

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPLIANCE GAINING MESSAGES
AND THE COORDINATED MANAGEMENT OF MEANING

by

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Chapter One

Communication is a form of human action that creates social reality. This is the central tenet of the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM), a communication theory developed by W. Barnett Pearce and Vernon E. Cronen. CMM as a theory of communication has grown out of Cronen and Pearce's belief that people construct their own social reality.

The purpose of this report is to analyze CMM as a communication theory and to describe how the process of compliance-gaining as a specific communication context contributes to the development of one's social reality. The report intends to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is social reality?
- 2) What are the major characteristics of CMM and how do they account for the development of one's social reality?
- 3) How is one's social reality created during compliance-gaining?

Chapter One includes a discussion of social reality and the process of compliance-gaining. Chapter Two describes the major characteristics of CMM and relates those characteristics to the development of social reality. Finally, Chapter Three describes how social reality is created during the act of compliance-gaining.

As early as 1923 Malinowski recognized that people create reality (p. 296). Malinowski identified a relationship between communication and the development of reality. He studied the natives of Melanesia in East Asia and found that when the native language was used to communicate the interaction was ethnocentric in its perspective. His research supports the view that language contributes to the creation of a common reality.

The Melanesian's employed language to discuss future tasks or plans for the tribe. Sometimes, their communication involved the talking in incantations, rituals, or ceremonies. For example, a tribal ritual to heal the sick created a reality in which the tribe functioned. Because the tribe believed that the ritual would heal the sick person they each accepted an idea that was formed by the tribe as a group rather than by them individually.

A Western medical doctor might call the ritual superstitious, unscientific, or not a true representation of reality. But, Malinowski argued that the tribe by creating a reality in which the ritual forms the basis for healing, had just as correct a reality as that of the Western medical doctor.

G. H. Mead (1934), though he never used the phrase "social reality" described a "dynamic reality" in which communication was the process in which individuals created

reality through their relationship with others. According to Mead, the social order is created through interaction with others. Once defined, people treat it as if it were real. Hence, a social reality is created.

Perhaps the best explanation of social reality comes from Berger and Luckman (1966): "persons construct an interpretable universe or known space within which they live and move and have their being; this is called social reality (p. 116). Social reality, then, is defined as "that which people believe other people believe" (Berger and Luckman, 1966, p. 117). For example, if a person walks into a store and asks for "the red ones in the large jar up there", that statement has no connection with reality. But, if that same person gets the "red ones", the message has served its purpose in creating reality. In other words because a person gets the "red ones," a common social reality has been created.

Other theorists have attempted to account for how people construct their social reality through communication. (Barnlund, 1963; Brummett, 1971; Bormann, 1972; Watzlawick, 1976; Orr, 1978; Gergen, 1985). Bormann (1972), for example, believed that persons could be influenced in their perception of reality by sharing a common "vision" with others. If an individual proposes a perception of the world with which you agree, your acceptance creates a shared social reality.

Watzlawick (1976) explained that a person's version of reality is the result of communication between he/she and the groups in which he/she participates. Persons share a common social reality, because by participating in the same groups, they simultaneously and reciprocally define the symbols of communication they use and build relationships with those using them. In that way, he/she's impression of the world, is developed in the way he/she talks about it. Social reality then is made up of the impressions we form within ourselves about the world and the relationships we sustain based on those impressions. There is at least one element shared by all of these views of social reality. Social reality consists of those beliefs that an individual holds in common with the group.

CMM has as its principal concept the way people construct social realities. Cronen, Pearce, and Harris (1982) view ordinary communication as the center of powerful forces through which persons maintain, alter, and simultaneously create social reality. They argue that an adequate theory of communication must do more than acknowledge that the nature of communication depends on the context in which it occurs. An adequate theory of communication must account for how persons create contexts through communication. They, in fact, believe that a truly acceptable theory of communication must account for the

process of creating perspectives on reality that make possible ideas and facts (1982, p. 65).

