Advertising a stutter: Does it affect how much a listener remembers?

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose: To determine the impact of advertising a stutter on recall of conversational information. It has been consistently suggested by clinicians that clients find a way to disclose their stuttering (Healey et al., 2007).

Previous research has shown that disclosure of stuttering may lead to more positive listener perceptions (Healey et al., 2007). King et al. (2012) found that when an individual advertised her stutter, she was viewed more positively across a wide variety of domains.

To date, all known studies evaluating the effectiveness of advertisement have focused on how listeners perceive a speaker who stutters, whether it is advertised or not. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to measure the impact of advertisement in regards to content retention.

METHODOLOGY

Participants: 419 undergraduate students (138 male, 281 female) from large general education classrooms participated as part of a class session.

Video materials: Two recordings were made using a JVC Everio GZ-MG77U video camera of a graduate student answering questions about finding a job after college, one in which she pseudostuttered and the other spoke fluently. The pseudostuttered clip was edited in iMovie to make a third clip which removed her advertisement.

The time and number of participants in each condition are as follows:
1. Unadvertised Stutter, 4:35 (n = 155)
2. Advertised Stutter, 4:54 (n = 162)
3. Fluent-Control, 2:40 (n = 102)

Subjects responded to ten open-ended questions based on statements made by the speaker.
Questions were displayed on a projector for one minute per question (with five questions shown simultaneously).
Correct and incorrect responses for each question were totaled with three judges voting on any questionable responses.

Analysis: Data were analyzed using mixed Analysis of variance:
• Between-group factors: Gender, Advertisement of Stuttering.
• Within-group factors: Type of question (fact based versus conclusion-based), location of question (beginning/end).

RESULTS

Significant Main Effect for Advertisement: Post hoc analysis with Bonferroni correction revealed that the unadvertised group (M = 7.02, SD = 1.677) had more correct responses than the advertised group (M = 6.28, SD = 2.909).

Significant Main Effect for Gender: Females had more correct responses (M = 6.94, SD = 1.815) than males (M = 6.16, SD = 2.138).

Significant Main Effect for Question Type: Responses were more accurate for fact-based questions (M = 4.53, SD = 1.228) than deductive-reasoning questions (M = 3.15, SD = 1.150).

Significant Main Effect for Information Position. Items from the first half of the clip (M = 3.89, SD = 1.060) were better retained than those found in the second half (M = 2.79, SD = 1.361).

DISCUSSION

It was hypothesized that the unadvertised group would score with less accuracy than the advertised group. However, the opposite was found, a surprising finding.
• May relate to attention and distraction, where greater attention and focus leads to better accuracy.
• This phenomenon has been found in other tasks dealing with attention (Jones, 1997; Smith, 2011).

Difference related to position of question, type of question, and gender did not vary by fluency or disclosure variables (no interaction effects).

Clinical Implications: Clinicians often encourage clients who stutter to advertise it when meeting someone new.
• Studies have found improved perceptions of the speaker when stuttering is advertised/disclosed.
• Our findings suggest that improved recall of facts by a listener may not necessarily be an identifiable benefit of disclosure.

Stuttering advertisement may need to be considered on a benefit continuum, as opposed to a necessary recommendation in clinical practice.

FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Relationships between speaker perception and information retention. King et al. (2012) found that when a female speaker advertised her stutter, she was perceived more positively across multiple domains.
2. Effects of speaker gender, by determining if accuracy of responses differs when a male stutterers in a conversation as opposed to a female. While King et al. used a female speaker, Lee & Manning (2010) found no difference in listener perception with a male speaker.
3. Attention factors: Do listeners demonstrate different attention to information about the speaker, such as physical traits, as compared to the accuracy of their responses to questions after a conversation? This may help to establish if advertisement affects attention overall.

Special Thanks:
Jennifer M. Hillman, Christa J. Irzinski, and John H. Benedict for assistance in the production of the videos.
Bloomburg University of Pennsylvania National Student Speech Language Hearing Association Research Committee for funding and support.
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