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A study of self-imposed silence and perceived listening effectiveness

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A STUDY OF SELF-IMPOSED SILENCE AND PERCEIVED LISTENING
EFFECTIVENESS

A Thesis

by

CYNTHIA MARROQUIN-BALDWIN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Texas-Pan American
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A STUDY OF SELF-IMPOSED SILENCE AND PERCEIVED LISTENING
EFFECTIVENESS

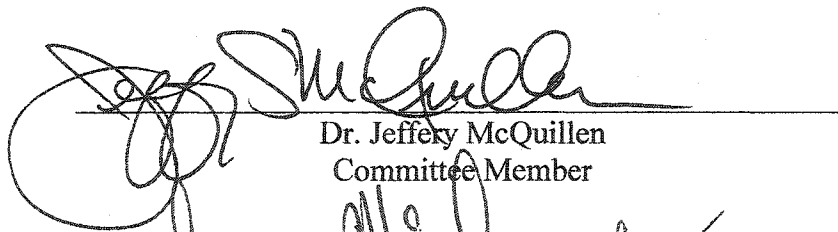
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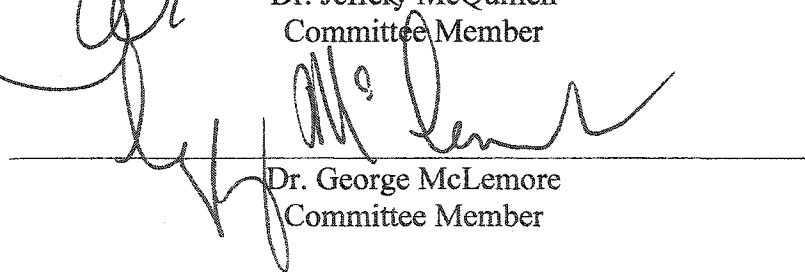
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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the affects of self-imposed silence on perceived listening effectiveness. The subjects used in this study were 15 males and 17 females from the McAllen area (n = 32). These subjects were nonsystematically approached at the Lark Community Center/Library to solicit participation in the study. Four tests were performed to test the possible affects that 12 hours of self-imposed silence may have on listening. The independent t-test used to analyze differences in posttest scores between the treatment group and the control group revealed that no significant difference was found. The independent t-test used to analyze differences in pretest scores revealed that both group's scores were initially equal. Paired t-tests were used to compare differences in pretest and posttest scores on the Listening Styles Inventory for the treatment group and then again for the control group. No significant difference was found in either paired t-test.

DEDICATION

“It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.” Psalm 18:32

I have been very blessed in many ways. One of the ways God has blessed me is through my husband, Aaron. Thank you, Love for all that you do and have done. A dedication page is not enough to express the love I feel for you or the appreciation I have for our relationship. Your companionship through this is irreplaceable and you are a brave man.

May God continue to bless us.

Ya lyubit ty.

God has also blessed me with a loving family. Thank you for all your prayers and all your support. It can never be repaid. Stephanie, I think I may be approachable; we can have pedicures and sushi any time now. Mom, as you have always taught me – all things are possible with those who believe. Dad, can I have my rose now?

Thanks to all the wonderful subjects who volunteered to be silent for 12 hours. I know it was an arduous task; I hope there was some enlightenment in doing so.

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INTRODUCTION

The ability to listen well is increasingly recognized as a critical skill among managers and leaders. Silence, on the other hand, seems to be something that is not valued as much as listening, particularly on a personal level. In many cases silence makes people feel uncomfortable. However, silence may increase listening effectiveness. The goal of this study is to discover whether silence affects perceived listening effectiveness. Using silence to help increase listening effectiveness may produce positive results in our day-to-day relationships. This in turn may help people to value silence and its effects on listening.

Poyatos (2002) characterizes silence as follows,

Silence, not only in conversation but in general, is something everybody feels uncomfortable about during an interaction in western cultures, causing anxiety as soon as it lasts beyond a few seconds, because we tend to think that something must be 'happening' all the time, that we must 'hear' or 'see' others, do something for interaction to be interaction, the silence is not a 'happening.' (p. 298)

Even in church where silence should be part of the interaction, western Christians fail to uphold the silence. Poyatos recalls research by Aquilina (2001) that documents how a Catholic priest would keep silence for five minutes after communion. The priest noted the following:

...in the parish where he grew up, it was customary to keep at least 15 minutes... He soon recognized, however, that was unthinkable in America... For most Americans this silence was unbearable beyond the first 30 seconds. Assuming the priest had fallen asleep, the folks in the pews would begin to let their kneelers fall loudly to the floor, or they'd slam shut their hymnals, or they'd jingle their keys.(Aquilina, 2001, p. 200)

Such avoidance of silence is common; however, why silence causes such reactions is unknown. The topic of silence is vast, and much research has been done regarding different aspects of silence. In contrast, research regarding how silence can affect listening skills is minimal. Many people use silence for personal reasons without ever consciously thinking how they use silence. Yet, despite the known benefits for silence there is still an avoidance of silence on various levels in regards to listening. Perhaps, if more research were done on how silence can benefit listening, society would not avoid silence as much.

This paper discusses listening, specifically how silence can improve listening skills. Research related to silence and listening is addressed. The theory upon which this proposal is based is also discussed.

Certain significant terms need to be defined in order to discuss silence. Mortensen (1994) utilizes two definitions of silence. The first definition is discursive silence which is not just the absence of sound but also the refusal or unwillingness to talk. Mortensen cites a definition from Ehrenhaus (1988) who noted that silence is a state in which one is rendered momentarily incapable (voluntarily or involuntarily) of making productive use of verbal constructs. Mortensen also defines dialogical silence as an interdependence of

sound and silence of any one source in transitional states of anticipation and response to the audible or silent activity of any other. In other words, one person's decision to be silent provides an opportunity for another to fill the air with the sound of his or her own voice or else make the decision not to say anything further on the topic at hand. These two definitions, though not key for this study, are helpful in providing a more field-specific basis for defining silence. These two definitions are commonly used when studying shorter periods of silence in a conversation versus longer periods of silence to which one may be exposed. Most research regarding silence focuses on shorter periods of silence in daily conversations.

Bruneau and Ishii (1988) define silence in more cultural and layman's terms. They state that "Silence, as we understand it, is relative to levels of mental depth or levels of relative unconsciousness" (p.2). According to Bruneau and Ishii, most people throughout the world experience forms of silence. However, the manner in which we become "culturally disposed attitudinally" toward silence differs from culture to culture. Northern European and American cultures find silence socially undesirable. Other cultures strive for silence. These other cultures view talking as a less natural way of being. In addition, Bruneau and Ishii provide definitions for silence, silences and silencing. They argue that all three definitions are necessary for a true discussion of silence. These terms and their definitions are reviewed.

According to Bruneau and Ishii (1988) "Silence belongs to the world of being and not to the world of becoming. Silence is stillness and durational mental phenomena" (p. 4). Silence involves sitting still in solitude. Further, silences belong to the world of becoming, of conscious (and semi-conscious) thinking, saying and doing. Silences are

surfaces of deeper levels of silence. However, silences come out of social acts. Bruneau and Ishii, state that within social acts there are social silences, interpersonal and group silences.

