PARTNERS' LISTENING STYLES AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION:
LISTENING TO UNDERSTAND VS. LISTENING TO RESPOND

Faye K. Doell

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Abstract

This study tests a model of listening patterns, observable in marital communication, which consists of two distinct listening modes: *"listening to respond"* (LTR) and *"listening to understand"* (LTU). Using a sample of 236 undergraduate students, the current study provided evidence for the two-factor structure, homogeneity and test-retest reliability, and validity of both the LTR and LTU subscales of the new Listening Styles in Committed Relationships (LSCR) Scale. The hypotheses that listening to understand augments relationship satisfaction, and that listening to respond is associated with lower satisfaction, were supported. More specifically, it was found that higher ratings of relationship satisfaction were correlated with higher self-ratings of listening to understand, and also with higher ratings of the extent to which one's partner was perceived of as listening to understand. Conversely, higher self-ratings of listening to respond, and also higher ratings of the extent to which one's partner was perceived of as listening to respond, were associated with lower ratings of relationship satisfaction. Exploratory analyses also suggested that discrepancies between how one characterizes oneself and how they perceive their partner, in terms of these listening styles, may carry important implications for their experience of satisfaction within their relationship. The theoretical and clinical implications of these findings concerning the influence of what and how one "hears", on individuals' experience of relationship satisfaction, is discussed.

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Introduction

The psychological research literature is replete with studies that have found that the quality of a couple's communication is a key component of marital satisfaction and stability. Thus, many marital therapists and researchers alike identify communication skills acquisition as a pivotal component of their efforts to prevent or ameliorate marital distress and dissolution (Gottman, 1994). The importance of research which impacts on clinicians' ability to effectively treat couples in distress is highlighted when one considers that marital discord has been implicated etiologically in problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, and alcoholism (Jacob, 1987). Indeed, Berscheid (1999) argues that it is our close relationships with others that are widely considered most meaningful and essential for our mental and physical well-being.

The broad aim of this thesis was to investigate the intricate link between communication and relationship quality in couple relationships. Specifically, it focused on the ways in which individuals in committed relationships listen to and comprehend one another, and how this impacts on relationship satisfaction. We have focused on couples' *listening*, not only because we feel that listening is in and of itself an important part of the ongoing communication within a relationship, but also because the ways in which individuals listen within the context of their relationship has important implications for how they construe their relationship. What people actually "hear" when listening has important implications for how they understand their relationship. In other words, it is our position that a partner's construal of their relationship and their ongoing

participation and feeling about their relationship is ultimately mediated through what they "hear".

This thesis first presents a model of listening styles that is based on two listening patterns observed over a succession of couples undergoing repeated sessions of couples therapy in our research laboratory. The rest of the thesis describes the development and testing of a self-report measure of the degree to which individuals listen in ways that are consistent with each of these two patterns. It is our contention that normally all partners will use both patterns when listening within their relationship, but that some will rely more on one pattern than on the other. Individual differences in the quality of their listening to the other is thought to be a crucial link in understanding the communication issues that couples often refer to as a major difficulty in their marriage. The specific aim of this thesis is to develop and obtain evidence of the reliability and validity of a measure of marital listening that could be used by both researchers and couples therapists alike.

To this end, we have assumed the existence of two modes of listening based on the two patterns that became evident when working with couples in our clinical laboratory. These modes are referred to as *"listening to understand"* and *"listening to respond"*. This assumption is grounded in our audio recording and careful observation of couples referred for couples therapy. Through the course of our observations it has become increasingly apparent that in interpersonal discourse many partners habitually fail to fully understand the meaning of their partner's communications, although they clearly think that they understand. It is as if these individuals are immediately caught up with what they assume that their partner is trying to convey, and thus are unable to listen for a

deeper meaning. Partners often only hear enough of what their spouse had said so as to be able to react with their own response. This seemingly non-conscious habit of failing to listen thoroughly serves to frustrate each partner's ability to relate effectively to the other. Alternatively, when spouses listen for the meaning of their partner's words, the quality of their discourse becomes more co-constructive, and self-generated relationship enhancement is more possible.

It is our belief that all individuals operate under both of these two modalities, but that there are individual differences in the extent to which people operate under each. One goal of our research has thus been to develop a reliable instrument to measure these individual differences in listening styles, and then to use this instrument to examine the interpersonal dynamics within a relationship.

Listening to Understand and Listening to Respond

The first of these two modes, listening to understand, is characterized as an active and deliberative form of listening which requires strict attention and reflexivity on the part of the listener, and is thought to be indicative of an underlying motivation to truly "understand" what one's partner is trying to communicate. Individuals who are listening to understand are attempting to truly hear what their partner is saying, including how it is being said, and are actively trying to cultivate a deeper understanding of their partner's own understanding of what it is they are trying to communicate. Individuals who are operating within this mode of listening are thought to be concerned with the needs of their partner, and to the extent that they are motivated to seek a deeper understanding of their partner's thoughts and feelings, it is thought that they are more likely to encourage

their partner's continued communication. By listening to understand, an individual is able to step outside of their own "reality", and to look upon their partner and their relationship with an open mind. This mode of listening requires that the listener adopt a patient and nonjudgmental stance, and thus creates an atmosphere where partners are free to explore with one another, and one which is inherently incompatible with conflict.

Listening to respond, on the other hand, is characterized as a more passive and effortless form of listening that seems to be reflective of the underlying goal of obtaining a more superficial understanding of meaning. Individuals who are operating within this modality are most often concerned with "knowing" only what their partner has actually said, as opposed to really "understanding" what it was that their partner was trying to communicate. Implicitly, what individuals are doing here is attempting to find out just enough information from their partner to allow them to come back with their own response. This mode of listening is typically a habitual way that individuals interact with one another. In a busy world where there just isn't the time to stand around deep in conversation with everyone we encounter, listening to respond functions for people, and to attempt to do otherwise would often be completely impractical. The problem is that when individuals habitually believe that they already know what their partner is talking about and are ready to jump in with a response of their own, their partner often winds up feeling unheard.

According to our model, listening to understand and listening to respond thus represent two fundamental ways in which people respond to the communications of their partner. As such, it is our contention that individual differences in the extent to which

individuals in a committed relationship operate under each of these listening modalities has implications for the satisfaction of individuals in a relationship.

<u>Communication and Relationship Satisfaction</u>

Despite the considerable body of research on communication and satisfaction in relationships, there has been very little research that has focused on the ways in which individuals listen to one another. This is likely due in part to the fact that research on marital communication more often involves the investigation of higher order constructs (such as general negativity or positivity in communication) as opposed to more specific differences in communicative behaviors (O'Donohue & Crouch, 1996).

Reviews of the literature on marital communication (Dindia & Fitzpatrick, 1985; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990) have identified that the predominance of research that is focused on specific communication behaviors has sought to classify couples into various typologies based often along the dimensions of affect and conflict/control. The focus on the behavior of the listener in such models has thus been considered together with their behavior as "speaker", and limited mostly to the affective valence and intensity of the behaviors and to the extent to which these behaviors control (or seek to control) the communications with their partner.

Burleson & Denton (1997) have noted that much of the research on marital conflict has adopted a "skill-deficit model", with marital conflicts being seen either as caused by or exacerbated by deficits in the communication skills of one or both partners. Thus, there are a great number of approaches to marital therapy (particularly *behavioral* marital therapy) that emphasize general communication skills training. However,

Burleson & Denton argue the current tendency of making general claims about the relationship between communication and satisfaction is problematic, and that researchers instead ought to focus on the relationship between satisfaction and more specific, conceptually and operationally defined skills.

One of the most comprehensive studies on communication and marital stability is Gottman's (1994) longitudinal research, which has indicated major differences in the patterns of communicative behaviors between stable and non-stable couples, and has identified three stable adaptations to marriage (volatile, validating, and conflict-avoiding couples). Through his observational coding of couples he has identified a set of listener withdrawal behaviors that he labels as "stonewalling". In stonewalling, the listener appears disengaged, and fails to provide the speaker with cues that indicate they are tracking the conversation. While an individual's stonewalling was often perceived by their partner as "detachment, disapproval, smugness, hostility, negative judgment, disinterest and coldness" (p. 141), this was not always the case, particularly when the same individual appeared positive and engaged during their turns at speech. Thus, while it is identified as a distinct set of listener behaviours, listener stonewalling has not been indicated as a major predictor of marital instability.

Gottman (1994) suggests that what is most deleterious to marital stability is the emergence of criticism and contempt, and partners' ensuing defensiveness. As such, he argues for the importance of teaching *nondefensive* listening as a key skill in Couples Therapy. Nondefensive listening is defined as substituting either an affectively neutral or an empathic response to the complaints of one's partner, instead of defensive behaviors

such as "whining, denying responsibility for a problem, ...defensive rebuttal, or cross-complaining"(p.438). Furthermore, Gottman argues that the use of validation is a necessary listener skill in that it decreases the likelihood of defensive responding. Gottman presents validation as a scale of listener responses that at the very least implies demonstrating that the listener is actually tracking what is being said (i.e. is not stonewalling) while at the higher end implies an empathic understanding of what one's partner is thinking or feeling. We would argue that nondefensive listening and validation of one's partner's views are both key components of listening to understand.

Research on gender-linked factors in communication has provided some evidence that female-listeners tend to provide more verbal back-channel cues (e.g. utterances like "mmm-hmm", and "yeah") than male listeners (O'Donohue & Crouch, 1996). This is consistent with Gottman's (1994) characterization of stonewalling as a predominantly male attribute. Ross (1995), recognizing this difference, has proposed that interventions which teach couples how to use "conversational pitchbacks" to provide one another with increased verbal and physical feedback during conversation are often very effective. Models of marital therapy that aim to "teach" couples how to encourage one another's communication are drawing on a similar understanding of interpersonal dynamics within relationships. It has been our observation that individuals who are listening to understand typically demonstrate this type of encouragement in their interactions with their partner.

Therapeutic Listening

A further body of work on listening which is directly relevant to our conceptualization of listening to understand, albeit somewhat removed from the research

on marital satisfaction, is the research that has been done on listening and the therapeutic relationship.

Certainly, it is widely recognized that therapist "listening" is crucial to the therapeutic alliance, and indeed to the very efficacy of therapy. Gendlin (1997) has argued that effective listening, defined as "stay(ing) constantly in touch with what the client wishes to communicate" is one of the overarching principles of therapy. Likewise, empathic and nonjudgmental listening has long been thought to be a key component of person-centered therapy, and is thought to be crucial to the ability of the therapist to convey the Rogerian core conditions of empathy and unconditional positive regard (Raskin & Rogers, 1995; Rogers, 1957). Individuals who are listening to understand exemplify this type of attentive, empathic, nonjudgmental listening.

In the person-centered literature, "empathic listening" refers to listening which results in individuals feeling that their communication, and potentially their inner experience, has been both heard and understood (Barrett-Lennard, 1988). This type of listening thus entails receptivity to the experience of the other, along with communication of acceptance and prizing of the other. Moreover, when an individual is truly attempting to listen empathically, there is a tacit recognition that their "understanding" of the other is open to correction and change. Reflections are offered tentatively and frequently in order to check one's sense of what it is that is being communicated by the other. Barrett-Lennard (1988) has suggested that this type of listening has several important effects within the context of the therapeutic relationship. He argues that empathic listening serves to promote clients' personal growth by opening "inner channels" of

communication, that it fosters therapists' attunement to and "knowing" of their clients, and that it facilitates therapeutic contact and ultimately deepens the therapeutic relationship.

Past research has provided evidence that supports the importance of therapist responses that reflect empathic listening. For example, Hill and colleagues (1988) found that clients rated therapists' demonstrations of understanding and expressions of support and approval as consistently more helpful than the use of closed questions and advice giving. Therapist responses reflecting understanding and approval are a key component of empathic listening within the context of the therapeutic relationship. Furthermore, it has been found that therapist interventions which reflect greater expression of attunement and tentativeness actually serve to promote a more internally focused, reflective and deliberate manner of client processing (Gordon & Toukmanian, 2002). This evidence supports the idea that empathic listening operates in such a way that it deepens clients' processing of their experiences and facilitates client change.

Rennie (1998) has argued that "clients are helped along their paths when presenting them in the presence of an attentive listener more than when only thinking them" (p.14). Thus, he maintains that there is something special that happens when clients actually voice what it is that they are thinking and feeling to an *accepting* audience. It is as though the mere presence of such a listener can facilitate clients' pursuit of meaning. It is our contention that by listening to understand, individuals present their partners with an opportunity to pursue their *own* meaning, and to process their experience in a deeper, more complex, manner. Listening to understand is thought

to not only facilitate an individual's understanding of their partner, but also to facilitate their partner's own understanding of him/herself.

Listening to respond on the other hand, is almost the antithesis of this type of therapeutic listening. Rogers (1952) identified our natural tendency to judge and to evaluate the statements made by others as the major barrier to interpersonal communication. This type of evaluative process is a key component of listening to respond. Rogers argues that "real communication" can only occur when we suppress this natural tendency to evaluate, and instead listen with understanding. What this entails is that the listener must "see the expressed idea and attitude from the other person's point of view, to see how it feels to be him, to achieve his frame of reference in regards to the thing he is talking about" (1952, p.84). Rogers contends that listening with understanding is an integral aspect of psychotherapy, and argues that in interpersonal settings it will always be helpful to increase the amount of listening that individuals do *with* one another, and to decrease the amount of evaluation *about* what is being said. His position holds that once individuals have an understanding of the other's point of view, that their own opinions will be more easily revised, differences of opinion will be reduced, and those differences that do remain will become more rational and understandable.

Thus, Rogers' discussion of listening with understanding was not limited to a discussion of listening within the context of the therapeutic relationship. Indeed, he recognized that "the therapeutic relationship is seen as a heightening of the constructive

qualities which often exist in part in other relationships, and an extension through time of qualities which in other relationships tend at best to be momentary" (1957, p.101).

Multimodal Information Processing Theories

Our contention that there are two separate modes of listening is not only grounded in evidence which can be readily observed in every day life and on observations of couples in therapy, but also draws upon past research in information processing which offers support for numerous theories that have independently proposed the existence of two modes of processing. One of these modes is consistently characterized as being more automatic and effortless, while the other is seen as more deliberate and reflective. Examples include Shiffrin and Schneider's (1977) demonstration of the differences between automatic detection and controlled search as separate strategies of information processing, and Epstein's (1994) distinction between experiential and rational processing. Other well known dual-modal processing theories include the psychoanalytic distinction between the unconscious primary process and conscious secondary process, experimental-cognitive theories which differentiate between non-verbal and verbal processing, as well as the social-cognitive work on heuristics, which proposes a natural, intuitive mode of reasoning together with a separate extensional, logical mode.

Certainly, our conceptualization of listening to understand and listening to respond dovetails nicely with the various dual-processing models that have been proposed over the years. The ideas of controlled vs. automatic, systematic vs. heuristic, or even conscious vs. unconscious thought capture somewhat the distinction between the modes of listening which we are proposing here.

Many of these theories also suggest that automatic tendencies in processing may serve to frustrate attempts at more active, deliberate processing. Just as psychoanalytic theory holds that the primary process of the unconscious tends to undermine individuals' attempts at conscious, rational thought, we would maintain that the more automatic tendency to listen to respond interferes with individual's attempts to truly listen to understand. Support for the interference of automaticity comes from Shiffrin and Schneider's (1977) work, which demonstrates that automatic processes are not only difficult to suppress or alter, but that they tend to hinder controlled processing. Their work established that when individuals are repeatedly exposed to familiar situations, automatic attention responses develop to allow the individual to make better use of their limited attentional resources. However, what they also found was that the ability to use controlled processing was affected by the presence of information that had previously been rehearsed and attended to automatically. Thus, their work demonstrated the existence of negative transfer - the idea that when we already "know something" it becomes harder to learn something new about it. In much the same way, we would argue that listening to respond develops as an automatic process in response to the communications of others, and that it ultimately makes it harder for individuals to listen for unique and unfamiliar information. Repeated exposure to the communications of others results in the development of complex schemata regarding the types of information that one needs to attend to, the types of things that are likely to be communicated, and the types of responses that are required. The activation of these schemata happens automatically when we are in conversation with others and thus allows us to function

efficiently by enabling rapid scanning of communicative "cues". However, this activation may also serve to hinder our attempts to listen to understand. Specifically, it is our contention that attempts at more controlled processing by means of listening to understand will be difficult in the face of automatically activated schemata that dictate what we expect to hear.

