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### Bivariate and Multivariate Associations between Trait Listening Goals and Trait Communicator Preferences

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## ARTICLES

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# Bivariate and Multivariate Associations between Trait Listening Goals and Trait Communicator Preferences

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This article provides validity evidence for a measure of listening goals by showing theoretically consistent relationships with an existing communication preference questionnaire. Participants ( $N = 257$ ) were administered trait measures for listening goals and communicator preferences. The four listening goals—relational, task-oriented, analytical, and critical—are related to seven communicator preferences: interpersonal, intrapersonal, auditory, visual-spatial, kinesthetic, linguistic, and logical. These results are supportive of hypotheses, although there were some contradictory findings and some findings were not hypothesized. Results of multivariate correlation estimates portray a listening profile centered on relational goals and interpersonal communicator preferences. Although acknowledging several limitations, results offer theoretical and practical guidance for future work, specifically how this information may be of help to individuals, couples, and counselors in utilizing relational goals and making more careful communicative choices.

Fundamental to social cognitive communication research is the concept of goal: “future states of affairs that an individual is committed to maintaining or bringing about” (Dillard, Anderson, &

Knobloch, 2001, p. 433). The primary focus of most work in this area is with the goal directed behavior of the speaker with much less attention afforded to exploring the goal-directed nature of listening. Even fewer works explore the associations between message production and message processing goals, which is surprising given that listening and speaking choices seem naturally associated. In their work, Bodie and Villaume (2003; Villaume & Bodie, 2007) found evidence of this claim by reporting bivariate and multivariate correlations between a set of listening styles and a set of communication styles. The purpose of this article is to replicate the work of Bodie and Villaume by proposing an updated conceptualization of listening goals along with a more psychometrically sound measurement instrument and a recently formulated conceptualization of communicator preference that was principally designed with listening in mind. Thus, an important aim of the current study is to further the validity evidence for a new conceptualization of listening goals by showing theoretically consistent relationships with an existing communication preference questionnaire.

LISTENING GOALS

When people engage in social interaction it is in the service of goals, and the ways in which we listen are a product of what we wish to achieve by interacting (Berger, 1989). The first conceptualization of listening-related goals was developed by Watson, Barker, and Weaver (1995), who proposed the construct *listening style* as a set of characteristic or habitual ways of listening. In their framework, listening style was considered an individual difference that explains variability in how people attend to and process information. In particular, Watson et al. identified four listening orientations—people, action, content, and time—that individuals habitually orient towards, especially in novel situations (Imhof, 2004). Thus, for instance, an individual may be primed to focus on emotions or to solve problems, and each goal produces qualitatively different ways of approaching information processing (see Table 1 for a full description of each listening style).

TABLE 1  
Conceptual Definitions of Listening Styles and Listening Goals

LSP-16		LSP-R	
Style	Definition	Goal	Correlations with LSP-16
People	Primarily concerned about the others' emotions and feelings; listen to connect.	Relational	People ( $r = .71$ ) Content ( $r = .19$ )
Action	Primarily concerned with task at hand; listen to focus.	Analytical	People ( $r = .32$ ) Content ( $r = .30$ )
Content	Primarily concerned with details; listen to evaluate.	Task-Oriented	Action ( $r = .65$ ) Time ( $r = .35$ )
Time	Primarily concerned with listening efficiency; listening can be viewed as a waste of time.	Critical	Action ( $r = .57$ ) Content ( $r = .41$ ) People ( $r = .11$ )

Note. Correlations presented in the last column were generated from data reported by Bodie, Worthington, et al. (2013) and represent those statistically significant relationships ( $p < .05$ ;  $N = 409$ ). LSP-16 = Listening Styles Profile; LSP-R = Revised Listening Styles Profile.

The conceptualization of listening goals as reflecting four orientations toward information processing has gained widespread acceptance, appearing in nearly every interpersonal communication textbook with a listening chapter and receiving popular press attention across the globe. Although these conceptualizations of listening style have been fruitful to some extent, problems have surfaced in recent work. In particular, studies utilizing the primary measurement instrument, the LSP-16, consistently report reliability estimates in the range of .50 to .60 for most of the subscales (for a review, see Bodie & Worthington, 2010). These findings call into question the results of past research and may signal scale-related problems. The primary limitation of the LSP-16 is that confirmatory model testing has returned results largely inconsistent with the conceptualization of listening goals outlined by the LSP-16 (Bodie, Worthington, & Gearhart, 2013). More damaging is the fact that poor fit is primarily the result of substantial measurement error associated with most of the scale items and high standardized residual covariances.

