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EMOTION TALK BETWEEN SAME- AND MIXED-GENDER FRIENDS

Form and Function

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Emotion talk between friends was examined. Women, men, and mixed pairs engaged in an unstructured and self-disclosure conversation. In addition to comparing talk in the two topics, the speech act category, the directness, the experiencer, and the target of the emotion expression were analyzed. As expected, more references to emotion were made during the self-disclosure than during the unstructured conversation. Negative emotions were referenced more often than positive ones and were particularly likely to be referenced using an indirect form. Contrary to self-report studies, no gender differences were found in the frequency of emotions or in the particular types of emotions referenced. Furthermore, gender composition was not related to the linguistic form of emotion expression. The findings (a) suggest that examining the form of emotion talk is a potentially useful strategy for studying how people verbally convey emotions and (b) lend support to contextual models of behavior.

Self-disclosure in close relationships has been linked with various indexes of psychological adjustment such as relationship satisfaction (Cole & Bradac, 1996; Fitzpatrick, 1987). Although self-disclosure is typically defined as revealing private thoughts and feelings about the self (e.g., Hill & Stull, 1987), studies generally have not analyzed the specific emotional content of disclosures. In particular, there have been very few studies investigating people's actual references to emotion in their talk. Yet, as reviewed below, there is reason to believe that individuals may vary in the manner and types of emotions they express verbally. Thus, the first goal of this study was to

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systematically examine specific forms of emotion talk in friends' conversations. A second goal was to investigate conversation topic and dyad gender composition as potential contextual influences on emotion talk.

There is an extensive body of research on nonverbal emotional expression (see Hall, 1984; LaFrance & Banaji, 1992; Schwartz, Brown, & Ahern, 1980). However, surprisingly little research has been carried out specifically examining how people verbally express their emotions. Although there is often overlap between self-disclosure and emotional expressiveness, the act of self-disclosure does not require emotional expressiveness (see Derlega & Berg, 1987; Hill & Stull, 1987). Self-disclosure is generally defined as the sharing of private feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes (Leaper, Carson, Baker, Holliday, & Myers, 1995) or the revealing of information about oneself of which the conversation partner was probably not aware (Monsour, 1992). Thus, in contrast to self-disclosure, emotion talk refers to the actual words and emotion terms people use.

The language used to refer to emotions allows one to differentiate the emotions and different intensities of the same emotion (Clore & Ortony, 1988). For instance, there is a prototypical facial expression for anger that is argued to be universal (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). However, verbal variants, or indirect forms of anger, might be annoyance, frustration, irritation, or even indirect phrases such as, "I was miffed!" or "I was *not* happy!" In addition, emotion-related phrases that convey interpersonal distance or closeness and empathy can be captured in phrases such as: "We're growing apart" and "I appreciate her a lot more." However, emotion *experience* is not necessarily captured in words. Therefore, emotional experience or "emotionality" is not studied here but rather emotion *expression* through talk. Emotion expression reflects what one displays to others either in a conscious and deliberate manner, or as a result of habit of expression that accumulates with experience. Thus, in addition to studying emotion words in conversations, an important question is, do people choose different ways to express emotions verbally? The *forms* of expression are also investigated in the present study and will be discussed later. But first, another reason for studying emotion talk is the link between emotion and gender.

EMOTION AND GENDER

Emotional expression is seen as one of the key characteristics that distinguishes feminine- and masculine-stereotyped behaviors. For example, many of the items in measures of gender-stereotyped behaviors such as the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) and the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence & Helmreich, 1978) are organized around emotion stereotypes (Shields, 1995). In both scales, being

emotional is considered "feminine." When asked about the most emotional person they knew, college students described a girl or woman much more often than a boy or man (Shields, 1987). Grossman and Wood (1993) found that college students generally viewed "the typical woman" as experiencing and expressing emotions more often and more intensely than "the typical man." One notable exception was that anger was viewed as more typical of men. Emotion and gender are so intertwined that, as Lutz (1990) notes, "any discourse on emotion is also, at least implicitly, a discourse on gender" (p. 69).

Women's and men's reports of their own feelings and expressions of emotions often are consistent with the above stereotypes. However, most research on people's experience and expression of emotion has been based on questionnaires and, to a lesser extent, on role-play situations. Compared with men, women often *report* feeling and expressing the following emotions: more fear (Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Blier & Blier-Wilson, 1989; Brody, 1985; Brody, Hay, & Vandewater, 1990; Croake, Myers, & Singh, 1987; Highlen & Gilles, 1978; Highlen & Johnston, 1979; Kirkpatrick, 1984), more sadness (Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Grossman & Wood, 1993), more shame and guilt (Tangney, 1990), less pride (Tangney, 1990), and more intense positive and negative feelings in general (Brody, 1993; Diener, Sandvik, & Larsen, 1985). Thus, when questionnaires are used, women and men report differences in their emotionality.

LaFrance and Banaji's (1992) review of gender and emotion research indicated that when questionnaires are used, gender differences are more likely to emerge than when other methods of assessment are used. The discrepancy between what is observed during people's conversations and what is found from questionnaire measures might be due to the limitations of questionnaire methods. People's impression management may be magnified in the case of emotion because of display rules that exist for emotion expression generally and display rules for women's and men's expression specifically (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). It is difficult to mask the content of a questionnaire about emotion. Furthermore, there may be a weak link between what people *say* they would do in a situation and what they *actually* do. Finally, people may rely more on gender-role prescriptions on a questionnaire than they would in a conversation where remarks are influenced by the situation (Fischer, 1993; LaFrance & Banaji, 1992; Shields, 1995). Thus, it may not be appropriate to draw inferences from questionnaire data about what people do in actual conversation.

Women and men report feeling and expressing emotions differently and are judged by others as being different emotionally. If women and men are in fact different, how are these differences manifested? As we interact from moment to moment, there may be physiological changes related to emotion. However, our conversation partners do not

necessarily see these changes. Documented gender differences in facial expressions and other nonverbal behaviors (e.g., see LaFrance & Banaji, 1992) suggest that some of the judgments about women's and men's emotionality may be based on their nonverbal behaviors. Girls and women are judged as more emotional than are boys and men (e.g., Shields, 1987). Because verbal expression is one mode of conveying emotion (Winton, 1990) through the sharing of feelings and exchanging intimacy (Holtgraves, 1990), it must be a mode that is used when judging women's and men's emotionality. Therefore, studying emotion talk may provide insight into why women are judged as more emotional than men, and why women rate themselves as more emotional than do men.