Bruneau and Ishii (1988) provide a chart that defines and separates the differences between silence and silences (see Appendix A). In identifying the differences between silence and silences one is able to note how society uses silence in different ways. Silence is a spiritual/ mystical behavior. This present-oriented act is internal to the individual and unconscious. Silences are secular and action oriented. Silences are conscious, social and past-future oriented. Society may be able to use either kind of silence to improve listening effectiveness.

Bruneau and Ishii (1988) also define silencing. Silencing is “the imposition of violation or will in order to give significant symbolic meaning” (p.8). Silencing is connected to social and political events or situations. When discussing silencing, one can talk about those who silence and those who are silenced. Bruneau and Ishii feel that one imposes silencing on others to gain attention, maintain control, to protect, to teach, to attempt to eliminate distractions, to induce reverence for authority or tradition and to point to something greater than ourselves.

One other concept necessary to define is listening. Janusik (2002) discovered through content analysis that there are five top factors scholars feel should be included in a definition of listening. These factors are the concepts of perception, attention, interpretation, remembering and response. With these factors in mind the International Listening Association (ILA) (1995) provided the following definition of listening; “the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or

nonverbal messages” (p. 8). Listening, according to this definition, will be viewed from the perspective of speech communication. Speech communication examines the interaction of the listener with the speaker and the environment as part of listening. Janusik uses this definition for the basis of her article, and it will also serve as the definition of listening in this study.

These definitions of silence and listening are beneficial to the reader because they most accurately describe the kind of silence and listening the researcher intended for this study. These definitions will aid the reader in understanding these two terms and their application in this study. These definitions lead us to the following research question: Will self-imposed silence increase perceived listening effectiveness?

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Benefits of Silence

Silence is viewed in many different ways. A current view of silence is one depicted by Yoffe (2004). In her article, "Silent Treatment," Yoffe recalls the experiences she encountered while remaining silent for two days. During those two days, she went about her daily routine; however, she did not speak to anyone she encountered along the way. Throughout Yoffe's article she describes the difficulties she encountered such as having to avoid a neighbor as she walked the dog. Yoffe did not want to explain why she could not talk, nor why her dog, Sasha, was in a cast (Sasha was hit by a car the previous week). When she went to a movie, the friend who accompanied her declared her a bore because of her lack of conversation. In contrast, her daughter engaged in more conversations with her in those two days than she had in a long while. Yoffe recognized the importance of silence and how it helped her in listening to others as a result of her experience of remaining silent for two days.

Similarly to Yoffe, Patterson (2004) expresses the significance of silence.

Patterson states,

We may crave silence, but we are afraid of it. An inability to stay quiet is one of the most conspicuous failings of mankind, yet silence often leads us to the place of contemplation where we can find ourselves – and God. (p. 75)

Patterson (2004) also argues that the most powerful way to connect with another is to listen. He claims that "loving silences often have more power to heal than clever words"

(p. 75). However, in today's society silence is constantly filled; they are feared like dead time on radio and TV. Patterson speculates that if society learned to find silence again it would be better off in more ways than one.

Hitzeman (2004) advances a similar point of view in his review of Ruth Haley Barton's recent book, *Invitation to Solitude and Silence*. Hitzeman agrees with Barton that there is hardly anything in the United States' culture that encourages Americans to sit in stillness and non-activity. Barton (2004) reports that she practices 20 minutes of silence a day. She claims that because she takes the time each day to practice silence, she is able to listen to other people and herself better. Barton warns, however, that silence is a discipline that takes time and planning.

Many authors have expressed a new need for silence. Fr. Roy Cimagala (2004) asserts that people are flooded with distractions in today's society so much "that we don't know anymore what is real and what is not, what is meaningful and what is inane" (p. 5). Cimagala speculates that people have trouble listening to others because of all these distractions. According to Cimagala, cases of depression, pathological obsessions and other forms of deviant behavior are mounting because people fail to use their reason properly by not listening to others or listening to oneself. People would rather drown out the silence by watching TV than take the time to think. "Man deafens himself with noise" (2004, p. 5) says Cimagala, who at the end of his article challenges his readers to maintain a period of silence everyday. He explains that spending time in silence will allow people to enter into a proper relationship with others where communication and listening to each other are key elements.

Klein (2003) focuses on the need for silence, however, he emphasizes that one can achieve silence not by creating a quiet place to be alone, but more through the help of technology. Klein begins his article with describing a commercial for the Bose Corporation to sell its Quiet Comfort 2, Acoustic Noise Canceling Headphones. The slogan for these headphones is “think of them as a mute button for the world around you” (Klein, 2003, p. 1). Klein wonders why silence has such a big price tag and complains that even at churches one can not escape the “noise” of music with no time allotted for silent meditation and thanksgiving. He argues that our constant need for entertainment keeps us from listening to what is real. Klein acknowledges, though, that at least the Bose company recognizes the need for silence. He just found that wearing expensive headphones is an odd way to achieve that. Klein further emphasizes that achieving silence daily would help people to listen better.

Media’s Use of Silence

The following subsection is not to divert from the goal of supporting how silence should be incorporated into one’s life in order to increase listening effectiveness. This subsection supports how the media, in their various forms, can also benefit from the proper use of silence.

In order to investigate the functions silence plays in television advertisements, Olsen (1994) distributed a four-page survey to 230 creative directors of advertising agencies in Canada and the United States. Of the 230 only 53 were returned to Olsen (a 23% response rate). This survey examined insights into how silence was used as a creative tool in five major areas. These five areas were: global measures of the usefulness of silence; structured evaluations of the functions of silence; self-reported

functions of silence; questions about the creative director's experience in advertising and a section for open-ended questions.

Overall, Olsen's findings suggest that silence is an extremely effective tool if used properly. These creative directors reported that silence was a good tool for generating attention to an ad and was a good way to get people to contemplate and review information within the ad. In addition, they found that overall listening was greater with the use of silence. The creative directors agreed that silence was a good way to evoke sadness, calmness and intrigue, and only moderately effective for evoking fatigue and anxiety. Silence was poorly rated in evoking anger and happiness.

Despite empirical evidence supporting the positive use of silence in advertisements many clients are hesitant to use silence in their ads. A study by Muehling and Bozman (1990) found that the absence of music or use of positive music resulted in a more persuasive advertisement. Advertisements that contained a factual narrative that required higher cognitive involvement also were more persuasive with the absence of music or the positive use of music. Gorn (1990) found that the absence of music resulted in increased memory for verbal information. This study found that an advertiser may use silence to encourage viewers to concentrate and listen to specific pieces of information within an ad. Silence is also a good tool to evoke particular kinds of emotion in the audience especially feelings of peace and serenity. Regardless of these findings, clients tend to feel they need to fill every second of a commercial with sound. Creative directors also noted that the effective use of silence could be tricky. If silence were used in a proper way a very effective commercial would result; however, if used improperly a very poor commercial would result.

Olsen (1995) furthered his research on the significance of silence by looking into whether silence within radio commercials would increase attention and subsequent retention of information within the advertisement. Olsen had 144 participants listen to five different commercials. Subjects were given three different tasks after listening to the five commercials. The first task asked subjects to rate their enjoyment of five commercials on seven-point scales. Subjects were then told to recall one of the commercials for a cellular phone company. For their second task they were given a sheet of paper and asked to write down all information they could remember about the cellular phone company commercial. Finally, subjects were asked to order the three most important pieces of information from the cellular phone company commercial. Subjects were to then allocate 100 points to indicate the importance of the information (the most important piece of information received the greatest number of points).

