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Listening Treatment in the Basic Communication Course Text

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INTRODUCTION

This study assesses the current listening scholarship found in the basic communication course textbook. Wichelns introduced the concept of rhetorical effect in 1925 (Dearin, 1980), which not only introduced the listener into the human communication process, but made the listener of equal importance to the speaker. Listening as a daily communication activity surpasses speaking by 15% in adults (Rankin, 1926, 1930) and 37% in college students (Barker, Edwards, Gaines, Gladney, & Holley, 1980). However, it appears that communication scholars have not taught or researched the role of speaker and listener equally, even though basic communication theory defines communication as a process dependent upon a listener. This study will evaluate content, quality, and position of current listening scholarship in the basic communication course textbook.

RATIONALE

Research on public speaking is bountiful, and research on listening has gained abundance in the last 30 years; yet students in higher education are still offered

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only 7% of instructional time focused on listening (Perkins, 1994). The three most popular models of communication — the linear, interactional, and transactional models — show the speaker and listener to be involved equally in the communication process, but research and instruction on the speaker and the listener has not been equal.

Listening is a critical skill for success in today's academic and professional worlds, and most students only receive listening instruction in the basic course. However, if listening content in the course text is not adequate, then students are not learning to listen effectively, for listening skills are improved primarily through direct instruction.

Listening scholarship and coverage of basic listening theory and skills in the basic course text are necessary to achieve direct instruction for listening skill development. Listening is a critical skill, and it is particularly important for today's college students. Not only has listening been identified as more important than reading skills or academic aptitude in college student achievement and retention (Conaway, 1982; McDevitt, Sheenan & McMenamin, 1991), but listening has been identified as one of the most used and one of the most important communication skills in professional settings (Hynes, & Bhatia, 1996; James, 1992; Maes, Weldy, & Icenogle, 1997; Waner, 1995; Willmington, 1992; Winsor, Curtis, & Stephens, 1997; Wolvin & Coakley, 1996). Consequently, students must learn to listen effectively for better success in both their academic and professional lives.

The basic communication course is the only course that addresses listening skill development and instruc-

tion for most college students. Fewer than 6% of colleges and universities offer a stand alone listening course (Smith & Turner, 1993, as cited in Wacker & Hawkins, 1995), and of that 6%, only slightly more than half of the schools require the separate listening course for their communication majors (Wacker & Hawkins, 1995). Listening is a skill, and students need to be taught to be more effective listeners. Since instructional time spent on developing effective listening skills is severely limited, it is critical that the time spent addresses the most important and current listening scholarship to develop students' knowledge and skills.

Listening content covered in the basic course is relatively unknown. Prior studies of the basic communication course reveal that most courses did include a unit on listening (Morreale, Hanna, Berko, & Gibson, 1999; Perkins, 1994; Wolvin, Coakley & Disburg, 1991 and 1992). The unit typically was short, providing little more than an introduction to the process and to strategies for effective listening. Even a short unit has been found to impact on student perceptions of their listening competencies (Ford & Wolvin, 1993).

Additionally, Perkins' (1994) study provided information on how 498 college institutions taught listening in the basic course. Over half (54%) taught listening, either as a separate unit (37.5%) or by integrating it throughout the semester (34%). A majority (54%) reported covering a general overview of five types of listening (Wolvin & Coakley, 1979, 1982, 1988, 1992, 1993, 1996), with most (44%) focused on critical listening. Instruction primarily took the form of lectures, and even though strategies and activities for developing effective listening skills were presented, less than 50% of the

time spent on listening was focused on skill development. The average time spent on listening instruction in the basic course was 7% of class time, or about 3 hours (Perkins, 1994). While Perkins' (1994) study provides important information as to how listening was taught, instructors have little information as to what aspects of listening were included in these units.

Direct instruction of listening has been demonstrated to increase listening skills in the corporate world (Papa & Glenn, 1988; Smeltzer & Watson, 1985) and academic worlds (Cooper; 1988; Brown, 1954; Brown, 1955; Brown & Keller, 1962; Erikson, 1954; Giffin & Hannah, 1960; Lorenz, 1966; Trivette, 1959; Whitfield, 1964; all as cited in Duker, 1968; Irvin, as cited in Steil, Summerfield, & de Mare, 1983). Some advocate the notion of automatic transfer, suggesting that if a student learns speaking skills, one automatically learns listening skills (Sprague & Stuart, 1996). Conversely, others believe that learning listening skills will transfer to being a better speaker (Nelson & Pearson, 1996; Osborn & Osborn, 1997). The assumption of automatic transfer has not been supported. In order for a skill to become a part of a communicator's repertoire, the communicator needs knowledge, training, and practice of that skill (Kirkpatrick, 1999; Steil, Barker & Watson, 1983; Wolvin & Coakley, 1994). Since the notion of automatic transfer has been proven false, the only way for students to develop more effective listening skills in the academic setting is through direct instruction. Thus, it is imperative that the content reflected in the listening section of the basic text accurately and currently reflect listening scholarship today.