Pearce in his early work believed that not enough attention had been paid to the development and function of social reality. For him, social reality was generated from episodes of talk and the formation of interpersonal relationships (Pearce, 1976, p. 17). He stated that interpersonal communication involves the sequencing of messages into conversation, and the sequencing of conversations into a relationship, which forms a social reality (1976, p. 17).

In CMM, Pearce includes concepts associated with anthropology, sociology, psychology, and communication studies, and structures a framework that explores human communication and the structure of social reality. In doing so, Pearce and Cronen offer a series of propositions which serve to develop the relationship of CMM to social reality (Pearce and Cronen, 1980). The propositions assume that within society each social group is "interdependent with a changing environment." Persons who make up specific groups are also changing because of their involvement with other groups. The conclusion is that a social reality that is adequate at one time may be inadequate at others (Cronen, Pearce, and Harris, 1982, p. 67).

The following propositions represent CMM's assumptions for interpreting the world.

Proposition One - Human beings will create systems of meaning and order even when there are none (Watzlawick, 1976, p. 49).

The terms with which the world is understood are products of past interchanges among people. When a person experiences something he or she attempts to make sense of it based on some past experience.

Proposition Two - Human beings organize meanings hierarchically (Pearce and Conklin, 1976, p. 76).

In CMM, the theorists speculate that messages are often construed on several levels. Persons act on the basis of message constructions regarding situations, beliefs, etc.

Proposition Three - Human beings organize meanings temporally (Shank and Abelson, 1977).

The meanings of a message change with successive messages. Communication is a sequential activity and, as messages follow each other, a particular pattern may emerge. In other words, the unfolding interaction suggests a definition of what meaning to assign.

Proposition Four - Individuals' systems of meaning are to some extent idiosyncratic (Kelly, 1963; O'Keefe, 1978).

Although individuals develop systems of meaning based on their own social reality, those messages are still unique and different from those of others.

Proposition Five - Individuals interpret another's behavior in the context of larger systems (Pearce and Cronen, 1980). Persons communicate when they apply their system of meanings (social reality) to the messages they receive. In turn other persons are doing the same thing. To understand the interactions between persons, the systems (social realities) of all those involved should be taken into account.

As discussed, one of the purposes of this paper is to explain how social reality is created during compliance-gaining. The foregoing review of the concept of "social reality" and the discussion of compliance-gaining messages below will set the stage for a later discussion of it.

Overview of Compliance-Gaining Messages

Compliance-gaining can be described as a process involving the manipulation of messages to achieve behavioral change (Miller and Burgoon, 1978). The process involves an attempt on the part of one person (Person A, an actor) to change the behavior of another person (Person B, a target). Person A presents messages to Person B, which contain the desired course of action. When the messages generate the desired response from Person B compliance has been gained. Scholars have used a variety of methods and procedures for the derivation of compliance-gaining messages. The earliest and most prominent of the studies was Marwell and Schmitt's taxonomy of sixteen compliance-

gaining strategies. Others have identified similar taxonomies for compliance-gaining, among them Falbo (1977), Wiseman and Schenck-Hamlin (1981), Cody McLaughlin and Schneider (1981). The purpose here is to offer an example of the messages these studies described to define compliance-gaining.

The most basic compliance-gaining message is the "direct request" (Wiseman and Schenck-Hamlin, 1981). The actor simply asks the target to comply to a request. No additional motivation or inducement is offered for compliance. For example, the question "will you give me a ride to the airport," is a direct request. Another type of compliance-gaining message is called a "promise" (Marwell and Schmitt, 1967, p. 354). The actor (Person A) offers a reward for compliance. In other words, if you comply I will reward you. "Debt" is another type of compliance-gaining strategy (Marwell and Schmitt, 1967). Person A takes the position "you owe me" for past favors given to Person B.

