The Effects of Perspective-getting and Interlocutors' Relationships on Everyday Conversations

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Master Thesis
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January 2022

Acknowledgment

This work represents a significant highlight in my lifetime. I will be remiss if I do not acknowledge the support and advice of all those who helped me to reach this milestone. I acknowledge, with profound gratitude, the support of the Tilburg University Fund for underwriting the cost of my study and my stay in the Netherlands during my study. Tilburg University Fund, you have won yourself a special place in my heart! To my supervisor, Dr. Monique Pollmann, I owe you a massive debt of gratitude for your patience and excellent advice throughout writing this master thesis.

I am highly thankful to my mother, Martha Sharpe, for all her prayers and advice. By the way, this work is dedicated to you, mama! Finally, I thank all my professors at Tilburg University for their quality teachings and my friends and colleagues who inspired me with so much enthusiasm to reach this far. All of you never doubted that I could achieve this feat. Above all, I glorify God for everything.

Abstract

People engage in various communication behaviors in everyday conversations. The current study examined the influence of three communication behaviors and interlocutors' relationships on the quality of everyday conversations. We called these communication behaviors perspective-getting (asking one's conversation partner questions), perspective-taking (imaging others' thoughts), and control condition (being conscious while communicating with others) and tested how they influence five communication outcomes: enjoyment, meaningfulness, social connection, understanding, and satisfaction. We called these communication outcomes conversation quality. We hypothesized that perspective-getting will yield higher conversation quality and that when friends and family communicate, the quality of the conversation will improve compared to colleagues. Results showed that all three communication behaviors jointly influence conversation quality. However, the effect is non-significant when people perform perspective-getting behaviors in their daily conversations. Similarly, interlocutors' relationships (i.e., family, friends) influenced conversation quality. The results also revealed that when friends communicate, conversation enjoyment and conversation satisfaction increase compared to family. There was no interaction between the effects of perspective-getting and interlocutors' relationships on conversation quality. Lastly, we did not test whether conversation quality is higher among family and friends than colleagues because the number of participants who reported communicating with colleagues was insufficient. A future study may replicate this study in an offline environment, as our data was collected online.

Keywords: perspective-getting, perspective-taking, relationships, conversation quality

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> Each person has their story and their take on other people's stories!!! We all have so many different bright beautiful lives!!! Remember, no matter what we think we know about a person's life it is nothing compared to the actual person living behind the lens. (Britney Spears, Twitter, February 10, 2021).

The US pop singer followed up this tweet with a string of social media posts to express her dissatisfaction about the conservatorship a United States court granted her father Jamie Spears in 2008 to control her property and other aspects of her life. Britney and her father's conflict lay between both parties' subjective understanding of what was good and in her best interest (like getting pregnant).

The row between the Spears mirrors the concept of perspective-taking and perspective-getting. Perspective-taking and perspective-getting have been extensively investigated but not in the context of everyday conversations. Hence, the current study will delve further into the effects of perspective-getting against perspective-taking in the context of everyday conversations. Therefore, examining these two constructs first calls for deciphering them in the context of daily conversations.

Perspective-taking means inferring what the other person thinks or feels or putting oneself in the other person's shoes (Keysar et al., 2000), while perspective-getting refers to directly asking the other person about their thoughts and feelings (Eyal et al., 2018). Perspective-taking and perspective-getting are communication behaviors that seem to occur in everyday conversations, as can be noticed in the case of the Spears'. But perspective-takers are always mis-predicting (Damen et al., 2021; Eyal et al., 2018), and their mis-prediction sometimes leads to them being less appreciated (Cavanaugh et al., 2015) and put them into trouble with others, as in the case of the Spears'.

On the other hand, perspective-getting seems to influence interpersonal communication in ways that perspective-taking may not do. For example, unlike perspective-taking, perspective-getting positively affects interpersonal accuracy (Eyal et al., 2018), and it positively influences attitudinal change against outgroup individuals (Kalla & Broockman, 2021). In summary, Kalla & Broockman's (2021) study was a field experiment in which United States voters and illegal immigrants were made to hear each other's stories as in a question-answer conversation, thereby giving the voters the illegal immigrants knowledge of how they felt about each other. Their result shows that prejudice against illegal immigrants reduced among voters who got the illegal immigrants' perspectives compared to perspective-takers and perspective-givers. These prior studies and similar others did not study whether perspective-getting influences people's appraisal of their daily conversations.

Subsequently, this study seeks to fill this research gap by examining the effects of perspective-getting on the quality of everyday conversations. Conversation quality, in this context, means interlocutors' evaluation of their daily conversations as enjoyable, meaningful, socially connecting, understandable and satisfactory. Additionally, because daily conversations often involve people with relationships with one another (Reis et al., 2017; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002), we will explore how the relationships of interlocutors may also affect conversation quality. Therefore, we intend to answer the following research question: *To what extent does perspective-getting influence the quality of everyday conversations (i.e., enjoyment, meaningfulness, social connection, understanding, and satisfaction), and does interlocutors' relationship impact this effect?*

Scientifically, the results of this study may be incorporated into further research in various communication domains. Family communication scholars, business communication, and negotiation scholars may reference the finding in future research. Conversations in these

communication domains usually take the form of dyadic interactions in which the interlocutors' perspectives may not match (a buyer-seller negotiation, for example). Additionally, we did not find prior research testing the effects of interlocutors' relationships on conversation quality, where participants are asked to engage in perspective-getting. This study may shed more light on how perspective-getting and relationships of interlocutors together affect conversation quality from a theoretical viewpoint.

Practically, this study's result may significantly lower the chances of misunderstanding among interlocutors (like the Spears' for example). Counselors may rely on this study's findings to advise couples on communicating with each other. The results may also be significant in fostering improved business relationships and breaking deadlocks in negotiations. For example, a frequent question-answer exchange between negotiators may lead to reciprocal disclosure and concessions and the exchange of values, a tendency known as logrolling in negotiation (Ismet & Beriker, 2009). Additionally, the findings from this study may reveal whether conversation quality is higher when family, friends, or colleagues communicate.