Olsen posed two hypotheses for the study. His first hypothesis was that recall of information contained in ads is higher when background silence is present throughout the ad. Recall of information in the ad was only marginally supported when music was present throughout the ad. A general trend toward increased retention appeared with silence throughout the ad. This was more so than with music throughout the ad. The difference in retention between ads with silence throughout versus ads with music throughout was only marginally significant. Olsen's second hypothesis contained two parts. The first part of the hypothesis stated that recall of a specific piece of advertised information would be greater when background silence (no sound is played with the message in the ad) is used to highlight that item. Olsen proposed that recall would be greater with background silence than when either silence or music is present throughout

the ad. The second part of the hypothesis stated the perceived importance of an item of advertising information is greater when background silence is used to highlight that item. Olsen proposed that perceived importance of an item would be greater with background silence than when either silence or music is present in the background throughout the ad.

Olsen's (1995) second hypothesis was supported. These results advance the idea that silence is a good way to increase the ability to stress the importance of information in advertising. The results also affirm that silence is a good way to help listeners recall information from an ad.

Despite these findings, advertisers are still hesitant to use silence in ads. Society as a whole appears to resist the use of silence. Saville-Troike (1985) writes,

Perhaps because silence in communicative settings is often taken simply for inaction, or because perceptual bias has led researchers to attend to more readily noticeable behaviors while treating silence as merely background, or because much of the focus of research to date has been on small group and dyadic conversational interaction, the important position of silence in the total framework of human communication has been largely overlooked. (p. 15)

Saville-Troike also claims that most of the existing literature on silence is devoted to shorter silences within discourse while a marginal amount of data is available on longer silences and their communicative significance.

The research discussed stresses how silence can be beneficial to the individual if only he/she is willing to try silence. Silence, be it in the media or on a personal level can help people to listen better.

Listening

Despite the many theories and methods on how to improve listening, listening is a skill that many do not master. There are several factors that affect listening; however, the suggestions or steps on how to improve listening are similar in nature. The benefits of listening are endless. Therefore, many scholars/researchers stress its importance, particularly in the workplace. The present section reviews studies on ways to improve listening skills, research on why listening is very important, mainly in the work place, and research on what factors affect listening. The suggestions or steps to improve listening in these studies are similar.

Grau and Grau (2003b) assert that in order to have an edge over your competitor one must have good listening skills. Grau and Grau (2003b) comment, “Expanded listening capability and well-developed conflict management skills are now indispensable management tools... a collaborative communication style, grounded in strong listening skills, is an essential component for success in this climate” (2003b, p. 3). They note how the *Wall Street Journal* reported that business schools across the country indicated the communication, leadership and interpersonal skills were still lacking in today’s MBA graduates. Grau and Grau (2003b) also cite several sources that emphasize the role listening plays in organizations and careers. Among these sources are Steven Covey’s Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (1989) and Michael P. Nichols’ The Art of Listening. Nichols (2003) states,

Much misunderstanding would be cleared up if we learned to do two things: appreciate the other person's perspective and, at times, clarify what usually remains implicit... Effective listening promotes growth in the listener, the one listened to and the relationship between them. (p.19)

Grau and Grau (2003a) in another article also stress the importance of silence when trying to listen to someone. They state, "Above all, we learn far more from listening than from speaking... if one can resist the tendency to dominate their conversations. Just be quiet, be patient and listen" (p. 19). Grau and Grau emphasize that if people view listening as an enjoyable experience that they will find that their relationships will change. The more one strives to listen, even in challenging situations, the easier it will become. Good listening will become a habit.

Batty-Herbert (2003) concludes that many educators fail to recognize that listening is an acquired skill. Batty-Herbert argues also that listening can forge a bond of mutual respect and trust while increasing others' willingness to listen to us. She stresses how people learn more from listening than from speaking and that if people demonstrate that listening is not a burden but a rewarding task good listening becomes something worth striving for. Overall, Batty-Herbert emphasizes the need for people to be quiet while listening. She feels that people try to dominate conversations. Dominating a conversation produces a counter effect when all that is needed is being silent while listening.

Bartholome (2003) is one of the few authors who stresses that silence combined with open-ended and clarifying questions is one way to improve listening skills. She notes that a non-judgmental environment is a necessity for better listening. Bartholome

claims that because society is bombarded with unbelievable amounts of information every day, people rarely take the time to listen fully. She also explains that if society genuinely practiced listening, individuals' behavior would produce a positive change because they felt that they were truly being listened to.

Silence alone has not been used as a means for improving listening; however, it is considered one of the factors necessary for better listening. For example, Morgan (2001) suggests that good listening requires getting involved with the communicator at three levels. The first level requires the listener to demonstrate empathy by identifying with the speaker's plight or by sharing a similar event. Morgan (2001) states that one should, "Take care that your own recitation doesn't hijack the discussion if you intend to share in turn. There's nothing more irritating than listeners who turn conversations around to make it all about themselves" (p. 11). The second level recommends the listener simplify and summarize what the communicator is saying; while the third requirement prompts the listener to uncover the emotional truth behind what the person is saying. This third level requires the listener to truly relate to and find the basis for what the communicator is saying. Morgan suggests that silence is helpful particularly when considering the first level in which one tries not to dominate the conversation.

Worthington (2003) explored the relationship between listening style preference and personality by utilizing the Listening Styles Profile (LS-16) which identifies an individual as a people, action, content or time-oriented listeners (Watson, Barker, & Weaver, 1995). People-oriented listeners tend to look for common ground with others, action-oriented listeners notice errors in incoming messages, while content listeners like to attend to a speaker's supporting advice and time listeners prefer "hurried interactions."

Worthington also used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Myers and Briggs, 1980) which classifies a person's type of preference on four scales of:

1) extroversion/introversion 2) sensing/intuiting 3) thinking/feeling

4) judging/perceiving. The extroversion/introversion scale measures how social individuals are. The sensing/intuiting scale, measures how aware people are of people, places, events or ideas. The thinking/feeling scale determines how people reach conclusions about information they have just received. The judging/perceiving scale determines how people approach dealing with the external world. Worthington's first hypothesis stated that the thinking/feeling and sensing/intuiting indices are associated with the People Listening Style was supported. The second and third hypotheses received statistical support as well. Her second hypothesis stated that the content listening style would be associated with thinking. Her third hypothesis proposed that the action listening style would be associated with sensing and thinking. Her fourth hypothesis was unsupported; it stated that the time listening style would be associated with judging.

Results from Worthington's study (2003) support the claim that listening style preference and personality are associated. However, Worthington also notes that listening does not occur in a vacuum and that "the listening process should be approached in terms of how pre-existing constructs, such as personality attributes, may subsequently affect how individuals listen" (Worthington, 2003, p.81). Worthington explains that focusing solely on how one would improve his/her listening skills in daily interactions is very difficult. The difficulty on focusing on how one would improve his/her listening skills in daily interactions should be considered when studying listening. She concludes that even

when people are given the chance to improve their listening through the use of an alternative listening style, people will continue to use the style they feel best “fits” them. Accordingly, there may be some difficulty in using silence as a means of improving listening if one is not accustomed in doing so.