All three of these message types are representative of the efforts of theorists to generate lists of compliance-gaining messages. Wiseman and Schenck-Hamlin (1981) developed a more comprehensive approach to compliance-gaining. Their study is important because of its effort to analyze the underlying structure of compliance-gaining messages. Four properties are named by Wiseman and

Schenck-Hamlin (1981), manipulation of sanctions to describe the characteristics of a compliance-gaining strategy, the reasons for compliance, the locus of control and the revelation of the persuader's intent.

Sanctions are identified as rewards and punishments. Using the previous examples, Person A controls the rewards that appeal to ingratiation, promises, and debts. Person B controls rewards of esteem, for example the children's offer of esteem "I'll be your best friend!" Punishments controlled by the actor Person A include "threats" while those controlled by Person B include "guilt" (Wiseman Schenck-Hamlin, 1981; Jensen, 1984). In addition, circumstances control rewards and punishments. A reward controlled by a third party is "allurement" and a punishment controlled by a third party is "warning."

The manipulation of sanctions is different than the locus of control of sanctions. In manipulating sanctions a person takes advantage of the sanctions he/she controls and uses them to the greatest personal benefit. For example, Person A knows that Person B needs money, Person A may offer the reward of money in return for compliance to a request. In doing so Person A is manipulating the sanctions by enhancing the request for compliance with money as an additional incentive.

The reasons for compliance and the revelation of persuader's intent are the two additional properties of

compliance-gaining messages. The reasons for compliance property is easily understood with an example. If Person A requests compliance from Person B based on the consequence of Reason C and in turn, Person B complies, Person A has given adequate reasons for compliance.

The revelation of the persuader's intent is the last property of compliance-gaining messages to be discussed. For example, when Person A requests money from Person B because he wants to buy something to eat, Person A has revealed the intention to get some food. Clearly, in compliance-gaining theory intention is important because it answers what a person wants from an episode.

In summary, this chapter has provided an overview of the thinking that brought about the theory of CMM. The chapter has reviewed the concept of social reality and described the process of compliance-gaining. The task now will be to focus on how CMM can be understood using the act of compliance-gaining and how compliance-gaining relates to the creation of social reality.

Chapter Two

The Coordinated Management of Meaning is a communication theory that describes how persons construct reality when they interact with one another. This chapter will discuss CMM by relying on the main body of literature relating to it (see Pearce, 1976; Pearce, 1979; Pearce and Conklin, 1979; Pearce and Cronen, 1980; and Cronen, Pearce and Harris, 1982). The major goals of this chapter are to describe the terms in the expression "the Coordinated Management of Meaning," to describe the theory, and to relate the theory to social reality. First, the concept of coordination is discussed.

Coordination

CMM theory describes persons' attempts to achieve "coordination" by managing the ways messages take on meanings. Cronen, Pearce and Harris (1982, p. 69) use the analogy of two motorists. Motorists coordinate their encounter at an intersection by avoiding each other even though they inhabit different "realities." Drivers obey systems of traffic laws and spontaneously respond to the behavior of other drivers (1982, p. 68) to achieve "coordination". Another example is Pearce's (1976, p. 24) musicians' example. Five musicians cannot play together unless they reach some agreement to "coordinate" their performance.

In coordinating communication, a person interprets and responds to the verbal and non-verbal messages ("acts" in CMM) of others. The problem in communication is that no two people enter the process knowing what the other person is thinking. As interaction begins, events are uncoordinated and the primary task of communication is to achieve and later sustain some form of coordination.

Cronen, Pearce and Harris (1982) describe three variables related to coordination: coherence, control, and valence. Coherence is the extent to which persons make sense of a developing sequence of messages. As an interaction unfolds messages follow messages and as they are interpreted they help to make the interaction comprehensible.

For example, when Person A asks Person B, "Where are you from?" and Person B responds "Texas! Where are you from?", the appropriate response from Person A is to state his/her origins. Person B might respond "Where in Texas?", or "I lived in Texas once," or "Texas is beautiful." Coherence occurs when both participants feel they know what is going on. In other words, each subsequent message further clarifies the relationship of each to the other.

