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Conversational memory, understanding, perceived agreement and satisfaction in marriage: An exploratory analysis

Burggraf, Cynthia Shank, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1988
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UMI
CONVERSATIONAL MEMORY, UNDERSTANDING, PERCEIVED AGREEMENT AND SATISFACTION IN MARRIAGE: AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS

DISSertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By

Cynthia S. Burggraf, Ph. D.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1988

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To my mother, Shirley R. Shank
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CHAPTER I
RATIONALE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication is the fabric of social relationships. Indeed Duncan (1967) noted, "we do not relate and then talk but we relate in talk." (p. 247). Within the literature on marriage, the creation of a shared perceptual reality has often been defined as the key to relational success, and communication has often been defined as the means through which a shared perceptual reality is negotiated (Berger & Kellner, 1964; Hess and Handel, 1959; Laing, Phillipson, & Lee, 1966). Indeed, the development of differentiated and/or accurate interpersonal perceptions are a dominant theme in theories of relationship development as well (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck, & Schulman, 1976; Miller & Steinberg, 1975; also see Sillars, 1985, and Sillars & Scott, 1984 for reviews).

Given the emphasis on perceptual processes in relationship development and stability, studies began to focus on the association between understanding and satisfaction in marriage in the early 1950's and
continue into this decade. Sadly, the results from this mass of research are mixed and inconclusive, and a number of theoretical and methodological problems make the findings difficult to interpret.

Marital scholars who are interested in interpersonal perception issues have attempted to study the relationship between mates' perceptions from two theoretical orientations, symbolic interactionism and the coorientation model. Each of these theoretical perspectives is based in different assumptions about human information processing and each makes different predictions about the perceptual outcomes of communication. Approaching the issue from the symbolic interactionists' orientation, communication is assumed to serve an information exchange function; social actors are believed to gather information from the content they exchange during interaction, and understanding is proposed to develop over time. Understanding is proposed to produce opportunities for preferred experience and confirmation of the self, and is therefore asserted to promote marital satisfaction. Thus within the symbolic interactions' perspective, a chain of events has been proposed such that communication fosters understanding, and understanding promotes relational harmony.
Approaching interpersonal perception from the coorientation perspective, the role of communication in relationship development and stability is less well articulated; these scholars have focused primarily on variables that reflect the outcomes of communication (O'Keefe, 1973). Nonetheless it is clear that coorientation theorists dispute the notion that social actors process the content exchanged during their interactions—or at least that they process it in an unbiased fashion. According to this model, the way information is processed and interpreted will depend upon the positive or negative sentiment experienced within a relationship. Within satisfied relationships information processing will be biased such that the other is seen as sharing the same attitudes and values as self; in dissatisfied relationships information processing will be biased such that the other is seen as holding attitudes and values that are dissimilar to self. Thus the outcomes of concern within this model are agreement (similarity in attitudes and values) and perceived agreement rather than understanding. Unlike the symbolic interactionists who predict that understanding will promote marital satisfaction, scholars within this orientation predict that misunderstanding, in the form of perceived agreement, can serve as an index of marital satisfaction or distress.
Research conducted from both orientations has received strong support. To further confuse the findings, the outcomes of understanding and perceived agreement predicted within the two models are theoretically and statistically confounded. That is, people tend to project their own attitudes onto others when predicting others' attitudes. Understanding is measured by comparing one mate's prediction of the other mate's attitudes with the other mate's stated attitudes, hence actual agreement tends to produce inflated understanding scores that could more appropriately be defined as perceived agreement scores. Unfortunately, few of the studies that will be cited in this paper have controlled for the dependence among the variables of agreement, understanding, and perceived agreement.

Because the symbolic interactionists and the coorientation theorists make different assumptions about human information processing in interpersonal relationships, a method of investigation that may bring clarity to the issues of understanding and perceived agreement is conversational memory. That is, symbolic interactionists emphasize the idea that the content exchanged during day-to-day interaction will foster understanding. Coorientation theorists, on the other
hand, implicitly dispute this idea. According the coorientation model, satisfaction biases perception therefore the information exchanged during day-to-day interaction is unlikely to promote understanding, even if that information contradicts one's current summation of the other (see Weick, 1971). Thus if the coorientation theorists' ideas are valid, conversational memory should be poor, and a negative correlation should be seen between conversational memory and perceived agreement. If the symbolic interactionists' ideas are valid however, conversational memory for everyday talk should be positively correlated with understanding, and negatively correlated with perceived agreement. Moreover, each of these models suggests different associations between memory and satisfaction. Conversational memory should be negatively associated with marital satisfaction according to the coorientation theorists, however, conversational memory should be positively correlated with marital satisfaction according to the ideas expressed by the symbolic interactionists.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the assumptions about information processing that underlie the symbolic interactionists' and the coorientation theorists' perspectives on communication and marital satisfaction. For this purpose, conversational memory will serve as the
index of information processing, and will be assessed in both short term and long term contexts. It is hoped that an investigation of conversational memory will yield results that will consistently support one or the other of the two theoretical orientations discussed above, and will then suggest directions for future research.

In the remainder of this chapter, the literature relevant to the purpose stated above will be discussed. First, an overview of the symbolic interactionists' perspective on marriage will be discussed. Within this theoretical orientation, the associations between communication, understanding, and marital satisfaction are emphasized. Moreover, the idea that day-to-day communication promotes these associations is evident. In addition, the coorientation model of interpersonal perception that suggests contrasting hypotheses will be discussed followed by a review of the studies that have investigated communication, understanding, perceived agreement, and marital satisfaction. After this presentation, a discussion of the recent line of studies looking at conversational memory will be presented. Finally, expectations regarding the associations between casual interaction and understanding, perceived agreement, and satisfaction will be discussed for both theoretical orientations. In Chapter 2, the methodology to be used in
this analysis will be outlined and in Chapter 3, the results of the analyses will be presented. Finally, in Chapter 4, the findings from this study will be discussed and directions for future research will be elaborated.

Theoretical Orientations

Although understanding has been emphasized in a number of theoretical perspectives (see Delia, 1977; Rogers, 1947; 1959, for examples) and the assumption that understanding naturally and simplistically results from communication is seen in a number of studies (see Hawes & Smith, 1973), it is arguably the symbolic interactionists' perspective that stimulated the most thinking along these lines in the marital literature. As O'Keefe (1973) pointed out:

Most contemporary perspectives on communication have at least some roots in the symbolic interaction approach derived most directly from the work of G. H. Mead (1934), and elaborated upon more recently by Cottrell (1969; 1942), Martindale (1960), and Strauss (1946), among others. The approach assumes that man is best studied and known through his interactions with other men, and that analysis should begin with the social act. Symbolic interaction conceptualizations open the door for the viewing of interaction and communication as structured patterns of shared behavior, and have been profitably applied to the study of both husband-wife interaction and parent-child interaction. (p. 514).

Due to its prevalence, and its emphasis on the associations of interest in this paper, the tenets of symbolic interactionism will be reviewed in depth.
In this area, relationships are defined as microcultures characterized by a system of interdependent roles. The central organizing principle underlying symbolic interactionism is that humans experience themselves and their worlds through a symbolically mediated and created reality. The basic tenets of this orientation include: (1) Reality is subjective and is known only through the reciprocal negotiation of role relationships. (2) Individuals' self-concepts and repertoires of potentially possible roles evolve through a never-ending process of communicational transactions. (3) People purposefully enact roles that they create, modify, interpret, and organize. (4) Reality, and one's view of oneself, is modified when others' reactions to one's behavior reflect divergent realities that invalidate one's view of the world and one's place in it (see Zurcher, 1983: p. 13).

Berger and Kellner (1964) summarized the communicative process by which social reality is constructed. They stated that the process of discovering social reality begins with society's specific way of defining and perceiving the world. Within society itself there is an overall consensus about the range of variation in world view that will be tolerated. The individual discovers the range of consensus by interacting with
others; those actions that are consistent with social reality are validated and the individual internalizes his or her culture's world view.

This process is continued and refined within marriage. Berger and Kellner (1964) stated that the major task of marital partners is to construct a mutually acceptable world view and a consensual understanding of one another. When two people marry, they bring with them their own individual realities that are massively similar (due to the fairly narrow range of tolerance found within any society) yet ideosyncratic and unique due to each individual's particular patterns of experience. Through interaction, marital partners must infuse their world views into a common definition:

as of the marriage, most of each partner's actions must now be projected in conjunction with those of the other. Each partner's definition of reality must be continually correlated with the definitions of the other (Berger & Kellner, 1964: p. 10).

Hess and Handel (1959) also integrated the tenets of symbolic interactionism with marriage and identified five dimensions on which the negotiation of family roles and individual personalities must be defined. They are (1) Establishing a pattern of separateness and connectedness. (2) Establishing a satisfactory congruence of images through the exchange of suitable testimony. (3) Evolving modes of interaction into central family themes or
concerns. (4) Establishing the boundaries of the family's world of experience. (5) Dealing with significant biosocial issues of family life, as in the family's disposition to evolve definitions of male and female and of older and younger. Reconciliation of these issues is essential to the family's functioning and communicative interaction is the forum in which reconciliation is achieved. Although understanding must develop on all dimensions, the communicative process by which issues are negotiated was described best in Hess and Handel's discussion of establishing a congruence of images.

**Congruence of images.** For Hess and Handel (1959), like Berger and Kellner (1964), communication functions to refine family members' perspectives about the world, their family's place in it, and their place within the family. They stated:

> In their mutual interaction, the family members develop more or less adequate understanding of one another, collaborating in the effort to establish a consensus and to negotiate uncertainty (p. 1).

Understanding, or "consensus" does not imply that family members must be similar to one another. Rather, understanding functions to provide consistency and coherence to life. Hess and Handel stated:

> In his relationship in the family an individual member strives toward predictability of preferred experience, attempting to discover or create circumstances which fit his image of what the world around him should be—how it should respond
to him and provide opportunity for expression of his own preferences (p. 3).

Family members develop images of themselves and of each other. Adequate family functioning is dependent upon consensual understanding of the images that each member has of him or herself and of one another. Moreover the translation of these images into appropriate role behaviors must also be understood. Hess and Handel stated:

A stable human relationship is one in which the members have reached a high degree of consensus about one another; the terms in which personal worth may be demonstrated are clear and are shared. Their interaction is an exchange of suitable testimony of what family members are to one another. The action of each person in his family testifies to his image of it, of himself, and of the others. (p. 10).

For the purposes of this study, it should be noted that both Berger and Kellner (1964) and Hess and Handel (1959) stressed the ongoing, day-to-day nature of this process. Similar ideas about the nature of casual interaction and understanding are expressed in the more general literature on interpersonal relationships as well (see McCall & Simmons, 1966; Cushman & Whiting, 1972).

Early studies of relationships that resulted from this orientation were concerned primarily with the perceptions that family members had of one another and initially tended to be qualitative in nature. Unlike many current studies in the field of communication, early
studies from this perspective were concerned with what family members said to one another (the exchange of suitable testimony), rather than focusing on the pragmatic implications of utterances or the patterning of exchanges (see O'Keefe, 1973). Indeed it was in the content exchanged among family members that the family themes, images, and metaphors were expected to be expressed and specific role behaviors were expected to be defined:

In the sociological literature much has been written with respect to role behavior and role expectations. Most of these writings indicate that individuals take roles based on that which is communicated to them by others and the individuals' interpretations of the communication. (Taylor, 1967: p. 22)

The assumptions that people process the content of their daily interactions, and that this exchange of information leads to understanding are clearly seen in the discussion above. That is, everyday interaction was presumed to promote understanding, both in terms of general themes and images about family life, and regarding the nature of the roles that family members played within the relationship. In addition, it can be seen that understanding was presumed to create the opportunity for preferred experience and confirmation of the family members' self-concepts, and therefore understanding was presumed to promote satisfaction within the family unit.

Research conducted from the qualitative orientation of the sociological tradition, includes Hess and Handel's
own work as well as analyses conducted by Bott (1957) and Kantor and Lehr (1976). Most of this research described various types of family relationships that resulted from the salient images developed and conveyed through interaction and the descriptive analyses conducted from this perspective stand as seminal pieces in the marriage literature. These studies did not attempt to test the hypotheses inherent in the symbolic interactionists' perceptive however. Yet quantitative analyses of the associations between communication, understanding, and marital satisfaction were being conducted by scholars who focused their attention on issues of interpersonal perception.

It is important to note that not all scholars who approach the study of interpersonal relationships from the symbolic interactionists' perspective would agree that the quantitative techniques employed in hypothesis testing adequately represent the ideas they endorse. Indeed, at least one group of symbolic interactionists would argue that such assessment techniques violate a basic epistemological assumption of symbolic interactionism. That is, some scholars within the symbolic interactionists' camp define reality as matter of perspective and therefore would not concur with the idea that reality can be assessed in association with terms
such as "accuracy." Nonetheless, a second school of thought within the symbolic interactionists' tradition argues that perceptions of reality can be more or less accurately shared and understood. Because the latter school of thought dominates a great deal of theorizing and research within the marital literature (see Parks, 1981), and because so many scholars who hold this attitude trace their roots back to the earliest discussions of symbolic interactionism (see O'Keefe, 1973), the presentation above was intended to highlight the theoretical origin of such thinking, and is not representative of all scholars who approach interpersonal perception from the domain of symbolic interactionism.

Quantitative assessments of the association between perceptual variables and marital satisfaction began in the early 1950's when Newcomb (1953) developed the coorientation model of interpersonal perception. Also referred to as the ABX model, Newcomb's coorientation model grew out of the cognitive consistency principles that form Heider's (1959) balance theory and Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory. The benefit of this model is that it emphasizes the "co" in coorientation and focuses on interlocking relationships among the perceptual experiences of groups or families. In general terms, the model contains an actor-perceiver, A, who is
simultaneously oriented toward another person, B, and
toward some object, X. Person B is, at the same time, an
actor-perceiver who is simultaneously oriented toward A
and X. Through the communication process, persons A and B
are assumed to develop similar orientations toward X
(given that A and B are positively oriented toward each
other). In order to study how coorientation occurs and
its effects on relationships and families,
conceptualizations of the relationships between A's and
B's perceptions are defined. The first relationship among
perceptions is agreement, which refers to the extent to
which A and B agree about the object of mutual
orientation. Agreement can mean sharing the same attitude
toward political topics (Pasdirtz, 1969) or it can mean
that both parties attribute the same personality trait to
self and/or other (Dymond, 1954). The second perceptual
relationship is understanding (referred to in this model
as accuracy), which refers to the correctness with which A
and B perceive one another's appraisal of the object.
Finally, perceived agreement (referred to as congruency)
is the third variable, and technically speaking, it is not
a coorientational relationship. Perceived agreement
refers to person A's (or person B's) perceived agreement
between A and B about object X. Operationalizations of
these three variables are simply and easily achieved. For
example, both husbands and wives are asked to respond to a series of questions regarding some topic such as political issues. Each mate responds to the questions once, revealing his or her own attitudes, and then again revealing his or her prediction of the other's attitudes. A correlation of A's and B's own attitudes yields an agreement score, a correlation of B's attitudes with A's prediction of B's attitudes yields an understanding score, and a correlation of A's attitudes with A's predictions of B's attitudes yields a perceived agreement score.