Scholarly publications have been judged by their ability to further knowledge while basing the content on current research and theory. Some argue that "textbooks must still participate in the production of knowledge in the field" (Alred & Thelen, 1993, p. 471), but others contend that the textbook's role is more focused on reflecting the proven truths of the discipline (Connors, 1986). This study is based on the latter philosophy, and it assumes that basic course instructors are responsible for presenting both research and skill instruction that accurately and currently reflects the field of listening research.

The content included in the text can provide a sense of what listening principles and practices are highlighted with students in the basic course. While some instructors often go beyond textbooks and complement them with additional materials, many do begin with the text as a base for what is covered in the course. This study was designed to assess basic listening scholarship and content included in basic communication course textbooks.

For the purposes of this paper, listening scholarship is defined as listening-focused research conducted in a systematic fashion, using quantitative or qualitative methods, with research findings presented in an academically sanctioned outlet, such as journals, books, or conferences. Listening scholarship has been published in many journals, and much of it has been published in the *International Journal of Listening* since its inception in 1987. The majority of scholarship has been published within the areas of theory, research, instruction, assessment, and practice, identified as the "intellectual discussion" of the journal (Wolvin, Halone, & Coakley,

1999). Specific research for these five areas have focused on topics such as theory development, listening in the classroom, validation of listening tests, the teaching of listening, and listening practices in specific contexts such as healtcare settings.

To determine what constitutes the study of listening, it is helpful to look at the treatment of listening in the reportedly most-used textbooks in these courses. In their survey of the basic communication course, Morreale et al. (1999) identified 17 most-mentioned textbooks used to instruct the basic course (Appendix A).

This study utilizes an inductive content analysis to determine what content is included in the textbook's listening chapter. Content analyses of texts is the longest established empirical method of social investigation (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000). Though deductive content analyses are more common, a deductive model would be inappropriate (Silverman, 2001) because predetermined categories of listening constructs do not exist (since a study of this type has not been attempted). An inductive content analysis will lay the groundwork for what is currently included in basic course textbooks, and this will allow instructors and scholars to determine what should be included.

PROCEDURE

The 17 texts cited as those most widely reported to be used to teach the basic communication course were analyzed for this study. All editions of these textbooks were either those cited in the survey (Morreale et al., 1999) or a more recent version available from the pub-

lisher. The decision to use the most recent edition was based on the belief that former editions of books usually are no longer available from publishers when a new edition is printed. Thus, the most recent edition would most clearly illustrate that text's treatment of listening today.

The texts were reviewed for listening content, which, in most instances, was limited to a single chapter devoted to listening. Each chapter was read thoroughly, and major content categories emerged. An analysis of the major content categories resulted in three major classifications: content related, process related, and placement. The emerged content categories then became the standard by which the texts were analyzed.

What follows is a report on the approach to listening taken in the listening chapters in these textbooks. Each textbook was reviewed for the location of listening chapter(s) in the textbook, listening content, and the portion of text devoted to listening instruction. A discussion of the findings and their implications for the basic course instructor follows.

FINDINGS

Location of Listening Chapter in Books

The placement of the listening chapter in the book might imply the importance of listening in the basic communication course. Most listening chapters were featured in approximately the first quarter of the text. One exception (Gamble & Gamble, 1996) placed the chapter about half way through the book. Most texts (12

of the 16 with entire chapters) placed the listening chapter as the third or fourth chapter of the book following chapters on the introduction to communication and perception.

Content

References, Additional Readings, and Listening Scholarship

The quantity and quality of references cited in each listening chapter could identify current and accurate reflection of listening scholarship. First, current scholarship was assessed by the number of citations referenced and the date of the referenced publication (Appendix B). The majority of references for all texts were from 1980's publications (81) followed by publications of the 1990's (61). However, citations from the 1970's also were prevalent with 35 references, followed by the 1950's with 21 references.

In general, texts displayed inconsistent numbers of references. Total number of references ranged from 33 (Adler & Rodman, 1997) and 27 (Gamble & Gamble; 1996; Osborn & Osborn, 1997) to 2 (Gronbeck et al., 1998) and zero (Sprague & Stuart, 1996). The reference mode was 7 references (Grice & Skinner, 1995; Zarefsky, 1996).

Authors of two textbooks did address current listening scholarship. Adler and Rodman (1997) cited a number of listening and interpersonal publications. Included were references to listening and empathy (Burleson, 1994; Spaeapan and Oskamp, 1992; as cited in Adler & Rodman, 1997), relational listening (Vangelisti, 1994; as cited in Adler & Rodman, 1997), and organiza-

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tional listening (Wolvin & Coakley, 1991; as cited in Adler & Rodman, 1997). Likewise, Lucas (1998) referred to two listening textbooks (Coakley & Wolvin, 1991; Wolff & Marsnik, 1992; as cited in Adler & Rodman, 1997), listening training in the organizational environment (Wolvin & Coakley, 1991, 1996; as cited in Adler & Rodman, 1997), as well as the International Listening Association. This international association, established in 1979 in an effort to "promote the study, development, and teaching of effective listening in all settings" (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996, p. 100) was also referenced by Gamble and Gamble, 1996. No other texts gave mention to listening as a separate study of communication and to its international organization.