To attempt to account for these weaknesses, a potentially more psychometrically sound measurement of listening goals was advanced by Bodie et al. (2013), who have framed their typology as representing four distinct “goals that listeners have when engaged in situations that call them to be a particular kind of listener” (p. 86). This reconceptualization suggests listening styles are adaptable and that pursuing a specific listening goal has considerable implications on how conversational partners may respond (Gearhart, Denham, & Bodie, 2013). The introduction of this newer, potentially stronger measure of listening goals makes it necessary to retest relationships among listening goals and other constructs found in previous studies utilizing the LSP-16. Following is a description of each subscale of the LSP-R and how it compares to the original iteration (see Table 1 for a summary).

First, a fundamental goal of listening involves connecting with others emotionally and attempting to understand how they feel. Similar to Watson et al.’s people-orientation, the first listening-related goal in this new framework is labeled relational listening (RL), a concern with and awareness of others’ feelings and emotions. When the goal of listening is focused on the relationship there is a corresponding enjoyment of listening and a higher likelihood that one will attend to others during times of stress. When listening relationally, people are viewed as more empathic (Weaver & Kirtley, 1995; Worthington, 2001), and their speech is likely more relationally oriented (Bodie & Villaume, 2003). In addition, people who report listening in this way also report being more outgoing and sociable (Sargent, Fitch-Hauser, & Weaver, 1997; Villaume & Bodie, 2007; Weaver, 1998).

The second goal, analytical listening (AL), reflects an intentional focus on the full message of a speaker before coming to judgment. AL more accurately captures a tendency to engage in systematic thinking, which is clearly evident given AL was found to be strongly associated with the information processing constructs *perspective taking* and *systematic-analytic processing* (Bodie, Worthington et al., 2013; Study 2). Items on the AL scale such as “I fully listen to what a person has to say before forming any opinions” recognize a listener’s desire to gather all available information with the intention to truly understand all available perspectives. AL is also correlated with RL ( $r = .39$ ; Bodie, Worthington et al., 2013) suggesting listening in analytically oriented ways exhibits sensitivity to what others are feeling.

The third goal, task-oriented listening (TOL), reflects concern with the amount of time spent in an interaction, but also represents a desire by the listener for a speaker to stay focused and on-topic. These two facets of TOL are neatly evidenced through the two relationships with the original action- and the time-oriented styles of the LSP-16 (see Table 1). Consequently, people

who report high levels of TOL are those who want a speaker to remain on task and “get to the point” without wasting time. TOL also is related to a tendency toward verbal aggressiveness, a lack of enjoyment for listening, and the inclination to respond nonempathically (Bodie, Worthington et al., 2013; Study 2). Thus, TOL seems to map conceptually to what past research calls a socially callous listening style (Villaume & Bodie, 2007; Weaver, 1998).

Finally, critical listening (CL) refers to purposeful attention to accuracy and consistency of a speaker’s message. The items comprising the CL scale all tap a tendency to evaluate and critically assess messages, a key component of the original content-orientation factor of the LSP-16. Indeed, people who report a high degree of CL also report a high need to think about issues and to evaluate the perspectives of others. Basically, this goal reflects a felt need to critically examine people and information in general (Bodie, Worthington et al., 2013; Study 2).

Importantly, not only does the work of Bodie and colleagues provide a new conceptualization of listening goals, it is also a substantially improved measurement instrument. Indeed, the reliability estimates of the new scale have been consistently higher than those produced by the LSP-16 ( $\alpha$ ’s > .80 vs. < .65), and model fitting procedures conducted with data gathered using the new scale have produced evidence of construct validity. A primary purpose of this study is to advance the case for validity for this new measure by showing theoretically relevant relationships among the various listening goals and a set of communicator preferences detailed below.

## COMMUNICATOR PREFERENCES

According to Keteyian (2011), individual differences in communication skill and listening skill are inextricably linked; as individuals “develop more awareness of [communicative] strengths, [they] will naturally develop more patience in listening to others, asking questions, and communicating a greater desire to achieve understanding” (p. 92). Keteyian (2011) asserts that there are seven different communicator preferences making up one’s communication style, and these components can fluctuate per individual: Linguistic, logical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, auditory, visual, and kinesthetic.

