

1972

Pronoun usage as a reflection of orientation to marriage.

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PRONOUN USAGE AS A REFLECTION OF ORIENTATION TO MARRIAGE

A Thesis Presented

By

Susan E. Gottlieb

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER'S OF SCIENCE

May

1972

Major Subject Psychology

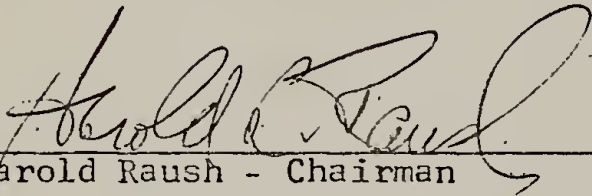
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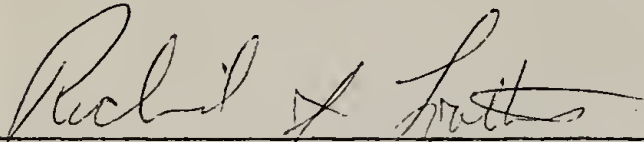
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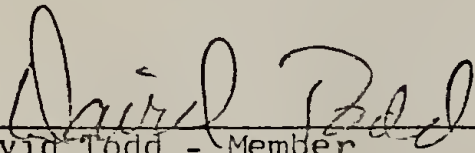
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1972

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Harold Raush, Dr. David Todd, and Dr. Arnold Well for their time and energy. I am grateful to Dr. Harold Raush, my chairman, for his warmth and understanding, to Dr. David Todd for his clear thinking, and to Dr. Arnold Well for his invaluable help with the statistical aspects of this study. I also wish to thank my roommate, Nietzsche Keene, for her understanding during this most trying of times.

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"All I hear all day long is

I-me-mine, I-me-mine, I-me-mine."

The Beatles

"Let It Be" Album

Introduction

Pronoun Usage

The aim of the present study is to explore the connections between pronoun use and the orientation to the marital relationship of different couples and of the two sexes in the early years of their marriage. Pronouns have been found to be a sensitive indicator of interpersonal orientation in some situations. Mowrer (1953), in a discussion of verbal behavior in psychotherapy, cites a study by Zimmerman and Langdon which found systematic changes in the relative frequency of use of certain common personal pronouns during the course of psychotherapy. Zimmerman and Langdon derived their expectations from G. W. Allport's (1937) criteria for a mature or normal personality. Among other characteristics, the mature person is only minimally concerned with himself, in the sense of being introspective and self-centered, and is maximally interested in other persons and objective events (Mowrer, p. 517). From this definition it follows that as a person moves from immaturity to maturity during the course of therapy, his diminishing self-consciousness may be reflected in the relative frequency with which he uses certain of the common personal pronouns. The transcripts of the therapy case of a Mrs. X. showed a general downward trend in the incidence of the first person singular pronoun " I " and an upward trend in the incidence of the third person singular, second person singular, and first person plural pronouns. Jaffe (1964) studied the use of the personal pronouns " I " and " You " by a patient in psychotherapy. He reports that the ratio of " I "

to " You " decreases from the beginning to the end of therapy. Wiener and Mehrabian (1968) have explored the way attitudes toward various content areas and addressees are communicated through language; variations in the choice of pronouns have been shown to be indicative of a communicator's attitude toward an addressee. Lippitt and White (1940) in their classic study of authoritarian group atmospheres looked at the comparative use of " I " and " We " as an index of group cohesiveness. A considerably greater proportion of " I - centered " statements were expressed in the authoritarian atmosphere. Conrad and Conrad (1956) explored the frequency of pronoun use in two groups at the same Veteran's Administration hospital with distinctly different task orientations, a therapy group and two staff meetings in which the topic of discussion was theories of group therapy. Different patterns of pronominal usage were found in the two groups which reflected the different tasks.

Orientation to Marriage

Several researchers have identified and described two different orientations to marriage. They distinguish between couples who focus on their relationship with each other and those who focus on the fulfillment of specific functional requirements. Cuber and Harroff (1966) in their study of upper middle class Americans, discuss five types of enduring marital relationships: the conflict-habituated, the devitalized, the passive-congenial, the vital, and the total. These different types of relationships are seen as varying along the dimension from a utilitarian to an intrinsic orientation to marriage. The

term utilitarian marriage is used to designate " any marriage which is established or maintained for purposes other than to express an intimate, highly personal relationship between a man and a woman (p. 109). " When an individual's primary goals lie outside the marital relationship, but because of social or personal expectations, the person also wants a home and family, one is likely to enter into this kind of marriage. An intrinsic marriage is characterized by the intensity of feeling that the spouses have for one another and the importance they place on each others welfare. Burgess, Locke, and Thomes (1963) make a distinction between marital relationships similar to Cuber and Harroff's. One pattern of relationship is designated the institutional and the other the companionship. Members of an institutional family are primarily concerned with fulfilling external norms for a family. Economic security and the family's position within a community are important to them. Within the family, physical health and care are emphasized and family members interact with one another according to traditional role expectations. In companionship families, the establishment and maintenance of affectional bonds are emphasized as well as each member's personal development. Farber's (1962) distinction between child- and parent oriented homes reflects a similar dichotomy. Rausch, Marshall, and Featherman (1970) explored the differences between couples who had children early in marriage and those who did not in the use of two classes of pronouns, " I-me-my-mine " and " we-us-our-ours," in a series of interviews. Typed transcripts from joint and individual

interviews at the three stages of marriage studied, newlywed, pregnancy, and early parenthood, were used for the frequency counts of pronouns. Couples in the seventh month of pregnancy used higher proportions of " I " than did non-pregnant couples married the same length of time. Moreover, the two groups differed even in the fourth month of marriage when none of the couples were knowingly pregnant. Thus even as newlyweds, couples who had children relatively early in marriage tended to use higher proportions of " I. " The authors suggest that the I - We dimension may tap different orientations to marriage. One end (" I ") would reflect a task orientation, that is, a focus on the accomplishment of specific marital tasks, and the other end (" We "), a relationship orientation, a focus on the interpersonal aspects of the marriage. Couples who had children shifted toward an increased use of " I " as marriage progressed from the Newlywed stage to the stage following the birth of a child; there was no overall difference between the Newlywed and Pregnancy stages. For couples who did not have children, the overall differences between the first two stages are negligible.