FORMS OF EXPRESSION

There have been few studies examining emotion talk. Two research teams have looked at the emotional content of conversations between mothers and their children (Cervantes & Callanan, 1998; Fivush, 1993). Shimanoff (1983, 1985) examined talk between adults. In these cases, the researchers looked at the emotion *words* that were used. For example, Cervantes and Callanan (1998) found that mothers provided more emotion words in explanations (e.g., "The boy was sad because his dog ran away") than simply emotion words as labels that provided no causal information (e.g., "The boy was sad") to their sons than daughters. Mothers provided equal numbers of labels and explanations to their daughters. The implication here may be that mothers felt that they needed to explain more about why people feel certain ways to their sons, whereas they assumed their daughters already knew. Shimanoff (1983, 1985) collected tape-recorded conversations of adults and found that although there were no gender differences in the overall frequency of emotion words, men used more emotion words when talking with women than with other men.

Our study sought to apply and extend the methodologies of these studies. First, we examined emotion talk between friends. Specifically, we compared pairs of women, pairs of men, and pairs of women and men friends. Second, we looked beyond uses of particular emotion words to consider the linguistic *form* that emotional references took. In particular, we analyzed the *speech act* category of the expression (declarative, question, or response), the *directness* of the expression (direct or indirect), the *experiencer* of the referenced emotion (self, conversational partner, or other person), and the source or *target* of the emotion (specific person, general relationships, or inanimate object). Shimanoff (1983, 1985) considered the target or source of people's emotion talk and found that emotion words were more apt to be used in reference to specific people than to less personal sources (e.g., objects or events). To our knowledge, no other study has considered linguistic

form when analyzing emotion talk. By analyzing the form of emotion talk, it is possible to take into account subtle variations in how emotions are discussed. In this regard, Lutz (1990) argued that one way to consider talk about emotion is the degree of distance put between the self and the emotion. Thus, the same emotion may be expressed in a highly personal way (e.g., self as experiencer, specific person as source or target, direct declarative) or in a relatively impersonal way (e.g., other person as experiencer, impersonal situation as target, and indirect). The type and manner of emotion talk may partly depend on the gender of the speaker. In addition, as reviewed next, the conversational context may also influence the emotion talk.

CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES: CONVERSATION TOPIC AND DYAD GENDER COMPOSITION

Two potentially influential contextual moderators of emotion talk examined in this study are the conversational topic and the dyad's gender composition. By comparing behavior in different social contexts, we can begin to disentangle gender differences due to ability (i.e., whether women and men are equally capable of disclosure) versus those due to preference (i.e., whether women and men are equally interested in disclosing). For instance, some studies have reported a greater tendency for self-disclosure among women than men (see Hill & Stull, 1987; Sherrod, 1989). However, when people are placed in a situation where self-disclosure is expected, women and men self-disclose similarly (see Leaper, 1994; Leaper et al. 1995), which may help explain the small magnitude of overall gender difference in self-disclosure found in a recent meta-analysis (Dindia & Allen, 1992). Thus, men may talk to each other about less-intimate issues than do women. However, when the situation calls for self-disclosure, they may "perform" the task as well as women. Therefore, in the present study, we compared emotion expression during two conversation topics: an unstructured conversation and an assigned self-disclosure topic.

Our first set of hypotheses was concerned with conversation topic effects. We expected (1) more total references to emotions and emotion-related states during the self-disclosure setting than the unstructured setting. Moreover, we hypothesized that topic effects would be especially apparent when aspects of linguistic form for emotion talk were taken into account. For instance, to the extent that people may be less comfortable when discussing negative emotions, (2) they may be more likely to use indirect references during the self-disclosure conversation. We also hypothesized that (3) there would be more references to relatively impersonal emotion targets (e.g., objects and events) during the more casual unstructured conversation, whereas there would be more references to personal targets (e.g., specific people) during the self-disclosure conversation.

Our second set of hypotheses addressed possible gender effects on emotion talk and emotion-related talk. We expected that the gender composition of the friendship pair would influence emotion talk. In particular, we anticipated (4) relatively less emotion talk between men than between women or between women and men. Furthermore, we expected the gender composition effect would be especially robust during the self-disclosure topic. There is little pertinent research that has addressed this topic. However, in the only known published study of adult emotion talk that actually examined participants' emotion words in conversations, Shimanoff (1983) found fewer emotion words when two men talked together than when either two women or a mixed pair talked together.

Next, we hypothesized that references to specific emotions would vary depending on the gender composition of the friendship pair. The pairs of women were expected (5) to refer to stereotypically feminine emotions such as fear and sadness more than were pairs of men. In contrast, because anger is considered a self-assertive emotion deemed more acceptable for men to express (Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Sharkin, 1993), we hypothesized (6) that the pairs of men would be the most likely to refer to anger.

Finally, we hypothesized that the gender composition of the friendship pairs would also be related to the linguistic forms of emotion talk. Regarding the speech act category, we expected (7) men to be more likely to reference emotions in response to a question, whereas we expected women to be more likely either to offer spontaneous declarative statements about their emotions or to ask their partners emotion-directed questions. With regard to the directness of emotion-laden statements made, we hypothesized that (8) pairs of women would be more likely than the pairs of men to refer to fear and sadness in relatively direct ways. Conversely, we expected men would be more likely than women to refer to anger directly than indirectly. When examining the experiencer of the emotion, we expected that (9) the pairs of men would more often talk about others' emotions than their own—a strategy that distances the speaker from emotion. Finally, for target of emotion, we expected that (10) the pairs of men would more often refer to objects or events as targets of their emotions than would the pairs of women.

To summarize, in this laboratory study, we compared the talk between women, men, and mixed-gender pairs of friends during two conversation topics: an unstructured session and an assigned emotion-laden conversation topic. Using this procedure, we systematically compared people's talk in the two situations. In addition to examining the types of emotions friends discuss in conversation (specific emotions and positive versus negative), we looked at (a) the *speech act category* of each emotion-laden utterance (declarative statements versus questions versus responses); (b) the *directness* of emotion

expressions; (c) the *experiencer* of the emotion, whether the speaker or another person; and (d) the *source* or *target* of the emotion.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Twenty-five pairs of women, 19 pairs of men, and 24 mixed-gender pairs between 18 and 21 years old ($M = 19.40$, $SD = 1.02$) from mostly middle-class European-American backgrounds participated. Participants were recruited from undergraduate psychology classes at a California university. As criteria for inclusion, participants had to be between 18 and 21 years old. Friends had to have known each other for at least 2 months (mean length of friendship = 12 months). Length of friendship did not differ across the three groups. Also, friends were not supposed to have any romantic interest in each other.

We did not randomly assign participants to arrive with either a same- or a different-gender friend due to the challenge of recruiting pairs of actual friends who were both willing to participate in an observational study. Also, recruiting pairs of men is especially difficult in friendship studies (Lewis, Winstead, & Derlega, 1989). Therefore, our comparison of friendship groups (pairs of women, men, and women-men) constitutes a quasi-experimental design.

PROCEDURE

Each pair was seated in a university research office. First, participants were asked to talk about whatever they wanted for 5 minutes. Afterward, they were asked to discuss for 5 minutes how their family relations had changed since they entered college. Conversations were audiotaped.