Theoretical Perspectives

Perspective-taking in everyday conversations

Everyday conversations include dyads of different personalities who may have different perspectives about their conversations. However, interlocutors soon forget that there may be a mismatch between their perspectives and the perspectives of their conversation partners (Damen et al., 2021). One reason interlocutors may overlook a mismatch between their perspectives and those of their conversation partners is that interlocutors take perspectives instead of getting perspectives based on perceived closeness with others (Savitsky et al.,

2011). Furthermore, interlocutors take perspectives because they assume more shared knowledge and similarity with their conversation partners (Ames, 2004).

Perspective-taking is a cognitive capacity that supports perceiving the world from others' viewpoints (Galinsky et al., 2008). Perspective-taking may set humans apart from animals, but perspective-takers are almost never accurate (Keysar & Henly, 2002; Schober, 1993). The failure of perspective-takers to accurately predict the mental state of others can be explained by the fact that mental states are latent constructs that cannot be directly observed (Ames, 2004). For example, a study found that couples overestimate the extent to which their spouse agrees with them about a thought and underestimate disagreement thoughts (Sillars et al., 2010).

Despite the inadequacy of perspective-taking people may still take perspectives on the basis that humans are mind readers, an ability of humans that is better explained by the Theory of Mind. According to the theory, people possess the ability to ascribe mental representations to the self and to others by imputing *intention or purpose* and *knowledge or belief* onto the other, indicating that humans can accurately understand the minds of others (Premack & Woodruff, 1978).

However, reading others' mind during everyday conversations may not enhance conversation quality. For example, Cavanaugh et al. (2015) conducted a lab study in which the researchers asked some participants to *imagine* that they (the participant) or a friend needed to pick a birthday gift for a friend or them (the participant). Cavanaugh and colleagues (2015) found that participants who imagined what birthday gifts the other person might need significantly mis-predicted the receivers' reactions, as the gifts were less appreciated than the givers expected. Such inaccuracy and less appreciation (due to perspective-taking behaviors) revealed by Cavanaugh and colleagues (2015) may be

corrected by perspective-getting because the receiver in this context will reveal their true gift preference, which may influence their satisfaction with the birthday present.

Perspective-getting in everyday conversations

Perspective-getting means asking one's conversation partner about his or her mental state or opinion about the conversation. For example, person A told person B that they were at a hospital. Person B engages in perspective-getting if they ask Person A, *Why are you at the hospital?*. It could be that person A went to the hospital because they are ill or visited a sick relative. Perspective-getting is necessary for everyday conversations, since people seldom accurately predict what others think or how others feel (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2015; Damen et al., 2021).

Perspective getting mirrors the idea of reciprocal self-disclosure. At the core of the self-disclosure concept is that people get to know each other's motivations and thoughts by listening to each other (Derlega et al., 1973), a behavior explained by the Social Penetration Theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973). The Social Penetration Theory argues that people do not get information about others at first glance. For example, the givers in Cavanaugh and colleagues' (2015) study would have been appreciated as expected by the receivers if the givers had the chance to ask the receivers for the preferred birthday gifts.

Furthermore, when people are asked for their opinions about an issue, they show agreement to referents about that issue (Maynard, 1989). Opinion inquiry in this context reflects perspective-getting, and demonstrating agreement to statements made about an issue signifies harmony among interlocutors. Also, a demonstration of agreement to statements made about one's interlocutor indicates that the need to ask questions during conversations should not be overlooked.

Perspective-getting resembles feedback, and it is also connected to understanding issues better. A study by Kraut et al. (1982) shows that feedback enhances understanding. In their study, Kraut and colleagues (1982) asked university moviegoers and students to watch the movie "Bend of the River" and summarized the movie to a listener. The listener would also summarize the movie. The researchers found that listeners who gave unlimited feedback to their speakers reported a profound understanding of the speaker's summary compared to those that gave limited feedback and no feedback at all. Feedback in this context resembles perspective-getting because of its question-answer pattern. Similarly, Damen et al. (2021) show this in an experiment where participants assessed how sarcastic they thought addressees perceived messages in short stories presented to the participants. Damen and colleagues (2021) found that participants initially overestimated their addressees' perceived sarcasm of the message but later readjusted their assessment of the addressees' thought of sarcasm after receiving narrative feedback. All these studies support our argument that perspective-getting should be encouraged in daily conversations because it might lead to improved conversation quality.

Conversation quality

Conversation quality reflects the listener's overall perception and evaluation of the conversation. Conversation quality refers to interlocutors' perceived increased conversation enjoyment, understanding within a conversation, satisfaction with a conversation, conversation meaningfulness, and improved social connection through conversations (Gould & MacNeil Gautreau, 2014; Levine & Cohen, 2018). Each of the five constructs we attribute to conversation quality can be related to perspective-getting. We, therefore, delve into these by first understanding what enjoyment is and how enjoyment relates to perspective-getting.

Conversation enjoyment can be described as how pleasant, relaxing, and enjoyable an interlocutor perceives a conversation. Enjoyment, in this regard, should be asked of because it is a sense of or an experience of pleasure that a person develops because of an activity (Tamborini et al., 2010; Verderer et al., 2004). In one study, Bosshart and Macconi (1998, as cited in Tamborini et al., 2010) term enjoyment as a *pleasant reception phenomenon* that encompasses different kinds of pleasures resulting from an activity or system, and that such pleasant reaction is connected to one's personality, reasoning, and emotion. Based on the idea that we do not get a person's whole personality at first glance, it is logical to suggest that asking more questions during conversations will increase interlocutors' perceived enjoyment. In other words, when a party in a conversation does most of the talking instead of asking for the other person's thoughts about an issue, perceived enjoyment of the conversation may be lower. The same applies to most interpersonal interactions because research (e.g., Damen et al., 2021) shows that speakers and addressees may differ in perspectives and understanding about an issue.

Understanding refers to how a party feels they understood the other party and felt understood by that party (Pollmann & Finkenauer, 2009; Weger, 2005). Understanding entails a detailed comprehension of a subject (e.g., Kraut et al., 1982). Achieving understanding or being understood requires asking questions, given that understanding does not manifest outwardly. Additionally, constructivists argue that people construct knowledge and understanding about issues in their minds (Bodner, 1986), indicating that we understand and interpret things differently. For example, a teacher who entertains question-answer class sessions gets to know the extent to which students understand the lesson, and that level of understanding may vary among the students due to individual differences.