Individuals who use words carefully to specifically define concepts prefer a *linguistic* component to their communication style. Because a linguistic preference involves careful attention to detail and word choice, it should be associated with AL because its attributes include careful attention, understanding, perspective, analysis, and sensibility. Furthermore, because TOL involves a concern with not wasting time, staying focused, and getting to the point, and CL involves a detail orientation, each shares conceptual space with a communicator preference that puts a premium on specifics and detail. Accordingly:

H1: Linguistic communicator preferences are positively associated with analytical, critical, and task-oriented listening goals.

Next, those *logically* inclined to communicate choose to explore possibilities and construct an understanding of sequential events and their underlying causes. Logical communicators prefer to be careful, attentive, and thorough, emphasizing details and consistency of thought. AL goals should display an association to logical communicator preferences because they involve careful attention, understanding, perspective, and analysis. Logical preference may also be related to

TOL and CL goals because they also emphasize specifics and detail. Moreover, previous associations have been reported between AL and RL. If logical communicative preferences are associated with AL as these authors claim, then they too should also be correlated with RL.

H2: Logical communicator preferences are positively associated with relational, analytical, task-oriented, and critical listening goals.

The *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal* constructs describe a preference to communicate externally or internally, respectively. Those who have an inclination for communicating interpersonally often think out loud and prefer to talk things through with a conversational other. It seems intuitive that interpersonal preferences, that is, focusing on talk and interaction, and relational listening goals, which are grounded in empathy and relationships, would be related. On the other hand, those who think internally often think things through before and after responding, and often appear reserved and in need of time and space to process information, which insinuates a connection to AL and CL goals. However, because TOL has been associated with verbal aggression, lack of enjoyment in conversational listening, and a lack of empathy, these goals should be inversely associated with interpersonal preferences, which emphasize affect, physical connection, and talking things through, and intrapersonal preferences, which include a need for time to process information. Thus:

H3: Interpersonal communicator preferences are positively associated with relational listening goals and negatively associated with task-oriented listening goals.

H4: Intrapersonal communicator preferences are positively associated with analytical and critical listening goals and negatively associated with task-oriented listening goals.

Those preferring *auditory* communication are attuned to the tone, pitch, timbre, and rhythm of a conversation. This preference would seem helpful in regards to being attentive and picking up on subtle nonverbal and affective cues applicable to relational encounters, which by extension may result in a greater probability that one is able to carefully attend to others during listening scenarios involving a stressful situation. AL goals also involve message processing, and the ability to hear beyond words would seem to be an apt preference when one wants to understand every possible perspective in a conversation. Finally, auditory cues may help decode message intent—especially concerning discrepancies between the tone of one's voice and the content of their message—which is essential to CL goals. Therefore, an auditory communication preference should display an association to RL, AL, and CL. The following hypothesis is advanced according to this reasoning:

H5: Auditory communicator preferences are positively associated with relational, analytical, and critical listening goals.

Others favor thinking in pictures, displaying a strong *visual-spatial* component to their conversational preference. It is not difficult for these individuals to picture events with visually oriented detail. This preference may allow the communicator to more easily pick up on necessary nonverbal and affective cues, which suggests usefulness in RL situations (akin to auditory and kinesthetic preferences). Furthermore, to take in all possible information when comprehending a situation, a listener with AL goals would be interested in gathering visual information to appreciate every likely perspective (in the same vein as auditory and kinesthetic preferences).

Finally, in the same sense that auditory and kinesthetic cues may help decode message intent concerning discrepancies between nonverbal cues and message content, visual attention should be a necessary part of evaluating in terms of CL goals.

H6: Visual-spatial communicator preferences are positively associated with relational, analytical, and critical listening goals.

Finally, *kinesthetic* communicators are grounded in experience and prefer to utilize physical gestures and postures to communicate nonverbally. Because emotional and physical connections play a large part in kinesthetic communication, it would naturally seem related to RL, which emphasizes awareness of feelings and emotions. In an opposite sense, TOL goals are concerned with not wasting time, staying focused, and getting to the point. Because TOL has been associated with verbal aggression, lack of enjoyment in conversational listening, and a lack of empathy, TOL should not be associated with a kinesthetic communicator preference that emphasizes emotions and physical connections. In the same sense as auditory preferences for communicating, kinesthetic communication likewise involves message processing and the ability to decipher nonverbal and affective cues. Because AL goals similarly focus on a wider understanding and perspective, these goals should also be related to kinesthetic communicator preferences (in the same regard as auditory). Kinesthetic preferences may also aid in discerning discrepancies between the speaker's nonverbal expressions, gestures, and the content of their message, which is also necessary to evaluate messages and accomplish CL goals. Therefore:

H7: Kinesthetic communicator preferences are positively associated with relational, analytical, and critical listening goals and negatively associated with task-oriented listening goals.