EMOTION AND EMOTION-RELATED CODING CATEGORIES

Transcripts of tape-recorded conversations were coded for linguistic references to emotion states. We used Shimanoff's (1983) definition of emotion talk as "a statement about a positive or negative internal state (other than one of knowledge or faith) and which may include but cannot be limited to physiological sensations" (p. 178). Verbal references to various specific emotions were coded. In addition, several states that we considered related to emotional expression were coded. All of the categories were mutually exclusive. The different codes are described below.

Specific emotions. Several taxonomies of emotion have been devised (see Averill, 1975; Harrison, 1986; Shields, 1984). One of the most common classification systems is based on a distinction between basic and social emotions. Basic emotions are typically apparent within the first few months of life, are considered universal and include *interest, joy, disgust, fear, sadness, and anger* (Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Izard, 1992; Lewis, 1993; Shaver, Wu, & Schwartz, 1992; Stein & Oatley, 1992). Social emotions emerge during the second and third years; they are more complicated feelings involving self-awareness that include *pride* and *guilt/embarrassment*¹ (see Cornelius, 1996; Lewis, 1993; Oatley & Jenkins, 1996). We coded for instances of these eight specific emotions, although the distinction between basic and social emotions was not relevant for our study. After reviewing several transcripts, we also added *stress* as an emotion because of its prevalence and obvious connection to emotion (see Robinson & Johnson, 1997, for a discussion of stress as an emotion). There were more negative than positive emotions coded, which is consistent with other typologies (Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Izard, 1992; Lewis, 1993; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987). Having more categories for negative emotions does not necessarily mean that negative emotions occur more often than positive emotions.

Interpersonal emotion-related states. To broaden the scope of our analyses, we also analyzed interpersonal states with emotional connotations. We created the following categories inductively after surveying the content of several transcripts: *positive affiliation* (affection, love, emotional closeness, harmony, trust, empathy, respect, phrases such as "we've grown closer" or "I appreciate her as a person more"), *negative affiliation* (missing someone, loneliness, interpersonal alienation, phrases such as "we're more distant now" or "falling out of love"), *emotional autonomy* (establishing distance from a person or people, independence, separation, e.g., "You're growing away from them in some ways"), *emotional control* (feeling controlled emotionally by someone, e.g., "I was under her thumb" or "he likes to control my life"). Although these interpersonal emotion-related states are not specific emotions themselves, they are associated with emotional sentiments. Affiliative states refer broadly to positive and negative feelings toward people and relationships. The words and phrases used that are classified as positive and negative affiliation suggest interpersonal connection and distance that are not captured by traditional emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, and joy (see de Rivera & Grinkis, 1986 for a discussion of emotions as relational). Autonomy and control usually refer to the degree of emotional distance or pressure one experiences in a relationship (Collins & Repinski, 1994).

Evaluative comments. Evaluative comments included five categories. First, *positive comparisons* referred to positively valenced evaluative words (excluding specific emotion terms) such as *good, better, and cool*. Second, *negative comparisons* referred to negatively valenced evaluative terms (excluding specific emotion terms) such as *bad, worse, that sucks, and bummer*. Third and fourth, *positive and negative preferences* referred to likes and dislikes, respectively. Finally, *desire* included references to wants, needs, or wishes. Although evaluative terms are not as “emotional” as specific emotion words (e.g., *angry* or *fearful*) we, along with others (e.g., Ortony, Clore, & Foss, 1987; Shimanoff, 1983, 1985), view them as *affective*. Ortony et al. (1987) distinguish *affect* from *emotion* by arguing that affect is a broader construct than emotion. All emotions are affective conditions, but not all affective conditions are emotions. For instance, a person’s preferring one restaurant over another is an affective judgment, as is the judgment that a person is unfriendly (Ortony et al., 1987).

Data reduction. Some emotion categories were combined or dropped from analysis. First, references to interest were originally coded but are not included in the present analyses because of the varied meanings subsumed under this category. For instance, the statement “That’s interesting” may variously mean that the referent is curious or that it is strange. Second, references to disgust were rare and, therefore, were not used in the present analyses. Finally, emotional autonomy and emotional control were both relatively infrequent and were combined for the analyses. Autonomy and control are interrelated constructs—especially with regard to family relationships (Frank, Avery, & Laman, 1988).

LINGUISTIC FORM CODING CATEGORIES

In addition to coding specific emotions from each emotion-laden utterance, we analyzed four aspects of the linguistic form: speech act, directness, experiencer, and target or source. Each of these characteristics is described below.

Speech act. We distinguished between emotion references in the following three speech act categories: First, *declaratives* are self-generated statements (i.e., not responses to a question) about emotion and included both affirmative declaratives (“I love you”) and negating declaratives (“He wasn’t bummed out”). Second, *responses* are emotion-laden statements made in response to the conversation partner’s query. Responses included affirmative responses (“Yeah, she’s pretty upset”) and negating responses (“No, I’m not so mad anymore”).

Third, *questions* refer to emotion-laden statements about the self or another person in the form of a query and include both affirmative questions ("Is she just guilty?") and negative questions ("Are you not angry still?"). Although a distinction was made between positive and negative speech act categories during coding, there were insufficient frequencies to maintain the distinction in the statistical analyses.

Directness. Each reference was coded as either a *direct* or *indirect* reference to emotion. A direct reference included specific emotion words such as *angry*, *sad*, *scared*, or *happy*.² An indirect reference to emotion was a word that substituted for, or related to, an emotion term. For instance, *annoyed* was coded as an indirect reference to anger because, although *annoyed* has elements of anger, it is not simply synonymous with anger. Shaver et al.'s (1992) prototype approach to emotion categorization describes emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, and joy as "basic," whereas related emotions such as annoyance, despair, fright, and amusement are subordinates of these. Another example of indirectness we coded is the use of *bumped* to refer to sadness. We interpreted *bumped* to be a weaker form of sadness—perhaps incorporating feelings of disappointment. In addition, other phrases and metaphors that referred to emotion terms but without using the actual term were coded as indirect ("She went through the roof" to indicate anger).

Experiencer. The person who was reported to have experienced the emotion was divided into three categories: the *self* (i.e., the speaker), the *partner* (i.e., the speaker's conversation partner), and *other person* (i.e., a third person who is not present during the conversation).

Target/source. The person or object that was the target or source of one's emotion was divided into three categories. The target was coded as a *specific person* if a specific person was mentioned (e.g., boyfriend, mother, boss); as a *relationship* when the reference is made about a group of people (e.g., family, friends); or as an *object/event* when the reference was to inanimate objects, animals, or events.