Imhof (2001) explored the effects on self-regulation strategies on the individual’s perception of a listening situation. While there have been studies on how an individual may use cognitive strategies while processing written information; the same is not true for listening. Therefore, Imhof focused on three metacognitive strategies in her study. They are: interest management, asking pre-questions and elaboration techniques.

Imhof found that metacognitive strategies are applicable in listening situations if appropriately adapted. Three metacognitive strategies were studied in the listening situations; they were interest management, asking pre-questions and elaboration strategies. Imhof notes, “Participants found that they had more comprehensive understanding, deeper level of processing, more reflective assessment of the new material, facilitated integration of new information into existing prior knowledge and improved processing characteristics”(2001, p. 16). Imhof also discovered that using metacognitive strategies in listening causes, in some cases, interference and distraction. She was not able to establish whether this interference is due to lack of experience with these strategies or if these strategies can actually be counterproductive in listening tasks.

Research on ways to improve listening is vast; but research on silence as a way to improve listening is minimal. However, one study that sought to discover if self-imposed silence would improve awareness of one’s listening skills and the value of developing beneficial listening skills. This study performed by Johnson, Pearce, Tuten, and Sinclair

(2003) notes how listening training has been “limited to lectures on the process of listening and to exercises that provide for listening practices and ways to identify beneficial and detrimental listening behaviors” (p.23). Johnson and her colleagues noted that listening plays a central role in how co-workers assess another’s communication effectiveness more than any other type of communication. Johnson et al. wanted to discover whether long periods of silence would improve people’s listening skills. These researchers also found that research involving silence and listening were minimal.

Johnson et al. (2003) exposed participants to one of three different treatments. Participants either listened to a lecture on listening, were exposed to a period of silence or were subjected to both the lecture and period of silence. All participants took a pretest and posttest on perceived listening effectiveness. Subjects’ total scores are placed on a scale to determine whether they are active, involved or passive listeners. Active listeners (score between 45-50) give full attention to others when they are listening. Active listeners expend much energy in the speaker-listener exchange. Involved listeners (score between 38-45) give some of their attention to the speaker’s words and intentions; they do not devote complete attention. While passive listeners (score between 0-38) do not see themselves as an equal partner in the speaking-listening exchange; they do not expend any noticeable energy in receiving and interpreting messages. The researchers’ first hypothesis claimed that participants experiencing a period of self-imposed silence will score higher on measures of perceived listening effectiveness than those exposed to only a listening lecture. Their second hypothesis claimed that participants experiencing both silence and a listening lecture will score higher on measures of perceived listening effectiveness than those exposed to only one form of listening training (silence or lecture).

These researchers did not find any significant differences between the pretest and posttest on perceived listening effectiveness to support their hypotheses. Johnson et al. noted that although there were no significant differences, posttest scores were slightly higher than pretest scores (on the listening effectiveness test) for each of the treatment groups.

While their hypotheses were rejected, these researchers noted that qualitative data provided in the journals participants kept during the period of silence provided evidence that pretest scores were inflated due to the lack of awareness about one's own listening behavior. Therefore, because subjects had not considered the nature of their listening behavior, pretest scores were higher than posttest scores. Once the subjects reflected on their listening habits their listening effectiveness score was lower.

Silence has the potential to improve perceived listening effectiveness for two reasons. First, people are forced to listen. The pressure to talk is taken away. Therefore, people are able to notice things they had not noticed before. As Patterson (2004) stated, "The inability to stay quiet is the most conspicuous failings of mankind;" (p.75) people do not experience as much because they refuse to be silent. Second, silence allows the opportunity to focus on another person's message.

To review, Fr. Cimagala (2004) encourages silence because it allows for a proper relationship with others. For these reasons there is a potential relationship between silence and listening. Batty-Herbert (2003) reminds readers that listening is an acquired skill. Silence, especially self-imposed silence as a means to improve listening, may also be an acquired skill. This proposal, while based on major premises advanced in the Johnson et al. (2003) study, differs in that the only treatment given is the self-imposed period of silence. By reducing the number of treatments given, more focused results should arise

and another attempt is made to see if a self-imposed period of silence influences perceived listening effectiveness. Therefore, the following research question is proposed:

RQ₁: Will participants who experience a period of self-imposed silence score higher on measures of perceived listening effectiveness than those who do not experience the self-imposed period of silence?

METHODS

Subjects

The subjects used in this study were 15 males and 17 females from the McAllen area ($n = 32$). Subjects were drawn from a mid-size Southwestern city. Each of these subjects expressed the desire to improve his/her listening effectiveness. Subjects ranged in age from 18 years of age to 80 years of age. These subjects were nonsystematically approached at the Lark Community Center/Library to solicit their participation. No special characteristics were required of the subjects to participate in this study

Design

The investigation employs a pretest/posttest control group design. The treatment consists of two values; those who received the silence treatment and those who did not. To test the possible effects self-imposed silence (the independent variable) may have had on listening (the dependent variable), a quasi-experimental control group design was used. The treatment group took the pretest (Listening Styles Inventory) and was given a week to perform the 12 consecutive hours of silence and then took the posttest (Listening Styles Inventory) at the end of the week. The control group consisted of subjects who did not receive the silence treatment; this group completed the pretest (Listening Styles Inventory) and a week later completed the posttest (Listening Styles Inventory).

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for this study was listening. Listening was operationalized as the subjects' total scores on the Listening Styles Inventory. The Listening Styles Inventory created by Johnson, Barker and Pearce (2002) was administered. The Listening Styles Inventory provided a measure of one's preferred listening style, be it active, involved or passive. However, for the present study, only total scores were used in the analysis. The inventory was used to discover if perceived listening skills increased after subjects completed the 12-hour period of silence. The inventory format follows a five-point Likert-type scale. Subjects' total scores from the ten question inventory were computed to determine whether the subject's total scores increased after the 12-hour silence period. Examples of statements evaluated in the Listening Styles Inventory include, "I do not listen to my full capacity when others are talking," "I analyze my listening errors so as not to make them again" and "I listen to the complete message before making judgments about what the speaker has said ." See Appendix B for a complete copy of the Listening Styles Inventory.

Independent Variable

The independent variable in this study is self-imposed silence. Subjects were randomly assigned to the treatment or control groups. Half of the 32 subjects received the silence treatment. These subjects remained silent for 12 consecutive hours in order to see if the self-imposed silence affects perceived listening effectiveness. The other half of the subjects were assigned to the control group. These subjects only completed the pretest and then a week later completed the posttest; they did not have to complete the 12 consecutive hours of self-imposed silence.

Materials/Instruments

Three assessment tools were used in this study: the Listening Styles Inventory, the Silence Journal and Silence Assignment Questionnaire (Johnson, Barker and Pearce, 2002). The subjects' total scores from The Listening Styles Inventory provided a measure of subjects' perceived listening effectiveness. Self-imposed silence is considered an active listening style because self-imposed silence requires much attention and energy in the speaker-listening exchange. The measurement technique used to measure the subjects' responses to the listening survey was a questionnaire, more specifically, a Likert-type scale. The scale used is a five-point scale ranging from "almost never" to "almost always." If subjects' scores are higher on the Listening Styles Inventory after the 12 consecutive hours of self-imposed silence then it can be determined that self-imposed silence does affect perceived listening effectiveness.