## METHODS

### Participants

A total of 257 (122 females, 135 males) undergraduate students attending Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College constituted the convenience sample for this study. Students ranged from 18 to 27 years of age ( $M = 20.02$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ) and represented the freshman ( $n = 71$ ), sophomore ( $n = 99$ ), junior ( $n = 59$ ), and senior ( $n = 27$ ) ranks; one respondent indicated graduate student status. Although recruited through Communication Studies courses, only 38 self-identified as Department majors or minors.

### Procedures

Students were recruited for the study via an online scheduling system. Those choosing this option earned 1.5% of their course grade for participating. All data collected were confidential, all students provided informed consent, and the appropriate Institutional Review Board approved all procedures. Participants were directed to an external and secure universal resource locator (URL) where they completed self-report scales measuring listening goals and communicator preferences.

## Preliminary Analyses

Prior to running primary analyses, data were inspected for violations of multivariate assumptions (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). All measurement scales utilized were assessed for dimensionality and ability to represent current data. Commonly used fit indexes and comparison thresholds were utilized: The comparative fit index (CFI) above .90, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) below .10, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) below .08 (e.g., Byrne, 2010; Hoyle, 2000; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006). Internal consistency was estimated using Cronbach's  $\alpha$ .

## Statistical Power

With  $N = 257$  and alpha set at .05, power to detect small effects ( $r = .10$ ) was .48 and exceeded .99 for medium ( $r = .30$ ) and large ( $r = .50$ ) effects. Therefore, a Type II error is possible for any small effect sizes discovered in this study. The sample meets moderate expectations to detect small effects and high expectations to detect medium to large effect sizes for correlational model estimations.

## Measures

### *Listening goals*

Listening goals were operationalized using the 24-item Revised Listening Styles Profile (LSP-R; Bodie, Worthington et al., 2013). This scale contains four factors tapping into Relational Listening (e.g., "When listening to others, it is important to understand the feelings of the speaker";  $\alpha = .81$ ), Analytical Listening (e.g., "I wait until all the facts are presented before forming judgments and opinions";  $\alpha = .86$ ), Task-Oriented Listening (e.g., "I am impatient with people who ramble on during conversations";  $\alpha = .79$ ), and Critical Listening (e.g., "When listening to others, I focus on any inconsistencies and/or errors in what's being said";  $\alpha = .82$ ). The factors were allowed to freely correlate, but error terms were not correlated to achieve model fit. The latent structure fit the data,  $\chi^2(246) = 366.77$ ,  $p < .000$ , CFI = .93, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .05, CI90% = .04, .05.

### *Communicator preferences*

A refined and revised version of the Communication Components Inventory (CCI-R; Keaton & Bodie, 2012) containing 21 items across seven latent constructs was used to measure communicator preferences: Auditory (e.g., "I really notice tone of voice when someone is speaking";  $\alpha = .44$ ), Kinesthetic (e.g., "Physical movement helps me process information";  $\alpha = .60$ ), Linguistic (e.g., "I like explaining, teaching, or persuading other";  $\alpha = .70$ ), Logical (e.g., "I reason things through step-by-step when thinking and talking";  $\alpha = .73$ ), Visual-Spatial (e.g., "I can see things from different angles when I hear a description";  $\alpha = .64$ ), Interpersonal (e.g., "It is important for me to get my thoughts and feelings out in the open";  $\alpha = .66$ ), and Intrapersonal (e.g., "Learning about myself is central to my understanding of others";  $\alpha = .67$ ). The factors were allowed to freely correlate, but error terms were not correlated to achieve model fit. The latent structure fit



the data,  $\chi^2 (168) = 317.82$ ,  $p < .000$ , CFI = .92, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .06, CI90% = .05, .07. It should be noted that many of these subscales exhibit reliability estimates that are below commonly accepted values (i.e.,  $< .70$ ), thus correlations reported in the results section may underestimate true relationships.