Some texts suggested additional readings outside of the referenced works (Adler & Rodman, 1997; DeVito, 1994; Gamble & Gamble, 1996; Lucas, 1998; Pearson & Nelson, 1997). Additional readings were almost always published prior to 1990 and rarely included work from listening scholarship. Rather, additional readings included print and film materials, Internet sources, and speeches.

The Listening Model

Models provide a representation of how a process works, and consistency in models indicates agreement on the process. Texts that offered a model described listening as a linear process, one by which all steps needed to be met in order to listen effetively.

Seven of the texts (Adler & Rodman, 1997; Beebe & Beebe, 1997; DeVito, 1994; DeVito, 1999; Grice & Skinner, 1995; Nelson & Pearson, 1996; Verderber, 1999) described listening as a process consisting of detailed

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steps (appendix C). With the exception of both of De-Vito's texts, no two descriptions of the processes were exactly the same. The step most consistent and found in 6 of the 7 texts was the step of understanding. None of the other texts attempted to break down listening into steps, suggesting that listening is not a process and cannot be taught as such. In fact, one text (Gamble & Gamble, 1996) determined that humans have the ability to "unlisten," negating the idea of listening as a linear or dynamic process.

Listening as a Dynamic Process

Communication is a dynamic process, and the act of effective communication requires both listening and speaking. Both Beebe and Beebe (1997) and Gronbeck et al. (1998) approached listening as a dynamic process interdependent with the speaker. Specifically, strategies on how to improve listening by adapting to the speaker and the message were given (Beebe & Beebe, 1997), and listening as a joint responsibility between the speaker and the listener was stressed (Gronbeck et al., 1998). Tips for the listener to listen more effectively in addition to tips for speakers to develop the message so that the audience could listen more effectively were presented (Gronbeck et al. 1998). Verderber (1999) also viewed listening as a dynamic process. His treatment of listening focused more on how to respond as a listener, thereby moving the skill of listening to the first step of being a speaker.

Describing listening as the first step of the speaking process was not unusual. This approach also was found in many of the hybrid texts, the texts that include chapters on interpersonal and group communication, (Adler

& Rodman, 1997; DeVito, 1994; DeVito, 1999; Gamble & Gamble, 1996; Jaffee, 1998; Pearson & Nelson, 1997; Verderber, 1999) by suggesting that the effective listener asks questions and paraphrases what was heard.

Types of Listening

A basic listening taxonomy identifies the importance of listening skills varying by different contexts. This categorization enables students to understand that listening is contextual, that there is no single "right way" to listen in all contexts. Wolvin and Coakley's (1979, 1982, 1988, 1992, 1993, 1996) listening taxonomy, which identified five types of listening, has been widely cited in listening research (Brownell, 1995; Purdy, 1997; Rhodes, Watson & Barker, 1990; Ridge, 1993; Ross & Glenn, 1996). Discriminative listening is used to identify sounds; comprehensive listening is used for understanding; therapeutic listening offers supportive listening without judgment; critical listening judges what is heard against a specific standard; and appreciative listening is used for enjoyment.

The majority, 14 of 17, of the texts, included critical listening. Of these 14 texts, 4 of them exclusively covered critical listening (Grice & Skinner, 1995; Osborn & Osborn, 1997; Sprague & Stewart, 1996; Zarefsky, 1996). Much more common was a text review of two to three types of listening, usually critical, comprehensive, and therapeutic, devoting a fair amount of space to all. Only one text (Gronbeck et al., 1998) cited all five types of listening found in Wolvin & Coakley's (1979, 1982, 1988, 1992, 1993, 1996) listening taxonomy.

Approaches to Teaching Listening

Certain approaches to learning skills are more successful than other approaches, and a consistent approach may indicate agreement. A similar, persuasive formula-based approach to teaching the listening section was taken by most of the textbooks. Texts used the formula of identifying the need for effective listening, distinguishing listening from hearing, presented listening barriers , and then offered a list of solutions.

Need for effective listening was established either by quoting statistics or by giving specific examples of when effective listening was not utilized. Many texts relied on the statistics of Barker's et al. (1980) study (Adler & Rodman, 1997; Grice & Skinner, 1995; Verderber, 1999), or Rankin's 1926 or 1930 study (Beebe & Beebe, 1997; Gamble & Gamble, 1996; Nelson & Pearson, 1996). Two texts cited both (DeVito, 1994; Pearson & Nelson, 1997). Both Rankin and Barker identifed listening as the communication behavior that adults and college students used most on a daily basis. Textbook authors concluded, some implicitly and some explicitly, that if listening is used most, it should be learned.