CODING AND RELIABILITY

Transcripts were coded in two stages. First, two trained undergraduate research assistants together identified emotion-laden phrases on the transcripts. Second, research assistants individually coded the emotion-laden phrases into one of the previously defined and mutually exclusive emotion categories. During the latter stage, utterances containing emotion were also coded for linguistic form. Table 1

Table 1
Intercoder Reliability for Coding Categories

Coding Category	Minimum Kappa and Minimum Percentage of Agreement	
	κ	%
Emotion category		
Joy	.68	98
Pride	1.0	100
Interest	.72	99
Anger	.70	97
Fear	.91	100
Guilt/embarrassment	.80	99
Sadness	.80	100
Stress	.87	99
Disgust	.25 ^a	99
Ambivalence	—	—
Positive affiliation	.88	97
Negative affiliation	.88	99
Autonomy	.55	98
Control	.79	99
Positive comparative	.88	96
Negative comparative	.70	95
Positive preference	.76	97
Negative preference	.66	99
Desire	.94	99
Directness of reference	.79	90
Experiencer of emotion	.79	92
Target/source of emotion	.66	79
Grammatical classification	.69	81

a. Low kappa due to the relatively low frequencies with which this category occurred.

shows kappas and percentage of agreement for each emotion and emotion-related category, and form of emotion talk.

Unit of analysis. Unit-of-analysis coding refers to the identification of emotion-laden statements in the written transcripts. Pilot research indicated a moderate degree of reliability on the unit of analysis when transcripts were coded separately. To increase intercoder agreement further, we chose to have two raters code each transcript together, working out their differences jointly through discussion. Using this method, two separate pairs of coders achieved 76% agreement on what constituted a codable statement.³

Coding emotion talk. Next, four trained research assistants individually coded each phrase for the specific emotion being referenced as well as for the forms of expression. As seen in Table 1, there was

generally an excellent level of intercoder agreement for emotion coding (average $\kappa = .78$) and linguistic form (average $\kappa = .73$).

RESULTS

Because of unequal cell sizes for the three dyad types, we used the SAS General Linear Model (GLM) statistical procedure for unbalanced designs. This procedure uses adjusted least squares means in its computation of all analyses. When significant main effects were found, least squares means comparison tests were used. Any reported comparison tests were based on this type of analysis.

When significant effects were observed in the analyses, the η^2 measure was computed from the F value (see Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984). The η^2 measure is an estimate of the proportion of variance accounted for by an effect. The η^2 estimates are presented following the F value in the results.

In addition, Cohen's d effect size was computed when any difference between two groups was tested. Cohen's d is an estimate of the difference between two groups in standard deviations. Cohen's d effect size estimates are presented following the p level in the results. Effect sizes of d below .2 are considered negligible. Substantive effects sizes are differentiated as "small" if d is above .20, "medium" if d is above .50, and "large" if d is above .80 (see Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984). Table 2 illustrates the hypotheses for the present study and their associated outcomes.

FREQUENCIES OF SPECIFIC EMOTIONS REFERENCED BY CONVERSATION TOPIC AND DYAD TYPE

In the first set of analyses, we used a mixed-design multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to analyze the effects of dyad type (women, men, and mixed) and conversation topic (unstructured and disclosure) on the specific verbal categories (joy, pride, anger, fear, guilt/embarrassment, sadness, stress, positive affiliation, negative affiliation, autonomy/control, positive comparisons, negative comparisons, positive preferences, and negative preferences). Dyad type was a between-group factor. Conversation topic and verbal category were entered as within-group repeated measures. Dyad type did not produce a statistically significant main effect in any of the analyses. Nor did the variable appear as a factor in any significant interaction effects. Therefore, contrary to expectation, references to either total or particular emotion-related categories did not vary according to the gender composition of the friendship pair. However, as hypothesized, a significant conversation topic main effect indicated that more emotion

Table 2
List of Hypotheses and Outcomes

Hypothesis	Outcome
Hypotheses associated with conversation topic	
1. More total references to emotions and emotion-related states were expected during the self-disclosure than the unstructured setting.	Supported
2. During the self-disclosure topic, references to <i>negative</i> emotions were expected to be expressed more often <i>indirectly</i> than <i>directly</i> .	Supported
3. References to relatively impersonal emotion targets (e.g., objects and events) were expected to occur during the unstructured conversation, whereas references to personal targets (e.g., specific people) were expected during the self-disclosure conversation.	Partially supported—during the self-disclosure conversation, the target of emotion was more often specific people than objects/events.
Hypotheses associated with dyad type	
4. Less emotion talk was expected among pairs of men than either pairs of women or mixed pairs, particularly during the self-disclosure conversation.	Not supported
5. Pairs of women were expected to make more references to <i>fear</i> and <i>sadness</i> than were pairs of men.	Not supported
6. Pairs of men were expected to make more references to <i>anger</i> than were pairs of women.	Not supported
Hypotheses associated with dyad type and form of expression	
7. Pairs of men were expected to refer to emotions when responding to a question, whereas pairs of women were expected to offer spontaneous declarative statements about their emotions or ask their partners emotion-directed questions.	Not supported
8. Pairs of women were expected to refer to traditionally feminine emotions such as fear and sadness <i>directly</i> more than <i>indirectly</i> , whereas pairs of men were expected to refer to anger <i>directly</i> more than <i>indirectly</i> .	Not supported
9. Pairs of men were expected to discuss others' emotions more often than their own.	Not supported
10. Pairs of men, more than pairs of women, were expected to refer to more <i>objects/events</i> as the source or targets of their emotions than specific persons.	Not supported

references occurred during the self-disclosure conversation than during the unstructured conversation, $F(1, 65) = 63.29, \eta^2 = .49, p < .001, d = 1.97$.

There also was an Emotion \times Topic interaction, $F(13, 53) = 11.42, \eta^2 = .18, p < .001$. Follow-up analyses were performed for each topic

Table 3
*Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Rankings for Emotion Categories
 During Unstructured and Disclosure Conversations*

Emotion Category	Unstructured Conversation			Disclosure Conversation		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Ranking	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Ranking
Joy	1.75 _c	1.74	5	1.06 _{e,f}	1.37	9.5
Anger	1.52 _c	2.40	5	2.74 _c	3.00	4.5
Fear	0.63 _d	0.93	9	0.65 _{f,g}	1.28	9.5
Sadness	0.54 _{d,e}	1.23	9	0.52 _{g,h}	0.99	12
Pride	0.15 _{f,g}	0.58	13.5	0.34 _{g,h}	0.94	12
Guilt/embarrassment	0.49 _{d,e}	0.92	9	0.52 _{g,h}	1.04	12
Stress	1.27 _c	2.22	5	2.49 _c	2.37	4.5
Autonomy-control	0.10 _g	0.35	13.5	3.34 _c	3.85	4.5
Positive affiliation	1.43 _c	2.38	5	8.34 _a	6.25	1
Negative affiliation	0.24 _{e,f,g}	1.02	11.5	1.77 _d	1.94	7.5
Positive preference	1.60 _c	2.17	5	1.62 _{d,e}	2.28	7.5
Negative preference	0.29 _{e,f}	0.62	11.5	0.25 _h	0.68	14
Positive comparison	8.57 _a	4.95	1	7.71 _b	5.37	2
Negative comparison	3.02 _b	3.21	2	2.78 _c	2.82	4.5

Note. Means with different subscripts within each conversation setting were significantly different ($p < .05$).

separately. Although no hypotheses were associated with this type of interaction, this analysis illustrates the frequency of each emotion occurring in the two conversation topics. Table 3 illustrates means, standard deviations, and ranking for each emotion category by topic.