Male - Female Differences

Barry (1968) in a study of the interactions of the newlywed couples, looked at the sex differences in the handling of the experimentally induced conflicts. Newlywed husbands were more supportive and seemed more inclined to resolve the conflicts and reconcile the differences while their wives were more inclined to resort to coercion or personal attack and more often

applied emotional pressure as a means of handling conflict. Raush, Barry, Swain, and Hertel (unpublished manuscript), in a chapter on the interactions of these newlyweds, state that the sex differences are consonant with what is generally known about the behavior available to persons of greater or lesser power. Men are seen as having greater power than their wives at the time of marriage and the sex-linked variations in behavior are explained in terms of this power differential. They cite Deutsch's argument that in order to engage in authentic cooperation in the midst of conflict one must have a power base from which to operate. Cooperation requires that both parties are capable, if the occasion arises, of independent action. Given a bond between two or more people, power is defined by Deutsch as the (relative) independence of one party from the other and the other's dependence on him for the attainment of goals. Raush et al. go on to explain how cultural expectations have led to the woman's greater dependence on the marital relationship. Until the present, a woman's status as an individual and self-worth have depended on how she fared as a wife and mother. A man's self-concept has not been as closely tied to the status and quality of his marriage and family. He may seek affirmation of his identity through the alternative mode of occupational achievement and success, goals over which he has control. Barry (1970) in a review of marriage research and conflict, reports that there is much evidence to support the contention that women have a more difficult time adjusting to life and marriage than do men. The first years of marriage are particularly

difficult for women. The newlywed stage is more of a transition period for wives than husbands since they more often move from a career orientation to a housewife and mother orientation. This change in orientation, like any drastic change, produces anxieties. At the newlywed stage, the husband is fulfilled, he has a job and a wife. For the wife, fulfillment still lies ahead in becoming a mother.

Swain (1969) studied the interactions of the same couples as Barry (1968) at pregnancy and early parenthood. Her data suggest that pregnancy leads to a solidification of husbands' and wives' identities. At the pregnancy and early childbearing stages, wives were better able than they were as newlyweds to follow experimental instructions either to maintain distance or to get close to their spouses; husbands become less harsh in maintaining distance. As might be expected, husbands were most supportive of their wives at the pregnancy stage. Swain interprets these results as reflecting increased security in the identities of the husbands as providers and the wives as mothers.

In order to establish and maintain a marital relationship, husbands and wives must decide how to manage individuality versus togetherness. Erikson (1959, 1963) sees the development of the capacities for both intimacy and distantiation as the central task facing young adults. To attain intimacy, a person must have the desire and ability to commit himself to another even when that commitment entails substantial sacrifice, compromise, and self-abandon. Distantiation implies " the readiness to repudiate,

to isolate, and, if necessary, to destroy those forces and people whose essence seems dangerous to one's own (1959, p. 96)." Hess and Handel (1959) pose the issue in another way: the chief developmental task of young adulthood is to handle the need for separateness and the need for connectedness. They conceive of both needs as characterizing one's relationship to the intimate other. Sex differences have traditionally been assumed to exist in the needs for separateness and togetherness. In our society, men have been taught to value independence, assertiveness, and personal accomplishment while women have been expected to be dependent and passive and encouraged to seek fulfillment in the marital relationship. Because of the different cultural expectations for the two sexes, men would be subject to greater fear of engulfment at the beginning of marriage and women to greater fear of abandonment.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of the present study is to explore the use of personal pronouns in situations of interpersonal conflict by young married couples. The couples to be studied in the present investigation are the same as those studied by Raush, Marshall, and Featherman (1970); the data for this study, however, are typed transcripts of conflict scenes rather than interviews. The use of the personal pronouns " I, " " You, " and " We " by childbearing and non-childbearing husbands and wives at three stages of early marriage will be examined. If pronoun usage reflects a task-relationship orientation to marriage in conflict situations as well as in interviews, we would expect (a) child-

bearing couples to use a greater proportion of " I " and non-childbearing couples to use a greater proportion of " We," (b) husbands to be more "I-" oriented and wives to be more " We-" oriented, and (c) the proportion of " I " used by both spouses to increase over the course of marriage. Pronoun usage in conflict situations may also be affected by other factors. The pronouns " I " and " We " may reflect the need within an intimate relationship for individuality and mutuality, respectively; we would then expect (a) husbands to be more " I-" oriented and wives more " We-" oriented as newlyweds and (b) the sex differences to decrease over the course of marriage. Pronoun usage can also be seen as an indication of emotional maturity; our expectations in this case would be that (a) husbands are more " We-" oriented and wives more " I-" oriented as newlyweds and (b) as marriage progresses for this difference to decrease.