In order to disrupt the pattern of listening to respond, it is thus necessary to deliberately interrupt the automatic processing that is taking place when individuals are in conversation with one another. Although Shiffrin and Schneider's (1977) work provides evidence that automatic processing interferes with controlled search processes, their research also demonstrates that with large amounts of practice these automatic attention responses can be overcome. Indeed, it has been postulated that the interruption of automatic processing is not only possible, but that it is actually one of the fundamental means of therapeutic change. For example, Toukmanian (1990) argues in her perceptual-processing model of experiential psychotherapy, that the most vital therapist function is "to catalize the process of clients' perceptual skills development" (p.312). She maintains that when therapists consistently engage clients in a controlled mode of processing, that clients learn to reorganize and reconstruct their perceptions of experiences which were previously governed by automatic responses. Research has shown that learning to engage in more controlled and complex processing is indeed associated with therapeutic improvement (Toukmanian, 1996).

Another concept that is directly relevant to the distinction between listening to understand and listening to respond, and which is particularly relevant to a discussion of

the latter, is the concept of heuristic thought. Heuristic thought is thinking that includes inferential leaps or instantaneous conclusions, including agreement or disagreement, which occurs in the mind of a listener in response to what they hear a speaker say. Such heuristic thinking is typically not reflective, yet it is common for people to use heuristic thinking to quickly make sense of what is happening. Heuristic thinking is predicated on the individual's need to know or make sense of events. It is our contention that just as heuristic thinking functions for individuals in their everyday lives allowing them to make judgments and to solve problems in an efficient manner, so too does listening to respond function for people, allowing them to communicate efficiently with others. When individuals are listening to respond, they are operating under an implicit set of assumptions regarding who they are communicating with and what that person is trying to communicate.

Nickerson (2001) argues that one common heuristic is that people tend to assume that others possess the same knowledge that they do. While this assumption simplifies communication and allows individuals to carry on conversations effectively (i.e. without explaining every little thing as though to someone from a different planet), Nickerson argues that it is often made uncritically, and that as a result people often assume that others possess certain knowledge when, in fact, they do not. He suggests that over time individuals can develop detailed conceptual models of what a specific other person (i.e. a spouse) knows, but that these too are error-prone, and require a constant fine-tuning and updating of the model. When an individual listens to respond, the probability of misinterpretation of their partner's communications increases because of the activation of

such heuristics. Listening to understand, on the other hand, requires that an individual keep their assumptions in check, and instead listen for their partner's own meanings.

A separate line of research concerning information processing has identified individual differences in the extent to which individuals tend to engage in and enjoy thinking (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). While some individuals may be more inclined towards heuristic thinking, it is argued that there are others who are more likely to actively organize, question, and evaluate information. These individuals who are characterized as having a high "need for cognition" are thought to be more willing to spend considerable mental effort in order to get to the root of problems, and to be more inclined to enjoy cognitive activities in general. We would argue that because these individuals are inclined to seek out deeper understanding of communicated messages and are concerned with the accuracy of their own perceptions and interpretations, it is quite possible that they may be more likely to spend the time and effort required in order to truly listen to understand when interacting with their partner.

In making the distinction between listening to respond and listening to understand we have also found it useful to draw on Seymour Epstein's (1994) cognitive-experiential self-theory, which maintains that all individuals possess two parallel, interacting systems of information processing known as the "rational" and "experiential" systems. This theory holds that most information processing occurs automatically, effortlessly and intuitively within the experiential system, rather than in its rational counterpart that requires more conscious, deliberative thinking. The experiential system, operating alone, is thought to be responsible for the kind of rapid, effortless processing of information that

is evident in individuals who are listening to respond. However, and particularly in conjunction with the rational system, the experiential system is also the source of the intuitive wisdom and creativity which is thought to be exercised by individuals who are truly listening to understand. Thus, although there are some obvious parallels between the rational and experiential systems and listening to understand and listening to respond respectively, our conceptualization of listening to understand is such that it is a rich and complex construct which is dependant upon interaction between *both* the rational *and* experiential systems.

<u>Social Cognition</u>

A further body of research which has relevance to our distinction between listening to understand and listening to respond can be found in the social cognitive literature. Perspectives on social cognition have long supported the theory that in the service of social interaction, people tend to operate with "good-enough understanding" (Fiske, 1992). Pragmatism has been a core theme in the social cognitive literature, just as it is a key theme in our conceptualization of listening to respond and listening to understand.

The construct of listening to respond fits well with recent social-cognitive work on the automaticity of higher order mental processes, including those involved in social interaction, judgment, and motivation. Recent research in this area (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Bargh & Ferguson, 2000) has shown that much of our complex behavioral and psychological functioning occurs spontaneously and without conscious choice or reasoning. This finding is certainly not surprising when one considers how exhausting,

and indeed impossible, it would be for one to attempt to function effectively while trying to attend to every tiny stimulus in the environment at any given time. Automatic mental processes are thought to free up our limited conscious attentional capacity, and in doing so allow us to function in the world. Bargh and Chartrand (1999) argue that processes become automated due to the frequency and consistency of their use under the same circumstances. Our supposition is that listening to respond develops as a functional necessity for individuals in the world (to do otherwise on a consistent basis would simply not be practical given our limited attentional resources and the multiple demands upon us at any given time), and that this mode of listening then becomes an automatic process and comes to serve as our habitual way of responding to the communications of others because of the frequency with which it is activated. It is only when an individual makes a conscious effort to do otherwise that they listen in a different manner.

Indeed, the need for listening to understand is highlighted when one considers the relative thoughtlessness with which individuals seem to negotiate their way through relationships. Despite the recognized importance that relationships play in our lives, it has been argued that there is a general tendency for our thinking about relationships to be deficient in attention to subtleties and detail (Burnett, 1987). Baxter (1987) argues that much of the communication that regulates our relationships is indirect in nature, and that individuals possess a well-developed set of relationship process cognitions that allow them to interact efficiently in this indirect manner. Yet, by definition, indirect communication increases the chance for misunderstanding and misinterpretation because of its ambiguity. Listening to understand combats the natural tendency to operate in a

manner which contributes to the development of a superficial understanding of one's partner and one's relationship, which is lacking in both depth and detail, and provides partners with an opportunity to explore and learn together and from one another. The systemic-constructivist approach to couples therapy that informs our work (Fergus & Reid, 2001) holds that this type of active processing is crucial to facilitating relationship change. Fundamental to this approach to couples therapy is the attempt to integrate the intrapersonal processing of each individual partner with the mutual identity that they share within their interpersonal system. In therapy we attempt to work with a couples' tacit understanding of who they are as a couple, and encourage their reflexivity in the service of change. Thus, the primary task for therapists within this approach is to promote cultivation of couples' relationship awareness. In doing so, the therapist aims to "place both partners on the same side of the relational fence" (Fergus & Reid, p. 398) thereby increasing their sense of "us" as a couple, and clearing the way for mutual discovery. It has been our observation that as partners' awareness gradually expands to include an awareness of the other, that partners then become more sensitive to one another. Furthermore, it appears that this sensitivity develops in a reciprocal manner with more open communication between the partners. Thus, it is our contention that listening to understand not only facilitates an increased sensitivity between partners within a relationship, but also in turn, that this sensitivity encourages partners to listen to understand one another.

Independent and Interdependent Self-Construals

An additional body of research that we believe has relevance to our conceptualization of the characteristic listening styles of individuals within committed relationships stems from the literature on independent and interdependent self-construals. Essentially, what this distinction boils down to is the degree to which individuals see themselves either as separate from others or as connected with others. It is our contention that these two ways of viewing the self will ultimately be related to the extent to which an individual engages in the various modes of marital listening.

Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994) have suggested that cultural ideals of independence and interdependence have significant implications for the nature of individual experience and behavior. Individuals operating under an independent view of the self are thought to be governed by an enduring concern with expressing one's own personal position, whereas individuals operating under an interdependent view of the self are thought to grant primacy to the relationship between self and others. Thus, an individual's sense of self, be it independent or interdependent, is likely to have an effect on the ways in which they relate to others in the world. For example, Markus & Kitayama (1991) argue that the independent self, in communication with others, will view it as the responsibility of the other to get their point across and to "say what's on their mind" if they want to be listened to or be understood. In contrast, for someone with an interdependent view of the self, concern with "maintaining a connection to others will mean focusing on their needs, desires, and goals" (p.229). This will translate into a willingness to attune to what others are thinking and feeling and to try to absorb this

information without requiring the other to make explicit attempts to request such attention.

It is now widely believed (Guisinger & Blatt, 1994; Singelis, 1994) that both independent *and* interdependent self-construals will be developed within a given individual to varying extents. Guisinger and Blatt (1994) argue that independence and interdependence (conceptualized as individuality and relatedness) develop in a dialectical manner with the cultivation of *both* being crucial for mature relationships and self-definition. Recent research (Acitelli, Rogers & Knee, 1994) has shown that the extent to which individuals view themselves in relational terms can in fact have important implications for how they view their committed relationships. It is our contention that individual differences in the extent to which individuals see themselves as either predominantly independent or interdependent will have significance for the ways in which they communicate with their significant others.

Specifically, it is our assumption that individuals who identify highly with their relationship, and see it as being more essential to their own identity, will be more motivated to listen patiently and to try to be empathically attuned to their partner. Thus, we would expect individuals with a highly interdependent self-construal to be more likely to listen to understand. We would also argue that the natural tendency to listen to respond may be less prevalent in these individuals because their partner's thoughts and feelings are experienced as being as essential as their own, and thus the need to express their own opinions or to respond immediately to what has been said may be mitigated.

Development of the Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale

In order to examine the association between relationship satisfaction and each of

these listening modalities, it was first necessary to develop and psychometrically assess

an appropriate measure of listening to understand and listening to respond. The initial

phase of this effort involved developing the content domains of, and thus delineating the

listening behaviors that are representative of, each of the two listening modalities (see

Table 1). At this early phase of the study, two informal focus groups were used to help

flesh out the two constructs, and it was interesting to note how intuitive the distinction

between the two modes seemed, and the relative ease with which individuals were able to

identify the behaviors that were thought to be indicative of each. Items were generated to

provide concrete examples of the various listening behaviors, and were then edited to

decrease redundancy. A preliminary version of the Listening Styles in Committed

Relationships Scale (LSCR) was created (Doell, 1997), and was demonstrated to have

adequate reliability. Correlational analyses utilizing this scale supported the hypothesized

relationships between relationship satisfaction and each of these two listening styles.

The original LSCR was a 32-item inventory consisting of one bipolar and two

unipolar subscales which were intended to measure the conceptual domains of listening

to understand (LTU) and listening to respond (LTR). The bipolar subscale was included

in the initial study with the LSCR merely to allow for comparisons of the LTU and LTR

subscales with a single unidimensional measure of listening which was comprised of

items which were thought to encompass each of the two separate modalities.

Psychometric evaluation of the LSCR using a sample of 25 married couples found the

Table 1

Characteristics of Individuals Who Listen to Understand and Listen to Respond

Individuals Who Are Listening to Understand...	Individuals Who Are Listening to Respond...

* Give their undivided attention when their partner is communicating
   * Try to remove all distractions from the listening environment
	* Tend not to give their full attention to their partner when he/she is communicating
	   * Let their mind wander when they ought to be attentive
	   * Are often preoccupied or are easily distracted
	   * Tolerate or create distractions
	   * May "fake" attention

* Are driven to look beyond the superficial presentation of meaning
   * Are concerned with both accurate perceptions and interpretations of messages
   * Are motivated to seek deeper understanding
	* Are inclined to talk rather than to listen
	   * Want to control communication interactions
	   * Often interrupt their partner's communications
	   * Listen only enough so that they can add their own two cents worth

* Pay attention to the broader message being conveyed * Do not get caught up with or react to particular details	
* Use feedback to clarify ambiguous messages	* Do not often use feedback to clarify ambiguous communications * Are concerned merely with superficial understanding

* Remain nonjudgmental during listening situations
   * Do not interrupt when their partner is communicating
   * Resist responding with immediate solutions
	* Listen only for facts while overlooking the intent or purpose of the message

	* Tend to react to specific pieces of information, rather than to the broader message

* Are empathic listeners
   * Seek a deeper understanding of their partner's thoughts and feelings
   * Try to "think with" their partner while he/she is expressing him/herself
   * Draw on their intuitive knowledge of their partner
	* Are quick to prejudge topics and listening situations as boring or unimportant
	   * Often think that they already know what their partner is going to say

Table 1 (Continued)

Individuals Who Are Listening to Understand...	Individuals Who Are Listening to Respond...
* Attend to nonverbal cues	* Want to concentrate only when the communicated message has personal relevance
* Avoid interrogation so as to allow their partner opportunity to fully express his/her opinion	
	* Tend not to pay close attention to nonverbal cues
* Use both verbal and nonverbal encouragement to keep the interaction going	* Tend to be critical of/respond to less relevant features of their partner's communications (e.g. their delivery)
* Tend to think about communications both during and after the actual interactions	* Often seem uninterested in their partner's communications (or may appear to feign interest)
* Are cognizant of the tentativeness of their own understanding of their partner's thoughts and emotions	
* Show concern for their partner's needs	

16-item Listening to Understand and 7-item Listening to Respond subscales to have alpha

coefficients of .91 and .82 respectively, and the 9-item bipolar scale was found to have an

alpha of .84. Exploratory principal components factor analysis was performed on the

aggregate of the LTU and LTR subscales. This analysis revealed a strong first factor on

which all of the LTU subscale items loaded positively, and all of the LTR items loaded

negatively. Varimax and Oblique rotations, which were subsequently performed, did not

provide evidence for a two-factor structure. Pearson correlations revealed a significant

relation between the LTU and LTR subscales (r = -.66, df = 48) which implied that the

two subscales may have been tapping inverse sides of a single bipolar dimension of

listening, as opposed to two independent unipolar dimensions. This conclusion was

further supported, as both the LTU and LTR subscales were significantly correlated with

the bipolar subscale of the LSCR (r = .65, df = 48 and r = -.76, df = 48, respectively).

Based on the interrelations of the scales, and a content analysis of the items, it

was decided that the 9-item bipolar subscale did not yield sufficient information above

and beyond that provided by the 16-item LTU and 7-item LTR subscales to warrant its

inclusion in the final version of the LSCR. It was also decided that the LSCR would

continue to be interpreted as yielding separate scores for each of the two listening

modalities, despite evidence that the two subscales may not represent two entirely

independent dimensions of listening.[1] Instead, the plan was to further develop the LSCR

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[1] It is worth noting that the psychometric evidence in this preliminary study was not
uniformly supportive of the conclusion that the LSCR is measuring a single
unidimensional construct of listening. For example, reliability analyses found that the
internal consistency of the aggregate scale formed by combining the LTU and LTR
subscales was less than that found in each of the two subscales separately.

to test whether a final version with two subscales of LTU and LTR was viable. To do this it would be necessary to test the scale on a larger sample of respondents. This two-subscale aspect of the scale is crucial in order to allow for the comparison of individuals' scores under each of the modalities, as well as to allow for the examination, both separately as well as additively, of their association with ratings of relationship satisfaction. Given that the two modes are assumed to contribute independently to individuals' experience of marital satisfaction, scores on the two subscales of the LSCR were expected to supplement each other in predicting marital satisfaction.