## RESULTS

### Bivariate Correlations

First, to assess the hypotheses in terms of direct associations, bivariate correlations were estimated between the factors of trait communicator preferences and listening goals. H1 asserts that linguistic communicator preferences are positively associated with analytical, critical, and task-oriented listening goals. Bivariate correlations (Table 2) support the assertion in that AL, CL, and TOL goals are all associated with linguistic preferences.

H2 claims that logical communicator preferences are positively associated with relational, analytical, critical, and task-oriented listening goals. Bivariate estimates support the statement in that AL, TOL, CL, and RL goals are all significantly correlated with logical communicator preferences.

H3 maintains that interpersonal communicator preferences are positively associated with RL goals and negatively associated with TOL goals. There is partial support for this hypothesis as RL goals are highly correlated with interpersonal preferences. However, while TOL is related to interpersonal preferences, it is in the opposite direction. Furthermore, interpersonal preferences are also correlated with AL and CL goals, which was not hypothesized.

TABLE 2  
Bivariate Correlations between Communicator Preferences (CCI-R) and Listener Goals (LSP-R)

	<i>LSP-R</i>				<i>CCI-R</i>					
	<i>RL</i>	<i>AL</i>	<i>TOL</i>	<i>CL</i>	<i>TER</i>	<i>TRA</i>	<i>LI</i>	<i>LO</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>V</i>
<b>LSP-R</b>										
AL	.47***	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOL	.17**	.11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CL	.21***	.32***	.46***	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>CCI-R</b>										
TER	.61***	.31***	.24***	.17**	—	—	—	—	—	—
TRA	.48***	.39***	.29***	.37***	.63***	—	—	—	—	—
LI	.48***	.38***	.24***	.44***	.63***	.61***	—	—	—	—
LO	.22***	.31***	.35***	.42***	.27***	.46***	.52***	—	—	—
A	.46***	.31***	.20**	.23***	.49***	.61***	.65***	.55***	—	—
V	.41***	.41***	.25***	.42***	.58***	.43***	.49***	.35***	.49***	—
K	.41***	.23***	.14*	.15*	.56***	.57***	.53***	.40***	.48***	.51***

Note. Boldface represents results not predicted by hypotheses. RL = Relational Listening; AL = Analytical Listening; TOL = Task-Oriented Listening; CL = Critical Listening; TER = Interpersonal; TRA = Intrapersonal; LI = Linguistic; LO = Logical; A = Auditory; V = Visual; K = Kinesthetic.

\*Significant at the  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significant at the  $p < .01$  level. \*\*\*Significant at the  $p < .001$  level.

H4 states that intrapersonal communicator preferences are positively associated with AL and CL listening goals and negatively associated with TOL goals. This hypothesis is partially supported. AL and CL goals are associated with intrapersonal preferences. However, TOL is significantly correlated in the opposite direction. Furthermore, intrapersonal preferences are related to RL, which was not posited.

H5 posits that auditory communicator preferences are positively associated with RL, AL, and CL listening goals. This hypothesis is supported in that all three are significantly correlated. Additionally, auditory preferences are likewise positively related to TOL.

H6 claims that visual-spatial communicator preferences are positively associated with RL, AL, and CL listening goals. This hypothesis is supported in that all three are significantly correlated. Of further note is that visual-spatial preferences are also positively related to TOL.

H7 asserts that kinesthetic communicator preferences are positively associated with RL, AL, and CL listening goals and negatively related to TOL listening goals. This hypothesis is supported in that RL, AL, and CL are significantly correlated with kinesthetic communicator preferences. However, TOL is in the opposite direction as predicted (it is also positive).

Multivariate Correlations

Next, multivariate correlations were estimated to observe whether there were significant linear combinations of the set of trait communicator preferences and the set of listening goals. Results indicate two significant canonical dimensions: *canonical*  $r_1 = .68$  ( $F = 8.72$ ; 46% overlapping variance) and *canonical*  $r_2 = .49$  ( $F = 4.65$ ; 24% overlapping variance). The remaining two canonical dimensions are not statistically significant (see Table 3).