Procedures

Background

A project was begun at the National Institute of Mental Health in 1961, to investigate the early stages of family development. As a pilot project for the later investigation, approximately fifty newlywed couples were systematically studied over the first years of their marriage. The sample of couples was obtained from local marriage license records within a reasonable drive of N.I.M.H. since it would be necessary for the couples to spend a number of evenings at the Institute. The criteria for selection were: the couple had to be white, in their first marriage, and to have completed high school, but not to

have more than the B.A. degree and not to be currently a full-time student; husbands had to be between 20 and 27, wives between 18 and 25. The wife could not be knowingly pregnant as of three months of marriage. The criteria were designed to obtain a non-transient sample for the longitudinal study and to reduce the effect of socio-economic differences on the data. The sample is middle-class and is divided into approximately equal thirds of Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. More detailed descriptions and some results of the general studies are presented by Ryder and Goodrich (1966) and by Goodrich, Ryder, and Raush (1968).

The couples were first seen during the fourth month following marriage. Four evenings were spent with each couple, two in the home and two at N.I.M.H. The first meeting was a joint interview with the couple at their home which focused on the general background of the spouses and how they came to be married. The second interview took place at N.I.M.H. where each spouse was seen separately and the individual's past history was discussed. While one spouse was interviewed, the other filled out questionnaires. On the third evening which also was spent at N.I.M.H., the spouses were again interviewed separately. They were questioned concerning their current relationship with their family of origin, sexual behavior in marriage, and their feelings concerning parenthood. The Improvisations, a procedure to be described below, were administered also on the third evening. The final interview was a joint one at home.

Those couples in which the wife later became pregnant (within two to three years from the beginning of the study) were seen

again during the seventh month of pregnancy. Many of the initial procedures were repeated including the relationship scenes of the Improvisations and a new scene concerning who will get up to see why the baby is crying. For each pregnant couple another couple married the same length of time, but where the wife had not become pregnant, was selected to be interviewed.

The couples who had children were again seen during the fourth month after the birth of the child. Some of the same procedures were repeated including the same scenes of the Improvisations used at the pregnancy stage. The matched non-pregnant couples were not interviewed a third time because many were no longer in the area.

Improvisations

The Improvisations were designed to engage the couples in four quasi-experimental, quasi-naturalistic conflict situations. Each spouse is told before each scene what the situation and his role are. Neither one is informed of the instructions to the other. The instructors were allowed to vary the instructions within the general framework to maximally involve the participants. The couples are not to role-play but to be themselves in the given situation. The four scenes were:

a. Issue-oriented Scenes

1) Anniversary - The couple is informed together that it is their first wedding anniversary. Each is then taken to a separate office by his (her) instructor. The husband is told that he wishes it to be a very special occasion; he is asked about their favorite restaurant; and it is suggested that he has

made reservations, ordered a special dinner, and paid in advance. The wife is instructed that she wishes it to be a very special occasion; she has taken a half-day off work (all the wives in the sample were working when this scene was administered) in order to prepare a very special dinner at home; she is asked to plan the meal and to imagine the setting. The dinner is cooking and almost ready when her husband comes home from work. At a signal, the husband and wife enter the living room from different doors, she from the "kitchen," he from the "front door."

2) Television - They are both told that the wife is pregnant and will soon give birth. Separately the husband is told that there is a television show on at nine o'clock that he especially wants to watch; he is asked what such a program might be; if he suggests a program that is part of a weekly series, it is suggested that this is much more special; husbands chose programs ranging from sports programs such as the World Series to Presidential news conferences. The wife is told that at nine o'clock there will be a special show about naming babies; psychological and psychiatric authorities such as Dr. Spock will discuss the implications of names for the psychological health of the child; since they have not settled on names for the baby, she especially wants them to both watch this program. They are brought back into the living room and are seated in front of an imaginary television show; they are told that it is a few minutes before nine o'clock.

b. Relationship-oriented Scenes - The Relationship-Oriented Scenes are designed to be more emotionally involving.

1) Husband-Distant - The instructor asks the husband whether he has ever felt toward anyone that he wanted nothing to do with that person, that the sight or presence of the person was unbearable, etc. He is asked if he has ever felt this way toward his wife. If he denies ever having felt this way toward his wife, he is asked to imagine something about her or something she might do to produce this feeling. The wife is informed that her husband has been cold and distant for the last few days. This behavior is presented as being disturbing to her and disruptive of their relationship. That evening she is to restore the lines of communication between them, find out what is troubling him, and get close to him. The scene opens with the husband looking out of the window when the wife enters the room.

2) Wife-Distant - In the Wife-Distant Scene, the roles are reversed. She is to maintain distance and he is to get close. At the beginning of the scene, she is reading a magazine as the husband enters, returning from an errand. A flaw in the experimental design is that the Husband-Distant Scene is always presented before the Wife-Distant Scene. We therefore do not know the extent to which the wife's behavior in the maintaining distance role is influenced by her husband's prior enactment of that role.

The instructions for the Improvisations do not ask the couples to reach agreement and the fact of discrepancy in the instructions given to each of them is unstated.

Sources of Data and Sample

The present study is based on typed transcripts of the Improvisations from the three stages of marriage studied. At the Newlywed Stage the data source consisted of the enactments of the four scenes of the Improvisations by 26 couples (i.e., 52 individuals). The Anniversary and Television Scenes were administered only at the Newlywed Stage: the Husband-Distant and Wife-Distant Scenes were administered at the three stages of marriage studied. The latter two scenes of the Improvisations were available for all three stages - Newlywed and Equivalent Non-pregnancy Stages.

For examining male-female differences at the Newlywed and Pregnancy (or Equivalent Non-pregnancy), there was thus a sample of 26 husbands and 26 wives. For examining developmental stages and their interactions with sex differences, there were three sets of data for 13 husbands and 13 wives. For comparing the effects of developmental stage with length of marriage, there were protocols from 13 non-childbearing husbands and wives at equivalent periods of marriage. For comparing Issue- and Relationship-oriented Scenes, there were typed transcripts from 26 husbands and 26 wives at the Newlywed Stage.