The silence assignment required subjects to take part in 12 continuous hours of silence. Specific instructions were provided for the silence assignment (See Appendix C). The silence period took place during the day (therefore, time spent sleeping does not count toward completion hours) and participants were asked to do whatever they would normally do during their day. The subjects were asked to start over if the silence was broken. Subjects were trusted to maintain honesty about whether they had broken silence during the silence assignment. Subjects were asked to use other methods of communication such as writing notes or using gestures.

Participants in the treatment group were asked to complete a Silence Journal and Silence Assignment Questionnaire (Appendix D & E). In the silence journal subjects discussed the activities they performed, who they were with, methods of communication,

temptations they faced, emotions they felt, any prevention methods and difficulties they faced during the 12 hours of self-imposed silence. For the Silence Assignment Questionnaire subjects were asked about whether they had received listening training, reasons they may have broken the period of silence, what they had learned about themselves as a function of silence, overall difficulty rating and times silence may have helped or hindered situations. These questions let the subjects further examine whether they felt their perceived listening skills were improved by the silence they experienced. These questions also help to identify whether subjects felt the same way during the silence treatment.

The responses on the Silence Journal and Silence Assignment Questionnaire completed by the subjects were compiled to examine the overall evaluation of the assignment. These responses were not rated nor coded. Subjects' reactions were used to determine if subjects experienced similar emotions during the 12 hours of self-imposed silence. These responses were compared qualitatively by assessing whether subjects used similar words to describe their feelings. For further understanding of the study, these responses are noted in the qualitative data related to the silence assignment section. The data were also used to identify limitations within the study.

A pilot study with five participants was performed first to identify any possible questions about the procedure. The pilot test assisted the researcher in giving more concise directions to the treatment group. The pilot test also enabled the researcher to address questions that the subjects were likely to have once they started the silence assignment. Once the pilot test was run, the researcher started the process of selecting individuals to participate in the study.

Procedures

The researcher unsystematically approached subjects at the Lark Community Center/Library to ask if they would like to participate in the study. Approximately 150 people were approached. One hundred and eighteen people approached (approximately 79%) did not agree to participate in the study. Thus 32 total subjects (21%) agreed to participate. The subjects were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Half of the 32 subjects received the silence treatment. The remaining sixteen did not receive the silence treatment.

The study required that two meetings occur. The first meeting was to administer the pretest to all subjects, distribute the journals and questionnaires and discuss the 12-hour silence treatment. The second meeting was held at the end of the week to collect the journals and questionnaires and to administer the posttest to all subjects. The researcher gathered phone numbers and addresses as a means for contacting subjects to remind each about both of the meetings they should attend. A phone call was made two days before each meeting and a letter was sent to remind the subjects of both meetings (see Appendix F). An alternate date was set for a make-up meeting for those who were unable to attend the first meeting; however, it was not necessary.

During the first meeting, participants were given the chance to ask questions and officially decide whether they would like to participate in the study. Once these subjects had provided official written consent (see Appendix G) to participate in the study, they completed demographic data and were given a Listening Styles Inventory to measure perceived listening effectiveness.

The researcher assigned subjects to one of two groups - either the treatment or control groups. Thirty-two pieces of paper with numbers one through thirty-two marked on them were placed in a hat. During the first meeting, each subject selected a piece of paper out of the hat with a number on it. The number selected determined who would be assigned to the treatment or control group. All subjects had been informed that they may or may not take part in the 12-hour silence assignment.

Subjects who selected numbers one through sixteen were assigned to the treatment group. Subjects who selected numbers seventeen through thirty-two were assigned to the control group. All 32 subjects then filled out demographic data. The demographic data included: the subject's name, gender, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, highest degree earned and occupation (see appendix H). Then, all subjects took the Listening Styles Inventory. Once all subjects were done with the pretest, those subjects assigned to the treatment group were asked to move to another room. Subjects assigned to the control group were dismissed and asked to return the following week (to the same place and same time) to take the posttest (Listening Styles Inventory). A card was sent to remind the control group about the meeting.

The researcher then addressed the treatment group and explained the procedures for the silence assignment. Subjects were encouraged to ask questions and express concerns. Subjects were dismissed and were given one week to fulfill the silence assignment. Once the subjects finished the 12-hour silence period they completed the silence journal and the silence assignment questionnaire. The data in the silence journal and silence assignment questionnaire was used to determine the level of difficulty

subjects felt in remaining silent. This information was also used to identify how subjects felt during the treatment and whether they had similar reactions.

All subjects met again at the end of the week to take the posttest (Listening Styles Inventory) and to return their silence journals and questionnaires. Subjects met at the same time and place as the first meeting. Cards were sent to remind them of the second meeting. The first meeting was approximately 20-30 minutes. The second meeting was approximately 15-20 minutes. During the second meeting a debriefing period was conducted. Subjects could voice any concerns, difficulties or reactions they had to the experience. Thank you notes were sent to all the subjects once the study was completed.

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative procedures were used to analyze the data for this study. Quantitative observations were used to analyze subjects' responses to the listening survey. This analysis produced a score that corresponds with the subjects' level of listening be it active, involved or passive. However, subjects' total scores were used for analysis of whether the self-imposed silence period affected perceived listening effectiveness. A five-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the subjects' responses to the listening survey. The five-point scale ranged from "almost never" to "almost always." Two questions were reverse coded.

An independent t-test analyzed the differences in posttest scores between the treatment group and the control group. This test was used to compare scores in the posttest (Listening Styles Inventory) to establish whether the silence treatment made a difference in perceived listening effectiveness. A second independent t-test analyzed the differences in pretest scores between the treatment group and the control group. The

second independent t-test was used to establish if both the treatment and control groups' scores were initially equal. Therefore, any changes in scores could be attributed to the silence assignment treatment.

A set of paired t-test procedures were employed to analyze the differences between pretest and posttest scores on the Listening Styles Inventory for both the treatment and control group. The paired t-tests helped to establish whether self-imposed silence does have an effect on perceived listening effectiveness. The first paired t-tests analyzed the differences between pretest and posttest scores on the Listening Styles Inventory for the treatment group. The second paired t-test procedures analyzed the differences between pretest and posttest scores on the Listening Styles Inventory for the control group.

A qualitative analysis was used to evaluate subjects' journal responses to the 12 consecutive hours of self-imposed silence. This qualitative data was mostly used to establish if subjects had similar reactions during the 12 hours of self-imposed silence.

Results

The research question, "Will self-imposed silence increase perceived listening effectiveness?" was the basis for this study. Four tests were performed to establish the results of this study. An independent t-test was performed to analyze differences in posttest scores between the treatment and control groups. An independent t-test was used to analyze differences between the pretest scores for the treatment and control groups. A paired t-test was performed to analyze differences between pretest scores and posttest scores for the treatment group. Finally, a second paired t-test was performed to analyze differences between pretest scores and posttest scores for the control group.

An independent t-test analyzed the differences in posttest scores between the treatment and control group. The treatment group had a mean score of 34.06 while the control group had a mean score of 35.43. No significant difference in the scores was found [$t(30) = -1.069, p > .05$]. In fact, the treatment had a negative impact on perceived listening effectiveness.