The four listening goals are significantly correlated with the first canonical dimension; of the communicator preferences, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and linguistic are significantly correlated with the first canonical dimension. However, when examining the standardized results, only interpersonal communicator goals are greater than .30, signifying a moderate to large association (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Intrapersonal and linguistic communicator preferences are associated to a small to moderate degree. Of the listening goals, only RL is large in magnitude. The other three listening goals are small to moderate correlations (Table 4).

The first canonical dimension lends support to H3, which asserts that interpersonal communicator preferences are positively related to RL. To a slighter degree, these results also support H4, which states that intrapersonal communicator preferences are positively associated with AL and CL, and hypothesis one, which posits that linguistic communicator preferences are positively associated with analytical, critical, and task-oriented listening goals.

TABLE 3  
Tests of Canonical Dimensions

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Canonical r</i>	<i>Wilk's λ</i>	<i>Multivariate F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
1	.68	.38	8.72	28	791.04	.000
2	.49	.70	4.65	18	622.74	.000
3	.27	.92	1.82	10	442	.06
4	.09	.99	0.42	4	222	.79

TABLE 4  
Standardized Canonical Coefficients

	<i>Dimension</i>	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
Listener Goals		
Relational	.72*	-.72*
Analytical	.22*	.34*
Task-Oriented	.21*	-.03
Critical	.24*	.82*
Communicator Preferences		
Interpersonal	.39*	-.96*
Intrapersonal	.23*	.28
Linguistic	.24*	.41*
Logical	.05	.41*
Visual-Spatial	.19*	.39*
Kinesthetic	.00	-.23
Auditory	.12	-.16

*Note.* Asterisk indicates statistical significance.

The second canonical dimension is composed of relational, analytical, and critical listening goals and interpersonal, linguistic, logical, and visual-spatial communicator preferences. All of the associations are at least moderate in strength, and with interpersonal, RL, and CL in particular, large in magnitude. Of particular note is the strength of the association of interpersonal communicator preferences ( $r = -.96$ ) to the canonical dimension. As listeners' propensity to attend to feeling and emotions (RL) decreases, tendencies to employ analytical and critical listening goals increase. They are also less likely to prefer to communicate interpersonally but are more likely to prefer linguistic, logical, and visual communication. Conversely, individuals who tend to listen relationally are more likely to prefer interpersonal communication, less likely to listen analytically or critically and less likely to prefer to communicate linguistically, logically, and visually.

The second canonical dimension also supports H3, which again maintains an association between interpersonal communicator preferences and RL. It also lends further support to H1 in that linguistic communicator preferences are positively associated with analytical and critical listening goals. H2 maintains that logical communicator preferences are related to all listening goals, so it is partially supported in two of the four instances (AL & CL), and contradicted by the negative association with RL. Finally, H6 states that visual-spatial communicator preferences are positively associated with RL, AL, and CL listening goals. Again, it is partially supported through associations with AL and CL, but contradicted by a negative association with RL.

## DISCUSSION

This study advances the exploration of the goal-directed nature of listening by beginning to unpack associations between message processing goals and preferences for ways of conversing.

It shows how the concerns that listeners tend to utilize during interaction are related to choices they are likely to make as communicators. All listening goals are related to every communicator preference and results are largely supportive of predictions, although there were 1) some contradictory findings and 2) some findings not predicted (see Table 5). The results of multivariate correlation estimates paint a picture of a listening profile centered on relational goals and interpersonal communicator preferences. Although acknowledging several limitations (e.g., use of a convenience sample, self-report data), our results still offer theoretical and practical guidance for future work. It is to those implications that we now turn.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

H3, H4, and H7 maintain that interpersonal, intrapersonal, and kinesthetic communicator preferences are negatively associated with TOL. However, in all three instances, the association was positive and significant. In addition, it was found that TOL is positively correlated with auditory and visual communicator preferences. These results are surprising given that engaging in listening situations with a task mentality is related to a tendency toward verbal aggressiveness, a lack of enjoyment for listening, and an inability to respond empathically (Bodie, Worthington et al., 2013; Study 2), and also is reminiscent of a socially callous listening style (Villaume & Bodie, 2007; Weaver, 1998). These findings may be cause to reconceptualize task-oriented listening as more integral to conversations than previously maintained. Indeed, in many situations,