A significant emotion main effect occurred during the unstructured conversation, $F(13, 53) = 30.33$, $\eta^2 = .36$, $p < .001$. To compare the frequencies of each emotion category, t tests were conducted. As seen in Table 3, the most frequently referenced emotions during the unstructured topic were positive and negative comparisons followed by joy. The least frequent emotion referenced during the unstructured topic was autonomy-control.

A significant emotion main effect also was associated with the self-disclosure conversation, $F(13, 53) = 30.61$, $\eta^2 = .37$, $p < .001$. As shown in Table 3, the three most frequently referenced emotion categories during this topic were positive affiliation, positive comparison, and autonomy-control. Thus, autonomy-control was the least commonly mentioned emotion-related category in the unstructured conversation and was among the most often referenced categories in the self-disclosure conversation.

FORMS OF EMOTION TALK

A second set of MANOVAs examined dyad type and conversation topic in relation to the linguistic form of emotion talk (speech acts,

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations for Forms of Positive and Negative Emotion Expression During Unstructured Conversation

	Grammatical Class			Directness			Experiencer			Target	
	Dec	Ques	Resp	Direct	Indirect	Self	Partner	Other	Person	Rel	Obj/Event
Positive emotions											
<i>M</i>	1.53	.10	.26	0.81	1.09	1.63	.09	0.18	0.43	0.26	1.19
<i>SD</i>	1.55	.35	.64	1.22	1.47	1.67	.29	0.46	0.80	0.66	1.37
Negative emotions											
<i>M</i>	2.53	.18	.25	1.31	1.87	2.06	.37	0.75	1.69	0.71	0.78
<i>SD</i>	2.41	.42	.58	1.35	2.03	2.05	.71	1.11	2.45	1.04	1.03

Note. Dec = declarative statement; Ques = question; Resp = response to questions; Rel = relationship; Obj/Event = object or event.

Table 5
Means and Standard Deviations for Forms of Positive and Negative Emotion Expression During Disclosure Conversation

	Grammatical Class			Directness			Experiencer			Target	
	Dec	Ques	Resp	Direct	Indirect	Self	Partner	Other	Person	Rel	Obj/Event
Positive emotions											
<i>M</i>	1.24	.06	0.10	0.72	0.68	0.68	.09	0.63	1.10	0.07	.21
<i>SD</i>	1.50	.24	0.35	1.14	1.13	1.01	.33	1.23	1.56	0.39	.53
Negative emotions											
<i>M</i>	3.60	.19	0.42	1.47	2.93	2.66	.37	1.37	3.37	0.79	.22
<i>SD</i>	3.23	.60	1.04	1.79	3.00	2.80	.73	1.55	3.13	1.33	.54

Note. Dec = declarative statement; Ques = question; Resp = response to questions; Rel = relationship; Obj/Event = object or event.

directness, experiencer, and target). Given that the previous analysis revealed significant differences in emotion talk between the two conversation settings, separate analyses of linguistic form were conducted for each topic. Means and standard deviations associated with the unstructured topic are shown in Table 4 and means and standard deviations associated with the self-disclosure topic are shown in Table 5.

The analyses of linguistic form specifically focused on *emotion* talk. Therefore, the interpersonal states and the evaluative comments included in the previous analysis were excluded. Also, because the analyses involved breaking down the emotion categories into the different linguistic forms, we needed to combine some of the emotion categories to allow for sufficient frequencies to perform the analyses. We followed the convention used by other researchers by making a broad distinction between positive and negative emotions (see, e.g., Frijda, 1970; Osgood, 1966; Schlosberg, 1954). *Positive emotions* consisted of joy and pride, whereas *negative emotions* consisted of anger, fear, sadness, and guilt/embarrassment.

Dyad type was entered as a between-group factor in all of the MANOVAs. However, dyad type was not associated with any significant main effects or interactions in any of the analyses. Therefore, the subsequent results are limited to findings regarding the relationship between linguistic form and references to positive or negative emotions in the two conversation settings.

SPEECH ACT

The first form of expression that was analyzed was the speech act of the expression. Speech act (declarative, question, or response) and emotion valence (positive or negative) were entered into the MANOVA as two cross-classified, within-group repeated measures.

Unstructured conversation. A significant speech act main effect was found, $F(2, 130) = 83.75, \eta^2 = .39, p < .001$. Least square means comparison tests revealed that emotion references most often took the form of *declarative* statements, followed by *responses*, and then *questions* (all $ps < .05$). Second, a valence main effect indicated that during the unstructured conversation, negative emotions were mentioned more often than positive emotions, $F(1, 65) = 8.65, \eta^2 = .12, p < .01, d = .73$. Finally, there was a significant Valence \times Speech Act interaction, $F(2, 130) = 7.99, \eta^2 = .06, p < .001$. Simple effects tests revealed that the previously described valence effect was especially likely for emotions stated in the declarative form, $F(1, 65) = 9.54, \eta^2 = .13, p < .01, d = .77$.

Self-disclosure conversation. A valence main effect indicated that negative emotions were more frequent than positive emotions during the disclosure topic, $F(1, 65) = 40.73, \eta^2 = .39, p < .001, d = 1.58$.

Although a similar finding occurred during the unstructured conversation, the effect size is twice as large during the disclosure conversation.

A Valence \times Speech Act interaction was also observed, $F(2, 130) = 20.03$, $\eta^2 = .13$, $p < .001$. Simple effects tests indicated that negative emotions were more likely to be mentioned than positive emotions in the form of a declarative, $F(1, 65) = 28.38$, $\eta^2 = .30$, $p < .01$, $d = 1.32$, or a response, $F(1, 65) = 6.17$, $\eta^2 = .09$, $p < .05$, $d = .62$. However, people were equally likely to mention positive and negative emotions in the form of a question.

DIRECTNESS

The next form of expression that was analyzed was directness. Directness (direct or indirect) and emotion valence were entered into the MANOVA as two cross-classified, within-group repeated measures.

Unstructured topic. During the unstructured topic, there was a significant main effect for directness, $F(1, 65) = 5.72$, $\eta^2 = .08$, $p < .05$, $d = .59$. Examination of Table 4 indicates that during the unstructured topic, indirect references were more common than direct references.

