

**IMAGINED INTERACTIONS AS A COMPONENT
OF HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC COMPETITION**

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IMAGINED INTERACTIONS AS A COMPONENT
OF HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC COMPETITION

An Abstract

Presented to the
Graduate and Research Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Lee Ellen Beach

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of imagined interactions for a specific task, a high school forensic competition. The results indicate that students experience imagined interactions related to competition. Comparisons were made between successful and unsuccessful competitors, experienced and inexperienced competitors, and extemporaneous speakers and original orators. Successful and experienced competitors imagine themselves as successful and perceive less discrepancy between the real and imagined interaction. Designed to facilitate their specific task, the imagined interactions of extemporaneous speakers and original orators differ in the time they experience the imagined interaction and how they perceive themselves in the imagined interaction.

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To the Graduate and Research Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Lee Ellen Beach entitled "Imagined Interactions as a Component of High School Forensic Competition." I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content, and I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Mass Communication and Speech.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Almost all people experience imagined interactions every day (Rosenblatt & Meyer, 1986). A woman who is stuck in rush hour traffic, consciously thinks through the encounter she may have with an employee when she arrives at work. A student sits in class and imagines his response to the teacher's question as well as his fellow classmates' reactions to his response. At the end of a day, a man takes a shower, unconsciously reviewing the conversation he had with his son that afternoon. These are all examples of imagined interactions.

Imagined interactions can easily be understood by the common man as "imaginary conversations" (Caughey, 1984) that individuals create in their own heads. It seems that many scholars have been aware of this concept for years, but it has not been until recently that the term imagined interaction has been coined and clearly defined. Two theories which provide background for the concept of imagined interactions were developed by communications scholars Mead and Goffman. Mead (1934) discussed the idea of "the conversation of gestures," an internal dialogue which helps one see himself interacting with others. Goffman (1974) suggests that an individual can take an internal look at interaction to help him better understand his actions in daily encounters. These basic ideas of individuals contemplating their interactions with others

lead to the concept of imagined interactions which has been investigated recently.

Edwards, Honeycutt and Zagacki (1988) define imagined interactions as a "related process of cognition whereby actors imagine themselves in interaction with others" (p. 24). They crucially note that imagined interactions are different from cognitive decision-making in which the actor would "match appropriate behaviors to situational contingencies in an 'if-then' fashion" (p. 24). Confronted with a problem, an individual might evaluate possible solutions with a thought process which dictates, "If A occurs, then I will react in a B manner, or if C occurs, then D should be my response." Imagined interactions are different from this type of decision-making because they involve the actor in an imagined "strip" of experience, in an imagined dialogue with others (Honeycutt, Zagacki, & Edwards, in press). In imagined interactions an actual scene takes place in an individual's head as opposed to thinking through responses which have been stored by the person.

It is also important to note a difference between imagined interactions and fantasies or daydreaming (Honeycutt et al., in press). Imagined interactions represent encounters that could actually occur in real life. Although these interactions may not occur for various reasons, there is an element of reality involved with imagined interactions. On the other hand, fantasies

are improbable or impossible encounters. For example, imagining an encounter with a movie star or a dead relative would not be an imagined interaction but a fantasy. Imagined interactions fall into the realm of reality.

Specifically, the research concerning imagined interactions involves counseling situations (Rosenblatt & Meyer, 1986), social cognition (Edwards et al., 1988), and intrapersonal communication and social cognition (Honeycutt et al., in press). Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press) study imagined interactions and social cognition, examining one special aspect, a college forensic tournament. Forensic competition calls upon the participants to utilize cognitive skills in developing messages for communication. Therefore, imagined interactions play a role in message development for forensic competition.

Statement of the Study's Purpose

Through a survey of high school forensic competitors, it is the purpose of this study to examine the nature of imagined interactions as they relate to this special group. Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press) were unable to link successful competitors with successful imagined interactions because of a problem with identifying success among the participants. Thus, this investigation will deal with the element of success at forensic competitions as it relates to imagined interactions. Also, Honeycutt and Gotcher compared debate participants to individual events participants. This study will break down the analysis of

forensic events a step further, comparing extemporaneous speaking competitors with original oratory competitors.

Justification for the Study

The nature of forensic activity lends itself to numerous methods for preparation and rehearsal. Previous studies lead us to believe that imagined interactions can be a useful tool in the learning process of forensics. Since Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press) deal with imagined interactions on the college level, an examination of high school students, the age when most forensic competitors begin, is warranted.

Knowledge of imagined interactions as they relate to forensic competitors could be useful to other areas of competition, such as sports. Sports psychologists have encouraged the use of imagery or mental practice in preparation for competition (Bird & Cripe, 1986).

Understanding the nature of imagined interactions in high school students could be beneficial to educators. They could apply this knowledge to the classroom. The areas in which imagined interactions could be useful in learning are endless.

Specifically, the need for this study is justified by forensic coaches and students who are continually searching for new methods of preparation, practice, and performance. Once the relationship of imagined interactions and forensic competitors is understood, its use could be incorporated into forensic programs. Students could utilize their

knowledge of imagined interactions in competition, and in other facets of their lives such as education and interpersonal relationships.

Imagined Interaction Research

With a working definition of imagined interaction, a statement of this study's purpose, and justification for investigating imagined interactions and high school forensic competitors, an analysis of the research concerning imagined interactions is necessary. Therefore, chapter two deals with literature pertaining to this study and, also, presents this study's research questions. The study's methodology and results are found in chapters three and four, respectively. The final chapter is devoted to the discussion of the survey's results and its ramifications.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

An imagined interaction involves an "actor in an imagined 'strip' of experience in dialogue with anticipated others" (Edwards et al., 1988, p. 24). To further explain the concept of imagined interactions, it is essential to understand the idea of the script as it relates to this study. Much of the research in this area was conducted by Abelson and Schank.

Abelson (1976) defines a script as a "coherent sequence of events expected by the individual, involving him either as a participant or an observer" (p. 33), or as a "coherently linked chain of vignettes stored as a unit" (p. 33), and also as a "cartoon strip, a sequence of panels telling a story" (p. 34). People develop scripts for everyday activities such as eating at a restaurant, going to the grocery or watching television (Schank & Abelson, 1977, p. 41). A script works to organize events, actions, people and props into a connected structure (Sanford, 1985, p. 203).

Roger Schank is a computer scientist interested in artificial intelligence, while Robert Abelson is a social psychologist. These two men brought these diverse fields together to form a hypothesis pertaining to "a conceptual framework for a set of 'knowledge structures' used by both people and certain computer programs to comprehend social behavior, as presented in simple stories" (Galambos, Abelson, & Black, 1986, p. ix).

The development of scripts or knowledge structures enables individuals to deal with the situations of life. Social cognition is defined as "the study of how people make sense of other people and themselves. It focuses on how ordinary people think about people and how they think they think about people" (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p. 1). Taking the idea of the script a step further, a schema is part of the cognitive structure that "represents one's general knowledge about a given concept or stimulus domain" (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p. 13).

Each individual stores many scripts which add up to his schema. Each schema represents knowledge about a given concept (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Individuals develop schema which enables them to approach new situations with some degree of prior knowledge. Galambos et al. (1986) further explain that "knowledge is schematized, that is, organized in chunks or packages so that given a little bit of appropriate situational context, the individual has available many likely inferences on what might happen next in a given situation" (p. 1).