Given that understanding is a personal assessment (Pollmann & Finkenauer, 2009; Weger, 2005), it stands to reason that perceived understanding may be higher in

conversations that take the form of a question-answer interaction. For example, even couples understand thoughts differently, as revealed by Ames (2004), which supports the idea of asking questions during conversations. Given this couple example and the constructivist view, we argue that perspective-taking may not support improved conversation understanding compared to perspective-getting. As in Kraut et al. (1982), perspective-getting may lead to improved conversation understanding, suggesting a satisfactory conversation.

Conversation satisfaction means interlocutors' intrinsic and self-reported contentment with a conversation. Satisfaction goes with a feeling of pleasure, happiness, and fulfillment (Goris, 2007; Nikolić et al., 2013). The feeling of pleasure, happiness, and fulfillment that goes with satisfaction links satisfaction with well-being and enhanced performance. Satisfaction should be expressed by the person who is satisfied since it is characterized by how one feels.

Unfortunately, we did not find preliminary evidence predicting that perspective-taking or perspective-getting influences satisfaction among interlocutors, so most of our premises are exploratory and inductive. That said, we believe perspective-getting may influence people's perceived satisfaction with their conversations, especially in longer conversations where many questions may be asked. People desire others to perceive them just as they perceive themselves (Swann & Read, 1981). Thus, asking questions during conversations provides the chance for interlocutors to self-verify their thoughts, which may lead to satisfaction with the conversation. With this reasoning of self-verification, we anticipate that perspective-getting, compared to perspective-taking and consciously communicating, will yield improved conversation satisfaction. We make this prediction because, during meaningful conversations, one may not tell at first sight that a person is satisfied with how a conversation went because satisfaction is a feeling, not a smile.

Conversation meaningfulness denotes the significance interlocutors attribute to their daily conversations. Meaningfulness in this context represents interlocutors' personal evaluation of the conversation as meaningful, fulfilling, liberating, and enriching. Meaningful conversations are deeper and longer (Kardas et al., 2021), suggesting that a series of question-answer exchanges characterize them. Deeper conversations imply revealing private and personal information about oneself, while longer conversations go beyond the ordinary exchange of greeting and brief question-answer interactions, and they cover greater detail of the topic (Kardas et al., 2021).

The difference in the personality of individuals may render people's assessment of conversation meaningfulness to be a subjectively self-defining construct. That is, what defines a meaningful conversation is the intuition of the person who reasons that a conversation was meaningful. In other words, situational issues (e.g., a student attending an exam inspection to prepare for a second take of the exam) affecting an individual's reactions to a conversation may dictate the individual's definition of what makes a conversation meaningful. Based on these facts about meaningfulness, perspective-getting should influence perceived improved conversation meaningfulness because longer and deeper conversations provide chances for more question-answer interactions, making people even more socially connected.

Social connection means having a feeling of close relationships with others (Aron et al., 1991). Socially connected individuals communicate frequently, spend time together, have shared activities, and build mutual understanding (Berscheid et al., 1989). Social connection is essential because of its benefits for the individual. For example, people seek or receive professional support, emotional support, and social support from their social connections (Burke & Kraut, 2013; Gee et al., 2017).

People connect socially by reciprocal self-disclosure (Collins & Miller, 1994). When we disclose our thoughts and motivations to others, they too reciprocate by self-disclosing to us, and this reciprocated disclosure leads to a feeling of having relationships with others (Aron et al., 1997). Because people often desire to connect with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and when they connect, the connection is likely to continue beyond a single interaction (Aron et al., 1997), asking many questions during conversations may increase social connection. In such question-answer conversations, interlocutors may get to know each other better. This reasoning and the provided insights underline our first hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: We expect perspective-getting to influence higher perceived improved conversation quality.

Hypothesis 1b: The effect of perspective-getting on conversation quality will be higher than the effect of perspective-taking and control condition.

Relationships in everyday conversations

Everyday conversations predominantly involve dyads with relational bonds (Reis et al., 2017). People with relationships rely on one another to execute various life activities and expect to interact again (Reis, 2018), suggesting that people in relationships have regular conversations. Family members, friends, and colleagues fall under our *relationships umbrella* based on this concept.

A Family represents a group of individuals connected by biological and legal traits (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). A family consists of romantic partners or parents, their children, siblings, and those with whom a sense of oneness and shared identity and history is developed (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). On the other hand, the Cambridge dictionary defines friend as "a person who you know well and who you like a lot, but who is usually not

a member of your family," and also defines colleague as "one of a group of people who work together."

The meanings of family, friends, and colleagues suggest that perceived conversation quality may vary among relationships because relationships differ. For example, conversations among colleagues may focus on professional matters (Sias, 2005), conversations among friends may be more casual and personal (Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019; Silvi et al., 2009), while family members hold more intimate conversations (Litzinger & Gordon, 2005; Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004). Considering that professional conversations among colleagues may be brief and to the point than intimate and casual conversations among family and friends, perceived conversation quality may be higher among family and friends than among colleagues.

Additionally, family members keep in touch for a longer time (e.g., meeting and communicating during weekends) than colleagues, and family may embrace longer and deeper daily conversations compared to colleagues. Similarly, conversations among friends may be more personal than conversations among colleagues. For example, research indicates that friends influence students to sustain and complete their college studies (Silvi et al., 2009). Given these reasonings, we expect that perceived conversation quality would be higher among family and friends than among colleagues.

Thus, our second hypothesis:

Compared to colleagues, conversations among family and friends will yield higher conversation quality (i.e., enjoyment, meaningfulness, social connection, understanding, and satisfaction).

Our relationship with others may impact our communication behavior towards them. For example, friends are mostly confident that they see things from their friends' perspectives

because of their close relationships (Savitsky et al., 2011). This higher perceived similarity in thoughts based on the relationship suggests that perspective-getting does not spontaneously occur among interlocutors who have relationships with each other. Hence, encouraging family, friends, and colleagues to engage in perspective-getting may yield higher conversation quality.

However, conversation quality may vary among the three groups. For example, conversation enjoyment, meaningfulness, social connection, and satisfaction may be higher among family members. Because family members rely on each other during difficult times like illness (Ahlberg et al., 2021), asking how one feels during difficult times is expected because it makes the sick person satisfied and connected with significant others.