Control refers to which of the communicators has more influence over the other individual. In a particular episode, for example, a superior might tell a subordinate

to do something over whose outcome the superior has influence.

Valence refers to the degree to which communicators find the product of their joint actions satisfactory. For example, communicators might agree upon the episode's coherence and control, but have a disagreement as to whether the episode is satisfactory (i.e., desirable, pleasant).

These three variables answer the questions: What are we doing?, Who is controlling what we are doing?, and Do I like what we are doing?

Meaning

An adequate theory of communication will account for a communicator's meanings (Cronen, Pearce and Harris 1979, p. 22). In the expression "coordinated management of meaning", meaning is described as being context-bound or derived from episodes (Pearce, 1976, p. 20). Although this will be explained in more detail later, persons have a complex network of relations among meanings. But, for the present purposes, persons have several levels of context that affect meaning. Each level serves to define and describe successive episodes with another person.

According to Pearce (1976), communicators do not view their conversations as streams of experiences. Rather, they view them as units of a situation. They interpret

messages by locating within their memories similar conversational units with a related meaning context.

For example, when a person answers the phone, he/she will greet the other person, anticipating a conversation with another person. But, when a person answers the phone and encounters a computer-generated message, he/she realizes that the computer does not require a greeting. The person's greeting is based on the anticipated context of a conversation. In CMM meaning is understood to be the context of a conversation.

Management

Management focuses directly on how people organize, direct, and control the creation of social reality. Individuals participate in a variety of social groups and organizations, and a theory of communication must account for the way people manage their roles in groups and organizations.

Persons do this by transcending their environment to produce and understand messages for which they do not necessarily have previous knowledge. In other words, persons select meanings for actions based on their ability to coordinate with another person. If a certain response was called for, then that response was selected by managing the number of appropriate responses available to the person and determining which best applies.

This section has attempted to define the terms that label CMM in order to provide background to Cronen and Pearce's theory.

CMM

CMM has three components. The first component is the individual's hierarchy of meaning. A second is the concept of rules that people use to organize and manage their meanings. The third component is "logical force."

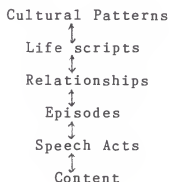
CMM - Hierarchy

In Pearce's 1976 work three levels of hierarchical meaning were described. By 1980, Pearce and Cronen had expanded the hierarchy to include six levels. In 1982, Cronen, Pearce, and Harris described these six levels of the hierarchy. Their latest version will be presented here. The first element in the hierarchy is "content." It refers to the verbal and non-verbal information carried in messages. But it does not indicate the message's type. "Speech Acts," the second element, are units of meaning that tell us about the intention of the speaker. Speech acts could entail promises, information, advice, etc.

"Episodes," the next element, consist of one or more speech acts that are interpreted by the situation in which they occur. These communicative routines are viewed as wholes and can be recognized easily. The "relationships" element represents the implicit agreements people make with each other that form the collective "we." These are also

called "contracts." When persons have a history of interactions from which to draw they have established a common degree of comfort with each other. That degree of comfort is the "contract." "Life scripts" consist of the individuals' self concepts. Self concept is essentially the values and beliefs a person believes about him/herself, i.e. (family episodes).

Finally, "cultural patterns" locate human experience in a larger conceptual framework of social order. For example, on an employment application one answers questions about him/herself. One's answers can be categorized in groups. Those groups represent the varied aspects of one's environment. That environment represents one's concept of social order. These elements form a hierarchy as indicated in the following diagram.



Cronen, Pearce and Harris (1982) use the example of a marital dispute. Suppose one party uses the episode to interpret the entire relationship, while the other does not. The first may see the relationship as fundamentally altered by the episode, while the second wonders how such

an interpretation could be derived from the content alone (p. 72).

The concept of the hierarchy of CMM might further be understood by the notion that meanings are created by people in different ways. For example, in southern Texas where this author grew up, it was common to greet people with the message "What's goin' on?" But, in other parts of the country that message is not a greeting. It questions one's ability to do something.

