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INTERVIEWER WARMTH AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN THE INITIAL INTERVIEW.

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THE PRESENT STUDY INVESTIGATES THE EFFECTS OF INTERVIEWER WARMTH ON INTERVIEWEE VERBAL BEHAVIOR, AND REPLICATES EARLIER FINDINGS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF INTERVIEWER SPECIFICITY. IN ADDITION TO FIVE VERBAL BEHAVIOR VARIABLES USED IN PREVIOUS STUDIES, THREE ADDITIONAL SCALES, NONRESISTIVENESS, RESISTIVENESS, AND SUPERFICIALITY, WERE DEVELOPED TO ASSESS THE RELEVANCE OF THE INFORMATION COMMUNICATED BY THE INTERVIEWEE. FEMALE NURSING STUDENTS WERE INTERVIEWED TWICE BY TWO DIFFERENT INTERVIEWERS WITH ONE USING A WARM, AND THE OTHER, A COLD APPROACH. EACH INTERVIEW SCRIPT CONTAINED FOUR HIGH AND FOUR LOW SPECIFICITY QUESTIONS. ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE INDICATED THAT UNDER THE WARM CONDITION, THE INTERVIEWEE IS MORE VERBALLY RESPONSIVE. WHEN THE FIRST INTERVIEW IS WARM, THE EFFECT ON PRODUCTIVITY IS GREATER, AND TENDS TO PERSIST INTO THE COLD INTERVIEW. THE INTERACTION BETWEEN INTERVIEWER WARMTH AND INTERVIEWEE SPEECH DISTURBANCE VARIES WITH SPECIFICITY CONDITIONS. LOW SPECIFICITY OF THE INTERVIEWER IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTERVIEWEE'S HIGH VERBAL OUTPUT, SPEECH HESITANCY, LOW RESISTIVENESS, AND HIGH SUPERFICIALITY. HIGH SPECIFICITY IS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH RESISTIVENESS. INTERVIEWER WARMTH EMERGES AS A BASIC CONDITION FOR A HIGH LEVEL OF INTERVIEWEE VERBALIZATION, ALTHOUGH THE RESULTS OF A STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON MEDICAL SCHOOL DO NOT AGREE. MANY RELATIONSHIPS MAY VARY FROM ONE INTERVIEW TO ANOTHER, DEPENDING ON INTRA-INTERVIEW INTERACTION. (FR)

Interviewer Warmth and Verbal Communication in the Initial Interview[1]

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In the present study the interview dyad is regarded as a social system composed of two aspects which we designate relationship and informational exchange. Both terms are modifications of expectancy and communication, the ones preferred by Lennard and Bernstein (1960). The major goal of the study is the investigation of the effects of interviewer warmth, a relationship variable, on interviewee verbal behavior. A secondary goal is the attempted replication of earlier findings regarding the effects of interviewer specificity (Pope and Siegman, 1965; Siegman and Pope, 1965).

Interviewee verbal behavior variables in previous studies have included gross productivity, the Ah and Non-ah Ratios (i.e. hesitation in speech and speech disturbance) reaction time, silence quotient (The proportion of speaking time spent in silence) and articulation rate (Number of words per second of speaking time after the subtraction of silent pauses).

Three additional scales, not hitherto used by us, have been developed for the present study. In our earlier work productivity had been investigated with no attempt to assess the value or relevance of the information communicated by the interviewee. A first attempt to deal with questions such as these is embodied in the three new scales, entitled non-resistiveness, resistiveness, and superficiality. Clause units were classified as non-resistive if they were freely expressive of deviation from normal behavior and indicative of a readiness to expose oneself to possible criticism; as resistive if they were minimizations, denials, or other forms of attenuation and blocking of free communication about one's problems;

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and as superficial, if they were trivial or non-psychological, factual associations.

The two investigators achieved a percentage of agreement of 87.7% in the classification of clauses into the three categories, based on clauses from three interviews. Reliability figures for the other variables are adequate; they have been extensively quoted in earlier reports (Pope and Siegman, 1965; Siegman and Pope, 1965).

Method

The subjects were 32 female junior and senior nursing students. Each subject was interviewed twice by two different interviewers, both young women psychologists in their twenties. The two interviews for each subject were preceded by introductions in which the experimenter induced contrasting expectations of the interviewers; one was described as warm and the other as cold. The interviewers were trained to behave in a manner consistent with the interviewee's expectations. Each interview script consisted of two low and two high specificity questions in the area of family relations, followed by two low and two high specificity questions in the area of school history. Since the design called for two interviews for each subject it was necessary to prepare two interview scripts, varying somewhat in the literal content of the questions, while maintaining the above interview structure. The sequence of the warm-cold conditions, the two interviewers, the two interview scripts, and the within interview sequence of low and high specificity was alternated between subjects according to a counter balanced design. Since the sequence of topical areas within the interviews was not counter-balanced, the effect of topic is completely confounded with that of within interview time sequence. Topic is therefore kept constant across interviews, but not investigated as an independent variable.

An analysis of variance for repeated measurements on the same subjects, according to Winer (Winer, 1962) permitted an assessment of the main effects of interviewer warmth (warm-cold), specificity (high vs. low specificity) and of the interactions between these two variables.

Results

Effects of the warm-cold manipulation

The results of a series of analyses of variance are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. The one significant main effect for the warm-cold variable has reference to productivity (See Tables 1 and 2) with an F ratio of 13.74 (df = 1/29; $p < .005$) and Epsilon (ϵ) of .55. As expected, under the warm condition the interviewee is more verbally responsive than under the cold condition.