Meanwhile, friends may experience high conversation enjoyment, meaningfulness, social connection, and satisfaction because friends share life experiences with each other, gossip (Leaperand & Holliday, 1995), and lean on each other during difficult times (Rose, 1990). These natures of friendship conversations imply that question-answer interactions seem higher among friends than colleagues. Colleagues may have more extended conversations over shared tasks (Newnam & Goode, 2019). Managers and supervisors communicate tasks to subordinates (Sias & Duncan, 2019), and subordinates may sometimes need clarity about executing tasks. In these conversations about communicating roles, the need for question-answer exchanges cannot be overemphasized. However, one may reason that the underlying motivation for such conversations among colleagues is to increase understanding about tasks. Furthermore, since colleagues meet routinely, and question-answer conversations may be scanty, we do not expect improved conversation quality among colleagues compared to family and friends.

Therefore, our third hypothesis:

Perspective-getting and interlocutors' relationships will influence perceived higher conversation quality (i.e., conversation enjoyment, satisfaction, understanding, increased social connection, and conversation meaningfulness).

Conceptual model
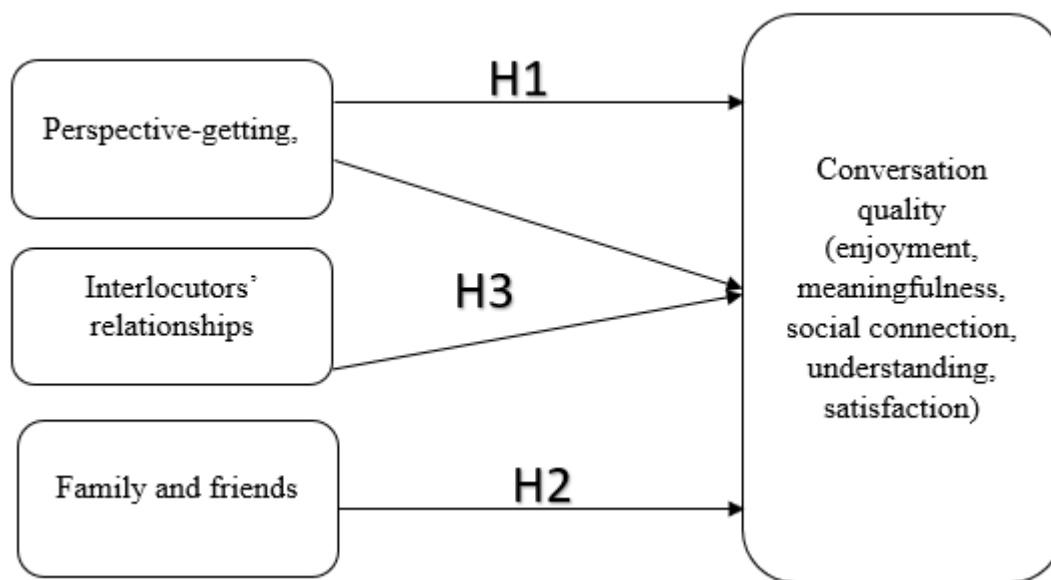
Method

Research Design

To answer the research question, we followed the method of Levine & Cohen (2018). We conducted our study with Wesley den Horder and Yanic Doeve, who used a similar method. The original setup was a 3(perspective-getting vs. perspective-taking, control condition) by 3(family, friends, vs. colleagues) design. However, we employed a 3(perspective-getting vs. perspective-taking, control) by 2(family vs. friend) design because the number of participants ($N = 9$) that spoke with colleagues during the three days was low. With the 3(perspective-getting vs. perspective-taking, control condition) by 2(family vs. friends) design, we could not test hypothesis two, which predicted that conversation quality would be higher among family and friends than among colleagues. The respondents were

enrolled in three conditions: perspective-getting, perspective-taking, and control. Participants in the perspective-getting condition were asked to seek the perspectives of people they had conversations with for three days. Participants in the perspective-taking condition were asked to imagine what their conversation partners thought, and we asked the participants in the control condition to maintain their usual communication style but be conscious in their daily conversations with others. The independent variable was communication behavior with three levels (perspective-getting, perspective-taking, and control condition), and the dependent variable was *conversation quality*. Our second independent variable was relationships (family, friends, and colleagues).

Sample

The sample size was a total of ($N = 105$) participants, perspective-getting ($N= 37$), perspective-taking ($N = 33$) and control condition ($N = 35$). Seventy-five percent ($N =74$) of the participants were female, and the participants' ages ranged from 17 to 64 years ($M = 23.45$, SD 9.40). Participants included students ($N=16$) from a course on interpersonal communication (Persuasion and (Dis)agreement). The students from the course filled in the three surveys and gave reflections to their teachers as part of their course requirements. Other students ($N = 52$) participated in the study via the Tilburg University online participant pool. The students from the pool received an invitation to participate in the study through their university email accounts. Additionally, participants were recruited via convenience sampling through the researchers' networks ($N = 37$). The students from the participant pool were awarded 1.5 points out of the 7.5 points they needed to complete the participant pool credits. The non-student participants were offered a chance to win one of three €10 gift certificates. All the participants read and signed a consent form (see Appendix A), which assured their

anonymity and confidentiality. The consent form also informed participants about the study's duration and their right to opt out.

Procedure

Participants created a unique participant ID for the study after consenting to participate. The participant ID enabled the researchers to match the participants' responses to the three surveys. We conducted the study for three days in December 2021. For example, participants who filled in the first daily survey on Thursday completed the study on Saturday. Participants received the survey questionnaire measuring the quality of their conversations in the evening of each of the experiment days. Additionally, the study included the procedures explained in the following paragraphs:

Introductory survey

Participants filled out an introductory Qualtrics survey that recorded their demographic information and email addresses after consenting to participate in the study. We got participants' email addresses to email the participants the study's daily survey questionnaire.