The elements of the hierarchy are imbedded within each other so that the lower levels of the hierarchy are defined by the levels above them. At the "content" level a message has not been conceptualized yet. The "speech act" element makes sense of the content element by relating it to the intention of the speaker.

The episode element of the hierarchy explains the speech act. The intent of a message can change depending on the situation in which it occurs. Relationships describe the episode element by focusing on the patterns of similar episodes which the individual has had with another.

Life scripts can define the relationships element because the background of an individual will determine the potential of relationships possible. Finally, cultural patterns is the world view that makes the lower levels possible. In general, the elements of the hierarchy determine a strategy for selecting a message.

CMM - Rules

In the previous section the hierarchy described the structure from which persons organize their own individual meanings. In the process of interpreting messages with respect to the hierarchy, persons use their own set of rules to guide the interpretation. CMM identifies two types of rules to describe the way that people interpret messages (Pearce and Cronen, 1980). The two types are constitutive and regulative rules. Constitutive rules organize a person's hierarchy of meaning. They specify how meanings at one level of abstraction count as meaningful construals at another level (Cronen, Pearce and Harris, 1982). For example, the statement "You are beautiful" counts as the speech act "compliment" depending on the context. In an argument, "You are beautiful" could mean an insult. In addition, "you're good looking" could be perceived as a "come-on" line, depending on context. In general, when a message is perceived it takes on meaning at the content level of the CMM hierarchy. At this level, individuals may define the message based on the other levels. Constitutive rules are present at all levels of the hierarchy, and serve to integrate the levels rather than provide a guide for behavior.

Cronen, Pearce and Harris describe these rules by stating "that in a certain context, if specific antecedent

conditions are satisfied then meaning at one level of social reality counts as meaning at another level of social reality" (1982, p. 74).

The constitutive rule is modeled below (Cronen, Pearce, and Harris, 1982).

$$cR = \frac{MC_k}{A \supset [MC_i + MC_j]}$$

where: A = antecedent conditions

MC_i = meaningful construal at abstraction level i

MC_j = meaningful construal at abstraction level j

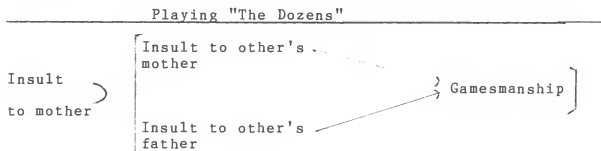
MC_k = meaningful construal at abstraction level k

+ = read "count as"

[= read "in the context of..."

\supset = read "if...then"

An example of a constitutive rule based on the urban ghetto game playing "The Dozens" can be developed as follows:



Regulative rules can be defined as cognitive reorganizations of constitutive rules (Pearce and Cronen, 1980, p. 173). These regulative rules indicate to individuals what they should or should not do in a given communicative interaction. These rules tell people how to act (Jensen, 1984, p. 14). A regulative rule can be developed for the game "playing the dozens." If two urban youths are "playing the dozens," each knows that the episode starts with reciprocated insults toward the other individual, or the other individual's family. Each insult must top the previous one, continuing until one participant is unable to produce a more effective response. Each knows that in order not to lose the game, certain forms of responses must be avoided. Thus regulative rules for a particular episode specify what speech acts may follow antecedent acts in order to coordinate the episode (Pearce, Cronen, Johnson, Jones, and Raymond, 1980; Pearce and Cronen, 1980; Cronen; Pearce and Harris, 1979, 1982).

The regulative rule is modeled below Cronen, Pearce, and Harris (1982).

$$\text{rR: } \frac{\text{Actn}_i}{A \supset \left[(\text{Do} (\text{Actn}_i))_i - n \right] \supset C}$$

where: A = antecedent message and/or conditions

Do = deontic operation. (The deontic operators are obligatory, legitimate, prohibited, undetermined)

\supset = read "if ...then"

Actn = Action (a class term for social action at any level of abstraction in the hierarchy, such as episode, relationship, life scripts etc.)

i and j = subscripts, indicating levels of abstraction in the hierarchy such as speech sets, episodes, etc.