Coding of Protocols

Typed transcripts of the Improvisations were read by one of three coders¹. Each scene was read three times; the first time to divide it into phases, the second to divide the husband's

¹I am deeply indebted to Terry Naylor and Jim Dunn who assisted me in the coding.

(or wife's) responses into blocks of 10 lines each and to tally the frequency of use of " I," " We," and " You " type pronouns, and the third to repeat the process for the other spouse.

Division into phases. Issue-oriented Scenes were divided into three phases - Introduction, Conflict, and Resolution; Relationship-oriented Scenes into two - Conflict and Resolution. The Introductory phase consisted of those remarks which preceded statement of the conflict issue. The beginning of the Conflict phase was indicated in the Anniversary Scene when either the husband or the wife first mentioned their plans for dinner; in the Television Scene when either spouse stated his/her desire to watch a specific program at nine o'clock. In the Relationship-oriented Scenes, there was no Introductory phase; according to instructions, from the opening of the scene one of the spouses was to maintain distance and the other to get close. In all the scenes, Resolution was said to begin at the first proposal of a plan which was later agreed upon by both spouses. The Resolution phase did not occur in all scenes; sometimes the spouses never reached agreement. Since the present study was designed to study pronoun use in conflict situations, only the conflict phase was scored for frequency of use of personal pronouns.

Defining pronoun usage. Tallies were made of the frequencies of the " I," " We," and " You " type pronouns. Except when they were used as interjections, like " I think," " I mean, " and " I guess," all occurrences of I, me, my, myself, and mine were

counted as " I." The pronouns we, us, our, ours, and ' you and I ' were scored as " We." The words you, your, yours, and yourself were recorded as " You." Not included in the frequency counts of " You " were the uses of you as an impersonal pronoun, like one, to designate a general other or in an interjection like " You know."

Division into blocks. The Conflict phase was divided into blocks of 10 lines each; blocks being determined separately for the two sexes. A line was defined as any line of typed material consisting of more than two words. The coders were instructed to start with the husband's (or the wife's) first response in the Conflict phase, to count down ten lines of his (her) speech and then to go back and record the frequency of " I," " We, " and " You " type pronouns in that block. After the husband's (wife's) responses had all been divided into blocks and scored, the process of division into blocks and tallying of pronouns was repeated for the other spouse's responses. In half of the scenes the husband's responses were scored first; in half, the wife's were.

Scenes were divided into blocks as a precautionary measure. Rauh, Marshall, and Featherman (1970) found a positive relationship between proportion of " I " and interview length. If pronoun use was significantly correlated with scene length in the present study, it would be possible to examine the within-scenes relationship between the two variables.

For a more detailed account of scoring procedures see Appendix A - The Scoring Manual.

Reliability

Division into phases. 10 Issue- and Relationship-oriented Scenes were read by all three coders who marked off the phases in each scene. For each scene, the maximum difference between any two coders in dividing it into phases was found. In Issue-oriented Scenes the average maximum difference was 1.8 lines; in Relationship-oriented Scenes, 3.7 lines. These differences were small enough for the purposes of this study.²

Pronoun tallies. The protocol of one childbearing couple was scored by all three coders. A protocol was selected which had already been scored by one of the coders as part of his regular assignment. To obtain an unconfounded measure of reliability in tallying pronouns, the first coder's cut-off points for phases were used by the next two coders. The second coder was told that the scoring sheets for the protocol had been misplaced and that to save time, he should use the first coder's cut-off points; the third coder was the investigator. Correlation coefficients (\underline{r}) were computed between pairs of coders. Frequencies of " I " and " We " type pronouns were ordered by blocks, separately for husbands and wives, yielding 12 Pearson \underline{r} 's. The mean correlation between pairs of coders was .90 for " I " and .94 for " We; " Table A in the Appendix lists the

²The mean length of Anniversary Scenes was 60 lines, = 46 lines; that of Television Scenes was 38 lines; = 48 lines. At the Newlywed Stage the mean length of Relationship-oriented Scenes was 104 lines, at Pregnancy (or Equivalent Non-Pregnancy) 93 lines with 's of 52 and 65 lines respectively.

12 r's. The measure of reliability used was a very stringent one, sensitive to errors in counting both lines and blocks. Since the main data analyses are based on totals of pronouns rather than subtotals by blocks, the .92 value probably underestimates overall reliability.

Control for Length of Scenes

Because the scenes varied in length, raw frequencies of " I," " We," and " You " were not used in the analyses of the data; frequencies were transformed into ratios of (a) I-words/ I + We + You-words and (b) We-words/ I + We + You-words. The relationship between proportion of " I " and scene length (as measured by number of blocks for one sex) was examined in the Relationship-oriented Scenes at the Newlywed Stage. The correlation between proportion of " I " and protocol length was -.12 for the Maintaining Distance role and .25 for the Getting Close role; t-tests of these r's were not significant. See Figure A in the Appendix.

Statistical Methods

To look at pronoun usage in Relationship-oriented scenes, a two between- and two within-subjects design (Myers, 1966) was used with couples and sex as between-subjects variables and with stages and scenes as within-subjects variables. In comparing childbearing and non-childbearing couples, the effects of couples, sex, and scenes were explored at only two stages, Newlywed and Pregnancy (or the equivalent time for non-pregnant couples); since couples who had children were also seen at a third stage, Early Parenthood, an additional analysis was performed on the

data from these couples. The Issue-oriented scenes were administered only at the Newlywed Stage. Pronoun usage in Issue-oriented Scenes was examined by using a two between- and one within-subjects design; couples and sex as between variables and scenes as the within variable. An analysis was also performed to compare Issue- and Relationship-oriented Scenes; a two between- and one within-subjects design, couples and sex as between variables and scenes as the within variable. All of the above analyses were done both with the proportion of " I " and with the proportion of " We " as dependent measures. Differences between specific sets of cell means were tested by methods of multiple comparisons for a priori and post-hoc hypotheses (Myers, 1966).