Thus, an important aim of this present study was to use a larger sample to further investigate the factor structure of the LSCR. Additionally, we wanted to explore the possibility of refining the scale so that the two resulting subscales contain items that load on distinct factors corresponding to the separate listening modalities.

Hypotheses

The present study thus had two basic aims. First of all, to establish the reliability and construct validity of a revised version of the LSCR. Secondly, to establish its criterion validity by using this scale to examine the link between each of the two modes of listening and individuals' ratings of relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was measured using both the Revised Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS) and the Satisfaction subscale of the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS).

The construct validity of the LSCR was assessed by examining the relationships between the two LSCR subscales and the Need for Cognition Scale (NFC) and Self with Partner Reflections Scale (SPRS; a measure of independence and interdependence in self-

construals). Specifically, it was hypothesized that the listening to understand subscale of the LSCR would correlate positively with both need for cognition and the interdependency subscale of the SPRS, and that it would correlate negatively with independency subscale of the SPRS. Conversely, we expected the listening to respond subscale of the LSCR to correlate negatively with need for cognition and interdependency while correlating positively with the independency subscale of the SPRS.

Based on earlier research which identified that individuals who are high in need for cognition are more inclined to actively process and evaluate information and to enjoy activities that require cognitive effort (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982), it was hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between need for cognition and listening to understand. It was thought that individuals who identify themselves as being high in NFC would be more likely to seek out a more complex understanding of their partner's communications and would be more concerned with the accuracy of their own perceptions. Conversely, we expected to find a negative relationship between NFC and listening to respond, as this mode of listening is assumed to be a predominantly automatic process characterized by the relative absence of conscious mental effort.

Further evidence for the construct validation of the LSCR subscales was obtained by examining the hypothesized relationships between listening to understand and listening to respond and independence and interdependence in self-construal as measured by the SPRS. The distinction between independence and interdependence in self-construal involves the extent to which individuals view themselves as being either

separate from others or connected with others in their lives. Thus, it was our contention

that individual differences in these two ways of viewing the self would ultimately be

related to the extent to which an individual either listens to understand or listens to

respond. Specifically, we hypothesized that individuals with a predominantly

independent self-construal would be more likely to listen to respond and less likely to

listen to understand and that, conversely, individuals with a predominantly

interdependent self-construal would be more likely to listen to understand and less likely

to listen to respond. Individuals with a largely independent self-construal see themselves

as being separate from their significant others, and are thought to be concerned with

expressing their own personal opinions and agenda (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). It was

thus hypothesized that, in daily life, these individuals would be more likely to listen to

respond, and less likely to take the time to characteristically listen to understand their

partner. On the other hand, individuals with predominantly interdependent self-

construals are thought to be more concerned with their connection to their significant

others, and thus are thought to be more likely to focus on the needs, opinions, and goals

of their partner (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Therefore, it was our hypothesis that these

individuals would be more likely to demonstrate the same motivation to listen patiently

and to try to become attuned to their partner that is seen in individuals who are listening

to understand. At the same time, we postulated that the natural tendency to listen to

respond might be less prevalent in individuals with interdependent self-construals since

their partner's thoughts and feelings are such an integral part of their own, and this might

thus mitigate the inclination to respond with their own opinion.

Our examination of the relationship between listening styles and relationship satisfaction was guided by two main sets of hypotheses. First, that individual differences in listening to understand and listening to respond would be directly related to an individual's ratings of relationship satisfaction. Second, that these ratings of satisfaction would also be related to individuals' perceptions of the extent to which their *partner* tends to operate under each of the two listening modalities.

Specifically, we expected to find a positive correlation between relationship satisfaction and individuals' ratings of the extent to which they listen to understand, and individuals' ratings of the extent to which their partner is perceived as listening to understand. Conversely, we expected to find a negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and individuals' ratings of the extent to which they listen to respond, and individuals' ratings of the extent to which their partner is perceived as listening to respond.

Finally, we wanted to explore the possible additive effects of the two separate listening styles, and to explore any possible interactions between ratings of self and perceptions of partner, in terms of predicting marital satisfaction.

Individuals who are inclined to listen to understand are thought to be motivated by an underlying desire to seek a deeper understanding of their partner's thoughts and feelings, and are thus thought to be more likely to actively encourage their partner's communication with them. Given that they are concerned with the accuracy of their perceptions and their interpretations of their partner's messages, it is thought that they are also better equipped to effectively and appropriately deal with problems as they arise. In

the context of discussing a problem, listening to understand facilitates a dialogue in which there is a sense of shared inquiry between partners, and in which both the understanding and the relevance of the problem are free to be explored. Individuals who are truly listening to understand are both willing and able to learn about and to be sensitive to their partner's opinions, even when these opinions differ markedly from their own. It was thus hypothesized that individuals who characteristically listen to understand would be more likely to report higher ratings of relationship satisfaction, since these individuals are able to cultivate an environment in which communication between partners is more likely to be productive. At the same time, individuals who believe that their *partner* exhibits those behaviors which are characteristic of listening to understand, and thus perceive their partner as more patient, less judgmental, and as a more empathic listener, were also expected to report higher ratings of relationship satisfaction.

On the other hand, individuals who more inclined to listen to respond tend to be more immediately reactive to their partner's communications, and thus more likely to respond to their partner with an inaccurate or incomplete interpretation of their message. To the extent that individuals operating within this mode tend to react without really understanding their partner's thoughts and feelings, it was thought that they would be more likely to find themselves in confrontational situations with their partner, and thus more likely to report lower ratings of marital satisfaction. Furthermore, individuals who perceive their *partner* as exhibiting the behaviors which are characteristic of listening to respond, and thus perceive their partner as a somewhat distracted, judgmental and self-

absorbed listener, were likewise hypothesized to be more likely to report lower ratings of relationship satisfaction.

In addition, it was posited that listening to understand and listening to respond might demonstrate additive effects in terms of the degree to which they are predictive of relationship satisfaction. It was our assumption that these two listening styles represent two distinct modes of listening, and that individuals within a relationship will operate under each of these listening styles at one point or another. We were thus interested in determining whether or not the degree to which an individual listens under each would combine to account for more of the variability in ratings of satisfaction than could be accounted for by self-ratings of either of the listening styles alone.

Finally, we wanted to explore the possible interaction between individuals' ratings of the extent to which they listen to understand or listen to respond and their perceptions of the extent to which their partner operates under each of these modalities on ratings of relationship satisfaction. Specifically, we were interested in examining how discrepancies between ratings of self and perceptions of partner influenced ratings of relationship satisfaction. For example, if an individual sees him/herself as being high in listening to understand, but perceives his/her partner as being low in listening to understand, then we were interested in exploring how this might affect their experience of relationship satisfaction.

Method

<u>Subjects</u>

The sample for the current study was comprised of 236 undergraduate students from York University who volunteered to complete a survey on "Communication and Satisfaction in Committed Relationships". At the time of the study, all of the subjects were involved in intimate relationships of at least 6 months duration. Twenty-six of the subjects were married, 31 were cohabiting, 178 were living apart and 1 respondent failed to indicate their relationship status. The mean length of relationship was 44.3 months (median = 30 months, ranging from 6 months to 30.8 years). Thirty-two of the participants were male, and 204 were female. The mean age of participants was 22.9 years (median = 20 years, ranging from 18 to 52 years).

<u>Measures</u>

All participants were asked to supply some basic demographic information (see Appendix A.1) and to complete a package of questionnaires that included the measures described below.[2]

<u>Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale</u>

The Listening Styles in Committed Relationships (LSCR) Scale administered to participants was a 26-item self-report inventory that was created to measure individual differences in the degree to which respondents characteristically listen to understand and listen to respond (See Appendix A.2 for a copy of the Scale). Respondents are asked to

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[2] Only the last 93 participants recruited were given the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS). This scale was added to the package to supplement the findings based on the Revised Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS).

indicate how often they believe that they engage in various behaviors when listening to their partner. Responses to each item are made on a 7-point scale, ranging from "always" to "never". The LSCR is comprised of two subscales that measure listening to understand and listening to respond respectively. This 26-item scale is a revised version of the original LSCR scale (Doell, 1997) with the bipolar subscale removed and three of the original bipolar items retained for use on the two remaining subscales[3]. The listening to understand subscale is comprised of 17 items, twelve of which are negatively weighted. High scores on this subscale are thought to be indicative of an individual who is likely to exhibit the behaviors that are characteristic of listening to understand. The listening to respond subscale includes 9 items, eight of which are negatively weighted. High scores on this subscale are thought to indicate an individual who is inclined to listen to respond. In the present study, the listening to understand and listening to respond subscales of the LSCR had internal consistency coefficients and one-month test-retest reliabilities of $\alpha = .85$ ($\underline{n} = 225$), $\underline{r} = .86$ ($\underline{n} = 28$) and $\alpha = .86$ ($\underline{n} = 233$), $\underline{r} = .89$ ($\underline{n} = 30$) respectively.

A parallel form of this scale, the LSCRb, was also included in order to assess individuals' perceptions of the extent to which their *partner* tends to engage in behaviors which are characteristic of listening to understand and listening to respond (See Appendix A.3 for a copy of the LSCRb). The LSCRb is comprised of items that are essentially the

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[3] Several of the bipolar items were considered for retention based on our evaluation of their subjective value. The three items which were ultimately included in this version of the scale were those which were judged as "fitting" well within either the listening to understand or listening to respond subscales. These judgements were based both on theoretical considerations and on examination of item-total correlations.

same as those contained in the LSCR, but with the exception that the wording of each item has to do with the behaviour of their partner. Based on the current sample, the listening to understand and listening to respond subscales of the LSCRb demonstrated internal consistency coefficients and one-month test-retest reliabilities of $\alpha = .92$ ($\underline{n} = 233$), $\underline{r} = .88$ ($\underline{n} = 30$) and $\alpha = .90$ ($\underline{n} = 232$), $\underline{r} = .87$ ($\underline{n} = 30$) respectively.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSD; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) is a self-report scale that was designed to measure individual differences in the need to give socially desirable responses (See Appendix A.4 for a copy of the MCSD). The scale is comprised of 33 items that represent behaviors which are both culturally acceptable and approved of, yet are also relatively unlikely to occur (e.g. "I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble"). Respondents are asked to decide and indicate (true or false) whether or not each of the items pertains to them personally. The Marlowe-Crowne is a well established measure and was included to allow for the examination of the hypothesized relationships between listening styles and relationship satisfaction while controlling for social desirability bias in subjects' responses. Points are assigned for each item answered in the socially desirable direction, and high scores on this scale are thus thought to be indicative of individuals who are attempting to cast themselves in a favorable light. In the current study, the MCSD demonstrated an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .76$.

Need for Cognition

The 19-item Need for Cognition Scale (NFC; Epstein, Pacini, Denes-Raj & Heier, 1996) is a short form of the original 45-item NFC scale (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). This scale was designed to measure the extent to which individuals report that they enjoy and engage in, or dislike and avoid, cognitive activities (See Appendix A.5 for a copy of the NFC). Respondents are asked to indicate their degree of agreement with a number of statements regarding their feelings, beliefs, and behaviors, based on a five-point scale ranging from "completely false" to "completely true". In previous studies, the 19-item NFC has demonstrated reliability of α = .87 and has been found to be related to several measures of constructive thinking and coping (Epstein et al., 1996). The internal consistency coefficient based on the current sample was also α = .87. Fourteen of the items on this scale are negatively weighted, so that high scores on this scale are thought to be indicative of individuals who are more likely to organize, elaborate on, and evaluate the information to which they are exposed.

Revised Relationship Assessment Scale

The Revised Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS) is a modified 13-item version of Fowers and Olson's (1993) 15-item ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) scale. The items of the RRAS are designed to survey several domains of relationship quality including: global relationship satisfaction, personality issues, role responsibilities, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, and family and friends (See Appendix A.6 for a copy of the RRAS). Respondents are asked to indicate their degree of agreement with a number of statements

pertaining to their relationship with their partner on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Previous studies with the RRAS have demonstrated internal consistency coefficients of $\alpha = .83$ (Nguyen, 1999) and $\alpha = .93$ (Doell, 1997). Analysis of the data from the current study found the RRAS to demonstrate both internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$) and test-retest reliability ($\underline{r} = .86$, $\underline{n} = 30$). Five of the items in the RRAS are reverse coded, with high scores on this scale being indicative of individuals who are experiencing greater levels of relationship satisfaction.

Self With Partner Reflections Scale

The Self With Partner Reflections Scale (SPRS; Reid, 1998) is a self-report scale that was designed to measure interdependency and independency in an individual's self-construal (See Appendix A.7 for a copy of the SPRS). The SPRS is a 34-item scale, which is comprised of a 19-item interdependency subscale and a 15-item independency subscale. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which a number of statements regarding the ways in which one interacts and communicates with one's partner are indicative of their own behaviors. Responses are made on a 9-point scale ranging from "not typical of me" to "very typical of me". The interdependency and independency subscales have demonstrated reliabilities of $\alpha = .82$ and $\alpha = .75$ respectively (Nguyen, 1999). Previous studies have found interdependency scores to be positively correlated with measures of relationship satisfaction (RRAS, DAS), closeness, and commitment while independency scores have been shown to correlate negatively with measures of satisfaction (Nguyen, 1999). In the present study, the interdependency subscale was found to have an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .78$, and a test-retest reliability of

r = .62 (n = 27). The independency subscale demonstrated an internal consistency

coefficient and test-retest reliability of α = .68, and r = .83 (n = 28) respectively. The

items on the interdependency subscale are designed to measure the extent to which an

individual's sense of self incorporates representations of their significant other, and at the

same time includes a sense of sharing, of accommodation, and kind of alternate

perspective taking vis-à-vis their partner. The independency subscale, on the other hand,

was created to measure that aspect of the self that reflects an individual's experienced

sense of independence, difference, and autonomy from their partner.

Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The Revised DAS (RDAS; Busby, Christensen, Crane & Larson, 1995) is a

revised version of Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The RDAS was developed

in response to criticisms of the problematic nature of some of the subscales and

individual items of the DAS, and appears to measure the various components of

relationship adjustment in a more reliable and valid way than does its predecessor.

Respondents are asked to indicate the approximate degree of agreement between them

and their partner on 14 items representing decision-making, values, affection, stability,

conflict, activities, and discussion (See Appendix A.8 for a copy of the RDAS). Busby et

al. (1995) have demonstrated the internal consistency (α = .90) and split-half reliability

(Guttman split-half coefficient = .94) of the full scale RDAS and have shown it to

correlate significantly with other measures of marital adjustment. In the present study,

the full scale RDAS was found to have an internal consistency coefficient of α = .83. In

addition to providing a total adjustment score, the RDAS measures and yields scores for three sub-components of dyadic adjustment: consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion.

Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate volunteers recruited either through the York University Psychology Department Undergraduate Research Participant Pool (URPP), or through undergraduate classes held during the summer session at York University. Those students not participating through the URPP were offered, as an incentive, the chance to be included in a lottery which awarded two $50 prizes.

Participants were given a package containing the measures outlined above, and signed consent was obtained. See Appendix A.9 and A.10 for copies of the informed consent forms distributed to participants. Subjects participating through the URPP signed up to complete the packages at a location on the York University campus, whereas students participating during the summer session were asked to take the questionnaires home to complete and to return them the following week.

A random sample of 30 of the 143 subjects recruited through the URPP were asked to complete a slightly abbreviated version of the package[4] a second time, approximately one month following their initial completion, to allow for test-retest comparisons.

Statistical Analyses

Exploratory factor analyses were performed in order to examine the factor structure of the Listening Styles in Committed Relationships (LSCR) Scale, and to

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[4] The retest version of the questionnaire did not contain the MCSD or NFC.

explore the possibility of further meaningful division of the LTU and LTR subscales.

