

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON AT CLEAR LAKE CITY
HUMAN SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

COMMUNICATION PATTERNS IN STABLE MARRIAGES

by

MARY ANNETTE WOODS

Thesis

**submitted to the Behavioral Sciences faculty
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts**

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Approved:



Thesis Director



Committee Member



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Program Director and Acting Dean

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates patterns of communication systems, focusing particularly on the representational systems used between spouses.

The concept of representational systems is derived from the work of Richard Bandier and John Grinder and refers to the process of using the sensory modalities to represent life experiences.

Once the pattern of the communication system is defined, it will be possible to determine if it is related 1) to the quality of communication; 2) to variation in the spouses' agreement about the family environment, and 3) if the agreements about the family environment are related to the quality of communication.

The transcripts of forty-five unlabeled (normal) couples are selected from eighty-two couples that had been previously interviewed and tested. The couples were chosen by stratified sampling based on the number of agreements on the Moos Family Environment Scale. These transcripts were examined for predicates which indicate each person's representational system.

The two tests used to measure the couple's ability to communicate were 1) an Index of Agreement on the Family Environment based on the Moos Family Environment Scale, and 2) an Index of the Quality of Communication based on the Feldman Family Questionnaire.

The results indicate that, as hypothesized, most couples who have long-term stable marriages have matching or complementary representational systems. Only two couples out of forty-five had different systems.

The hypotheses that there would be a correlation between the sameness or difference in representational systems and a measureable variation in

the Agreement on the Family Environment and on the Quality of Communication Scales are not supported.

There is a strong correlation between the quality of communication and the number of agreements on the family environment indicating that couples who communicate well share common perceptions of the family environment.

It is suggested that future research compare the communication patterns of couples with varying years of marriage, and couples undergoing therapy.

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CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

During the last several years there has been a great deal of emphasis on the importance of communication in the field of family therapy. Virginia Satir (1972) states in her book Peoplemaking that communication is the largest single factor that determines what kind of relationship one person has with another.

Communication has many elements, including the basic ability to speak and hear words. It also incorporates body movements and posture, a person's values, the expectations for the present experiences as influenced by past history, and the sensory experiences of the moment: what a person hears, sees, smells, touches, or is touched by in the immediate time frame. All of these elements are contained in the context of communication. The brain participates in the communication experience by storing the incoming information and combining this information with what the person has experienced from the past which has been gathered in the same manner (Satir, 1972). Language is the easiest element of communication to acknowledge, yet all of these other factors are observed at least unconsciously, if not consciously. It is the combination of all of these that gives one a sense of meaning for what another is attempting to convey.

Richard Bandler and John Grinder (1975) have postulated many hypotheses about how people code and communicate experiences. By linguistic analysis and clinical observations of communication experts such as Gregory

Bateson, Virginia Satir, Fritz Perls, and Milton Erickson, they have noted the effects of the senses on the communication process (Bandler & Grinder, 1975). They observe that individuals use various sensory modalities to assimilate and store external events. Information retrieval is accomplished by recalling the event using these same sensory modalities. This recollection is communicated to another person linguistically using certain key words which are usually congruent with and indicative of the original sensory modality in which the event was perceived (Bandler & Grinder, 1975; Gordon, 1978). For example, in the sentence "He commented that he saw the point clearly", the words 'saw' and 'clearly' indicate that the speaker was attentive to visual input.

In the model which they have constructed, Bandler and Grinder (1975, 1979) make it clear that there is a vast difference between the world and a person's perception of the world. In order to be able to make life comprehensible and allow for historical continuity, people learn to make representations of their life experiences. These representations - or maps - are very individual since they are created through living an experience, perceiving or sensing what is happening, and making choices about the event. No two people can have the exact same experience because each person has had prior experiences that are already represented or mapped in memory and are combined with the new experience. To further support this concept, Bandler and Grinder (1975) quote from A. Korzhyski's book, Science and Sanity (1958), "A map is not the territory it represents, but if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness."

Maps are unique to each person. How they differ depends on the individual's neurological make-up, including the receptor systems of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell; social constraints; and individual history (Bandler and Grinder, 1975). Sociology examines the impact of social structure on human behavior. Psychology approaches behavior by examining personal history. Bandler and Grinder recognize the importance of these fields and augment both fields by utilizing data obtained through the study of language systems as modeled by transformational grammar (Bandler and Grinder, 1975). This particular model of language contrasts what is said, which is referred to as the surface structure, with what is meant, which is referred to as the deep structure. Bandler and Grinder's linguistic model reiterates the principle of Korzybski that the map is not the territory, that what is spoken is not what has actually occurred, but rather what has been consciously experienced as happening (Cameron-Bandler, 1978).

People gather and organize information through their senses - seeing, hearing, feeling (which includes emotions, touch, and movement (Andreas, 1980), tasting, and smelling (Gordon, 1978). These are known as representational systems. David Gordon (1978) defines them:

Representational systems are those sense modalities which we...have available and use to know (represent) the world around us. The ways in which we know (represent, experience) the world are through the sensory portals...All of these systems are always operating. (p. 90)

Although all of the senses are available to register any event, most people favor one representational system. This is referred to as their primary system. It is through this system that they register most of their experience (Bandler and Grinder, 1976). It may be visual - they 'see'

what is happening; auditory - they 'hear' what is happening; or kinesthetic - they 'feel' what is happening. Other systems are used as secondary or back-up systems. Since all of the sensory systems are operating all of the time (Gordon, 1978), that sensory information which is not consciously perceived is stored in the unconscious, because it is only possible for the conscious mind to be aware of the limited amount of information at any given time (Miller, 1956).

People use a primary representational system, then, to code the events of their lives for internal storage. They understand the world through a selected sensory system, and they communicate back with the world through that same system. Language is the tool that is used to model the internalized event and to share that event or representation with others (Bandler and Grinder, 1975). By listening to the words that an individual selects to represent his/her experience, it is possible to identify which representational system is most used. For this paper, these identifying words are referred to as predicates - the adjectives, adverbs, and verbs in a conversation (Grinder and Bandler, 1976).

Grinder and Bandler (1976) define predicates as

the portions of a person's experience which correspond to the processes and relationships in the experience. Predicates appear as verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in the sentence which the client uses to describe his experience. (p. 9)

Some specific examples of predicates are listed in Appendix A.

Communication in marriage has long been recognized as an essential element of marital satisfaction. Having worked with many couples who are experiencing marital difficulties, Bandler, Grinder, and Satir (1976) have discovered by listening to predicates and observing non-verbal

communications that couples in therapy often represent the same situation in different sensory modes. This is to say that one may be seeing or hearing what is happening, while the partner may be gathering information by one of the feeling modes. When this occurs, and the couple try to relate an experience to one another, they wonder if they are relating the same situation. Frustration, anger, and psychological distance may thus develop in the relationship. By teaching each partner to understand and communicate in the mode that the partner can understand by the use of predicates, therapists have found that communication between the couple improves (Cameron-Bandler, 1978). It is as though they now speak the same language, or at least comprehend the language of their partner (Gordon, 1978).

Grinder and Bandler (1976) have described other contributing factors to the communication process. However, this study will focus on the representational systems between spouses. Also, whereas Bandler and Grinder studied couples experiencing marital difficulty, the sample in this research uses couples who have long-term stable marriages as indicated by the fact that the couples have a child at least 15 years old and have no history of divorce. Since Grinder and Bandler (1976; 1979) discuss the value of helping couples in therapy converge and therefore understand the language patterns of the partners, will couples with long term marriages demonstrate this quality - that is, will they have the same or complementary communication patterns? (Complementary communication pattern means the spouses have the exact opposite representational systems.)

It is a fundamental assumption of family therapists that communication and family environment are related in important ways. There is not

much empirical evidence that this is true, so this research will examine the relationship between the quality of communication and the perception of the family environment. The units of measurements are the predicates - verbs, adverbs, and adjectives which indicate a particular representational system; the number of agreements on the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment; and the self-report answer on the Index of the Quality of Communication scale asking about the communication between the husband and wife. In short, this research will empirically test the claims of Bandler and Grinder.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses generated for this study are based on the work of Bandler and Grinder. An important difference is that the sample being tested is a population of "unlabeled" (normal) families (Bell, 1976). An "unlabeled" family is defined as a family who has no history of a disabling illness, experience in psychotherapy, encounters with the penal or divorce courts. Therefore, none of these families have been labeled by any of the above mentioned social agencies.

The following hypotheses are examined in this study:

I. Couples with long-term marriage will have effective communication patterns which are either the same or complementary.

II. Couples who believe that the quality of communication is high will also be able to agree about their family environment.

The next three hypotheses flow from Bandler and Grinder's theory which leads one to expect that the more effective the couple's communication is the more they will agree about their family environment and

the more they will agree about the quality of communication between themselves.

III. Couples who have the same primary representational system and the same secondary system will have a high score on the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment, indicating that they are in agreement about the way the family unit functions, and they will concur on the quality of communication between themselves as measured by the Index of the Quality of Communication.

IV. Couples who have complementary primary and secondary representational systems will score in the middle range of the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment; however, since their communication systems are not perfectly matched they will not agree on the quality of communication between themselves.

V. Because they have the least effective communication patterns, couples who have a difference in both their primary and secondary representational systems will score in the lower ranges on the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment; in addition, because they have poor communication patterns they will not agree on the Index of the Quality of Communication.

In short, the first two hypotheses refer to the distribution of values within a population. The last three - hypotheses 3, 4, and 5 - refer to relationships between variables in this population. Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5 are summarized in Figure 1.

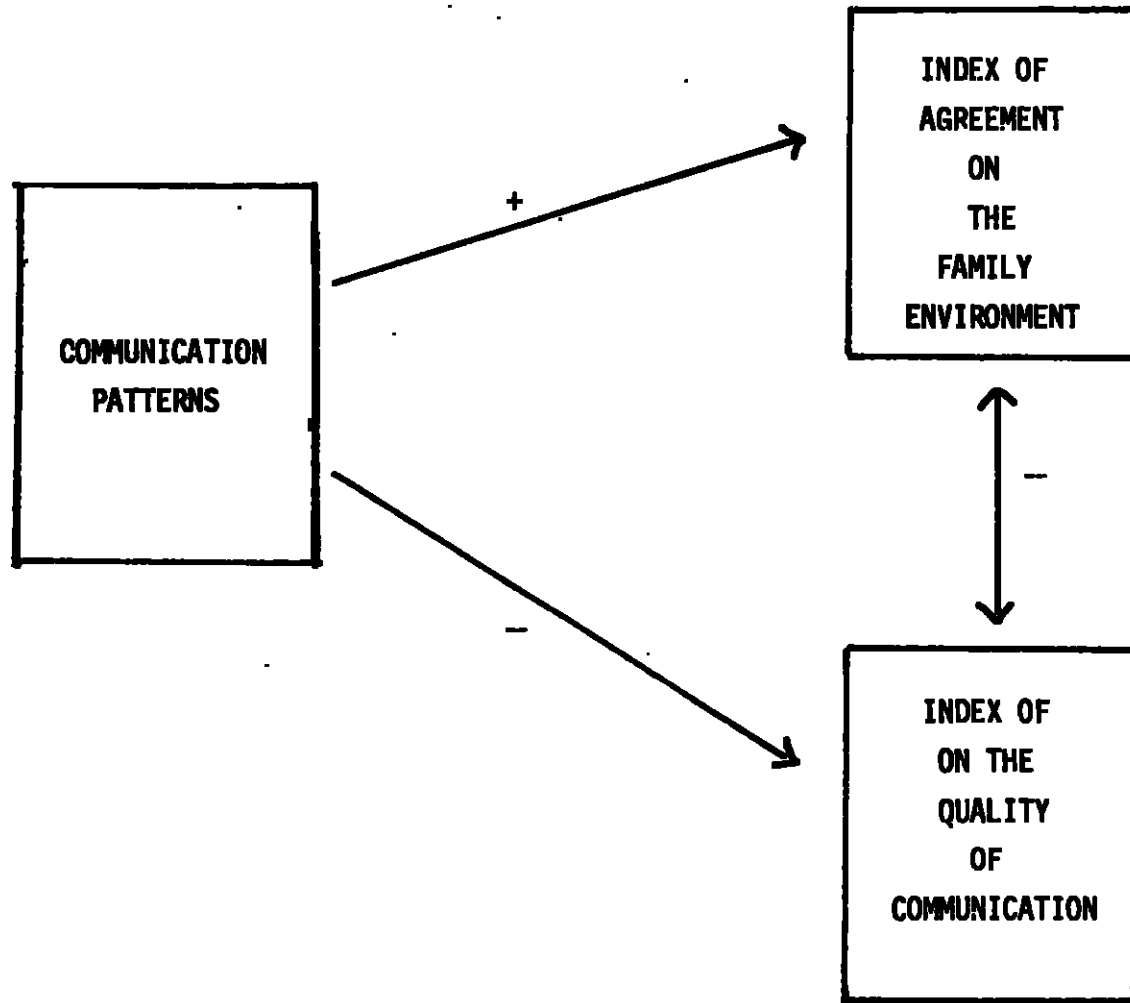


Figure 1

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODS

SUBJECTS

Data collected by Linda Bell and a colleague on 99 families in the Chicago area is used in this research. The families were originally selected through the cooperation of Chicago area high schools; the area was white, middle class, suburban. A homogeneous population was sought (white middle class, 2 or 3 child families, with a 15 - 17 year old girl) in order to minimize extraneous variance. The identified adolescent girl in each family had previously completed Loevinger's sentence completion test which measure ego development (Loevinger, 1966; Loevinger and Wessler, 1970), and the California Personality Inventory which measures personality traits, and a sociometric questionnaire.

INSTRUMENTS

The Moos Family Environment Scale

The Moos Family Environment Scale (F.E.S.) was developed to measure the interpersonal relationships within the family in 3 categories: social environment, the importance of individual growth, and organizational structure. The form used in the Bell study was a shortened version of the original F.E.S. and included 63 items or statements (Appendix B).

In this study, the scale is used for two purposes. First, the F.E.S. is the base for the selection of the stratified sample. The forty-five

couples were chosen according to the number of agreements on the 63 items and how that number fit on the scale from 0 - 63, in a high, middle, or low range.

The Index of Agreement

The second use of the scale is to create an Index of Agreement on the Family Environment. Once the Communication Patterns have been established by examining the sameness or difference in the representational systems through the study of the couple's predicates, it is possible to investigate the consequences of these patterns on communication. Bandler and Grinder have postulated that having shared representational systems, the couple will have successful communications (Grinder and Bandler, 1976). In order to determine if this is true, this research uses the total number of agreements on the F.E.S. as a measure of the sameness or difference in the couple's perception of the family environment.

The Index of the Quality of Communication

The Index of the Quality of Communication is based on the first statement of the Feldman Family Questionnaire (Appendix C).

The Feldman Family Questionnaire consists of a Likert type scale of nine statements. It is designed to measure the quality of the communications between different pairings of family members. These statements were originally constructed by Larry Feldman of the Chicago Family Institute, and were put into a questionnaire form by Linda Bell (1976) for the purpose of her study on "unlabeled" normal families. This questionnaire was an experimental measure and, to date, has not been tested for validity or reliability. Therefore, one can not state that the results from the

questionnaire adequately measures the quality of communication among the family members.

However, this study uses the first statement from the Feldman Family Questionnaire since it asks directly about the quality of communication between the husband and wife. It reads: "communication between husband and wife 1. very good; 2. pretty good; 3. not so good, but not so bad; 4. pretty bad; 5. very bad." (Feldman, 1976). Each spouse answered this statement separately and the responses were not discussed.

The couple's responses to this statement are categorized in two ways - the couple's ability to agree on the quality of their communication, and a summation score of their responses, derived by adding the two Likert values, which is used for statistical analysis.

It is hypothesized that those couples who reported that the communication between the husband and wife is 'very good' would have similar primary and secondary representational systems, and that this degree of communication will be verified by a high number of agreement on the Index of Agreements on the Family Environment.

PROCEDURE

The selected families were involved in a two hour structured interview which was held in the family's home and involved the entire family. Of this time period, one twenty minute segment was for the husband and wife only and is the focus of attention for this study.

The family was asked to complete a shortened version of the Moos Family Environment Scale (1974). The questionnaire provided the basis for a revealed differences exercise (Strodtback, 1951, 1954). In this exercise

family members were asked to consider items from the Moos questionnaire on which they had disagreed, and to try to reach a consensus of opinion by discussing the items. In the segment for the couple, the husband and wife were given 6 - 10 slips of paper in an envelope. Each piece of paper listed an item from the questionnaire and the answer of each mate. They were asked to discuss the items while being tape recorded, and to try to reach an agreement, then mark whether the agreement was true, false, or the outcome of the task was that they could not reach an agreement.

Out of the 99 couples' interactions, 82 had been transcribed and thus were available for this study. Forty-five couples were chosen from this group based on the number of agreements on the Moos Family Environment Scale. There were a total of 15 couples who scored in an upper range (48 - 58 agreed answers), and 15 who scored in the lower range (23 - 41 agreements). In order to make use of these extremes, it was decided that a random stratified sample should be used. Therefore, the total high and low groups were used and an additional 15 transcripts were randomly selected from the group in the middle range.

For the purpose of this study transcripts of the discussion of the revealed difference task done by the husband and wife were used. Predicates were searched for in each of the eight pages of the transcript per couple as a way of determining the representational systems of each spouse. They were circled and tallied according to the representational system for each individual. From these individual scores, the coders determined the primary and secondary representational systems according to the raw score count per category. The primary and secondary systems were compared with

the same systems for the mate. If these were the same - for example, if the husband had the largest number of visual predicates and his second largest number of predicates were kinesthetic, and wife's count were in equal divisions - then it was hypothesized that the communication was effective and good. If the husband was primarily visual and secondarily kinesthetic, and the wife was primarily kinesthetic and secondarily visual, this was considered a complementary match and one that Grinder and Bandler (1976) describe as a stable relationship. The other relationships were: the primary systems matched, and the secondary systems differed; the primary systems differed and the secondary systems matched; and, neither the primary or the secondary systems matched which is described as 'different'. In the latter case, it was hypothesized that there would be poor communication (Bandler, Grinder and Satir, 1976).

Out of the 63 items on the Moos Family Environment Scale, twenty had wording that might lead the respondents toward the kinesthetic mode (ex. It's hard to be by yourself without hurting someone's feelings in our household.) Eight items had an auditory lead (ex. Money and paying bills is openly talked about in our family.) Three items had visual leads (ex. Each person's duties are clearly defined in our family.) In order to reduce bias from the wording within the statements, all forms of the conversations that were either a full or partial duplication of the preceding statement were disregarded. Only the portions of the conversations that were free of possible bias from the wording of the items were coded for their predicate content.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The independent variable, Communication Patterns, counted, compared, and categorized the predicates of each of forty-five couples to observe the fit of the representational systems between mates. Using the SPSS computer package on the Honeywell 3000 computer, this variable and the two dependent variables - the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment, and the Index of the Quality of Communication - were analyzed for the descriptive statistics for each variable and the correlation between the pairings of the Communication Patterns with each of the dependent variables, and the two dependent variables with each other.

In the next section, the descriptive statistics will be given for each of the variables, and the results of the Pearson's r will be discussed.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The independent variable in this study is the communication pattern. These patterns are arrived at by tabulating the predicates - the adjectives, adverbs, and verbs within the transcript which indicated a particular representational system. Each person's use of the auditory, visual, and kinesthetic indicators were counted in two ways: by actual frequency and by percentile frequency (i.e. the proportion of the predicates that indicated a particular mode). The frequency of each representational modality was ranked. The one most used was classified as the primary mode, and the second most frequent was the secondary mode. Both the actual and the percentile frequencies of the husband were compared with those of the wife to determine the pattern scale.

The first task was to determine the primary and secondary representational patterns and then to categorize these patterns. The results were that 62% of the husbands in this sample used their auditory systems as their primary mode, and the remaining 38% used their kinesthetic mode. The frequency distribution for their secondary systems were more diverse. Of the forty-five men, 58% used the kinesthetic mode, 33% the auditory, and 7% used the visual mode. One man was uncodeable for a secondary system.

The results for the wives primary systems contrasted sharply with the husbands. For the wives, 69% used kinesthetic systems and 31% used the auditory. Their secondary distribution was diverse. Of the forty-five

women, 62% were auditory, 27% kinesthetic, and 7% were visual. Two women were uncodeable.

Those cases that were uncodeable can be explained by having either no secondary system, that is, those persons relied on only their primary system, or the predicates of the remaining two systems were so closely matched that they gave no strong indication of a firm secondary system.

It is interesting to note that the men's major primary system was auditory, and the women's was kinesthetic by the same proportions. Their secondary systems mirrored the opposite modes in a close match also.

When the husband and wife both had the same primary and the same secondary system, according to theory, they were thought to have effective communications. This was also true of couples whose representational systems were the exact opposite, that is, complementary (Grinder and Bandler, 1976). In classifying the communication patterns a rank scale was used. When both the husband and wife had the 'same' pattern it was coded 1. If the husband and wife had 'Complementary' systems, it was coded 2. When the primary modes of both were matched, but their secondary modes differed, they were coded 3. If the primary systems were different, but the secondary systems matched, it was coded 4. When neither the primary or secondary systems matched, they were ranked 'different' and coded 5. This scale had a theoretical range from 1 - 5 where 1 represented the most effective communication and 5 the least effective communication pattern.

The first pattern represented couples who had matching primary and secondary representational systems. Twenty out of forty-five couples were in this category. The second rank represented couples whose patterns were complementary. There were sixteen couples in this category. The third

rank represented couples whose primary systems matched only. There were seven in this category. The fourth rank represented couples whose secondary systems matched. There were no couples who fit this description. The fifth ranked couples whose primary and secondary systems differed. There were two in this category.

The model type communication pattern variable was 1, indicating that the largest number of couples had the same primary and secondary pattern.

In order to refine the communication pattern data and gain interval data, a new measure was created by examining the percentile differences of each of the representational systems between the couple. That is, each person's predicates were summed and each category was computed to give the percent per mode. These percentages were subtracted between the husband and wife. Then the absolute sum of the differences were gathered per couple. Thus, couples who had similar systems would have a summated score closer to zero and couples who had different systems would score further apart.

Each point of difference represents a lost opportunity to effectively communicate. Thus, couples who communicate perfectly effectively would never have divergent patterns and would score 0. Couples who communicate perfectly ineffectively would have divergent patterns and would score 200: 100% of the time the wife communicates, the husband would be in a different mode. Therefore, theoretically, the range would be 0 - 200. In fact, the actual range is 4 - 98. Given the possible range, this sample is communicating well. Less than half of the range is used by any couple and the typical couple has approximately 40 missed opportunities to communicate with most couples in the range between 20 - 60 misses.

There were two tests used to measure agreement between the couples: the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment and the Index of the Quality of Communication.

The Index of Agreement on the Family Environment was created from a shortened version of the Moos Family Environment Scale which included 63 true or false statements about the way the family unit functions. How the couple described their family was not considered. More important for this research was whether the couple agreed on their responses to the items. Theoretically, the range was from 0 - 63, where 0 meant that the couple had no agreements on any of the family environment items, and 63 meant that the couple had perfect agreement on all the items. The actual range was from 23 - 58, with a mean of 44 and a standard deviation of 6.9. The majority of couples scored between 37 - 51 agreements on this scale. This small span in the upper portion of the scale could be attributed to the fact that this is a homogeneous population, so there would only be a little variation in scores.

The second measure, the Index of the Quality of Communication, compares a couple's response to the first statement on the Feldman Family Questionnaire which is:

Communication between the husband and wife (is):
1. Very good; 2. Pretty good; 3. Not so good,
not so bad; 4. Pretty bad; 5. Very bad.

This statement was measured in two ways: Did the couple agree on their response? What category did they choose to evaluate their communication? As with the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment, this test was not concerned with what the couple answered, but only with their ability to agree. On this questionnaire the couple did not discuss their

responses with each other. Sixty-four percent of the couples were able to agree on the quality of their communication. The remaining 36% gave no-agreement answers.

In order to recode the couple's responses on the first statement from agreement or no agreement, and to create an ordinal scale, each possible response on the Likert scale was scored from 1 to 5 with 1 representing 'very good' and 5 representing 'very bad'. The couple's responses were then added together to produce a combined score which was theoretically ranked from 2 - 10. Perfectly good communication between a couple would yield a score of 2; perfectly bad communication would be indicated by a score of 10. The actual range was from 2 - 6. The group mean was 3, and the standard deviation was 1. The majority of the forty-five couples stated that the quality of the communications between themselves was very good, or a combination of very good with pretty good. This distribution can be accounted for in three ways: the sample couples communicate well; they responded in a socially acceptable way causing a systematic error; or, the group is homogeneous and there would be only slight variation in their responses.

Communication Pattern correlated with the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment:

The Communication Pattern measuring the summed percentile difference in the representational systems between the husband and wife was correlated with the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment. It was expected that the lower the summated difference score, the higher the score would be on the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment. The one-tailed Pearson's r was .09 with a significance level of .27. This is a

negligible relationship and in the reverse of the predicted direction between these two variables. There is no evidence that couples who have low scores, indicating similar representational systems, would have a higher number of agreements about their family environment as measured by the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment.

Communication Pattern Correlated with the Index of the Quality of Communication:

The couple's Communication Pattern was correlated with the Index of the Quality of Communication to examine the hypothesis that couples with a low percentile difference in their representational systems could report 'very good' when asked about their ability to communicate. The one-tailed Person's r was $-.12$ with a significance level of $.21$. This is a negligible relationship and in the reverse of the predicted direction. Therefore, one cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the communication patterns of the couple and the couple's response about the quality of their communication.

Index of Agreement on the Family Environment Correlated with the Index of the Quality of Communication:

A correlation was done between the two dependent variables, the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment and the Index of the Quality of the Communication. Would couples who had scored in the high range on the family environment scale also report a high quality of communication (shown as a low collective score on the quality of communication index)? The Pearson's r between these two variables was $-.37$ with a significance level of $.007$. This indicates a strong relationship between these two indexes. It is in a negative direction, as predicted, meaning that the more the

couple agreed on the family environment, the more likely they were to report that they had very good quality of communication between themselves. It is unlikely that this association is due to chance because the significance level of .007 means that in a sample of forty-five there is only seven chances in a thousand that this relationship would be found if it in fact did not exist.

In summary, there is a negligible correlation between the Communication Pattern, which measured the representational systems, and the couple's responses on the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment, and the responses to the Index of the Quality of Communication. There is a strong relationship in the predicted direction between the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment and the Index of the Quality of Communication.

In reviewing the hypotheses, the first two hypotheses are supported, but this research does not provide support for the final three hypotheses.

The first hypothesis predicted that couples with long-term marriages would have effective communication patterns, that is, they would be either the same or complementary. This hypothesis is supported as indicated by the fact that 20 couples (44%) had the same representational systems and 16 couples (36%) had complementary patterns.

The second hypothesis states that couples who believe that the quality of the communication is high will also be able to agree about their family environment. The evidence gathered by this research indicates that the quality of communication is an important element in the ability to agree about the family environment.

The third hypothesis predicts that couples who had the same primary and secondary representational systems would have a high number of

agreements on the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment, and would agree on the quality of communication as reported on the Index of the Quality of Communication. There is no evidence to support this hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis considers the patterns of couples with complementary systems. It hypothesizes that couples with complementary systems would be in the middle range on the Index of Agreement on the Family Environment and would have different opinions on the Index of the Quality of Communication. Again there is no evidence to support this hypothesis.

The fifth hypothesis states that couples who have both systems different would fall within the low to low-middle range on the Family Environment Index, and would not agree on their response to the Quality of Communication Index. There were only two couples in this group. One scored in the low range on the family environment, and the other scored in the upper-middle range. Both couples disagree on the quality of communication index, but agree that the communication is in the range of 'very good' or 'pretty good'. Because this is a very small group, it would be misleading to interpret this pattern.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Four findings of this research that will be discussed are: 1) Couples with long term marriages have effective communication systems; 2) there is a strong relationship between the quality of communication and the agreement on the family environment; 3) men and women choose different representational systems in almost equal proportions, and 4) the auditory and kinesthetic systems are the predominant choices of couples with long term marriages.

In working with couples and families in therapy, Bandler and Grinder have discovered that one of the problems in communication involves people using differing representational systems. One of their therapeutic goals is to help the family members understand the systems of those they are communicating with, or, when necessary, adding a system that is not already used in the family. The sample in this research differs from Bandler and Grinders' in several ways: these couples have been married for fifteen years or more; they have no history of divorce; and, they have not been in therapy. Therefore, by looking at the communication patterns of these couples, one might expect to find that they have effective communication patterns. That is, their representational systems match or are complementary. In Bandler and Grinders' terms, they understand the language of their partner, and are able to communicate. By examining the predicates in a transcript of each couple, it was found that almost all of the forty-five couples either used the same or complementary systems. Only two

couples had both their primary and secondary systems differing. The findings support the idea that couples with effective communication patterns have long term marriages and a stable relationship.

It was hypothesized that if couples had effective communication patterns, this would encourage similar perceptions about the family and these spouses would report good quality of communication between themselves. The findings show that there is a strong relationship between quality of communication the couple reports and their ability to perceive family environment in the same way. However, there is no correlation between communication pattern and a) the quality of communication or b) the family environment indexes. Therefore, the patterns of communication in these couples does not explain their ability to communicate well or to perceive the family environment similarly. One factor influencing these results is the fact that this sample is homogeneous and has little variation in the communication pattern. With couples who have more variations in their patterns there may be more of a relationship between the patterns and the quality of communication, and their ability to agree about the family environment. This is an area for further research.

One implication of the finding is that if a couple which has a long-term marriage seeks therapy for problems in communication, the therapist would want to investigate factors in the communication process other than the representational systems patterns, since this research shows the longevity is associated with similar communication patterns.

One unexpected and dramatic contrast between men and women was uncovered in this research. When sorting the primary and secondary patterns

of the husbands and wives, it is noted that the men choose the auditory mode for their primary system while (by an equal, but reversed margin) women choose the kinesthetic mode for the primary system and the auditory mode for their secondary system. The author speculates that this may be a result of the socialization process, or of role assignment. Clearly this is an issue for further research.

In examining the predicates, it is noted that the auditory and kinesthetic modes are most prevalent. There are only six visual secondary systems observed, and no visual primary system. This differs from the speculations of Bandler and Grinder that the visual system is more prevalent (Grinder and Bandler, 1976; Grinder, 1978). One possible explanation for this finding might be that the assigned task required a discussion in the presence of a tape recorder. This may have biased the participants toward the auditory system. Another possibility might be that there were only a few discussion items with a visual lead, while the majority of the statements had a kinesthetic or auditory lead. The author attempted to control this factor by eliminating any repeat of the item in the discussion; however, the influence of the lead may have caused a leaning toward those modes. A third possibility is that couples who form lasting relationships develop a stronger reliance on their auditory system because it increases their ability to listen and discuss issues, whereas relying on the visual mode may lead to "mind reading" and confused confusion.

RECOMMENDATION

The population under study consists of couples from normal families and are a homogeneous sample. Thus, the range of variation within the

population is not extreme. It is suggested that a random sample of married couples with varying years of marriage, as well as a sample of couples undergoing therapy, be interviewed to examine and contrast patterns of relationship between the representational systems and the quality of communication.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE LIST OF PREDICATES

Visual

see
clear
look
light
seems
read
watch
imagine
show
hide
flare
find
face

Auditory

say
tell
discuss
growling
hoot
ask
speak
curse
arguing
state
loud
sound
express
yell
scream
hear

Kinesthetic

sit
hard
tired
play
comfort
stand
jump
run
happy
touch
drop
blow
punch
handle
rigid

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B
THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT SCALE

(Codes: Family _____ Person _____)

INSTRUCTIONS: These are statements about families. You are to decide which of these statements are true of your family and which are false. If you think the statement is TRUE or mostly TRUE of your family, circle T (true). If you think the statement is FALSE or mostly FALSE of your family, circle F (false).

You may feel that some of the statements are true for some family members and false for others. Circle T if the statement is TRUE for most members. Circle F if the statement is FALSE for most members. If the members are evenly divided, decide what is the stronger overall impression and answer accordingly.

Remember, we would like to know what your family seems like to YOU. So DO NOT try to figure out how other members see your family, but DO give us your general impression of your family for each statement.

- T F 1. Family members really help and support one another.
- T F 2. Family members often keep their feelings to themselves.
- T F 3. We fight a lot in our family.
- T F 4. We don't do things on our own very often in our family.
- T F 5. We feel it is important to be the best at whatever you do.
- T F 6. Activities in our family are pretty carefully planned.
- T F 7. Family members are rarely ordered around.
- T F 8. We often seem to be killing time at home.
- T F 9. We say anything we want to around home.
- T F 10. Family members rarely become openly angry.
- T F 11. In our family, we are strongly encouraged to be independent.
- T F 12. Getting ahead in life is very important in our family.
- T F 13. We are generally very neat and orderly.

- T F 14. There are very few rules to follow in our family.
- T F 15. We put a lot of energy into what we do at home.
- T F 16. It's hard to "blow off steam" at home without upsetting somebody.
- T F 17. Family members sometimes get so angry they throw things.
- T F 18. We think things out for ourselves in our family.
- T F 19. How much money a person makes is not very important to us.
- T F 20. It's often hard to find things when you need them in our household.
- T F 21. There is one family member who makes most of the decisions.
- T F 22. There is a feeling of togetherness in our family.
- T F 23. We tell each other about our personal problems.
- T F 24. Family members hardly ever lose their tempers.
- T F 25. We come and go as we want to in our family.
- T F 26. We believe in competition and "may the best man win."
- T F 27. Being on time is very important in our family.
- T F 28. There are set ways of doing things at home.
- T F 29. We rarely volunteer when something has to be done at home.
- T F 30. If we feel like doing something on the spur of the moment, we often just pick up and go.
- T F 31. Family members often criticize each other.
- T F 32. There is very little privacy in our family.
- T F 33. We always strive to do things just a little better the next time.
- T F 34. People change their minds often in our family.
- T F 35. There is a strong emphasis on following rules in our family.
- T F 36. Family members really back each other up.
- T F 37. Someone usually gets upset if you complain in our family.
- T F 38. Family members sometimes hit each other.

- T F 39. Family members almost always rely on themselves when a problem comes up.
- T F 40. Family members rarely worry about job promotions, school grades, etc.
- T F 41. Family members make sure their rooms are neat.
- T F 42. Everyone has an equal say in family decisions.
- T F 43. There is very little group spirit in our family.
- T F 44. Money and paying bills is openly talked about in our family.
- T F 45. If there's a disagreement in our family, we try hard to smooth things over and keep the peace.
- T F 46. Family members strongly encourage each other to stand up for their rights.
- T F 47. In our family, we don't try that hard to succeed.
- T F 48. Each person's duties are clearly defined in our family.
- T F 49. We can do whatever we want in our family.
- T F 50. We really get along well with each other.
- T F 51. We are usually careful about what we say to each other.
- T F 52. Family members often try to one-up or out-do each other.
- T F 53. It's hard to be by yourself without hurting someone's feelings in our household.
- T F 54. "Work before play" is the rule in our family.
- T F 55. Money is not handled very carefully in our family.
- T F 56. Rules are pretty inflexible in our household.
- T F 57. There is plenty of time and attention for everyone in our family.
- T F 58. There are a lot of spontaneous discussions in our family.
- T F 59. In our family, we believe you don't ever get anywhere by raising your voice.
- T F 60. We are not really encouraged to speak up for ourselves in our family.

- T F 61. Family members are often compared with others as to how well they are doing at work or school.
- T F 62. Dishes are usually done immediately after eating.
- T F 63. You can't get away with much in our family.

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APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C
FELDMAN FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

(Codes: Family _____ Person _____)

For each of the following relationships and issues, please indicate how things have been recently in your family by **CIRCLING** the most appropriate response:

These answers will not be discussed with other family members.

A. Communication between husband and wife

Very Good	Pretty Good	Not So Good, But Also Not So Bad	Pretty Bad	Very Bad
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B. Communication between husband and children

Very Good	Pretty Good	Not So Good, But Also Not So Bad	Pretty Bad	Very Bad
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C. Communication between wife and children

Very Good	Pretty Good	Not So Good, But Also Not So Bad	Pretty Bad	Very Bad
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D. Communication among the children

Very Good	Pretty Good	Not So Good, But Also Not So Bad	Pretty Bad	Very Bad
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E. Ability of family members to express feelings to each other

Very Good	Pretty Good	Not So Good, But Also Not So Bad	Pretty Bad	Very Bad
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F. Ability of family to make mutually acceptable decisions

Very Good	Pretty Good	Not So Good, But Also Not So Bad	Pretty Bad	Very Bad
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G. Ability of family to handle problems

Very Good	Pretty Good	Not So Good, But Also Not So Bad	Pretty Bad	Very Bad
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H. The way you feel about yourself

Very Good	Pretty Good	Not So Good, But Also Not So Bad	Pretty Bad	Very Bad
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I. The way you feel about your family

Very Good	Pretty Good	Not So Good, But Also Not So Bad	Pretty Bad	Very Bad
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