Results

Relationship-oriented Scenes: Comparison of Childbearing and Non-Childbearing Couples at Two Stages of Marriage

The results of the analysis of variance for childbearing and non-childbearing couples in Relationship-oriented Scenes is summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Analysis of Variance for Relationship-Oriented Scenes:
Childbearing and Non-Childbearing Couples at Two Stages of Marriage

Source	df	Dependent measure: I		Dependent measure: We	
		MS	F	MS	F
Couples (C)	1	.013		.000	
Sex (H)	1	.051	2.98	.018	4.82*

Table 1 (continued)

Source	df	MS	F	MS	F
C X Y	1	.037	2.13	.000	
Subjects (<u>S</u>)CH	48	.017		.004	
Scenes (S)	1	.002		.003	
C X S	1	.017		.000	
H X S	1	.892	34.32****	.036	9.82***
C X H X S	1	.002		.004	
<u>S</u> X S/CH	48	.026		.004	
Stages (T)	1	.007		.012	5.68**
C X T	1	.005		.005	2.14
H X T	1	.008		.004	1.73
C X H X T	1	.004		.004	1.95
<u>S</u> X T/CH	48	.011		.002	
S X T	1	.001		.000	
C X S X T	1	.009		.001	
H X S X T	1	.000		.000	
C X H X S X T	1	.001		.001	
<u>S</u> X S X T/CH	48	.012		.003	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .025$ *** $p < .005$ **** $p < .001$

Sex differences. Husbands used " We " significantly more often than their wives ($F = 4.85$, $p < .05$); wives tended to use " I " more often ($F = 2.98$, $p < .10$). Childbearing wives were

significantly more " I-" oriented than the matched non-child-bearing wives ($F = 7.01, p < .025$); the two samples of husbands did not differ from one another in their use of " I."

Stage Differences. A statistically significant relationship was found between length of marriage and pronoun use. There was an overall increase in the use of " We" from the Newlywed to the Pregnancy (or Equivalent Non-pregnancy.) Stage ($F = 13.63, p < .01$); husbands showed a slight nonsignificant increase between the two stages. Sheffe's Multiple Comparison method (Myers, 1966) was used to look at the differences between the two stages for childbearing and matched non-childbearing wives separately. Childbearing wives showed a significant increase in use of " We " from Newlywed to Pregnancy ($F = 24.22, p < .01$). Compared to all other groups at the Newlywed Stage, childbearing wives used the lowest proportion of " We;" by Pregnancy, however, childbearing wives' proportion of " We's " matched that of their husbands. The increase for non-childbearing wives between the Newlywed Stage and a time equivalent to Pregnancy was not significant, suggesting that the childbearing wives' increase in use of " We " may be related to their pregnancy. The overall stage effect seems to be due to the wives' increase in use of " We " with childbearing wives contributing more to the effect than matched non-pregnant ones.

Role differences. The Sex X Scenes interaction was significant. The significant effect seemed to be produced by role differences. Pronoun usage in the Maintaining Distance and Getting Close roles was compared. When Ss were in the MD role, they used a

significantly higher proportion of " I " ($F = 37.51, p < .001$); in the GC role, they used a significantly higher proportion of " We " ($F = 13.42, p < .001$). Because husbands were in the MD role first and wives in the GC role first, the effect of roles is confounded by the interaction between sex and order.

Relationship-oriented Scenes: Childbearing Couples at the Three Developmental Stages

Table 2 summarizes the results of the analysis of variance for childbearing couples at the three stages of marriage studied. The analysis did not provide much additional information.

TABLE 2

Analysis of Variance for Relationship-oriented Scenes:
Childbearing Couples at the Three Developmental Stages

Source	df	Dependent measure: " I "		Dependent measure: " I "	
		MS	F	MS	F
Sex (H)	1	.060	4.87*	.008	
Subjects (<u>S</u>)/H	24	.012		.005	
Scenes (S)	1	.001		.010	2.26
S X H	1	.557	23.37**	.015	3.37
<u>S</u> X S/H	1	.025		.005	
Stages (T)	2	.001		.009	3.17
T X H	2	.002		.006	2.00
<u>S</u> X T/H	48	.019		.003	
T X S	2	.001		.005	
T X S X H	2	.001		.000	

Table 2 (continued)

Source	df	MS	F	MS	F
<u>S</u> X T X S/H	48	.017		.004	

*p<.05

**p<.001

Sex differences. The sex difference in the use of " I " which was suggested by the analysis of data from both sets of couples is significant in the data for the childbearing couples; over the three stages of marriage, wives are more " I- " oriented than their husbands (F = 4.87, p<.05).