Because Newcomb's (1953) coorientation model developed out of the cognitive consistency theories, it originally predicted that partners in an interpersonal relationship would become more similar over time, or in the terms of the coorientation model, that agreement would increase over time (assuming that the two individuals were positively oriented toward one another). Thus initial studies from this model focused on agreement rather than understanding, and a number of studies supported this expectation (Morgan, 1968; Newcomb, 1961; Pasdirtz, 1969; Van der Veen, Heubner, Jordens, & Neja, 1964). Yet Hess and Handel (1959) argued that agreement was less important to families' functioning than understanding and Wackman (1973) concurred. Wackman reanalyzed the data reported in Newcomb's (1961) study of relationship development among
college roommates and reported that it was understanding, rather than agreement, that increased as relationships progressed. From these findings Wackman argued that the coorientation model implies that the function of interpersonal communication is persuasion, but that information exchange would be more aptly defined as the function of interpersonal communication as the symbolic interactionists suggested.

Despite the evidence that Wackman (1973) offered for his argument that the function of communication in interpersonal relationships is information exchange, other coorientation theorists disputed the notion that communication in ongoing relationships would increase understanding. These scholars also disputed the idea that communication would lead to increased agreement, however. Indeed rather than predicting that communication would lead to understanding or agreement, and that understanding or agreement would lead to satisfaction, these scholars suggested that satisfaction would lead to misperception, and that communication would not to lead to understanding. This argument will be elaborated below.

First, a constant problem facing scholars who study understanding is projection. Projection refers to the tendency to use one's own attitudes and values to estimate another's attitudes and values. Recall the definitions of
agreement, understanding, and perceived agreement stated above. It can be seen that these three variables are not independent as they are conceptualized and operationalized. That is, if two of the three are known, the third can be inferred. Paraphrasing Gage and Cronbach (1955), if agreement and perceived agreement are scored as one, the resulting understanding scores is also necessarily one. From this it can be seen that to the extent to which two individuals hold the same attitudes, projection can artificially inflate understanding scores. Thus there is a theoretical and statistical confound between one's own attitude, the attitude that is predicted for the other, and the other's attitude such that if the parties' attitudes are similar, high understanding scores could be found among total strangers who by chance hold the same attitudes. Indeed one study reported such a finding (Corsini, 1956).

Within the coorientation model, projection translates into assimilation and contrast effects, and the probability that projection will occur is strongly increased as a result of satisfaction. As previously stated, the coorientation model is based in the principles of the cognitive consistency theories. According to these principles, a tension free system is in a state of equilibrium or balance. An imbalance in the system is
tension producing and the tension motivates the person to restore balance. In ABX terms, if A feels positively toward B, and positively toward X, but B feels negatively toward X, A's system of cognitive elements is out of balance and A must alter either the relationship with B or the relationship with X in order to restore equilibrium. Thus if A and B are wife and husband, and X is some issue on which they disagree, the wife will be motivated to alter either her attitude toward her husband or her attitude toward X in order to reestablish equilibrium and a tension free cognitive system.

Byrne and Blaylock (1963) proposed an alternative method by which cognitions may be aligned and cognitive equilibrium maintained. Basically, they suggested that cognitive symmetry may be achieved more easily through misperception than by any other means. The processes of misperception that would allow the system to maintain equilibrium are assimilation and contrast. Assimilation refers to the tendency to perceive agreement where it does not exist, and contrast refers to the tendency to perceive disagreement where it does not exist. Assimilation is likely to occur in relationships that are characterized by positive sentiment; contrast is likely to occur in relationships that are characterized by negative sentiment. Hence satisfaction should predict perceived
agreement rather than understanding predicting satisfaction as the symbolic interactionists proposed. Moreover, day-to-day interactions should not contribute to understanding, particularly in satisfying relationships. Thus the assumed association between communication and understanding in everyday interactions, as proposed by the symbolic interactionists should not hold either.

To summarize the theoretical orientations, symbolic interactionists predict that everyday talk fosters understanding and understanding promotes marital satisfaction. One coorientation theorist supported this view but others have proposed that satisfaction should predict perceived agreement. In the next section, the relevant studies will be reviewed.

Understanding and Marital Satisfaction

Perhaps because the function of interpersonal communication was assumed to be information exchange, the earliest studies assessed the relationship between understanding and marital satisfaction. Initially the claim that satisfaction and understanding are positively related seemed warranted. Subsequent studies that focused on the association between perceived agreement and marital satisfaction appear to contradict the idea that understanding is the critical perceptual variable
associated with satisfaction. To further confuse the issue, only a few studies have simultaneously assessed both understanding and perceived agreement, and fewer still have controlled for a possible confound between agreement and understanding. In this section, the investigations that have emphasized understanding in association with marital satisfaction are presented first, followed by a presentation of the studies that have focused only on the association between perceived agreement and marital satisfaction.

As an interest in issues of interpersonal perception was growing in the early 1950's, a number of scholars focused their attention on both understanding and perceived agreement in small group research on decision making and similar activities (Chowdry & Newcomb, 1952; Dymond, 1949; Dymond, Hughes, & Raabe, 1952; Gage & Suci, 1951; Hites & Campbell, 1950). It was believed that either understanding or perceived agreement would be associated with effective group functioning, however the results from investigations were mixed. This led Dymond (1954) to suggest that the degree to which understanding would affect group functioning would depend upon the nature of the group and therefore the extent to which group performance was dependent on understanding. From this Dymond concluded that marriage "should be a crucial
area in which to test for the understanding-effectiveness relation." (p. 164). Effective functioning was equated with marital happiness, and agreement, understanding, and perceived agreement were assessed by having each member of 15 married couples respond to 100 interaction-relevant questions, and the 15 question lie scale, from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). Participants responded to the 115 questions from the MMPI first for self, and then as they perceived their mates would respond.

A common problem faced by scholars who investigate issues of understanding concerns the extent to which understanding scores could be inflated due to the participants' ability to guess correctly the other's response due to stereotyping. Dymond (1954) attempted to control for the possibility of inflated understanding scores by eliminating all the questions from her analysis that were marked either true or false by 66% or more of the participants in her sample. This left 55 questions out of the 115 originally selected for inclusion.

T-tests were performed on the understanding scores of the high and low happiness couples and revealed that the happily married couples had higher understanding scores and higher agreement scores (rated themselves as more similar on the 55 MMPI questions) than the unhappily
married couples. This result suggested to Dymond that the understanding scores could have been an artifact of projection, due to the similarity of the partners in the happy couples. To test for this possibility, Dymond computed a correlation of the number of items marked identically by the couples in both groups and found that understanding and agreement were not associated for the happy couples but were associated for the unhappy couples. This refuted the idea that the happy couples correctly projected the responses of their mates.

Finally Dymond (1954) investigated perceived agreement. In this analysis, Dymond found no association between perceived agreement and marital happiness, although an analysis of the perceived agreement scores with the understanding scores revealed an interesting difference between the two groups. When looking at agreement, two types of error can be made: (1) agreement exists but disagreement is reported, or (2) disagreement exists but agreement is reported. Dymond found that happy couples made both types of errors with about equal frequency but the unhappy couples made significantly more errors of the second type. That is, unhappy couples tended to assume agreement where it did not exist. In addition, Dymond reported that happy couples estimated the extent of their agreements and disagreements at a rate
that was relatively close to their actual extent, but unhappy couples were found to significantly overestimate the extent of their agreements and disagreements. As a whole, Dymond's work supports the idea that both understanding and agreement are associated with marital happiness and suggests that perceived agreement is of lesser importance to happiness than either understanding or agreement.

Newmark, Woody, and Ziff (1977) also examined marital satisfaction and understanding using the MMPI. This study differed from Dymond's (1954) work in that participants responded to all 550 items on the MMPI.

Newmark et al. (1977) reported that satisfied participants were able to predict their partners' responses on the MMPI to a significantly greater extent than dissatisfied participants, both before and after removing the stereotypic items as described by Dymond (1954). In addition, Newmark et al. found significantly greater agreement of responses within the satisfied than the dissatisfied couples. As in the Dymond study, the association between agreement and understanding was further probed to test for the probability that the greater understanding scores found among the satisfied couples simply reflected their similarities. As in the Dymond study, the results of this analysis suggested that
the satisfied couples' understanding scores were not influenced by their agreement scores.

Finally, Newmark et al. (1977) tested for an association between perceived agreement and marital satisfaction. No overall association was found, indicating that satisfied and dissatisfied couples did not differ in the extent to which they assumed agreement, however inconsistent with Dymond's (1954) findings, the dissatisfied couples more commonly predicted a disagreement when agreement actually existed.

Looking at just these two studies, a pattern seems to be forming that indicates that satisfied married couples agree on issues relevant to each other's self perceptions and understand one another on these issues. Dissatisfied couples, on the other hand, agree with each other's self perceptions less and understand one another's self perceptions less. No consistent direction of error was identified for dissatisfied couples, however. These results support the idea that satisfaction is associated with understanding, however, serious doubts are raised by Corsini's (1956) work.

Corsini (1956) conducted a study of understanding and actual (rather than perceived) agreement in marriage. Unlike the two previously discussed investigations that used the MMPI as the primary measurement instrument,
Corsini asked spouses to perform a 50-item personality adjective Q-sort first for self and then as they perceived that their mates would respond. The adjectives on the Q-sort were selected in a manner designed to reduce stereotyped responses. To test the hypothesis that happiness in marriage is a function of understanding, Corsini computed correlations between the husbands' and wives' happiness scores and four understanding scores (husbands' understanding of wives' self-concept, husbands' understanding of wives' perceptions of husbands' self-concept, wives' understanding of husbands' self-concepts, and wives' understanding of husbands' perceptions of wives' self-concepts). The correlational analysis revealed that the only scores that were associated with satisfaction were the wives' understanding of their husbands' self-concepts and the wives' understanding of their husbands' perceptions of the wives' self-concepts. When the wife was the perceptual target, no associations between understanding and satisfaction were found. This led Corsini to investigate the types of significant and non-significant correlations in order to determine whether or not they were due to specific types of understanding or to mutual covariation with unknown variables. To test this, Corsini computed 12 additional correlations by pairing four of the husbands' Q sorts with four randomly
selected wives' predictions of their husbands' Q-sorts. The randomized pairing produced the same results as the correlation of actual husbands' and wives' understanding scores. That is, among randomly paired husbands and wives, when the randomly selected wives' predictions of their husbands' responses to the Q-sort were in agreement with the randomly selected husbands' own Q-sort responses, the wives' understanding of the non-husbands was high and marital satisfaction for both randomly paired individuals was high. Corsini stated that this result was so unexpected that the randomized correlational analysis was replicated and still produced the same results.

These unanticipated findings indicated that the variable associated with marital happiness was not understanding but a specific "type" of husband personality. To investigate this possibility, Corsini (1956) computed a mean correlation of every man's Q-sort for self with every other man. The same analyses were done for women's Q-sorts. As Corsini explained, "The mean correlation of any individual against others of his own sex may be interpreted as an index of 'conformity' of self-perception." (p. 330). The mean conformity scores of both husbands and wives were then correlated with marital satisfaction scores. Findings indicated that marital satisfaction was associated with a high conformity score
for husbands but not for wives. In other words, the results supported the idea that marital satisfaction was not due to understanding per se, but was due to the satisfied husbands' and wives' shared perceptions that the husband was what a husband ought to be (also see Barry, 1970, for a discussion of these findings).

Corsini (1956) also examined the association between agreement and understanding, to determine whether or not understanding was a function of agreement, by correlating the responses of couples and randomly selected husband and wife pairs. Recall that in Dymond's (1954) and Newmark et al.'s (1977) studies, analyses revealed that understanding scores were not an artifact of agreement (similar self-concepts and other's self-concepts). These findings were supported in Corsini's analyses as well. That is, the correlations for understanding were ranked with the correlations for agreement for both couples and randomly selected dyads, and the magnitude of the relationship was about the same for both groups. Thus again understanding did not appear to be a function of agreement.

The final analysis reported by Corsini (1956) supported the idea that marital happiness is associated with actual agreement. In this analysis, couples' self-perceptions were paired and correlated with satisfaction and randomly selected dyads self-perceptions were also
paired and correlated with satisfaction. Both the husbands' and the wives' happiness with the marriage was associated with their actual agreement. Almost no relationship was detected for the association between randomly selected dyads' self-perceptions and "their" marital happiness.

Adding Corsini's (1956) findings to those of Dymond (1954) and Newmark et al. (1977), it still seems that agreement is associated with marital satisfaction, and that understanding is not an artifact of agreement. The association between understanding and satisfaction, however, became less clear as Corsini's findings suggested that satisfaction may be a result of the husbands' conformity to a socially desirable personality profile, and their wives' tendency to perceive them in that light.

Murstein and Beck (1972) also addressed the issues of understanding, agreement, and perceived agreement in marriage in association with marital satisfaction and additionally tested hypotheses specifically related to differences in satisfaction due to the relative importance of husbands' and wives' perceptions. In this study, couples were asked to respond to a 20-item, bi-polar personality adjective checklist first for self and then other. Murstein and Beck then performed analyses to test the hypotheses that (1) agreement would be significantly
correlated with marital satisfaction, but that this association would be stronger for perceived agreement than for actual agreement, (2) understanding would be significantly correlated with marital satisfaction, but that this association would be stronger for wives' understanding of husbands' self-concepts than for husbands' understanding of wives' self-concepts. Murstein and Beck stated that wives' understanding scores would be more strongly associated with marital satisfaction due to societal differences. They stated that because:

• of the greater economic and social advantages men possess in our society, men are more powerful, interpersonally speaking, than women. Men are usually not dependent on marriage to acquire status as is often the case for women; consequently, they are better able to control the relationship with their spouse both before and after the marriage. The effect of this superior masculine status should be reflected in the greater importance of men as perceptual targets and the greater need for women to gauge accurately their husbands' perceptual world so as to adjust themselves to these more powerful individuals. (p. 398)

Thus, although Murstein and Beck did not discuss Corsini's (1956) findings, they did propose an alternative explanation for Corsini's suggestion that marital satisfaction was due to husbands' possession or lack of possession of a socially desirable personality type. Unfortunately, no studies have been directed to discovering which, if either, of the two explanations is more valid.
The results of Murstein and Beck's (1972) analysis revealed that agreement was positively and significantly associated with marital satisfaction, however, the association between perceived agreement and satisfaction, while higher than actual agreement as predicted, was not significantly higher. Turning to the next hypothesis, marital satisfaction was also found to be positively and significantly associated with understanding. Also consistent with Corsini's findings, this association was stronger for the wives' understanding of their husbands' self-concepts, than for the husbands' understanding of their wives' self-concepts.

Similar findings regarding the differential impact of husbands' and wives' understanding were also reported by Stukert (1963). In this study, personality factors, as they related to marital role performance, were the target of investigation. To assess mates' perceptions of personality and marital role performance, participants in this study were asked to rate the relative importance of 10 topics such as (1) the importance of love in marriage, (2) being able to confide in one's mate, and (3) showing respect for the other. Each respondent addressed the topics first for marriage in general and then as they related to his or her own marriage. Participants also predicted their mates' responses to these topics in regard
to their importance in their own marriages. The results of the correlational analyses revealed a positive significant association between agreement of response and the husbands' but not the wives' marital satisfaction. In addition, understanding was positively and significantly associated with satisfaction only for the wives' understanding of their husbands, and only with the wives' satisfaction scores. Wives' understanding of their husbands, and husbands' understanding of their wives were not associated with the husbands' satisfaction scores. No significant associations were detected for the associations between either mates' responses to the questions for their own marriage versus marriage in general.