Imagined interactions, like scripts, may give the creator information that can be used in real life interactions. Edwards and associates (1988) compare imagined interactions to cartoon strips. Like the reader of a cartoon, a creator of imagined interactions may reread the script or change the lines if appropriate. In an imagined interaction, the creator has control of the script.

Also, related to the concept of scripts is Greene's idea of procedural records (1984). "Procedural knowledge refers to stored action specifications" (Greene, 1984, p. 291). A procedural record can be considered a cognitive information bank which assists individuals in responding appropriately to specific situations. The procedural record represents what an individual has learned to do, and not to do, in order to respond to situations appropriately.

Imagined interactions may provide information, which is stored as a procedural record, for individuals to use during real conversation (Edwards et al., 1988). Edwards et al. also points out that imagined interactions may activate procedural records, helping the individual determine behavior related to specific situations.

Also related to these cognitive processes is Wegner and Vallacher's "phenomenal field" (1977). Each person has a highly organized phenomenal field which contains his thoughts, perceptions and feelings which are real for him. A phenomenal field, which is a cognitive structure, aids a person in responding to situations by releasing stored information. Thus, a person responds to his environment based on his phenomenal field, or the way he perceives his world.

Imagined interactions relate to the phenomenal field because they are a creation of an individual's perception of an encounter. The individual creates the scene, the dialogue, and possibly the other character involved in the interaction according to his perception of the situation.

The cognitive processes of scripts, procedural records, and phenomenal field are closely related. The every day activities of life are represented in scripts. Scripts enable people to deal with the situations of life. Stored by an individual, a procedural record is the knowledge of what one has learned to do and what not to do. The phenomenal field of an individual is his thoughts, perceptions and feelings about the world. Awareness of these processes will facilitate a better understanding of the features and functions of imagined interactions.

Features of Imagined Interactions

Imagined interaction refers to a related process of cognition whereby actors imagine themselves in interaction with others. Imagined interactions may precede, follow, or even help constitute the decision-making process. Imagined interactions are in principle different from decision-making processes insofar as they involve the actor in an imagined "strip" of experience, in dialogue with anticipated others. As such, they reflect a distinct kind of thinking in which communicators experience or actually work through cognitive representations of conversation (Edwards et al., 1988, p. 24).

Most people experience imagined interactions every day. For the most part they are fragmentary and do not necessarily involve verbal response from the other individual (Rosenblatt & Meyer, 1986). Individuals are

aware of their imagined interactions, but may not remember them a few moments after they occur (Rosenblatt & Meyer, 1986). Edwards et al. (1988) determined that there are variances in the degree of activity of imagined interactions. The differences include (a) some people experience more imagined interactions than others, (b) imagined interactions occur before and after important encounters, and (c) imagined interactions are different from actual interactions (Edwards et al., 1988).

For a person to have an interaction, real or imagined, another person must be involved. The "other" in imagined interactions is often a known relational partner rather than an unknown individual (Edwards et al., 1988). Probably the interaction will occur with a significant other instead of an acquaintance or stranger. In their study of college students and imagined interactions, Honeycutt et al. (in press) determined that the most common other for their study group is romantic partners, followed by family and friends. Sixteen percent of the college students in their experiment experienced imagined interactions with ex-relational partners, such as a former girl-friend or ex-husband.

Although the other is a significant part of the imagined interaction, he does not necessarily play an active role. The individual may say something in front of the other, but not directly to the other (Rosenblatt & Meyer, 1986). The other may take on another role as an

extension of the self. "To some extent, the other person in an internal interaction can be understood as surrogate for an aspect of oneself and as such can help one to be more clear about opposing aspects of the self" (Rosenblatt & Meyer, 1986, p. 320).

The role of the other will vary greatly depending on the person having the interaction and the type of interaction. In general, the self will initiate the interaction, dominate the interaction and talk more than the other (Honeycutt et al., in press). The self is the dominant character in the imagined interaction because more information is available about the self than the other (Edwards et al., 1988).

Consequently it is suggested

...that the self is relatively unable to take the perspective of others. Thus, individuals process primarily their own role and thoughts in imagined interactions, and to a lesser extent the roles and thoughts of others (Honeycutt et al., in press.)

Functions of Imagined Interactions

Many disciplines have discovered ways in which imagined interactions can be beneficial to people. Psychologists have determined that imagined interactions help individuals maintain relationships with others. Even though imagined interactions occur outside of real conversation, they can be an important determinant in relational development (Edwards et al., 1988). Imagined

interactions function to maintain relationships in several different ways.

Initially, imagined interactions offer individuals an opportunity to clarify their thoughts and feelings about a relationship, as well as a chance to develop expectations and interpretations about interpersonal encounters (Edwards et al., 1988). Imagining an interpersonal encounter, before or after it occurs, allows the individual an occasion to interpret the situation at hand. Not only will this process lead to a better understanding of a specific relationship, but it may also direct the individual to greater self-development.

Rosenblatt and Meyer (1988) concur with this idea stating that imagined interactions "...may also help in locating opposing or differing aspect of oneself, for example, contradicting or differing values and wants" (p. 320). The other may actually represent an aspect of the individual's identity, values or wants leading to self-understanding.

Another function of imagined interactions is to test actions without actually performing them in real life (Edwards et al., 1988). Individuals can plan and think through specific courses of action before testing them in reality. Predicting behavior is closely related to the function of decision-making. Rosenblatt and Meyer (1986) state "...the process of imagined interactions may provide a person with a perspective, especially if the person is

stuck in dealing with an issue, somehow at a loss to choose a direction of thought or to decide what has happened (p. 320).

Although the above functions are important to any student of imagined interactions, the function of rehearsal and review is of particular concern when considering forensic competition. It is important to note that these functions vary among individuals. The rehearsal function occurs before an imagined interaction, and the review occurs after. The research of Edwards and associates (1988) and Rosenblatt and Meyer (1986) finds that rehearsal is more common than review. Edwards et al. go on to say the rehearsal function is more important than the review function.

The rehearsal function allows the self to practice an interaction he intends to have or would like to have. The rehearsal may or may not prepare the individual for the actual interaction. Keep in mind that the imagined interactions may activate procedural records to be utilized in the upcoming encounter. Thus, rehearsal may help an individual discover appropriate behavior for future interactions.

Review is utilized less than rehearsal, meaning the primary function of imagined interactions is preparation for future encounters. Although review has not been strongly utilized by the subjects studied to date, it is still an important function of imagined interactions.

Rosenblatt and Meyer (1986) suggest that review may "remind oneself of what went on or to try to think through different courses that might have been possible for an interaction" (p.320). A cycle could develop in that the imagined interaction that occurs during review may reoccur during rehearsal for a future imagined interaction. The functions and features of imagined interactions are closely related to the concept of imagery related to sports competition.

Imagined Interactions in Sports: Imagery

The use of imagery in competition preparation and performance is not a new idea in the field of sports. Jack Nicklaus uses imagery to improve his golf game (Straub & Williams, 1984); Greg Louganis, gold medalist in diving, and Dwight Stones, world-class high jumper and sports commentator, advocate the practice of visualization before competition (Porter & Foster, 1988). The theories of imagery are diverse, as are the research findings.