TABLE 5  
Hypotheses and Support

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Supported by Bivariate Correlations</i>	<i>Supported by Multivariate Correlations</i>
H1: Linguistic communicator preferences are positively associated with analytical, critical, and task-oriented listener goals	Yes	Yes
H2: Logical communicator preferences are positively associated with relational, analytical, task-oriented, and critical listener goals	Yes	Partially
H3: Interpersonal communicator preferences are positively associated with relational listener goals and negatively associated with task-oriented listener goals	Partially	Yes
H4: Intrapersonal communicator preferences are positively associated with analytical and critical listener goals and negatively associated with task-oriented listener goals	Partially	Partially
H5: Auditory communicator preferences are positively associated with relational, analytical, and critical listener goals	Yes	N/A
H6: Visual-spatial communicator preferences are positively associated with relational, analytical, and critical listener goals	Yes	Partially
H7: Kinesthetic communicator preferences are positively associated with relational, analytical, and critical listener goals and negatively associated with task-oriented listener goals	Partially	N/A

being focused on the task is likely beneficial to not only the listener and his or her meeting social goals but also to the other participants who also may be crunched for time or otherwise in need of “quick” listening. For instance, in meetings where the decision to be made is rather straightforward or the outcomes of any given decision are benign, a need to belabor the pros and cons of all the available options, truly consider all sides of an issue, or focus on emotions and feelings may work against the accomplishment of a group’s goals to move onto other business that is more consequential or otherwise complicated.

Other associations that were not hypothesized reveal gaps in the listening goal literature. It was found that interpersonal preferences are correlated with AL and CL and that intrapersonal preferences are related to RL. These results are somewhat counter-intuitive. However, previous research has surmised that AL may reflect a sensitivity to what others are feeling due to careful and systematic listening that calls to mind an interpersonal orientation (Bodie, Worthington et al., 2013). CL also might involve a greater investment in the message of the conversational other to evaluate other perspectives. Indeed, some work in the realm of supportive communication suggests that inspiring others to think about a problem differently (i.e., to reappraise the stressful situation) may enhance coping and speed up the comforting process (Bodie, in press; Burleson & Goldsmith, 1998; Jones & Wirtz, 2006; Nils & Rimé, 2012). Given these points, it may also call for a reconceptualization of these listening goals and their associations with interpersonal communicator preferences. Finally, those who prefer to communicate intrapersonally are also inclined to relational listening. Perhaps a deeper awareness of self enables one to interact more successfully with conversational others. These and other relevant speculations derived from these data should be subjected to empirical scrutiny in future work.

Lastly, there are important conclusions to be drawn from the multivariate analysis. The most meaningful inference drawn from the first canonical dimension is that utilization of a relational listening goal is associated with a strong preference for communicating interpersonally. Since the relative importance of RL compared with the other three listening goals and the interpersonal preference compared with the remaining six communicator preferences was substantially greater, the first multivariate correlation seems to suggest that individuals who have a clear relational listening goal in mind have an inclination for thinking out loud and talking things through with conversational others. Such a finding is in line with the conceptualization of RL as an important relational resource (Bodie, 2012; Bodie, Vickery, & Gearhart, 2013; Halone & Pecchioni, 2001; Pecchioni & Halone, 2000; Rhodes, 1993). Practically, this result suggests that RL is likely to manifest into communication behaviors shown beneficial for close relationships (e.g., relationship talk; Theiss & Solomon, 2008), especially when a close other is experiencing a stressful life event (MacGeorge, Feng, & Burleson, 2011).

Similar implications come from the most ready interpretation of the second canonical root: The combination of low RL with high CL and a moderate degree of AL seems to paint a multidimensional listening goal that directs an individual toward listening closely to all sides of an issue, perhaps to point out inconsistency and errors with less concern for emotions and feelings. This profile is related to a lack of an interpersonal preference and linguistic, visual-spacial, and logical communicator preferences, all of which are detail-oriented communicator styles. This combination suggests that this profile, which features critical listening goals supported by analytical goals (and deemphasizing relational goals) incorporates a careful and attentive multifaceted communicator approach that requires close attention to word choice, visuals (such as nonverbal cues), and an understanding of sequential events and their underlying causes.