Stukert (1963) continued his analysis by dividing the total sample into subsamples based on the patterns between perceptions and satisfaction. The variable most highly associated with satisfaction was used as a starting point and the procedure resulted in 3 types of husbands and 3 types of wives being identified. The Type I husbands were defined by a single characteristic, their agreement with their wives' rating of the importance of the 10 topics in their marriages. This type of husband was highly satisfied with his marriage, although only about half of them understood their wives. Husbands in this category,
however, were the only ones who were understood by the majority of their wives. The Type II husbands were dissatisfied with their marriages. Interestingly, these husbands understood their wives' perceptions of marital role expectations however they did not share their wives' views (disagreement). Thus for these husbands, understanding was inversely related to marital satisfaction. The Type III husbands, like the Type II husbands, also disagreed with their wives' views of marital role expectations, however, these husbands did not perceive their wives' expectations accurately. Thus there was disagreement, but a failure to understand that the disagreement existed. Interestingly, these husbands were generally satisfied with their marriages.

An examination of the Type I wives indicated that their satisfaction was dependent upon their understanding of their husbands. Wives in this category were not particularly likely to agree with their husbands' expectations, yet understanding and satisfaction were still high. Type II wives did not understand their husbands expectations, yet their own and their husbands' expectations tended to be quite similar. Type II wives tended to be satisfied with their marriages however. Finally, Type III wives were dissatisfied with their marriages, did not agree with their husbands'
expectations, but also failed to understand the lack of agreement.

It is interesting to note that when the husbands and wives shared a common view of marriage, or when the wives were able to predict their husbands' views, both the husband and the wife tended to be satisfied with the marriage. In many ways these findings are reminiscent of those presented by Corsini (1956). Yet these findings do not dispute the ideas presented by Murstein and Beck (1972) either, and again suggest that the reasons for the consistent association between marital satisfaction and wives' understanding needs further exploration.

Several other studies have assessed marital satisfaction in association with perceptions of personality related role expectations, and these studies all used the Interpersonal Check List (ICL). The ICL is a list of 128 descriptive, self-referent, personality-based role definitions and expectations. The 128 items represent 16 personality variables that correspond to the octants of Leary's (1957) Interpersonal Behavior Circle. The octants are represented within a circle which is divided on the verticle axis by a dominance-submission dimension, and on the horizontal axis by a hostility-affection dimension. Each person who fills out the ICL can be located at one point on the circular continuum; the
point at which his or her dominance-submission and hostility-affection scores intersect. The 16 personality variables which correspond to the eight points within the octants are managerial-autocratic, responsible-hypernormal, cooperative-overconventional, docile-dependent, self-effacing-masochistic, rebellious-distrustful, aggressive-sadistic, competitive-narcissistic. Because of its roots in psychoanalytic psychology, the ICL has been used to investigate mates' perceptions on a number of intrapsychic dimensions that are not relevant to this study. For that reason, the presentation of these studies will focus only on the hypotheses that are relevant to this paper.

Luckey (1960) used the ICL to assess the association between understanding and marital satisfaction along with a number of other perceptual variables. Using the summary point as an index, Luckey reported that couples who understood one another tended to be high in marital satisfaction. Kotlar (1965) also used the ICL to assess understanding and satisfaction along with a number of other hypotheses. Kotlar reported a positive association between understanding and satisfaction, and also reported the results of analyses that looked at husbands' and wives' understanding scores in association with satisfaction. Unlike the studies previously discussed,
Kotlar did not find differences in marital satisfaction relative to husbands' and wives' understanding scores. Finally, a similar analysis was conducted by Taylor (1967). In this analysis, husbands' and wives' understanding scores were again analyzed individually. In contrast to Kotlar's findings, but consistent with Corsini's (1956), Stukert's (1963), and Murstein and Beck's (1972) findings, differences were found between husbands' and wives' understanding scores and marital satisfaction. In this study, as before, marital satisfaction was higher when the wives' understanding of their husbands' role-personality concepts was higher and when wives' understanding of their husbands' perceptions of their (the wives') role-personality concepts was higher. No significant relationship was found between marital satisfaction and the husbands' understanding of their wives' role-personality concepts, nor for the husbands' understanding of their wives' perceptions of their (the husbands') self-concepts.

The studies reviewed up to this point all indicated a clear association between agreement and marital satisfaction and in general supported the assumption that understanding is associated with marital satisfaction. Before drawing final conclusions however, a few more studies must be discussed. These studies indicate that
perceived agreement is more critical for marital satisfaction than is actual agreement. This also tends to cast doubt on the relationship between understanding and satisfaction.

As discussed earlier in this paper, it is perceived agreement, rather than understanding, that was predicted to positively correlate with marital satisfaction according to coorientation scholars. This model generated a great deal of study within the family (see O'Keefe, 1973, for a discussion) and several studies, those that examined agreement and perceived agreement between marital partners, reported that perceived agreement, rather than actual agreement, was associated with satisfaction.

Byrne and Blaylock (1963) examined mates' perceptions of self and other using a dogmatism scale and, contrary to two of the three studies previously reported in this paper, found that perceived agreement exceeded actual agreement. Moreover, Byrne and Blaylock reported that marital satisfaction was associated with perceived, not actual, agreement. They went on to state that the association between perceived agreement and marital satisfaction was so strong that the magnitude and direction of perceived agreement scores could serve as an index of marital satisfaction. This suggestion prompted further study.
Levinger and Breedlove (1966) replicated and expanded Byrne and Blaylock's (1963) findings. For their analysis, Levinger and Breedlove collected mate's self ratings and perceptions of other's ratings on the relative importance of nine different marriage goals and the relative importance of 11 marital communication topics. In addition, self responses to Levinson and Huffman's (1955) Traditional Family Ideology Scale were collected along with perceptions of actual and ideal role performance. Actual agreement was measured on each of the four indices, and perceived agreement was measured for the first two. Correlations were computed for both the husbands' and the wives' actual and perceived agreement on the general goals and communication topics. In three of the four correlations, perceived agreement was significantly higher than actual agreement and the remaining correlation was in the predicted (higher) direction. Moreover, perceived agreement was positively associated with marital satisfaction, although this finding was stronger for husbands than for wives. Further analysis of this finding revealed that the relationship between perceived agreement and satisfaction was strongest for husbands who fell below the median in their understanding of their wives. The relationship between perceived agreement and satisfaction was less strong for wives and husbands who fell above the
median in understanding, however. Other than in relation to the findings just presented, understanding scores were not discussed and it is not known how they might have related to satisfaction.

Levinger and Breedlove (1966) also investigated the association between actual agreement and marital satisfaction by looking at instrumental and non-instrumental issues. To do this they used the participants' perceptions of actual and ideal role behavior, and the general goal versus communication importance questions already discussed. They stated:

In our judgement, agreement about the relative importance of specific communication topics is more instrumental than about the importance of general goals for the marriage and the family. The former refer to particular behavior on which husband and wife are interdependent—marital communication depends on both; the latter refer to the achievement of general vague objectives, each desirable but of low operational significance. It is also judged that agreement about real role performance in the marriage has greater instrumentality than agreement about ideal role performance. Disagreement about a partner's ongoing behavior should hinder joint performance more than disagreement about images of desired behavior. (p. 370)

Levinger and Breedlove expected agreement on the high instrumental issues to be associated with satisfaction to a greater extent than the low instrumental issues. The correlational analysis of agreement and marital satisfaction in relation to high and low instrumental goals revealed coefficients in the predicted direction,
however none achieved statistical significance. Nonetheless, this idea seems ripe for further investigation.

One additional study also supported Byrne and Blaylock's (1963) and Levinger and Breedlove's (1966) findings. Ferguson and Allen (1978) investigated marital satisfaction in association with parents' perceptions of their children's behavior and adjustment and with parents' perceptions of self and other on the Interpersonal Check List (previously discussed). The strongest association found was for perceived agreement between parents and their marital satisfaction.

To summarize the findings of studies examining interpersonal perception in marriage is difficult because nearly every result has been disputed at least once. First, of the seven studies that assessed agreement and perceived agreement, four found agreement to be significantly associated with satisfaction (Dymond, 1954; Newmark et al., 1977; Murstein & Beck, 1972; Stukert, 1963), three found perceived agreement to be significantly associated with satisfaction (Byrne & Blaylock, 1963; Ferguson & Allen, 1978; Levinger & Breedlove, 1966), and one of the four that predicted that perceived agreement would be more strongly associated with satisfaction than actual agreement failed to support this prediction but the
correlations were in the predicted direction (Murstein & Beck, 1972). Second, of the eight studies that assessed the association between understanding and satisfaction, all reported a significant association but Corsini (1956) found that people in randomly created dyads were as likely to "understand" one another and be satisfied with their "relationships" as were actual married partners. Stukert's results generally supported the association but husbands who understood that they did not share their wives' perceptions were dissatisfied as a result of understanding. To further muddy the waters, only three of the eight studies that examined the association between understanding and satisfaction took any type of precautions to insure that agreement and understanding were not confounded (Corsini, 1956; Dymond, 1954; Newmark et al., 1977). Thus there is no way to tell whether the remaining studies' findings were a result of poor statistical inferences or actual understanding between mates. Finally, several studies indicated that wives' understanding of their husbands was associated with marital satisfaction to a greater extent than husbands' understanding of their wives (Corsini, 1956; Murstein & Beck, 1972; Stukert, 1963; Taylor, 1967), however one failed to find a difference between husbands' and wives' understanding and marital satisfaction (Kotlar, 1965).
The finding associating satisfaction with wives' understanding of their husbands was the most consistently reported result, however.

In the following section, studies that looked at communication and understanding, or that assessed communication, understanding, and satisfaction will be reviewed. Unfortunately, this review will bring little clarity to the findings presented above.

Communication, Understanding, and Satisfaction

Despite the often stated importance of understanding, few studies have directly investigated the association between communication and understanding within the context of ongoing relationships. This may be because agreement and understanding were defined as the outcomes of communication (see O'Keefe, 1973) and the communication component was simply assumed. Indeed, Pavitt (1983) pointed out that even the most fundamental questions about how verbal communication is related to understanding are yet to be investigated. A search revealed only one related study, two studies that looked at both communication and understanding in marriage, and only three that assessed communication, understanding, and marital satisfaction.
The first study to be discussed did not assess the association between communication and understanding per se. It did, however, address the more general idea, expressed in the symbolic interactionists' perspective, that relational images and themes would be conveyed through verbal content.

Sillars, Weisberg, Burggraf, and Wilson (1987), after listening to numerous conversations among married couples, noted that "different married couples have vastly different things to say about a given topic, and implicit perceptions are indicated by their focus" (p. 496). Recalling from Berger and Kellner's (1964) and Hess and Handel's (1959) work that conversational content carries information about individual beliefs that influence more general perceptions of the relationship and the role of the family members within the relationship, Sillars et al. proposed that the content themes contained in conversations should be linked in systematic ways to the couples' relationship definitions. To test this hypothesis, couples were classified as either traditionals, independents, or separates from their self-reported responses to Fitzpatrick's (1983; 1984) Relational Dimensions Instrument. Traditional couples hold conventional beliefs about marriage, emphasize togetherness, prefer restraint in conflict engagement,
seek regularity in their use of time, and value stability over uncertainty and change. Independent couples are nonconventional in their beliefs about marriage, value high expressivity in dealing with conflicts, endorse both togetherness and autonomy, and believe in novelty, uncertainty, and change. Separates however, emphasize autonomy, differentiated space, and value emotional distance and conflict avoidance. Couples' conversations were coded using an 11 category system that represented three primary classifications of themes; communal, individual, and impersonal themes. Communal themes denote a marriage that is seen as the product of joint or interdependent qualities of the couple, hence it was expected that traditional couples would use more communal themes than either of the other two couple types. Individual themes signal that marriage is seen as a product of separate identities and roles, and separate couples were expected to use more individual themes. Finally the use of impersonal themes would indicate that marriage is seen as the product of factors that are outside the direct personal control of the couple. Independent couples were expected to express moderate levels of both impersonal and individual themes. The analysis revealed that the themes contained in couples' conversations were generally reflective of their self-
An important point to consider here concerns the extent to which the couples involved may have actively processed the content themes exchanged during their conversations. No measure of information processing was assessed and indeed it was Sillars et al.'s (1987) contention that content themes serve as metacommunication—implicit rather than explicit information about the how each mate sees the relationship. Thus, an association between the subjective relationship definitions and the content exchanged within couples' conversations was found, yet little knowledge can be gleaned regarding how this association occurred or how global themes translate onto the level of actual role performance.

The second study to be discussed examined perceptions of communication, rather than actual communication behavior, and their associations with understanding. Hobart and Klausner (1959) pointed out that for some time sociologists had been investigating variables that correlated with marital adjustment, yet seldom were interaction-based variables among them. To examine the association between perceived communication and understanding, Hobart and Klausner created 26 questions concerning communication between husbands and wives. Two types of interaction-based variables were assessed by this
scale including: (1) Perceived barriers to communication, which were assessed by such questions as "Do you and your mate avoid certain subjects in conversation?" and "Can you and your mate discuss your most sacred beliefs without feelings of restraint or embarrassment?" (2) Perceived empathic communication, which was assessed by such questions as "Can your mate tell what kind of day you've had without asking?" and "When you start to ask a question does your mate know what it is before you ask it?" (p. 256). In addition to a numeric score for both barriers to communication and empathic communication, a third interaction variable was produced by sum of both, and was referred to as the total communication score.

Understanding was defined as one mate's ability to predict the other's attitudes, intentions, and behaviors, and was measured on three scales. The first scale contained 21 items that generally dealt with positive, negative, and neutral personal characteristics. Examples from this scale included "I have a sense of humor" and "I am talkative." The second scale concerned marital role opinions and consisted of 27 items selected from the Kirkpatrick and Hobart Family Opinion Survey (Kirkpatrick & Hobart, 1954) for their ability to discriminate between high and low role disagreement couples. The third measure of understanding was composed of items used by Burgess and
Wallin (1953) in the personality rating section of their Marital Prediction Scale. This measure was much like the first except that almost all items had a negative tone such that "an affirmative response reflects emotional instability or worse." (p. 257). Examples from this scale included "Do your feelings alternate between happy and sad without apparent reason?" and "Does some particularly useless thought come into your mind to bother you?" Each participant answered the questions on each scale first as he or she perceived the other would, then all questions were answered for self.

Forty-eight correlational analyses were run using the understanding scores from the various scales and the self-reported communication behaviors. Scores from the communication scales were adjusted so that positive correlations between communication and understanding were expected. Of the 48 correlations, only 10 were significant and two of those were in the negative direction. Interestingly, one of the negative correlations showed that husbands who rated themselves as high empathic communicators were unable to predict their wives' responses on the Burgess-Wallin self-rating items. In addition, the higher the wives rated themselves on empathic communication ability, the less able they were to understand their husbands' marital role opinions. This
suggests that both husbands and wives seek less information when they are confident about their understanding of one another; a finding that has been supported by other researchers (Clatterbuck & Turner, 1978; Lester, 1978; Obitz & Oziel, 1972; Posavec & Pasko, 1971) and that will be discussed again in subsequent pages of this text. Regarding the other eight significant correlations, the authors simply stated that no consistent pattern of association was found and concluded that the association between perceived communication and understanding was weak.