In addition there are three significant interactions (See Table 3). The first, between warm-cold and warm-cold sequence, indicates that when the first rather than the second of a sequence of two interviews is warm, the effect of warmth on productivity is greater and tends to persist into the cold interview. The next interaction anticipates the results for specificity i.e. low specificity is associated with high productivity. Thus, the warm-low specificity interview segments are the longest.

The final interaction effect on the non-Ah ratio (See Table 3) permits only a tentative interpretation. Since non-Ah has been associated with anxiety and uncertainty, one would expect it to be higher when the interviewer is cold rather than warm. This occurs under high specificity conditions. The reversal of this trend under conditions of low specificity may result from the greater readiness of the S to speak about anxiety arousing material with a warm interviewer when left free to do so by the interviewer's ambiguity. As a consequence there is an increase in flustered speech. This interaction is an example of the type of complex contingency that can arise between relationship (warmth) and informational exchange (specificity) variables.

Effects of specificity

In the present results there is a replication of earlier findings regarding the relationship between specificity and both productivity and the Ah ratio (See Tables 1 and 2), i.e. low specificity is associated with both high verbal output and

hesitation in speech. For productivity the F-ratio is 48.18 (df = 1/29; $p < .005$) and Epsilon (ϵ) is .78; for Ah the F-ratio is 25.94 (df = 1/29; $p < .005$) and Epsilon (ϵ) is .67. The hesitation evoked by uncertainty is now emphasized by a new finding i.e. the higher reaction time for interviewee responses to low specificity rather than high specificity remarks (See Tables 1 and 2). For reaction time the F-ratio is 20.19 (df = 1/29; $p < .005$) and Epsilon (ϵ) is .62.

Additionally, low specificity is associated with low resistiveness (F-ratio is 11.83; df = 1/29; $p < .005$; ϵ is .51) and high superficiality. High specificity is associated with high resistiveness. These findings are understandable when one considers that specific remarks leave the interviewee little latitude for evasion through peripheral comments, and therefore raise the probability of resistive comments.

The absence of any significant differences between the two interviewers, under the conditions of the warm-cold experiment is a particularly striking result, indicating the strength of the experimental manipulation.

Discussion

The impact of interviewer warmth is noted in a gross index of interviewee responsiveness, productivity, not in the more subtle measures of fluency and hesitation. Thus interviewer warmth emerges as a basic condition for a high level of interviewee verbalization. A group at the University of Oregon Medical School (Allen et al, 1965), working with a pre-interview warm-cold set demonstrated longer latency after the cold set, but could not obtain expected shorter durations of speech. Since duration of speech is highly correlated with productivity, the results of the Oregon study are inconsistent with the present ones. A possible explanation may be found in the weak manipulation of the relationship variable by the Oregon group. Set was induced by a written paragraph and not reinforced by systematically differential interviewer behavior.

The complex interaction effect of warmth on non-Ah would suggest that

invariant relationships between interviewer behavior and interviewee speech cannot always be expected. To be sure, some interviewer variables evoke more stable consequences than others. Thus low interviewer specificity appears to be stably related to high interviewee productivity and hesitation. Moreover, many other relationships may vary from one interview to another depending on intra-interview interactions. Some of these are simply additive and can be predicted once the main effects are known. Others are more complex and more difficult to predict. The clinically unique aspects of a particular interview are probably imbedded in these interactions.

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Tables

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Table 1

Analysis of Variance Results

of Warm-Cold Study[1]

Source	df	M S					
		Productivity	Res.	Superf.	Ah Ratio	Non-Ah	Reaction Time
Warmth Seq. (A)	1	182,106.12	669.4	203.4	14.34	29.34	48.82
Spec. Seq. (B)	1	109,863.28	1.4	13.0	14.84	79.78	138.18
S's Within Groups	29	92,751.31	1837.8	870.4	25.08	38.48	35.42
Warmth (C)	1	315,813.78***	337.8	312.4	.82	16.48	61.88
A x C	1	107,647.07*	265.8	9.4	8.12	9.72	18.68
C x S's Within Groups (Error C)	29	22,981.33	1423.7	585.4	8.60	13.10	17.26
Specificity (D)	1	2,049,806.28***	15,053.4***	30,325.6***	175.88***	12.63	255.94***
B x D	1	167,186.53	5590.*	2.4	.00	17.60	168.84***
D x S's Within Groups (Error D)	29	42,540.69	1272.6	731.6	6.78	10.82	12.68
C x D (Warmth s Spec.)	1	106,037.53*	137.0	.2	.06	109.22**	31.00
Within Error	33	15.717.21	1033.8	551.7	5.02	8.26	15.92

*p $\leq$ .05
**p $\leq$ .01
***p $\leq$ .005

[1]Based on an analysis of variance design for repeated measurements of the same subjects (Winer, 1962).

Table 2

Significant Main Effects of Warm-Cold Study

	Mean Words Per Response	Res. Mean Perc. Per Segment	Superfic. Mean Perc. Per Segment	Mean Ah Ratio	Mean Reaction Time (Secs.)
Warm	85.60				
Cold	59.20				
p	.005				
High Spec.	57.53	49.12	9.33	2.59	4.05
Low Spec.	104.82	32.28	24.72	3.75	5.47
p	.005	.005	.005	.005	.005

Table 3

Interactions Between Warm-Cold

and Other Variables

	Productivity[1]				Non-Ah[2]	
	Warm First	Cold First	Low Spec.	High Spec.	Low Spec.	High Spec.
Warm	818.25	551.38	497.84	186.97	3.65	2.41
Cold	503.56	468.69	340.72	145.44	3.08	3.69
t	3.42**	1.60	3.33**	2.13*	1.74*	2.68**

[1]Number of words per interview or interview segment.

[2]Warm Non-Ah Ratio per interview segment.

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$