Instruction video

Participants watched a one-minute instruction video embedded in the introductory survey to receive detailed individual instructions about their tasks based on their experimental condition. We randomized the instruction according to the three conditions. After watching the instruction video, participants reread the instructions, completed a comprehension check, and continued with the study if they answered correctly what we wanted them to do for the study. The instruction for the participants in the perspective-getting condition was: "During the next three days (today, tomorrow, and the following day) please regularly ask your conversation partners what they are thinking, feeling, or

mean by what they say." Participants in the perspective-taking condition received the following instruction: "During the next three days (today, tomorrow, and the following day) please actively think about what your conversation partners are thinking, feeling, or mean by what they say." For the control condition, participants' instruction was: "During the next three days (today, tomorrow, and the following day) please communicate as you would normally do but be conscious of the way you communicate with others." See Appendix B for the instruction transcripts for all three conditions. If a participant failed the check, the participant is told that their answer is incorrect. The participant is redirected to the instruction to the corresponding condition to reread the instruction and answer the check question correctly to be able to continue with the study.

Measures

After completing the manipulation check, participants responded to a total of 16 items measuring their conversation quality. These conversation quality items were grouped into five constructs. The five constructs include conversation enjoyment, meaningfulness, social connection, understanding, and satisfaction. Participants' scores of each of these five constructs were measured on a five-point Likert Scale: *strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree*, and *strongly agree.* The first participants rated their general conversations for the day and then the most important conversations they had for the day. Conversation enjoyment ($m = 3.4$, $SD = 1.0$) was measured with four of the 16 items (e.g., "The conversations I had today were…easy"), and the reliability yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = .85$. Meaningfulness ($m = 3.5$, $SD = .80$) was measured with four items (e.g., "The conversations I had today were meaningful"), and the reliability strength was $\alpha = .85$. We measured social connection ($m = 3.9$, $SD = .90$) with two items (e.g., "The conversations I had today were socially connecting"), and the reliability analysis showed $\alpha = .70$. The

understanding subscale (4.3 *SD* = .60) included three items (e.g., I felt I understood what my

conversation partners said today), and they were reliable α = .77. Finally, we measured

satisfaction (m = 4.1, *SD* = .60) with three items (e.g., "I felt satisfied with the conversations I

had today.") and the Cronbach's Alpha was strong, α = .81. These conversation quality

measurement items were used in previous studies about honesty in communication (Levine &

Cohen, 2018). We chose participants' most important conversations for the analysis because

we expected important conversations among family, friends, and colleagues to differ. Also,

people may remember their important conversations for the day than their general

conversations. Lastly, participants were thanked and provided the opportunity to share their

experiences and thoughts about the study.

Data analysis

Double data/Incomplete data

There were cases (*N* = 34) where participants' IDs appeared in the dataset more than

once. These participants filled in the initial survey at least twice. Therefore, their data were

deleted from the dataset because they saw the instructions for more than one condition. We

also had cases (*N* = 21) where the participants opened the initial survey but did not fill in the

initial survey. After this cleaning process, we had (*N* = 214) participants that completed the

initial survey. There were participants that filled in one daily survey twice and did not fill in

the other daily surveys. We deleted these participants' (*N* = 29) data if the duplicate did not

happen on day two. If the duplicate occurred on day two, we checked if the participant filled

in the second daily survey on two different dates, indicating that the participant intended to

fill in daily survey three. In such a case, we used the data from the participant (*N* = 6).

Another scenario involved participants (*N* =4) who filled in all daily surveys but filled in one

of the daily surveys twice, resulting in four complete daily surveys. In this case, we used the last recorded data because the duplicate occurred on the same day.

Additionally, six participants were excluded from the analysis because they did not speak with the target relationship groups. Also, several participants ($N = 65$) filled in the initial survey but did not complete any of the daily surveys or missed out on several options in the surveys. We deleted these participants' data. Lastly, we excluded the data of nine participants who spoke with colleagues only because we believe nine is statistically not significant, resulting in a final sample of ($N = 105$).

Results

More than half ($N = 59$) of the participants did not fill in all three daily surveys. On day one, 102 participants filled in the survey compared to 84 on day two and 70 on day three. Therefore, we picked a random day for each participant (i.e., a day the participant filled in the survey and talked with either a family member or a friend). By picking a random day, we used the data provided by each participant either on day one, day two, or day three. We could not analyze the data provided for each participant for the three days because some participants filled in either one or more than one daily survey. We performed a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to test our two hypotheses.

Communication behaviors

There was a significant multivariate effect of communication behaviors on the five dependent variables, $V = .18$, $F(10, 192) = 1.92$, $p = .045$. However, none of the univariate tests was significant, indicating that communication behaviors did not influence conversation quality. Therefore, our first hypotheses predicting that perspective-getting will yield higher conversation quality received no support. In other words, participants' scores on conversation

enjoyment, meaningfulness, social connection, understanding, and satisfaction were not influenced by interlocutors engaging in perspective-getting during conversations. The univariate results are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1 shows the main effects of communication behaviors in a bar graph.

Table 1

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects results for Communication behaviors

Dependent	PG		PT		Control			
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	Sig.	η^2.
Enjoyment	3.4	1.0	3.5	0.68	3.2	1.2	.333	.022
Meaningfulness	3.4	0.76	3.4	0.64	3.6	0.86	.516	.013
Social connection	4.0	0.82	3.7	0.82	3.7	1.0	.193	.033
Understanding	4.4	0.54	4.3	0.51	4.2	0.71	.294	.024
Satisfaction	4.0	0.61	4.1	0.53	3.9	0.85	.254	.027

Note. Enjoyment, $F(2, 99) = 1.111$, Meaningfulness, $F(2, 99) = .665$, Social connection, $F(2, 99) = 1.672$, Understanding, $F(2, 99) = 1.240$, Satisfaction, $F(2, 99) = 1.389$. Significant *p*-value and partial eta squared in last two right columns of table.