Another study that investigated both communication and understanding looked at interactional data. Knudson, Sommers, & Golding (1980), rather than relating general indices of understanding to communication behavior, attempted to study how changes in behavior related to changes in perception during interaction. To accomplish this, Knudson et al. asked couples to role play a previous conflict episode they had experienced together. Following the role play, the couple was separated and each mate viewed a video tape, in the company of a researcher, of the role play they had just performed. At three points during the conflict scene, the researcher stopped the video tape and asked the participant to describe his or her direct perspective of self's and other's behavior at
that time, as well as his or her metaperspective, meta-metaperspective, and feelings of being understood. These terms were created by Laing, Phillipson, and Lee (1966) and are defined as follows: (1) direct perspective refers to an individual's attitude toward an issue, (2) metaperspective refers to an individual's perception of the other's attitude toward an issue, (3) meta-metaperspective refers to the individual's perception of the other's perception of the individual's perception of the other's attitude, and (4) feeling of being understood refers to an individual's belief that the other perceives accurately the individual's attitude. Using these definitions, analyses of the relationships among two individual's perceptions can be carried several levels of abstract higher than the coorientation variables of agreement (congruence of direct perspectives), understanding (congruence of one's metaperspective with the other's direct perspective), and perceived agreement (congruence between one's own direct perspective and one's own metaperspective) permit. While theoretically interesting, the higher levels of abstraction are seldom investigated due to their complexity. The participants' perspectives were coded using Leary's (1957) Interpersonal Behavior Circle, thus the eight possible behavioral codes were the same as those that result from the Interpersonal
Checklist, and refer to trait-like assessments. Following the coding, understanding was computed in the traditional method; that is, one mate's prediction of the other's self-reported trait was correlated with the other mate's self-reported trait for the three points in the conflict episode. In addition, Knudson et al. analyzed agreement, realization of understanding, and feelings of being understood.

The couples' conflict scenes were also classified according to their conflict behavior. From this, 2 groups were formed; those who engaged in discussion during conflict, and those who avoided discussion during conflict. Results indicated that the couples who engaged in discussion increased in agreement, understanding, realization of understanding, and feeling understood from the point of preconflict to the point of conflict resolution, although at the midpoint in the conflict episode no differences were found for any of the perceptual variables between the engaging and avoiding couples. For the avoidance couples though, discrepancies in perception increased at every level. These findings demonstrated an empirical relationship between the exchange of verbal content and increased understanding of self-rated behavioral styles.
The next two studies to be discussed focused on concepts from the Interactional Perspective of the Palo Alto Group (see Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). Unlike the symbolic interactionists who emphasize subjective perceptions, proponents of the interactional perspective look for relationship definitions in redundant patterns of the pragmatic character of messages exchanged among relational partners. Based on cybernetics and systems theory, the interactional perspective asserts that families operate as rule governed systems. It is the rules of interaction that prescribe and delimit permissible behavior and that provide a sense of coherence and stability to family life. Rules are observed in redundant patterns of communication. Thus the content of messages is generally irrelevant; only those aspects of messages relevant to systemic rules and functions are used to classify the nature of a relationship. Nonetheless, two studies conducted from this perspective focused on communication patterns and subjective perceptions.

To date only the control dimension of relational communication has been investigated. The same team of researchers performed both studies that examined the association between relational control and understanding. In order to assess the patterns of communication, both Millar, Rogers-Millar, and Courtright (1979) and
Courtright, Millar, and Rogers-Millar (1979), used the Rogers-Farace (1975) coding system. Within this system, utterances that prescribe or restrict the behavior of the other (such as orders or commands) are coded as one-up maneuvers; utterances that accept the other's control maneuver or that pro-offer control are coded as one-down, and utterances void of relational control implication are coded as one-across. Individual styles of control behavior (labeled "domineeringness" and "submissiveness") are defined by the nature of the individuals' utterances. Relationship definitions, however, are defined on the basis of the patterns of control maneuvers found within the dyadic level of analysis. The patterns are identified by using the interact, a 2-act sequence, as the unit of analysis. Relationships that are characterized by dissimilarity within interacts (e.g., a one-up followed by a one-down) are defined as complementary (see Millar & Rogers, 1976) and the controlling partner is defined as dominant (as opposed to the individual style of domineering). Relationships in which the partners exchange utterances with similar control implications are referred as symmetrical (see Millar & Rogers, 1976).

In both the Millar et al. (1979) and the Courtright et al. (1979) studies, understanding was operationalized as the ability of one spouse to predict the other's
responses to a series of questions concerning who performs a variety of household tasks. After gathering this information, each couple was asked to discuss four family related topics including (1) how did you meet and decide to marry, (2) how do you relate the happenings of your day to one another, (3) how do you deal with disagreements between you, and (4) how does a couple develop and maintain a strong marital and family relationship. These discussions were then coded as described above and the individuals' control behaviors and the dyadic control patterns were analyzed in association with understanding.

Millar et al. (1979) reported that for both husbands and wives, the strongest predictor of understanding was the complementary dyadic pattern. That is, the more one partner was clearly dominant over the other, the less accurately each spouse predicted the other's responses concerning who performs the various household tasks. Thus complementary relationships were characterized by a lack of understanding. Similar results were obtained with the individual level analyses. The second strongest predictor of understanding was the proportion of domineering utterances made by one spouse. Unlike the complementary relationship above in which neither spouse exhibited much understanding, on the individual level, the more one person expressed domineering messages, the less likely he
or she was to be understood by the other.

Similar results were reported by Courtright et al. (1979). As before, the complementary relationship was characterized by a lack of understanding. Also as before, the individual level analyses revealed a lack of understanding was associated with domineeringness, although some variation in this association was seen in this study. For example, in the Millar et al. (1979) study, husband domineeringness was related to his wife's inability to predict his responses. In this study, husband domineeringness was associated with both partners' inaccurate predictions of their mates' responses to the household chores questionnaire. Wife domineeringness, however, was associated with poor understanding of her husband, although wife domineeringness did not interfere with his ability to accurately predict her responses.

Thus the most common finding associated one-up messages with lower understanding scores. The authors explained the association between the observed communication behavior and understanding by suggesting that the more equivalent the dominance pattern, the more flexible the relationship rules and the more discussion that would be needed to negotiate household chores. Thus greater understanding would be seen in symmetrical relationships. Complementary relationships, however,
would necessarily be less flexible, resulting in fewer discussions and hence less understanding. This explanation is highly consistent with the idea that understanding results from the exchange of content information during conversation, and will be addressed again in the discussion of this section.

The Courtright et al. (1979) study assessed marital satisfaction as well as communication and understanding, and also reported the results from an unpublished study by Rogers-Millar and Millar (1977) that discussed the association between relational control patterns and satisfaction. In the Rogers-Millar and Millar study, wife domineeringness was related to both spouses' dissatisfaction with their marriage, however in the Courtright et al. study, wife domineeringness was associated only with her dissatisfaction and husband domineeringness was related to both spouses' dissatisfaction. Turning to the dyadic level of analysis, husband dominance was associated with both spouses' satisfaction in the Rogers-Millar and Millar study, but in the Courtright et al. analysis husband dominance was only slightly correlated with satisfaction and this association was due primarily to the dominant husbands' greater satisfaction.
Pulling these findings together does little to clarify the contribution of understanding to satisfaction. That is, both domineeringness and dominance have been consistently associated with a lack of understanding, but domineeringness was associated with dissatisfaction while dominance was slightly related to satisfaction. Indeed from these results, understanding seems to be less important to satisfaction than does communicator style or interaction pattern. Concerning the relationship between communication and understanding, the results of these studies suggest that when dealing with instrumental issues, the exchange of verbal content is more critical to understanding than the exchange of pragmatic information.

The final article to be discussed addressed the association between communication, understanding, and satisfaction and examined both nonverbal affect and verbal conflict tactics in two studies. In these investigations, understanding was operationalized as the ability of one spouse to predict the other's responses to a series of questions about 10 common conflict issues in marriage. Each spouse was asked to rate the extent to which each topic was a problem, how important the issue was, and how bothersome the issue was in their marriage. After this, each spouse was asked to predict the other's responses to the same questions. Unlike the studies previously
discussed in this paper, Sillars, Pike, Jones, & Murphy (1984) used a partial correlation technique to compute the understanding scores. This technique was used to correct for the suggested bias in understanding scores that may occur due to projection and statistical dependence (see Gage & Cronbach, 1955). After gathering each individual's assessment and prediction of the other's assessment of the problem, each couple was asked to discuss the 10 topics they had just rated. The couples' discussions were recorded and later coded for nonverbal affect using Gottman's (1979) system (classifications include positive, negative and neutral nonverbal affect) and Sillars' (1980) verbal conflict tactics coding system (classifications on the most general level include avoidance tactics, distributive or competitive tactics, and collaborative or cooperative tactics).

Looking at the results of the first study reported by Sillars et al. (1984), both the husbands' and the wives' raw understanding scores (the unpartialed correlations) averaged .42, however when agreement of response was partialed out, understanding scores decreased to an average of .19. In addition, perceived agreement strongly exceeded actual agreement which indicated that mates tended to use their own feelings as references points for inferring the other's feelings.
Using the partial correlation technique to compute understanding scores resulted in consistently negative associations between satisfaction and understanding. In addition to satisfaction, Sillars et al. (1984) examined understanding in association with consensus, cohesion, and affection as measured by Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale. These associations were consistently negative as well. Unlike previous research, agreement was not significantly associated with satisfaction, but like understanding, agreement and satisfaction were negatively correlated. Perceived agreement, on the other hand, was positively associated with all dimensions of marital adjustment (satisfaction, consensus, cohesion, and affection). The strongest correlations were between the wives' perceived agreement scores and her satisfaction, cohesion, and consensus scores. Sillars et al. also computed correlations between the topic salience ratings and marital adjustment and these too were negatively associated with adjustment on all four dimensions.

Turning to an examination of the communication behaviors associated with the above findings, it was seen that one mate's understanding of the other was greater when the other was less neutral and more negative in the expression of nonverbal affect. In addition, it was found that the spouse who understood the other tended to be more
neutral and less negative in the expression of nonverbal affect. As Sillars et al. (1984) pointed out, a simple explanation for these findings seems apparent; people who are dissatisfied are more negative in their expression of nonverbal affect, negative emotions are easier to judge than neutral emotions, hence there is greater understanding of the dissatisfied partner. Further analyses revealed however, that these findings cannot be explained that simply. An analysis that cross-classified partner's affect, spouse's understanding of the partner, and partner's marital satisfaction indicated that indeed, less satisfied spouses were more negative in the expression of nonverbal affect, however, the significance of this effect was primarily due to the high proportion of neutral affect expressed by the satisfied and misunderstood spouses. Some of the satisfied partners were both more negative and understood, thus the negativity of the communication alone did not account for the poor satisfaction scores. Negativity was consistently associated with understanding, however, and Sillars et al. expressed the idea that the tendency to use one's own feelings to estimate the other's feelings was probably accentuated in satisfied couples who rarely expressed negative feelings.
Results similar to those above were reported from an examination of the verbal content. Here it was found that understanding was greater when the spouses used more competitive codes (direct distributive and indirect distributive) and fewer informational or supportive codes. The competitive codes describe actions that are verbally faulting or blaming, while the second two classifications are more neutral or positive in affect. This again indicates that understanding is more likely to be associated with affectively negative communication behaviors.

Examining verbal communication and satisfaction, the satisfied partners used more denial and noncontinuity codes (both are forms of avoidance), more indirect distributive codes (subtle forms of competition) and fewer informational codes. This indicated that satisfaction was greater when spouses avoided discussing problematic issues.

Looking at the results from the 3-way interaction of communication, understanding, and satisfaction, again three types of groups were identified (satisfied and understood spouses, satisfied and misunderstood spouses, and dissatisfied and understood spouses) but specific verbal communication behaviors were associated only with satisfied and misunderstood spouses. Communication within
this group was characterized by a high number of noncontinuity codes (avoidance), and very few direct distributive codes (competition). In this respect, Sillars et al.'s (1984) findings are similar to Knudson et al.'s (1980) result that indicated that little understanding occurred among couples who avoided conflict. However Sillars et al. also found that understanding may be a mixed blessing because those who avoided the discussion of conflict issues were less understood, but more satisfied.

The majority of the findings reported from the second study included in Sillars et al.'s (1984) article were consistent with those from the first. Raw understanding scores averaged .36 for husbands and .30 for wives, however these scores dropped to .14 for husbands and .05 for wives when agreement was partialed out. As in Study 1, perceived agreement was much higher than actual agreement, again suggesting that spouses tend to assimilate their mates' attitudes about instrumental issues in marriage.

Results pertaining to satisfaction were also consistent with the first study. Husbands' understanding of their wives was negatively correlated with husbands' satisfaction, and wives' understanding of their husbands was negatively correlated with wives' satisfaction. The
additional scales, consensus, cohesion, and affection, were not included in the second analysis. Agreement, as in Study 1, was not associated with either spouses' satisfaction, however perceived agreement highly correlated with satisfaction for both marital partners. In addition, Sillars et al. (1984) reported that both the husbands' and the wives' satisfaction was more strongly related to the wives' perceived agreement and perceived topic salience than to the husbands' perceived agreement and perceived topic salience.

The analysis of nonverbal affect revealed that understanding was greater when the partner was less positive and more negative. Spouses who understood their mates tended to be more neutral in the expression of nonverbal affect. Because these results again indicated that negative nonverbal affect was associated with understanding, an additional analysis was computed for the 3-way interaction of partner's affect, spouses' understanding of partner, and partners' martial satisfaction. Similar to the results in Study 1, more satisfied but less understood spouses were less negative, but in this case they were also more positive, rather than neutral, in the expression of nonverbal affect. Also similar to the results in Study 1, more satisfied and better understood spouses were less positive and more
negative. Interestingly, the expression of nonverbal affect among the dissatisfied and understood mates was very similar to the expression of nonverbal affect among the satisfied and understood mates. That is, again understanding was associated with negative nonverbal affect, however the impact of affectively negative expression was not consistently associated with marital satisfaction. Finally, looking at verbal communication, Sillars et al. (1984) reported that no significant differences were found in association with satisfaction in the second study.

In summary, Sillars et al. (1984) reported:

(1) People strongly overestimate the similarity between their own and their partner's feelings.
(2) Understanding was negatively related to marital satisfaction.
(3) Among the more satisfied individuals, those who were better understood were more negative in vocal tone.
(4) Among the less satisfied individuals, there was little relationship between communication and understanding.
(5) Individuals with a better understanding of their partner were more neutral than individuals with less understanding. (pp. 340-341).

The body of literature on communication, understanding, and satisfaction does not yield simple summary statements about either the relationship between communication and understanding or the relationship between understanding and satisfaction. Examining first those studies that assessed the association between
communication and understanding, it is tempting to claim that a positive association was supported. Courtright et al. (1979) and Millar et al. (1979) both reported that a lack of understanding was found among couples in which one partner's communication behavior prohibited discussion about who performs various household chores. Knudson et al. (1980) reported that greater understanding occurred as a result of conflict when the couples engaged, rather than avoided, discussion of the issue, and Sillars et al. (1984) also reported less understanding among couples who avoided the discussion of conflict issues. Yet the findings from these studies did not demonstrate empirically an association between communication and understanding. Rather, their results indicated that a lack of communication was associated with a lack of understanding. Even Knudson et al. failed to demonstrate that understanding about a conflict issue results from discussion about that issue—the association that was tested and supported concerned mates' perceptions of global trait-related behaviors, not perceptions about the issue itself.

Turning to studies that assessed the association between understanding and satisfaction, an inconsistent pattern of results was seen. Some studies indicated that agreement may be a more important variable associated with
satisfaction, while others indicated that perceived, rather than actual agreement is the more critical variable. The latter studies, by implication, suggested that failure to understand is likely to be associated with satisfaction. Several studies reported that misunderstanding was associated with satisfaction, but a number of others indicated that it was understanding, rather than perceived or actual agreement, that was associated with satisfaction.

As previously stated, the key to deciphering the findings may lie in the amount of information processing that occurred. The symbolic interactionists predict that the function of communication in ongoing relationships is information exchange, while the coorientation theorists assume that such interactions will not function to increase understanding, especially among more satisfied couples. Unfortunately, the studies cited above provide little knowledge about this critical variable. Many of the studies that assessed understanding did not investigate agreement or perceived agreement (Kotlar, 1965; Luckey, 1960; Taylor, 1967) and many that investigated agreement and perceived agreement did not examine understanding (Byrne & Blaylock, 1963; Ferguson & Allen, 1978; Levinger & Breedlove, 1966). In addition, only four studies controlled for a statistical confound
due to projection. Hence many of the studies that reported a positive correlation between understanding and satisfaction may just as likely have reported effects that were based on projected agreement and therefore a lack of understanding. Finally, the four studies that did control for this potential confound used such diverse methods to do so that summaries across studies would be tenuous at best, and invalid at worst.

Given the opposing assumptions about information processing that are implied by the symbolic interactionists and coorientation theorists, an investigation of communication, understanding, and marital satisfaction that includes an index of information processing is warranted. By using an index of information processing, the assumptions underlying each model can be addressed and hopefully some clarity can be brought to bear on the confusing mass of findings above. In this study, conversational memory will serve as the index of information processing, therefore recent research within this line will be presented in the following section.

Conversational Memory

For quite some time the focus of studies of human memory remained outside the domain of Communication inquiry. Wyer and Carlston (1979), Anderson (1979), and
Tulving (1972), to name a few, investigated memory processes in order to discover the cognitive structure of memory. Other scholars, approaching the issue from an attributional orientation (Heider, 1959) or a scheme orientation (Hastie, 1981) attempted to document hypothesized biases within the memory structure. To date relatively few studies have investigated memory for naturally occurring conversation. Yet memory is clearly an integral component of the communication process. As Stafford and Daly (1984) pointed out:

A critical requirement for successfully completing any interaction is a functioning memory that permits people to (1) generate relevant topics from the store of memories they have from previous interactions with others involved in the current exchange; (2) assess and integrate both general and specific topical information; (3) recall general rules of social conversation; (4) adjust to new messages that arise as the conversation progresses within the frame of remembered materials; (5) devise expectancies and trajectories for likely directions the conversation may take; and (6) store, in some suitable fashion, impressions and memories of the conversation for future use. (pp. 379-380).

Despite a general lack of investigation, awareness of the importance of conversational memory is not new. Indeed, memory has often been employed as a dependent measure in social science research (e.g., Berscheide, Granzuiano, Monson, & Dermer, 1976; Cegala, 1984; Nunnally, 1971). Yet in such investigations, memory was not the focus of study. Rather, memory was used as an index of another intrinsically important but related
variable such as interaction involvement (Cegala, 1984). Thus such studies revealed little about conversational memory in and of itself or its role in the communication process.

Recently a number of studies have made conversational memory the focus of inquiry (Benoit & Benoit, 1987; Benoit, Benoit, & Wilkie, 1988; Keenan, MacWhinney, & Mayhew, 1977; Kemper, 1980; Kemper & Thissen, 1981; MacWhinney, Keenan, & Reinke, 1982; Stafford, Burggraf, & Sharkey, 1987; Stafford & Daly, 1984). To date such studies have aimed primarily at methodological concerns that needed to be addressed before more theoretically substantive questions could be investigated. However, due to the relative success of such investigations, a small body of knowledge about conversational memory has emassed and some theoretically grounded questions about the association between conversational memory and other interaction based variables are suggested by the results. Of particular interest to this investigation are the findings concerning the amount and types of information recalled from casual conversations. The findings from these studies cast doubt on the idea that information exchange is a primary function of casual conversations. Further, these findings suggest that there may be little association between casual conversations and understanding
in marriage.

Stafford and Daly (1984) began their study of conversational memory because it is an essential aspect of the communication process, and also out of concern about the generalizability of the few findings that existed. A number of studies cited by Stafford and Daly used only recognition techniques to assess conversational memory and others measured observers' rather than participants' recall of conversational events. Yet observers' memories for conversational events may provide little information about how memory functions for participants, and recognition tasks may not be the optimal method for assessing memory for naturally occurring conversations. To remedy these problems, Stafford and Daly employed free recall procedures to assess participants' memories for conversation. In addition, Stafford and Daly investigated the mode of recall (oral versus written) as well as three types of memory expectancies in which participants were either (1) not forewarned that they would be asked to recall their conversations, (2) were told that they would be asked to recall their impressions from their conversations, or (3) were told that they would be asked to recall as much as possible from their conversations.
In order to analyze the memory protocols produced by the participants, Stafford and Daly (1984) created a coding system that allows substantive as well as methodological issues to be addressed. To use Stafford and Daly's coding system, participants' conversations must first be transcribed. Then both the transcripts and memory protocols are coded into idea units and recall units, respectively; each defined as the smallest unit of meaning with informational or affective value. From this the amount (proportion) of the conversation remembered can be computed by comparing each participant's recall units to the idea units found in the conversation itself. The types of information recalled are investigated by further classifying the recall units into one of seven categories: reproductions (verbatim recollections or paraphrases of a conversational idea unit), redundant reproductions (restatements of a previously recorded reproduction), themes (statements of a discussion topic without any information about the topic, elaborations (inferences and additions that are plausible but not specifically stated), descriptions (remarks about any aspect of the conversational experience), evaluations (similar to descriptions except that items classified here have a positive or negative quality), or errors (information that is incorrect or inconsistent with the conversation).
Using this method, it can be determined not only how much of the content of a conversation is recalled, but also whether other characteristics of the conversation, such as generalizations about the content (themes), impressions of the other (descriptions, evaluations), or additions (elaborations), and simple errors are recalled. Thus the amount of conversation recalled is measured by comparing the number of reproductions produced in the memory protocols to the number of idea units expressed in the conversation, while the types of information recalled reflect the proportion of each classification within the recall units produced by the participants.

Using this system to analyze the interactions of stranger dyads, Stafford and Daly (1984) reported that, on the average, participants recalled only about 10% of their conversations, with variations ranging from none to 40%. Examining the findings regarding recall mode, Stafford and Daly found that participants who recalled their conversations orally produced significantly more redundant reproductions and elaborations than participants who were asked to recall their conversations in writing. The latter group, however, produced more reproductions than those participants recalling their conversations orally. No interaction effects were found when recall mode was associated with memory expectancy.
Turning to an examination of memory expectancies, Stafford and Daly (1984) reported that significantly more of the conversation was recalled and a significantly larger proportion of reproductions were produced by participants who were forewarned that they would be asked to recall their conversations than by participants in either of the other two expectancy conditions. Participants in the no expectancy condition and in the impression expectancy condition were very similar in their recall sets. Participants in each of these conditions produced significantly more evaluations and descriptions that participants in the recall expectancy condition.

Finally, Stafford and Daly (1984) assessed the participants' recall of their own and the other's contributions to the conversation. Previous research that examined egocentric biases in memory reported that small group members tended to recall more of their own than the other's contributions in a task orientated discussion, and that married partners tended to recall more of their own that their mates' contributions to the accomplishment of household chores (Ross & Sicoly, 1979). In this study however, it was found that participants recalled significantly more of the others' contributions to the conversation than their own. The reverse in direction of recall may have been due to the different stimulus
conditions examined in the two studies. In a task oriented discussion, attention would probably be focused on the task, but in an initial encounter, attention would probably be focused on the other. Indeed, subsequent analyses supported this idea.

Stafford, Burggraf, and Sharkey (1987) investigated long term conversational memory among the participants who took part in Stafford and Daly's (1984) study. In this follow-up examination, a number of the participants, who were not forewarned about the second memory assessment, were asked to return to the communication lab and again report their recollections from the conversations that had taken place a month earlier. Recall mode and memory expectancies were again analyzed in this study. As predicted, participants' memories decreased significantly over time, and averaged only 4% at the one month measurement. In addition, four of the remaining seven memory classifications showed significant effects due to time. That is, at the long term interval, participants produced significantly fewer reproductions, and significantly more elaborations, descriptions, and errors.

Significant effects were also seen for recall mode. Participants who recalled their conversations orally, as in Stafford and Daly's (1984) original study, produced significantly more redundant reproductions and elaborations
in the long term condition.

Finally, an examination of memory expectancies (assigned in the short term condition) also yielded results similar to those from the short term analysis. That is, consistent with the differences reported by Stafford and Daly (1984), participants who had been forewarned that they would be asked to recall their conversations in the short term investigation remembered more of their conversations and produced more reproductions in the long term condition than participants who had been given no memory expectancy or who were forewarned that they would be asked to recall their impressions. Interestingly, the no expectancy and the impression expectancy groups were again markedly similar in the amount and type of information recalled from their conversations. That is, both of these groups produced more themes, evaluations, and descriptions (though the differences were non-significant) as well as significantly fewer reproductions than the recall expectancy group.

Finally Stafford et al. (1987) reported that the participants recalled significantly more of the other's remarks than they recalled of their own at the long term interval. Thus the finding that the other's remarks were more memorable held for the longer time frame as well as the shorter.
Looking at the general findings, there is little support for an uncertainty reduction model of relationship development that stresses the idea that conversational partners gather information about one another from the content they exchange during interaction in order to increase their predictability of one another (see Berger & Calabrese, 1975). While it was seen that participants recalled more of the other's contributions to the conversation than their own, and that this finding held over time, it was also seen that participants recalled only about 10% of their conversations within minutes of completing them, and this figure dropped to 4% about a month later. The argument against an uncertainty reduction model is based in the idea that information is conveyed verbally, however. As Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967) pointed out, both a content and a relationship level of information are conveyed by the messages exchanged among participants in an interaction. The content level of information is conveyed in the exchange of verbal utterances, but the relational level of information is conveyed through the manner in which the content is expressed. Taking this broader view, it can be argued, as Stafford et al. (1987) did, that the information gained from initial encounters is relational rather than content based. Support for this argument can
be found in two aspects of Stafford and Daly's (1984) and Stafford et al.'s findings.

One reason to accept the idea that casual conversations among strangers serve a relational rather than content function is that conversational participants recalled so little content and that small amount decreased dramatically over time. In addition, conversational participants increased in their production of evaluations, descriptions, and errors over time, suggesting that impression relevant information, rather than content, was recalled. A second reason to accept the argument that relational, rather than content information was gleaned from casual conversation comes from the finding that participants in the no expectancy and the impression expectancy conditions produced very similar memory protocols. Indeed, Stafford et al. (1987) suggested that these findings indicated that the low amount of content recalled may not have reflected a flaw in human memory, but may have indicated that the goal of conversation in initial encounters is to form impressions that may help shape future interactions.

Looking at related studies, additional evidence suggests that relational, rather than content-based information is more salient and is more likely to be recalled. For example, Kemper (1980) examined memory for
utterances that varied in illocutionary form and force. She hypothesized that when the content of a speech act signaled that it conveyed relational information, it would be better remembered than the same speech act used in a neutral context where little or no relational information would be conveyed. To test this hypothesis, Kemper first performed an experiment to evaluate the effectiveness of contextual information in shaping the illocutionary force of declaratives and interrogatives. Once the influence of contextual information was established, Kemper designed a second experiment to test the memorability of speech acts in different contexts such that they implied different meanings about the relationship in which they were used. She reported that when declaratives and interrogatives were used indirectly (as requests or offers) they were recalled verbatim more frequently than the same speech acts used directly. Thus when the speech act reflected politeness, it was recalled. Findings also indicated, however, that syntactic form contributed to memorability because interrogatives were remembered more accurately than were declaratives.

In a second study, Kemper and Thissen (1981) examined the memorability of requests that violated politeness conventions. As in Kemper's (1980) study, it was proposed that the relational information conveyed by such actions
would make them both salient and memorable. In order to test this idea, various forms of requests were scaled on the dimensions of politeness and directness. Once the relative politeness and directness (opposite ends of a conceptual dimension in this study) were assessed, they were presented to experimental participants as the captions under a series of cartoons. The cartoons portrayed two or more individuals, one of whom uttered the captioned request. The characters in the cartoons were of different status levels and were clearly identifiable as such. One type of violation occurred when a low status speaker delivered a direct request to a high status character, and a second type of violation occurred when a high status speaker delivered a polite request to a low status character. Initially, experimental participants were asked to rate the funniness of each of 10 cartoons. After 20 minutes of unrelated activity, participants were provided with the uncaptioned cartoons as cues and were asked to recall the caption verbatim. The results revealed that participants recalled the polite requests delivered by high status speakers to low status characters, but not the polite requests delivered by low status speakers to high status characters. In addition, impolite requests delivered by low status speakers to high status characters were recalled, however, impolite
requests delivered by high status speakers to low status characters were either not remembered or memories for those utterances were distorted. Thus the idea that speech acts that violate social conventions, and thereby provide relational information, are more memorable, was supported.

Two additional studies highlighted the salience of relational information in casual conversation. The first study hypothesized that utterances rich in relational information, referred to in this study as high interaction content utterances, would be memorable because "subsequent interactions with the speaker often depend upon the contents of earlier interactionally significant events" (Keenan, MacWhinney, & Mayhew, 1977: p. 551). Because of this, Keenan et al. hypothesized that the exact wording of high interaction content utterances would be recalled more than the exact wording of low interaction content utterances because it is often the choice of words that conveys the relational information.

To test this hypothesis, Keenan et al. (1977) audiotaped a lecture and the discussion that followed it at a research group meeting among faculty and graduate students at a large university. One of the authors participated in the discussion and contributed a number of high interaction content utterances to it. Three to four
days later, the faculty and graduate students that had attended the lecture-discussion were given a recognition memory test made up of sentences taken from the meeting. Results from an analysis of the participants' memories indicated that the sentences with high interaction content were recalled two times as often as sentences with low interaction content. In addition, the exact wording was recalled for high interaction content utterances, as opposed to low interaction content utterances, three times as often. Thus the hypothesis that utterances rich in relational importance would be remembered was supported.

In a second study, MacWhinney, Keenan, & Reinke (1982) extended the findings from the Keenan et al. (1977) investigation. Specifically, MacWhinney et al. stated that the memory effects revealed above may have been due to an arousal effect rather than because the relational information was itself important. That is, a number of researchers had shown that memory for list learning improved when the learners were aroused. Thus the results reported above may have signified that high interaction content utterances are arousing, but not memorable due to their relational importance.

To test the differing explanations for better recall of the high interaction content statements, MacWhinney et al. (1982) videotaped 12 Psychology graduate student
participants as they conversed. One of the experimenters participated in the discussion so that he could attempt to elicit both high and low interaction content statements and so that he could promote conversation by introducing such topics as the status of Psychology as a profession, and the role of women in academia. To test for effects due to arousal, all participants' Galvanic Skin Responses (GSR) were measured during the conversation. By using the GSR it could be determined whether or not participants were aroused when hearing both high and low interaction content utterances, and whether or not the arousal contributed to memory for either or both utterance types.

The results of a first analysis indicated that GSR was not a good predictor of memory. That is arousal, as indicated by the GSR, was used to predict participants' memories for the utterances that occurred while participants were in an aroused state. The correlational analysis of arousal and memory revealed no associations or support for the arousal hypothesis.

Support was found for the idea that memory was related to the expression of high interaction content utterances however. A second correlational analysis partialed out the effects due to arousal and revealed a significant effect for memory for high interaction content utterances. When the effects due to high interaction
content were partialed out, no residual effects were found for arousal. MacWhinney et al. (1982) stated that high-interaction content utterances produced arousal, but it was not the arousal itself that stimulated memory.

Recall the Kemper (1981) reported that the syntactic form of utterances contributed to their memorability (e.g., interrogatives were recalled more accurately than declaratives). This finding suggested that greater recall of high interaction content utterances may be due to something inherent in their form, rather than their relational importance. To test this idea, MacWhinney et al. (1982) performed a second experiment in which the high interaction content utterances that were recalled in the study reported above were presented on audiotape to a second group of participants as a list learning task. As MacWhinney et al. stated:

According to the definition of interactional content, removing the statements from the context of meaningful purposeful communication between real people should drastically reduce, if not totally eliminate, the interaction content of the statements. Thus, if it is the interactional content of the statements that is responsible for the difference in memorability, no differences between high and low interaction content statements should be obtained in a list learning situation. (p. 314).

The results of this experiment indicated that the list learning group had better memory for the surface form of the statements they heard than did a comparison group selected from the participants in the first study,
however, this differences was attributable to the list learning group's greater recall of low interaction content utterances. Both groups' recall of the high interaction content utterances was the same.

In an attempt to understand the lack of support for their hypotheses, MacWhinney et al. (1982) realized that the list learning group had been informed that a memory test would follow the audio tape they would hear. In addition, the list learning group's memories were assessed immediately after they heard the tapes, while the original group's memories were assessed approximately 72 to 96 hours after their participation in the conversation. Finally, MacWhinney et al. realized that the list learning group had been warned that the audiotape they would hear contained profanity and the mention of sexually explicit activities and they were informed that they could withdraw their consent to participate on those grounds. This suggested that participants in the list learning condition may have devoted more attention to the profane and sexually dramatic utterances than did the conversational participants. To test this idea, a second analysis was conducted after removing the off-color utterances from the list. The results of the second analysis revealed that utterances were remembered because they provided relationally significant information, although utterances
that contained profanity or that were sexually explicit were memorable in and of themselves, and apart from the context in which they were expressed.

To summarize the findings from the research on conversational memory, it can be concluded that free recall memory for the content exchanged during casual conversation is poor (Stafford & Daly, 1984; Stafford et al., 1987). Other studies that have focused on issues unrelated to this paper also supported this conclusion. For example, Benoit and Benoit (1987) reported that participants in a free recall condition remembered only about 16% of their conversations, and Ross and Sicoly (1979) reported that an average of 5.6% of one's own and 2.6% of the other's contributions to the accomplishment of a group task were remembered.

A second conclusion that can be drawn is that relational information, to a greater extent than content information, is gleaned from casual conversations and discussions. In addition to the evidence cited above, a study using observers, rather than participants, supported Stafford et al.'s (1987) finding that instructing people to form impressions produced the same memory configuration as a no recall expectancy condition (Benoit, Benoit, & Wilkie, 1988). This again suggests that the goal of casual conversation is not to reduce uncertainty by
gaining content level information, but is rather to size up the desirability and probability of future encounters and relationships.

How do these findings relate to the assumptions made about information processing expressed by the symbolic interactionists and the coorientation theorists? First, adding the generally poor conversational memory scores found among strangers to the lack of empirical evidence linking communication and understanding, it seems particularly unlikely that the content exchanged during routine interactions will be encoded as salient or will be recalled by marital partners to a greater degree than was seen among strangers. Thus there is some indication that the coorientation theorists' assumption that casual conversation does not perform an information exchange function may be valid. Nonetheless, the symbolic interactionists' perspective predicts that day-to-day interactions serve an information exchange function, and at least some recall would be expected.

In regard to assessing the validity of the two models, an examination of long term recall may yield more insightful results than an examination of short term recall. That is, simple knowledge about memory structures would predict a significant decrease in memory over time, regardless of the assumptions expressed by the symbolic
interactionists or the coorientation theorists. However, in regard to the types of information recalled, coorientation theorists would predict greater distortions in memory over time than would symbolic interactionists. Using Stafford and Daly's (1984) coding system, indirect evidence for the coorientation model would be seen in an increase in elaborations between the short term and long term conditions. Because differing expectations are expressed by the two models, and a simple examination of the amount the recall and the types of information recalled will not conclusively support either model, a research question will be stated in lieu of an hypothesis.

RQ1: How much content will be recalled, and what types of information will be produced, by marital partners in both short term and long term memory assessments for casual conversation?

The second research question to be asked concerns the associations between agreement, understanding, perceived agreement, and conversational memory. Symbolic interactionists assert that the content exchanged in ongoing relationships allows understanding to develop. Thus from this perspective a positive correlation would be expected between conversational memory and understanding, both in the short term and long term conditions. The coorientation theorists, on the other hand, argue that the processing of conversational content will be biased in association with the positive or negative affect
experienced within a relationship. Hence from this perspective, either no correlation between conversational memory and understanding would be expected, or assuming that the couples in the sample to be used in this investigation are relatively satisfied with their marriages, a negative correlation would be expected. In addition, the coorientation model would predict a negative correlation between conversational memory and perceived agreement. These expectations should also hold or be enhanced over time. In addition, it might be expected from the tenets of the coorientation model that the production of elaborations, as an index of memory distortion, would be positively associated with perceived agreement, and negatively associated with understanding, in both the short term and long term conditions. No particular associations are expected between conversational memory and actual agreement, however. From this the second research questions becomes:

RQ2: What is the association between martial partners' memories for casual conversation and understanding, perceived agreement, and agreement in both short term and long term conditions?

Each model implicitly links information processing to marital satisfaction in inconsistent ways as well. Symbolic interactionists would predict that conversational memory, due to its inherent association with understanding, should be positively correlated with
marital satisfaction. The coorientation model, however, implies the opposite; that conversational memory should be negatively correlated with marital satisfaction because the more one recalls, the less likely he or she is to maintain an illusion of agreement on problematic issues. Again, these effects are likely to be magnified over time.

RQ3: What is the association between marital partners' memories for a casual conversation and marital satisfaction in both short term and long term conditions?

Finally, a fourth correlational analysis will be conducted to discover the overall association between understanding, agreement, perceived agreement, and marital satisfaction within this sample. This analysis will serve as a check on the previous findings and may strengthen the claims that can be drawn from them.

RQ4: What is the association between marital satisfaction and understanding, agreement, and perceived agreement in this sample?

In the following chapter, the methods used to address these questions will be discussed.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Sample

Participants were recruited for this study in a number of ways. One method used was to contact local organizations such as the Junior League, the Child Culture League, the Columbus Wellness Coalition, and the State of Ohio Public Defenders Office, explain the purpose of the study and ask for volunteers. This process yielded only three couples who were willing to participate. Volunteers were also sought through local churches and this effort proved to be more fruitful; nine couples who participated in this study were located in this way. Finally, 11 couples were recruited from introductory communication courses in which one spouse was a student. Thus 23 couples took part in this study, however the data from only 43 participants could be used in the analyses due to technical difficulties with one tape recording and because one husband did not complete the entire questionnaire. Of the two courses used for recruitment, one was an evening class and the couples who were identified through this
source tended to be older than those from the traditional student population. The average age of the participants was 33 years (sd = 9.8) and the couples had been married for an average of 8.5 years (sd = 10). All participants had completed at least a high school education, and many of the participants were parents (the average number of children reported by this group was approximately 1.2, sd = 1.2).

All couples met with a researcher twice, first at a location other than the couples' homes and the second time at the couples' homes. The first meeting took place either at the communication lab or in the building that housed the couples' sponsoring organization. Upon arrival, a researcher greeted each couple and explained the general nature of the research project, the tasks that the couple would be asked to perform, and informed the participants that they could withdraw their consent to participate at any time and for any reason. Each member of each couple was then asked to sign a standard consent form.

Immediately after this procedure, the couples were asked to "talk about anything they would like" for about seven minutes while being video-taped. The couples were left alone, in a closed room, after a researcher started the video equipment. At the end of seven minutes, a
researcher returned, turned off the equipment and one spouse was taken to a separate room. Each spouse was given a brief essay to read that served as a short-term memory distraction task, and was then asked to fill out a questionnaire (see Appendix). The first page of the questionnaire asked the participant to recall everything that he or she could from the previous conversation. The questionnaire also elicited the demographic information discussed above, contained Norton's (1983) Quality Marriage Index, and a list of topics from which agreement, perceived agreement, and understanding were assessed.

After finishing their tasks with the researcher at this meeting, each couple was asked if a researcher could come to their home in about a month to ask a few follow-up questions. The participants were not informed that their memories for the conversations they had had during participation would be assessed at the later date. Of the 23 couples, 12 couples agreed to participate in the follow-up portion of the study, however again technical difficulties reduced the number of participants included in the long analysis to 23 individuals. Approximately one month after their initial encounter with the researcher, each couple was contacted and an appointment was made to see them in their homes. During this encounter, each spouse was again presented with a piece of paper and was
asked to write down everything that he or she could recall from the conversation that had taken place a month earlier. The researcher stayed in the room with the participants to insure that collaboration did not occur. After about 15 minutes, the researcher collected the memory protocols, thanked the couple for their willingness to help in the research endeavor, and left. All records of the participants' names and addresses were destroyed after their initial participation if they did not grant permission for the follow-up, and were destroyed after the follow-up had been completed among the remaining participants.

Quality Marriage Index

A number of problems associated with the measurement of marital satisfaction have been noted in the literature, so a discussion regarding the selection and use of a satisfaction index seems warranted. One problem with the concept of marital satisfaction is that any and all related concepts, such as clinical/nonclinical, harmonious/discordant, happy/unhappy, adjusted/nonadjusted, tend to be discussed together under the rubric of satisfaction. This is particularly true in reviews such as the one presented in this paper (also see Hicks & Platt, 1970; Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Of course
there is a great deal of intrinsic similarity among these variables—one would not expect couples seeking marital counseling to be particularly satisfied, nor would one expect discordant couples to be particularly well adjusted. Thus in the interest of thoroughness, findings related to these variables are often discussed together. Indeed, Lewis and Spanier (1979) pointed out:

What these variables share in common is that they represent qualitative dimensions and evaluations of the marital relationship. At the empirical level, they are highly intercorrelated. (p. 269).

Fitzpatrick (1987) also noted the high intercorrelations among these variables but suggested that they be classified differently. That is, it might be more appropriate to distinguish between couples who seek relational counseling because the family has psychological difficulties (functional problems) and couples who rate themselves as satisfied or dissatisfied on some subjectively defined scale. This particular difficulty was not highly problematic for the review presented in this paper, however. Only one study cited in Chapter 1 included a comparison from the former group (dysfunctional couples) with couples from the latter group who subjectively defined themselves as satisfied (see Murstein & Beck, 1972).

Two additional problems were relevant to this review, however, and concern the meaning and measurement of
satisfaction. First, regarding the meaning of satisfaction, a number of scholars have devised scales that assess marital satisfaction on multiple dimensions. For example, it is common for marital satisfaction scales to include questions regarding the amount of conflict experienced within the relationship, the degree of agreement perceived between the mates, the number of activities the couple shares together, and perceptions about the permanence of their marriage, among other issues (see Fitzpatrick, 1987). Clearly such scales would be problematic when used in association with assessments of agreement, understanding, and perceived agreement because issues relevant to these variables are assessed within the satisfaction scale. Nonetheless, many of the studies reported in this paper have relied on such scales.

A second problem associated with the use of subjective-evaluative scales is the definition of the unit of analysis. To use these scales, each mate within a couple independently rates his or her perceptions of the marriage. Often however, the two individuals' scores are summed or even averaged to form a dyadic unit of analysis. As Fitzpatrick (1987) pointed out, such a method not only loses a great deal of pertinent information about individuals' assessments of their marriages and their behaviors, but such a process is also likely to create
equivalent satisfaction scores across marriages in which the husbands and wives value various aspects of the marriage quite differently.

Both of types of problems with the meaning and measurement of satisfaction occurred in the studies cited in this paper. Rarely was satisfaction assessed by the same method in two studies; many studies used a multidimensional scale, and some investigations used individuals' satisfaction scores while others used a dyadic level of analysis. Further, it was often difficult, if not impossible, to determine which of the two levels of analysis was used unless the husbands' and wives' satisfaction scores were correlated with the other variables under investigation separately. That is, the specific unit of analysis was seldom reported. These problems also contributed to difficulty in drawing conclusions from the review of literature above. For the purposes of this analysis, satisfaction will be defined on the individual level.

The scale to be used in this analysis is Norton's (1983) Quality Marriage Index (QMI). Norton devised the QMI in an attempt to overcome the problems associated with multidimensional scales as well as a few additional difficulties. The QMI contains six questions, each designed to measure semantically similar evaluations of
the marriage as a whole. It was Norton's contention that
the evaluation of the marriage should not be confused with
evaluations regarding perceptions of agreement, conflicts,
and affection within marriage. Indeed a scale that
eliminates such dimensional variables could then be used
to assess the covariation of such variables with marital
satisfaction. Eliminating these dimensional variables,
however, resulted in a scale that produces positively
skewed marital satisfaction scores.

A highly skewed marital satisfaction index can be
problematic for the researcher because all marriages tend
to cluster toward the positive end of the scale, thus it
does not distinguish between more and less satisfied
marriages. Spanier (1976) eliminated highly skewed items
when creating the Dyadic Adjustment Scale for just that
reason. Norton, on the other hand, argued that
evaluations of marital quality are highly skewed, thus
eliminating highly skewed items may result in a scale that
approximates a normal curve, but it may also be less
representative of the concept it is intended to measure.
To cope with this problem, Norton proposed that skewed
items be kept, and that marital partners' responses to
those items be transformed to approximate a linear
function, which in turn possess the properties of a normal
curve. Thus the items on the QMI are all semantically
similar evaluations of marriage, and are all positively skewed. To use the scale, participants' responses are transformed by (1) stratifying the data into 5% intervals, (2) adding a constant to each interval mean to move the lowest score close to zero, (3) raising each interval score to the third power, and (4) dividing each score by 1000 to produce a workable range (see Norton, 1983; p. 149). This procedure then results in a linear representation of lower to higher marital satisfaction scores, and variables of interest can be examined in association with the relative satisfaction expressed by individuals within a sample. It is important to note that this process provides a relative, rather than absolute, index of satisfaction. Thus, the least satisfied individual in one sample may or may not be dissatisfied with the quality of his or her marriage when compared with marriages from other samples.

Agreement, Perceived Agreement, and Understanding

After completing the QMI, each participant was asked to rate the extent to which each of eight topics was problematic in his or her marriage on a seven point scale with one indicating that the issue was not at all problematic in their marriage and seven indicating that the issue was the most difficult problem the couple faced
(see Appendix). After responding to these questions for self, participants were asked to rate each topic as they perceived their mates would respond.

Agreement scores were computed by correlating each mates' estimate of the extent of the problem. Understanding scores were computed by correlating one mate's prediction of the other mate's response with the other mate's actual response, while partially out the effects due to agreement. Finally perceived agreement scores were computed by correlating one's own response with one's prediction of the other's response. The partial correlation technique was used to control for a potential confound due to projection. As previously pointed out, agreement, perceived agreement, and understanding are confounded such that agreement can artificially inflate understanding due to projection. Although an alternative method of controlling this confound was suggested by Hastorf and Bender (1952) whereby subtracting agreement from understanding would result in a corrected score, this method was not recommended by Gage and Cronbach (1955). The partial correlation technique was suggested by Sillars, Pike, Jones, & Murphy (1984) and provides the control afforded by Hastorf and Bender's method but also maintains the proportion of agreement that is independent from
understanding (see Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

One problem that is associated with using the partial correlational technique is that it potentially removes the contribution of issues on which there is both agreement and genuine understanding from the resulting understanding score. Thus it is conceivable that the strength of genuine understanding is reduced by using this technique, but it also insures that only those issues on which there is genuine understanding contribute to the final analyses. The argument can be made that it is particularly important to use such a technique because first, one of the more consistent findings in the marriage literature is that mates in happy, stable marriages tend to be homogamous in many respects (see Broderick, 1984; Havemann & Lehtinen, 1986; Landis & Landis, 1977). Thus the probability of understanding scores being confounded with agreement is high. Second, this is especially likely because there is reason to suspect that in homogamous relationships, information seeking is less likely to occur because fewer circumstances prompt uncertainty reduction (see Sillars, Pike, Jones, & Redmon, 1983; Ellis & Hamilton, 1985). Hence there is little reason to think that the high understanding scores found among couples who are similar to one another will be based on their differentiated perceptions. In short, using the partial correlational
technique may be a more rigorous test of the associations, and but using it should reduce the probability of finding a spurious relationship between satisfaction and understanding that should more appropriately be attributed to homogamy.

**Memory Coding**

The coding procedure to be used in this analysis was designed by Stafford and Daly (1984) and was discussed earlier in this paper (see pp. 64-65). For the convenience of the reader, this system will be reviewed briefly here.

Participants' conversations were transcribed and coded into idea units. Idea units were defined as the smallest unit of meaning with informational or affective value. Participants' memory protocols were also coded into idea units, which were labeled "recall units" for the sake of convenience. Recall units were also coded as representing one of seven categories including (1) reproductions, defined as verbatim recollections or paraphrases of a conversational idea unit, (2) redundant reproductions, defined as restatements of a previously produced reproduction, (3) themes, defined as statements of a discussion topic without any information about the topic, (4) elaborations, defined as plausible inferences
and additions to the conversation that were not included in the conversation, (5) descriptions, defined as remarks about any aspect of the conversational experience, (6) evaluations, defined similarly to descriptions except that these descriptions had an affectively positive or negative quality, (7) errors, defined as information that was incorrect or inconsistent with the conversation. Two independent coders unitized the conversational transcripts and recall protocols, and also coded the memory protocols. Simple percentage of agreement was used as an index of reliability and averaged 92% for both unitizing and content coding.

From these coding procedures, the amount of conversation remembered is ascertained by comparing the number of reproductions from a participants' memory protocol to the number of idea units found in his or her conversation. The recall units can also be examined in and of themselves, to determine the types of information that were recalled by each participant.

In the following chapter, the results of the analyses will be presented.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

Amount and Type of Information Recalled

Means for (1) amount of conversation recalled, (2) proportion of reproductions produced, (3) proportion of redundant reproductions produced, (4) proportion of themes produced, (5) proportion of elaborations produced, (6) proportion of evaluations produced, (7) proportion of descriptions produced, and (8) proportion of errors produced are seen in Table 1. On the average, participants produced 191.49 idea units in their conversations (sd = 36.44, range = 96 - 318).

As can be seen in Table 1, the participants in this study recalled only about 10% of their conversations shortly after having them, and this figure dropped to less than one percent in the long term condition. The short term recall figure is within the range of earlier findings for stranger groups and dyads (see Benoit & Benoit, 1987; Ross & Sicoly, 1979; Stafford & Daly, 1984). The decrease to less than one percent is lower than might have been expected however; stranger participants were found to
recall about 4% of their conversations a month later (Stafford, Burggraf, & Sharkey, 1987). Still so little is known about memory for naturally occurring conversations, particularly within ongoing relationships, that it is impossible to tell whether this decrease in recall is representative of "typical" married couples or not. Nonetheless, these figures do not suggest that the primary function of casual conversation in marriage is the exchange of content information.

Table 1
Amount and Types of Information Recalled in Short Term and Long Term Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of information recalled</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reproductions</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundant Reproductions</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborations</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n at time 1 = 43
n at time 2 = 23
Turning to an examination of the types of information recalled, it can be seen that the participants in this study produced fewer reproductions in the long term condition than in the short term condition, but increased in the production of themes. Slightly more elaborations were produced than descriptions, evaluations, or errors in both the short term and long term conditions and earlier it was suggested that the production of elaborations, particularly if increased over time, could mean that memories for conversations were enhanced for the purpose of maintaining perceived agreement. While on the surface the finding that more elaborations were produced than other types of noncoherent memory provides some support for this idea, the analyses to be discussed below indicated that elaborations were associated only with actual agreement. All in all then, there is little reason to suspect that memories for naturally occurring conversations become greatly distorted over time. It simply appears that the content exchanged is forgotten.

A comparison of these findings to the assumptions made about information processing by the two models of interest tends to favor the predictions made by coorientation theorists. That is, the generally poor recall found in the short term condition, and the dramatic decrease in recall found in the long term condition,
suggest that the content exchanged in casual encounters is not encoded as salient, hence would not contribute to understanding, as the symbolic interactionists predict. Yet these findings alone cannot support either model. It may be that the small amount of content recalled in the short term condition represents that proportion of information contained in any casual conversation that contributes to the development of understanding on issues of importance in marriage. Thus stronger evidence would be found by examining the association between conversational memory and understanding.

Conversational Memory and Understanding

An understanding score, an agreement score, and a perceived agreement score was computed for each participant in the analysis. The average understanding score was .15 (sd = .38), the average agreement score was .42 (sd = .25), and the average perceived agreement score was .58 (sd = .28). Thus in this sample perceived agreement exceeded both agreement and understanding.

The correlational analysis of conversational memory and understanding generally supported the assumptions underlying the coorientation model. As can be seen in Table 2, conversational memory was negatively correlated with understanding, and this association approached
statistical significance (p < .06) in the short term condition. The power to detect an effect size of .50 at an alpha level of .05, two-tailed test, was .76, however (see Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Although the correlation was also negative in the long term condition, it did not approach significance. Less data were available for the long term analysis (23 participants) yet the power to detect an effect size of .50 at an alpha level of .05, two-tailed test, remained high at .71 (see Cohen & Cohen, 1983). No other significant correlations were

Table 2
Conversational Memory and Understanding, Perceived Agreement, and Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Perceived Agreement</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.27*</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductions</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundant Reproductions</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborations</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.29*</td>
<td>-.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant, p < .05
n at time 1 = 43
n at time 2 = 23
detected between conversational memory and understanding. Still these findings suggest that the content conveyed during casual conversation does not contribute to understanding.

Turning to an examination of conversational memory and perceived agreement, again the assumptions about information processing underlying the coorientation model were generally supported. Conversational memory was negatively and significantly correlated with perceived agreement (p < .05). This, paired with the negative correlation between conversational memory and understanding, again suggests that the content exchanged during casual conversation is not processed as salient, and does not contribute to the development of understanding. The correlation for conversational memory and perceived agreement was not significant in the long term analysis however.

Several other memory categories also produced significant correlations with perceived agreement in the short term condition. Participants' recall of themes was positively and significantly associated with perceived agreement; unexpectedly however, the production of elaborations was negatively and significantly associated with perceived agreement. As discussed earlier, a possible correlation between the production of
elaborations and perceived agreement was suspected because it might have indicated that the information necessary to maintain the illusion of agreement was added to remembrances of conversations. Clearly this was not the case, however. No other significant correlations were detected for the short term analysis, nor were any significant correlations identified for the long term condition. Again, the power to detect an effect size of .50 at an alpha level of .05, two-tailed test, was .76 for the short term condition, and .71 for the long term condition (Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

Looking at the results of the analysis of conversational memory and actual agreement, no specific effects were predicted, however two significant correlations were found. First, the proportion of redundant reproductions produced in the short term analysis was negatively correlated with agreement. This particular effect is difficult to interpret. Redundant reproductions refer to the restatement of a recall unit already coded within the memory protocol, and in general are of interest only in regard to examinations of written versus oral recall modes. Thus there is little substantive reason to predict this finding, nor is there a theoretical explanation for it. The second significant effect showed that the number of elaborations produced in
the long term condition was positively associated with actual agreement. This, along with the generally low amount of content recalled suggests that when couples are in agreement about instrumental issues in their marriages, less processing of day-to-day information is needed to coordinate action. As Ellis and Hamilton (1985) pointed out, when role expectations in marriage are relatively clear and/or based on conventional patterns, there is little need to discuss expectations about role performance. Similar ideas were expressed by Sillars, Pike, Jones, and Redmon (1983). Thus one may remember little, and elaborate a lot, and still behave within the range of appropriate expectations. This argument is speculative, of course, but it would be interesting to explore this idea in future research.

In summary, there is little evidence that the content exchanged during casual conversations is processed beyond superficial depths. The question now becomes, how does the general lack of information processing relate to marital satisfaction?

Conversational Memory and Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction was assessed using Norton's (1983) Quality Marriage Index. Reliability for the scale was computed in this study using Cronbach's Alpha and
averaged .83.

As stated previously, symbolic interactionists and coorientation theorists inherently link conversational memory to marital satisfaction in contradictory ways. That is, because symbolic interactionists assume that understanding promotes relational satisfaction, and communication should promote understanding, conversational memory should be positively associated with marital satisfaction. Coorientation theorists, on the other hand, would assume that conversational memory should be negatively correlated with satisfaction because the more people recall, the more likely they are to identify dissimilarities in their relationship. The results of this correlational analysis again supported the ideas expressed by the coorientation theorists (see Table 3). That is, conversational memory was negatively correlated with marital satisfaction in both the short term and long term conditions, although in neither case did the results achieve statistical significance ($p < .07$; power to detect an effect size of .50, at an alpha level of .05, two tailed, was .76). Two effects were significantly correlated with marital satisfaction, however, and both occurred in the long term analysis. The production of elaborations was positively associated with marital satisfaction, and the production of evaluations
Table 3

Conversational Memory and Marital Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory for</th>
<th>Short term</th>
<th>Long term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductions</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundant Reproductions</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborations</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant, p < .05
n at time 1 = 43
n at time 2 = 23

was negatively associated with marital satisfaction. The contribution of elaborations to marital satisfaction was probably due to agreement, rather than either understanding or perceived agreement however, as elaborations were associated only with actual agreement in the earlier analyses. The finding that evaluations were negatively associated with marital satisfaction provides little support for either the symbolic interactionists' theory or the coorientation model's assumptions about information processing, although it is interesting in and of itself. Pairing this finding with those reported in Chapter 1 by Sillars, Pike, Jones, and Murphy (1984), in which affectively negative communication behaviors were associated with understanding, it is possible that these
behaviors are more salient than neutral or positive behaviors, and may therefore trigger more evaluative memories in addition to contributing to understanding. If so, then the finding that fewer evaluations were associated with greater satisfaction may simply indicate that fewer affectively negative behaviors occurred during casual conversation among more satisfied couples. This too is speculative, however, as the valence of the evaluations was not assessed in this study. This would be an interesting topic for future investigations.

**Understanding and Marital Satisfaction**

Finally an examination of Table 4 lends credibility to the congruence between the coorientation theorists' claims and the findings in this study. As can be seen, perceived agreement was most strongly associated with martial satisfaction, although the result merely approached significance (p < .055; power to detect an effect size of .50, at an alpha level of .05, two tailed, was .76).

**Discussion**

Overall, the findings from the analyses presented in this paper tend to support the assumptions about information processing that are reflective of the
Table 4

Correlations Between Understanding, Perceived Agreement, Agreement and Marital Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Satisfaction</th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Perceived Agreement</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.24 *</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* nonsignificant, p < .055
n = 43

coorientation model, rather than those of the symbolic interactionists' perspective. Indeed the chain of events proposed by symbolic interactionists linking the exchange of content during day-to-day interactions with understanding and understanding with marital satisfaction was violated at both links. Little evidence was seen to accept the idea that the exchange of content is a primary function of casual interaction, nor that the content that is exchanged will produce understanding. Care must be taken not to overstate this case however. This study, like every other study cited in this paper, did not assess understanding in association with communication about the specific topics on which it was measured. Thus it cannot be claimed that casual conversation does not contribute to
the development of understanding on any level; rather the results of this study indicate that the content exchanged during casual conversation is not highly salient, hence it is not likely to promote understanding in a simple, straightforward manner. Indeed, Duck (1986) expressed a similar opinion while discussing the generally humdrum nature of interaction in ongoing relationships.

Paraphrasing Emler and Fisher (1982), Duck pointed out:

A consistent element of these lifelong routines consists of trivia, we apparently waste a lot of time doing seemingly unimportant things. For example, we spend a lot of time talking about other people, gossiping, and giving our view of one another. (p. 98).

A second conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that understanding is not necessarily associated with marital satisfaction, and may in fact contribute to the experience of less satisfaction within the marriage. This finding is so counter-intuitive within this cultural's ideology about intimate relationships, that it, along with its assumptions regarding the relationship between communication and understanding, will be discussed at length in the following chapter.
The ideas expressed by Berger and Kellner (1964) and Hess and Handel (1959), that communication fosters understanding, and that understanding fosters marital satisfaction, are intuitively sound. Indeed one would be hard pressed to argue that communication does not foster understanding—how else could it develop? Moreover, if one does not understand one's mate anyway, why not marry a stranger? Thus the agenda in this paper was not to dispute the importance of communication in marriage, nor was it to confer legitimacy on the idea that misunderstanding is the key to relational harmony. Rather, the purpose of this paper was to examine married participants' information processing during casual conversation in order to clarify the relationship between communication, understanding, and marital satisfaction. Certainly this initial exploratory investigation has resolved little, and a number of limitations must be stated before final conclusions can be discussed, and future research proposed. Nonetheless, the findings from
this study seem to dispute the claims that the primary function of casual conversation in marriage is the exchange of content level information, and that understanding is the path to marital satisfaction. These findings contradict the dominant view on interpersonal relationships in this culture and will be discussed in that light following a presentation of the limitations that qualify the claims that can be drawn from this exploratory investigation.

Limitations of this Study

There are a number of reasons why the conclusions drawn from this study must be tempered with restraint. First, as noted in the previous chapter, understanding was not assessed in association with conversation about the topics on which it was measured. That is, the eight common conflict issues on which understanding was assessed were not discussed in the casual conversations that were recorded during the married couples' participation. Thus, it may be that conversational memory, and understanding, would be higher if the topics on which understanding was measured had been the target of the couples' discussions. Yet it is commonly assumed that even casual conversation contributes to understanding, and the point of this investigation was to explore the possibility that this
assumption was justified. Judging from the results reported here, this assumption does not appear to be valid. Nonetheless, investigations in which the relationship between specific discussions and understanding is examined are needed.

Another limitation of this study is that conversational memory was assessed following a single conversation, and that conversation was produced by the participants in an artificial setting. Indeed it is likely that the nature of the conversation, the topics selected for discussion, and the style in which the content was exchanged was not reflective of the types of discussions that the couples have when casually conversing in their homes. Moreover, had conversational memory been assessed over a number of conversations, particularly if the conversations occurred in more natural settings, it might have been found that the small amount of content recalled in this study reflects that proportion of content level information from which understanding develops or is maintained from day-to-day interactions.

It should also be noted that, although many of the correlations reported in Chapter 3 were significant, they were not indicative of particularly strong relationships. That is, in the social sciences a common rule of thumb concerning the strength of correlational relationships is
that correlation coefficients under .30 are considered to be weak, correlation coefficients in the range of .30 to .50 are considered to be moderate, and correlation coefficients of .50 and above are considered to be strong. Nearly all the correlation coefficients reported in Chapter 3 then, reflected moderate to weak relationships between the variables of understanding, perceived agreement, conversational memory, and marital satisfaction. This suggests that a number of factors that were not investigated in this study influence the relationship between conversational memory and understanding, and that factors other than understanding or perceived agreement influence individuals' assessments of their state of marital satisfaction.

It may also be the case that conversational memory is not be the optimal method for assessing information processing. That is, there are a number of reasons why conversational memory might be biased, and marital satisfaction, as proposed by the coorientation theorists, is only one of many. For example, Fitzpatrick, Bauman, and Lindaas (1987) suggested that couples' relationship definitions act as scheme, and scheme have often been reported to influence the types of information that will be attended to and recalled (see Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Thus, it may be that information was recalled, or not
recalled, on the basis of the scheme that married participants use to define their relationships. If such thinking is correct then conversational memory for non-salient discussions would be expected to be poor. Similarly, Langer (1978) proposed that conversations, like other events that are commonly experienced, may be conducted according to the rules and procedures that characterize a conversational script or event scheme. Again, to the extent that casual discussions among married couples are conducted according to the rules and regulations defined in a conversational script, little information processing would be expected, regardless of the satisfaction experienced within the marriage. Hence, the use of freely recalled conversational memory as an index of information processing may overlook the complexity of the information processing that does, or does not, occur during married couples' casual conversations.

One final limitation concerns the nature of the marital satisfaction index that was used in this study. It, like all currently available satisfaction indices, stress stability rather than growth and change, and may be biased in favor of traditional couples. As previously noted, traditional couples are believed to base their behaviors on conventional role definitions, and therefore
"understand" one another with little conscious effort. Thus it may be that the more satisfied couples in this sample failed to process the content that they exchanged because their conventional role expectations prompt little need for uncertainty reduction. This argument also suggests that nontraditional couples, who stress growth, change, and personal development, and who negotiate their role relationships through the process of communication, cannot be defined as "satisfied," because their relationships would necessarily be less harmonious and stable. This should be a topic for future investigation, however.

Despite the limitations of this study, the results allow some speculation about the role of communication in marriage. This is particularly true because the findings presented in this paper violate some basic ideas about interpersonal relationships that seem to dominate thinking in this culture. A discussion of these ideas will be presented below.

The Ideology and Intimacy and the Role of Communication

Just over 10 years ago, Sennett (1977) expressed a concern about an ideology that has developed in this culture:

The reigning myth today is that the evils of society can all be understood as evils of impersonality,
alienation, and coldness. The sum of these three is an ideology of intimacy: social relationships of all kinds are real, believable, and authentic the closer they approach the inner psychological concerns of each persons. (p. 259).

The ideology of intimacy proposes a model of interpersonal relationships in which intensive levels of self-disclosure are required and conflict engagement is stressed over restraint, because mates must understand one another on the deepest and most personal intrapsychic levels. Anything less is simply role-playing, a devil term that smacks of inauthenticity and superficiality (see Bochner, 1981).

Parks (1981) expressed a concern that this ideology of intimacy dominates scholarly thinking:

The point at which observations meet value systems is inherently problematic for the communication scientist. Values may be used to stimulate new research and theory or they may give rise to ideologies which ultimately limit and distort our search for scientific understanding. Recent research on interpersonal communication often exhibits just such an ideology. It is an "ideology of intimacy." (p. 79).

As Parks (1981) feared, a survey of thinking on interpersonal relationships indicates the extent to which this ideology has been taken to heart. Within the popular literature readers are advised to be open, honest, and disclosive with one another in order to create deeper levels of intersubjective understanding and to make underlying conflict issues manifest (see Kidd, 1976).
These ideas also dominate scholarly thinking and are part and parcel of nearly every marital enrichment program (see Bosco, 1972; Miller, Corrales, & Wackman, 1975; Rappoport, 1976; Regula, 1975; Smith & Smith, 1976; Travis & Travis, 1975).

Embedded within this view is the idea that communication is the key to personal and relational happiness, and there is a good bit of evidence in support of this idea. For example Snyder (1979), while constructing a marital satisfaction index, discovered that measures of communication were the single best predictors of global marital satisfaction. Lewis and Spanier (1979), in their extensive review of the literature, also found communication variables to be intrinsically linked with martial satisfaction. Mathews and Milhanovich (1963) tested the hypothesis that happily and unhappily married couples would have the same types of problems but discovered that unhappy marriages were characterized by communication difficulties while happy marriages were not. Indeed couples expressing major dissatisfactions with their marriages have consistently identified communication as one of the major problems (cf. Brim, Fairchild, & Borgotta, 1961; Dubuger, 1967; Gottman, Notarious, Gonso, & Markman, 1976; McMillian, 1969; Mitchell, Bullard, & Mudd, 1962).
The problem seems to lie in the use of the term "communication," and reflects the cultural view that understanding is a magical elixir. Within this view, "communication" has come to mean the exchange of content for the purpose of generating deeper and deeper levels of understanding. Indeed Deutsch (1969) expressed the idea conflicts result from misunderstanding and that communication would allow the "real" underlying issue to be identified. Hawes and Smith (1973) pointed out that one of the more common assumptions underlying conflict research is that "conflict is really a manifestation of insufficient or ineffective communication." (p. 428). The idea that conflict, and therefore dissatisfaction with a relationship, might result from "communication" and a clear understanding of underlying differences, was apparently never considered. Yet several studies reported just such a problematic association (Cutler & Dyer, 1965; Doherty, Lester, & Leigh, 1986; Levinger & Senn, 1967; Stukert, 1963).

Examining more closely those studies that linked the generally undefined term "communication" to satisfaction in marriage, an alternate explanation for the association can be identified. That is, the process of communication may contribute to satisfaction because the act itself, rather than the content it contains, signifies affection
and involvement with the relationship. Looking at just two of the many studies that attempted to define the term as it applies in marriage, evidence for this alternative hypothesis can be seen.

Navran (1967), for example, investigated the association between communication and marital satisfaction by administering a communication inventory and a marital adjustment scale to a group of married couples. The correlational analysis indicated that the higher the couples' reported communication scores, the higher their marital adjustment. Several items on the communication inventory significantly discriminated between the happy and unhappy couples and allowed Navran to "provide an insight into the specifics of the oft-used but ambiguous and hackneyed phrase 'good communication.'" (p. 182). The perceived characteristics of good communication that were reported were: (1) talking more frequently about pleasant things that happened during the day, (2) feeling more frequently understood, (3) discussing shared interests, (4) not breaking off communication or inhibiting it by pouting, (5) talking more often with each other about personal problems, (6) using words with private meanings, (7) generally talking most things over, (8) being more sensitive to each others' feelings, (9) being able to discuss intimate issues without restraint or
embarrassment, (10) being able to predict what kind of day the other has had without having to ask, (11) being able to communicate nonverbally to a greater degree, via the exchange of glances. Similar findings were reported by Bienvenu (1970) who designed a questionnaire to assess the process of communication and its association with marital satisfaction. Bienvenu reported that the communication styles of dissatisfied couples were characterized by nagging, inability to deal with conflict, poor listening, conversational discourtesies, and most significantly, the tendency to reveal things that would be better left unsaid.

Relating these descriptions to the findings reported in this study, the claim can be made that the "understanding" that develops and sustains itself through day-to-day communication may be relational, rather than informational, as indicated in the descriptions above. Indeed, it may be that through casual interactions married couples "understand" that affection and involvement are still present in their relationships. Indirect support for this idea is seen in the finding that wives' satisfaction was more strongly associated with their perceptions than was husbands' satisfaction associated with their perceptions. This is because a number of studies have shown that wives are better at both encoding
and decoding nonverbal communication (Gottman, Markman, & Notarious, 1977; Gottman & Porterfield, 1981; Noller, 1980; 1981), and that husbands sometimes tend to be inexpressive (Balswick & Peek, 1971). This may indicate that when husbands fail to convey affection or involvement on the relational level, wives are more aware that a discrepancy exists, and are therefore dissatisfied with their relationships. Indeed the idea that casual conversation serves a relational function is highly consistent with the findings of the memory studies reported earlier, all of which indicated that relational information, to a greater extent than content information, was gleaned from casual interactions. Thus communication may indeed be the key to relational success, but not because it allows understanding about specific issues to develop.

The issue of understanding and its association with satisfaction is still problematic however. While it is certainly a plus to understand that one's mate views the other and the relationship warmly, it would also seem that there must be some understanding in regard to the division and accomplishment of instrumental tasks that make up the bulk of a couple's activities. Understanding on this level seems to be particularly problematic however. Returning to the studies that were reviewed in Chapter 1,
it can be seen that all those that supported the association between understanding and satisfaction, and all those that supported the association between perceived agreement and satisfaction varied consistently in regard to the level of abstraction on which understanding and perceived agreement were assessed. That is, all the studies in which understanding was associated with marital satisfaction examined understanding on issues regarding personality traits or such topics as the importance of love in marriage. All those that reported that either misunderstanding or perceived agreement were associated with marital satisfaction, including this one, examined more specific issues such as who performs various household chores, or disagreements about spending money. Byrne and Blaylock (1963) were the exception in that they found perceived agreement to be strongly related to marital satisfaction while investigating perceptions of dogmatism; yet even this study examined a perceptions about a specific trait, rather than using general measures of numerous traits. As a whole, this indicates that the outcome of any study that assesses the relationship between understanding, perceived agreement and marital satisfaction may depend, at least in part, on the level of abstraction on which understanding and perceived agreement are assessed.
This suggests an interesting topic for future investigations. That is, it may be that understanding and agreement are associated with marital satisfaction on global levels of abstraction, but that understanding and disagreement on more focused issues are associated with dissatisfaction. In regard to information processing, it may also be that understanding and agreement on global levels reduces the processing of messages that are inconsistent with one's abstract conceptualization of the other and the relationship. Thus, as the coorientation theorists might predict, benevolent perceptions on global levels would increase the potential for assimilation on the specific level, while malevolent perceptions on the global level would increase the potential for contrast effects on the specific level.

One final issue regarding the association between communication and understanding needs to be addressed. That is, it is clearly time for communication scholars to focus their attention on this issue. As Sillars, Pike, Jones, and Murphy (1984) pointed out, there may be no issue more relevant to communication theory than the association between communication and understanding, yet due to a sense that the relationship is straightforward, research has not been done to prove the obvious. Clearly, however, there is little reason to make such an
assumption, and a great deal of research is needed, particularly within the marriage literature, in order to discover both when understanding is beneficial, and how such understanding can and does come about. This will be a topic for future investigations, however.
APPENDIX
IDENTIFICATION NUMBER __________

[ ] Husband
[ ] Wife

PRE-INTERACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS
All of your responses will be kept totally confidential. Under no circumstances will your mate be permitted access to your questionnaire.

Please answer all of the questions as accurately and honestly as possible. You may find that some of the questions appear redundant, but please try to answer all the questions. You may, however, skip any question that you feel is too personal or threatening.

You may withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason.

Again, THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

PART 1 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[ ] Male    [ ] Female

[ ] Age

How many years have you been married? _____

What is your occupation? ___________________________

Please check the highest level of education you have completed.

[ ] elementary education
[ ] high school education
[ ] undergraduate college (BA or BS)
[ ] graduate school (MA or MS)
[ ] post graduate school (PhD, JD, MD, etc.)

How may children do you have? _____ What are their ages? _________

Is this your first marriage? _____ Yes _____ No
PART 2 - GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MARRIAGE

In this section you are asked some general questions about your marriage and how you presently feel about it.

Please CIRCLE the number that indicates how you feel about the following statements using the scale below. Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>moderately agree</th>
<th>undecided</th>
<th>moderately disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. We have a good marriage. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. My relationship with my partner is very stable. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Our marriage is strong. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. I really feel like part of a team with my partner. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. How would you rate your degree of happiness with marriage, everything considered? (please use the 10-point scale below.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>perfectly happy</th>
<th>average</th>
<th>perfectly unhappy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 7 8 9 10
PART 3 - TOPICS

Please respond to each topic presented below. Thank you.

PRESSURES OR PROBLEMS AT WORK THAT AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP

To what extent do you feel this is a problem in your marriage?

1 not at all
2 sometimes
3
4
5
6
7

CRITICISM OF ONE ANOTHER'S LIFESTYLE, BELIEFS, IDEAS OR ACTIVITIES

1 not at all
2 sometimes
3
4
5
6
7

LACK OF AFFECTION OR ATTENTION PAID BY ONE OR BOTH OF YOU TO THE OTHER PERSON.

1 not at all
2 sometimes
3
4
5
6
7

DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT SPENDING MONEY

To what extent do you feel this is a problem in your marriage?

1 not at all
2 sometimes
3
4
5
6
7

ONE OR BOTH OF YOU HAVE BEEN IRRITABLE, DEPRESSED, BOSSY OR OTHERWISE HARD TO GET ALONG WITH

To what extent do you feel this is a problem in your marriage?

1 not at all
2 sometimes
3
4
5
6
7
DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT HOW TO SPEND YOUR LEISURE TIME

To what extent do you feel this is a problem in your marriage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at sometimes the most
difficult
times
difficult
problem
we face

LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU

To what extent do you feel this is a problem in your marriage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at sometimes the most
difficult
times
difficult
problem
we face

NOW, PLEASE RESPOND AS YOU THINK YOUR MATE WILL RESPOND. THANK YOU.

PRESSURES OR PROBLEMS AT WORK THAT AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP

To what extent does your mate feel that this is a problem in your marriage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at sometimes the most
difficult
times
difficult
problem
we face

CRITICISM OF ONE ANOTHER'S LIFESTYLE, BELIEFS, IDEAS OR ACTIVITIES

To what extent does your mate feel that this is a problem in your marriage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at sometimes the most
difficult
times
difficult
problem
we face

LACK OF AFFECTION OR ATTENTION PAID BY ONE OR BOTH OF YOU TO THE OTHER PERSON.

To what extent does your mate feel that this is a problem in your marriage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at sometimes the most
difficult
times
difficult
problem
we face
DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT SPENDING MONEY
To what extent does your mate feel that this is a problem in your marriage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at all sometimes the most difficult problem we face

ONE OR BOTH OF YOU HAVE BEEN IRRITABLE, DEPRESSED, BOSSY OR OTHERWISE HARD TO GET ALONG WITH
To what extent does your mate feel that this is a problem in your marriage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at all sometimes the most difficult problem we face

DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT HOW TO SPEND YOUR LEISURE TIME
To what extent does your mate feel that this is a problem in your marriage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at all sometimes the most difficult problem we face

LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU
To what extent does your mate feel that this is a problem in your marriage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
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REFERENCES