Self-disclosure conversation. A Valence \times Directness interaction occurred in the analysis of emotion talk during the self-disclosure conversation, $F(1, 65) = 9.36$, $\eta^2 = .13$, $p < .01$. Simple effects tests found that negative emotions were more likely to be expressed indirectly than directly, $F(1, 65) = 12.16$, $\eta^2 = .16$, $p < .001$, $d = .87$. There was no difference in how positive emotions were expressed.

EXPERIENCER

The next form of expression analyzed was the experiencer (self, partner, object/event). As in the other analyses, this factor and valence were entered as repeated measures.

Unstructured conversation. A significant main effect for experiencer occurred for emotions mentioned during the unstructured topic, $F(2, 130) = 78.15$, $\eta^2 = .38$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.55$. Least square means comparison tests indicated that participants most often referred to their own emotions, next most often to the conversation partner's emotions, and least often to other people's emotions (all $ps < .05$).

Self-disclosure conversation. A significant experiencer main effect also occurred during the self-disclosure conversation, $F(2, 130) = 33.45$,

$\eta^2 = .2, p < .001, d = 1.01$. As in the unstructured conversation, references to one's own emotions were most common. However, references to others' emotions were the second most frequent, and references to the conversation partner's emotions were the least frequent (all $ps < .05$).

A Valence \times Experiencer interaction occurred as well, $F(2, 130) = 11.69, \eta^2 = .08, p < .001$. Simple main effects for experiencer were associated with positive emotions, $F(2, 130) = 8.92, \eta^2 = .06, p < .001$, as well as with negative emotions, $F(2, 130) = 25.90, \eta^2 = .17, p < .001, d = .89$. Comparison tests indicated that when positive emotions were expressed, people referred to either their own and to other people's emotions significantly more often than to their conversation partners' emotions (all $ps < .05$). A somewhat different pattern is seen with negative emotions. During the self-disclosure conversation, participants referred to their own negative emotions more than others' (all $ps < .05$).

TARGET/SOURCE

The last form of expression analyzed here was the target or source of the emotion expressed (single person, people/relationships, or objects/events). Both target and emotion valence were tested as within-group factors and entered as cross-classified repeated measures.

Unstructured conversation. A significant Valence \times Target interaction occurred in the unstructured setting, $F(2, 130) = 15.39, \eta^2 = .11, p < .001$. Simple main effects for target were associated with positive emotions, $F(2, 130) = 17.67, \eta^2 = .12, p < .001$, and negative emotions, $F(2, 130) = 6.30, \eta^2 = .05, p < .01$. Comparison tests indicated that when positive emotions were expressed, the target of the emotion was more often objects or events than either a specific person or relationships (all $ps < .05$). When negative emotions were discussed in this setting, a specific person was most often the target of the emotion compared to relationships or to objects/events (all $ps < .05$).

Self-disclosure conversation. A significant main effect for target occurred, $F(2, 130) = 60.33, \eta^2 = .32, p < .001$. Least square means comparison tests revealed that the most frequent target of an emotion during the disclosure conversation was a specific person. The second most frequent target was people/relationships, whereas the least frequent target was an object/event (all $ps < .05$).

A Valence \times Target interaction was also found, $F(2, 130) = 18.74, \eta^2 = .13, p < .001$. Simple main effects for target occurred with both positive emotions, $F(2, 130) = 22.95, \eta^2 = .15, p < .001$, and negative emotions, $F(2, 130) = 45.57, \eta^2 = .26, p < .001$. Comparison tests revealed that specific persons were the most common target for

expressions of either positive or negative emotions. However, the next most likely references varied by valence. When positive emotions were discussed, the target of the emotion was more often specific people than people/relationships or objects/events (all $ps < .05$). When negative emotions were mentioned, specific people were the most frequent targets, whereas people/relationships were the next frequent and objects/events were the least frequent targets during the disclosure topic (all $ps < .05$).

DISCUSSION

Perhaps the most striking result in our study is the lack of differences associated with the gender composition of the friendship pair. The three dyad types did not differ on any of the dimensions studied. Women were expected to make more total references to emotion than were men. Women were expected to make more references to feminine-stereotyped emotions such as fear and sadness, whereas men were expected to make more references to the masculine-stereotyped emotion of anger. We also anticipated that dyad type would account for differences in the linguistic forms of expression studied such as speech act category, directness, and experiencer. Instead, conversation topic accounted for the most variability in the study. That is, the frequency of emotion references and the types of emotions referenced varied according to conversation topic, not according to the gender composition of the friends. The absence of gender differences contrasts with self-report studies of the frequency and intensity of one's emotional experience and expression (e.g., Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Croake et al., 1987; Grossman & Wood, 1993) and with people's beliefs about women's and men's emotionality (Grossman & Wood, 1993; Shields, 1987). As we noted earlier, gender differences are more likely when self-report measures are used—particularly when the topic of study itself is gendered, such as emotion (see LaFrance & Banaji, 1992, for a discussion). People tend to rely more on gender-role prescriptions when filling out a questionnaire than they would in a conversation where remarks are influenced by the situation (Fischer, 1993; LaFrance & Banaji, 1992; Shields, 1995). Thus, the findings here lend support to models of gender emphasizing the influence of the interactive setting (conversational topic) rather than gender or sex category in driving behavior (e.g., Deaux & Major, 1987).

There were differences associated with other factors examined in this study. One advantage of using a laboratory experiment is that participants talked with each other under two different conditions: one in which they were asked to talk about whatever they wanted and a self-disclosure topic designed to encourage emotion disclosure. As expected, the frequency of emotion references was much higher in the

disclosure conversation than in the unstructured conversation. It is important to point out that we did not ask participants to express emotion. Nonetheless, the disclosure situation elicited many more emotion references from all three dyad types. Thus, when people are put in situations that call for emotion expression, they tend to express it, regardless of their gender. The influence of particular situations on emotion talk has important implications for self-disclosure and intimacy in relation to gender. Recall that women and men have been found to differ in self-disclosure, with women being more likely to talk about personal feelings and men being more likely to talk about shared interests and activities (see Hill & Stull, 1987; Sherrod, 1989). However, some recent studies have demonstrated that when men are put in situations that call for disclosure, they disclose with the same frequency as do women (see Leaper, 1994, for a review). Thus, to the extent that there are gender variations in disclosure, they may reflect differences in preference rather than in ability. In other words, if women and men were equally likely to choose situations that afford emotional expression, no gender differences in emotion talk would be expected (which occurred in the present study). Thus, gender differences in self-disclosure and, by extension, emotional expression may be a function of the situations in which people are located rather than any innate or predisposed ability. If women continue to be primary caregivers of children, for instance, they will have more practice communicating in traditionally feminine or nurturing ways. However, because women are much more likely to be full-time workers, and because men are somewhat more likely to be involved in caregiving than they were 30 or 40 years ago, women and men may get practice in nontraditional contexts. Some studies have found that corporate women and men are similar in characteristics such as aggression and nurturance (e.g., Hatcher, 1991), whereas other studies have found that women and men in the same occupation are different in some respects ("Male, Female Physicians," 1992). Future work in the area of women's and men's exposure to, and communication in, nontraditional contexts will shed light on women's and men's flexibility across situations.