Figure 1. Bar chart with error bars showing a main effect of communication behaviors
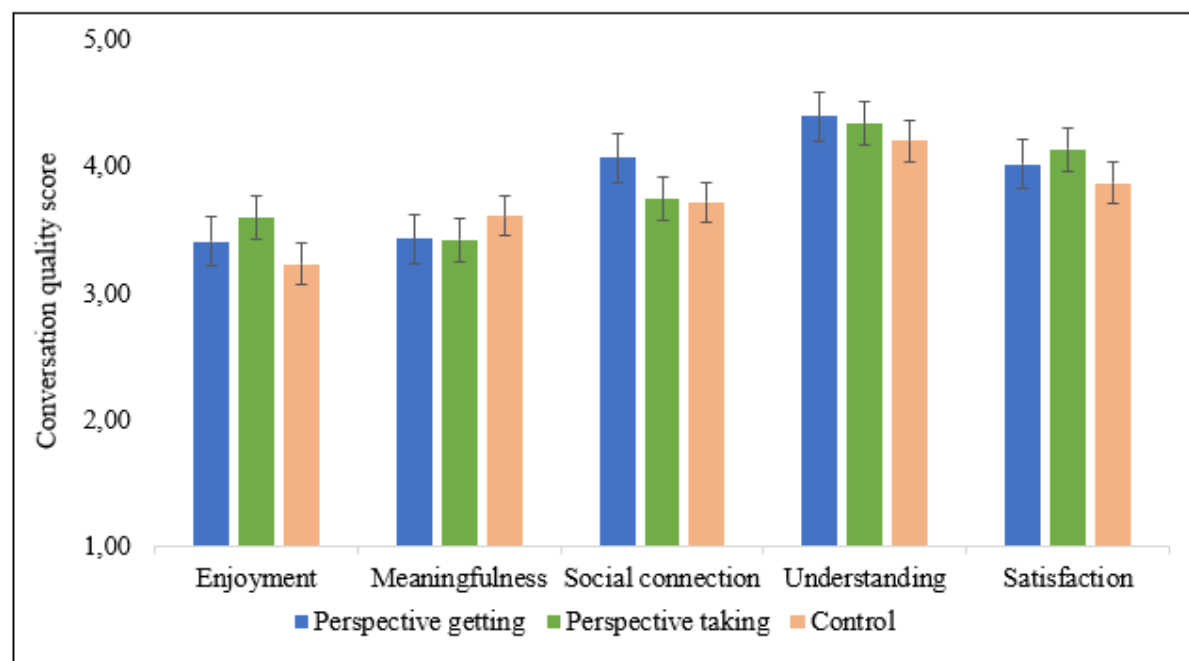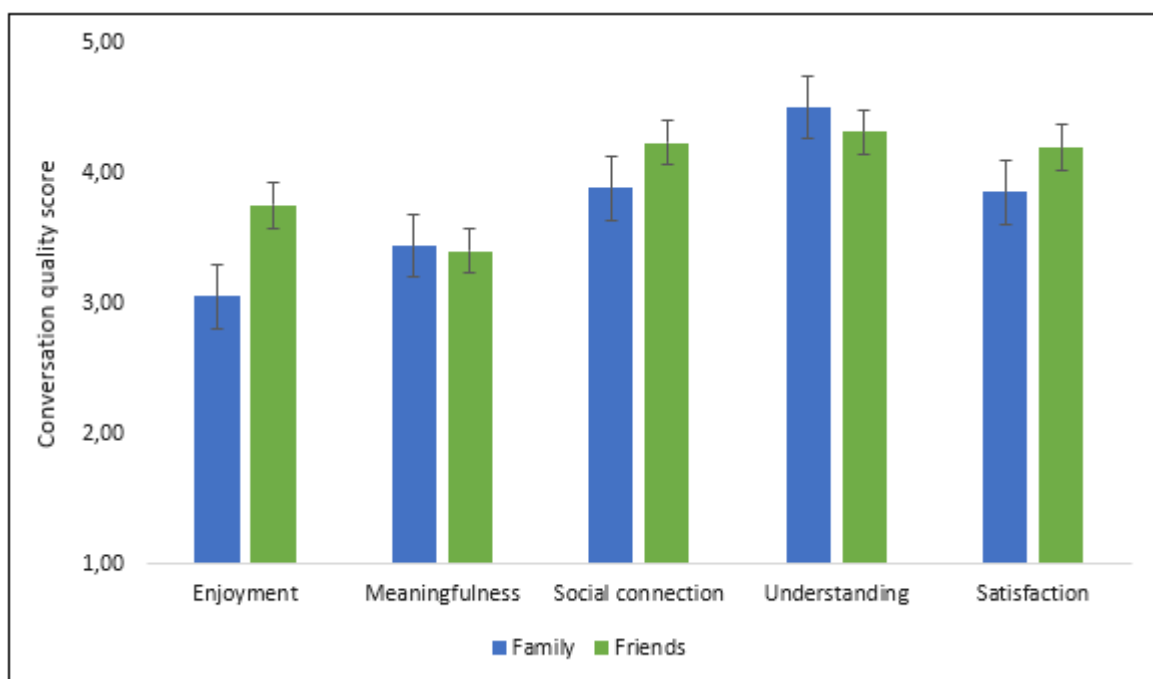

Note. Univariate analyses revealed that the differences between all the dependent variables are non-significant.

Relationships

We tested the effect of family and friends on conversation quality. There was a significant multivariate effect of family and friends on the five dependent variables, $V = .18$, $F(5, 95) = 4.2$, p $= .002$. Friends ($m = 3.7$, $SD = 0.89$) reported more enjoyment with their conversations compared to family ($m = 3.2$, $SD = 1.0$). Also, friends ($m = 4.1$, $SD = 0.68$) reported more satisfaction with their conversations than family ($m = 3.8$, $SD = 0.66$). Figure 2 shows the main effect in a bar chart, and we present the detail of the results of the univariate tests in Table 2.

Figure 2. Bar chart with error bars showing a main effect of Relationships

Note. The Univariate analyses show that the differences between the scores of meaningfulness, social connection, and understanding are non-significant, as shown in the Table below.

Table 2

<div align="center">Tests of Between-Subjects Effects results for Relationships</div>

Dependent Variable	Family		Friends		Sig.	η^2
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Enjoyment	3.2	1.0	3.7	0.87	.012	.061
Meaningfulness	3.5	0.75	3.4	0.78	.495	.005
Social connection	3.7	0.88	4.0	0.89	0.90	.029
Understanding	4.3	0.55	4.2	0.64	.499	.005
Satisfaction	3.8	0.66	4.1	0.68	0.43	.041

Note. Enjoyment, $F(1, 99) = 6.48$, Meaningfulness, $F(1, 99) = 0.47$, Social connection, $F(1, 99) = 2.93$, Understanding $F(1, 99) = 0.46$, Satisfaction, $F(1, 99) = 4.19$. Significant *p*-value and partial eta squared in last two right columns of table.