Listening was distinguished from hearing and further defined in 13 of the 16 textbooks. This distinction is critical, as hearing is the receiving of sound waves, while listening is the process by which one attaches meaning and understanding to the message. Hearing takes no effort, but listening takes effort and concentration. Hearing is passive, but listening is active.

At the end of most chapters, a list of barriers to listening was presented, and then strategies for developing better listening skills were given. Only one text, (Pearson & Nelson, 1997), offered solutions based on

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previous research (Capella, 1987). Most books provided a number of exercises or activities for students to improve their listening skills.

Automatic Transfer Between Listening and Speaking

Three texts presented the view of automatic transfer, though no text identified it as such. Sprague & Stuart (1996) supported the notion of automatic transfer from speaking to listening. Their coverage of listening in the public speaking text was condensed to 2 pages of a 457-page text. The authors stated "If you master the techniques in this 'speaker's' handbook, we guarantee that you will be a better listener" (p.17).

However, this notion of automatic transfer was supported by two texts,but in the opposite direction. These texts supported automatic transfer from listening to speaking skills. Nelson and Pearson (1996) suggested that one would become a more confident public speaker if one became a more confident listener. Similarly, Osborn and Osborn felt that "Good listeners tend to grow good speakers" (1997, p. 93). The other texts did not address the notion of automatic transfer.

Listening Ethics

Ethics are concerned with moral codes accepted by a society and practiced by the majority of its members. Spoken and unspoken support for ethical codes provides part of the glue that binds together a culture. A consistent code of ethics for the listener would imply a disciplinary agreement of the ethical rules. No such agreement existed in the basic course textbooks.

Nine textbooks referred to the ethical responsibilities of a listener (Beebe & Beebe, 1997; DeVito, 1999; Gamble & Gamble; 1996; Grice & Skinner, 1995; Gronbeck et al., 1998; Jaffee, 1998, Lucas, 1998; Osborn & Osborn, 1997; Verderber, 1999). Gamble and Gamble (1996, p. 180) began the listening chapter with the topic of listening ethics and concluded five pages later with "...everyone must assume 51 percent of the responsibility of communication" because everyone acts as the source and the receiver. Listening was considered in a variety of contexts from personal to professional, and the ethics of listening appeared to be synonymous with effective listening. Gronbeck et al. (1998) devoted almost a full page to listening ethics in the form of five components for which to critically listen. These five components, based on Wolvin and Coakley (1979), included the need to be wary of percentages instead of whole numbers and to watch for generic substitutions. Jaffee (1998) offered a discussion of ethical dilemmas. A portion of a 1992 Clinton transcript was cited, followed by questions addressing ethical dilemmas issues.

Additionally, the placement of the ethical listening section was not consistent, further calling into question the listener's ethical responsibilities. For example, DeVito (1999) placed the section on ethical listening in the chapter on public speaking preparation. Other texts (Beebe & Beebe, 1997; Grice & Skinner, 1995; Lucas, 1998) placed the ethical listening section within the chapter on the ethics of public speaking; but, the listening chapter was not presented until later in the text so no connection was made between listening research, listening practices, and ethics. Two texts (Adler and Rodman, 1997; Verderber, 1999) offered an ethical

challenge to the reader to identify if one was obligated to listen to all messages; however, no specific guidelines were given to solving the dilemmas. Osborn and Osborn (1997) included ethics in the portion of the listening chapter that addressed critically evaluating speeches. They did reference the topic of ethics to a previous chapter; however, they reiterated the ethical responsibility of the speaker and did not specifically address the ethical responsibility of the listener. Nelson and Pearson (1996) had a separate chapter devoted to the ethical and effective use of evidence, proof, and arguments that follows the chapter on listening. Additionally, their listening chapter contained a section that concerned the speaker's ethical standards, and the listener was instructed to consider what the speaker was thinking as opposed to what the listener heard.

Listening, Gender, and Culture

The way one listens is affected by gender and culture (Borisoff, & Hahn, 1997; Brownell, 1996; Thomlinson, 1997), and it is important that students understand that gender and culture affect their listening style so that they can make accommodations when necessary. Listening and gender differences only were given attention by DeVito (1999). Tannen's research (1990; 1994a; 1994b; as cited in DeVito, 1999) was reviewed in a brief and objective fashion.

Some texts (Adler & Rodman, 1997; DeVito, 1999; Jaffee, 1998; Osborn & Osborn, 1997) addressed the issue of listening diversity in terms of the influence of cultural differences on listening. Jaffee (1998) devoted almost 50% of her chapter to the cultural differences of listening by addressing such topics as language and vo-

cabulary differences, cultural allusions, and listening schemas as cultural expectations. Both Adler and Rodman, (1997) and Jaffee (1998) included and explained the Chinese character for listening.