Issue-oriented Scenes

The results of the analysis of variance for the Issue-oriented Scenes are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Analysis of Variance for Issue-oriented Scenes

Source	df	Dependent measure: " I "		Dependent measure: " We "	
		MS	F	MS	F
Couples (C)	1	.029		.032	
Sex (H)	1	.107	4.28*	.002	
C X H	1	.001		.002	
Subjects (<u>S</u>)/ch	48	.025		.022	
Scenes (S)	1	.123	8.81***	.019	
C X S	1	.009		.017	
H X S	1	.343	24.65****	.122	7.04**

Table 3 (continued)

Source	df	MS	F	MS	F
C X S X H	1	.005		.004	
<u>S</u> X S/CH	48	.014		.017	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .025$ *** $p < .005$ **** $p < .001$

Sex differences. The overall Sex main effect was significant for " I;" wives were more " I- " oriented than their husbands ($F = 4.28, p < .05$). The significant Sex X Scenes interaction indicates that husbands and wives were differentially affected by the two scenes. Wives used a significantly higher proportion of " I " and a lower proportion of " We " in the Anniversary than in the Television Scene; husbands do not show this difference. Since the Anniversary Scene was always administered before the Television Scene, the Differences between the wives' pronoun usage in the two scenes may have been produced by order effects as well as by the specific conflict issues. The wives' high frequency of use of " I " in the Anniversary Scene seems to be responsible for the overall sex difference.

Comparisons Between Issue- and Relationship-oriented Scenes

In Table 4 is presented the analysis of variance for the comparison between Issue- and Relationship-oriented Scenes.

TABLE 4

Analysis of Variance for the Comparison Between Issue- and Relationship-oriented Scenes

Source	df	Dependent measure: " I "		Dependent measure: " We "	
		MS	F	MS	F
Couples (C)	1	.019		.015	
Sex (H)	1	.097	12.15*	.003	
C X H	1	.002		.003	
Subjects (<u>S</u>)/CH	1	.008		.006	
Scenes (S)	1	.299	31.85**	.805	131.96**
C X S	1	.008		.004	
H X S	1	.004		.007	
C X H X S	1	.015		.000	
<u>S</u> X S/CH	48	.009		.006	

* $p < .005$

** $p < .001$

Sex differences. Over the two kinds of scenes administered at the Newlywed Stage, wives were more " I- " oriented than their husbands ($F = 12.15$, $p < .005$).

Scene differences. A significant main effect due to Scenes was obtained. A higher proportion of " I " was used in the Relationship-oriented Scenes ($F = 31.85$, $p < .001$); a higher proportion of " We " was used in the Issue-oriented Scenes ($F = 131.96$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

Pronoun use in the conflict situations represented by the Improvisations seems to be a complex phenomenon which cannot be explained in terms of a single dimension. Raush, Marshall, and Featherman (1970) explored the differences between the childbearing and non-childbearing couples in the use of " I " and " We " type pronouns. Couples who had children early in marriage used higher proportions of " I " than couples who did not at both the Newlywed and Pregnancy (or Equivalent Non-pregnancy) Stages. Childbearing couples shifted toward an increased use of " I " as marriage progressed from the Newlywed Stage to the stage following the birth of a child; there was no overall difference between the Newlywed and Pregnancy Stages. For couples who did not have children, the overall differences between the two stages are negligible. The investigators suggested that the I - We dimension might tap different orientations to marriage. " I " was seen as reflecting a task orientation, that is, a focus on the accomplishment of specific marital tasks and " We " a relationship orientation, that is, a focus on the interpersonal aspects of marriage. In the present study, no overall differences were found between childbearing and non-childbearing couples in pronoun use. Childbearing wives did, however, use a higher proportion of " I " than non-childbearing wives. Since Raush, Marshall, and Featherman did not examine sex differences, their significant couple differences might have been produced by differences between the two samples of wives.

In the Improvisations, there was a significant increase in the use of " We " between the Newlywed and Pregnancy (or Equivalent Non-pregnancy) Stages; no Stage differences were found in the use of " I." The results of the two studies combine to suggest that over the course of marriage, task aspects become more individualized whereas relationship aspects become characterized by a greater emphasis on jointness. At the Newlywed Stage the task and relationship aspects of marriage may be relatively undifferentiated; husbands and wives may still be in the process of dividing responsibility in regard to the performance of tasks and of learning how to work together on interpersonal problems. The increase in the use of " We " in the conflict scenes between the Newlywed and Pregnancy stages may indicate a greater sharing of the relationship aspects of marriage. Although Raush, Marshall, and Featherman found an overall increase in the use of " I " in the interviews between the Newlywed and Early Parenthood Stages, discussions of friends, a relationship aspects of marriage, were characterized by a higher proportion of " We " later in marriage. The overall increase in " I " in the interviews at the Early Parenthood Stage suggests that task specialization is related to the birth of a child rather than to length of marriage. Parenthood may lead husbands and wives to adopt the traditional male-female division of responsibility.

The task-relationship conceptualization of pronoun use does not explain the Sex differences in pronoun use. Wives were more " I- " oriented than their husbands; childbearing wives used a higher proportion of " I " than non-childbearing wives. As

Newlyweds, wives were less " We-" oriented than their husbands; at Pregnancy, there were no sex differences in the use of " We." Although all husbands and wives showed an increase in the use of " We " between the Newlywed and Pregnancy (or Equivalent Non-pregnancy) Stages, childbearing wives showed the greatest increase. As compared to all other groups, they used the lowest proportion of " We " as Newlyweds; they did not however differ from their spouses at Pregnancy. The task-relationship conceptualization would have predicted sex differences in the opposite direction at the Newlywed Stage.

Wives may have experienced a greater threat to their self-esteem in the conflict situations than their husbands. Because of cultural expectations, a wife's self-esteem tends to be more bound to the quality of her marriage than her husband's (Barry, 1970). Conflict may be disruptive of a relationship; the basis of the wives' self-esteem may therefore be more threatened than their husbands' in the interpersonal situations represented by the Improvisations. The two samples of wives may differ in the degree to which they accept the traditional definition of the woman's role. Having a child early in marriage may indicate a stronger acceptance of the traditional female role on the part of childbearing than non-childbearing wives. Because childbearing wives may be more heavily invested in the marital relation, they may feel more vulnerable than the non-childbearing wives in situations which threaten the integrity of their marriage.