Bird and Cripe (1986) explain that the dual code theory plays a role in sports imagery. Information in memory is represented by either verbal codes or visual images. They suggest that either system can operate singly or jointly during the imaginal rehearsal. The dominance of verbal codes or visual images would depend on the nature of the task to be rehearsed and other factors such as the previous experience of the person. Imagery utilizes the verbal and visual memory system.

Sports psychologists define imagery in many different ways. The terms imagery, imagery rehearsal, mental rehearsal, and mental practice signify functions similar to imagined interactions. Some sports psychologists make distinctions between the terms. Suinn (1984) defines mental rehearsal or mental practice as "repetition of a task, without observable movement, with the specific intent of learning," and imagery rehearsal as "a more narrow term used...to mean covert practice where imagery is the dominant experience to achieve the rehearsal" (p. 254). Suinn (1984) also coined the term "visuomotor behavioral rehearsal" (p. 256). Heil (1984) further defines the verbal aspect of imagery as "self talk" and the visual as "imagery rehearsal" (p. 246).

Imagery may occur on an individual level or as a group. Cratty (1984) indicates that another individual, such as a coach, trainer, or teammate, talks the athlete(s) through skills in a structured way and that a script is developed. In this process the athlete may verbalize or think in words or feel the skill. Cratty (1984) does suggest that the mental practice must suit the needs of the individual.

Imagery occurs externally and internally. In external imagery, the person steps outside himself to visualize his performance, seeing himself from a distance (Bird & Cripe, 1986; Cratty, 1984). Internal imagery is first person; the athlete remains inside his own head, watching the

surroundings (Bird & Cripe, 1986; Cratty, 1984). External imagery is less often reported by athletes than internal imagery (Cratty, 1984).

A function of imagery in sports is to aid athletes in learning specific skills. Although it is difficult to prove through research, Bird and Cripe (1986) suggest that the imaginal rehearsal of motor skills can best be structured to facilitate the learning of sport and motor skills. Cratty (1984) suggests that "often during the initial stages of learning a highly complex skill, physical practice effects and mental practice effects may be equal in 'strength'" (p. 26).

Yet, once the skill is learned, imagery does not play as great a role. Bird and Cripe (1986) indicate

...when a person reaches a high degree of skill at a certain task- that is, skill execution reaches the automated stage- does that person need to cognitively organize and mentally rehearse the skill before execution? No. Therefore the cognitive activity of symbolically rehearsing skill components should not greatly enhance skill execution (p. 200).

Opinions vary greatly when considering the efficacy of imagery in relation to practice. It is important to note that the effectiveness of the imagery is dependent on the individual. Simply, different methods work for different people. "Imaginal practice is a skill like any other skill; proficiency requires practice" (Bird & Cripe, 1986,

p. 207). Efficient use of imagery gains the advantages of (a) not fatiguing, (b) progressing more rapidly than physical practice, and (c) allowing performer to focus attention on highly selected features of the task (Bird & Cripe, 1986).

The type of task practiced and the mental abilities of the athlete play a part in the effectiveness of imagery in practice. Bird and Cripe (1986) indicate that

...imaginally rehearsing tasks with high cognitive demand produce superior effects as compared with physically practicing those same tasks. On the other hand, when task performance required little cognitive activity, imagery was not very helpful (p. 200).

Cratty (1984) suggests that "individuals who have the best visual memories are likely to benefit more from mental practice of physical skill" (p. 25). Successful imagery is dependent on many variables.

Sources show that "some mental practice is better than no practice" and "unstructured imaginal practice might be worse than no imaginal practice at all" (Bird & Cripe, 1986, pp. 195 & 207). A logical conclusion is that a combination of mental and physical practice is beneficial (Cratty, 1984). Imagery can strengthen correct responses and eliminate incorrect responses; it can increase the transfer of training from practice to game conditions (Suinn, 1984). In addition imagery can help an athlete practice technique and strategy, gain aggressiveness, and build confidence and familiarity (Suinn, 1984).

Direct application of imagery is being made in the world of sports. For example, Hank Kashiwa, World Pro Skiing champion and director of skiing at Keystone, Colorado, encourages skiers to use imagery. He suggests looking at action photos-still pictures, slides, racing posters-of great ski racers to begin visualization (Kashiwa, 1987). Kay Porter and Judy Foster (1988) provide a guided visualization for tennis. Their process begins, "Imagine yourself as you arrive at the tennis courts. See people playing, feel the air, the environment. Hear the sound of balls popping off rackets..." (p. 24). In this instance the imaginal rehearsal is scripted for the player. These are just two examples of the way imagery is being used in sports today.

Yet, the research has not always been able to provide conclusive or consistent results (Suinn, 1984). Most of the information reported shows the current trends in imagery. Popular thinking shows that in "pure" skill activities (i.e. pistol shooting), mental practice is more useful than in power, endurance or strength skills where imagery is moderately helpful (Cratty, 1984). Also, if the competition involves a brief performance, the athlete could profit from brief, intense periods of mental practice, whereas if the competition encompassed prolonged periods of time, mental practice was not very effective (Cratty, 1984).

It is important to remember that imagery is an

ability, not a trait (Heil, 1984). An athlete can improve his use of imagery through training and practice. To excel in imagery, a person must "be 'drilled' regularly just as are essential physical skills" (Heil, 1984, p. 251).

Imagery is a tool for use in sports, but its effectiveness is dependent on how it is used (Suinn, 1984).

Imagined Interactions and Forensic Competition

The features and functions of imagined interactions cited previously focused on individuals who were not involved in a particular task. Imagery applies the concept of imagined interactions to a specific task, sports competition. The following research deals with a new application of imagined interactions in competition, particularly college students engaged in forensic competition.

Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press) connect forensic competition with imagined interactions in three ways. They are (a) "competitors are engaged in an activity that 'rewards' the most appropriate communication behavior," (b) "in the tournament environment, message making is in a constant state of evaluation and reevaluation," and (c) "participants are encouraged to demonstrate 'spontaneity.'"

Debaters and individual events participants were compared in the Honeycutt and Gotcher study (in press). It was determined that debaters experience more imagined interactions concerning competition than individual events competitors. They concluded that the nature of the task

varies the frequency of the imagined. Also, it was discovered that debaters experience imagined interactions before competition in a rehearsal function, while individual events participants utilize the review function after competition.

The study examined the discrepancy between the real interaction and the imagined interaction. Evidence shows that as frequency of imagined interactions increases, the discrepancy between the real interaction and the imagined interaction decreases. The more successful a competitor had been in the past, the less discrepancy he experiences in his imagined interactions (Honeycutt & Gotcher, in press). The researchers concluded that imagined interactions with decreased discrepancy can compensate for lack of experience, yet they did not discuss the link between these aspects.

Proactivity and retroactivity of imagined interactions were explored by Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press). They learned that proactive imagined interactions, those occurring before the real interaction, envisioned success which helped to prepare the participant mentally for the competition. Conversely, retroactive imagined interactions, those occurring after the real interaction, tended to be unsuccessful. Participants focused on the negative aspects of the encounter after it was over, yet this provided psychological support if the competitor was not victorious. Proactive imagined interactions tend to be positive, and retroactive tend to be negative.

Two findings of the Honeycutt and Gotcher study were interesting. The "other" in the imagined interactions of college forensic competitors was usually the opponent(s). This aspect seems unusual considering that the fate of the participant lies in the hands of the judge not the other competitors. The study was not able to determine a link between success in imagined interactions and success in real competition because of difficulty in identifying successful competitors.