Native Americans were the focus of 2 other books (Adler & Rodman, 1997; Osborn & Osborn, 1997) that linked listening to culture. In their introduction to listening, Osborn and Osborn (1997) explained the listening philosophies of two native American tribes, the Ojai and the Lakota, and suggested that silence and thinking before speaking would be incorporated into their chapter on listening. Likewise, Adler and Rodman (1997) explained the ritual of the "talking stick" found in another Native American tribe, the Iroquois. The rules of the "talking stick" were quite easy. One cannot talk or even think about what one is going to say unless one was holding the single talking stick. If one was not holding the talking stick, one must listen by devoting full attention to the speaker.

Listening and Critical Thinking

Critical thinking and critical listening are two separate skills; however, they often work in tandem with each other. Students should understand that competency in one does not necessarily translate to competency in the other.

Some texts seemed to use the listening chapter to introduce critical thinking as opposed to distinguishing listening and critical thinking as two separate skills (Beebe & Beebe, 1997; Gregory, 1996; Gronbeck at al., 1998; Zarefsky, 1996). Zeuschner (1997) tied both listening and critical thinking together; however, each received its own chapter and explanation and the listen-

ing chapter segued into the critical thinking chapter. Two texts (Adler & Rodman, 1997; Gamble & Gamble, 1996) had no separate chapter on critical thinking; however, a substantive portion of the listening chapter was devoted to critical listening and covered such topics as assessing speaker credibility and examining reasoning. Another author (DeVito, 1994) did not address the issues of critical thinking or critical listening in one text, but placed a separate section of critical thinking tailored for a specific topic at the end of each of the 15 chapters in another text (DeVito, 1999). Each chapter contained special questions and examples that one could ask within that specific communication context. For example, chapter 12 on public speaking preparation cited the importance of questioning the credibility of Internet sources since anyone can operate an Internet site. Similarly, Jaffee (1998) interspersed critical thinking segments throughout the book rather than devoting a separate chapter to critical thinking.

Hybrid versus Public Speaking Focus

If one accepts that listening is contextual (Borisoff & Purdy, 1997; Purdy, 1997; Wolvin & Coakley, 1996), then the coverage of listening in a hybrid or a public speaking focused text may be different. A hybrid text would consider listening in interpersonal, group, and public contexts, while a public speaking text would concern itself only with listening in the public arena.

The textbooks included in this study roughly approximated the split between a hybrid and a public speaking focused basic course. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the most-used texts had a public speaking orientation (Beebe & Beebe, 1997; Gregory, 1996; Grice & Skinner,

1995; Gronbeck et al., 1998; Jaffee, 1998; Lucas, 1998; Nelson & Pearson, 1996; Osborn & Osborn, 1997; Sprague & Stuart, 1996; Zarefsky, 1996). Fifty-five percent (55%) of schools teaching the basic course focused on public speaking, and 30% used a hybrid approach (Morreale et al., 1999). It might appear logical that listening would be taught differently to students who had little opportunity to interact with the speaker in a public forum versus those that had interpersonal interactions. Overall, the difference with how listening content was addressed in the separate books was not great.

The primary difference between the hybrid and public speaking texts was in the therapeutic or empathic approach to listening. All of the texts with the hybrid approach (Adler & Rodman, 1997; DeVito, 1994; DeVito, 1999; Gamble & Gamble, 1996; Pearson & Nelson, 1997; Verderber, 1999; Zeuschner, 1997) described empathic listening, while only one of the public speaking texts (Gronbeck et al., 1998) gave mention to therapeutic listening.

Another notable difference between the hybrid texts and the public speaking texts was the concept of active listening. Active listening often was viewed as a four-step process that was defined as "(1) getting prepared to listen, (2) staying involved with the communication, (3) keeping an open mind while listening, and (4) reviewing and evaluating after the event" (Zeuschner, 1997, p. 41). Active listening was proposed by five of the seven hybrid texts (DeVito, 1994; DeVito, 1999; Gamble & Gamble, 1996; Pearson & Nelson, 1997; Zeuschner, 1997) but only one of the public speaking texts (Jaffee, 1998). Beebe and Beebe (1997) offered a different version of

active listening, which includes resorting, rephrasing, and repeating.

Portion of Book Devoted to Listening Instruction

Textbook treatments can provide a sense of what listening content is addressed with students in the basic course. Educators generally perceive that the time spent teaching a subject is roughly equivalent to the amount of space devoted to the concept in the textbook. Each textbook from this study had at least one full chapter devoted to listening with the exception of Sprague and Stuart (1996), who devoted only two pages to listening. The average text only devoted a little more than 4 % of its space to listening. This is slightly less than the 7% of time reported by instructors in the Perkins' (1994) study. Two texts (Adler & Rodman, 1997; Verderber, 1999) did devote the equivalent of 7 % of their space on listening, but no text exceeded that amount.

