audiences would widen the scope of this analysis. Similarly, reviewing magazines that cover different varieties of content would meaningfully expand upon the consistency of the trends as well. Another important contribution would be to include data from different media, in addition to print advertisements. With the progression of technology, print sources no longer hold the corner on the market for advertising. A study of imperative use in radio, television, and internet advertisements would provide more comprehensive ground to verify whether or not the persistence of the imperative as evidenced in this research remains consistent in non-print media advertisements. This study, which is

based on an extensive diachronic approach to politeness in magazine advertisements, opens the door for several avenues of research for continued investigations into the role of politeness and directness versus indirectness. Following the explanations of Leech (2014) and Brown and Levinson (1987), one may conclude that advertisements tend toward impoliteness as a result of their consistent use of directness. Rather than talking around purchasing, marketers frequently choose to state their intents directly, placing greater value on their own interests than on those of readers without apology or circumlocution. However, as this study consistently exemplifies, within advertising, directness is often considered permissible or even appropriate because of the unique context of the direct words—imperatives.

In Sum

Ultimately, throughout this study, many new interpretations about the function of imperatives in advertisements can be drawn; however, the most substantial conclusion is that over the course of seventy-six years the role of imperatives has increased in frequency and prominence. As discussed in the previous chapter, the role and presentation of imperatives often changes. Advertisements in the 1940s tend to use imperatives that are printed in small font and embedded within paragraphs. By 2016, imperatives often hold a more significant role. They begin to be placed prominently in a central location or set against an eye-catching image. Each of these changes shows an increase in acceptance of direct language within advertisements. Rather than seeing a decline in font size or minimization of imperatives through placement, readers recognize an opposite shift, imperatives boldly move to the forefront of advertisements.

The increased number of imperatives in the role of experiences (that is, imperative sentences which encourage the audience to take part in an experience related to their product) accommodates for the potentially excessive directness of imperatives as face threats. Experiencers are used as a new means to normalize the presence of imperatives. Rather than resorting to indirect speech acts (for instance, using a question for a command as in "When getting pregnant isn't part of your 3 year plan what's next? Nexplanon!" (*Vogue* 2016*, 206* (1), 44). in order to maximize politeness, creative marketers have developed their own indirect function which bypasses the need for indirect speech acts. An imperative that orders one to purchase a product might be considered too direct, bordering on rude or impolite; however, being encouraged to appreciate one's self rarely meets disdain. Advertisers play on their audiences' insecurities and the audience's desire for affirmation by providing what they have reformed as inspirational words for their readers. Because the company is selling an experience, an idea, rather than a product, the audience welcomes the advertisement rather than rejects it. As a result of this shift and the increase in imperative frequency, font size, and prominence, imperatives have named their persistent position in advertising and are not likely to be usurped.

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