C = intended consequents

The model above indicates that within the context of some social reality, if an antecedent condition is followed by specific actions then some consequence will follow. Cronen, Pearce, and Harris (1982) illustrate a regulative rule based on the example of "playing the dozens" below.

$$\text{rR}_1: \frac{\text{Episode: Playing the Dozens}}{\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{opponent} \\ \text{insults own} \\ \text{parent} \end{array} \right] \supset \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{(obligatory} \\ \text{(top opponent's} \\ \text{last insult))} \end{array} \right] \supset \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{avoid losing} \\ \text{opponent insults} \\ \text{back} \end{array} \right]}$$

In the episode "playing the dozens" regulative rules are cognitive reorganizations of constitutive rules. An important aspect of CMM is the idea that regulative rules are built from constitutive rules. The rules of CMM are

based on the content of a person's hierarchy. This hierarchy in turn provides a structure for the relationships between individuals. The structural designations (i.e., episodes, lifescrpts, speech acts) may only serve to mark or identify linkages between levels in certain situations. But the presence of a structure for the relationship indicates a common social reality. Cronen, Pearce, and Harris (1982) model how regulative rules are derived from constitutive rules in the example below.

Formal Dining Episode		
cR_x :	at anytime) [slurping soup ---- prohibited]
Formal Dining Episode		
+ cR_y :	at anytime) [slurping soup ---- unintelligent ---- rude ---- low class
Formal Dining Episode		
= rR :	at anytime) [(prohibited (slurping soup)) Avoid being construed as unintelligent rude, low class

In the preceding models of constitutive and regulative rules, individual meanings for messages have been modeled as systems of rules. CMM conceptualizes all persons as having beliefs and values made up of rules for interpreting

meaning (constitutive) and rules for selecting an action or response to messages (regulative). Thus, persons use "constitutive" and "regulative" rules to manage their individual hierarchy, and in turn create social reality with others.

When persons interact with one another they form an interpersonal system. The system is governed by a person's rules and hierarchy of meanings in combination with those of others. This interpersonal system will be used to explain the development of one's social reality.

CMM - Logical Force

Cronen, Pearce, and Harris (1979) believe that meanings are organized temporally. This means that in the flow of communication each person's behavior is tied to the behavior of others. Since communication is sequential, messages precede other messages and their meanings become dependent on one another.

CMM posits that interpersonal communication occurs when a message produced by one person is interpreted by the constitutive rules of another person. Each person's system of rules creates pressure for the person to act in certain ways. This pressure is called "logical force." (Pearce and Cronen, 1980). Logical force refers to the pressure that is present in a context to make a certain episode take place, and has implications for the speech act behavior that follows. In other words, in a given episode the range

of actions available to each person is determined by the joining of the person's rules for meaning and action.

For example, in retail sales, salespersons are taught not to give their potential customer an opportunity to say "no." When asking someone to buy, a salesperson asks a question which should generate a desired response. "Do you want to buy the blue one or the red one?" is an example of this type of question. The pressure of "logical force" limits the number of responses available in a situation. When the prospect answers affirmatively they buy either the red or blue one. When the answer is different, logical force results in an answer that gives more information or is "no". "Logical force" is concerned with how an individual perceives an episode which is composed of the previous speech act meaning and the range of actions available. Based on that perception, the individual chooses to act in a certain way. The focus of the perception is on consequences and how individuals engage in communication to bring about the desired consequences.

CMM and Social Reality

The three components of CMM represent one way of explaining the structure of social reality. The CMM hierarchy is proposed as a guideline or model from which to structure meaning or social reality. The content level and the speech acts level illustrate the initial stages of reality construction. Remember that content and speech

acts identify a speaker's intent. The next context is episodes. This level identifies past realities that have been created in similar situations. Relationships, life scripts and cultural patterns represent higher levels of reality construction.

