Communication as power: The relationship to marital satisfaction

by

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on communication as a form of power and its impact on marital satisfaction. Specifically, females may appear to have more power because they speak more often in conversations. However, when dissected, the amount women speak may be a result of lower power status, requiring them to work harder to achieve their desired level of power in the relationship. Successful talkovers, unsuccessful talkovers, support statements, and nonsupport statements were examined to determine their impact on couples’ marital satisfaction. Secondary data was utilized for the current study; the original study pertained to the investigation of the relationship between physiological arousal and demand/withdraw patterns. Seventy-three married couples (73 men and 73 women) were recruited for the original study via newspaper advertisements, advertisements posted on bulletin boards, and word-of-mouth in the local schools and community. Paired t-tests and simple linear regression analyses revealed that males’ and females’ unsuccessful talkover ratios and nonsupport statement ratios were significantly different. In addition, successful talkovers, unsuccessful talkovers, support statements, and nonsupport statements were not found to significantly influence males’ or females’ marital satisfaction. Relevance to family therapy and clinical implications are discussed.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Researchers have examined dyadic interactions with regard to interruptions, influence on discussion by topic, power, and affect on behavior based on relationship of participants. Interruptions have been defined many ways by researchers. Some define them broadly while others are extremely specific about what constitutes an interruption. These interruptions have then been related to the topic of sex and power. One way of looking at power has been to focus on who renders control of the topic. Sex then, has been examined as to its influence on the previously mentioned topics; some researchers choose to focus heavily on sex while others do not; this can be, in part, due to the relationship of the participants. A majority of prior research has used friends, teacher/student, or student/student dyads to explore these topics. Therefore, despite the focus of previous research on dyadic relationships, very little research has been done on dyadic relationships of a romantic nature. The purpose of this study is to look at how the techniques of previous studies can be applied to marital dyads to examine how conversation influences marital satisfaction. Little research has been done on this topic when using a sample consisting of couples, such as in the present study. In addition, previous literature has examined the constructs of interruption, power, and marital satisfaction often in combinations of two if not entirely separate. The current study looks at these constructs as they relate to one another; interruption as a form of power and its influence on marital satisfaction.

Based on past literature, the current study will explore the many types and definitions of power. Power has been looked at inadvertently in many studies through the use of other language avoiding the word power but retaining some of the meaning; sex and status are one example of such language. The literature will then review how power has been analyzed.
through the use of interruptions and what the previous literature on interruptions implies for marital satisfaction. Finally, we will look at the importance of power through interruptions to marital satisfaction. In other words, do men and women exert power over one another through their conversations? Previous research suggests that although women make more decisions than men, those decisions have a smaller impact on the relationship. Therefore, it might appear that women have more power because they make daily decisions such as when the kids go to bed, what is for dinner and who does the dishes. However, men’s decisions have been shown to involve finances, where the family will live, job placement, and other life-changing topics. This is one example of the way conversations may misconstrue the true power dynamic in a relationship. The present study strives to examine how power, interruption, and marital satisfaction relate to each other.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Power

Measuring power in relationships is a difficult task. Power in and of itself is an abstract concept that requires researchers to create a means to quantify it, and because not all research is conducted using the same methods, these definitions vary between studies. Furthermore, much previous research has focused on topics that allude to power differentials but do not specifically name them as such. For instance, Beattie’s (1981) study titled “ Interruption in conversational interaction and its relation to the sex and status of the interactants” looked at the effect of interruption and its relations to sex and status of participants within a conversation. Although the reader may assume from the title of the study that status implies an examination of power differences between participants, the language used by the researcher can be misleading, such as the use of the words sex and status rather than power. By not directly naming power as such, it is easy to overlook the implications with regard to power like the role of expectations in relationships. Society dictates what it means to be a man verses a woman; to be white collar verses blue collar, and all the behavior considered appropriate for each of those classifications. For instance, a man might see his role in the marital relationship as one of the provider and therefore feel he is responsible for financial matters and the logistics involved in coordinating or making the big decisions of life. Likewise, women often feel their role is to facilitate the management of emotions in the relationship as well as attend to all the day to day activities like groceries, laundry, and child care. In these ways, expectations can dictate behavior in ways that may be conducive to high or low levels of marital satisfaction depending on the match between the couples’ expectations and their behaviors. For example, Gray-Little and Baucom (1996)
examined the effect of power on marital outcomes in therapy. Although these authors did use
the word power in the title, it was then operationally defined by comparing dominance levels
between husbands and wives. The authors found that egalitarian couples demanded less of
one another and had better treatment outcomes, and husband-led and wife-led couples were
more demanding and equal in terms of treatment outcome. Power can be named many
different things via operational definition; in the first study it was named sex and status while
in the second it was named dominance. Each study had implications regarding couple
interactions but at first glance may be overlooked in the literature on power dynamics.

Many scholars would argue that sex has inherent implications with regard to power.
A feminist perspective might argue that sex is one indication of power dynamics between
people, whether they are of the same or different sex, due to stereotypes created by society.
These differences in naming are important to point out because of the dearth of research on
power and its implications. Because power is so difficult to define, it is often worked around
by using alternate names and ideas related to power. To use the word power might be
construed by some researchers as controversial. They may fear the use of that language might
imply they are theoretically inclined toward a feminist perspective because they chose to
discuss such a topic openly. Although this may be true, a feminist orientation is not well
taken by some audiences. It is possible then, that a researcher would shy away from
controversial language so as not offend any potential readers.

**Power and Methods**

A majority of previous research has measured power by examining the relationship
between two non-related individuals; this method seems to be consistent across studies. An
examination of power in relationships, however, is not. Many studies use strangers because
they are convenient (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Ayres et al., 1993; Dindia, 1987; Jones, Gallois, Callan, & Barker 1995; Marche, 1993; Rogers, Bull, & Smith, 1988; Thimm, Rademacher, & Kruse, 1995; Witteman & Fitzpatrick, 1986). College populations serve as an excellent place to recruit students that are willing to participate for extra credit or an incentive of some type. Although this population is relatively easy to recruit, choosing this method leaves out important issues imbedded in power dynamics. One such issue is that power between strangers might be very different than power between friends or spouses. The latter of these relationships involves expectations of one another with regard to behavior, shared beliefs, and attitudes. These then become alternate variables that are not addressed in studies using strangers to assess for power differences. Of those studies that did not use stranger relationships (Beatie, 1981; Kolb & Straus, 1974), even fewer used dating, cohabitating, or married couples to address power (Ball, Cowan, & Cowan, 1995; DeFrancisco, 1991). As mentioned previously, both friendships and romantic relationships share the concept of expectations within that relationship. However, based on stereotypes alone, these expectations are often more explicitly defined in romantic relationships and have larger consequences for roles in the relationship. Felmlee (1994), examined power in romantic relationships by surveying college students; the survey addressed their perceptions of power in current or past romantic relationships specifically focusing on decision-making, emotional involvement, and equity between partners. The author found that men were more likely to say they had more power in the relationship despite the finding that both men and women seemed to feel they were equal in their relationships. Additionally, both men and women perceived men as having more decision making power and that the more decision making power a man was perceived to have, the less emotionally involved he was perceived to be as
well. The questions this study raises are directly linked to the issue of expectations in romantic relationships. Both men and women agreed that men had more decision making power than women, yet this decision making power is directly related to the perception of emotionality in men. Men are stereotypically the “head of the household,” therefore they make the majority of decisions in the relationship. It is possible that if a man is fulfilling his stereotypical role as the breadwinner, then the expectation for him to also do emotional work might decrease by both partners. This may explain why the couples reported they were equal in their relationship despite the fact they agree that men are making more decisions than the women. If a couple interacts in a way that does not support these stereotypes but believes they should act according to them, it can create interactional problems between them—possibly a power struggle over who is responsible for certain physical and emotional work. Inevitably, if the ideals of the man and woman do not match, marital and/or relational satisfaction will also be affected.

Many studies have acknowledged the importance of these sex roles in relationships with regard to power by examining the impact of demand/withdraw patterns (Carli, 2001; Caughlin & Huston, 2002; Heavey, Layne, & Christensen, 1993; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Vogel & Karney, 2002). A demand and withdraw pattern implies that one partner consistently initiates interaction while the other secedes. Much of the literature surrounding this topic has looked at demand-withdraw patterns as they relate to satisfaction between couples. For instance, Heavey et al. (1993) studied demand and withdraw patterns in just under thirty couples looking specifically at who exhibited which behavior. They hypothesized that when discussing topics brought up by husbands, the demand and withdraw patterns would not differ between husbands and wives, but when discussing wives’ topics
husbands would withdraw and wives would demand more often. This hypothesis was found to be accurate according to their results. In addition, Heavey et al. (1993) found that wives’ demanding was predictive of a decrease in marital satisfaction while husbands’ demanding was not. The authors speculate that this difference may be attributable to husbands’ sexed role as the primary decision maker and therefore justified when making demands.

Similarly, Vogel and Karney (2002) used observational data to examine the social structure hypothesis which states that “wives are more likely to demand because marital relationships tend to favor husbands, who are accordingly more committed to maintaining the status quo” (Vogel & Karney, 2002, p. 685). Vogel and Karney’s findings were congruent with those of previous research in that wives were more likely to demand and husbands to withdraw. In addition, this study looked at whether demand and withdraw patterns were affected by each spouse’s desire to change. They found that the more important the individual felt the topic was, the more demanding he/she was. The social structure hypothesis is yet another example of the ways sex and sex roles can influence power and satisfaction in couple relationships.

There are many different ways to name power behaviors and interactions in a relationship; defining what these differences are is an important missing link in the literature on power. Researchers and clinicians alike need to be aware of all the ways power has been represented in the literature so that a comprehensive analysis can be made of how these studies relate to one another. At present, the lack of unity in naming leaves the field at an impasse in that only studies using similar labels can be compared with one another. For example, studies using the word status to represent power may be able to compare and contrast results of other studies looking at the effect of status as a source of power. Studies
that used interruption as a source of power, however, may not be compatible to those that
called power “status.” Until a common term is developed for concept of power, we must
work with those that have been used in the past and try to incorporate interactional and
systemic components. The present study will use information gathered on couples in
romantic relationships and the concept of interruption to add to the literature on power.

Definitions of Interruption

There are many ways to define interruption. When reviewing the literature on
interruptions between speaker/listener interactions, it becomes apparent that interruption can
be defined in multiple ways. It is important to recognize the role that definition plays in the
design, hypotheses, and results of a study. Zimmerman and West (1975) are one of the most
commonly cited research teams in interruption literature. Zimmerman and West’s (1975)
original flow chart included three categories: 1) does the original speaker hand over the floor,
2) if so, does the second speaker choose to speak on his/her own, and 3) does the current
speaker continue. These three categories could be answered yes or no depending on items
like silences, one person talking over another causing a relinquishment of the floor, and
minimal responses. Minimal responses are not viewed as interruptions in this study; rather
they are defined by Zimmerman and West (1975) as verbalizations that support the speaker
or show that active listening is taking place. Phrases such as “uh-huh” or head nodding are
examples of such responses (Zimmerman & West, 1975).