Specifically, the intention was to see whether or not we could assign the items in order to

create a measure with two separate subscales that correspond to distinct factors

representing the content domains of listening to understand and listening to respond. Our

initial attempts at factor analysis early in the development of the LSCR (Doell, 1997) did

not support a two-factor structure, but were based on a sample of much smaller size ($\underline{N}$ =

50). Although there is dispute regarding the actual number of subjects that ought to be

used when attempting factor analysis, evidence has shown that in order to obtain

replicable and meaningful factors, it is necessary to use a sample which is at the very

least 3 times larger than the number of items being analyzed (Kline, 1987). However, a

generally accepted rule of thumb is that it is preferable to have at least 300 subjects when

conducting this analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

The reliability of the revised subscales of the LSCR and LSCRb was then

assessed using the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient, and Pearson's

correlation coefficient to determine test-retest reliability.

Correlations between the subscales of the LSCR and the conceptually related

NFC and independency and interdependency subscales of the SPRS were calculated to

provide further evidence for the construct validity of the listening to understand and

listening to respond subscales.

The hypothesized relationships between listening to understand, listening to

respond, and relationship satisfaction were explored through correlation analyses utilizing

the LSCR, LSCRb, RRAS and RDAS. Partial correlations between these scales

controlling for social desirability (using the MCSD) were also performed. Multiple

regression analyses were then run in order to test the additive effects of listening to

understand and listening to respond in terms of their predictive power regarding

relationship satisfaction.

In order to explore the effects of interactions in the data between individuals'

ratings of self and their perceptions of their partner, two separate ANOVAs were run.

These were used to determine whether or not significant interactions were present that

could contribute to our understanding of the relationship between these listening styles

and relationship satisfaction. Specifically, we looked at the effects of self-ratings and

perception of partner as listening to understand, and the interaction between these two, on

ratings of relationship satisfaction. We then examined the potential for main effects and

an interaction of ratings of listening to respond on ratings of relationship satisfaction.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Prior to analysis, the distributions of all demographic, predictor, and criterion

variables were examined for violation of standard univariate assumptions through use of

boxplots, normal probability plots, and skewness and kurtosis statistics. All independent

and dependent variables satisfied the assumption of normality, but the demographic

variables of age and duration of relationship were both found to be positively skewed.

Table 2 presents the summary statistics for all of the predictor and criterion

variables. See Appendix A.11 for a table of the simple intercorrelations among the

various predictor and criterion measures used.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Each of the Measures in the Study

Scale/Subscale	M	SD	Range	N
LSCR Listening to Understand	91.9	10.9	54	225
LSCR Listening to Respond	28.4	8.4	48	236
LSCRb Listening to Understand	86.26	16.4	87	233
LSCRb Listening to Respond	29.8	10.3	47	235
MCSD	16.5	5.1	25	227
NFC	67.5	11.2	55	223
SPRS Independence	74.3	14.4	72	227
SPRS Interdependence	127.7	16.8	102	217
RRAS	51.5	9.8	46	229
RDAS Total	49.0	8.6	47	88
RDAS Consensus	22.9	4.1	24	89
RDAS Satisfaction	14.7	3.2	17	92
RDAS Cohesion	11.3	3.2	19	93

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, LSCRb = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for assessing perceptions of partner, MCSD = Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, NFC = Need for Cognition, SPRS = Self with Partner Reflections Scale, RRAS = Revised Relationship Assessment Scale, RDAS = Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Factor Analysis and Scale Refinement

Principle components factor analysis revealed a strong first factor on which all of the listening to understand items loaded positively, and all of the listening to respond items loaded negatively. This was similar to what we had found in our attempts at factor analysis with an earlier version of the LSCR (Doell, 1997). However, once rotated, a two-factor structure began to emerge.

An initial Varimax rotation resulted in two interpretable factors, which corresponded nicely to the content domains of listening to understand and listening to respond. The interpretability of the factors was determined by ensuring that all of the items that were felt to be crucial to the definition of each of these constructs fell together on only one of the factors. This was indeed the case. However, there were also several items from the listening to understand subscale that were loading dominantly on the factor corresponding to listening to respond. A review of the content of these items revealed that they were more representative of the construct of listening to respond. There were also a number of items that were loading on both factors, and a review of these determined that they were tapping inversely related aspects of the two listening styles. In other words, the content of these items combined elements of both styles. Thus, in the interest of creating two coherent and relatively independent subsets of items that represent the content domains of listening to understand and listening to respond, it was decided that we would undertake a refinement of the subscales.

The criteria used to determine an item's inclusion on a given subscale were as follows. First, it was decided that each item in the subscale must load higher than .35 on the factor on which it loaded highest[5], and at least .20 less on the non-dominant factor. Second, an examination of the content of each item must confirm that it fit well conceptually within the factor on which it was loading. At the same time, it was important to consider the impact that any changes to subscale structure might have on the internal consistency of the subscales, as we did not want to make changes that would have drastic adverse affects on the reliability of the scale.

Following the above procedures, a 9-item listening to understand subscale and a 12-item listening to respond subscale emerged. In the interest of creating two subscales containing equal numbers of items, the "best" 9 items were selected for inclusion on the final listening to respond subscale after an examination of item content and item-total correlations. The resulting 18 items were then factor analyzed, and a Varimax rotation did indeed reveal a simple two-factor structure. Table 3 presents each of the new 9-item subscales along with the resultant factor loadings.

For more detailed information comparing the original 26-item and new 18-item versions of the LSCR, please see Appendix B.

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[5] Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest that as a general rule, factor loadings of more than .32 ought to be used as the criterion for meaningful correlations between factors and variables.

Table 3

Item Factor Loadings for 9-item LSCR Subscales

Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale (LSCR) Items		
Listening to Understand Subscale	Factor 1	Factor 2
When my partner is communicating with me I pay attention not only to his/her verbal message, but also to his/her expression and gestures.	-.25	.57
If I am unclear about what my partner is saying, I will ask for more detail.	-.13	.66
If I have asked for clarification of my partner's message and find that I am still confused, I will continue to ask for more detail.	-.15	.64
I find that I continue to think about what my partner has said to me even after he/she has finished talking.	-.08	.45
I communicate to my partner (both verbally and nonverbally) that I am interested in what he/she has to say.	-.33	.56
I delay responding to what my partner is saying until I have had time to think about what he/she has said.	-.23	.56
When my partner is explaining him/herself, I try to get a sense of what things must be like for him/her (i.e. I try to "put myself in his/her shoes"), so that I may better understand how he/she must be feeling.	-.27	.58
Even when I disagree with what my partner is saying, I encourage him/her to continue talking so that I may better attempt to understand how he/she is feeling.	-.38	.58
When my partner is communicating with me I pay attention to the broader message which he/she is trying to convey, and I do not get caught up with or react to particular details of what he/she is saying.	-.05	.42

Table 3 (continued)

Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale (LSCR) Items		
Listening to Respond Subscale	Factor 1	Factor 2
I confess that I give more importance to expressing my own opinions than I do to listening to those of my partner.	.66	-.14
I don't find it necessary to pay close attention when my partner is talking, because I already know what my partner is going to say before he/she even says it.	.70	-.01
When my partner is talking to me, I find that I am easily distracted.	.76	-.13
While my partner is talking to me, I think about how I would like to respond to him/her rather than about what he/she is actually saying.	.62	-.12
When I feel that what my partner is saying is "unimportant", I do not give him/her my undivided attention.	.78	-.20
I tend to respond to what my partner is saying before he/she finishes talking.	.67	-.13
When I'm not interested in what my partner is talking about, I change the subject.	.71	-.13
On topics that I already have a strong opinion about, and on which my partner has a differing opinion, I find that I do not really listen to what he/she has to say.	.65	-.22
If I'm preoccupied while my partner is communicating, and I'm not really listening to what he/she is saying, I will "fake" attention (e.g. I will simply nod or agree with whatever he/she is saying).	.62	-.27

Reliability of the Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale

The internal consistency of the 9-item listening to understand and listening to respond subscales of the LSCR and LSCRb was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The listening to understand and listening to respond subscales of the LSCR had internal consistency coefficients of $\alpha = .75$ and $\alpha = .87$ respectively. The listening to understand and listening to respond subscales of the LSCRb demonstrated internal consistency coefficients of $\alpha = .85$ and $\alpha = .90$ respectively.

The one-month test-retest reliabilities of the subscales of the LSCR and LSCRb were assessed using Pearson's r coefficient to determine the correlation between scores obtained on 30 subjects at two different administrations. For the LSCR, these were $r = .76$ for the listening to understand subscale and $r = .81$ for the listening to respond subscale. The listening to understand and listening to respond subscales of the LSCRb had test-retest reliabilities of $r = .83$ and $r = .82$ respectively. The magnitude of these correlation coefficients would suggest that the subscales of the LSCR and LSCRb are indeed tapping into individual differences as opposed to random variance.

The results of the reliability analyses are represented in Table 4.

Table 4

Reliability Coefficients for the LSCR and LSCRb Subscales

Subscale	Internal Consistency		Test-Retest	
	Alpha	N	Pearson r	N
LSCR				
Listening to Understand	.75	232	.76	30
Listening to Respond	.87	235	.81	30
LSCRb				
Listening to Understand	.85	238	.83	30
Listening to Respond	.90	234	.82	30

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, LSCRb = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for assessing perceptions of partner.

<u>Construct Validity of the Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale</u>

The construct validity of the LSCR subscales was assessed by testing the hypothesized relationships between listening to understand and listening to respond and the constructs of need for cognition (NFC), and interdependent and independent self-construal (SPRS). Table 5 displays the correlations of scores on the subscales of the LSCR with NFC and the SPRS subscales.

The hypothesized relationships between listening style and need for cognition were supported by the data. As shown in Table 5, the listening to understand subscale of the LSCR was positively correlated with NFC, $r = .26$ ($p < .001$), while listening to respond was found to be significantly related to NFC but in the opposite direction, $r = -.29$ ($p < .001$). Stepwise multiple regression analysis revealed that a model containing both the LTU and LTR subscales of the LSCR was able to account for an additional 2% of the variance in need for cognition scores ($R = .32$, Adjusted $R^2 = .10$) beyond that associated with LTR scores alone ($R = .29$, Adjusted $R^2 = .08$). These findings lend support to the interpretation of listening to understand and listening to respond as two separate listening modalities, which are not completely redundant, or simply the inverse of one another.

Furthermore, the statistically significant relationships found between the listening to understand and listening to respond subscales of the LSCR and the interdependency and independency subscales of the SPRS were also consistent with what we had predicted. Analyses revealed that individuals who rated themselves higher in independency also rated themselves as being less likely to listen to understand their

Table 5

Correlations of LSCR subscales with SPRS and NFC

Scale/Subscale	LSCR			
	Listening to Understand		Listening to Respond	
	r	N	r	N
SPRS				
Independence	-.28***	231	.53***	231
Interdependence	.46***	219	-.49***	219
NFC	.26***	225	-.29***	225

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, SPRS = Self with Partner Reflections Scale, NFC = Need for Cognition.
*** p < .001

partner ($\underline{r}$ = -.28, $\underline{p}$ < .001) and more likely to listen to respond ($\underline{r}$ = .53, $\underline{p}$ < .001).

Conversely, individuals who rated themselves higher in interdependency rated

themselves as being more likely to listen to understand ($\underline{r}$ = .46, $\underline{p}$ < .001) and less likely

to listen to respond ($\underline{r}$ = -.49, $\underline{p}$ < .001) when communicating with their partner.

<u>Listening Styles and Relationship Satisfaction</u>

In order to test the hypothesized relationships between listening style and

relationship satisfaction, a series of correlation coefficients were computed pairing the

listening to understand and listening to respond subscales of the LSCR and LSCRb with

indices of relationship satisfaction (RRAS and RDAS). These coefficients are presented

in Tables 6 and 7.

The results of these analyses supported the hypothesized relationships.

Individuals' self ratings of the extent to which they characteristically listen to understand

and listen to respond were found to be significantly correlated with their ratings of

marital satisfaction as measured by the RRAS ($\underline{r}$ = .33, $\underline{p}$ < .001 and $\underline{r}$ = -.40, $\underline{p}$ < .001),

and the Satisfaction subscale of the RDAS ($\underline{r}$ = .26, $\underline{p}$ < .001 and $\underline{r}$ = -.36, $\underline{p}$ < .001).

Moreover, individuals' ratings of the extent to which their *partner* listens to understand

and listens to respond were found to be even more predictive of marital satisfaction,

correlating to a greater extent with both the RRAS ($\underline{r}$ = .68, $\underline{p}$ < .001 and $\underline{r}$ = -.67, $\underline{p}$ <

.001) and the Satisfaction subscale of the RDAS ($\underline{r}$ = .48, $\underline{p}$ < .001 and $\underline{r}$ = -.62, $\underline{p}$ < .001).

Furthermore, the correlations between these self-reported ratings of listening style

and relationship satisfaction remained significant even when we controlled for social

desirability in subjects' responses. Tables 8 and 9 present the partial correlation

Table 6

Correlations of LSCR subscales with RRAS and RDAS

Scale/Subscale	LSCR			
	Listening to Understand		Listening to Respond	
	r	N	r	N
RRAS	.33***	231	-.40***	231
RDAS Total	.23*	90	-.29**	90
RDAS Consensus	.20	91	-.34***	91
RDAS Satisfaction	.26**	94	-.33***	94
RDAS Cohesion	.07	95	-.01	95

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, RRAS = Revised
Relationship Assessment Scale, RDAS = Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale.
*p < .05, **p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 7

Correlations of LSCRb subscales with RRAS and RDAS

Scale/Subscale	LSCRb			
	Listening to Understand		Listening to Respond	
	r	N	r	N
RRAS	.68***	231	-.67***	230
RDAS Total	.61***	90	-.66***	90
RDAS Consensus	.51***	91	-.56***	91
RDAS Satisfaction	.48***	94	-.62***	94
RDAS Cohesion	.49***	95	-.41***	95

Note: LSCRb = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for
assessing perceptions of partner, RRAS = Revised Relationship Assessment Scale,
RDAS = Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale.
*** p < .001

Table 8

Partial Correlations of LSCR with RRAS and RDAS, controlling for Social Desirability

Scale/Subscale	LSCR			
	Listening to Understand		Listening to Respond	
	r	N	r	N
RRAS	.29***	221	-.36***	221
RDAS Total	.20	85	-.28**	85
RDAS Consensus	.15	86	-.29**	86
RDAS Satisfaction	.22*	88	-.30**	88
RDAS Cohesion	.12	89	-.06	89

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, RRAS = Revised Relationship Assessment Scale, RDAS = Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale.
*p < .05, **p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 9

Partial Correlations of LSCRb with RRAS and RDAS, controlling for Social Desirability

Scale/Subscale	LSCRb			
	Listening to Understand		Listening to Respond	
	r	N	r	N
RRAS	.67***	221	-.66***	221
RDAS Total	.61***	85	-.66***	85
RDAS Consensus	.49***	86	-.54***	86
RDAS Satisfaction	.46***	88	-.61***	88
RDAS Cohesion	.51***	89	-.45***	89

Note: LSCRb = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for assessing perceptions of partner, RRAS = Revised Relationship Assessment Scale, RDAS = Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale.
*** p < .001

coefficients between the LSCR and LSCRb subscales and the RRAS and RDAS while controlling for social desirability as measured by the MCSD.

Exploratory Analyses in Predicting Relationship Satisfaction

Although, theoretically, listening to understand and listening to respond represent two distinct listening modalities, we had suspected that the measures of each of these constructs might be highly intercorrelated due to shared method variance. An examination of the intercorrelations among the subscales of the LSCR and LSCRb revealed that this was in fact the case (see Table 10). Thus, we did not make any formal hypotheses about additive effects or interactions among these subscales, but were nonetheless interested in examining whether or not any did exist. As such, this set of examinations was exploratory in nature.

Additive Effects of Listening Styles

In order to test the additive effects of the two listening modalities in predicting relationship satisfaction, a series of multiple regression analyses were run. Tables 11 through 14 present the results of these analyses.