DISCUSSION

This content analysis of the basic course texts affirms that the quality of the content included does not reflect current listening scholarship, and the amount of space allotted for listening instruction falls short of the premise that the speaker and the listener are of equal importance in the communication process. Speaking and listening instruction are not treated equally in communication instruction, as significantly more time is spent on instruction for the source, even though the average adult spends most of his time acting as a receiver (Bar-

ker et al., 1980; Rankin, 1926; Rankin 1930). Additionally, basic text authors do not agree on the definition or process of listening, and they do not appear to include current listening scholarship that supports their choices. If these listening chapters serve the basis for listening instruction, then students are not exposed to current listening findings.

Some listening instruction is taking place in the basic course; however, the amount and the type does not appear to be adequate to provide sufficient direct instruction for listening skill development. Scholars' work is not being reflected in the discipline, and basic course instructors, when using the basic text as a foundation, are not providing students with current research and theory on listening skills during the time that they provide listening instruction.

Listening accounts for 50% of the communication process, and listening instruction accounts for only 7% of the basic course instruction, with less than 50% of this time designated for skill development (Perkins, 1994). However, it is the instruction and practice of skills that change behaviors (Kirkpatrick, 1999; Steil et al., Wolvin & Coakley, 1994). Thus, the amount of time devoted to listening instruction should be increased, and the quality of time spent in listening instruction must improve by using current listening scholarship.

Findings from this study substantiate the lack of listening scholarship in basic course texts. No text offered new theories or knowledge substantiated by testing. Equally important, few texts accurately reflected the breadth and depth of listening scholarship today.

The lack of attention to listening scholarship ignores recent scholarship and research in critical areas of

study. For example, the content analysis did not identify critical work in the field including listening theory (Bruneau, 1989; Fitch-Hauser & Hughes, 1992; Floyd & Reese, 1987; Nichols, 1987; Thomlison, 1987; and Walker, 1997; Witkin, 1990), listening conceptualization, assessment, and measurement (Bentley, 1997; Cooper, 1988; Fitch-Hauser & Hughes, 1992; Rhodes, Watson, & Barker, 1990; Shellen,1989; Steintjes, 1993; Watson & Barker, 1988, 1991), listening and cognitive processing (Fitch-Hauser & Hughes, 1988), listening constructs (Halone, Cunconan, Coakley & Wolvin, 1997; Witkin & Trochim, 1997), the impact of culture and gender on listening (Borisoff & Hahn, 1993; Cha, 1997; Emmert, Emmert, & Brandt, 1993; Marsnik, 1993; Ostermeier, 1993), the impact of age on listening (Coakley, Halone, & Wolvin, 1996; Halone, Wolvin & Coakley, 1997; Ross & Glenn, 1996; Wolvin, Coakley, & Halone, 1995), organizational listening (Cooper & Husband, 1993; Lobdell, Sonoda, & Arnold, 1993; Strine, Thompson, & Cusella, 1995), hearing loss and its affect on listening (Clark, 1991; Villaume, Darling, Brown, Richardson, & Clark-Lewis, 1993), state requirements on teaching listening (Witkin, Lundsteen, & Gallian, 1993), listening pedagogy (Janusik, 2001) the effects of media on listening (Ostermeier, 1991; Palmer, Sharp, Carter, & Roddenberry, 1991), and listenability (Glenn, Emmert, & Emmert, 1995).

Although theoretical knowledge is important, much advancement in listening scholarship has occurred with current, more rigorous studies. Yet, a quick review of Appendix B shows that listening chapters included between 2 and 33 references to support their assertions. The majority of references were from the 1980's, even

though all of the course texts were printed in the 1990's. Thus, more recent listening scholarship from the last 11 years was not included.

Also, only some of the references were from listening scholars while the rest were from a variety of sources including movies and pop culture. For example, only one of the seven references in Zarefsky's (1996) listening chapter deals specifically with listening. The others are more concerned with the reasoning process and rhetorical criticism, not considered listening scholarship.

Few text authors agreed on a definition of listening. As is evidenced in Appendix C, only six of the texts attempted to define the listening process, and no two processes were defined alike, with the exception of De-Vito (1994, 1999). Listening scholars do not always agree upon the definition of listening, as it may depend upon which approach (speech communication, speech science, or cognitive psychology) the research is advancing. However, there are two generally accepted definitions that authors and instructors could use. The first is the ILA's definition of listening, "the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages" (An ILA Definition of Listening, 1995, p. 4). The second option is derived from a content analysis of 50 definitions of listening that identified the top five factors to be perception, attention, interpretation, remembering, and response (Glenn, 1989). Basic text authors could either cite the controversy regarding the definition or select one of the accepted definitions of listening.