Emotion expression differed depending on the conversation topic. First, friends did not refer to emotions much in their conversations when compared to the interpersonal emotion-related states and evaluative comments also under investigation here. Even when we asked friends to talk about an implicitly emotional topic (how their relationship with their family has changed since they began college), few specific emotions, in the traditional sense of what an emotion is, such as anger, sadness, fear, guilt, and pride (Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Izard 1992; Lewis, 1993), were expressed. There was also a lot of

variability between pairs in terms of the frequency with which they expressed emotions.

The most frequent emotion categories referenced during the unstructured topic were the affective states of positive and negative comparisons (references to good, bad, better, worse). Thus, during the relatively more casual conversation, opinions and evaluations were exchanged much more than talk about specific emotions. However, after comparisons, the next most frequent reference during the unstructured conversation was joy. The relatively high ranking of joy in frequency of occurrence during the unstructured discussion contrasts with its low ranking during the self-disclosure conversation.

During the disclosure conversation, the emotion most frequently referred to was the emotion-related state of positive affiliation. This category was established after an initial examination of the transcripts in which we found statements that were emotion *laden* but that did not refer to words or phrases from specific emotion categories. Utterances such as "Our relationship is growing closer now" or "She's like totally supportive" exemplify this category. Thus, when participants referred to emotions in conversations, they did not often use terms associated with specific emotions but rather more colloquial terms and statements. Therefore, confining studies of emotion talk to the examination of only emotion words or terms may not get at the richness of the verbal expression of affect and emotion.

Conversation topic effects were also found when we collapsed basic and social emotions into *positive* (joy, pride) and *negative* (anger, fear, guilt/embarrassment, sadness) categories. Across topics, negative emotions were more frequent than positive emotions. However, negative emotions were particularly likely to be discussed during the disclosure topic. Shimanoff (1985) also found more references to negative than positive emotion terms, particularly when the speakers were referring to their own emotions. Shimanoff reasoned that speakers may not refer to positive emotions regarding their own behavior out of reluctance to seem conceited or self-praising. Also, the relatively greater number of negative emotions compared with positive emotions may make it more likely for them to be reported. That negative emotions were particularly likely during the self-disclosure topic about family relations may reflect the tensions commonly associated with young adults and their families (Frank, Avery, & Laman, 1988). Because the conversations in the present study were on specific topics and involved college students, we are reluctant to suggest whether people of all ages generally speak about more negative than positive experiences. This particular finding might be a result of our two conversation topics as well as the age and type of the participants in this study.

FORMS OF EXPRESSION

In addition to examining the frequency of specific emotions referenced in conversations, we examined various *forms* of expression. The speech act category, the directness of the reference, the experiencer of the emotion, and the target were coded for every emotion-laden utterance. Just as in the first set of analyses, no gender differences emerged from any of the analyses on the forms of emotion expression.

We were surprised that speech act did not vary according to dyad type. Because there are differences in women's and men's self-reports of emotion experience and expression (e.g., Grossman & Wood, 1993), we expected that pairs of women would be more likely to make declarative statements and ask more questions concerning emotion, whereas pairs of men would be more likely to refer to emotions in responses to questions—speaking emotionally only when having to respond to an emotion-laden question. Perhaps the demands of the two conversation topics overshadowed whatever small gender differences in speech act there might have been. The more frequent use of self-generated declarative statements about emotion suggests that the participants in this study may have felt reasonably comfortable discussing emotions—even negative ones.

The most frequent speech act for emotion references during both topics was in the form of a declarative statement as opposed to a question or a response to a question. Thus, a self-generated expressive statement was the most likely way of conveying emotions between friends. In comparison with positive emotions, negative emotions were particularly likely to be expressed in the declarative form. However, as discussed next, even though negative emotions were expressed in the declarative form, they tended to be discussed indirectly.

The second form of expression examined here was the directness of the reference. Direct references to an emotion were specifically emotion *terms*, such as the use of *angry*, *scared*, and *happy*. Indirect references often took the form of colloquial words or phrases to substitute for emotion words such as “He was pretty *bummed*,” or metaphors such as “She went through the roof.” Most references to emotion in the conversations were indirect. During the disclosure topic, negative emotions were particularly likely to take the form of indirect rather than direct references. People may be more comfortable discussing negative feelings less directly—particularly while discussing an emotion-laden topic. Collier, Kuiken, and Enzle (1982) asked participants to describe when they had experienced seven emotions and found that participants' descriptions of negative emotions were more complex (e.g., adverbial modification, embedded sentences) than descriptions about positive emotions. To our knowledge, the present study is the first study to compare direct and indirect references to emotion expression. The findings contribute to a fuller picture of the expression of negative

emotion. Although there are more terms for specific negative emotions (e.g., anger, fear, sadness, guilt, shame, embarrassment, jealousy) versus positive ones (e.g., joy, pride, love), it still may be more comfortable to use indirect references to those emotions. Thus, examining indirect references to emotion is important to an understanding of people's emotion talk.

The experiencer of the emotion was yet another aspect of linguistic form that was examined. In both conversations in the present study, friends most often talked about their own emotions. During the disclosure topic, the experiencer varied somewhat depending on whether positive or negative emotions were discussed. During the emotion-laden topic, negative emotions were more likely to be about the self, whereas positive emotions were equally likely to be about the self or another person. This particular finding is consistent with Shimanoff's (1985) finding that people referred more to their own than to others' negative emotions, perhaps due to concerns about appearing self-praising. In addition, the prevalence of negative emotions during the family-relations self-disclosure topic may reflect the tensions associated with young adults and their families (Frank et al., 1988). Finally, evidence from other studies suggests that negative experiences in social networks may be more salient than positive ones (Pagel, Erdly, & Becker, 1987; Thorne & Klohnen, 1993).

Finally, the target or source of emotions referenced was examined in this study. We looked at three levels of a target here: a specific person, people or relationships more generally ("family," "friends"), and objects/events. For both the unstructured and self-disclosure topic, the most frequent target of an emotion was a specific person. The second most likely type of target during the unstructured topic was objects/events, whereas people/relationships were the second most likely during the self-disclosure topic. In her study of tape-recorded conversations, Shimanoff (1985) found that the targets of participants' emotions were more frequently people than objects/events. Interesting patterns emerged when the valence of the emotion was taken into account. When negative emotions were discussed during the unstructured conversation, the target was most often a specific person, and when positive emotions were discussed, the target was most often an object/event. During the self-disclosure conversation, both positive and negative emotions were more often associated with a specific person rather than people/relationships or objects/events. Perhaps during the unstructured conversation there was more negative gossip talk in which friends expressed negative emotions toward specific people (see, e.g., Leaper & Holliday, 1995). Thus, a conversation topic predicted the likely target of emotion expression.