The second independent t-test was used to analyze differences in pretest scores between the treatment and control groups. This was done to analyze whether the treatment and control groups' scores were initially equal before other tests were performed. The pretest scores for the treatment group and control group were very similar; both groups had similar attitudes for their perceived listening effectiveness. The treatment group had a mean score of 35.56 while the control group had a mean score of 35.50. This independent t-test revealed that there was no significance between the scores [$t(30) = .049, p > .05$]. Therefore, because scores were similar in the pretests between the treatment and control groups, if any significant difference was found between groups in the posttest, that difference could be attributed to the effects of self-imposed silence on perceived listening effectiveness.

A paired t-test was used to compare differences between pretest and posttest scores on the Listening Styles Inventory for the treatment group. Pretest scores [$M=35.56, SD= 4.1628$] were higher than posttest scores [$M=34.06, SD= 3.8724$] and there was no significant difference between the scores [$t(15) = 1.394, p > .05$] for the treatment group. The treatment of self-imposed silence did not have an effect on perceived listening effectiveness.

A second paired t-test was used to compare differences between pretest and posttest scores on the Listening Styles Inventory for the control group. Pretest scores [M=35.5, SD= 3.0111] were slightly higher than posttest scores [M=35.43, SD= 3.3856] however, no significant difference between the scores [$t(15) = .078, p > .05$] was found. See pages 41 and 42 for table results for all tests conducted.

Qualitative Data for the Silence Assignment

Although the data concludes that self-imposed silence does not have an affect on listening, many of the subjects provided interesting comments about silence, listening and the self-imposed silence assignment. The qualitative data provided in the Silence Assignment Questionnaires and the Silence Journals were used to establish if subjects felt similar emotions during the silence assignment. Due to a lack of a systematic or reliable method for coding these data, the results of these qualitative data can only be used conservatively to appreciate the results from the independent and paired t-tests performed.

The Silence Journal contained eight questions while the Silence Assignment Questionnaire contained ten questions. Both documents were one page each with approximately two lines provided for responses (see Appendix D & E). Many of the subjects found the silence assignment to be difficult. According to the data, out of the 16 subjects, 3 found the assignment easy, 3 others found it neither easy nor difficult, 6 subjects found it difficult and 4 found the assignment extremely difficult, however, subjects still ranked the assignment as a positive experience as seen through comments provided in the Silence Assignment Questionnaire and Silence Journals.

Provided below are eighteen comments drawn from both the Silence Assignment Questionnaires and the Silence Journals. The researcher identified one sentence (16 total) from each of the subjects' total responses for the Silence Assignment Questionnaire and the Silence Journal that summarized how the subject felt about the silence assignment. The first two comments noted were added to the list because many of the subjects made similar comments to these and the researcher felt they were pertinent to the study. However, overall many of the subjects wrote similar comments. The list below highlights sample comments taken from the subjects' journals:

- People tend to stay quiet if you are quiet
- Our culture does not promote listening skills or thinking time
- Small talk is done to avoid the awkwardness of silence
- I noticed the birds more
- I listened to my own thoughts more
- My spouse said that I was more tranquil
- It was hard not to interject comments when other's statements were not true
- I listened to my children more; there was less tension between us (others noted that their children were the reasons for breaking silence)
- I realized how much I talk to myself especially in the car
- The first thing I do in the morning is talk ... I missed singing in the shower
- Silence can be very relaxing but also very overwhelming
- It is very easy to choose not to listen or be silent; I can be completely attentive or I can completely block conversations
- I learned more about people

- I learned that many of the things I say are unnecessary
- My dog was very confused; even our pets are used to us talking
- With silence, I ran the risk of being misunderstood. I sometimes felt very isolated
- People were more willing to help me in stores when they realized I could not speak
- People talk to you more when you are silent; my son's girlfriend had never talked to me that much before

Even though the 12 hours of self-imposed silence was perceived as difficult many of the subjects noted that they could see how silence can help listening. Many of the subjects did not report negative comments about the silence assignment other than the fact that the assignment was difficult. The few negative comments that were documented resulted from some of the frustration the subjects felt as they experienced the last few hours of the silence assignment. Three subjects noted that they were frustrated with not being able to join a conversation to rectify incorrect information on the spot. Six subjects documented how tired they were of not being able to respond verbally, while two subjects reported that society does not value silence. Two other subjects noted that they were frustrated with being silent because they felt that they were being ignored or were misunderstood. Many of the subjects documented that they began to realize how much they talk on a daily basis. Some of the subjects recorded that self-imposed silence would be a complicated concept to enforce in their daily lives.

Discussion

Results of this investigation failed to show that self-imposed silence has an effect on perceived listening effectiveness. In order to completely explain this result, the following discussion explains the results from the four tests that were performed. This section also expounds on flaws in the study, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

An independent t-test on posttest scores was conducted to help establish if silence plays a role in perceived listening effectiveness. The independent t-test revealed no significant difference in the mean scores for the treatment and control groups. These data indicate that self-imposed silence did not achieve confirmation as a factor in better listening.

A potential reason for the lack of significance in the independent t-test for the posttest scores is that the treatment group may have focused more on remaining silent than on how the silence could assist their listening skills during the silence assignment. The treatment group remained silent for 12 hours as part of the silence assignment; this may have been too long a period for the subjects to remain silent. Many of the subjects were more than likely exhausted by the effort of being silent at the end of the 12 hours and forgot to analyze whether their listening habits were positively affected by the silence. The self-imposed silence may not have had an effect on listening because a shorter period of self-imposed silence may have been necessary.

A second independent t-test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in pretest scores between the treatment and control groups. This test was performed to establish whether scores for both the treatment and control group were initially the same.

No significance difference was found. Had any difference been found in posttest scores between the treatment and control groups, it would not be the result of initial differences, but rather due to the treatment applied.

Analysis of the paired t-test for the treatment group discovered that pretest scores were higher, however, not significantly higher, than posttest scores on the Listening Styles Inventory. The paired t-test for the treatment group was performed to discover whether there was a difference in pretest and posttest scores for the treatment group. The difference between pretest and posttest scores for the treatment group indicates that the treatment failed to produce the hypothesized effect.

The second paired t-test compared differences in the pretest and posttest scores on the Listening Styles Inventory for the control group. The pretest scores were slightly higher; but again, not significantly higher than the posttest scores. This test was performed to discover whether there was a difference in pretest and posttest scores for the control group. The control group, like the treatment group, did not show a significant shift in scores from the pretest to the posttest. Therefore, internal threats such as sensitization, history maturation and selection had no obvious effect.

Significance was not found possibly because there was a flaw in the theory or rationale for the study. Even though many of the subjects rated the silence assignment as a positive experience, many may not have the initiative or desire to practice using silence to improve listening on a daily basis. Perhaps the study should have been tailored to have subjects focus on being silent during particular conversations or had subjects remain silent for shorter periods of time.

Another reason this study failed to find significance may have been due to the small sample size. A larger sample may have helped in finding significance. Research findings based on large samples are typically more reliable. A larger number of scores may have produced greater variation in responses in the Listening Styles Inventory. Also, the chance that more of the subjects may have determined a positive connection between silence and listening, potentially, would have been greater with more subjects in the treatment group. With more subjects the researcher would be able to establish whether a difference in scores was a result of the treatment applied.

The location from which the subjects were selected may have been a factor in the results. Even though the Lark Community Center/ Library provides many activities for people of many ages and educational levels, the sample selected from this one area may not have been representative of the population available. While smaller samples can be representative of the population, the researcher could have found other places from which to draw a sample. The Lark Community Center/Library was a limited group.