First, we were interested in examining whether a model containing individuals' self ratings of both listening to understand *and* listening to respond could account for more of the variance in relationship satisfaction than self-ratings of either of these listening styles alone. Stepwise multiple regression analyses revealed that when relationship satisfaction was indexed by the RRAS, a model containing both individuals' self-ratings of listening to respond and their self-ratings of listening to understand was able to account for an additional 2% of the variance in relationship satisfaction above that

Table 10

Intercorrelations for the LSCR and LSCRb Subscales

Subscale	LSCR		LSCRb	
	LTU	LTR	LTU	LTR
LSCR				
Listening to Understand	--	-.49***	.50***	-.38***
Listening to Respond	--	--	-.32***	.57***
LSCRb				
Listening to Understand	--	--	--	-.66***
Listening to Respond	--	--	--	--

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, LSCRb = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for assessing perceptions of partner.
*** $p < .001$

Table 11

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Satisfaction (as indexed by the RRAS) from LSCR Subscales.

LSCR Subscale	B	SE B	β
Step 1			
Listening to Respond	-.44	.07	-.40***
Step 2			
Listening to Respond	-.35	.08	-.31***
Listening to Understand	.30	.12	.18**

$R^2 = .16$, Adjusted $R^2 = .16$ for Step 1
$R^2 = .18$, Adjusted $R^2 = .18$ for Step 2
Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale
** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 12

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Satisfaction (as Indexed by the

RDAS) from LSCR Subscales.

LSCR Subscale	B	SE B	β
Step 1			
Listening to Respond	-.12	.04	-.33***
Step 2 (forced)			
Listening to Respond	-.10	.04	-.27**
Listening to Understand	.07	.06	.13

$R^2 = .11$, Adjusted $R^2 = .10$ for Step 1
$R^2 = .12$, Adjusted $R^2 = .10$ for Step 2
Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale
Variables excluded from the model = LSCR Listening to Understand subscale
** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 13

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Satisfaction (as Indexed by the

RRAS) from LSCRb Subscales.

LSCR Subscale	B	SE B	β
Step 1			
Listening to Understand	.78	.06	.68***
Step 2			
Listening to Understand	.48	.07	.42***
Listening to Respond	-.36	.06	-.39***

$R^2 = .46$, Adjusted $R^2 = .46$ for Step 1
$R^2 = .55$, Adjusted $R^2 = .54$ for Step 2
Note: LSCRb = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for
assessing perceptions of partner.
*** $p < .001$

Table 14

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Satisfaction (as Indexed by the RDAS) from LSCRb Subscales.

LSCRb Subscale	B	SE B	β
Step 1			
Listening to Respond	-.19	.02	-.62***
Step 2 (forced)			
Listening to Respond	-.16	.03	-.53***
Listening to Understand	.05	.04	.14

$R^2 = .39$, Adjusted $R^2 = .38$ for Step 1
$R^2 = .40$, Adjusted $R^2 = .38$ for Step 2
Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for assessing perceptions of partner.
Variables excluded from the model = LSCRb Listening to Understand subscale
*** $p < .001$

accounted for by ratings of listening to respond alone (see Table 11). However, when satisfaction was indexed by the satisfaction subscale of the RDAS, the addition of self-ratings of listening to understand to a model already containing self-ratings of listening to respond made no significant difference in terms of predictive ability (see Table 12).

A similar pattern was revealed when we examined the additive effects of individuals' perceptions of the extent to which their partner operates under each of the two listening modalities. A model containing individuals' perceptions of the extent to which their partner both listens to respond *and* listens to understand was able to account for 54% of the variance in relationship satisfaction as indexed by the RRAS, whereas a model containing only listening to understand accounted for 46% of the variance (see Table 13). Still, when satisfaction was indexed by the RDAS satisfaction subscale, perceptions of the extent to which one's partner typically listens to understand was not able to add significantly to the model containing perceptions of listening to respond (see Table 14).

<u>Interactions Between Self-Ratings and Perceptions of Partner</u>

In order to examine the nature of any possible interactions between self-ratings and perceptions of partner in terms of the effect on individuals' ratings of relationship satisfaction, two separate ANOVAs were run. Given that we were primarily interested in exploring the effects of discrepancies between ratings of self and perceptions of partner, the distributions of scores on the LSCR and LSCRb subscales were divided into thirds in order to create groups of subjects with either "high", "medium" or "low" scores relative to the others in the sample. The ANOVAs were then run to determine whether

significant interactions were present. Tables 15 and 16 display the results of these analyses.

Although there were no significant interactions found between the LSCR and LSCRb listening to respond subscales, there was a significant interaction between the listening to understand subscales of the two measures. This interaction is displayed graphically in Figure 1. The nature of the interaction is such that the group of individuals with the highest mean satisfaction scores overall were those individuals who saw both themselves *and* their partner as being high in listening to understand. Yet those individuals with the lowest satisfaction scores were the ones who saw themselves as being high in listening to understand while at the same time seeing their partner as being low in listening to understand. Thus, it would appear that discrepancies between ratings of self and perceptions of partner, at least in terms of listening to understand, did have an effect on ratings of satisfaction in the present study.

Table 15

ANOVA for Effects of LSCR and LSCRb Listening to Understand Subscales on

Satisfaction Scores (as Indexed by the RRAS)

Source	df	MS	F
LSCR Listening to Understand	2	135.7	2.3
LSCRb Listening to Understand	2	2035.6	34.1***
LSCR (LTU) X LSCRb (LTU)	4	145.26	2.5*
Error	220	59.7	

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, LSCRb = Listening
Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for assessing perceptions of
partner.
* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Table 16

ANOVA for Effects of LSCR and LSCRb Listening to Respond Subscales on

Satisfaction Scores (as Indexed by the RRAS)

Source	df	MS	F
LSCR Listening to Respond	2	65.6	1.1
LSCRb Listening to Respond	2	2038.4	34.1***
LSCR (LTR) X LSCRb (LTR)	4	74.7	1.2
Error	219	59.8	

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, LSCRb = Listening
Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for assessing perceptions of
partner.
*** $p < .001$

Figure 1: Interaction of Self-Ratings and Perception of Partner Listening to Understand

on Mean Satisfaction Scores (as Indexed by the RRAS)

Self-Ratings – Listening to Understand

♦ High
■ Medium
▲ Low

65
60
55
50
45
40
35

Mean Satisfaction (RRAS)

Low   Medium   High

Perceptions of Partner - Listening to Understand
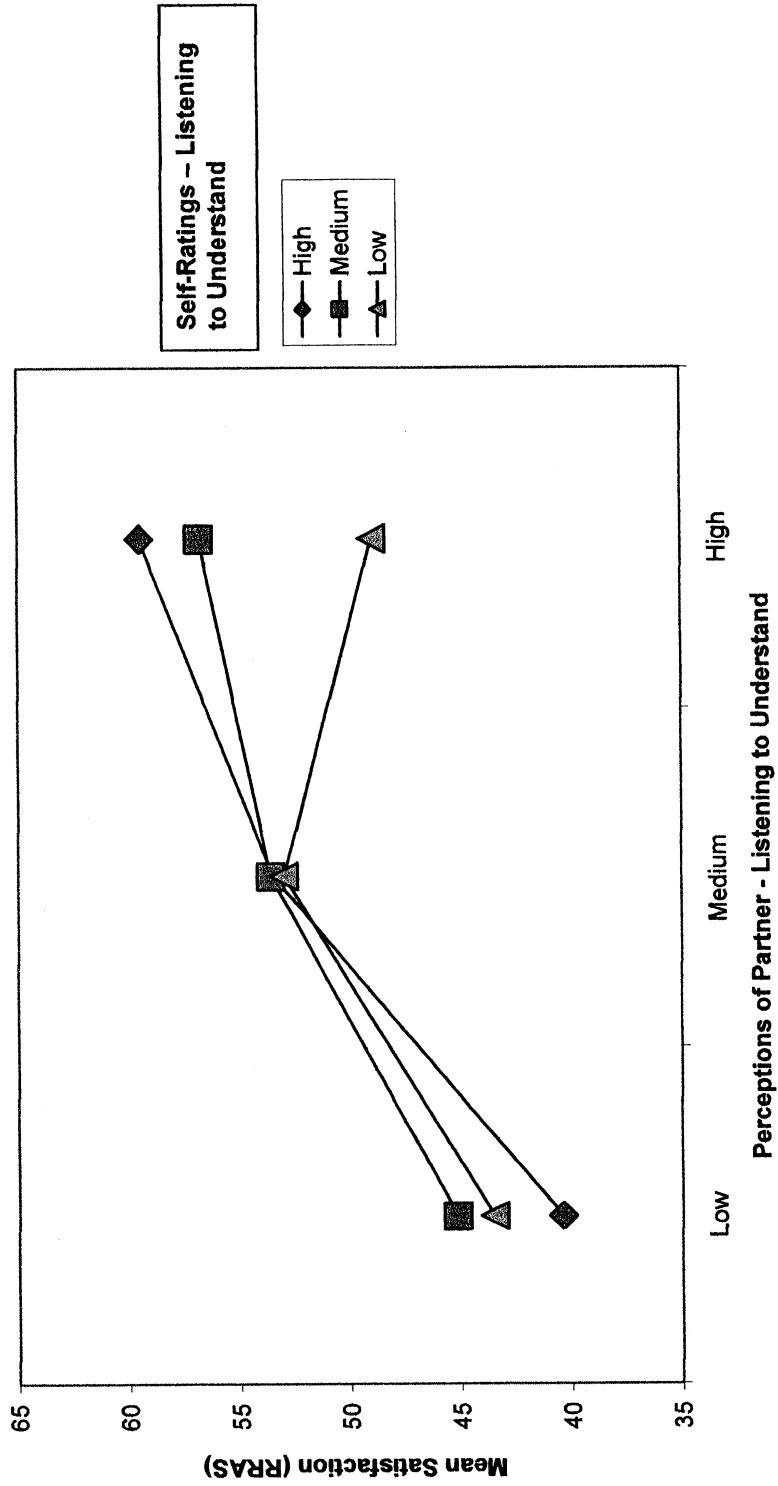
Note: High, Medium and Low represent the bottom, middle and top thirds of the distributions of ratings of listening

to understand.

Discussion

Couples' communication is a dynamic and multidimensional construct which encompasses not only the verbal and nonverbal behaviours which are evidenced in a couple's interactions, but also each partner's perceptions of the other's communicative behaviours. The self-reported perceptions of a couple's communication yield subjective data which allows us to understand the couple's own definition of the quality of their communication.

Through this study, the self-reported perceptions of one's own as well as one's partner's characteristic listening style have been found to be predictive of relationship satisfaction. The LSCR and LSCRb subscales are thus potentially valuable clinical tools for use not only for further research on relationship dynamics, but also in assessing communication difficulties and in tailoring appropriate intervention programs. The specific findings of this study, along with their theoretical relevance and clinical implications are discussed below.

Reliability and Validity of the LSCR Subscales

The results of the present study support both the reliability and validity of the LSCR as a measure of listening to understand and listening to respond in committed relationships. The LSCR was originally derived by generating items with high face validity based on content domains which originated from our clinical observations of couples in therapy and were fleshed out by informal focus groups with married individuals. Our attempt in the current study to further refine the LSCR so as to establish subscales representing two distinct factors corresponding to the domains of listening to

understand and listening to respond was successful. Psychometric evaluation of the resulting 9-item subscales revealed them to have both internal consistency and test-retest reliability.

In order to establish the construct validity of the LSCR it was necessary to both explicate the theoretical constructs of listening to understand and listening to respond, to consider how these constructs ought to relate to other variables, and then to examine whether or not these hypothesized relationships exist (Groth-Marnat, 1999). Accordingly, we sought to demonstrate the construct validity of the LSCR subscales by testing the hypothesized relationships between listening to understand and listening to respond and the constructs of need for cognition (NFC), and interdependent and independent self-construal (SPRS).

<u>Listening Styles and Need For Cognition</u>

As hypothesized, we found that individuals who rate themselves as being more likely to listen to understand are also more likely to rate themselves as being high in need for cognition. That is to say, these individuals identify themselves as being more likely to actively evaluate and process information and to engage in and enjoy thinking in general (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). The positive correlation between scores on need for cognition and on the listening to understand subscale of the LSCR was anticipated because the active processing of information and motivation for deeper understanding are central aspects of both constructs. Conversely, higher scores on the listening to respond subscale of the LSCR, which represent individuals who identify themselves as more likely to process their partner's communications effortlessly and to be less concerned

with attending to information which is being shared, were inversely related to scores on need for cognition.

Individuals who are high in need for cognition have been found to be less inclined towards heuristic thinking, and more inclined to actively process information (Epstein et al., 1996). The significant negative correlation between need for cognition and listening to respond thus fits well with our conceptualization of listening to respond as a more automatic process that requires relatively little conscious effort. Likewise, the significant positive correlation between need for cognition and listening to understand lends support to our hypothesis that individuals who characteristically listen to understand are those who are more inclined to attend to and to seek out information when communicating with their partner.

Listening Styles and Interdependent and Independent Self-Construals

The pattern of correlations resulting from the pairings of the subscales of the LSCR with the independency and interdependency subscales of the SPRS were also consistent with predictions based on the nature of the domains that these scales are designed to measure. As was expected, individuals who rated themselves higher in listening to understand tended to rate themselves higher in interdependency and lower in independency. Conversely, individuals who rated themselves higher in listening to respond were more likely to report lower ratings of interdependency and higher ratings of independency.

Listening to understand involves a considerable amount of concern with the thoughts and feelings of one's partner, together with an active attempt to empathically

attune to, and explore with their partner when he or she is communicating. The construct of listening to understand is thus closely connected with the interdependent tendency to focus on the "other", and the concern with maintaining connectedness. Individuals scoring high in interdependency are reporting that they typically approach their partner with empathy and sensitivity, and that they are responsive to, and mindful of, their partner's thoughts and feelings. At the same time, these individuals are more open to the influence of their partner's ideas, and will often actively seek their partner's opinions in making decisions. Thus, in conversations with their partner, these individuals are likely to be more motivated to attempt to truly *understand* what it is that their partner is trying to communicate. The significant correlation between listening to understand and interdependency would certainly seem to support this assumption. Moreover, we would argue that this might be the case not only because these individuals are concerned with their *partner's* needs, but also because their partner's thoughts and opinions are considered to be an essential part of their *own* perspective. At the same time, the significant negative correlation between interdependency and listening to respond was anticipated because the responsiveness and perspective-taking which are evidenced by individuals with primarily interdependent self-construals are almost the antithesis of the propensity towards expressing one's own opinion that is seen in individuals who characteristically listen to respond. Individuals who score high on interdependency are concerned with finding a balance between the viewpoints of their partner and themselves, and are thought to be more likely to promote the compatibility, and even value, of disparate opinions when they arise.

Individuals who are listening to respond on the other hand, are typically satisfied with simply "knowing" what it is that their partner is trying to say, rather than "understanding" what it was that they were trying to communicate. These individuals are thought to be less likely to worry about their partner's perspective, and to be more concerned with expressing their own viewpoints in conversation with their partner. When individuals are truly listening to respond, it is as if they are operating with a set of implicit assumptions regarding what it is that their partner is trying to communicate, and they make no effort to move beyond these initial assumptions. Thus, they tend to respond to their *own* interpretation and expectations of what their partner is saying or is going to say, and this response is typically ready even before their partner has finished communicating. Whereas individuals who score high in interdependency are thought to be more likely to promote conciliatory resolutions when differences of opinion arise, individuals who typically listen to respond are much more likely to continue to present their own viewpoint without attempting to truly understand their partner's point of view.

On the other hand, examination of the relationships between listening styles and *independency* revealed a reverse pattern in the correlations. Individuals who rated themselves as being high in independency rated themselves as being more likely to listen to respond and less likely to listen to understand. Individuals with predominantly independent self-construals typically see themselves as being separate from, and even competitive with, their partner. This sense of separateness is very much an integral part of the way that they see themselves in the world. In communication with their partner, this translates into a fundamentally egocentric attitude whereby little attempt is likely to

be made to gain awareness of their partner's thoughts, feelings, and opinions, and these may even be guarded against. Thus, these individuals are not concerned with gaining a deeper understanding of their partner's communicated messages, and we would expect that they would be less likely to characteristically listen to understand. Conversely, the sense of separateness between self and partner and the primacy of viewpoint that is evidenced in individuals who are high in independency would seem to make it more likely that these individuals would operate under the modality of listening to respond.

The pattern of correlations that were found in this study when examining the relationships between listening styles and interdependency and independency thus supported our initial hypotheses. These results, taken together with the confirmed relationships with need for cognition and the factorial validity and reliability of the two 9-item subscales lend support for the validity of the LSCR subscales as measures of individual differences in listening to understand and listening to respond.

Listening Styles and Relationship Satisfaction

The results of the present study served to corroborate our initial hypotheses regarding the relationships between listening styles and relationship satisfaction. Individuals' self-ratings of the extent to which they characteristically listen to understand and listen to respond were found to be predictive of ratings of relationship satisfaction. Additionally, individuals' perceptions of the extent to which their *partner* operates under each of these two listening modalities were found to be even more predictive of ratings of relationship satisfaction. These results still held when we controlled for social desirability bias in subjects' responses.

Through the course of our observations of couples treated in therapy, it has become apparent that often partners habitually listen in such a way that they do not really "hear" enough to truly understand what it is that their partner is trying to communicate. It is from these observations that the distinction between listening to respond and listening to understand was initially derived. The findings of the present study are consistent with our clinical observations of the relationship between these listening styles and relationship satisfaction. It has been our experience that the individuals in distressed relationships often complain that their partner doesn't really *listen* to them when they are communicating.

Individuals who are listening to respond tend to be somewhat "distracted" in their interactions with their partner. It is as if these individuals are preoccupied with what they think their partner is trying to communicate, or with how they would like to respond to what they have already heard. Thus, listening to respond can often look like a kind of "selective" listening, and involve responding to the communications of one's partner without having heard *all* of what has been said. Individuals who are listening to respond tend to give emphasis to expressing their own opinions, as opposed to listening to those of their partner, and may appear to *"read into"* what their partner has said. These individuals tend to overlook the intent or purpose of their partner's communications, and instead focus exclusively on the content of messages. They listen to their partner's *words* rather than to the underlying meaning or broader message of what is being communicated. Thus, when an individual in a relationship habitually listens to respond, it serves to create an environment in which their partner is typically not fully able to share

their thoughts or feelings. This in turn, may then serve to foster an adversarial

environment in which conflict and misinterpretation prevail.

This mode of listening is nicely illustrated in the following excerpt drawn from a

pilot study[6] in which the couple below discussed the issue of commitment and marriage

within their relationship.

> **Bob:** I guess common sense is sort of telling me to take things more step by step than... than uh, than just committing to everything all at once. I'm not saying that I'm not prepared to commit to it, just that...I, I don't see why there would be a big rush.
>
> **Wendy:** But if we want to start a family in the next few years, and we want to be married before we start a family, then you've got engagement, you've got marriage, you've got kids. By the time you get to kids if you don't start thinking about the commitment now, we're...
>
> **Bob:** We haven't, I haven't said that I'm not thinking about the commitment. In fact I think I've said the other way around, I have thought about the commitment.
>
> **Wendy:** Well, when you say you have thought it means you have thought, and decided that you're not interested.
>
> **Bob:** No, it just means I haven't finished thinking about it yet.

When Bob says that he wants to take things step by step and not "commit to everything

all at once", Wendy does not attempt to take his perspective or inquire more about the

underlying meaning of what he is saying, but instead responds with her own agenda. Bob

then tries to clarify his position, and in response Wendy completely dismisses what Bob

has said. It is as though she disregards what he says in light of her own cognitive

---

[6] This pilot study is an extension of the current work described in this paper, and involves
the behavioural coding of listening to understand and listening to respond within the
context of couple's conversations

schemata that are automatically "interpreting" what it is that he means. Wendy's

interpretations likely involve a long history between herself and Bob, and it's quite

possible that she may have reason to respond in this manner. However, what is important

for the illustration at hand is the way that she clearly fails to inquire for a deeper

understanding of what it is that Bob is trying to communicate, and how her responses

seem to involve her reading something into what Bob is saying that is not necessarily

consistent with his intent. Wendy is evidently not listening to *all* of what Bob is saying,

nor is she attempting to find out more about what he means. In fact, Wendy seems to be

responding to her *own* interpretation of what she hears. This is also apparent in the

following interchange which occurred after Bob stated that he believed that marriage was

important, but at some point in the future.

> Wendy: You're always telling me "sometime in the future" or "yes I think it's important but not right now", which makes me think lofty important, not important to me in my life with you. It's like saying "yes, I think that 911 is important, but I don't need to use it".
>
> Bob: How is it like that?
>
> Wendy: Because. There's no relevance whatsoever, it's not like "You know what? I really think marriage is important and I really want to marry you but I'm not ready to get married right now. Give it a couple of years." Is different than "Yes I think that marriage is important"... to some people, somewhere, who needed to get married for some reason at some point
>
> Bob: So I'm guilty of not being very clear.

At the end of these interchanges, neither Bob nor Wendy seems to have gained much

insight into the underlying feelings or intentions of the other.

This type of listening can be contrasted with that evidenced by individuals who are listening to understand. When listening to understand, an individual is attempting to gauge, or is picking up on, their partner's *feelings* about what they are communicating. This very much involves a sort of patient, empathic listening and concern with deeper understanding of one's partner's messages. Questions asked seem to be aimed towards developing a more complete understanding of their partner's thoughts and feelings, rather than focusing on specific details of what was said. These individuals are also attempting to provide their partner with opportunities to elaborate on their views, and are quick to pick up on cues from their partner that might suggest that they don't quite get what it is that their partner is trying to communicate. Understandings are presented tentatively and as open for clarification.

If we were to think in terms of our couple, Bob and Wendy, listening to understand would mean that Wendy would attempt to put aside her own preconceptions about how and what Bob thinks, and would be more likely to pick up on Bob's attempts to convey to her what his view of the future brings. She would be more likely to attune to, and inquire about, his feelings regarding what he was communicating and less likely to respond without allowing him time to fully express himself. In turn, if Bob were to listen to understand the deeper meanings in Wendy's communications, he would be more likely to recognize and respond to the feelings behind what she was saying.

The type of listening which is evidenced in individuals who are listening to understand is very much in line with the type of listening which is thought to be a necessary component of the therapeutic relationship. Carl Rogers himself recognized the

value in extending this type of listening outside of the bounds of the therapeutic alliance and into our relationships with others in the world. He argued (1952) that this type of listening would be likely to promote understanding of other's points of view, and that that in turn would lead to less conflict and more tolerance within the context of these relationships. It has been our experience with couples in therapy that when individuals are able to truly listen to understand one another, that they begin to report experience of an increased sensitivity to one another, and a decreased sense of conflict in their interactions. It is our contention that the more they are able to translate this into their interactions with one another, the more satisfying those interactions will be.

When individuals listen to understand one another, it is thought to create an environment in which open communication is encouraged and nurtured. Problems are free to be explored in a non-confrontational way, and individuals are able to learn from, and with, one another. We would argue that this has important implications for individuals' experience of satisfaction within their relationship, and the results of the present study seem to support this conclusion.

On the other hand, when individuals listen to respond, they tend to be more immediately reactive to their partner's messages, and more selective in what they "hear" in what their partner is trying to communicate. Thus, individuals who are listening to respond are thought to be more likely to inadvertently promote and maintain conflict within their relationships. At the same time, the partners of individuals who habitually listen to respond are likely to be left feeling misheard or misrepresented by their partner.

This too has important implications for individuals' experience of relationship satisfaction.

<u>Additive Effects</u>

The results of this study also leant some support to the notion that individuals' ratings of listening to understand and listening to respond would combine to predict more of the variance in relationship satisfaction than could be accounted for by either variable alone. However, the evidence was not uniformly supportive of this conclusion.

It had been hypothesized that, in theory, the extent to which an individual listens to understand and the extent to which they listen to respond ought to supplement each other in terms of predicting relationship satisfaction because the gestalt of our daily communications with our partner is a joint function of both modes of listening. What we found in this study was that the addition of the second listening style did add significantly to models aimed at predicting satisfaction as indexed by the RRAS, but did not add appreciably to models aimed at predicting satisfaction as indexed by the RDAS. This discrepancy is quite possibly due to the smaller sample of individuals who completed the RDAS. The fact that the RDAS was only completed by a subset of the total sample means that tests for effects using the RDAS will be less powerful than those that utilize the RRAS. However, the inconsistency in findings might also be due to actual differences in the two measures of relationship satisfaction. Although the RRAS and RDAS Satisfaction were significantly correlated (r = .74, df = 91), comparison of the item content of the two scales reveals them to be qualitatively different. The RRAS is a more broadband measure of relationship satisfaction, which is designed to measure

satisfaction across several domains including global relationship satisfaction, communication, personality issues, conflict resolution, affection, and relationships with family and friends. The RDAS Satisfaction Scale on the other hand, focuses more on the extent to which individuals quarrel and/or regret their relationship with their partner. Thus, it is possible that the differential results regarding the additive effects of LTU and LTR when predicting satisfaction as indexed by these two measures, are due to the fact that LTU and LTR do not contribute independently to *certain* aspects of satisfaction.

When individuals' self-ratings of listening styles were used to predict relationship satisfaction (as indexed by the RRAS), the addition of self-ratings of the extent to which one listens to understand, to a model already containing self-ratings of listening to respond, was able to account for an additional 2% of the variance in satisfaction scores. This addition, which increased the Adjusted R^2 from .16 to .18, was significant at the p <.01 level. More noticeably, when individuals perceptions of the extent to which their partner operates under each of the listening modalities were used to predict relationship satisfaction, the model containing both listening modalities was able to account for 8% more of the variance than could be accounted for by listening to understand alone. In this case, the addition of the second listening style raised the Adjusted R^2 from .46 to .54, and was significant at the $p < .001$ level.

<u>Interaction of Perceptions of Self and Partner</u>

In exploring the interaction between ratings of self and ratings of partner in terms of listening styles, what we were most interested in discovering was whether or not discrepancies between ratings of self and partner's listening styles had an effect on

respondents' relationship satisfaction. We know from the simple correlations, that respondents' perceptions of their partner's characteristic listening style were more predictive of respondents' relationship satisfaction than were respondents' self-ratings of listening to understand and listening to respond. The results of the ANOVAs involving classifying the subject sample into high, medium and low scores on listening styles found a significant interaction between ratings of self and ratings of partner, but only for ratings of listening to understand.

An examination of this particular interaction revealed that mean ratings of satisfaction were highest for that group of individuals who rated both themselves and their partner as being high is listening to understand. In comparison, mean satisfaction ratings were lowest for those individuals who saw themselves as being high in listening to understand but perceived their partner as being low in listening to understand.

Intuitively, these findings make sense and perhaps suggest a level of consciousness of differences that may exist between one's self and one's partner in terms of the extent to which each listens to understand and the satisfaction one has with one's relationship with the other partner. In other words, if I see myself as being the type of person who characteristically invests the time and effort required in order to listen to understand and am motivated to do so, but perceive my partner as being unwilling to do the same, then it is not unreasonable to assume that this discrepancy would affect my experience of satisfaction within the relationship.

<u>Limitations</u>

There are a number of limitations inherent in the present study that may serve to limit the generalizability of the obtained results. First of all, the sample for the present study was comprised of undergraduate students who may not be representative of individuals from a wider population of couples. This sample was relatively young, had a median length of relationship of only two and a half years, and the mean reported relationship satisfaction scores seem to indicate that they were, as a whole, not particularly distressed. Thus, it becomes problematic to generalize these results to married couples who have been together for a longer length of time, less educated individuals, older individuals, and individuals who are markedly dissatisfied with their relationship. At the outset of this study we were aware of these limitations, but chose to collect data based on an undergraduate population in the interest of obtaining a sample large enough to allow for certain analyses. In particular, we needed to obtain a sample upwards of 200 individuals in order to be able to confidently proceed with the exploratory factor analysis of the Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale. In the context of the present study, we were thus willing to take the risk of limiting the generalizability of results as a trade-off resulting from the need to obtain a sufficiently large sample.

The fact that one of our aims was to collect a *large* sample (as opposed to a truly representative sample) of individuals in committed relationships meant that we also failed to obtain a balanced sample in terms of the gender of respondents. In fact, 86% of our current sample was female. This disparity in sample size of male versus female

respondents meant that we were unable, in the present study, to make any comparisons between the two gender groups. This is somewhat problematic in light of the research which has suggested that gender differences do exist in terms of the ways in which men and women respond to the communications of their partner (O'Donohue & Crouch, 1996; Gottman, 1994). Nonetheless, in the present study, we did not set out to investigate gender differences in listening styles. This decision was informed, in part, by the results of our earlier study with 25 married couples (Doell, 1997) which did not find any gender differences in terms of listening to understand or listening to respond that even began to approach significance.

It is also worth noting that no attempt was made, in the present study, to examine the possible influence of ethic background on the variables which were measured. Indeed, respondents were not even asked to indicate their culture or ethnicity when we collected demographic information. In future studies it will be important to remedy this, and to test for the possible effects of ethnic background on listening styles, relationship satisfaction and the relationship between the two.

A further possible limitation of the current study lies in the correlational design that was employed. That is, no linear causality can be inferred because of the correlational nature of the design. There was no experimental manipulation applied that would allow us to infer that differences in listening style have a *causal* effect on an individual's experience of relationship satisfaction. However, with that said, it is not our contention that there ought to be any sort of linear causality to infer. In fact, we would argue that it is more likely that the relationship between listening style and relationship

satisfaction involves a type of reciprocal causality, whereby individuals' listening styles affect their satisfaction within the relationship, while at the same time their experience of satisfaction affects the degree to which they operate under each of the listening modalities.

One final limitation that bears mentioning here has to do with the nature of the data that were collected and utilized within this study. That is, the data within this study were purely self-report, and so were susceptible to factors such as distortion of responses, inaccurate memory and misinterpretation of item content (Harvey, Hendrick & Tucker, 1988). While we would argue that the information which is gained from using self-report questionnaires is an important source of information about an individual's own definition of their experience within their relationship, it still remains the case that this information may not be entirely accurate or representative of what really goes on in the context of their communications with their partner. Thus, future research employing behavioural observation techniques is necessary in order to provide a more complete picture of the listening modalities that are evidenced by partners as they interact with one another.

<u>Clinical Implications</u>

The complex systemic approach upon which this research is predicated posits that by highlighting the couple's own agency and expertise in their own relationship, self-generated relationship change becomes more possible (Fergus & Reid, 2001). Therapeutic interventions within this model are based upon the understanding that couples know more about themselves and their relationship than the therapist, as outside observer, could ever begin to comprehend. Thus, as therapists, we attempt to work with

the couples' own knowing and tacit understanding of one another and their relationship. By drawing couples' attention to their own capacity for listening to understand, it allows them to take to responsibility for their own change, and to do so in ways that are meaningful for *them*.

The Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale provides us with information which is relevant to an understanding of a couple's own definition of the quality of their communication, and which may be used to heighten their awareness of the extent to which they operate under each of these listening modalities. In making couples aware of the ways in which they listen, it is hoped that they will then engage their own reflexivity in service of change. Our goal is not to present clients with new communication strategies or "listening techniques", as such solutions often tend to lose their impact once the couple is immersed in their day-to-day functioning. Rather, the therapist is likened to a guide who helps couples to come to their own discoveries and understandings. In drawing attention to the limitations of listening to respond, and to the ways in which listening to understand can advance their understanding of one another and the salient issues in their relationship, it is hoped that couples will then make their own subtle adjustments which will in turn lead to more self-generated change.

Indeed, Burnett (1987) argues that most reflection on one's relationships occurs in "an unspoken dimension of relationship experience, where understanding (if it exists) is tacit, knowledge is intuitive and insights are felt rather than said" (p.90). In listening to understand, individuals not only draw on their own tacit understanding of their partner, but also draw their partner's unspoken experience out into the open. It is only once each

partner's implicit understandings have been uncovered that they can begin to construct a shared understanding of who they are as a couple.

Thus, it is our assertion that the ways in which individuals within a relationship listen to one another has serious implications for how they construe themselves as a couple and how they then experience their relationship. The ways in which an individual comes to understand their partner and their relationship is thought to be very much mediated through what they "hear". When individuals habitually listen to respond in communication with their partner, they completely miss out on their partner's unspoken experience. Conversely, when individuals listen to understand their partner, this experience is drawn out into the open where it can be explored, validated, and ultimately be shared.

Future Research Directions

While we routinely introduce the distinction between listening to understand and listening to respond to couples in therapy in our research lab, we have not yet begun to work with these constructs in a systematic fashion that would allow us to assess the impact of these interventions. Thus, future research on these listening styles will include a more controlled approach to our therapeutic interventions that would allow us to evaluate the efficacy of targeting this distinction. Introducing the concept of listening to understand in a more uniform manner, and coupling this with behavioural ratings of listening to understand and listening to respond taken both before and after the concept has been introduced, would allow us to determine its effect. A behavioural rating scale, which can be used to determine the extent to which partners within a relationship are

operating under each of these listening modalities within the context of their actual communications with one another, has thus been developed for future use.

Furthermore, future research aimed at exploring the *qualitative* impact of interventions which endeavor to increase couples' awareness of the value of listening to understand is planned, and would also speak to the clinical importance of the distinction between the two listening modalities. It has been our experience that couples in therapy often report finding these interventions to be valuable in terms of their growth as a couple. However, what that means in terms of *how* these interventions are useful, and how this distinction is *experienced* by couples remains to be explored.

Thus, future research is planned using a multi-method approach to assess listening styles and the impact of interventions designed to facilitate listening to understand. This will include integrating data from the LSCR and LSCRb with objective behavioural ratings and the qualitative analysis of couples' experience of their communication.

Longitudinal research with the LSCR, aimed at determining the stability of these listening styles over time would also prove interesting in terms of elucidating the role played by each of these listening styles across the span of marital relationships. For example, it would interesting to note whether the relationship between relationship satisfaction and listening to understand remains significant for individuals who have been married for longer periods of time.

Finally, future research with the Listening Styles in Committed Relationship Scale that is aimed at addressing a number of the limitations of the present study is planned. This research will include utilizing the LSCR with married couples who are

actively seeking therapy, and will thus allow for gender comparisons as well as comparisons of ratings across both partners within a given couple. It will also include using the LSCR as an educational tool to see whether respondents might use awareness of their mutual listening styles as a means to improve their capacity to work together.

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APPENDIX A.1
Demographic Questionnaire

Please take a minute to fill out the following items, so that we may obtain some general information on the people participating in this study.

1. **Current relationship status:**

   ___ Married   ___ Cohabiting   ___ Other

2. **Length of time with current partner:** ___ year(s), ___ month(s)

3. **Age:** ___

4. **Sex:**   ___ Male   ___ Female

5. **Level of education:**

   ___ Completed some highschool

   ___ Completed highschool diploma

   ___ Completed some college or university

   ___ Received college diploma or university degree

   ___ Received or working towards graduate degree(s)

   ___ Other (please specify _____)

APPENDIX A.2
Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale

Following are some statements concerning communication patterns which may be evident in interactions between partners. For each statement, please circle the number below that best indicates how often you believe that **you** engage in the behaviour described.

	Always	Most of the time	Often	Sometimes	Not often	Rarely	Never
1. When my partner is talking to me, I give him/her my undivided attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. When my partner is communicating with me I pay attention not only to his/her verbal message, but also to his/her expression and gestures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. If I am unclear about what my partner is saying, I will ask for more detail.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. If I have asked for clarification of my partner's message and find that I am still confused, I will continue to ask for more detail.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I find that I continue to think about what my partner has said to me even after he/she has finished talking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I allow my partner as much time as he/she needs in order to fully express him/herself, and I do not interrupt when he/she is talking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I communicate to my partner (both verbally and nonverbally) that I am interested in what he/she has to say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I delay responding to what my partner is saying until I have had time to think about what he/she has said.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. When my partner is explaining him/herself, I try to get a sense of what things must be like for him/her (i.e. I try to "put myself in his/her shoes"), so that I may better understand how he/she must be feeling.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. My partner has reason to feel that I do not listen well enough to really understand him/her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Always	Most of the time	Often	Sometimes	Not often	Rarely	Never
11. Even when I disagree with what my partner is saying, I encourage him/her to continue talking so that I may better attempt to understand how he/she is feeling.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I will admit that I question my partner in such a way that he/she does not have the full opportunity to express his/her views.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. When my partner is displaying emotion, I find it hard to listen enough to really understand what he/she is trying to convey or express.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. When my partner is communicating with me I pay attention to the broader message which he/she is trying to convey, and I do not get caught up with or react to particular details of what he/she is saying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. On topics that I already have a strong opinion about, and on which my partner has a differing opinion, I find that I do not really listen to what he/she has to say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. If I'm preoccupied while my partner is communicating, and I'm not really listening to what he/she is saying, I will "fake" attention (e.g. I will simply nod or agree with whatever he/she is saying).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. In my conversations with my partner I am good at listening to understand him/her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I confess that I give more importance to expressing my own opinions than I do to listening to those of my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I don't find it necessary to pay close attention when my partner is talking, because I already know what my partner is going to say before he/she even says it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. When my partner is talking to me, I find that I am easily distracted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Always	Most of the time	Often	Sometimes	Not often	Rarely	Never
21. I am quick to respond to what my partner has said (i.e. I tend to react to what my partner says with my "gut-reaction"), even though I may not have had time to think about what he/she really meant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. While my partner is talking to me, I think about how I would like to respond to him/her rather than about what he/she is actually saying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. When I feel that what my partner is saying is "unimportant", I do not give him/her my undivided attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I tend to respond to what my partner is saying before he/she finishes talking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. When I'm not interested in what my partner is talking about, I change the subject.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I will listen patiently until my partner has finished talking, even when I desperately wish to respond to something which my partner has said.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX A.3
Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale (Parallel Form)

Following are some statements concerning communication patterns which may be evident in interactions between partners. For each statement, please circle the number below that best indicates how often you believe that **your partner** engages in the behaviour described.

		Always	Most of the time	Often	Sometimes	Not often	Rarely	Never
1.	When I am talking to my partner, he/she gives me his/her undivided attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	When I am communicating with my partner, he/she pays attention not only to my verbal message, but also to my expression and gestures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	If my partner is unclear about what I am saying, he/she will ask for more detail.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	If my partner has asked for clarification of my message and find that he/she is still confused, he/she will continue to ask for more detail.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	It seems as though my partner continues to think about what I have said to him/her even after I have finished talking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	My partner allows me as much time as I need in order to fully express myself, and does not interrupt me when I am talking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	My partner communicates to me (both verbally and nonverbally) that he/she is interested in what I have to say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	My partner delays responding to what I am saying until he/she has had time to think about what I said.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	When I am explaining myself, my partner seems to try to get a sense of what things must be like me (i.e. he/she tries to "put him/herself in my shoes"), so that he/she may better understand how I must be feeling.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	I have reason to feel that my partner does not listen well enough to really understand me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Always	Most of the time	Often	Sometimes	Not often	Rarely	Never

11. Even when my partner disagrees with what I am saying, he/she encourages me to continue talking so that he/she may better attempt to understand how I am feeling.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

12. My partner questions me in such a way that I do not have the full opportunity to express my views.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

13. When I am displaying emotion, my partner finds it hard to listen enough to really understand what I am trying to convey or express.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

14. When I am communicating with my partner he/she pays attention to the broader message which I am trying to convey, and does not get caught up with or react to particular details of what I am saying.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

15. On topics which my partner already has a strong opinion about, and on which I have a differing opinion, I find that my partner does not really listen to what I have to say.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

16. If my partner is preoccupied while I am communicating, and is not really listening to what I am saying, he/she will "fake" attention (e.g. he/she will simply nod or agree with whatever I am saying).

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

17. In my conversations with my partner he/she is good at listening to understand me.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

18. I believe that my partner gives more importance to expressing his/her own opinions than he/she does to listening to mine.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

19. My partner doesn't seem to find it necessary to pay close attention when I am talking, because he/she believes that he/she already knows what I am going to say before I even say it.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

20. When I am talking to my partner, I find that he/she is easily distracted.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

	Always	Most of the time	Often	Sometimes	Not often	Rarely	Never
21. My partner is quick to respond to what I have said (i.e. he/she tends to react to what I have said with his/her "gut-reaction"), even though he/she may not have had time to think about what I really meant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. While I am talking to my partner, he/she appears to think about how he/she would like to respond to me rather than about what I am actually saying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. When my partner feels that what I am saying is "unimportant", he/she does not give me his/her undivided attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. My partner tends to respond to what I am saying before I have finished talking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. When my partner is not interested in what I am talking about, he/she will change the subject.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. My partner will listen patiently until I have finished talking, even when he/she desperately wishes to respond to something which I have said.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX A.4
Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is *true* or *false* as it pertains to you personally.

		T	F
1.	Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.	T	F
2.	I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.	T	F
3.	It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.	T	F
4.	I have never intensely disliked anyone.	T	F
5.	On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.	T	F
6.	I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.	T	F
7.	I am always careful about my manner of dress.	T	F
8.	My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.	T	F
9.	If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen I would probably do it.	T	F
10.	On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.	T	F
11.	I like to gossip at times.	T	F
12.	There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.	T	F
13.	No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.	T	F
14.	I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.	T	F
15.	There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.	T	F
16.	I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.	T	F
17.	I always try to practice what I preach.	T	F
18.	I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud-mouthed, obnoxious people.	T	F
19.	I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.	T	F

20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.   **T**   **F**

21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.   **T**   **F**

22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.   **T**   **F**

23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.   **T**   **F**

24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.   **T**   **F**

25. I never resent being asked to return a favour.   **T**   **F**

26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.   **T**   **F**

27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.   **T**   **F**

28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.   **T**   **F**

29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.   **T**   **F**

30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.   **T**   **F**

31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.   **T**   **F**

32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.   **T**   **F**

33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.   **T**   **F**

APPENDIX A.5
Need for Cognition Scale

Following are some statements about feelings, beliefs, and behaviours. Please circle the number which best indicates your degree of agreement with each statement.

		Completely False	Mainly False	Undecided	Mainly True	Completely True
1.	I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I don't like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I would prefer complex to simple problems.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likely chance I will have to think in depth about something.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I find little satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Thinking is not my idea of fun.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The notion of thinking abstractly is not appealing to me.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I prefer my life to be filled with puzzles that I must solve.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Simply knowing the answer rather than understanding the reasons for the answer to a problem is fine with me.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I don't reason well under pressure.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top does not appeal to me.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I prefer to talk about international problems rather than to gossip or talk about celebrities.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Learning new ways to think doesn't excite me very much.	1	2	3	4	5

	Completely False	Mainly False	Undecided	Mainly True	Completely True
14. I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is some what important but does not require much thought.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I generally prefer to accept things as they are rather than to question them.	1	2	3	4	5
16. It is enough for me that something gets the job done, I don't care how or why it works.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I tend to set goals that can be accomplished only by expending considerable mental effort.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I have difficulty thinking in new and unfamiliar situations.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX A.6
Revised Relationship Assessment Scale

Following are a list of statements dealing with the relationship between partners. Please circle the number which best represents your agreement with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My partner and I understand each other perfectly.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am not pleased with the personality characteristics and personal habits of my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am very happy with how we handle role responsibilities in our relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My partner understands and sympathizes with me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am not happy about our communication and feel my partner does not understand me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Our relationship is a success.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am very happy about the way we make decisions and resolve conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am unhappy about the way we make financial decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have some needs that are not being met by our relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am very happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am pleased about how we express affection and relate sexually.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I don't regret my relationship with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am dissatisfied about our relationship with my parents, in-laws, and/or friends.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX A.7
Self With Partner Reflections Scale

Following are some statements about how one interacts and communicates with one's partner. For each statement please circle the number below that best indicates the way that you are.

		Not typical of me								Very typical of me
1.	When I am in a conversation with my partner I find myself preferring and/or trying to integrate each other's views in order to find a common perspective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2.	I am very inclined to avoid comparisons with my partner that make him/her look poorly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3.	It makes me feel very good about myself when I find that I do well in comparison with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4.	I become competitive to comparisons with my partner that are about how well I am doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5.	In interactions with my partner, if I had to choose between competition vs. cooperation it is like me to go with the <u>competitive</u> (rather than the cooperative).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6.	I find that experiences demonstrating my superior effectiveness, status, or "specialness" relative to my partner to be self-enhancing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7.	When I am frustrated with my partner I am more inclined to <u>express my sadness or disappointment</u> with our relationship, than to disclose either my anger or criticalness of my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8.	I believe that I am relatively good at "self-disclosing" (revealing) my feelings, dreams, wishes, and opinions with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9.	In interactions with my partner, I am <u>not</u> always aware of how he/she perceives me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10.	My own sense of myself is <u>not</u> intimately intertwined with my partner's response and support for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

			Not typical of me							Very typical of me	

11. In conflict situations with my partner, I am likely to both value and promote conciliatory conflict resolutions rather than continue to promote my point.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

12. It is typical of me to be sensitive of how well my relationship with my partner is functioning.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

13. In my day-by-day interactions I am not particularly observant or even think about how my partner is viewing or experiencing situations that we are involved in.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

14. My emotions are much more rooted in my own experiences than being rooted in the experiences or wishes of my partner.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

15. When I am upset or stressed, my feelings are invariably expressed (verbally or non-verbally) without particular awareness of how they affect my partner.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

16. I am particularly sensitive or perceptive of either what is said or how "it" is said between my partner and I because I want to understand him/her.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

17. When my partner keeps wanting to know more and more about what I think or feel or what I have been doing, I find that pressure to be very unreasonable and a bother.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

18. Because I am concerned about my partner, I am internally responsive to fluctuations in the moods, tensions, and non-verbal communications of my partner.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

19. Self-reliance is a very important aspect of who I am.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

20. My sense of my self is best described as my sense of autonomy which includes having my own special views, objectives, and values.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

21. In comparison to most people, I likely have a superior memory for the qualities of my relationship with my partner, pay closer attention to my partner, and remember more about our relationship events (i.e. a vacation, argument, or first date).

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

22. When I listen to my partner describe his/her successes and/or failures, I find that I don't share or empathize with his/her feelings.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

23. In my conversations with my partner, because I am sensitive to the effect of our exchange on each other, I try to find a balance between our viewpoints.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

24. In my exchanges with my partner I admit that I make comments that could be experienced as "put downs" of my partner or else being in a "one up" (i.e. more correct, more superior, more important) position with regard to his/her opinions.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

25. My partner probably experiences me as rarely asking for his/her opinion or seeking his/her advice before doing things which are significant for both of us.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

26. Out of interpersonal consideration, it is routine for me to let my partner know what I will be doing or would like to do so that he/she can make his/her own plans.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

27. If you asked my partner he/she would tell you that I avoid asking for his/her input, preferring instead to figure things out myself.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

28. I am the kind of person who quickly has things figured out and assumes that my partner and I ought to do things my way because it is the sensible way to do so .