Research Questions

In light of the information gathered to date concerning imagined interactions in general and imagined interactions for a specific task, additional research is warranted. The following research questions were developed for discovery in the area of imagined interactions and high school forensic competitors. The first question deals with the possible occurrence of imagined interactions in high school forensic competitions. It has been determined that college students experience imagined interactions in forensic competition (Honeycutt & Gotcher, in press), thus:

RQ1: Do high school forensic competitors experience imagined interactions related to competition?

An imagined interaction may function in the rehearsal mode or as a review (Edwards et al., 1988). Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press) explain that imagined interactions happen proactively and retroactively for college forensic participants. Taking into account that a person could have

an imagined interaction before, during, or after an encounter:

RQ2: When do high school forensic competitors experience imagined interactions?

The tone of the imagined interaction may relate to the performance of an individual. Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press) discovered that proactive imagined interactions tend to be positive, and retroactive tend to be negative. Keep in mind that athletes are trained to have positive or successful imagined interactions regarding competition (Bird & Cripe, 1986). To understand the nature of the imagined interaction in competition:

RQ3: Do competitors imagine victory or defeat?

Edwards et al. (1988) acknowledge that an individual's imagined interaction can be very different from his real interaction. In forensic competition, discrepancies decrease as experience increases (Honeycutt & Gotcher, in press). Understanding that the nature of forensic competition and the uncertainty of each round can lead to major differences between the real and imagined interaction:

RQ4: Is there a discrepancy between the imagined interaction and the real interaction?

Honeycutt and Gotcher were unable to find a link between success in competition and success in the imagined interaction. Considering activity, time, and tone of the imagined interaction:

RQ5: Do successful competitors have imagined interactions that differ from unsuccessful competitors?

Experience in forensics should be highly correlated to victory. Experienced competitors have an "edge" on the novice simply because they have attended more tournaments. Is it possible that imagined interactions play a role in giving experienced participants an edge? Considering time, tone and activity:

RQ6: Is there a difference between the imagined interaction of experienced participants and inexperienced participants?

Honeycutt and Gotcher chose to identify differences between debaters and individual events participants. Their choice to lump all individual events participants into one category does not recognize the diversity of individual events. They should be analyzed separately.

Extemporaneous speakers and original orators are quite diverse; separating these events in this study is the first step toward obtaining more information about specific individual events and how they differ related to imagined interactions. These particular events were chosen because of the differences in their preparation, practice, and performance.

In extemporaneous speaking, the contestant draws three current events topics and chooses one on which to speak. He then has thirty minutes to consult his materials

(news magazines, files, etc.) and prepare a seven minute speech. Obviously, a competitor can practice this event, yet much uncertainty remains regarding his finished product, the extemporaneous speech. In original oratory, a contestant delivers a speech on a subject of a serious nature, not to exceed ten minutes. The competitor should be fully prepared before attending the tournament, knowing ahead of time what he will say.

Extemporaneous speakers prepare by gathering information on a wide variety of current events topics. Orators research one topic and write a speech. Extemporaneous speakers practice speeches on many different topics. Original orators practice the same speech over and over. Performance for extemporaneous speakers involves preparing and delivering a speech on a different topic each time. Orators perform the same speech at each tourney. Considering the diversity of these two events:

RQ7: Is there a difference between the imagined interactions of extemporaneous speaking competitors and original oratory competitors?

Summary

Before explanation of the research methods for this study which will be presented in the next chapter, it would be wise to comment on the concerns of imagined interactions investigators. It is quite obvious that one cannot observe another person's imagined interaction. Therefore, it is necessary to gather information from individuals in the best manner possible.

Honeycutt et al. (in press) indicate that Unlike actual social behavior, imagined interactions are not susceptible to direct observation. Even though certain physiological measures allow researchers to document the occurrence of mental states, they tell us very little about these states beyond the physiological level. If one's interest is in the content of mental states or in this case, imagined interactions, we must rely on the individual's reports .

The foreknowledge of the nature of imagined interactions and the use of sports imagery is adequate preparation for studying the impact of imagined interactions for a specific task, the high school forensic tournament.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Design of the Experimental Study

Subjects. The data were collected on January 21, 1989, at the Goodpasture Speech Tournament in Madison, Tennessee, an invitational, high school forensic competition. Twenty-nine public and private secondary schools from across the state of Tennessee attended. Two debate categories were offered, team (also called four-man or cross-x) and Lincoln/Douglas (one against one). There was also competition in seven individual events: prose interpretation, poetry interpretation, duet acting, dramatic interpretation, humorous interpretation, original oratory and extemporaneous speaking.

This tournament was chosen for this study because of its location, the competition, and the time. Goodpasture is centrally located for many of the schools that are active in speech competitions. This tournament has established itself over the last few years as a strong tournament with good competition. Since the tournament was held at the beginning of the second semester, many of the students would have at least one semester of experience to gain familiarity with the forensic setting.

Approximately 250 surveys were distributed to students, and 138 were collected with a response rate of 55%. The students ranged in age from 14 to 18 with 60% female and 35% male. The levels of experience ranged from

46% of the students who had attended 1-5 tournaments, 20% who had attended 6-10, 7% who had attended 11-15, and 27% who had attended 16 or more tournaments. Specifically at the Goodpasture Tournament, 85% of the respondents did not advance to finals, 8% were finalists, and 7% placed in the top three in their categories. Fifty percent of the subjects perceived themselves as successful at forensic tournaments while the other half considered themselves unsuccessful.

Permission Forms. Permission was granted from two sources in order to conduct this survey. The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies approved the survey after a form was filed explaining the specifics (see Appendix A). Permission was also requested from Mrs. Carlene Ford, tournament director at Goodpasture (see Appendix A).

Instrumentation

The measurement utilized was a revision of the Survey of Imagined Interaction used by Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press). The first section of the survey used in this study (see Appendix B) began with several paragraphs explaining the concept of imagined interactions and the purpose of the survey, written in language directed toward high school students. Students were then asked about their event, age, sex, number of tournaments attended, and perceived success at tournaments.

The next section was comprised of fourteen statements about imagined interactions and forensic competition. For

each statement, students responded to a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from Yes (strong agreement) to No (strong disagreement).

The dimensions of imagined interactions measured with the survey are activity, retroactivity, proactivity, discrepancy, and imagined interaction victory. Activity deals with whether the subject experiences imagined interactions or not. Activity was measured by statement 1 on the survey (see Appendix B). The time they experience the imagined interaction is represented by during, during the competition; proactivity, before the actual encounter; or retroactivity, after the actual encounter. During was measured by statement 7; proactivity was measured by statements 2 and 10; retroactivity was measured by statements 3 and 13 (see Appendix B). The difference between real interactions and imagined interactions is discrepancy. To measure discrepancy, statements 4, 5, 8, and 11 were used (see Appendix B). Imagined interaction victory pertains to whether the respondent imagines a successful interaction or an unsuccessful interaction. It was measured by statements 6, 12, and 14 (see Appendix B). Information about these aspects of imagined interactions will aid in the answering of the research questions.

Procedure

The survey was pre-tested at Northeast High School, Clarksville, Tennessee, in the advanced speech and drama class. The students, who are experienced forensic

competitors, were told to answer the questionnaire as if they had just completed the preliminary rounds at a tournament. After completing the survey, students were encouraged to criticize it and ask questions about anything they perceived as unclear or confusing. Student comments and a perusal of their completed surveys helped to build a stronger instrument.