Therefore the canonical analysis suggests two listening profiles: The first centers on RL and interpersonal preferences; the second on a critical, detail-oriented approach. These profiles are supportive of previous research finding two dimensions underlying listening constructs (Kluger & Zaidel, 2013). The degree to which a detail orientation (or lack of) in listening during particular situations is related to outcomes (for the listener, his or her interlocutor, and the ensuing conversational narrative produced) is an open area for future empirical work and theory building. Concerning the first listening profile described above, one potential consequence of the near exclusive focus on relational listening is a concomitant lack of detail, especially when it comes to analyzing. Thus, as was noted in the original conceptualization of people-oriented listening, relationally oriented listening may lead people to become mired in emotion. The second profile, however, suggests that there are listeners who tend to focus careful attention to details in listening scenarios. Both “types” of listening may be advantageous in particular situations and interactions with particular people.

### Practical Considerations

Recognizing conversational styles was popularized in linguistic studies (e.g., Tannen, 1993), and this approach illuminates tendencies (conversational patterns) that occur within different contexts (e.g., mother/daughter, men/women, boss/subordinate). Awareness of listening styles and communicator preferences has the potential to enhance practical, relational tools to strengthen relationships. With a better understanding of the relation between individual listening styles and communicator preferences, we deepen our knowledge of what occurs in conversation between two people. Communicators stand to be more intentional about how they employ these behaviors (tools) in relating to one another, increasing opportunities for better communication. When two individuals (regardless of the relationship) enhance awareness of their listening tendencies and can directly discuss them with each other, they might increase the likelihood of achieving understanding.

Furthermore, with information about listening styles and communicator preferences, couples, for instance, might clarify with each other what they need to better define context for conversation. For example, if an individual is emotionally upset and needs support, it is likely that the first listening profile (RL + interpersonal) would be helpful. CL, as a first order of listening, is not likely to be of help in that situation, although it could be if conversational participants (together) determine such a strategy is best. Awareness of different listening approaches and clarity between the parties about what is needed and/or desired is likely to result in positive outcomes.

In addition, if counselors educate themselves about listening goals and communicator preferences, they can exercise greater flexibility in meeting clients’ needs. Similar to the above example regarding couples, counselors might clarify the conversational context with clients to strengthen the working alliance. To illustrate this point, if a counselor and client together decide that the second listening profile (CL + detail oriented approach) would be most helpful in a particular situation, then their working alliance becomes more collaborative where rapport and trust might be likely to deepen. Also, couples counselors can help clients identify listening styles and communicator preferences as a means of noticing the impact they are having on each other. Specific education about the two listening profiles outlined in this study and how they might best be used can add value in teaching communication skills and help clients develop specific problem-solving tools.

Of course in any relationship, awareness of listening goals and communicator preferences can be useful. Knowing one's tendencies and recognizing that others do not always have the same inclinations might aid in creating an accepting and respectful environment. Being flexible as a listener, clarifying the needs and goals of the speaker, and collaborating in setting the context of the conversation can help emphasize the importance and value of a relationship. Ultimately, having a common language to identify different options for listening might increase the likelihood of better communication.

### Future Research

In addition to providing some speculative theoretical and practical guidance, this study also sets the stage for a program of research on listening goals. First, this investigation does provide additional evidence for the validity of a new measure of listening goals, one not marred by substantial measurement error. Of course validity is an ongoing process, and the LSP-R should be continually tested and potentially refined. Second, our results should be interpreted not as a proposal for categorical "styles" of listening but as situationally determined dispositions. Future research should continue to explore patterns of variability in the implementation of listening goals utilizing experimental procedures that present participants with various situations in which certain styles would be preferred over others, especially in regards to critical listening styles that may act as beneficial in some situations but may act against being an effective communicator in other scenarios.

Similarly, quasi-experimental designs can be employed to explore how listening goals manifest in "real world" interaction settings from the classroom to the boardroom and beyond. The results of this study suggest, for instance, that task-oriented listening may be advantageous in certain situations; thus, determining the characteristics of those situations is of utmost practical importance. Equally important is determining the degree to which holding multiple goals during certain interactions constitutes more competent listening analogous to work on message design logic (O'Keefe, 1988) or the pursuit of multiple goals in compliance gaining situations (Wilson, 2010). Concern about what constitutes competent listening is a mainstay of research in listening, and the multiple goals framework offered here suggests yet another conceptualization of what it means to be a "good listener." Indeed, listening is thought as key to a variety of specific communication contexts and relationships, and our goal framework is broad enough to apply equally well to a supportive conversation between friends as it is to a conflict negotiation between strangers. So, although the specifics may differ, we hope that the larger framework can influence the field in positive ways and perhaps help generate unifying theories that explain why and how people listen and interact in the ways they do.

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