In addition to the lacking quantity and quality of listening scholarship, the prescription approach taken by most books does not reflect current hypothesis or theory

development of recent scientific listening studies. Often cited in texts was Ralph Nichols, known as the "grandfather of listening", who pioneered listening research in the early part of the century. Nichols first began college listening instruction in the 1940's with the traditional approach of establishing need, identifying negative listening habits and then implementing the 10 guides to effective listening (Rhodes, 1985). This approach was appropriate in the 1940's; however, listening knowledge in terms of theories and concepts is much broader today.

Today, a research-based instructional approach to teaching listening is needed. Listening instruction should be approached as a process of what students can do to improve listening effectiveness before, during, or after the listening event (Imhof & Wolfgang, 1998; Stein, 1999). One example of an experiential classroom activity to improve students' listening skills is Janusik's (2000) in-class performance assignment. The exercise is a listening adaptation of Bales' (1950) Interaction Analysis that can assess students' use of listening skills in a class discussion. Finally, listening assessment should make use of validated listening tests, such as the Brown-Carlsen test; the Kentucky test, the Steinbrecher-Willmington test; and the Watson-Barker test.

Listening is a part of the communication process, and most texts addressed listening's critical placement in the communication process by placing the listening chapter in the first quarter of the text. The listening chapter appeared as the third or fourth chapter in 12 of the 16 texts that offered entire listening chapters. As a separate chapter, listening is distanced from the communication process. One innovative text, not recognized as one of the most widely used basic course texts, com-

bines speaking and listening in every chapter throughout the book (Wolvin, Berko, & Wolvin, 1999). More texts should follow this type of format that more closely approximates listening's importance in the communication process.

For example, most of the authors positioned their listening chapters after the chapter on perception. Most listening scholars agree that perception is a key component in the listening process (Glenn, 1989). One's gender and culture influence one's perception (Borisoff, & Hahn, 1997; Brownell, 1996; Thomlinson, 1997). Listening theory and instruction could easily be integrated into the perception chapters. Instruction in the roles of gender and culture on the listening and communication process is critical for students as our world increasingly is becoming more diverse.

Chapters on critical listening and critical thinking are often integrated or placed next to each other; however, the explication of their connection is not made clear. Critical thinking can take place without critical listening; however, critical listening cannot take place without critical thinking; they happen simultaneously. Students must be able to distinguish between the two skills, and they should learn the interdependence of thinking and listening within the communication context.

The discussion of ethics is critical based on the challenges and changes of the modern world. In 9 of the 17 texts reviewed, speaking ethically was addressed; however, ethics and listening did not achieve a similar consistency. Perhaps the lack of consistency points to a lack of agreement among listening scholars, or perhaps

textbook authors are not familiar with work on listening ethics (Clampitt; 1991; Larson, 1989; Purdy, 1995).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings of this content analysis of the basic course texts affirm that the amount of space allotted for listening instruction is insufficient, and the quality of the content included does not reflect current listening scholarship. If these listening chapters serve the basis for listening instruction, then students are not exposed to current listening research , behaviors, and practices.

The inclusion of an entire chapter on listening in most of these texts legitimizes listening as an integral part of the communication process; yet, the material presented does not reflect listening scholarship. Some effort at direct instruction in listening skills is offered, but it is not enough to reflect the importance of listening. If short units of listening instruction impact students' perceptions of their listening competencies (Ford & Wolvin, 1993), then longer units might impact students' perception and behaviors even more.

The placement of a listening chapter in almost every text represents a significant advance in listening education. In an earlier era, direct instruction in listening was not included in the basic course because supporters of direct instruction assumed that training in speaking skills would transfer to improved listening skills. The assumption of automatic transfer, of course, has been demonstrated to be false. To learn a skill, the listener needs knowledge, training, and practice of that skill

(Kirkpatrick, 1999; Steil, Barker & Watson, 1983; Wolvin & Coakley, 1994).

Ideally, listening is treated early on in the course so that the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are developed in this unit can be practiced, reinforced, and carried through the rest of the semester. Since listening is such a central skill, the importance of listening should receive a central place in the basic course curriculum and in the basic course texts.

The placement of the listening chapter early in these texts hopefully is consistent with where the listening unit is placed in the course. The value of this placement is that listening skills can be treated early in the course and then infused throughout the subsequent units in the course. What is not clear, though, is how this is accomplished. One of the risks here is that listening, then, is assumed to be carried through by the students with little attention to their listening practices. "Listening across the curriculum" in which listening is integrated into the other units within the basic course may not be enough of a focus to have much effect (Witkin, Lovern, & Lundsteen, 1996).

While those who research listening are encouraged that listening is treated in these texts, one must consider what a light, atheoretical treatment listening generally receives. The most current research on listening behavior does not inform what the authors tell the students. The foundation for students' listening competency is not built on theory and research, but rather unsubstantiated claims.