At the tournament at the conclusion of the preliminary rounds of competition while the competitors were awaiting the posting of finalists, the surveys were distributed to students. Throughout the final round, surveys were continually distributed and collected. At the awards ceremony, a final call was made for collection of the surveys. Students completed surveys in an unsupervised environment before, during, and after the free-flow of finals. Completed surveys were coded and then recorded in the computer for statistical analysis.

Method of Statistical Analysis

Computer analysis provided frequencies for event, actual success (measured by the students' ranking at the Goodpasture Tournament), age, sex, experience, perceived success (measured by the students' indication of the number of tournaments at which they made finals), activity, proactivity, retroactivity, discrepancy, and imagined interaction victory. A cross-tabulation of activity, discrepancy, proactivity, retroactivity, and imagined interaction victory with actual success, perceived success,

experience, and event was used to establish the relationship between variables in research questions five through seven.

In computing results for yes and no answers on the Likert-type scale, the middle answer was dropped and the answers on each end were added. For example, if 1=Yes, 2=yes, 3=?, 4=NO, and 5=no, 3 was dropped; 1 and 2 were added for the percentage of yes answers, and 4 and 5 were added for no.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations of this survey are recognized by the investigator:

1. The casual nature of the distribution of the surveys as opposed to monitored classroom distribution allowed students the opportunity to confer about answers on their surveys.

2. The time of the distribution of the surveys was close to the time of finals which could have caused the finalists not to become as involved in the survey as they might have been.

3. All the data gathered from the students are totally reliant on what they report; there are no means for observable behavior where imagined interactions are concerned.

4. The survey was conducted at only one tournament, limiting the ramifications of the study.

5. A random sample was not used.

However, this study is a reasonably valid measure of imagined interactions. Variations of this survey have been used by investigators from Louisiana State University (Honeycutt & Gotcher, in press; Honeycutt et al., in press; Edwards et al., 1988) without a significant difference in results. The short introduction of imagined interactions at the beginning of this survey (see Appendix B) was written in a style for high school students. The fourteen statements of the survey specifically relate to imagined interactions in a high school forensic setting.

The respondents were representative of a high school tournament in their percentage of males and females, successful and unsuccessful, and experienced and inexperienced. Although it cannot be proven through this study, the investigator believes that the results would be quite similar if this survey were administered at any other high school tournament.

Every effort was made to assure that the survey and its results were reliable. In the measurement of imagined interaction victory, one statement received an irregular response compared to the other statements in the index. Statement 9 reads, "When I have imagined interactions concerning competition, I am always victorious." The term "always victorious" prevented the statement from measuring imagined interaction victory in the same way as the other statements in the index, thus it was omitted from the results. Although certain limitations of this study are

recognized, the investigator feels confident that its results are valid and reliable.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The statistical results of the study will be presented as they pertain to each research question asked. Specific methods of analysis which were not provided in the previous chapter will be explained in greater detail.

The first research question asks "Do high school forensic competitors experience imagined interactions related to competition?" It was discovered that 64% of the respondents experience imagined interactions related to competition, and 25% do not. Therefore, it appears that a majority of high school competitors at this tournament do experience imagined interactions related to their competition.

Research question two asks "When do competitors experience imagined interactions?" From the frequencies it was determined that 52% of the students surveyed experience imagined interactions during competition, and 25% do not. Proactivity, imagined interactions before the actual interaction, was measured in 52% of the subjects, but not in 25%. Retroactivity, imagined interactions after the interaction, was found in 53% of the respondents, but not in 23%. Overall, the statistics show that students do experience imagined interactions before, during and after competition. These aggregate figures show little proclivity for one time over another.

"Do competitors imagine victory or defeat?" is research question three. Imagined interaction victory was measured through three statements on the survey. Four statements were intended for this purpose, but one of the statements was determined to be invalid because of its wording and was not included in the percentages provided here. Forty-nine percent of the students imagine success or victory while 19% experience defeat or are unsuccessful in their imagined interactions.

Research question four asks "Is there a discrepancy between the imagined interaction and the real interaction?" Four statements on the survey measured discrepancy. Experiencing discrepancy between the real interaction and the imagined interaction was reported by 36% of the subjects. Forty-four percent of the respondents experience imagined interactions and real interactions that are similar. The split on this variable was fairly even then, with slightly more competitors imagining the competition as it actually occurred.

Research question five asks "Do successful competitors have imagined interactions that differ from unsuccessful competitors?" Success was determined in two ways: actual success and perceived success. Actual success equals the specific achievement of the student at the Goodpasture Tournament. On the survey, students were asked to give their codes and events. With this information and the tally sheets provided by the tournament director, the

investigator was able to determine the actual success of each student. Placing first, second or third, or advancing to finals was considered successful, while not advancing to finals was considered unsuccessful. Table 1 provides an overall look at the differences and similarities between successful and unsuccessful competitors.

Students who were actually successful at the Goodpasture Tournament responded to the survey in the following way. Sixty-seven percent reported experiencing imagined interactions; 20% did not. Experiencing imagined interactions during competition was reported by 64% of the students, while 29% did not have imagined interactions during competition. Sixty percent reported imagined interactions before encounters; 20% did not. Fifty-three percent indicated having imagined interactions after encounters, while 13% did not. A discrepancy between the imagined interaction and the real interaction was reported by 31% of the successful subjects. Thirty-one percent also indicated there was not much difference between the real interaction and the imagined interaction. Sixty-four percent of the actually successful students said their imagined interactions were successful. Only 14% indicated having unsuccessful interactions.

Of the unsuccessful competitors, as measured by actual performance, 60% experienced imagined interactions; 26% did not. Fifty-three percent experienced the imagined interaction during competition; 20 percent did not

Table 1

Comparison of Successful and Unsuccessful Forensic Competitors

	Actual Success		Perceived Success	
	Successful	Unsuccessful	Successful	Unsuccessful
Activity	%(N)	%(N)	%(N)	%(N)
yes	67(10)	60(49)	65(43)	65(43)
no	20(3)	26(21)	27(18)	26(18)
?	13(2)	14(12)	8(5)	11(7)
	100%(15)	100%(82)	100%(66)	100%(66)
During				
yes	64(8)	53(40)	47(28)	58(34)
no	29(4)	20(15)	32(19)	19(11)
?	7(2)	27(20)	21(12)	23(14)
	100%(14)	100%(75)	100%(59)	100%(59)
Proactive				
yes	60(9)	47(36)	59(36)	50(31)
no	20(3)	25(19)	26(16)	21(13)
?	20(3)	28(21)	15(9)	29(18)
	100%(15)	100%(76)	100%(61)	100%(62)
Retroactive				
yes	53(8)	48(37)	59(36)	48(29)
no	13(2)	19(15)	18(11)	28(17)
?	34(5)	33(25)	23(14)	24(15)
	100%(15)	100%(77)	100%(61)	100%(61)
Discrepancy				
yes	31(4)	39(29)	25(15)	47(28)
no	31(4)	41(30)	49(29)	38(23)
?	38(5)	20(15)	26(15)	15(9)
	100%(13)	100%(74)	100%(59)	100%(60)
Imagined Victory				
yes	64(10)	33(25)	61(36)	29(17)
no	14(1)	31(23)	14(8)	36(21)
?	22(3)	36(27)	25(15)	35(20)
	100%(14)	100%(75)	100%(59)	100%(58)

experience imagined interactions during competition. Before competition, 47% of the unsuccessful had imagined interactions, while 25% did not experience imagined interactions proactively. Imagined interactions after competition were reported by 48% of the unsuccessful students with 19% indicating they did not have imagined interactions retroactively. The unsuccessful students have a higher percentage of discrepancy than the successful with 39% experiencing a difference between the imagined interaction and the real interaction. Forty-one percent did not experience a difference in the interactions. Of the unsuccessful students, 33% imagine a successful imagined interaction, and 31% experience an unsuccessful one.