Another limitation in this study was that the researcher could not monitor the environment of the treatment group, which could have contaminated the study. There was no way to ensure that the subjects would remain silent during the 12 hours of self-imposed silence.

Another limitation in this study is that the requirements of this study operate against basic human nature. Society teaches people to respond immediately when engaged in a conversation. Self-imposed silence operates against the natural human reaction to respond verbally to others when conversing. Self-imposed silence makes the

situation awkward for those involved in the conversation. Many of the subjects were frustrated when they could not respond to another person in the manner they wanted to.

For future studies in this area, one could reduce the number of hours the treatment group performs the self-imposed silence. Reducing the number of hours may keep the subjects from becoming tired during the silence assignment. A shorter silence assignment may also help the subjects to focus not only on the silence aspect but on the listening aspect of the study as well. Another suggestion is to divide the 12 hours into two sessions. This would perhaps break the preoccupation with just remaining silent and help the subjects to consider also how the silence is assisting their listening skills. However, a fault in this format would be, again, that the subjects would have too much freedom during the silence assignment, and there would be no way to ensure that the subjects were practicing complete silence.

Other suggestions are to create a listening questionnaire that is more tailored to the needs of this study. While this study was based on research with the same goal and used the listening questionnaire that was used in a previous study of the same nature (Johnson et al. 2003); the researcher notes that a more specific listening questionnaire may lead to better results. In review, the Listening Styles Inventory focused on attentiveness more than perceived listening effectiveness. The Listening Styles Inventory, however, was used for this study to establish whether results were similar to the previous study using the same instrument.

One last suggestion is to investigate how other factors such as differences in male/female response, age or whether high versus low educational levels impact how self-imposed silence effects perceived listening skills. These factors were not

investigated in this study because the primary focus of this study was to establish if there were a positive relationship between self-imposed silence and perceived listening skills. Including factors such as male/female response, age and whether educational levels impact results are aspects to be considered in future research.

In closing, there was no positive affect of self-imposed silence on perceived listening skills. However, the researcher believes that with the correct modifications to the study a positive effect may be found. The qualitative data suggests that the subjects appreciated silence; however, they did not make the connection between the self-imposed silence and listening. Many of the subjects noted that the 12 hours of self-imposed silence has encouraged them to use silence as a new listening habit. Perhaps a more practical or behavioral way of applying self-imposed silence to daily, listening needs could be applied. Philosophical points-of-view suggest that, if one practices longer periods of silence at any time during his/her day, better listening habits will develop. Perhaps the research focus should be more on shorter silences or better application of longer silences. A better monitored study may assist in reaching the goal of finding that self-imposed silence would lead to greater perceived listening effectiveness.

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TABLES

Table I

Independent t-test - Posttest Scores for Listening Style Inventory by Groups

Groups	n	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	t	df	sig. (2-tailed)
Treatment	16	34.06	3.8724	.9681	-1.069	30	.293
Control	16	35.43	3.3856	.8464			

*significant at the .05 level

Table II

Independent t-test - Pretest Scores for Listening Styles Inventory by Groups

Groups	n	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	t	df	sig. (2-tailed)
Treatment	16	35.56	4.1628	1.04	.049	30	.962
Control	16	35.50	3.0111	.752			

*significant at the .05 level

Table III

Paired t-test Scores for Listening Styles Inventory Between Pre- and Posttests for Treatment Group

Groups	n	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	df	t	sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest	16	35.56	4.1628	1.0407	15	1.394	.184
Posttest	16	34.06	3.8724	.9681			

*significant at the .05 level

Table IV

Paired t-test Scores for Listening Style Inventory Between Pre- and Posttests for Control Group

Groups	n	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	df	t	sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest	16	35.50	3.0111	.7528	15	.078	.939
Posttest	16	35.43	3.3856	.8464			

*significant at the .05 level

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SILENCE AND SILENCES /BRUNEAU AND ISHII
(1988)

<u>Silence</u>	<u>Silences</u>
1. Somewhat unconscious	Somewhat conscious
2. Being (somewhat timeless)	Becoming (timefull)
3. Durational	Processional
4. Internal (deep thought)	External and internal linear
5. Present-now oriented	Past-future oriented
6. Spiritual (mystical)	Secular
7. Inaction	Action
8. Solitudinal	Social

APPENDIX B

LISTENING STYLES INVENTORY

Directions: The following items relate to your listening style. Circle the appropriate responses. Please be candid. Tally your responses at the bottom.

The Situation: Thinking about a typical daily situation with you as a listener, please respond to the items below.

Item	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
1) I want to listen to what others have to say when they are speaking.	5	4	3	2	1
* 2) I do not listen at my capacity when others are talking.	5	4	3	2	1
3) By listening, I can guess a speaker's intent or purpose without being told.	5	4	3	2	1
4) I have a purpose for listening when others are talking.	5	4	3	2	1
5) I keep control of of my biases & attitudes when listening to others so that these factors won't affect my interpretation of the message.	5	4	3	2	1
6) I analyze my listening errors so as not to make them again.	5	4	3	2	1

Item	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
7) I listen to the complete message before making judgments about what the speaker has said.	5	4	3	2	1
* 8) I can't tell when a speaker's biases or attitudes are affecting his/her message.	5	4	3	2	1
9) I ask questions when I don't fully comprehend a speaker's message.	5	4	3	2	1
10) I'm aware of whether or not a speaker's meaning of words & concepts is the same as mine.	5	4	3	2	1

* reverse coded

APPENDIX C

SILENCE ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Select a 12- hour period during which you normally interact and talk with people
- 2) You will remain silent for 12 hours continuously. If you speak before the 12 hours are up, you are asked to start the 12 hours over. (You are being trusted that you will do so.)
- 3) The main idea is that the 12 hours of silence must be done during a time and in an environment where you normally would interact with others (family, friends, coworkers, sales representatives, etc.) Please avoid any activity that will allow you to spend the full 12 hours or a large portion of the 12 hours alone. Such activities would include sleeping, studying or watching TV alone.
- 4) Please look over the Silence Journal at this time. Please let the researcher know if you have any questions. You will note the categories of activities, people, communication, temptations, feelings, preventions and levels of difficulty in your journal. Provide as much detail as possible. Below are sample answers to these questions.

Silence Journal Entry Examples:

Activities: had lunch at a Chinese restaurant, grocery shopping, attended class.

People: sister, mother, friend

Communication: handwritten notes, e-mailed, smiled, waved.

Temptations: called my name, asked me questions, played jokes on me.

Feelings: left out, peaceful, sad, uncomfortable, irritated.

Preventions: used notes, reminded myself not to talk, body language, turned off phone.

Level: List one number from 1 to 7 each hour (1= extremely easy, 7 = extremely difficult)

- 5) After you've completed the 12 continuous hours of silence please fill in the Silence Journal and Silence Assignment Questionnaire.
- 6) Give the researcher your completed Silence Journal and Silence Assignment Questionnaires at the next meeting.

***Thank you for your participation!**

APPENDIX D

SILENCE JOURNAL

Directions: At the end of the 12-hour silence assignment, please answer the following questions. PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY.