The good work of listening scholars that has been published for the past decade in the *Journal of the International Listening* largely goes unrecognized. Most communication scholars who write texts do not include work

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by scholars in the listening field, even though that work is substantial (Wolvin, et al., 1999). The ILA definition of listening, "...the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages" (An ILA Definition of listening, 1995, p. 4), does provide a focus for our understanding of the construct of listening.

Meanwhile, the greater issue may well be the state of basic communication texts today and the finding that textbooks should be regarded as scholarship but do not reflect the current status of the field. To reflect current research, current findings must be included within the parameters of appropriate lag time. In the seminal *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990), Boyer contends that academics must expand our notion of scholarship beyond academic press and professional journal publications. Textbooks should be regarded as scholarship, not dismissed as "just a textbook" by promotion and tenure committees. Boyer argues that "writing a textbook can be a significant intellectual endeavor," which "can reveal a professor's knowledge of the field, illuminate essential integrative themes, and powerfully contribute to excellence in teaching, too" (p. 35). The communication field, then, should take seriously the textbook as scholarship. In turn, authors will raise the scholarly standards in these efforts.

Clearly, there is still much to learn about listening education. Since a large part of listening education resides in the basic communication course, the treatment of listening in the textbooks must be substantial in content and attention. Four percent of the text space is not adequate, and it does not support the premise that the listener is as important in the speaker in the communication process.

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A model for listening education (Wolvin & Coakley, 1994) that is based on systematic development of a listener's knowledge, attitudes, and skills already exists. Our goals as listening educators, thus, should be to ensure that this model is reflected in these basic communication course texts where many students receive their introduction to effective listening.

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Zeuschner, R. (1997). *Communicating today* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

APPENDIX A

The Most-Used Basic Communication Course Text-books:

Adler, R.B., & Rodman, G. (1997). *Understanding human communication* (6th ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Beebe, S.A., & Beebe, S.J. (1997). *Public speaking: An audience-centered approach* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

DeVito, J.A. (1994). *Human communication: The basic course* (6th ed.). New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.

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Gamble, T.K., & Gamble, M. (1996). *Communication works* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Gregory, H. (1996). *Public speaking for college and career* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Grice, G.L., & Skinner, J.F. (1995). *Mastering public speaking* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Gronbeck, B.E., German, K., Ehninger, D., & A.H. Monroe. (1998). *Principles of speech communication* (13th brief ed.). New York: Longman.

Jaffee, C. (1998). *Public speaking: Concepts and skills for a diverse society.* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

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Lucas, S.E. (1998). *The art of public speaking* (6th ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Nelson, P.E., & Pearson, J.C. (1996). *Confidence in public speaking* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

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APPENDIX B

Numbers and Dates of References and Footnotes Cited in the Listening Chapters

Author	Publication Date	# of Citations*	Dates
Adler & Rodman	1997	33	40's – 2 50's – 1 60's – 1 70's – 1 80's - 16 90's - 11
Beebe & Beebe	1997	8	30's – 1 50's – 2 60's – 1 70's – 1 80's – 2
DeVito	1994	8	20's – 1 70's – 4 80's – 8 90's – 1
DeVito	1999	10	70's – 2 80's – 3 90's – 5
Gamble & Gamble	1996	27	20's – 1 50's – 4 60's – 1 70's – 5 80's – 7 90's – 9

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Gregory	1996	17	Unknown–2 60's – 2 70's – 2 80's – 10 90's - 1
Grice & Skinneer	1995	7	80's – 5 90's – 2
Gronbeck et al.	1998	2	80's – 2
Jaffee	1998	16	70's – 4 80's – 3 90's – 9
Lucas	1998	14	09 – 1 50's – 2 60's – 1 80's – 2 90's – 7
Nelson & Pearson	1996	17	20's – 1 50-s – 7 60's – 1 70's – 4 80's – 5 90's – 4
Osborn & Osborn	1997	27	60's – 1 70's – 4 80's – 13 90's – 10
Pearson & Nelson	1997	18	20's – 1 40's – 1 50's – 3 70's – 4 80's – 9

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Sprague & Sruart	1992	0	--
Verderber	1996	16	80's – 6 90's – 10
Zarefsky	1996	7	60's – 1 70's – 2 80's – 4 90's – 2
Zeuschner	1997	13	70's – 1 80's – 7 90's - 5

*Some citations contain more than one reference; hence the total number of dates may exceed the total number of references.

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APPENDIX C

Variations in the Steps of the Listening Models

Author	Date	Model					
Adler & Rodman	1997	Attend	Understand	Respond	Remember		
Beebe & Beebe	1997	Select	Attend	Understand	Remember		
DeVito	1994/1999	Receive	Understand	Remember	Evaluate	Respond	
Grice & Skinner	1995	Receive	Select	Interpret	Understand	Evaluate	Resolve
Nelson & Pearson	1996	Receive	Select	Organize	Interpret		
Verderber	1999	Attend	Understand	Remember	Analyze Critically	Respond	

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