Thus while the differences are small, the trends are clear: actually successful competitors are more likely to have imagined interactions than their less successful counterparts (67% to 60%); they are more likely to have them before (60% to 47%), during (64% to 53%), and after (53% to 48%) the competition; they are more likely to have accurate imagined interactions (31% to 41%), and they are more likely to imagine victorious interactions (64% to 33%).

Perceived success was determined by the students ranking their overall performance at tournaments by their ability to make it to finals. Students who perceived their success as consistently placing in the top three, almost

always, frequently, or sometimes making it to finals were labeled successful. Students who indicated that they rarely made it to finals or had not made it to finals yet were considered unsuccessful.

Of the students who perceive themselves as successful, 65% have imagined interactions, while 27% report they do not. Forty-seven percent have them during competition; 32 percent do not. Proactively, 59% of the successful students imagine interactions, while 26% do not experience them before encounters. Fifty-nine percent also experience imagined interactions after competition compared to 18% who do not. A low percentage, 25, experience a discrepancy between the real and imagined interaction with 49% indicating not much of a discrepancy at all. Of the successful students, 61% imagined successful interactions with only 14% imagining unsuccessful interactions.

The students who perceived themselves as unsuccessful experienced imagined interactions like the successful students, with 65% reporting a "yes," yet only 20% responded with a "no" to activity. The unsuccessful students experienced more imagined interactions during competition, 58%. Only 19% reported they did not have imagined interactions during competition. They have less imagined interactions before competition, 50%. Twenty-one percent do not have imagined interactions proactively. After competition, just 48% experience imagined interactions concerning competition while 28% did not.

Unsuccessful students reported more discrepancy with 47% responding "yes" and 38% responding "no." Only 29% of the unsuccessful students indicated that they experienced successful imagined interactions concerning competition, while 36% reported they experienced unsuccessful imagined interactions.

Research question six asks "Is there a difference between the imagined interactions of experienced participants and inexperienced participants?" On the survey, students were given the opportunity to indicate the number of tournaments they had attended during their forensics career. Students who have attended one to five tournaments are considered inexperienced for the purposes of this study. Attending six tournaments or more qualifies students as experienced. For the average high school team, a fall forensic schedule would include from six to nine tournaments, thus students who participate in forensics at least one semester would probably have competed at least six times and could be considered experienced. Table 2 illustrates the comparisons between experienced and inexperienced competitors.

Of the experienced students, 63% have imagined interactions with 26% reporting they do not. Fifty-two percent of the experienced students have imagined interactions during competition, and 30% do not. Fifty-five percent experience imagined interactions before competition, and 26% do not. After competition, 53%

Table 2

Comparison of Imagined Interactions of Experienced and Inexperienced Forensic Competitors

	Experienced	Inexperienced
Activity	%(N)	%(N)
yes	63(43)	63(36)
no	26(18)	26(15)
?	11(7)	11(6)
	100%(68)	100%(57)
During		
yes	52(31)	51(26)
no	30(18)	24(12)
?	18(11)	25(13)
	100%(60)	100%(51)
Proactive		
yes	55(34)	52(28)
no	26(16)	28(15)
?	19(12)	20(11)
	100%(62)	100%(54)
Retroactive		
yes	53(33)	49(26)
no	21(13)	30(16)
?	26(16)	21(11)
	100%(62)	100%(53)
Discrepancy		
yes	35(21)	42(22)
no	48(29)	42(22)
?	17(10)	16(9)
	100%(60)	100%(53)
Imagined Victory		
yes	47(28)	37(19)
no	24(14)	31(16)
?	29(17)	32(16)
	100%(59)	100%(51)

experience imagined interactions, and 21% do not. Discrepancy occurred with 35% of the experienced students, and 48% do not experience much discrepancy between the imagined interaction and the real interaction. Of the experienced students, 47% imagine successful interactions while 24% have unsuccessful interactions.

Inexperienced students and experienced students displayed the same frequency of activity. Sixty-three percent have them; 26% do not. Of the inexperienced, 51% claim they occur during competition while 24% say they do not have them during competition. Fifty-two percent of the inexperienced have proactive imagined interactions; 28% report they do not have them before competition. After competition, 49% have imagined interactions while 30% do not. Discrepancy occurs with 42% of the inexperienced, but also does not occur with 42%. Thirty-seven percent of the inexperienced have successful imagined interactions while 31% have unsuccessful imagined interactions.

The final research question asks "Is there a difference between the imagined interactions of extemporaneous speaking competitors and original oratory competitors?" Contestants indicated on the survey which event they entered. Sixteen of the respondents competed in original oratory; eighteen were in extemporaneous speaking. The participants in these events comprised 27% of the respondents. Table 3 compares the imagined interactions of extemporaneous speakers and original oratory competitors.

Table 3

Comparison of Imagined Interactions of Extemporaneous
Speakers and Original Oratory Speakers

	Extemporaneous	Oratory
Activity	%(N)	%(N)
yes	67(12)	56(9)
no	33(6)	19(3)
?	0(0)	25(4)
	100%(18)	100%(16)
During		
yes	72(13)	47(7)
no	17(3)	20(3)
?	11(2)	33(5)
	100%(18)	100%(15)
Proactive		
yes	56(10)	53(8)
no	33(6)	20(3)
?	11(2)	27(4)
	100%(18)	100%(15)
Retroactive		
yes	50(9)	33(5)
no	17(3)	20(3)
?	33(6)	47(7)
	100%(18)	100%(15)
Discrepancy		
yes	44(8)	21(3)
no	50(9)	57(8)
?	6(1)	22(3)
	100%(18)	100%(14)
Imagined Victory		
yes	38(6)	47(7)
no	38(6)	27(4)
?	24(4)	26(4)
	100%(16)	100%(15)

Of the extemporaneous speakers, 67% reported having imagined interactions while 33% claimed they do not have imagined interactions. Seventy-two percent experience imagined interactions during competition while only 17% do not. Of the extemporaneous speakers, 56% reported having imagined interactions before competition while 33% do not. After competition, one half of the extemporaneous speakers have imagined interactions with only 17% reporting they do not have retroactive imagined interactions. Forty-four percent of extemporaneous speakers claim there is discrepancy between the real interaction and the imagined one. One half claim there is not much discrepancy. Thirty-eight percent have successful imagined interactions; 38% have unsuccessful imagined interactions.