The relative frequency of use of self- and other-referring pronouns has been found to be indicative of emotional health and maturity (Mowrer, 1953; Jaffe, 1964). During the course of psychotherapy, the ratio of self- to other-referring pronouns was found to decrease. The use of " I " in the conflict situations may, therefore, indicate a regression to a less mature but safer position when the relationship is threatened. The increase in " We " from Newlywed to Pregnancy may reflect the spouses' greater emotional maturity. At the later stages of marriage, conflict may be experienced as less threatening than at the Newlywed Stage. The marriages have endured a greater length of time and the couples may have learned how to handle differences in desires and needs; childbearing wives may now base their self-esteem on their performance as mothers as well as wives.

The Relationship-oriented Scenes were designed to involve a greater degree of conflict than the Issue-oriented Scenes. In Issue-oriented scenes, couples differed over what to do - where to eat and what television show to watch; in Relationship-oriented Scenes, one spouse is dissatisfied with some aspect of the other. Raush, Barry, Hertel, and Swain (unpublished manuscript) examined the interactions of couples in the Improvisation scenes. In the Relationship- as compared to the Issue-oriented Scenes, couples engaged in fewer cognitive explorations and resorted to a far greater use of rejection and coercion. Raush et al.'s findings provide evidence that the Relationship-oriented Scenes were more conflict laden than the Issue-oriented Scenes. The Relationship-oriented Scenes were characterized by more frequent

use of " I " and less frequent use of " We " than Issue-oriented Scenes. The pronoun differences between the two kinds of scenes make intuitive sense; since the Relationship-oriented Scenes involved a greater degree of conflict, they would present a greater threat to husbands' and wives' self-esteem.

Significant differences in pronoun use were found between the Maintaining Distance and Getting Close roles. In the MD role husbands and wives were more " I-" oriented and less " We-" oriented than they were in the GC role. The pronoun differences between the two kinds of roles cannot be explained either in terms of the task-relationship dimension or degree of threat to self-esteem. The Role differences in pronoun use seem to have been produced by the instructions given to the spouses in the two roles. In the MD role, spouses were oriented toward individuality; in the GC role, they were oriented toward mutuality.

In examining pronoun use in the conflict situations, flaws in the experimental design became apparent. There was no control for order effects; the Anniversary Scene was always administered before the Television Scene, husbands were always in the MD role first while wives were in the GC role first. There was not therefore an unconfounded analysis of the effects due to scene and role differences. Base rate measures of the husbands and wives pronoun use in ordinary conversation would have been valuable in interpreting the results of the present study.

Conclusions

The present study was an attempt to extend Raush, Marshall, and Featherman's (1970) findings in data from the same couples

in conflict rather than interview situations. A conceptualization of " I " and " We " as representing task and relationship orientations to marriage was not sufficient to explain pronoun usage in the interpersonal situations represented by the Improvisations. Pronoun use in conflict situations seems to be a complex phenomenon which can be explained only in terms of a number of dimensions. A task-relationship conceptualization can explain Stage differences. The increase in the use of " We " between the Newlywed and Pregnancy Stage may reflect a greater degree of jointness in dealing with relationship aspects later in marriage. Sex and Scene Differences can be understood in terms of degree of threat to self-esteem. The wives' self-esteem may be more bound to the quality of the marital relationship and therefore more vulnerable to threats to that relationship. The Relationship-oriented Scenes may have produced a greater degree of conflict and therefore a greater threat to the spouses' self-esteem than the Issue-oriented Scenes. The use of " I " in the former scenes can be interpreted as indicative of a regressive stance produced by a threat to one's self-esteem. Role differences may reflect orientations toward individuality or mutuality produced by the instructions to Get Close or to Maintain Distance respectively.

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Appendix A: The Scoring Manual

Each Scene is to be read three times; the first time to divide it into phases, the second to divide the husband's (or the wife's) responses into blocks of 10 lines each and to tally the frequency of " I," " We," and " You " type pronouns, and the third to repeat the process for the other spouse.

Division into Phases

Read through the typed transcript of the scene to be scored in order to divide it into phases. Issue-oriented Scenes are to be divided into three phases - Introduction, Conflict, and Resolution; Relationship-oriented Scenes into two - Conflict and Resolution. The Introductory phase consists of those remarks which precede statement of the conflict issue. The beginning of the Conflict phase is indicated in the Anniversary Scene when either the husband or the wife first mentions their plans for dinner; in the Television Scene when either spouse states his/her desire to watch a specific program at nine o'clock. In the Relationship-oriented Scenes, there is no Introductory phase; according to instructions, the husband is maintaining distance and the wife is trying to get close or vice versa from the moment they start interacting. In all scenes, Resolution begins at the first proposal of a plan which is later agreed upon by both spouses. The Resolution phase does not occur in all scenes; sometimes the spouses never reach agreement.

Division into Blocks

The Conflict phase is to be divided into blocks of 10 lines each; blocks are to be determined separately for husbands and

wives. A line is defined as any line of typed material consisting of more than two words. " Uh huh " would not be counted as line whereas " Can't see " would (can't is two words, can and not). Starting with the husband's or wife's first response is the Conflict phase, the coder first counts off a block of ten lines and then tallies the number of " I's," " We's," and " You's " used in that block. After the pronoun usage in a block has been tallied, the coder goes on to count out another block of 10 lines and to record the frequency of pronoun use in that block. When the husband's (or wife's) responses have all been divided into blocks and recorded, the process is repeated for the other spouse's responses.