Finally, MANOVA Pillai's Trace revealed a non-significant interaction effect, $V = .16$ (10, 192) = 1.7, $p = .080$ of communication behaviors and relationships on conversation quality. Therefore, our third hypothesis predicting interaction between communication behaviors and relationships on conversation quality was also not supported.

Conclusion and Discussion

Conclusion

This research examined the influence of perspective-getting and interlocutors' relationships on conversation quality. Three hypotheses were formulated. Based on previous literature, we expected perspective-getting to influence improved conversation quality than perspective-taking and control. We also expected conversation quality to be higher among family and friends than colleagues. We did not test the second hypothesis, which predicted that conversation quality is higher among family and friends than colleagues because we did not generate sufficient data of conversations among colleagues. The results showed that perspective-getting, perspective-taking, and control jointly influence conversation quality. In sum, we found that one does not necessarily need to ask their conversation partners many

questions to improve perceived conversation. However, we found that when family and friends communicate, friends report higher enjoyment and satisfaction compared to family. As for the case of the Spears', we may speculate, based on existing literature, that the more Britney Spears and her father Jamie Spears engaged in perspective-getting, the chances of their misunderstanding may have lowered.

Discussion

This study shows that perspective-getting (i.e., asking your conversation partner questions during a conversation) does not influence improved conversation quality (i.e., conversation enjoyment, meaningfulness, social connection, understanding, and satisfaction). We also show that interlocutors' relationships impact conversation quality. We collected participants' self-reported data for three days for our analyses. Participants were asked to either ask more questions to their conversation partners (perspective-getting), imagine what their conversation partners thought and felt (perspective-taking), or be conscious of the way they communicated (control condition). We expected that communication behaviors would influence conversation quality and that perspective-getting would influence conversation quality compared to perspective-taking and control.

Our study extends the current literature by revealing how three communication behaviors (perspective-getting, perspective-taking, and consciously communicating) and the relationships of interlocutors (family, friends) jointly influence people's appraisal of their conversations. However, when we contrast the effect of perspective-getting against perspective-taking and consciously communicating, it was found that perspective-getting did not lead to higher conversation quality. The results show that participants' assessments of their conversations as enjoyable, meaningful, socially connecting, understanding, and satisfactory do not rely on perspective-getting.

The results also show no support for the power of reciprocated self-disclosure explained by the Social Penetration Theory. Given that the constructs studied are all subjective and internal assessments, it was expected that asking one's interlocutors more questions during conversations may stimulate reciprocated self-disclosure, which may, in turn, improve communication outcomes. For example, as Maynard (1989) indicated in his conversational analysis, when we seek one's opinion about a topic, the person will demonstrate agreement to referents we make about that topic, suggesting that perspective-getting is related to conversation satisfaction. Our results, however, do not support such an analysis and previous studies that show positive effects of perspective-getting on interpersonal communication (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2015; Damen et al., 2021; Kraut et al., 1982). We, nonetheless, show that generally, the dependent variables are communication outcomes that are subjectively derived regardless of performing these three communication behaviors (perspective-getting, perspective-taking, and consciously communicating).

Contrary to the three communication behaviors, we found that the quality of conversation increased when family and friends communicated. Specifically, participants reported more enjoyment and satisfaction when communicators were friends than when they were family. Although our data could not allow us to contrast family and friends with colleagues as we intended, our finding that conversation satisfaction and enjoyment are higher when friends communicate supports the idea that relationship maintenance and communication satisfaction are related. For example, Forsythe & Ledbetter (2015) found that communication satisfaction mediates the relationship between relational maintenance behaviors (such as uncertainty and other-self inclusion) and relational maintenance among friends in the United States. Forsythe & Ledbetter's (2015) result and our result align in that we both show that friendship maintenance behaviors are inspired by communication satisfaction among friends.

A possible explanation for our findings that perspective-getting does not influence conversation quality may be that since people do not naturally engage in perspective-getting (Damen et al., 2021), its effect on daily conversation quality may happen with time.

Our study's results seem counterintuitive because perspective-getting did not influence interpersonal communication. For example, our results do not support Kalla & Broockman (2021) who found that perspective-getting enduringly reduced exclusionary attitudes towards illegal immigrants in the United States. Similarly, Bruneau & Saxe (2012) found prior that perspective-giving fosters positive attitudinal changes and supports conflict resolution. In their study involving Mexican immigrants and white Americans in Arizona, Kalla & Broockman (2021) asked one set of participants to write about the difficulties in their society (perspective-giving) and asked the other to summarize their counterparts' statements (perspective-taking). Their studies show that when people learn each other's stories, they are likely to change their attitude towards the other.

Though Kalla & Broockman (2021) and Bruneau & Saxe's (2012) manipulations of perspective-getting differ from our study's manipulation of perspective-getting, they show that perspective-getting positively influences interpersonal communication. With these promising effects of perspective-getting and its related construct (perspective-giving), we expected that when engage in perspective-getting, the quality of the conversation would be higher.

Finally, we believe future studies may find our study interesting but should consider the limitations we experienced. First, the data for the study are based on self-reports. Self-reported data are dependent on the participants' honesty and level of introspection (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). We tried to deal with this validity concern by ensuring participants' anonymity and by making our questionnaire as straightforward as possible.

Nonetheless, we believe that future research could further improve this validity by pretesting the survey questionnaire to ensure participants understand all questions correctly, for example. Second, the significant number of attritions, double data, and incomplete data jeopardize our use of video instruction and online data collection method. The high number of participants who did not fill in all the three daily surveys prevented us from analyzing all our collected data. In other words, we threw away two days' data of the participants who filled in all three daily surveys. We addressed this limitation by randomly selecting a day for every participant, which enabled us to include all participants in the analysis, thereby increasing the generalizability of our results. However, we believe that future research may attenuate this limitation. For example, Levine & Cohen (2018), whose method we followed, invited participants to the laboratory to receive verbal instructions for their study. Inviting participants to the laboratory brings the researcher and the participant face-to-face. In a face-to-face setting, the researcher may reemphasize the study's instructions, and participants have the chance to ask questions about the study's instructions. Hence, future studies on our topic may invite participants to the laboratory for instructions and collect data both online and in the lab to avoid attrition and enhance validity.