Of the orators, 56% experience imagined interactions. Only 19% reported they do not have imagined interactions. Forty-seven percent of orators have them during competition while only 20% do not. Of the orators, 53% experience imagined interactions proactively. Twenty percent do not have them before competition. Only 33% of orators have retroactive imagined interactions, and 20% do not have them after competition. Only 21% experience discrepancy between the imagined interaction and the real interaction. Fifty-seven percent claim that their real interaction is very similar to their imagined interaction. Orators tend to imagine victory with 47% having successful imagined interactions and 27% having unsuccessful ones.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion

Imagined interactions are a vital element of high school forensic competition. Students experience them before, during and after tournaments. Imagined interactions function proactively for rehearsal, retroactively for review, and during competition which could be for rehearsal and/or review. Overall, there does not seem to be a time for imagined interactions that is more crucial than another, although examining specific events more closely will show that the timing of imagined interactions varies for different tasks. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

Most students imagine successful interactions, yet it is important to understand that success can be defined in many ways, depending on the competitor. To some, success may equal tournament victory, imagining walking away with a trophy. To others, success could be completing their speeches without forgetting the words, a personal victory. Therefore, students who see themselves successfully in an imagined interaction do not necessarily see themselves winning the competition. Few successful students imagine unsuccessful interactions.

Most students report that their imagined interactions are quite similar to their real interactions, yet many also report that they experience discrepancy. It is important

to keep in mind that imagined interactions occur at different times. It is possible that students who report discrepancy place more emphasis on the rehearsal function of imagined interaction, thus they are imagining before the real interaction. Students who utilize imagined interactions as a review of an interaction that has already occurred most likely would not experience as much discrepancy.

Overall, students who are successful are more active than the unsuccessful competitors concerning imagined interactions. It is interesting to note that students who perceive themselves as successful do not report as many imagined interactions during competition as the unsuccessful, yet they do experience more than the unsuccessful proactively and retroactively. Students who perceive themselves as unsuccessful may experience imagined interactions during competition because they have not utilized the rehearsal and review function as much as their successful counterparts. This could lead one to believe that the rehearsal and review functions are important to speech competitions, and if the competitors do not have imagined interactions proactively or retroactively they will experience them during competition.

Unsuccessful competitors have a greater discrepancy between the real and imagined interactions. This evidence concurs with Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press) who claim increased success leads to decreased discrepancy. Yet,

they also conclude that imagined interactions take the place of experience. This investigator disagrees. Many factors could contribute to decreased discrepancy. Successful competitors seem to know what to expect from themselves in real competition, possibly due to experience. Perhaps, they adjust their imagined interactions to match their abilities. Unsuccessful students may expect more from their performances than they are capable of achieving. Or as stated previously, the time of the imagined interaction may affect the level of discrepancy. One cannot assume that imagined interactions equal experience.

Overwhelmingly, successful competitors imagine themselves as successful whereas unsuccessful competitors do not. Students who were actually unsuccessful or perceived themselves as unsuccessful do not imagine themselves as successful. One of the strongest links in this study shows that students who are successful imagine themselves as successful. This study does not indicate exactly why this is true. One can only speculate as to the reasons. Imagined interactions may actually improve students' performances by boosting their confidence because they see themselves in a positive light. Positive imagined rehearsal can be seen as a powerful element of successful forensic competition. Possibly, it has been learned that students who have experienced success in reality, review that success in an imagined interaction which aids them in continuing their success in the future. Much like the

chicken and the egg, it would be difficult to determine which comes first, the successful competitor or the successful imagined interaction.

A comparison of experienced and inexperienced competitors reveals information similar to that discovered when comparing successful and unsuccessful students. Both experienced and inexperienced competitors have imagined interactions with experienced competitors displaying higher percentages proactively and retroactively and just slightly higher during competition. Like successful students, experienced students report they do not experience much discrepancy between the real and imagined interactions. Also like successful students, experienced students imagine themselves as successful.

Not only do forensic competitors improve their speaking skills through experience, they also fine-tune their imagined interactions, aiding them in performing better. The time that competitors have the imagined interaction does not seem to be as important to success as having imagined interactions that do not vary greatly from the actual interaction and imagining in a positive way. This study indicates that discrepancy and imagined interaction victory are significant facets of imagined interactions and forensic competition.

It was assumed that the nature of certain events would produce different styles of imagined interactions. Honeycutt and Gotcher (in press) note the differences

between debaters and individual events competitors. The results of the extemporaneous speaking and original oratory comparison are typical of how events differ in preparation and practice. Keep in mind that extemporaneous speakers do not know the topics they will speak on until they draw for each round at the tournament. On the other hand, orators deliver the same speech each round. After several tournaments with the same speech, the orator must work not to appear too practiced or mechanical because he has performed the same speech so many times. Basically, the orator knows what will occur in his rounds; the extemper faces uncertainty.

Sports psychologists define two types of athletic skills which can be applied directly to the comparison of extemporaneous speaking and original oratory. An understanding of open and closed skills will help to show why these two individual events warrant comparison. Cratty (1984) explains a closed skill as one "which is able to be pre-programmed somewhat in advance of the competition, and whose execution is not dependent upon the actions of one's opponents" (p. 28). A free throw in basketball and a serve in tennis are examples of a closed skill, as an original oration is a closed skill in forensics. Cratty defines an open skill as one which requires numerous reactions dependent on the situation such as playing defense in basketball or a return in tennis. Extemporaneous speaking could be considered an open skill. The difference between

open and closed skills is recognized by sports psychologists as a factor in imagery.

In general, closed skills are considered more amenable to mental practice or imagery than open skills (Cratty, (1984). This theory is based on the idea that it is difficult to imagine a skill that will change depending on the situation of competition. Cratty also recognizes "that mental practice which is flexible and accomodates to too many changing conditions could well aid a person to perform better in 'open skill situations'" (p. 28). In sports, the mental rehearsal of closed and open skills proves beneficial to the athlete. In forensics, the results of this study show that participants in open and closed skills utilize imagined interactions in different ways.

Thus, more extemporaneous speakers experience imagined interactions than orators. The data indicate that imagined interactions are an integral part of the extemp process. Almost three-fourths of extemporaneous speakers experience imagined interactions during competition compared to less than one-half of orators who have them during tournaments. Extemporaneous speakers and orators experience them proactively more than retroactively, with orators rarely experiencing them retroactively. The data lead to the conclusion that extemporaneous speakers use imagined interactions during preparation of speeches, and to a lesser degree, utilize them as a function of rehearsal and review when not at tournaments. Orators tend to utilize imagined interactions as a rehearsal tool.

Extemporaneous speakers experience discrepancy more and success less than orators. They never really know what the real interaction will be like although they actively imagine the interaction. Considering the limited amount of time available for the imagined interaction during the tournament, discrepancy would tend to be higher for extemporaneous speakers as compared to orators who know what they will say but not what they will encounter. Orators may tend to be more confident due to their pre-tournament preparation, thus causing their imagined success to be higher than extemporaneous speakers.

Implications for High School Forensic Coaches

The cognitive functions of imagined interactions in interpersonal relationships along with the uses of imagery in sports (both presented in Chapter 2) link imagined interactions to forensic competition beautifully. Forensic coaches have probably been encouraging the use of imagined interactions in their students for years. For example, before the bus loaded with speech students arrives at the tournament, the coach says, "Everybody quiet and go over your piece in your head." Or, on the Thursday before a Saturday competition a student loses his voice and is told, "Don't practice; save your voice. Just think through your event." These are ways imagined interactions have been used in the past, but coaches can expand their use greatly.