Defining Pronoun Usage

1. " I " - I, me, my, myself, mine.

exceptions; when used in interjections such as " I think, " " I mean," " I guess, " " I suppose " or in automatic phrases such as " Excuse me."

2. " We " - we, us, our, ourselves, ' you and I. '

3. " You " - you, your, yours, yourself, ya.

exceptions: the uses of you as an impersonal pronoun like one to designate a general other or in interjections like " You know " and " You hear."

4. Special cases in coding.

- a) Sentences in quotation marks.

e.g. W: I guess, I guess I have to have the courtesy to say, "What would you like to watch " or " Are you going to watch anything" before I informed you of what I wanted to watch.

You didn't even say to me, " Is there something you want to watch?"

The you's in the first two sets of quotation marks refer to the husband and would therefore be scored as " You; " the you in the third set of quotation marks refers to the wife and would therefore be scored as " I."

b) The use of " We " to refer to another relationship other than the marital one is not scored under " We. "

e.g., H: We have got hearings six days in a row, I haven't kept it any secret.

In this utterance, we refers to the husband and his law colleagues and not the husband and his wife.

c) When a pronoun or a phrase consisting of a pronoun + an adverb or an adjective or an auxilliary verb is repeated immediately, the pronoun is counted only once.

e.g. H: No, I, I want to stay right here honey, I just don't want to see ya.

W: Oh, I don't know. I just, I just don't, just go away.

TABLE A

Correlations Between Pairs of Coders for Frequencies of " I " and " We "

Pairs of coders	" I "		" We "	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
1 - 2	.86	.89	.97	.96
1 - 3	.91	.91	.90	.98
2 - 3	.91	.94	.85	.94
Mean	.89	.91	.91	.96
<u>r</u> 's	.90		.94	

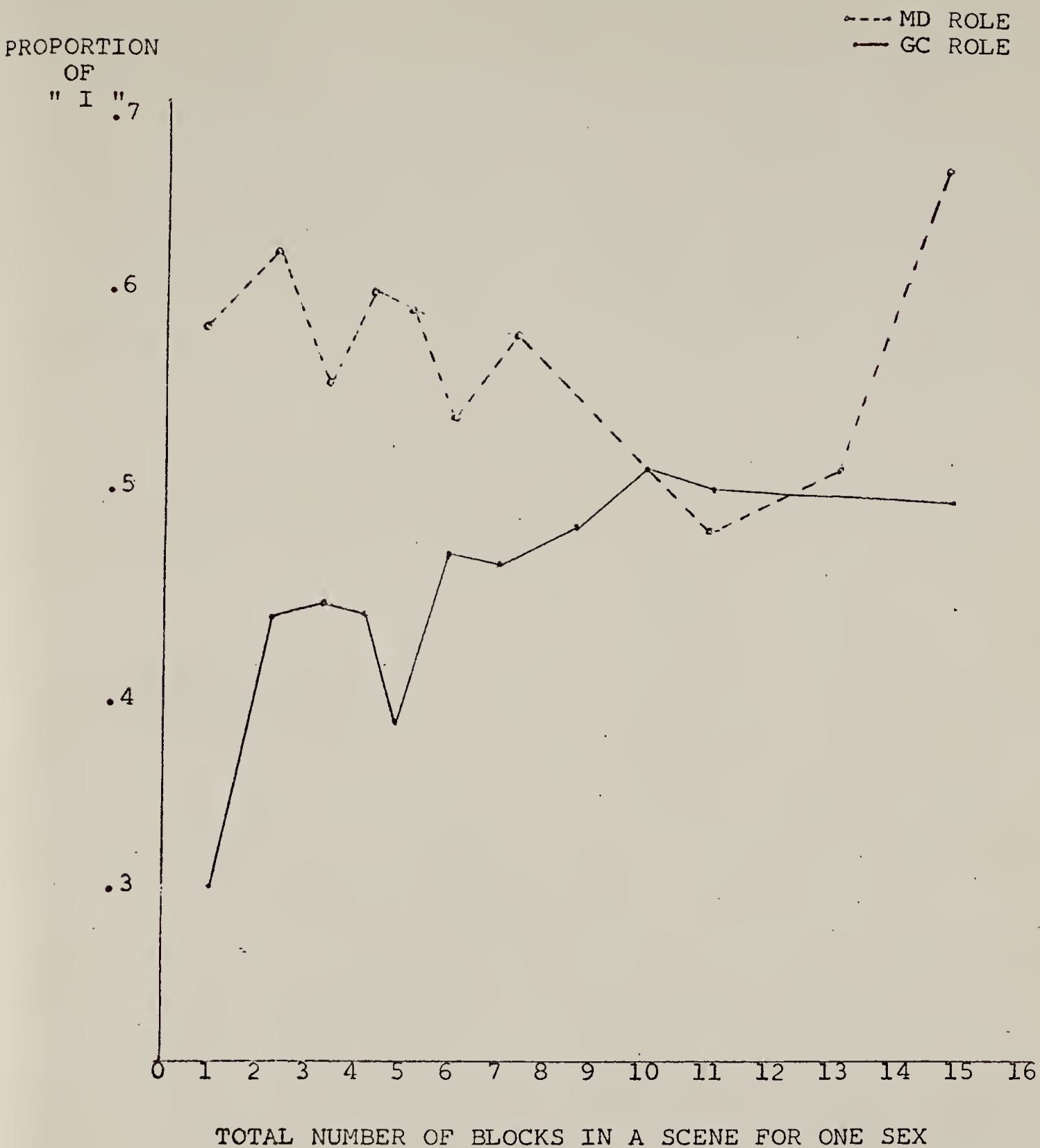


FIG. A. Relationship between scene length and proportion of " I. "