For example, if a married couple discusses feelings about a political candidate, one spouse's relationship with the candidate will create a reality different from the other's. That difference could be based on being "liberal" and the other "conservative," or the different reality that friends enjoy over acquaintances. Therefore, "life scripts" can create reality based on the relationships available over time.

Finally, cultural patterns represent the boundaries present for an individual's social reality. Those boundaries are imposed upon one's ability to act in a given situation.

The rules of CMM describe how reality comes to be created. An individual is a rules-based actor who interprets the messages of his world using constitutive rules. Those constitutive rules then generate regulative rules for the appropriate action to be taken. A series of messages and responses interpreted by the constitutive rules of all the communicators' present creates a common shared reality.

Finally, logical force is the influence that constrains the potential responses to messages. If the hierarchy is the structure of reality and rules systems are the building blocks of reality, then logical force is the tool used to shape the reality. In communication, the constitutive rules of a person in combination with the regulative rules limit the responses available to a message. By limiting the responses, logical force limits the way that reality can be created.

For example, in the retail sales example earlier, when a prospective customer is asked to buy either the "blue" one or the "red" one a high degree of logical force is present. Because the number of responses is limited to the ones given, an individual must choose to accept the outcome of this reality or create a new reality with which to interpret the questions.

Chapter three will describe how compliance-gaining can clarify the ways in which CMM is used to explain the creation of social reality.

Chapter Three

The previous chapter proposed that CMM provides a structure with which to understand human communication. In this chapter, the goal is to apply the concept of CMM to compliance-gaining episodes. Using CMM this chapter will examine two instances of compliance-gaining and suggest some implications for future research.

Since the CMM hierarchy consists of levels of meanings, different meanings for messages are interpreted at different levels of the hierarchy. For instance, if a message is interpreted at the "content" level, then one kind of meaning is present. But, if the message is interpreted at the level of "livescripts", then another meaning is present. This first section is concerned with the way persons perceive messages at various levels of the hierarchy. The hierarchy is not predictive, but will serve as a useful tool for analysis.

For example, people who do not perform satisfactorily on the job may have their employment terminated. In a retail store, an employee who serves as the store manager, has certain responsibilities, among them is to help the business operate profitably. For the sake of this example, the store manager will report to the store owner, and the store owner will evaluate the store manager's job performance. Suppose that a retail store has for the past few months experienced decreasing sales and increasing

costs. This combination is not satisfactory and the store owner might have the following constitutive rule:

If I say, "If the present sales trend continues some changes will be made," this action will be taken as a warning, because the store manager will realize his job is in jeopardy.

The owner's constitutive rule invokes the following regulative rule applicable to the manager:

My act, taken as a warning, will show the store manager that I'm serious. This should result in his working harder, so that things will improve.

In general, the owner realizes that the business must make money. But, he may also believe that the situation is temporary, and is just a routine cycle for the business. Consequently, he might interpret his messages at the "episodes" level of his hierarchy. However, the message might be interpreted by the store manager differently. The following might be his constitutive rule:

The owner knows how hard I work if I say, "By changes, do you think we ought to change our supplier of widgets?" This action will be taken as interest on my part in improving the business' sales.

His regulative rule might be the following:

My act taken as showing interest in the business will indicate how important I am to the business, and that I want it to improve.

The manager might interpret the message at the "speech acts" level because the owner has simply indicated an intention to make some changes, broadly defined, if things do not improve.

If the exchange continued, the owner might respond to the manager with the following constitutive rule.

This employee doesn't understand he is accountable to my business. My action must be clearly understood as a threat in order to improve job performance.

His regulative rule might be the following:

My act must be taken as a threat in order to make him understand my message. I will say, "If your performance does not improve, I'll fire you and run the business myself."

The owner might interpret the exchange by perceiving its context at the "lifescritps" level or the "relationships" level, because he remembers the last manager he fired.