Similarly, Ferguson (1977) defined interruption by expanding Zimmerman and
West’s (1975) categorization system adding more detail and grouping to enhance the
definition. Ferguson (1977) added to this model by including these minimal responses, talk
over scenarios, and silences in the flow chart. Ferguson’s (1977) version of the flow chart,
therefore, has an advantage in that it is far more detailed. The detail in Ferguson’s (1977) version can be seen in the multiple categories the author created to break down the definition. Breaking down the definition allows the reader and researcher to more accurately attribute cause and effect between speaker/listener interactions. The drawback to using Ferguson’s model (1977) rather than Zimmerman and West’s (1975) is that it is much more complex and therefore, less practical for future use.

Ayres, Hopf, Brown, and Suek (1993), define interruption as speaking behavior that is either dominated by or being yielded by the parties speaking to one another. This means an interruption was identified every time speaker one over took the floor while speaker two was talking, causing speaker two to give up his or her turn. Interruption however, was measured as only one of many possible means of turn-taking behavior. Ayres and colleagues (1993) looked at the influence of communication apprehension (e.g., speech anxiety, less eye contact, less head nodding, tendency to lean away, less facial expressions/animation) on turn-taking behaviors and found that communication apprehension affected the method of turn-taking behavior. The results indicated that higher rates of communication apprehension led to more aggressive types of interruption and simultaneous speech (e.g., interrupting or simultaneous talking). By contrast, lower communication apprehension was highly correlated with turn yielding behavior (silence, interrogatives, gesticulation, and auditor directed gazes). Alternately, Dindia (1987) defined interruption specifically pertaining to any time the speaker was cut off during a point at which it was clear the speaker was not finished with his/her thought or statement. Although Ayres et al.’s (1993) definition is similar to Dindia’s (1987), both were concerned with turn yielding behavior, it does not necessarily include every instance where one speaker began talking at the same time as another resulting in a
relinquishment of the floor. By Dindia’s (1987) definition, interruptions only occurred if it appeared the first speaker was not finished with his or her thought before the second speaker began talking. Dindia’s (1987) definition is much more content-oriented than that of Ayres et al. (1993). In her study, Dindia (1987) looked at the effect of sex of subject and sex of partner on interruption behavior. By doing so, she argues her study is possibly more accurate than previous studies; by isolating these variables, she can examine the possibility of an interaction effect rather than attribute differences to sex of subject alone.

Inconsistency across studies with regard to definition makes it difficult to compare and contrast them. For instance, it is hard to determine if the differences in results between Ayres et al. (1993) and Dindia’s (1987) studies were due to the actual number of interruptions exhibited, or simply a difference in the way they were recorded causing one group of interruptions to be higher than the other.

*Impact of Methodology on Interruption Definition*

Researchers may benefit from a simple approach to operationalizing interruption; a simple definition can make it easier for other readers to interpret and replicate the research (Dindia, 1987). Conversely, an author may use a more complex definition but write about it in such a way that both author and reader are able to look at multiple variables at once without misinterpreting its meaning (Zimmerman & West, 1975). Although this approach may not be as easy to interpret, the researcher may feel it is appropriate because it includes themes that an uncomplicated model would not (Zimmerman & West, 1975).

Sex is one commonly examined variable in the interruption literature. Ayres et al. (1993), for example, looked at the effects of sex, time, and communication apprehension on interruption and their effect on turn-taking verses turn-yielding. Comparatively, this study
used an operational definition of interruption similar to Dindia’s (1987), who chose to study interruption and sex by comparing groups with different combinations of men and women. If we continue to compare previous studies, we may find articles that focus solely on the speech interaction; wherein sex is an afterthought only because all participants are either male or female simply because they are human. This is not to say the researcher did not care about sex, rather, it was just not central to the study (Zimmerman & West, 1975). For instance, Anderson and Campbell (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of sex effects on conversational interruption. They looked at the type of definition that was used across forty-three studies and the variables that may have influenced that definition. The authors found that three major categories could be extracted from these studies: 1) those that were broadly or undefined, 2) those that did not include minimal responses (e.g. “uh-huh”), and 3) studies in which the interrupter was seen as invasive or controlling. Based on these definitions, the authors then examined what moderating variables may be common across studies; the author’s sex and sex of the group or participant were among the top two. Anderson and Campbell (1998) concluded that operational definition was significant in distinguishing the likelihood of sex differences in interruption. Additionally, the sex of the first author was found to be significant in that women authors were more likely to cite a difference than were men. The findings from this meta-analysis demonstrate that while sex may not be the main focus of a study, it can still impact the outcome.

DeFrancisco’s (1991) study, for instance, looked at the impact of sex on conversation. The choice to look at conversation rather than interruptions specifically is a valid one, but one that demonstrates how easy it may be to overlook sex in the interruption literature because it holds many titles. For instance, a researcher may look at how interruptions differ
between men and women, or they may look at how conversation topics differ between men and women. Both examples involve sex as a key element and both are concerned with sex’s impact on conversation, but the process of examining this impact is different. In her study, DeFrancisco (1991) found that men “silence” women by choosing not to respond when the topic of conversation is not in their favor. She argues that this lack of communication represents power that a man holds over a woman to decide whether or not an issue will be discussed. In line with this research, many other studies have found sex to be a factor in male/female communication (Anderson & Campbell, 1998; Ayres et al., 1993; DeFrancisco, 1991; Heavey, Layne & Christensen, 1993; Zimmerman & West, 1975); overall, however, the literature is mixed on the subject.

Contrary to DeFrancisco’s (1991) study, Marche (1993) looked at sex in relation to interruption in conversation. This study found that no sex differences existed when looking at rate and type of interruption based on Ferguson’s (1977) classification system. Although this author’s conclusions are divergent from those arguing that sex affects interruption, several previous studies have been done suggesting that sex does not affect communication (Beattie, 1981; Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Sagrestano, Christensen, & Heavey, 1998; Simkins-Bullock & Wildman, 1991).

Marital Satisfaction

There has been a tremendous amount of literature written about marital satisfaction, and from several different perspectives (Kolb & Staus, 1974; Kurdek, 1995; Mathews, Wickrama, & Conger, 1996; Noller, 1993; Whisman & Jacobson, 1990; Wilkie, Ferree, & Ratcliff, 1998). Kolb and Straus (1974) for example, felt previous studies had relied too heavily on self-report data to determine marital satisfaction. In addition, they felt that status,
as measured by occupation, was an element of marriage that had been overlooked in previous studies. To account for this, Kolb and Straus (1974) gave a questionnaire to at least one child from each family in an attempt to gain an additional perspective about the relationship. They then used the information gained from this questionnaire to examine how status influenced marital satisfaction. Researchers found that perceived power between husband and wife was indicative of marital happiness—if husbands had a perceived low power status, then marital satisfaction was lower and vice versa. Children’s perceived power of wives, however, had no relationship to marital satisfaction.

In contrast to studies of satisfactions as defined by Kolb and Straus (1974), Caughlin and Huston (2002), looked at marital satisfaction in relation to demand and withdraw. In their study, they examined whether the demand/withdraw pattern, a frequently studied relationship interaction, was the same construct as individual affect, which was measured by using The Affectional Expression Scale (Wills, 1974; as cited by Caughlin & Huston, 2002). The researchers argued that personal affect could influence the demand and withdraw interaction, whereby altering our understanding of marital satisfaction when it is understood in the context of a demand-withdraw pattern. The results of the study confirmed this hypothesis. Researchers found that negative affect and demand/withdraw patterns were in fact different constructs, allowing them to look at each separately in terms of its effect on satisfaction. Those spouses who exhibited higher levels of negative affect also had demonstrated more demand and withdraw within their relationship.

Much of the literature on marital satisfaction links interactions between the couple and their satisfaction. For instance, Gottman, Cowan, Carrer, and Swanson (1998) have conducted research examining how marital interaction helps or hinders couples’ relationship.
One such study focused on predicting marital happiness from couple interactions. The investigators took two groups of newly married couples and collected information about their current marital status. They selected couples they felt accurately represented the entire range of marital adjustment scores and then asked those couples to take part in further observational research at the lab. The investigators then tested the hypotheses that seven processes could be linked to marital satisfaction (anger as a dangerous emotion, active listening, negative start-up by the wife, de-escalation post argument, positive affect models and physiological soothing in husbands). The researchers followed up with these couples once a year for six years and found several results. The first, indicated that anger was not a dangerous emotion; rather it was contempt, belligerence, and defensiveness that could be detrimental to the marriage. The second showed that active listening was not used by couples during arguments and therefore could not be a predictor of outcome. The researchers then found several items that were predictive of divorce: wife's negative start-up, an unwillingness to accept influence by the husband, and low levels of negativity by the husband which were reciprocated by the wife. Gottman et al. (1998) chose to investigate these topics to underscore the link between marital interaction and marital satisfaction.

Another important study on this topic examines the responsibility of the women in bringing up topics which result in arguments (Gottman & Levenson, 1999). In this study, researchers investigate previous findings which implicate women as having a primary role in the process of beginning marital conflict; specifically that women start more conversations leading to conflict and that the wife-demand/husband-withdraw pattern is a part of that (Ball et al., 1995; Gottman et al., 1998; Heavey et al., 1993). This study hypothesized that it was not the women who caused the conflict but rather the high amounts of negativity that the
partners demonstrated when they came back together after being apart for a long period of time (Gottman & Levenson, 1999). This hypothesis was confirmed by the findings that couples who had higher levels of emotionality upon reunification were subsequently more dysfunctional when trying to resolve a conflict (Gottman & Levenson, 1999). These findings are important because they suggest that systemic interactions influence marital satisfactions rather than personal traits (e.g. being a woman).

Relevance to Family Therapy

The impact of power on marital satisfaction has been examined by many authors. In a review of the literature on marital satisfaction in the 1990’s, Gottman and Notarius (2000) discuss several important functions of power in marital relationships. For instance, egalitarian couples had higher satisfaction and fewer negative behaviors than did symmetrical couples when assessed at two time points (Olson & Ryder, 1970; as cited in Gottman & Notarius, 2000). If power does play a role in marital satisfaction as the research suggests, than it may be important to be sensitive to issues of power during therapists’ initial assessment of couples. Couples may often be engaged in a power struggle but either do not realize it, or do not name it as such. For instance, Gottman (1994; as cited in Gottman & Notarius, 2000) has found that couples have typologies with regard to arguments including validating (couples who validate one another’s feelings), volatile (couples high in conflict and persuasion attempts), and conflict avoidant (couples who are low in conflict try to avoid it in general). According to this research, a clash in argument type may cause problems for the couple. This study by Gottman is yet another example of how attention to power could help the clinician create a framework for working with couples. From a solution focused perspective, a therapist could look for exceptions such as when conflict has gone well for the
couple if working with couples who are volatile. Similarly, if working from this perspective with a conflict avoiding couple, the clinician may want to explore when a problem was addressed openly and went well. Such therapeutic interventions can only be created when the therapist has become aware of the issues surrounding power in the relationship. Without this knowledge, the therapist may look elsewhere to conceptualize what is happening within the couple and/or family dynamic.
CHAPTER 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the present study is to provide further research in the area of power, as measured by interruption, sex, and marital satisfaction. Previous literature has examined interruption by using strangers, persons in positions of power above another such as teachers and students, friends, and combinations of these groups. Very few studies have looked at interruption in the context of relationships making it difficult to infer previous results as they relate to couples. Similarly, marital satisfaction has been measured several different ways. Previous research has looked at the influence of power on couples, colleagues, strangers, and friends; and marital satisfaction has been researched with power in mind as well as without. The combination of these three constructs however has been somewhat overlooked by the literature. The many previous findings on interruption, sex, and marital satisfaction leave room for questioning as to how these three constructs might interact with one another in couple relationships. In addition, the influence of sex has been looked at by research pertaining to its impact on conversation between unrelated persons. However, little research focuses on the influence of sex when the dyads are in a dating or marital relationship.

On the basis of this prior research, twelve hypotheses are proposed: 1) The proportion of interruptions, as defined by successful talkovers, will differ between males and females; 2) Males will exhibit a higher rate of successful talkovers than females; 3) Females will exhibit higher rates of unsuccessful talkovers than males; 4) Support statements will differ between men and women; 5) Females will use more support statements than males; 6) Males will use more nonsupport statements than females; 7) Females' rates of successful talkovers will impact their marital satisfaction—specifically, females who have higher rates of successful talkovers will have higher marital satisfaction than those who do not; 8) Females who have
higher rates of unsuccessful talkovers will have lower marital satisfaction than those who do not; 9) Males’ rates of successful talkovers will impact their marital satisfaction—specifically, males who have higher rates of successful talkovers will have higher marital satisfaction than those who do not; 10) Males who have higher rates of unsuccessful talkovers will have lower satisfaction than those who do not; 11) Females’ rates of support statements will impact their marital satisfaction—specifically, females who have higher rates of support statements will have higher marital satisfaction than those who do not; and 12) Males’ rates of nonsupport statements will impact their marital satisfaction—specifically, males who have higher rates of nonsupport statements will have lower satisfaction than those who do not.
CHAPTER 4. METHOD

Participants

The original study consisted of 73 couples recruited via newspaper advertisements, advertisements posted on bulletin boards, and word of mouth in the local schools and community. The current study utilized 67 of the original 73 couples; data were not reported for 6 couples on the FRCCCS. Therefore, no data was available for these couples for the number of successful, unsuccessful, support, or nonsupport statements.

The original study pertained to the investigation of the relationship between physiological arousal and demand/withdraw patterns. Interested couples were asked to contact the investigators directly by phone or e-mail. Those that participated were paid $60 for a one hour laboratory interview that took place on campus. Seventy-three females and 73 males participated in the original study. The mean length of marriage was 85.5 months with a standard deviation of 86.0 months. Female ages ranged from 20 years to 57 years with a mean age of 33.39 years and a standard deviation of 9.02. Male ages were between 21 years to 63 years, with a mean age of 33.79 years and a standard deviation of 9.07. Males’ ethnicity was as follows: 49 (30.6%) Caucasian, 17 (10.6%) Asian, 2 (1.3%) Hispanic, 1 (0.6%) African, and 1 (0.6%) Indian. Females’ ethnic background was also predominantly Caucasian (52 females; 32.5%), 13 (8.1%) were Asian, 3 (1.9%) African, 2 (1.3%) from India, 3 (1.9 %) Hispanic, 1 (1.6%) Latin, and 1 (1.6%) Serbian. The satisfaction subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale was used to measure participants’ relationship satisfaction. The mean satisfaction level for this subscale for males was 34.6 ($SD = 2.8$) and the mean satisfaction level for females was 34.0 ($SD = 3.5$).
Procedure

In the original study, participants were asked to fill out a measure of martial satisfaction, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) independent of one another. The present study only used the satisfaction subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The subscale was chosen to help simplify the relationship of the variables to the results (the satisfaction subscale showed an internal consistency of .87; previous internal consistency was calculated with an alpha of .94 by Spanier, 1976). The present study did not use the other subscales included in the DAS for this reason, but the use of these other subscales could yield different and interesting results in future studies.

In addition, they were asked to select a topic to discuss based on a list of possible topics; possible topics included: 1) Problems with friends or family members; 2) Needs in the relationship not being met; 3) Sexual issues/problems; 4) Finances/money; 5) Problems with intimacy; 6) Problems with the amount of time spent together or apart; 7) Feelings/emotions that are unexpressed; 8) Specific areas in the relationship where change is wanted; 9) Making decisions; 10) Housework or responsibilities; or 11) Other. The participants could also select a topic of their choice if they desired. The participants’ topics were randomly assigned as to whose topic would be discussed first, then they were asked to discuss that topic for 10 minutes. During the interaction, their physiological responses were measured through heart monitors and skin conductance monitors. The interaction lasted a total of 25 minutes per marital couple. After each interaction, couples were instructed to observe the videotape of their discussion and describe their physiological arousal during the interaction. The physiological data were not used for the current study.
Measures

Interruption in communication was measured using the Family Relational Communication Control Coding System (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987). This coding system was based on systems theory and focused on interactions. Control was defined as “who has the right to define, delimit, and constrain the actions of the interpersonal system” (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987, p. 1). This coding system was used to examine interruptions in relation to sequential patterns in communication; patterns were labeled as symmetrical or complimentary. The FRCCCS was chosen as the preferred coding system because it allows interactions to be broken down by each individual comment and its response. This allows interruptions to be examined in two ways: successful talkovers and unsuccessful talkovers. Coding begins by identifying the primary speaker and the individual he/she is speaking to, labeled the direct target. Every time a new person spoke, the interaction was given a format code. The format code was “the grammatical form, or structure, of the message” (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987, p. 3). Consisting of eight categories, the format code included categories labeled assertion, open question, successful talkover, unsuccessful talkover, noncomplete, closed question, intercept, and indistinguishable. Assertion was defined as “any completed referential statement expressed in either the declarative or imperative form” (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987, p. 19). Statements such as, “I drive a blue car” would be considered an assertion. An open ended question was defined as a statement with a raised voice at the end of the statement, and one that allowed for many options in response. The next two categories concerned talkovers, defined by Heatherington and Friedlander (1987), as any verbal interruption or interjection that is made while the other person is talking. If the original speaker surrenders the floor the talkover is
considered successful. Conversely, if the original speaker does not relinquish control to the interrupter, the interaction is still considered an interruption but an unsuccessful talkover (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987). The noncomplete or indistinguishable code was used if the coder could not identify a verb. For instance, the statement “Um, well…” would be coded as noncomplete. Closed questions were the next category. These questions differ from open questions because they specify a limited number of responses from the direct target. “Do you want regular or diet soda?” is an example of a closed ended question. Questions that elicit yes or no responses would also be considered close ended (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987). The next category was labeled an intercept. This category is defined by a third party interrupting a conversation already underway by two other parties (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987). However, the current study only addresses dyadic interactions, so this code was never used. The final category was indistinguishable; this code was used if the coder could not determine the word(s) being used or the message was not clear (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987).

In addition to coding for the format, the coders then began to code the response mode. Ten categories were used to interpret the response mode. These categories consisted of support, nonsupport, extension, answer to open question, instruction, order, disconfirmation, topic change, answer to closed question, and indistinguishable. Support was “any message that offers or seeks agreement, assistance (including clarification of the previous speaker’s message), acceptance, encouragement, or approval” (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987, p. 27). If the speaker was acting in accordance to a previous request or order from the first speaker the message was also considered support. Nonsupport was “any message that opposes via resistance, rejection, disagreement, demand, challenge, sarcasm, et cetera”
(Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987, p. 29). For instance, if the speaker asked the direct
target to back the car out of the driveway and the direct target responded by stating, “I will
not back the car out of the driveway!” the statement would be coded as a nonsupport. An
extension was defined by a prolongation of the previous topic without indication of support
or nonsupport. An answer to an open-ended question was coded for when the direct target
answered the speaker’s open-ended question, regardless of question length or whether the
answer was a closed statement. The instruction code was defined as “a statement that is a
qualified suggestion involving clarification of one’s own demands, justification, or
explanation” (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987, p. 30). An instruction, therefore, was a
form of order accompanied by a soft tone and reason for the request. An order was coded if,
unlike instruction, the speaker was making a demand without justification. The statement,
“Clean your room!” would be considered an order. Disconfirmation was “a response that
disregards the demands or requests (whether explicit or implicit) of the previous message”
(Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987, p. 31). In other words, if the speaker makes a specific
request of the direct target and the direct target does not respond to the statement but rather
continues speaking about another subject it is considered a disconfirmation. A topic change is
distinguished from a disconfirmation by the absence of a request, question or response. The
topic was changed without an apparent reason (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987). “Process
comments” were also coded as a topic change. These were any metacommunicative
comments about the conversation that was currently taking place. Finally, the code of
indistinguishable was used if the coder could not recognize a verb or the response could not
be understood; this is the same as previously described in the format code (Heatherington &
Friedlander, 1987).
Each statement received a format and response code; these codes were considered mutually exclusive. Although the format and response codes are considered mutually exclusive, within each of those codes are non-mutually exclusive coding options. Therefore, if coders felt a statement could fall into multiple categories, a decision tree was used to determine which code should be assigned to the statement. The format was ordered as follows: indistinguishable, intercept, successful talkover, unsuccessful talkover, closed question, open question, assertion, and noncomplete. Therefore, if the speaker asked an open question that was also a talkover, the appropriate code would be a talkover because it is first in the decision tree. The order for the response code was: indistinguishable, disconfirmation, topic change, order, instruction, nonsupport, open answer, closed answer, support, and extension. Therefore, if a closed answer was given that was also an instruction, the appropriate code would be an instruction because it is first in the decision tree.

Coder Training

A faculty member instructed coders on the use of the Family Relational Communication Control Coding System. In order to avoid bias within the results, the coders were blind to the purpose of the study. They consisted of graduate and undergraduate students who were asked to practice coding until a 70% accuracy rate was reached (two independent coders agreed with one another 70% of the time during practice sessions on both format and response codes). The average percent agreement for the format mode was .964 and the Cohen’s kappa for format was .925 based on two coders; scores of 28 couples. The average percent agreement for the response mode was .801 and the Cohen’s kappa for response mode was .707.
Data Analysis

Power through interruption was examined by looking at talkover rates in dyadic interactions. Successful talkovers, unsuccessful talkovers, support statements, and nonsupport statements were all coded during the couple relationship. Hypothesis number one states that the rate of interruption, as defined by successful talkovers divided by total number of turns spoken by the couple will differ between males and females. Specifically, hypotheses two and three state that males will exhibit more successful talkovers than females, and females will exhibit more unsuccessful talkovers than males. Because the data were collected on couples interacting, paired t-tests were conducted to account for any relationship between males and females in each couple. The proportion of successful or unsuccessful talkovers for males and females were calculated by taking the number of the target construct (successful or unsuccessful talkovers) and dividing it by the total number of talk turns per couple. Hypothesis four states that support statements will differ between males and females. Specifically, hypothesis five states that males will exhibit more nonsupport statements than females, and hypothesis six states that females will exhibit more support statements than males. Hypotheses four, five, and six used the same technique but with regard to support and nonsupport statements; that is, the proportions of each construct were calculated by couple, and then paired t-tests were used to analyze these proportions across all couples.

Hypotheses seven through twelve were examined using simple linear regression. The seventh and ninth (for female and male satisfaction, respectively) hypotheses pose the question of whether males’ and females’ proportion of successful talkovers affects their marital satisfaction. This proportion was calculated for each couple by taking males’ minus
females’ successful talkovers and dividing that number by the total number of talk turns. A simple linear regression model was used to determine this by setting the proportion of successful talkovers as the independent variable to be regressed upon the dependent variable of females’ or males’ marital satisfaction. First, successful talkover ratios were regressed on females’ marital satisfaction (hypothesis seven), as well as males’ marital satisfaction (hypothesis nine). The same calculations were used to compute the proportion of unsuccessful talkover ratios. This proportion was then applied to the linear regression with regard to males’ and females’ satisfaction in the same manner as the previous calculation (hypothesis eight and ten).

Hypothesis eleven and twelve utilized the same simple linear regression but for these hypotheses, the target constructs were the proportion of support and nonsupport statements on males’ and females’ marital satisfaction (see Table 1 in Appendix A for correlations of variables considered for these hypotheses).
CHAPTER 5. RESULTS

After creating the proportions of successful, unsuccessful, support, and nonsupport statements, the SPSS data editor for windows was used analyze these proportions. To test hypothesis 1, the ratio of successful talkovers in males ($M = .06, SD = .16$) was compared to the ratio of successful talkovers in females ($M = .05, SD = .06$). A paired samples t-test ($t(66) = .504, p = .616$) revealed no significant difference between those samples (see Table 2 in Appendix A). Hence, hypothesis 1 was not supported; males’ ratio of successful talkovers did not differ from females’ ratio of successful talkovers.

To test hypothesis 2, the ratio of unsuccessful talkovers in males ($M = .03, SD = .03$) was compared to the ratio of unsuccessful talkovers in females ($M = .04, SD = .04$). A paired samples t-test ($t(66) = -2.89, p = .005$) revealed a significant difference between those two samples (see Table 3 in Appendix A). Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported; the ratios of unsuccessful talkovers between males and females were found to be significantly different; females exhibited more unsuccessful talkovers than males.

To test hypothesis 3, the ratio of support statements in males ($M = .10, SD = .06$) was compared to the ratio of support statements in females ($M = .10, SD = .08$). A paired samples t-test ($t(66) = -.225, p = .823$) revealed no significant difference between those samples (see Table 4 in Appendix A). Hence, hypothesis 3 was not supported; no difference was found between males’ and females’ support statements.

Hypothesis 4 was tested the same way. The ratio of nonsupport statements in males ($M = .07, SD = .07$) was compared to the ratio of nonsupport statements in females ($M = .08, SD = .08$). Nonsupport was defined as, “any massage that opposes via resistance, rejection, disagreement, demand, challenge, sarcasm, et cetera” (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987, p. 27).
A paired samples t-test \( t(66) = -2.93, p = .005 \) revealed a significant difference between those two samples (see Table 5 in Appendix A). Therefore, hypothesis 4 was supported; the ratios of nonsupport statements differed significantly between males and females; females exhibited more nonsupport statements than males.

To test hypothesis 5, male and female successful talkover ratios were regressed on males’ marital satisfaction. The simple linear regression was not found to be significant \( (F(66) = 1.43, p = .236) \). These results indicate that the ratios of male and female successful talkovers did not significantly impact men’s marital satisfaction.

To test hypothesis 6, male and female successful talkover ratios were regressed on females’ marital satisfaction. The simple linear regression was not found to be significant \( (F(66) = 1.08, p = .302) \). Therefore, the results indicate the ratios of male and female successful talkover ratios did not significantly impact females’ marital satisfaction.

To test hypothesis 7, male and female unsuccessful talkover ratios were regressed on males’ marital satisfaction. The simple linear regression was not found to be significant \( (F(66) = .035, p = .852) \). The results demonstrate that male and female unsuccessful talkover ratios did not significantly impact males’ marital satisfaction.

Similarly, hypothesis 8 male and female unsuccessful talkover ratios were regressed on females’ marital satisfaction. The simple linear regression was not found to be significant \( (F(66) = 1.07, p = .305) \). The outcome indicates that male and female unsuccessful talkover ratios did not significantly impact female marital satisfaction.

The same test was used to examine hypothesis 9. Male and female support statement ratios were regressed on males’ marital satisfaction. The simple linear regression was not
found to be significant ($F(66) = .034, p = .854$). Hence the results indicate that the ratios of male and female support statements did not significantly predict males’ marital satisfaction.

To test hypothesis 10, male and female support statement ratios were regressed on female marital satisfaction. The simple linear regression was not found to be significant ($F(66) = 1.24, p = .269$). These results indicate the ratios of male and female support statements did not significantly impact females’ marital satisfaction.

In hypothesis 11, male and female nonsupport statement ratios were regressed on males’ marital satisfaction. The simple linear regression was not found to be significant ($F(66) = 3.08, p = .084$). Although these results show that the ratios of male and female nonsupport statements did not significantly impact males’ marital satisfaction, they are very closely approaching the significance level of $p < .05$.

To test hypothesis 12, male and female nonsupport statement ratios were regressed on females’ marital satisfaction. The simple linear regression was not found to be significant ($F(66) = 3.5, p = .066$). Similar to the previous findings, the results indicate that the ratio of male and female nonsupport statements did not significantly impact females’ marital satisfaction, but are extremely close to reaching the significance level $p < .05$. 
CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

The hypotheses concerning successful and unsuccessful talkovers produced mixed results. No significant difference was found between males’ and females’ successful talkover ratios; however there was a significant difference in unsuccessful talkover ratios (female unsuccessful talkover ratios were higher than male unsuccessful talkover ratios).

Interruptions were deemed successful or unsuccessful based on whether the original speaker relinquished the floor to the second speaker. Based on previous literature, sex may play a role in the difference between unsuccessful talkovers. DeFrancisco (1991) found that men can “silence” women by choosing not to respond to them. This theory would suggest that females may be attempting to insert their opinion or influence into the conversation but their attempts are not received by their male counterparts; instead of stopping to accept this influence, their partner continues to speak. This theory gives strength to the idea that women may appear to have more power based on the number of times they speak in comparison to their partner. An outsider observing the relationship might believe the wife to hold power over the husband because she is trying to cut in during conversation (i.e. unsuccessful talkovers). However, the opposite may be true. In reality the husband retains power because he decides whether to stop speaking and allow his wife to speak, or just continue his own thought; women are often thought to have power in their relationship that, at a closer glance, does not really exist.

The hypotheses concerning support and nonsupport statements also produced mixed results. No significant difference was found between the ratios of male and female supportive statements, yet there was a significant difference in the ratio of nonsupportive statements between males and females (females’ nonsupport ratios were higher than males’ nonsupport ratios). Nonsupport statements were defined as “any message that opposes via resistance,
rejection, disagreement, demand, challenge, sarcasm, et cetera” (Heatherington & Friedlander, 1987, p. 29). Previous research suggests that females begin more discussions leading to disagreement than males because they have less power to make larger decisions. Based on this notion, it is possible that females would use more nonsupportive statements when trying to argue a point or convince their mate to change. Males, however, may not need to use nonsupport statements simply because the need to influence is less if they ultimately have the power to make a final decision. This could account for a difference in the ratios of nonsupportive statements between males and females.

Unsuccessful and successful talkovers did not significantly contribute to males’ or females’ marital satisfaction. It is possible that this result is in part due to the process by which talkover rates were calculated for the present study. Previous research suggests mixed results when power is measured by interruption; as was discussed, this interruption has been defined many ways. The current study accounted for the total talk turns by each partner, creating a ratio. Previous studies may have only looked at the rates of interruption alone without attending to the possibility of an influence by the partners affect on one another. In other words, by creating a ratio, the results give an accurate account of how often each person exhibited the target construct while accounting for how much they spoke during the conversation. Previous studies may miss an important dyadic dynamic if they only looked at the number of interruptions rather than a ratio, because one individual could be extremely outgoing and talkative while the other is shy and quiet.

It could also be possible that when attempting to measure power, successful and unsuccessful talkovers may not be the most accurate vehicle to access this construct. Perhaps results produced by this ratio did correctly reflect the construct but it was not significant
because talkover ratio is not as important as some research may lead us to believe. It is plausible that although talkover rate is an overt action that can be seen and measured, it is not at the heart of what is truly contributing to marital satisfaction or power.

Intriguingly, although nonsupport statement ratios did not predict marital satisfaction (both male and female) the results found approached significance. As discussed earlier, Gottman et al. (1988) proposed that high levels of negativity can lead to conflict in a relationship--specifically, criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling (unwillingness to respond or participate in conversation). Based on this idea, it would be logical to assume that nonsupportive statements would erode a couple’s relationship over time, which in turn affects marital satisfaction. Conceivably then, it may be equally or more important to look at these constructs in addition to rates and ratios of interruption alone.

Limitations

As with all studies, limitations do exist for this study. First, the type of relationship was not accounted for in the original data set. All couples in the original study were married. This leaves room for future research to explore how the relationship might affect the way conversations are carried out within a couple dynamic. There may be differences between a couple that has been dating for a few months, a couple that has been cohabitating for 3 years, or a couple that has been married for 1 year. The length and depth of the relationship could dictate the amount of nonverbal communication used and how well they recognize one another’s idiosyncrasies.

In addition, certain variables such as ethnicity were not taken from the original study to be explored in the present study. This variable could have potential implications on the conversations from which the data was collected as well. For instance, some ethnicities such
as Hispanics believe in very traditional gender roles. These gender roles could influence how often males talk in comparison to females as well as what type of talk they engage in. The original data set consisted of primarily Caucasian couples (49 males (30.6%) and 52 females (32.5%)). In terms of ethnicity, 1.3% (2) of males and 8.1% (13) of females were Asian, 0.6% (1) of males and 1.6% (1) of females were Hispanic, 0.6% (1) of males and 1.9% (3) of females were African, and 0.6% (1) of males and 1.3% (2) of females were Indian. The number of participants with varying ethnic backgrounds (i.e., Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, and Indians) could be increased in future studies to help improve the generalizability of results by creating a more representative sample.

Finally, because only one subscale of the DAS was used in the present study, the results may reflect the target variables’ relationship to that subscale. If the other subscales of the DAS—particularly consensus and cohesion—were included, the results may be different.

*Directions for Future Research*

The methodology of the present study was unique because of its ability to examine the influence of power on marital satisfaction by using couples observations. The current study was conducted through the use of secondary data. The original study collected data that was an excellent source of insight into romantic relationships and physiology. The present study utilized this data with another focus in mind; communication as power and its affect on marital satisfaction. A replication of the study original study with a shift in focus to conversation and power instead of physiology could be an interesting addition to the literature. If a replication study was done and found similar results it would add to the validity of the current study.
In addition, the use of multiple definitions has been discussed as a barrier to understanding and researching the construct of power. The present study defined interruption as talkover ratio adding to these multiple definitions. Although this uniformity is ideal, it is not always practical. Future research would strongly benefit from some type of conformity as to the definitions of interruption, power, support, and marital satisfaction. One way to implement such an idea might be to use the same observational data collection method but a different coding system. Zimmerman and West’s (1975) coding system, for instance, is one common system cited in the previous literature. Uniformity in this sense might mean an agreement in the scientific community to use one definition with a variety of methods and explore the outcomes. These outcomes could then be compared to one another with more assurance that each study is attempting to define the construct in the same way; building on one another rather than always trying to reinvent the wheel.

Similarly, rather than using the same coding system, future researchers could use complementary methods. Researchers could utilize different coding systems while implementing a similar data collection process; again, helping to assist in the comparison of outcomes across studies. The previous literature currently consists of numerous ideas, methods, and definitions with regard to the construct of power as well as interruption. Any consistency whether it is in the method or the coding system would be beneficial to future research.

Furthermore, the sample was collected on a college campus. This allowed for a large sample of couples, but is not necessarily representative of the population. A larger sample size would be ideal to help obtain a representative sample. One way to accomplish this might be to use a snowball sample. If a college campus was to be used again, the students could be
asked to provide contact information for friends, parents, or relatives. This would help create diversity in age range, type of relationship, ethnicity, and other variables not included in the present study. These couples could then be contacted and recruited to expand the sample.

Finally, the other subscales of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale should be explored in the future. These subscales were not included in the present study, but may have important affects on marital satisfaction. For instance, the length the couple has been together may influence the way they communicate with one another. In addition, length of relationship can also affect, or be affected by, cohesion, consensus or affectional expression. When a couple is newly formed, they might be more likely to agree with one another to avoid trouble in the relationship (consensus). Similarly, a couple in a newly formed relationship may be more physically affectionate toward one another in what is often termed “the honeymoon phase” of the relationship (affectional expression). Finally, those in a relatively new relationship might not be as in tune with each others’ wants, needs, and feelings and/or are not yet committed to each other in the same way a married couple might be, which in turn may affect their cohesiveness. The opposite could be said for couples who have dated or been married for a long time. There are many ways in which the other three subscales of the DAS may influence power, communication, and marital satisfaction. Future research should explore these questions further to better understand these constructs.

Clinical Implications

The present study may have several useful insights for clinicians. For example, although nonsupport statements were not found to significantly influence marital satisfaction, it was extremely close to reaching significance. This indicates that it may be very important to pay attention to nonsupport statements couples make to one another. A theory by Gottman
(1998) indicates that the ratio of positive to negative interactions between partners is important in predicting marital satisfaction. Based on this theory, marital satisfaction will remain positive if the ratio does not drop below a five to one (5 positive interactions to every 1 negative). Therefore, a couple that engages in excessive amounts of nonsupportive statements may be increasing that ratio in a negative direction. As a clinician, knowledge of this potential red flag could be useful in determining what type of therapeutic technique should be used. Although it is not a technique per se, Gottman suggests activities and discussions that can be utilized with couples he feels are nonsupportive of one another. One of these activities includes helping clients become more conscious of their tone with one another (e.g. are they criticizing, making sarcastic and contemptuous remarks, or name calling) and subsequently helping clients learn to rephrase those feelings in a more productive way.

Another important insight for clinicians is the lack of a significant impact of talkover rate on marital satisfaction (both successful and unsuccessful). This could mean that it may not be as important to focus on the process of discussion during an argument between couples. For instance, some couples may be extremely volatile--successfully talking over one another frequently, while other couples may rarely engage in talkover behaviors. Although the volatile couple may appear to the clinician to have lower satisfaction these results suggest this may not be the case. A clinician working with a couple such as the one previously discussed may feel it is important to use communication techniques to help the couple improve their satisfaction. The results found in the present study indicate that there may be other factors that would affect the couple more acutely than working with communication and/or focusing on talkovers behaviors between partners.
This study demonstrates that power in a relationship is not always as it seems. Although a direct link to marital satisfaction was not established, the findings did suggest that a power balance, or imbalance, may be an important part of the way that males and females relate to each other. It is logical to assume, then, that power, communication, and relationship satisfaction are worth further investigation. Communication is a dynamic construct deserving of much more investigation.
REFERENCES


Table 1

Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>female total satisfaction</th>
<th>female success ratio</th>
<th>female nonsupport ratio</th>
<th>male total satisfaction</th>
<th>male success ratio</th>
<th>male nonsupport ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>female total satisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
<td>0.170</td>
<td>0.303*</td>
<td>0.530**</td>
<td>-0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female success ratio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.452**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.284*</td>
<td>0.430**</td>
<td>0.300*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female nonsupport ratio</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.132</td>
<td>0.738**</td>
<td>0.447**</td>
<td>0.443**</td>
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<tr>
<td>male total satisfaction</td>
<td>-0.209</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.094</td>
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<tr>
<td>male success ratio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.198</td>
<td>-0.098</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.562**</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>male nonsupport ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Table 2

**Successful Talkovers Males vs. Females**  
Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 mmsucration - fsucratio</td>
<td>.01019</td>
<td>.16538</td>
<td>.02020</td>
<td>-.03015 - .05053</td>
<td>.504</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

**Unsuccessful Talkovers Males vs. Females**  
Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 munsucratio - funsucratio</td>
<td>-.01224</td>
<td>.03464</td>
<td>.00423</td>
<td>-.02069 - -.00380</td>
<td>-2.894</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.005</td>
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</table>
Table 4

**Support Statements Males vs. Females**

Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 msupratio - fsupratio</td>
<td>-0.00164</td>
<td>0.05973</td>
<td>0.00730</td>
<td>Lower -0.01621, Upper 0.01293</td>
<td>-2.25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0.023</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

**Nonsupport Statements Males vs. Females**

Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 mnonSupratio - fnonSupratio</td>
<td>-0.01355</td>
<td>0.03787</td>
<td>0.00463</td>
<td>Lower -0.02278, Upper 0.00431</td>
<td>-2.929</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX B: IRB LETTER

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DATE: May 25, 2006

TO: Amber Hines
CC: Dr. Megan Murphy

FROM: Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Assurances

SUBJECT: IRB ID Number: 06-278
Study Review Date: May 24, 2006

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair has reviewed the project, "Interruption as power: The relationship to marital satisfaction," and declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) (1) and (4). The applicable exemption category is provided below for your information. Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

The IRB determination of exemption means that this project does not need to meet the requirements from the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects, unless required by the IRB. We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways that you would if the project was required to follow the regulations. This includes providing relevant information about the research to the participants.

Because your project is exempt, you do not need to submit an application for continuing review. However, you must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or if required by the IRB.

Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuation and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Exempt Categories

(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
APPENDIX C: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**

The authors were interested in evaluating the utility of Falbo and Peplau’s model for understanding power and marital satisfaction. They also looked at how limited or plentiful resources can impact the use of differing power strategies. Specifically, the authors looked at marital satisfaction, gender and spouses resources (income). One general question asked was how husbands and wives handle and implement power differently. The authors propose that wives will utilize indirect routes of power while husbands will use direct strategies. With regard to resources, researchers hypothesized that equality in the relationship would amount to equality with regard to power whereas traditionalism would result in husband power.

**Methods:**

42 married couples were recruited from a business in Texas, marriage records, references from friends, and acquaintances of the first author. The couples were visited by the researchers in their home and given a multi-section questionnaire. After the questionnaire was completed, the authors would debrief the participant. The questionnaire included: the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), the Marital Opinion Questionnaire (Campbell, 1976), a Marriage Types section, a Power Strategy scale (Swain, 1985; as cited by Falbo & Peplau, 1980), and a background information section.

**Conclusions:**

Concurrent with their hypothesis, the authors found that couples who see themselves as equal to one another are more satisfied than those who view themselves as more traditional. In addition, the couples who perceive themselves to be equal report using a fewer number of overall power strategies; therefore, the authors hypothesize that power imbalance may be created due to an imbalance of resources. Finally, authors found that dissatisfied couples used more coercive power strategies overall.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**

The article is a meta-analysis of 43 studies. All articles looked at men’s and women’s interruptions during conversations.

**Methods:**

The article looked at how interruption was defined in previous studies and defined them according to 3 categories. The fist, were those that broadly or undefined in the original study; the second, those that did not include back channels and minimal responses (e.g. “uh-
Authors also explored possible moderating variables and what they may have in common across studies. These included such things as: the year of the study, authors' gender, gender composition, group size, familiarity, the observational setting, the activity structure, and length of observation.

**Conclusions Drawn:**
Authors concluded that operational definition was a significant moderator in distinguishing the likelihood of gender differences in interruptions. The gender of the first author was also found to be a significant moderator in that woman authors more frequently reported that men interrupted more than women. Group size was also a significant moderator. When participants were in groups of 3 or larger more intrusive methods of interruptions were used; this was not found to be true for dyads.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**
This study has three independent variables: communication apprehension, gender, and time. It was conducted to find out if these three variables would be impacted by the dependent variables: turn requesting and turn-yielding behaviors.

**Methods:**
Researchers began with a class of 2521 undergraduate students in a communications course at a medium sized university. Class credit was offered to those willing to participate in the study. This occurred upon commencement of four separate semesters. Three weeks after class began, participants were telephoned and given a rating on the interpersonal subscale of the PRCA-24. 640 males and females were gathered from this collection process but data was collected on only 320 of interest to the researchers.

Participants were paired with an unknown individual according to previously determined guidelines based on the interpersonal subscale of the PRCA-24. Data was collected at the end of five minutes and again at the end of twenty minutes. The tapes were then coded by thirty graduate students trained for inter-coder reliability who estimated using Pearson product-moment correlations.

**Conclusions Drawn:**
With regard to turn-requesting, gender and communication apprehension have been found to make a difference in this study. Females with low CA used less aggressive tactics to change turns such as head nodding as their main device. High CA participants were more likely to use interruptions and simultaneous talk to change turns.

Neither gender nor CA were found to cause a difference in turn yielding. Researchers believe differences exist, but feel these differences may be a matter of particulars created within the specific dyads.

**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**

Previous research has looked at how power in a marriage is influenced by which spouse raises the topic of discussion during an argument. The authors of the current study hypothesize that this concept is more complex. They speculate that while women may initially bring up a subject for discussion, men ultimately hold the decision making power.

**Methods:**

27 couples were recruited for the study. They were given a questionnaire, then videotaped while discussing a problem of their choice. They were then given another questionnaire and asked to view the videotape while stopping to make remarks about its content and process. The couple was then given a final questionnaire and in addition the tape was coded by the research team. The three questionnaires were The Conflict and Disagreement questionnaire, adapted from Starr (no date; as cited by Ball, et. al., 1995), Who Does What? (Cowan & Cowan), and The Locke-Wallace Short Marital Adjustment Test (Locke-Wallace, 1959).

**Conclusions Drawn:**

The author’s found that women had the most power in bringing up a topic for discussion. However, once that topic was on the table, men had the ability to decide how it would be handled. While women controlled the process of the conversation, men controlled its content.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**

This article is concerned with interruptions that occur during simultaneous speech. It is suggested that several things contributing to simultaneous speech such as personality type and timing in the conversation. The author suggests that this type of interruption may be used to show interest in, or heighten the conversation. The author attempts to examine findings by Zimmerman and West that suggest men interrupt more than women. They also examine feminist viewpoints that suggest interruption may be a way to assert dominance therefore explaining Zimmerman and West’s findings.

**Methods:**

Data was collected from ten groups created and video taped at tutorial groups consisting of one tutor and a number of students. All five male tutors had male and female students; however, three of five female tutors had only female students. The number of times and length of time each individual spoke was recorded along with the number of speaker switches. This system was based on Ferguson’s (1999) categorization system (as cited in Beattie, 1981).
Conclusions Drawn:
The most frequent form of interruption was overlap, concurring with prior studies that show simultaneous speech to be the most common. In addition, the researchers found butting-in interruptions to be the next most frequent and silences occurring least often.

No gender differences were found between the men and women of the study, contrasting previous findings of Zimmerman and West. However, researchers point out that the lack of difference was not do to fewer interruptions by men, but rather more interruptions by women resulting in equality among the sexes.

Authors did find differences in status. Students interrupted tutors more frequently than tutors interrupted students. This result contrasts the idea that interruptions are a reflection of dominance. Additionally, students also interrupted other students approximately twice as often as tutors interrupted students. Authors therefore concluded that interruption rate is determined by a number of factors such as status, environment, type of interruption, and sex.


Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
The main concept of this article focused around the influence of gender in social situations. Researchers looked at whether or not gender was related to the amount of influence a speaker had, in what way, and why. It was hypothesized that because of societies’ gender stereotypes around male dominance and female submissiveness, that men would exert more influence than women. A second hypothesis stated that although men would influence more than women, if the situation were such that the role stereotypes for women were being reinforced the reverse would be true.

Methods:
This article was a review of the literature on gender and influence. For this reason, no specific scales or tests are defined. The authors simply examined and compared the results of previously written research with variables in the areas of competence, dominance, gendered recipients of influence, proportion of male to female in interaction, and warmth.

Conclusions Drawn:
The results indicated that for a woman to be equally as influential as a man she must first be liked. There were two hypothesized reasons for this: women may be perceived to be competent but out of their context in which the man should stereotypically be most influential. Therefore, women must first achieve competence in a context that is culturally biased. Second, men have more power and authority than women in society. Women’s attempt to be influential is threatening to this power causing them to resist and making it more difficult for women to exert influence.

**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**
This study explores the possibility that previous findings linking demand/withdraw patterns to marital dissatisfaction may actually be a reflection of individual affect in the context of the relationship. Authors wanted to demonstrate that demand/withdraw and negative affect were separate constructs based on previous definitions of demand and withdraw.

**Methods:**
The first step in this study was a phone interview using the Marital Opinion Questionnaire (Campbell, Converse, & Rogers, 1976; as cited by Caughlin & Huston, 2000). The questionnaire attempts to assess satisfaction by using a dichotomous point scale. It does not however, include questions about specific communication behaviors. The Affectional Expression Scale (Wills, 1974; as cited by Caughlin & Huston, 2000) was used to measure affection in marriage. Similarly, the demand and withdraw behaviors were measured using a modified version of the Communication Patterns Questionnaire, short form (Christensen & Heavey, 1988; as cited by Caughlin & Huston, 2000).

**Conclusions Drawn:**
Authors found that demand/withdraw and negative affect were different constructs and that this negative affect did in fact have an effect on demand withdraw. A positive correlation was found between both spouses negative affect and their demand/withdraw. In addition, affectional expression and negativity were found to explain variance within the construct of satisfaction. Researchers found an indirect relationship between wives reports of their husbands demand/withdraw and their satisfaction. Finally, both spouses reported that wives demands and husbands withdraw affected satisfaction. The authors therefore concluded that demand/withdraw effects marital satisfaction beyond just negativity and satisfaction.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**
The author is suggesting that based on past research and her study, “women work harder to initiate and maintain conversation than men,” pp. 415. The author felt previous research ignored individual perception that may skew findings by simply counting types of interruption and silence. Therefore, this author chose to expand on previous research by including personal interviews.

**Methods:**
A total of seven couples were recruited for this study between the ages of 2 to 35 years and were paid an incentive of twenty dollars to participate. In addition, all couples
rated themselves as being generally satisfied to stable and were thought to follow traditional
gender role patterns.

Each couple was tape recorded in their home whenever both parties were present for
ten days. After being taped, each person was interviewed while listening to a thirty minute
segment of the tape. The participant was asked to comment on anything he or she liked or
disliked about each segment. Transcripts of the recordings were then created based on

Conclusions Drawn:
The author concluded that the most frequent turn-taking violation among men was
no-response. This in combination with personal interviews identified lack of conversation as
the major complaint among women rather than interruption.

In addition, men and women were found to raise issues equally with the acceptation
of anything emotional. When emotional topics were raised, men overwhelmingly withdrew
from conversation. The author has hypothesized that these differences in communications
styles can become part of the problem themselves, although no research was done on whether
or not this is true.

9) Citation: Dindia, K. (1987). The effects of sex of subject and sex of partner on

Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
The article is reexamining old assumptions about the effects of sex of subject and sex
of partner on interruptions. Specifically, the author looks at previous data that says it is
affected in three ways 1) men interrupt more than women, and women are interrupted more
than men; 2) interruptions are evenly dispersed in same sex pairs, and 3) women’s less
assertive behaviors were interrupted more often than assertive behaviors, women interrupt
less assertively, and respond less assertively to interruptions than men. The author feels these
conclusions have been made based on incorrect statistical procedures. Specifically, the
relationship between the dyad being studied was not accounted for; the correlations between
the dyad, whether positive or negative, may change the outcome of the data.

A random sample was collected from a large university. The subjects were drawn
from a basic communications class, thirty males and thirty females (sixty total). Each
participant was then assigned at random to a same-sex dyad with a stranger. These pair
assignments resulted in ten male and male groups, ten male and female, and ten female and
female.

Method:
Once the dyads were in place, each group was asked to participate in a thirty minute
conversation with the stranger (no direction was given as to what the topic of conversation
should be). Generally, the conversations revolved around getting to know one another.
“Interruptions were operationally defined as occurring when the listener began to speak at a
point that was not a possible completion point for the speakers’ utterance” (Dindia, 1987,
pg.353). The interruptions were coded according to Kennedy and Camdens’(1983, pp. 50-
52). The pre-interruption speeches were coded with regard to five categories to look for
gender differences that may be more common among one sex. Pre-interruption was also
coded for interruption if the participants were interrupting one another in a series of ingoing
interruptions.

Post interruption speech was coded for two things: 1) whether the interrupted
individual would give the floor to the interrupter, allowing them to speak, 2) the interrupted
individual’s reaction to being interrupted was coded for the level of resistance in the topic
change.

The researcher used Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for the dyads
with opposite sex partners; the intra class correlation coefficient was used for same sex
dyads. Finally, the Kraemer-Jacklin statistic (Kraemer & Jacklin, 1979 as cited in Dindia,
1987) was used to test for the effect of sex on the subject, sex partner and interactions.

**Conclusions Drawn:**

Three major findings resulted from this study. The first was that men did not interrupt
more than women overall in conversation, and women were not interrupted more often than
men. In relation, one person interrupted more in both same sex and opposite sex dyads
regardless of gender. Finally, women did not interrupt less assertively than men, they did not
have less assertive behaviors interrupted.

More specifically, both genders were found to be interrupted more often by an
opposite sex partners than same sex partners. Dindia speculates that if interruption represents
domination, then domination is more of an issue in opposite sex dyads than same sex dyads.

Roles, 31*(5-6), 275-294.

**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**

The author is interested in power imbalances between intimate romantic relationships.
Specifically, the author looked at the subjects perception of power, when imbalance occurs,
and how does it affect the relationship. The author focused on decision-making, emotional
involvement, and equity to assess these areas of interest.

**Methods:**

Subjects were 598 sociology students from two Midwestern universities. A voluntary
survey was given during class pertaining to romantic relationships. A follow up survey was
then given at the end of the semester. Power, decision making, emotional support and equity
were all measured using a Likert scale of 1 to 7 with questions created by the author.
Relationship longevity was measured by asking respondents when the relationship began
according to month, date and year. They were then asked to indicate the same response as to
when the relationship ended if it indeed had.

**Conclusions:**

With regard to decision making, men and women’s overall responses indicated that
men made more decisions than women in relationships. The author found that the principal
of least interest was supported when looking at emotional involvement. The more power men
were perceived to have the less they were perceived to be emotionally involved by both men
and women. Despite these findings, over half of the respondents stated they felt their relationships to be fair and equal. Women were more likely to respond that their relationship is equal with regard to all four categories, whereas men stated they were more general power and decision making ability in the relationship.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**

The researchers were interested in investigating the marital processes that have been linked as predictors to either marital stability or marital divorce. Specifically, the researchers looked at seven different processes: anger as a dangerous emotion, active listening, negative affect reciprocity, negative start-up by the wife, de-escalation, positive affect models and physiological soothing of males.

**Methods:**

Newlywed couples (recently married for the first time within the past 6 months) were recruited via newspaper ads between the years of 1989 and 1992. The couples were then contacted by phone to answer a number of questions (Marital Adjustment Test (MAT), Krokoff, 1987; Lock & Wallace, 1959). 179 of these couples met the criteria set by researchers for the first phase of research and were then mailed questionnaires to be answered separately and mailed back. The questionnaires asked about demographics, marital happiness and health and well being.

During the second phase, 130 couples that researchers felt accurately represented the gamut of marital satisfaction scores were asked to come to the lab for further study. One a year investigators did a follow up assessment with each couple for the next six years.

**Conclusions Drawn:**

The first finding confirmed the notion that anger was not a dangerous emotion but rather contempt, belligerence and defensiveness were negative indicators of destructive patterns in conflict resolution. Active listening was not proven to be a predictor of marital outcome nor was it found to be a significant factor in conflict resolution. Several indicators were found to predictors, these were: negative start-up by the wife, husbands unwillingness to accept spousal influence, a low intensity of negativity by the husband which was reciprocated by the wife and the absence of a de-escalation process.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**

Gottman and colleagues were investigating the role of women in conflict interaction based on previous findings. Specifically, previous studies have concluded that women start conversations which lead to conflict more often than men, and that a wife-demand/husband-withdrawal pattern is prominent in those marriages. The study hypothesizes that it is not the
women who are responsible for these patterns of behavior but rather high amounts of negativity when the couple reunites after being apart for a long period of time (i.e. and eight hour day) and that this negativity sets the tone for conflict.

**Methods:**
Original recruitment began in 1983 via the use of newspaper ads obtaining 200 responses. The couple was paid five dollars to fill out surveys about their marital satisfaction. The researchers then selected 85 couples who they felt best represented the array of levels of marital satisfaction to come participate in further research at the lab. Of these couples, 79 were responded and were submitted for further physiological data. The average ages were 32 for men and 29 for women with an average marriage length of 5 years. Marital satisfaction scores raged between 96 for males and 98 for females.

**Conclusions Drawn:**
The researchers found that couples who were more emotional, more negative, and less positive were more dysfunctional when attempting to resolve conflict. Both positive and negative affects were found to be significant and their ratios were significant across the two conversations. The researchers infer that these everyday conversations when couples reunite set the tone for later conflict resolution discussions as well as the longitudinal well being of the couple.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**
The study looks at marital power in terms of wife vs. husband dominance as it affects marital adjustment and outcomes to a variety of different treatments. Researchers hypothesized that levels of power in distressed couples may affect the outcome of the treatment models used.

**Methods:**
All participants were married couples with an average age of 32 for group 1 and 34 for group 2. Both groups were had high average education levels and were given the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (1959) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1957) before beginning treatment. The first study group was assigned at random one of three groups: 1) behavioral marital therapy (BMT), 2) problem solving alone, or 3) quid pro quo alone. The second study group was assigned at random to either BMT, cognitive restructing (CR) and BMT, or emotional expressiveness training (EET) and BMT, or a combination of BMT, CR, and EET.

**Conclusions Drawn:**
Researchers found egalitarian couples to have the highest adjustment rate of all couples overall. As part of this finding, egalitarian couples were found to demand less of one another and demonstrate lower amounts of negative behavior. It was speculated that this may
be because egalitarian couples come to agreements mutually while in unequal couples one partner must compromise for a decision to be reached.

In addition, the study found that while husband led and wife led couples were similar in their treatment outcomes, it was still important to explore possible differences between them. These differences may change the treatment model used to work with the couple.


Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
The study examined demand/withdraw patterns in 29 couples with relation to who exhibited each behavior (did the husband demand and wife withdraw or the opposite). In addition, this information was used to ascertain satisfaction levels one year after the study took place. Researchers hypothesized that when discussing the husbands issues, men and women would not differ in their demand/withdraw interaction. However, when discussing the women’s issues, women would demand and men would withdraw. In addition, this pattern would lead to a decrease in marital satisfaction.

Methods:
The concept of demand/withdraw was operationalized by the use of the Desired Changes Questionnaire (DCQ) (developed for the study by Heavey, Layne & Christensen, 1993). The seven-point likert scale was used to determine the extent to which each partner wanted change in the relationship. The Communication Patterns Questionnaire, Short Form (CPQSF) (Christensen, 1987, 1988; Christensen & Sullaway, 1984) was used to measure each partner’s perception of their problem solving abilities. The Post discussion Questionnaire (PDQ) (developed for the study by Heavey, Layne & Christensen, 1993) was used to identify how each participant felt about the conversation. Finally, the Conflict Rating System (CRS) (Christensen & Heavey, 1990) was coding system used to rate couples during their problem-solving discussion.

Conclusions Drawn:
Author’s found that when a subject is brought up by husbands there is no difference across gender with regard to demand/withdraw. Subjects were also found to be more anxious during a discussion instigated by the husband. With regard to marital satisfaction, wife’s demanding was found to be predictive of a decrease in marital satisfaction while husband’s demanding was found to be predictive of an increase in marital satisfaction. The authors speculate that because wives are stereotypically the person responsible for emotional needs in the relationship, they may respond to their husband’s demands positively by viewing it as a willingness to discuss problems.

Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
The present article is concerned with power differentials between individuals perceived as high status and those perceived as low status. In addition, the authors are interested in how these power differences affect communication patterns and behavior during casual conversation.

Methods:
Two groups of forty college students were recruited for the study. The first group consisted of half male (20) and half (20) female Australian students with a mean age of 19.5. The second group were half (20) male and half (20) female Chinese students with a mean age of 22.5. A final group of twenty faculty (10 male/10 female) were also recruited.
Participants completed a background questionnaire one week prior to participation. At participation, subjects were paired with other participants of the same sex and videotaped having a conversation. Partners filled out a subsequent questionnaire after the conversation addressing how they felt the conversation went and feeling about the assigned partner.

Conclusions Drawn:
Researchers found that when students interacted with other students, they discussed issues that each would have in common and create an equality between them. In contrast, when students were paired with instructors, the result was one of question and answer rather than equal interest in both parties. Lecturers led the direction of conversation more than students, and used more dominant behavior.
Differences were also found between men and women. Women were more likely to ask questions and expand a topic; they were also less likely to disagree. Men however, disagree readily, and changed topic when they felt necessary.

took a the Communication Patterns Questionnaire-Short Form (CPQ-SF) (Christensen, 1987, 1988; Sullaway & Christensen, 1983) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976).

Conclusions:
Authors concluded that social influences were more influential than individual differences in affecting demand-withdraw patterns. "The spouse with the most to gain by protecting the status quo was more likely to withdraw" (Klinetob & Smith, 1996, pp. 954).


Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
Previous research may have relied too heavily on self-report data. The current study accounted for this by interviewing at least one child of each marital dyad. Researchers also felt status should be seen as a confounding variable in many prior studies. Therefore, they controlled for status in this study. The overall question being examined is what, if any, effect status has on marital happiness.

Methods:
Ninth grade classes from two middle schools were selected to fill out a questionnaire. Based on responses with regard to parents’ occupation, 63 families were chosen to participate, and grouped into middle or working class. Each family was brought to a lab set up like a gymnasium. The families were given vague instructions to a game and told the purpose was to figure out the rules. Researchers then measured the number of instructive behaviors by each person that resulted in a change in behavior on the part of the person being instructed.

Conclusions Drawn:
The results of the study indicate that perceived power between husband and wife is indicative of marital happiness. When husbands are seen as having low power, satisfaction is low. Wives power status however, had no effect on satisfaction. In addition, marital satisfaction was found to be associated with power between parent and child. If parental power is positively related to marital satisfaction and child power is negatively related.


Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
Authors were interested in three types of conflict resolution styles with regard to their impact on marital satisfaction. These three styles were conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance. The study was conducted at three different times and the hypotheses were based as such. Hypothesis one was that conflict resolution would be predictive of change between time 1 and time 3. The second hypothesis stated that both spouses time 1 marital satisfaction...
score would predict change in conflict style between times 1 and 3. Finally, that marital satisfaction would be affected by a change in both spouses conflict resolution style from times 1 to 3.

**Methods:**

The sample consisted of 155 couples from an annual assessment of a longitudinal study of newly wed couples. These couples were initially recruited from a list of marriage licenses posted in the local newspaper. Couples were mailed two identical surveys containing informed consents, demographic questions, marital satisfaction questions, and conflict resolution questions. Marital satisfaction was measured using the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Schumm et al., 1986). Conflict resolution was looked at using the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI, Kurdek, 1994).

**Conclusions:**

Authors found that each spouse had an effect on the other in terms of conflict resolution style. Specifically, low marital satisfaction was found to be associated to the gender-stereotypical pattern of female demand and male withdraw. Additionally, withdraw as a form of resolution was different depending on gender; men were more satisfied if their wives were complaint when they withdrew. Women, however, tended to use withdraw no matter what their level of satisfaction or how their husbands would react.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**

Authors had three major goals. The first was to determine if interruption changed with age and whether some types of interruption were more prevalent among adults. The second was to examine the effects of subject and partner sex on different types of interruptions. Finally, the authors were interested in whether simple, overlap, butting-in, and silent interruption types were equally or unequally distributed between same and opposite sex dyads.

**Methods:**

A total of sixty students were recruited for the study. Thirty were in fourth or ninth grade and equally split by gender. These students were paired with a friend of an assigned sex. In addition, thirty college students were chosen (15 male and 15 female) and asked to bring a friend of an assigned sex and age.

Prior to participant selection participants were assigned to either a same or opposite sex dyad (10 female-female; 10 male-female; and 10 male-male). The dyad was then taken to a room in their respective school and given a list of topics from which they could discuss or choose their own topic. The conversations lasted 20 minutes and were audio recorded. Each conversation was later transcribed and coded based on Ferguson’s (1977) classification system (as cited in March & Peterson, 1993).

**Conclusions Drawn:**
The findings suggest that no differences exist between sexes in terms of number of interruptions. Researchers found that whether the dyad was same-sex or opposite sex had no bearing on frequency. They did not find that males and females interrupted at similar rates. The authors suggest this data contests the theory that interruption is a result of domination.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**
Authors of this study were interested in the differing quality of interaction that may occur between couples who have been together a long time and those who have divorced or are about to divorce. The study looked at perceived marital satisfaction as well as observed marital satisfaction as a longitudinal study. Researchers predicted that previous hostile activities between spouses would be associated to marital instability and perceptions of hostility by the couple.

**Methods:**
The study consisted of 436 couples who had agreed to a 5 year longitudinal study focused on individual traits and family functioning leading to successful adaption of rural living. On average, couples in the study had been married eighteen years. In the first four years of the study families received home visits twice a year. On the first visit they would complete a questionnaire about a variety of topics. The second visit consisted of a family task which was videotaped. During the fifth year of the study, a short phone call was made to the both parents and children to assess changes in family life such as separation or divorce. Measures of hostility and warmth were gathered using the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (Melby et al., 1989). Dyadic hostility score was also created. Marital instability was measured using a modified version of the marital instability index (Booth et al., 1983).

**Conclusions:**
Instability was found to be associated with lower warmth and higher hostility. It was also found that couples influence one another’s level of marital instability; if spouses exhibited high levels of hostility that were not balanced by high levels of warmth.

21) Citation: Noller, P. (1993). Gender and emotional communication in marriage: different cultures or different social power? *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 12*(1/2), 132-152.

**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**
The present article is a literature review on the debate between male and female differences. The article makes the argument that gender differences are a result of culture. Similarly, it explores the possibility that gender differences are the result of a power imbalance in society taught to each new generation. The author then discusses how these differences have been examined in terms of relationships and conflict; specifically addressing marital conflict and the demand-withdraw pattern.
Methods:
This article is a review of previous literature. The author attempts to draw conclusions by connecting ideas, themes, and findings of previous research.

Conclusions Drawn:
Overall it was found to be possible that gender differences may be a result of culture, power, or a combination of the two; the research on this matter is inconclusive. However, previous research regarding gender differences and conflict has shown that men are more likely to withdraw during conflict than women. The author hypothesizes this may be due to a feeling of powerlessness by men during an argument, or women’s need to keep the discussion going as a way of talking out the issue.


Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
The author’s dissatisfaction with previous systems of coding interruption led to the creation of a new coding system described in this article. The coding system is based on that of Ferguson (1977). However, this system is set up as a flow chart which can be found in the appendix.

Methods:
Undergraduate students from the University of York were selected based on answers to a dominance questionnaire. Research’s picked 18 male and 18 female students of approximately twenty years of age. In experiment one; each student was matched with a same sex and opposite sex confederate. During the conversations, the confederate was told to interrupt as often as possible. Experiment two consisted of only same sex confederates instructed to monopolize the conversation.

Participants were filmed without their knowledge. During debriefing, participants viewed the tapes and were asked to stop it whenever they felt they had been interrupted. This debriefing data was the basis for the coding system.

Conclusions drawn:
The new coding system was distinct from that of Ferguson’s (1977; as cited in Roger, Bull, and Smith, 1988) in several ways. Ferguson’s system only had four categories compared to 17 in the current study. The present study also made a distinction between simple and complex interruptions by increasing the number and type of categories. Authors’ feel this new system will be valuable to those doing research on interpersonal communication.

Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
The Authors looked at two previous studies (Christensen and Heavey, 1990 & Heavey, Layne & Christensen, 1993) through the lens of social influence techniques as a factor in creating change within a marital discussion. Authors were interested in whether these social influences were more important than gender in determining the outcome of the discussion. In addition, the researchers used attrition and schema theory as secondary hypotheses, suggesting that when a spouse wanted change they were more likely to attribute behaviors to their spouse and more likely to explain these behaviors by the attributions.

Methods:
This article covered two studies with the same concepts and hypotheses. In the first, thirty one families were recruited for the study all with a son between the age of 7 to 12. The authors used the Child Rearing Changes Questionnaire (Christensen and Heavey, 1990; as cited in Sagrestano et al., 1998) to rate the importance of child rearing topics to the parents. Based on these discussion topics, the families than took part in a 3 hour assessment session that included interviews, questionnaires, and videotaped interactions. The study uses two 6-minute videotaped interactions. Coding was done by means of the Close Relationships Influence Techniques Coding System (CRITCS) (Sagrestano et al., 1998).

In the second study, 29 intact families were recruited with at least one preschool age child. This couple was given the Desired Changes Questionnaire (DCQ) (Heavey, Layne & Christensen, 1993; as cited by Sagrestano et al., 1998). The families participated in the same 3 hour assessment. The study is based on two 7-minute videotaped discussions. Coding of these tapes was also based on the CRITCS.

Conclusions Drawn:
In the first study, researchers found that gender did not affect the outcome of the discussion as much as whose issue was being discussed. As hypothesized, spouses were more likely to attribute behaviors to their partner if they were talking about their topic. Spouses had a higher incidence of suggesting behavior change for their partner and explaining partner behavior when discussing their own issues demonstrating more cognizant thought about that issue.

Researchers found similar results in the second study. The outcome of the discussion was affected more by whose issues it was than gender and partners were more likely to explain their spouses behavior when the topic was their issue.


Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
The article focuses on genders’ influence on power related language in groups of college students asked to work on a task with one another. The author attempts to further the literature on power and language by attempting to operationalize constructs such as “topic”, “success”, and “failure”.

Methods:
Undergraduate subjects were obtained from an introductory psychology class at a Midwestern university. 78 subjects received either extra credit or were given course credit as part of the class. The dyads consisted of 13 male-female partners, 13 female-female partners, and 13 male-male partners. These pairs were then asked to work on a task pertaining to an orientation handbook. Their conversations were tape-recorded and took approximately 15 minutes. Nine variables were then selected from the conversation and coded as “powerful” or “powerless”. These consisted of topics written, written statements, interpretations, time, topics suggested, suggestion statements, suggestion questions, written questions, and support.

Conclusions:
The author found little support that gender differences exists in language use. The gender differences that were found were weak. Nevertheless, the author cited that women made more suggestions in question form than did men. No support was found to show that one sex worked harder than another. Additionally, the author did not find evidence to support the idea of “women’s language.”


Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
The authors are interested in whether or not expectations about a person will affect their willingness to give up control of a conversation. In this article, subjects are given a task and told whether their partner is dominant or submissive. Researchers then watch to see how this information will affect their behavior during the subsequent conversation.

Methods:
Power Related Talk (PRT) (Thimm, Rademacher & Augensteina, 1994) was developed as a way to look at context rather than content. This method of coding conversations is dynamic in that how one speakers words are coded depend on the other. The coder looks at combinations in the responses rather than individual statements alone. Subjects were given the German version of the California Personality Inventory (CPI) dominance questionnaire (Weinert, 1991) and based on their scores were grouped into high, low and medium and then paired. Each participant was given a statement about their partner such as “your partner is pretty self-confident” (Thimm et. al., 1995, pp.385).

Conclusions Drawn:
Partner’s in the high category paired with those in the low category spoke more rapidly than those paired with other high category partners. Authors interpreted this finding of fast speech as a way to control their less confident partners. In addition, high category partners interrupted more when they thought their partners were in the low category. Finally, high partners talking to low partners who they believed to be high used much less controlling language.
Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
The article uses the terms dominance through talking, and dominance through listening to describe power in relationships. They then use these concepts to examine how these conversational power techniques influence satisfaction in the relationship based on gender. Researchers hypothesized that power would be inversely related to satisfaction in marital relationships.

Another area of interest was whether power was affected by therapy; authors hypothesized that power inequality before therapy would be inversely related to the treatment outcomes after therapy.

Methods:
Couples were given the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) during recruitment. Couples were currently seeking therapy and fell into the distressed range on the DAS. They were given a fifty dollar incentive to participate. After recruitment couples were asked to spend 5 to 10 minutes discussing a topic together. The discussion was videotaped and coded according to the Verbal Content Coding System (VCCS; Jacobson & Anderson, 1982). After this session, couples returned for an average of 23 sessions of social-learning-based marital therapy (Whisman & Jacobson, 1990). The couples were again given the DAS after the completion of their therapy and six months after.

Conclusions:
Authors found evidence to support their first hypothesis that an inverse relationship existed between power in the marital relationships and marital satisfaction. In addition, researchers found that power distributions that were unequal before therapy began were a predictor of positive therapy outcomes.

Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
Researchers were interested in how gender affected power in terms of domestic division of labor and paid labor. In addition, how this division of labor affected marital satisfaction. It was hypothesized that couples division of work was based on values, perception of threat, love and equity. It was also hypothesized that both empathy and fairness contribute to marital satisfaction; and that they do so causally.

Methods:
Division of labor was determined by collecting an estimate from each spouse of relative contributions. A four item question assessment was given to the couple to assess role preference including such things as: family support is the husband's job, some work is women's work, etc. An empowerment assessment was also developed to assess decision
making power in the relationship. Similarly, assessment scales were created for perceived equity of division of labor, empathy, and marital satisfaction.

Conclusions:
In general, authors found that traditional divisions of labor can have positive or negative affects on marital satisfaction. If one spouse doesn’t feel apriciated than marital satisfaction will decrease. Conventional thinking with regard to roles was found to be abstract in that perceptions of labor division showed while couples may say they want these traditional roles, their actions are oriented toward their personalities. In terms of power in the form of agenda-setting behavior (as measured by the empowerment scale) men were found to have more influence than women in their relationship. The final conclusion was that men and women view marriage through the eyes of their respective gender; affecting their decision making process, labor sharing, and satisfaction.


Concepts and Main Hypotheses:
Researchers of this study wanted to examine how often couples were able to gain compliance from their spouse according to the Verbal Interaction Compliance-Gaining Scale. The authors have several hypotheses based on couple types. The first was that separates would not use as many of these compliance techniques as other couples; the second was that independent couples will use reduction techniques on one another more than other couples; the third hypothesis stated that traditional couples would be more direct with one another and use less power related talk than other couples; fourth, it was hypothesized that separate style couples will utilize power talk more and internal messages less than that of other couple types; the fifth hypotheses, similar to that of the fourth, stated that independent couples will use less we oriented statements for more power related talk; finally, the sixth hypothesis was that both separate and traditional couple types would more couple related speech (we, us, etc) than those of other types.

Methods:
Fifty one couples were selected at random from a list of married students on a large campus. Each couple was asked to have a 10 minute discussion and then role play two areas of conflict chosen by the researcher for 15 minutes. The first role play concerned sharing time with one another, the second related to introducing new friends into the relationship. These interactions were then coded according to the Verbal Interaction Compliance Gaining Scheme (VICS) (Fitzpatrick, 1977; 1984; Fitzpatrick & Indvik, 1982; Fitzpatrick & Badzinski, 1985). Couple types were also gathered based on and individual score from the Relational Dimensions Instrument (Fitzpatrick & Indvik, 1982).

Conclusions:
The authors came to three major conclusions as a result of this study. The first indicated that couple types (as defined by the Relational Dimensions Instrument) each use
different types of power when attempting to gain compliance from their spouse. The second held that as a result of these different power based strategies, outcomes differed based on which strategy was employed. The final conclusion drawn was that particular schemes were used by certain couple types, and therefore, can be used as a beginning point for future study of verbal compliance-gaining.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**
Authors use observational data to elaborate on the social structure hypothesis which posits that “wives are more likely to demand because marital relationships tend to favor husbands, who are accordingly more committed to maintaining the status quo.” (Vogel & Karney, 2002, p. 685). More specifically, are the social structure hypotheses replicable, can the nature of these differences be determined by separating demand and withdrawal behaviors, and are demand/withdrawal behaviors associated with a desire for change.

**Methods:**
Newly wed couples were recruited and then scheduled to go to 3 hour lab session. During this period, each partner was first interviewed alone during which time they identified an area of contention in the marriage. Spouses then had two sets of 10 minutes videotaped sessions in which they were left alone to resolve each topic. Prior to the lab session, couples were asked to complete a number of questionnaires including the Marital Adjustment Test and the Locke & Wallace, 1959 (as cited by Vogel & Karney, 2002). In addition, each spouse was asked to rate the importance of each topic chosen. Finally, the videotaped discussions were coded according to a global rating system adapted from Klinetob and Smith (1995) originally based on Christensen’s (1987, 1988; Sullaway & Christensen, 1983; as cited by Vogel & Karney, 2002).

**Conclusions Drawn:**
With regard to the first hypothesis, researchers found they were able to replicate previous tests of the social structure hypothesis on newly wed couples. More specifically, this meant that wives were more likely to demand and husbands to withdraw than the reverse, congruent with previous research. Dissimilar to previous findings however, authors found that husbands and wives demand/withdrawal patterns were positively correlated with one another. Finally, researchers sought to identify whether demand/withdrawal was affected by spouses desire for change. The authors found the more important the topic was to the spouse the more likely they were to make demands.


**Concepts and Main Hypotheses:**
This article focuses on Sack et al (1974) as cited in Zimmerman & West's model of decision making. This model is based on two person interaction in which the first person speaks, the second may then respond. If they do not, the first person may speak again or the second individual may choose to begin on their own. If neither of these scenarios occur, the model circulates back to the first individual.

The authors focus here was on silenced during conversation and talkovers that can occur when both parties begin at the same time. There is no direct hypothesis. The major purpose of this paper is to emphasize the utility of this model.

**Methods:**

Data was collected on a university campus in public places via tape recorder. Authors would then obtain consent and debrief the participants. All participants were Caucasian between twenty-five and thirty and middle class. Transcriptions were done by both authors. They collected data only on portions of the conversation that contained silences and simultaneous speech. The transcriptions were then coded accorded to the model. Sections of the tape that were not transcribed contained long spans of talking and were erased after coding.

**Conclusions Drawn:**

The study found that overall; women were interrupted more often and fell silent more often after being interrupted. Researchers define an interruption as “A violation of ones right to speak” (Zimmerman & West). This being said, they feel it is notable that men interrupt women more because it may be a reflection of the power constructs our society holds.

The study found that both male and female interrupters were rated less sociable and more aggressive than their non-interrupted counterparts. The study did not confirm the hypothesis that females who interrupted would be viewed more negatively than males who interrupted. However, males who interrupted where seen as having more gender appropriate behavior than females. Concurrently, females who interrupted were viewed as non-traditional in comparison with their females control counterparts.