Before we conclude, there are some limitations of the present study worth discussing. First, participants were not randomly assigned to dyad type. Instead, friends chose to bring either a same-gender friend

or an other-gender friend with them to participate. Therefore, participants who brought other-gender friends may differ from those participants who brought only same-gender friends. A second and related limitation is that dyad type (women, men, mixed) was a between-group factor in this study. Ideally, the same person would participate on separate occasions with a same-gender and an other-gender friend to treat partner as a within-group factor. In this way, whether people disclose differently depending on the partner's gender could be considered. However, including participants who have both a woman friend and a man friend available to participate is a practical obstacle that makes this design difficult. Third, participants were college student volunteers from mostly White, middle-class backgrounds. Thus, the generalizability of this sample to other samples of various ages and ethnic backgrounds is uncertain. Future research may tell us whether similar patterns would be found in women and men from various backgrounds. Relatedly, future research should also examine the degree to which the findings here will hold true in other cultures. It is commonly thought that ideas and roles about gender are transmitted in every culture (Bonvillain, 1998). Whether gender differences in emotion talk will be found in other cultures remains to be seen. However, we suspect that the general findings here—highlighting the salience of contextual influences—is general across cultures. That is, people's behavior is related to the particular environment in which they interact; alter the environment and you alter the behavior. Another limitation was that the order of conversational topics was not counterbalanced but was fixed for all pairs of friends. We felt it inappropriate to ask people immediately to discuss a sensitive topic without any warm-up. This was a difficult methodological decision to make; however, it was a necessary trade-off. Finally, this study is limited by a relatively short recording time (5 minutes for each topic) that yielded a relatively small corpus of emotion-laden statements.

CONCLUSION

In closing, the typical profile of emotion talk between friends observed in the present study is the indirect reference to one's own negative emotion about a specific person. A major finding was that verbal references vary greatly according to the conversation topic. Women and men expressed emotion similarly, which seems to be when it was appropriate for the situation (i.e., when asked to discuss their family relationships) as opposed to what may be appropriate (i.e., stereotyped) for their gender. The findings here contribute to previous research and generate new questions for future work.

First, self-disclosure in close relationships has been linked to both individual psychological adjustment and relationship satisfaction between friends, adolescent heterosexual couples, and married

couples (Cole & Bradac, 1996; Fitzpatrick, 1987; Hansen, Christopher, & Nangle, 1992; Hendrick, 1981; see Leaper & Anderson, 1997, for a review). An important aspect of self-disclosure is the sharing of one's feelings and emotions. Very few studies have looked at the actual words people use when discussing their own and others' emotions, and most have been between parents and children (e.g., Cervantes & Callanan, 1998; Fivush, 1993). The present study built on these studies and Shimanoff's (1983, 1985) work with adults. One implication for future research emerging from the present study is that measuring specific emotion *words* (e.g., *angry*, *sad*, *guilty*) may not be the most fruitful approach to studying emotion talk. Because indirect forms of expression were frequent here, linguistic *forms* of expression should be examined in future work.

In addition to the forms of expression studied presently, another form of emotion expression that might be examined is the *intensity* of the expression. Language intensity has been examined in other areas of disclosure (see, e.g., Bradac, Hosman, & Tardy, 1978), but to our knowledge, intensity as it relates to verbal emotion expression has not been examined. Studying language intensity in emotion talk will be challenging because modifiers of emotion terms, inflectional and intonational changes, and even exclamations will likely need to be considered.

Another aspect of emotion talk that should be examined in future research is conversational partners' responses to friends' emotion talk. Appropriate acknowledgment of a person's disclosure is an important component to successful interactions (Hansen et al. 1992). Although gender differences were not found in the present study, the area of listener support might be a place where gender differences might occur. For instance, in a study on self-disclosure between women, men, and mixed-gender pairs of friends, Leaper et al. (1995) found that although women and men self-disclosed similarly, women were more likely to demonstrate supportive responses to their friends' disclosures (see also Hacker, 1981). Of particular interest is how conversational partners respond to friends' disclosure of emotion *words* versus indirect references to emotions. Because indirect references to emotions were a frequent manner in which emotions were disclosed in the present study, whether women and men respond similarly to direct and indirect references to emotions is an interesting topic of further study.

Finally, as stated above, the present findings fit well into a contextual model of interaction, which emphasizes the power of the interactive setting to guide behavior (in this case the conversational topic). Deaux and Major's (1987) contextual model of gender emphasizes the influences of (a) the interactive setting, (b) the gender of the conversational partner, and (c) the interactants' attitudes and gender schemas. The first two influences were examined here; however, the third area was not examined. The question is, how might one's gender self-

concept (e.g., the degree to which one adheres to masculine and feminine stereotyped descriptors) influence the way one verbally expresses emotions? As we discussed earlier, gender and emotion are thought to be interlinked—one example being the gender-related display rules for women's and men's expression of certain emotions (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). Thus, we might expect that those with relatively feminine-stereotyped gender self-concepts might be more expressive overall or more expressive of feminine-stereotyped emotions such as fear and sadness. In contrast, those with relatively masculine-stereotyped gender self-concepts might be more willing to express anger, a stereotypically masculine emotion. In fact, in a self-report study, Ganong and Coleman (1985) found that gender self-concept was more predictive of emotional expressiveness than whether one was a woman or man. Whether a similar finding would emerge regarding emotion talk is for future research to examine.

NOTES

1. Guilt and embarrassment were combined together due to low occurrences of each. Both are negative social emotions (see Lewis, 1993). In other words, they both involve negative self-evaluation in relation to a social standard.

2. "Pissed off" was also coded as a direct reference to anger because of its pervasive use and the intensity of inferred feeling.

3. Our unit of analysis of 76% is considerably lower than that of one previous study. Adams, Kuebli, Boyle, and Fivush (1995) obtained 94% intercoder agreement for the *unit of analysis* when coding the emotional content of conversations between mothers and daughters. However, their study looked only at specific emotion *terms* (e.g., *angry*, *sad*, *scared*). Identifying specific words is considerably easier than coding both direct (emotion words) and indirect references (phrases). Our coding more likely resembles Jacob, Tennenbaum, Bargiel, and Seilhamer's (1995) coding. Jacob et al. (1995) obtained levels of agreement that were more similar to our own when they coded family conversations (e.g., for encouraging comments such as "You did that really well," and negative comments such as "You're a slob." Their rates of agreement ranged from 46% to 77% on particular codes. They concluded, "That agreement is most often in the 55% to 65% range may be a necessary compromise we have to make to pursue our research objectives" (pp. 161-162).

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