Additionally, future research may reiterate the instruction per condition to participants during the daily surveys instead of presenting the instruction only in the initial survey. Reiterating instruction in a single sentence may remind the participant of what is expected of them, which may inspire the participant to fill in the daily survey correctly and honestly.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Informed consent letter and consent form

Consent **Information letter**

Purpose of the study: In this study we are interested in everyday conversations. You will be asked to watch an instruction video in which we explain which aspect of your daily conversations we are interested in. After filing in some initial questionnaires, the study will start, and you will be asked to fill in a short survey at the end of the day for three days. You will also be asked to fill in another survey 14 days later, to reflect on the study. With this study, we hope to gain more insight into everyday conversations.

Duration of the study: It will take approximately 10 minutes to fill in the first questionnaire, 7 minutes to fill in each of the nightly surveys and 10 minutes to fill in the final survey.

Confidentiality: We will ask for your email address to be able to send you reminders for the surveys. This information will be deleted immediately after data collection is complete. No other identifiable information will be asked.

Participation: Your participation is completely voluntary. You may decide to end your participation at any time and to skip any question you are not comfortable answering, without providing any explanation. Declining or withdrawing has no negative consequences.

Potential Risks: It may cost you some mental energy to be more conscious about your everyday conversations and to remember them. We expect no other risks from participation in this study.

Potential Benefits: Being more conscious about your everyday interactions may improve their quality.

If you are participating via the participant pool, you will receive 1.5 credits if you fill in all the surveys of this study. If you are participating from outside the participant pool, you will have a chance to win one of three 10euro gift certificates from bol.com if you fill in all the surveys of this study.
Data use: The responses to the survey will be stored for at least 10 years and may be made available for other researchers.

Ethical Approval: This study was approved by the Ethical Review Board of the School of Humanities and Digital Sciences of Tilburg University. Code:

Contact: If you have any questions about this study, you can contact Monique Pollmann (m.m.h.pollmann@uvt.nl).

Agreement   By continuing with the questionnaire, I agree that I have read and understood this consent form. I know that my participation is completely voluntary, and I agree to participate. If you do not agree, please close this window.

Consent form

By continuing with this study, I confirm that …:

… I have read and understood the study information.

…I know that it is possible to contact the principal investigator to ask questions about the study by emailing to m.m.h.pollmann@uvt.nl.

…I know that my participation is voluntary.

... I can withdraw from the research once participation has begun, without any negative consequences, and without providing any explanation.

… I give permission to process of anonymous/coded data as mentioned in the information letter.

… I give permission to store the research data for a period of at least ten years and to be made available for other researchers.

By continuing with the questionnaire, I agree with the above points. If you do not agree, please close this window.

○ Agree

Appendix B: Instruction Video transcripts

Perspective-getting

Hi! Thank you for participating in this experiment on communication behavior. In this short instruction video, I will explain what your role in this experiment is. After this video we will ask you two questions to make sure that you watched the video and understood what was said. Before I start with explaining the instructions, I would like to ask you not to share your participation in this experiment with anyone, including relational partners or spouses.

Throughout the coming three days - that means today, tomorrow, and the following day - please strive to ask as often as possible what the conversational partner is thinking or feeling in every conversation you have with every person you talk to. Try to leave your judgments and understanding out of every conversation you have and ask your conversational partner what he or she is thinking, feeling or, means by what is said.

At the end of each day, at 19:00 hours, we would like you to fill in a survey, which will take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. These surveys consist of two parts. The first part focuses on the conversations you had that day in general. The second part focuses on the most important conversation you had that day. For convenience purposes, we would like to send the surveys by email. The email address will only be used for sending the surveys and will be deleted immediately after the experiment is ended.

The goal of this experiment is to find whether this intervention changes communication behavior. I hope that you will have fun or find this experiment valuable. Thank you again for participating and good luck!

Perspective-taking

Hi! Thank you for participating in this experiment on communication behavior. In this short instruction video, I will explain what your role in this experiment is. After this video we will ask you two questions to make sure that you watched the video and understood what was said. Before I start with explaining the instructions, I would like to ask you not to share your participation in this experiment with anyone, including relational partners or spouses.

Throughout the next three days – that means today, tomorrow, and the following day - please strive to actively imagine what the conversational partner is thinking or feeling in every conversation you have with every person you talk to. Really try to step in that person's shoes and think of what s/he means by what s/he says. Actively imagine their thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

At the end of each day, at 19:00 hours, we would like you to fill in a survey, which will take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. These surveys consist of two parts. The first part focuses on the conversations you had that day in general. The second part focuses on the most important conversation you had that day. For convenience purposes, we would like to send the surveys by email. The email address will only be used for sending the surveys and will be deleted immediately after the experiment is ended.

The goal of this experiment is to find whether this intervention changes communication behavior. I hope that you will have fun or find this experiment valuable. Thank you again for participating and good luck!

Control

      Hi! Thank you for participating in this experiment on communication behavior. In this short instruction video, I will explain what your role in this experiment is. After this video we will ask you two questions to make sure that you watched the video and understood what was said. Before I start with explaining the instructions, I would like to ask you not to share your participation in this experiment with anyone, including relational partners or spouses.

      Throughout the next three days – that means today, tomorrow, and the following day - please be conscious of the way you communicate with others. Please act as you normally would throughout the length of this study. You should not change your behavior, but you should be conscious of it.

      At the end of each day, at 19:00 hours, we would like you to fill in a survey, which will take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. These surveys consist of two parts. The first part focuses on the conversations you had that day in general. The second part focuses on the most important conversation you had that day. For convenience purposes, we would like to send the surveys by email. The email address will only be used for sending the surveys and will be deleted immediately after the experiment is ended.

      The goal of this experiment is to find whether this intervention changes communication behavior. I hope that you will have fun or find this experiment valuable. Thank you again for participating and good luck!

Appendix C: Conversation quality measurement scale items

Enjoyment, meaningfulness, and social connection: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

The most important conversation I had today was...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
... easy.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... pleasant.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... enjoyable.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... relaxing.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... meaningful.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... liberating.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... fulfilling.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... enriching.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... socially connecting.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
... uniting.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Understanding: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

These statements are about the most important conversation you had today

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I felt I understood what my conversation partner said.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I felt I correctly interpreted what my conversation partner said.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I understood what the conversation was about.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Satisfaction: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

These statements are about the most important conversation you had today

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I felt satisfied with this conversation.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
This conversation went well.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I am happy with this conversation.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )