SOCIAL RELATIONS MODELING OF LISTENING AMONG WOMEN AT ZERO ACQUAINTANCE

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Women Listening to Women

Tend and Befriend Theory (TBT) - Taylor et al. *Psychological Review*, 2000.

Fight or flight may be an initial human physiological response to stress, TBT proposes a specific behavioral mechanism among women. TBT identifies:

"biological and behavioral patterns of stress responses distinctive to females, responses that are markedly social."

- 1) Tend nurturance to protect self and offspring
- 2) Befriend creation of social networks to aid in this process

Theoretical Assumptions

T&B are generalized and dyadic processes

Speaking and listening are mechanisms of T&B that operate simultaneously at two levels:

the individual the dyad

TBT can be advanced by focusing on mechanisms at multiple levels of analysis

The Dyad

Psychology has focused primarily on the individual

Tagiuri (1958): "The two-person group is without doubt the most crucial social situation, perhaps even the most crucial of all human situations" (p. 329).

After decades of neglect, social psychology has rediscovered the theoretical importance of the two-person arrangement

Reignited by the Social Relations Model (for reviews see, Malloy, 2018; Kenny et al., 2006).

Theory and Methods of Dyadic Research

Theories of dyadic behavior (Sullivan, 1949; Leary 1957; Schutz, 1966; Swann, 1984) call for:

bi-directional, multi-interaction, multi-level methods that capture intrapersonal and interpersonal processes in dyads

Dyadic Perspectives

How does X listen to me? (interpersonal perception)

How do I listen to X? (dyadic self – a novel perspective in SRM research, see Malloy 2018)

How do I believe that X will rate my listening? (meta-perception)

Theoretical SRM

In a dyad composed of i and j, the SRM specifies individual and dyadic components

$$X_{ij} = \mu + \alpha_i + \beta_j + \gamma_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$
 (i's response to j)

$$X_{ii} = \mu + \alpha_i + \beta_i + \gamma_{ii} + \varepsilon_{ii}$$
 (j's response to i)

SRM Estimates

SRM is a special case of variance component analysis (Searle, Casella, & McCulloch, 1992) in the dyadic context

Dyadic phenomena are estimated with:

Variances of theoretical effects (individual α , β , and dyadic γ)

Covariances of theoretical effects at the individual and dyadic levels

Meaning of SRM Components

Individual Level Components

Perceiver (α) – judgments of many partners by one

Target (β) – judgments of the one by many partners

Dyadic Component

Dyad (γ) – unique judgments in specific dyadic arrangements (A and B, C and D), controlling for perceiver and target effects.

SRM of Listening among Women



Stressful Life Experiences

Malloy, Kluger, & Miller (2019) studied female dyads as they each spent 2 minutes talking about stress experienced. The randomly assigned topics were:

- Personal life
- Family life
- Relationships with Friends
- Academic Life
- Experiences of Gender Bias

Hypotheses - SRM Variances

For all listening perspectives

- 1. There will be reliable perceiver variance
 - (e.g., some people will rate others as listening well to them, and some will rate others as listening poorly).
- There will be no reliable target variance (Based on past findings in our labs, we sought to replicate that among unacquainted partners consensus about good or poor listening across partners is absent).
- There will be reliable dyadic variance (e.g., people will rate specific partners as good or poor listeners after controlling individual level effects).

Design and Participants

Round Robin

Perceiver	Target				
	A	В	C	D	
A		x	X	X	
В	x	-	x	X	
C	x	x	-	X	
D	X	x	X	-	

28 Round Robins (size 4, 5, and 6) 134 Individuals 265 Dyads

Perceived Listening Quality

Other: e.g., She listened attentively to what I was saying

Self: e.g., I listened attentively to what she was saying

MP: e.g., My partner felt that I listened attentively to what she was saying

1 strongly disagree - 5 strongly agree

Intimacy Measures

Self: After listening to my partner, I feel emotionally close to her

MP: After listening to my partner, she felt emotionally close to me

Stress Measures

Self: After talking with my partner, I felt less stress regarding the issue I discussed

SRM Variance Decomposition

Variable	Perceiver	Target	Dyad	Error
Listening: Dyadic Self	25%*	4%	21%*	52%
Listening: Partner	55%*	4%	26%*	20%
Listening meta-perception: Self	54%*	0%	26%*	20%
Listening meta-perception: Partner	41%*	2%	25%*	32%
Speaker Anxiety	40%*	4%*	35%*	21%
Interpersonal Closeness	30%*	3%	35%*	32%
* p < .05				

Interpretation: SRM Variance Components

Listening Quality, Metaperception of Listening Quality, Interpersonal Closeness, and Self Listening Quality were determined by individual differences in perceiver effects and dyadic effects.

Speaker Anxiety: Determined by perceiver effects, weak partner (i.e., target) effects, and dyadic effects.

Covariance Hypothesis: **Self-perceived good listening** to others provides a benefit for oneself

Women who think they listened well to others reported:

- a) less anxiety regarding problems discussed (r = .41)
- b) felt emotionally close to other women (r = .36)
- c) predict that other women feel emotionally close to them (r = .41)
- d) Judge their partners as listening well to them (r = .76)
- e) Predict that their partners judge them as listening well (r = .52)

Covariance Hypothesis: **Quality listening by partners** provides a benefit for oneself

Individual Level, bivariate within-perceiver correlations Women who felt their partners listened well to them:

- a) predicted that their partners felt emotionally close to them (r = .61)
- b) reported that they also listened well to those partners (r = .76)
- c) predicted that their partners judged them as listening well to them (r = .69)

Within Person Dyadic Covariance Hypothesis

If a specific partner is perceived as listening uniquely well to oneself, the speaker will derive positive Intrapersonal outcomes.

Women who believed that a specific partner listened well to them reported:

- a) unique emotional closeness with that specific partner (r = .63)
- b) Unique anxiety reduction about the problem discussed with that specific partner (r = .34)
- c) that the specific partner feels uniquely emotionally close with them (r = .33)

Interpersonal Dyadic Mechanisms of TBT: Assumed Reciprocity, Reciprocity, and Metapercepiton Accuracy

interpersonal γ γ correlations

Women assume dyadic reciprocity of interpersonal closeness following conversations. If A feels uniquely close emotionally to B, A assumes that B feels uniquely close emotionally to A (r = .43)

Dyadic Reciprocity - members' predictions of the other's emotional closeness to them (i.e., **metaperceptions** $\mathbf{r} = .46$) and actual emotional closeness ($\mathbf{r} = .40$) are reciprocal

Dyadic Meta-Accuracy: Women know accurately how emotionally close specific women feel toward them (r = .43)

Key Results: Listening

- -- Listening is an inherently dyadic phenomenon with substantial dyadic variance in perceived quality
- -- Individual Differences among speakers when judging listening quality
- -- Perceived good listening is associated with reduced anxiety and emotional closeness (individual level)
- -- No evidence for "good listeners"
- -- Evidence (very weak) that some listeners reduce speakers' anxiety

Broader Implications for Listening Research

Listening is relatively unstudied using dyadic methods (but see Kluger & Malloy, in press JPSP)

Dyadic methods offer promising theoretical and empirical possibilities

Theoretical Implications: TBT

Tending and Befriending: individual and dyadic phenomena

Speaking and listening are mechanisms of tending and befriending

High quality listening among women is associated with positive intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes that support tending and befriending

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