The manager, in turn, might realize that the message should be given meaning at the "lifescritps" level of his hierarchy. Because in the broad context of his life the

loss of his job means hardship for him. Thus, the manager's constitutive rule might be:

The boss is serious about firing me. I should respond so as not to further enrage him.

His regulative rule might be:

My action will be to say "Yes, sir" and he will know I intend to work harder.

The manager now realizes how to interpret the owner's message. This causes the manager to work harder in order to comply with the owner's request.

In the process just described the store manager and the store owner created a reality that resulted in compliance being gained to the threat of losing one's job.

A second example that will help to explain the relationship between CMM and compliance-gaining is the concept of "logical force." Logical force is the pressure that constrains the number of responses available in a given interaction. Logical force also serves to move the interaction to some conclusion.

Logical force is present in compliance-gaining. Consider the process one must go through to buy a new car. A person goes to a car lot and is approached by a salesperson who wants to by sell a car. The salesperson asks questions that lead to the sale of the car. Salesperson: Hello! Are you interested in a car, van, or truck?

Person A: I am just looking, I'll call you if I need something.

The salesperson attempts to find out what the prospective customer wants and at the same time direct him toward buying a car, truck, or van. However, the customer might answer in another way, which will influence the salesperson's response. That response might be:

Salesperson: Have you seen the new Model X? It is great!

Person A: No! But, is it like your competition's Model Z? I really like the looks of that car!

The prospective customer when asked an additional question might answer by providing additional information that influences the next response by the salesperson.

Salesperson: I agree. That Model Z is great! Have you seen our Model Y? It is very similar to Z.

Person A: No, but I would like to see it.

The salesperson interpreted Person A's response of liking the competition's Model Z as reflecting the type of car that Person A might want to buy. The salesperson then offered a substitute based on the knowledge gained in the previous message. The salesperson now asks what features the customer wants on the car, when the customer wants to drive it, and how much he wants his monthly payments to be. The questions serve to gain the compliance of the customer. Person A is in fact dictating what messages will follow based on responses to previous questions.

As the interaction develops the amount of logical force increases because compliance has been gained at several previous times and a skillful salesperson can use the logical force present to bring the situation to a desired outcome.

In other words, logical force has pressured Person A to behave in certain ways because of prior conditions. In the example, Person A chooses to drive the car because that is the appropriate thing to do in the context of buying a car.

The above two examples illustrate how, during the act of compliance-gaining, the persons interacting co-create a reality that makes sense of the messages exchanged. The examples suggest implications for future research.

As the logical force example suggests, certain actions govern the actions that will follow. According to CMM the actions that follow may depend on the level of hierarchy the participants are using. In other words, if messages have different meanings at different levels of the hierarchy, then different outcomes are possible.

Thus, if an individual is at the "content" level and is asked for compliance, he might give it rather than refuse it. However, if a person is at the "livescripts" level he might be harder to convince. Another implication is the possibility that as you move up the hierarchy the context becomes more important.

The level at which actors make meaning might determine why certain outcomes have greater importance to them than others. On the other hand, the level at which targets make meaning may influence why they do or do not comply.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPLIANCE GAINING MESSAGES
AND THE COORDINATED MANAGEMENT OF MEANING

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this report is to assess research on the theory of Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) and develop a relationship between it and compliance-gaining messages. The report emphasizes the central thesis of CMM that communication is the process by which relationships are created and maintained.

Three components of CMM are explored in the report. First, individuals communicate with respect to their own hierarchy of meanings. Second, constitutive and regulative rules provide people with the ability to manage their meanings. Third, persons engaged in conversation use these individual rules to convey meaning and form an interpersonal system, influenced by logical force.

The act of compliance-gaining is grounded in the theory of CMM by acknowledging that a degree of coordination is necessary to gain compliance. Using CMM the report applies the theory to compliance-gaining episodes and specifically examines two instances. The final portion concludes with some implications for future research. Research to support this contention is not available and CMM can be criticized for not addressing the role that compliance-gaining plays in the interaction of individuals.