- 1) What did you do during the 12-hour assignment?
(Activities) _____
- 2) Who were you with during the 12-hour assignment?
(People) _____
- 3) What methods did you use to communicate?
(Communication) _____
- 4) What were some things people said or did to try to get you talk?
(Temptations) _____
- 5) What were your feelings during the 12-hour assignment?
(Feelings) _____
- 6) How did you prevent yourself from speaking during the 12-hour assignment?
(Preventions) _____
- 7) What was the difficulty level for you to remain silent during the 12-hour assignment?
Use the following scale: _____

1= Extremely Easy 2= Easy 3= Neither Easy or Difficult
 4= Difficult 5= Extremely Difficult

Number of Attempts (of 12-hour Silence Assignment) (If you completed in the assignment in the first try please write "none".) _____

Start Time for continuous 12 hours (Indicate a.m. or p.m.) _____

Date completed the 12-hour Silence Assignment _____

Pledge: On my honor, all the information in this journal is truthful.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

APPENDIX E

SILENCE ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: At the end of the 12 hours silence assignment, please answer the following. PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY.

1) Have you had any listening training or instruction? ____yes ____no

If yes, please describe (a class, seminar, number of hours, where, when, etc.)

2) What day of the week did you choose for the experiment? _____
Why? _____

3) If you broke your silence, please state the reason for breaking it each time you broke it.
First break _____
Second break _____
Third break _____

4) How did you explain to people around you about your period of silence?

5) From the experiment, what did you learn about yourself?

6) From the experiment, what did you learn about others?

7) What did you learn about listening?

8) Was there a time when silence helped you to understand a situation better? If so, please explain. _____

9) If applicable, describe how being silent hindered a situation.

10) What was the overall difficulty level for you to remain silent? Circle one answer below. Remember one is the easiest level and five is the hardest level.

Extremely Easy	Easy	Neither Easy Nor Difficult	Difficult	Extremely Difficult
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX F

REMINDER CARDS FOR MEETINGS

Date _____

Dear _____

Thanks once again for agreeing to participate in my self-imposed silence and perceived listening effectiveness study. This is a friendly reminder that we will have two meetings in order to complete the study. The first meeting is Saturday, DATE HERE W/ TIME at the Lark Community Center. I will greet you up front and guide you to a study room. The second meeting is the following Saturday, DATE HERE W/ TIME (same place). Those who are completing the silence assignment will need to turn in their journals and questionnaires at the second meeting. Please be on time. If you have any questions or need an alternate meeting time please don't hesitate to call me at (956) 821-9503.

Thanks once again. See you Saturday.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Marroquin-Baldwin
Graduate Student
University of Texas Pan American
Communications Department

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The University of Texas Pan American

Study Title: A Study of Self-Imposed Silence and Perceived Listening Effectiveness

BACKGROUND

This is a survey designed to investigate whether self-imposed silence affects listening effectiveness. Thirty-two subjects will be asked to volunteer for the research project.

PROCEDURES AND DURATION

Subjects will be approached at the Lark Community Center and asked to participate in the study. Contact information will be gathered from the subjects that agree to participate. These subjects will be notified about an orientation meeting that will occur at the Lark Community Center so that information can be dispersed about the study and other requirements of the study can be fulfilled. At the meeting all subjects will give further contact information, sign the consent form, give demographic data and take the first listening quiz. Those that express interest in participating in the 12 hours of self-imposed silence will stay for further instruction; all others will be allowed to leave. The subjects will be given a week to fulfill the 12 consecutive hours of self-imposed silence. Those fulfilling the 12 consecutive hours of self-imposed silence should understand that if their silence is broken they agree to start the 12 hours again. They also should note that if they can not follow the requirements of the study, as related by the researcher, that they will notify the researcher immediately so that another subject can be found to fulfill the study. At the end of the week all subjects will meet again at the Lark Community Center to turn in the Silence Journals and Silence Assignment Questionnaires (which the subjects that undergo the 12 hours of self-imposed silence will fill out at the end of the 12 hours), all subjects will take the second listening quiz. Subjects will be instructed to not put their names on the listening quiz. Subjects will also be asked to complete the survey to the best of their ability. The orientation meeting (filling out the consent form, filling in demographic data, taking the listening quiz) is estimated to take approximately 20 minutes. The second meeting in which all subjects will take the second listening quiz will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Data collection for this study will start April 15, 2005 and will be completed by April 14, 2006.

The University of Texas Pan American
Study Title: A Study of Self-Imposed Silence and Perceived Listening Effectiveness

RISKS/BENEFITS

There are no foreseeable risks associated with your participation in this research investigation. However, those fulfilling the 12 hours of self-imposed silence may not be able to do everyday functions during the silence period. There are no direct benefits but indirect benefits may result if subjects find that self-imposed silence has helped them to listen better on a personal level. The principal investigator will also not receive any benefits from this study other than the objective of the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The information gathered from this research will be kept confidential. Your name will only appear on this consent form and once you have signed it an identification number (ID#) will be assigned to you. Your ID# will be used on all data collected from you. The consent forms will be securely stored in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's office. Other investigators using the data will have access only to coded data identified with your ID#.

COMPENSATION

You will receive no money or other compensation for your participation in this study.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions or comments about the procedures, positive or adverse incidents due to participation in this study or any other attribute of this study, contact the researcher Cynthia Marroquin-Baldwin at (956) 821-9503. This research has been reviewed for the protection of human subjects by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subject's In Research. For research related problems or questions regarding subject's rights, the Human Subject's Committee may be contacted through co-chair, Bahram Faraji at (956) 381-2287.

The University of Texas Pan American

Study Title: A Study of Self Imposed Silence and Perceived Listening Effectiveness

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. Your refusal to participate or desire to discontinue your participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you are otherwise entitled.

CONSENT

I have read and understand the explanations provided to me and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this informed consent form and all of my questions regarding this study have been answered.

*

Signature of Participant

Date

*

Signature of Witness

Date

Print Name:

Address:

Telephone:

ID#

Principal Investigator: Cynthia Marroquin-Baldwin

6904 N. 32nd Street

McAllen, TX 78504

(956) 821-9503

APPENDIX H
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1) Last, First Name: _____

2) Gender: _____ Male
 _____ Female

3) Age (years): _____

4) Race/Ethnicity: _____ Asian
 _____ African American
 _____ Hispanic
 _____ White
 _____ Other – Please List _____

5) Martial Status: _____ Single
 _____ Widower/Widowed
 _____ Divorced
 _____ Separated
 _____ Steady relationship
 _____ Living together
 _____ Married

6) Highest Degree Earned: _____ No degree
 _____ Bachelor's
 _____ Master's
 _____ Other – Please List _____

7) Occupation: _____

VITA

Cynthia Marroquin-Baldwin graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1997 with a bachelor of science degree in communication. She was a teaching assistant, research assistant, and self-contained teaching assistant at the University of Texas –Pan American from 1998-2000. During that time she was published in the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* (Fall 1999) and assisted in research for the “Know the Facts, Know for Sure” STD campaign through the American Social Health Association. From 2000-2005 she taught speech and debate at McAllen Memorial High School. While at Memorial High School, she was the speech coach for University Interscholastic League competition in informative and persuasive speaking, Lincoln – Douglas Debate and cross-examination debate. She was voted Fine Arts Teacher of the Year for 2003-2004. She lives at 6904 N. 32nd St., McAllen, TX 78504.