Initially, a better understanding of the nature of imagined interactions is needed before a coach can

incorporate them into a high school program. Discovering the abilities of students with imagined interactions could help determine in which event a student should compete. Since extempers utilize imagined interactions to a high degree, students who have trouble with imagined interactions might consider another event, like original oratory, in which imagined interactions do not play such a vital role. Yet, all students can learn to incorporate imagined interactions into their events. Heil (1984) believes athletes can improve their use of imagery, thus forensic students can learn to utilize imagined interactions.

The information discovered in this study indicates that a coach should try to increase students' imagined success and decrease the discrepancy. These factors could lead to more successful forensic competitors. The knowledge gained from sports imagery can aid forensic coaches with incorporating imagined interactions into forensic programs.

A technique that is used by sports coaches is to talk through an encounter with the athlete (Cratty, 1984).. This can be done in a group or one on one. This method could work ideally in a speech setting. To ease the fear of novices' first tournament, a script could be developed which talks the first-timer through the experience. The imagined interaction might ease some of the apprehension experienced at the first tournament. This method could

also be used for psychological preparation of experienced competitors. These sessions of talking through an interaction could help students learn the process of imagined interactions for a specific task. Hopefully, students could transfer the group sessions to private sessions, developing individual use of imagined interactions to aid them in competition.

Psychological preparation for tournaments can be accomplished through imagined interactions, but they are also helpful in event preparation. After students have performed a selection all year, they suffer from burn-out. It is difficult to encourage physical practice. Mental practice could be an alternative. Athletes have discovered that imagery is useful when suffering from fatigue (Bird & Cripe, 1986). Mental practice also helps students focus on specifics (Bird & Cripe,). A combination of real practice and mental practice could better prepare students for competition.

An aspect of imagined interactions which was not a part of imagery in sports was review. Many students would probably like to forget what occurs in some of their rounds. Forensic coaches could direct students through review sessions, hoping that students could learn from their mistakes and reinforce the successful aspects.

In sports, imagery has become a part of training for athletes. The idea of imagined interactions is quite new to forensic coaches. Many assumptions can be made on how

imagined interactions can be utilized in the forensic setting. If forensic coaches trained their students in the art of imagined interaction by talking through them in groups, hopefully, the students could transfer this skill to individual use in competition. Continued study of imagined interactions and forensic competitors is necessary.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study established that imagined interactions do occur for high school forensic competitors and that successful and experienced students have less discrepancy and more successful interactions. It is also recognized that imagined interactions vary for the specific task as in the case of extemp and oratory. This study leads to more questions to be answered.

What actually occurs in imagined interactions related to forensic competition? A closer look at the scripts involved with imagined interactions and the nature of what is actually seen is warranted. Determining whether forensic competitors experience external or internal encounters would aid in teaching the process to students. More research should be conducted concerning the time of the imagined interaction in relation to the forensic activity, determining the features and functions of retroactive imagined interactions as compared to the proactive.

Would coach directed imagined interactions improve the success of forensic students? Moving beyond surveys and to an experimental group of students would give strong evidence to the effectiveness of imagined interactions in the forensic setting.

Forensic coaches and students should experiment with imagined interactions as sports coaches and athletes have done with imagery. In the world of sports, imagery has been developed by coaches until it has become a significant element of athletic training. With more research and experimentation, it could be determined that imagined interactions have a tremendous influence on the preparation, practice and performance of forensic activity because of the strong cognitive link between the processes. Imagined interaction could develop into a vital component of forensic competition.

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APPENDIX A

Title of Proposal: Survey of Imagined Interaction

Principal Investigator: Lee Ellen Beach

Sponsor (if student): Dr. Ellen Kanervo

Action of the Human Research Review Committee:

A. Approved as described. Researcher is responsible for obtaining approval from the Committee prior to introducing any changes in protocol; for keeping signed consent statements for the duration of the project and 3 years thereafter; and informing the Committee of any unexpected physical or psychological effects on subjects.

B. Approved with recommendations as follows:

Researcher may revise the project in accordance with recommendations and communicate by writing the changes which have been made. Discuss the action with the Committee; or withdraw the proposal.

C. Proposal deferred for additional studies as follows:

Further action is contingent on the investigator supplying the Committee with appropriate information

D. Proposal not approved for the following reasons:

Researcher may revise the project or discuss the action with the Committee.

Reviewed by: Chairperson,
Human Research Review Committee

Membership,
Human Research Review Committee

Signature

1 16 89

Signature

Copies to: Investigator
File with proposal

Date



Northeast High School

3701 Trenton Road • Clarksville, Tennessee 37040 • (615) 648-5640

January 3, 1989

Dear Carlene,

I am currently working on my Master of Arts in Communication at Austin Peay State University. I am writing my thesis on "imagined interactions" as they relate to forensic competition.

I would like your permission to conduct a survey of the students who will attend your tournament. The written survey is enclosed so you can take a look at what I'm doing. I would like to distribute and collect the survey after finals have been posted and before the awards ceremony.

If you have any questions, call me at home (647-5994) or school (648-5640). Thanks!

Sincerely,



Lee Ellen Beach

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF IMAGINED INTERACTION

Imagined interactions are "mental" interactions we have with others who are not physically present. People may have imagined conversations that occur in self-controlled daydreams or while the mind wanders. Sometimes they may occur after a real interaction has taken place.

Imagined interactions may be brief or long. They may be ambiguous or detailed. They may address a number of topics or examine one topic exclusively. The interactions may be one-sided where the person imagining the discussion does most of the talking, or they may be more interactive where both persons take an active part in the conversation.

With your help, we can better understand the functions of imagined interactions as they relate to forensic competition. You do not have to answer anything you feel uncomfortable answering. Your answers will be confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Event _____ Code # _____ Age _____ Sex M or F

How many tournaments have you ever attended?

1-5 6-10 11-15 16 or more

At tournaments, I...

_____ consistently place in the top three.

_____ almost always make it to finals.

_____ frequently make it to finals.

_____ sometimes make it to finals.

_____ rarely make it to finals.

_____ have not made it to finals yet.

Following are a few items asking about your experiences with forensic competitions and imagined interactions. Please read each item carefully and answer as honestly as possible. Circle the appropriate response according to the following scale.

YES = strong agreement NO = strong disagreement

yes = agreement no = disagreement

? = neither agreement or disagreement

1. I tend to have imagined interactions concerning competition.

YES yes ? no NO

2. I tend to have imagined interactions before I compete.

YES yes ? no NO

3. I tend to have imagined interactions after I compete.

YES yes ? no NO

4. In real competition, I am very different than in my imagined interaction.

YES yes ? no NO

5. I usually perform in competition the way I imagined I would perform.

YES yes ? no NO

6. In my imagined interactions concerning competition, I experience defeat.

YES yes ? no NO

7. I had imagined interactions today concerning competition.

YES yes ? no NO

8. When I participate in a round that I have imagined, the actual round is very different from what I imagined.

YES yes ? no NO

9. When I have imagined interactions concerning competition, I am always victorious.

YES yes ? no NO

10. Before important rounds, I frequently imagine them.

YES yes ? no NO

11. My imagined interactions before competition are quite similar to the real situation which follows them.

YES yes ? no NO

12. In my imagined interactions I am successful in competition.

YES yes ? no NO

13. After important rounds, I frequently go through them in my mind.

YES yes ? no NO

14. In my imagined interactions concerning competition, I am unsuccessful.

YES yes ? no NO