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

29. Even when I have a distinct opinion or figured out what is best for my partner and I, nevertheless, I will ask his/her opinion, seeking accommodation of our views.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

30. When my partner comes to me with a decision or request that suits his/her wants, but not mine, I am quick to assert my position and do what is good for <u>me</u>.

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

31. Even though I can be persuasive and determined about my own views, when disagreements occur I tend to allow my partner's feelings to alter my views.

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

32. Exchanging views with my partner, particularly when our views are not the same, triggers me to express my views with increasing certainty and to downplay any doubts that I might have.

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

33. When things are not going well between us, I will even feign a feeling of being at least partially responsible for the discord, so that we can work together.

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

34. I share opinions/assumptions with my partner before making a personal decision (that could affect him/her).

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

35. There are times, during arguments, when I am compelled to remind my partner of "our past", because I am quite surprised at how my partner has forgotten what he/she either did or said to <u>me</u>.

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

36. When I have neglected my partner or have failed to live up to my obligations with my partner, I tend to experience guilt feelings because I am conscious of his/her opinions of me.

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

APPENDIX A.8
Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Agree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Religious matters	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Demonstrations of affection	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Making major decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Sex relations	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Conventionality (correct or proper behaviour)	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Career Decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6

	All Of The Time	Most Of The Time	More Often Than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
7. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Do you ever regret your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. How often do you and your partner "get on each other's nerves"?	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Every Day	Almost Every Day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
11. Do you and your partner engage in outside interests together?	1	2	3	4	5

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your partner?

	Never	Less Than Once A Month	Once Or Twice A Month	Once Or Twice A Week	Once A Day	More Often
12. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Work together on a project	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Calmly discuss something	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX A.9
Consent Form for Participants Recruited Through the URPP

Please read this form carefully, fill out the appropriate information, and detach this page from the rest of the study. Consent forms (and thus all of the identifying information contained on these forms) will be kept separate from completed surveys so as to ensure the anonymity of individual participants.

I (please print your full name) _____, hereby consent to participate in this study of communication and satisfaction in committed relationships. This study is being conducted by Faye Doell as partial fulfillment of the requirements of her Master's degree research practicum under the supervision of Professor David Reid, Department of Psychology, York University.

I agree to respond to this survey honestly, and to be as accurate and self-observant as possible. I understand that all of my responses will be kept private and confidential, and that all of the data will be analyzed and reported only in an aggregate form. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and I am aware that I am thus free to withdraw from the study at any time should I choose to do so.

I understand that my involvement in this study will consist of my completing a survey which is made up of seven separate sections. This should take approximately 45 minutes to complete. A representative sample of participants will be contacted upon completion of this survey, and asked to complete an additional survey approximately one month later. Furthermore, it is possible that I may be approached at some later date to participate with my partner in another study for which there will be some form of payment made available.

Information regarding the nature and the results of this study will be made available should I request it. If I indicate below that I would like to be contacted with the results of the study, then I will be contacted by Faye upon the completion of the study in the summer of 1999.

Having read the above, please fill out the requested information and sign below. Doing so will indicate that you understood this form and its contents. Contact information is necessary so that we may get in touch with those participants who are selected for participation in the later phases of the study.

Phone:_____ *and/or*

E-mail:_____
I would like to be contacted with the results of this study. ____ Yes, ____ No

Signed_____ Date_____

Thank you very much for your time and for your participation in this study.
Faye Doell (fdoell@yorku.ca)

Consent Form for Participants at Re-test

Please read this form carefully, fill out the appropriate information, and detach this page from the rest of the study. Consent forms (and thus all of the identifying information contained on these forms) will be kept separate from completed surveys so as to ensure the anonymity of individual participants.

I (please print your full name) _____ , hereby consent to participate in the second stage of this study of communication and satisfaction in committed relationships. This study is being conducted by Faye Doell as partial fulfillment of the requirements of her Master's degree research practicum under the supervision of Professor David Reid, Department of Psychology, York University.

I agree to respond to this survey honestly, and to be as accurate and self-observant as possible. I understand that all of my responses will be kept private and confidential, and that all of the data will be analyzed and reported only in an aggregate form. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and I am aware that I am thus free to withdraw from the study at any time should I choose to do so.

I understand that my involvement in this stage of the study will consist of my completing a survey which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Information regarding the nature and the results of this study will be made available should I request it. If I indicate below that I would like to be contacted with the results of the study, then I will be contacted by Faye upon the completion of the study in the summer of 1999.

Having read the above, please fill out the requested information and sign below. Doing so will indicate that you understood this form and its contents.

I would like to be contacted with the results of this study. ___ Yes, ___ No

Signed_____   Date_____

Thank you very much for your time and for your participation in this study.
Faye Doell (fdoell@yorku.ca)

APPENDIX A.10
Consent Form for Participants Recruited Through Summer Courses

Please read this form carefully, fill out the appropriate information, and detach this page from the rest of the study. Consent forms (and thus all of the identifying information contained on these forms) will be kept separate from completed surveys so as to ensure the anonymity of individual participants.

I (please print your full name) _____, hereby consent to participate in this study of communication and satisfaction in committed relationships. This study is being conducted by Faye Doell as partial fulfillment of the requirements of her Master's degree research practicum under the supervision of Professor David Reid, Department of Psychology, York University.

I agree to respond to this survey honestly, and to be as accurate and self-observant as possible. I understand that all of my responses will be kept private and confidential, and that all of the data will be analyzed and reported only in an aggregate form. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and I am aware that I am thus free to withdraw from the study at any time should I choose to do so.

I understand that my involvement in this study will consist of my completing a survey which is made up of seven separate sections. This should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The names of all participants in this study will be entered into a "lottery" from which $50 prizes will be drawn (the number of prizes available to be won will depend on the number of participants in the lottery pool, with approximately 1 prize for every 50 participants). Furthermore, I understand that it is possible that I may be approached at some later date and asked whether I would be willing to participate with my partner in a further study for which there will be some form of payment made available.

Information regarding the nature and the results of this study will be made available should I request it. If I indicate below that I would like to be contacted with the results of the study, then I will be contacted by Faye upon the completion of the study in the summer of 1999.

Having read the above, please fill out the requested information and sign below. Doing so will indicate that you understood this form and its contents. Contact information is necessary so that we may get in touch with those participants who are to receive the lottery winnings, as well as those who are selected for participation in later phases of the study.

Phone:_____ *and/or*

E-mail:_____
I would like to be contacted with the results of this study. ___ Yes, ___ No

Signed_____ Date_____
Thank you very much for your time and for your participation in this study.
Faye Doell (fdoell@yorku.ca)

APPENDIX B.1

Table B1

Original Items Included in 17-item Listening to Understand and 9-item Listening to

Respond Subscales

Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale (LSCR) Items

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Listening to Understand Subscale

When my partner is talking to me, I give him/her my undivided attention.

When my partner is communicating with me I pay attention not only to his/her verbal message, but also to his/her expression and gestures.

If I am unclear about what my partner is saying, I will ask for more detail.

If I have asked for clarification of my partner's message and find that I am still confused, I will continue to ask for more detail.

I find that I continue to think about what my partner has said to me even after he/she has finished talking.

I allow my partner as much time as he/she needs in order to fully express him/herself, and I do not interrupt when he/she is talking.

I communicate to my partner (both verbally and nonverbally) that I am interested in what he/she has to say.

I delay responding to what my partner is saying until I have had time to think about what he/she has said.

When my partner is explaining him/herself, I try to get a sense of what things must be like for him/her (i.e. I try to "put myself in his/her shoes"), so that I may better understand how he/she must be feeling.

My partner has reason to feel that I do not listen well enough to really understand him/her. (R)

Even when I disagree with what my partner is saying, I encourage him/her to continue talking so that I may better attempt to understand how he/she is feeling.

I will admit that I question my partner in such a way that he/she does not have the full opportunity to express his/her views. (R)

When my partner is displaying emotion, I find it hard to listen enough to really understand what he/she is trying to convey or express. (R)

When my partner is communicating with me I pay attention to the broader message which he/she is trying to convey, and I do not get caught up with or react to particular details of what he/she is saying. (LTU)

On topics that I already have a strong opinion about, and on which my partner has a differing opinion, I find that I do not really listen to what he/she has to say.

If I'm preoccupied while my partner is communicating, and I'm not really listening to what he/she is saying, I will "fake" attention (e.g. I will simply nod or agree with whatever he/she is saying).

In my conversations with my partner I am good at listening to understand him/her.

Listening to Respond Subscale

I confess that I give more importance to expressing my own opinions than I do to listening to those of my partner.

I don't find it necessary to pay close attention when my partner is talking, because I already know what my partner is going to say before he/she even says it.

When my partner is talking to me, I find that I am easily distracted.

I am quick to respond to what my partner has said (i.e. I tend to react to what my partner says with my "gut-reaction"), even thought I may not have had time to think about what he/she really meant.

While my partner is talking to me, I think about how I would like to respond to him/her rather than about what he/she is actually saying.

When I feel that what my partner is saying is "unimportant", I do not give him/her my undivided attention.

I tend to respond to what my partner is saying before he/she finishes talking.

When I'm not interested in what my partner is talking about, I change the subject.

I will listen patiently until my partner has finished talking, even when I desperately wish to respond to something which my partner has said. (R)

(R) Indicates items which are reverse scored
Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale

APPENDIX B.2

Table B.2

Items Included in revised 9-item Listening to Understand and Listening to Respond

Subscales

Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale (LSCR) Items

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Listening to Understand Subscale

When my partner is communicating with me I pay attention not only to his/her verbal message, but also to his/her expression and gestures.

If I am unclear about what my partner is saying, I will ask for more detail.

If I have asked for clarification of my partner's message and find that I am still confused, I will continue to ask for more detail.

I find that I continue to think about what my partner has said to me even after he/she has finished talking.

I communicate to my partner (both verbally and nonverbally) that I am interested in what he/she has to say.

I delay responding to what my partner is saying until I have had time to think about what he/she has said.

When my partner is explaining him/herself, I try to get a sense of what things must be like for him/her (i.e. I try to "put myself in his/her shoes"), so that I may better understand how he/she must be feeling.

Even when I disagree with what my partner is saying, I encourage him/her to continue talking so that I may better attempt to understand how he/she is feeling.

When my partner is communicating with me I pay attention to the broader message which he/she is trying to convey, and I do not get caught up with or react to particular details of what he/she is saying.

Listening to Respond Subscale

I confess that I give more importance to expressing my own opinions than I do to listening to those of my partner.

I don't find it necessary to pay close attention when my partner is talking, because I already know what my partner is going to say before he/she even says it.

When my partner is talking to me, I find that I am easily distracted.

While my partner is talking to me, I think about how I would like to respond to him/her rather than about what he/she is actually saying.

When I feel that what my partner is saying is "unimportant", I do not give him/her my undivided attention.

I tend to respond to what my partner is saying before he/she finishes talking.

When I'm not interested in what my partner is talking about, I change the subject.

On topics that I already have a strong opinion about, and on which my partner has a differing opinion, I find that I do not really listen to what he/she has to say.

If I'm preoccupied while my partner is communicating, and I'm not really listening to what he/she is saying, I will "fake" attention (e.g. I will simply nod or agree with whatever he/she is saying).

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale

APPENDIX B.3

Table B.3

Items Removed From the Refined 18-item Version of the LSCR

Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale (LSCR) Items

Listening to Understand Subscale

When my partner is talking to me, I give him/her my undivided attention.

I allow my partner as much time as he/she needs in order to fully express him/herself, and I do not interrupt when he/she is talking.

My partner has reason to feel that I do not listen well enough to really understand him/her. (R)

I will admit that I question my partner in such a way that he/she does not have the full opportunity to express his/her views. (R)

When my partner is displaying emotion, I find it hard to listen enough to really understand what he/she is trying to convey or express. (R)

In my conversations with my partner I am good at listening to understand him/her.

Listening to Respond Subscale

I am quick to respond to what my partner has said (i.e. I tend to react to what my partner says with my "gut-reaction"), even thought I may not have had time to think about what he/she really meant.

I will listen patiently until my partner has finished talking, even when I desperately wish to respond to something which my partner has said. (R)

(R) Indicates items which are reverse scored
Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale

APPENDIX B.4

Correlations of the 26-item LSCR and LSCRb with NFC, SPRS, RRAS and RDAS

Table B.4

<u>Correlations of 26-item LSCR with LSCRb, NFC, SPRS, RRAS, RDAS.</u>

Scale/Subscale	LSCR			
	Listening to Understand		Listening to Respond	
	<u>r</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>N</u>
LSCR				
Listening to Understand	-	-	-.71***	227
Listening to Respond	-.71***	227	-	-
LSCRb				
Listening to Understand	.56***	224	-.39***	235
Listening to Respond	-.50***	226	.55***	237
NFC	.25***	214	-.29***	225
SPRS				
Independence	-.48***	217	.52***	228
Interdependence	.58***	210	-.48***	219
RRAS	.44***	220	-.38***	231
RDAS Total	.32**	86	-.28**	90
DAS Consensus	.31**	87	-.30**	91
DAS Satisfaction	.36**	90	-.32***	94
DAS Cohesion	.10	91	-.03	95

<u>Note:</u> LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, LSCRb = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for assessing perceptions of partner, NFC = Need for Cognition, SPRS = Self with Partner Reflections Scale, RRAS = Revised Relationship Assessment Scale, RDAS = Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale
** $\underline{p} < .01$, *** $\underline{p} < .001$

Table B.5

Correlations of 26-item LSCRb with LSCR, RRAS, RDAS, SPRS and NFC

Scale/Subscale	LSCRb			
	Listening to Understand		Listening to Respond	
	r	N	r	N
LSCR				
Listening to Understand	.56***	224	-.50***	226
Listening to Respond	-.39***	235	.55***	237
LSCRb				
Listening to Understand	-	-	-.80***	235
Listening to Respond	-.80***	235	-	-
NFC	.07	222	-.09	224
SPRS				
Independence	-.39***	225	.40***	227
Interdependence	.34***	216	-.36***	218
RRAS	.76***	228	-.65***	230
RDAS Total	.71***	89	-.66***	90
DAS Consensus	.58***	90	-.57***	91
DAS Satisfaction	.61***	93	-.62***	94
DAS Cohesion	.53***	94	-.39***	95

Note: LSCR = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale, LSCRb = Listening Styles in Committed Relationships Scale parallel form for assessing perceptions of partner, NFC = Need for Cognition, SPRS = Self with Partner Reflections Scale, RRAS = Revised Relationship Assessment Scale, RDAS = Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale
*** p < .001

APPENDIX C
Intercorrelations Among Predictor and Criterion Variables

Intercorrelations Among Predictor and Criterion Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. LSCR-LTU	--	-.49***	.50***	-.38***	.26***	-.28***	.46***	.33***	.26**	.32***
2. LSCR-LTR		--	-.32***	.57***	-.29***	.52***	-.49***	-.40***	-.33***	-.45***
3. LSCRb-LTU			--	-.66***	.07	-.34***	.28***	.68***	.48***	.14*
4. LSCRb-LTR				--	-.8	.40***	-.35***	-.67***	-.62***	-.23***
5. NFC					--	-.04	.23***	.07	.13	.31***
6. SPRS-Ind						--	-.47***	-.49***	-.52***	-.33***
7. SPRS-Int							--	.38***	.30**	.27***
8. RRAS								--	.74***	.19**
9. RDAS-Sat									--	.16
10. MCSD										--

LSCR-LTU = LSCR – Listening to Understand
LSCR-LTR = LSCR – Listening to Respond
LSCRb-LTU = LSCRb – Listening to Understand
LSCRb-LTR = LSCRb – Listening to Respond
NFC = Need for Cognition
SPRS-Ind = SPRS-Independence
SPRS-Int = SPRS - Interdependence
RRAS = Revised Relationship Assessment Scale
RDAS-Sat = Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale – Satisfaction
MCSD = Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability

* $p<.05.$, **$p<.01$, ***$p<.001$