

Van Riper's Multiple Voices

revealed by
Analysing Clinical Interaction

A Master Therapist A Client Who Stutters

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Charles Gage Van Riper
Born 1905 in Champion
a forest village near the centre of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

Cully Chuck Dr Van



Outline

1. Different approaches to analysing discourse
 2. Brief overview of Van Riper's videotaped *Action Therapy*: stages, outcomes
 3. Evaluating therapy interaction to distinguish the voices used: by the client and by the therapist
 4. Summary and conclusion
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Learning Outcomes

- Analysis clinical discourse
 - Erving Goffman's Speaker Roles
 - Understanding of therapy interaction
 - Appreciate the kinds of interaction that
 - engage clients
 - engage an audience
 - facilitate change
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Charles Van Riper (1905-1994)

- Author** researcher practitioner
- 'plagued' by a stutter
- Student of Edward Lee Travis in 1930s at Iowa State**
- PhD c. 1934**
- 1936 Western Michigan Teacher's College**
- Married Catherine Jane Hull speech pathology major**
- 1st edition of Speech Correction 1939**
- Major texts: The Nature of Stuttering 1971**
- The Treatment of Stuttering 1973**
- Retired in 1976** **Action Therapy taped in 1977**

Action Therapy videotapes

- Taping took place over a period of 7 weeks
- weekly sessions comprising total 7 hours of therapy
- 2 tapes provide follow-up of C's progress
1 year **20 years later**
- Participants: Therapist (VR aged c. 70+ years)
- Client C (18 year old student) with a 'moderately severe stutter'
- 2 other people are present for recordings: a camera-man and director video; credits refer to 4 others

Context

- C has experience of fluency therapy - 'many hours'
- Unusual context video recording...in the limelight*
- Different kind of interaction from usual therapy?*

Large (unknown) audience students
therapists
researchers

- VR formally addresses audience directly
- introduce and sum up sessions (C absent)

Therapy focus: Desensitization

- Identification **desensitization** modification stabilisation
- reciprocal inhibition (Wolpe '58)**
- fear or anxiety are classically conditioned**
- responses could inhibit these feelings (relaxation)**
- If appropriate responses occur in presence of stimulus that evoked the fear, tendency for evoked response to weaken**
- VR 1973: reducing speech anxieties + neg emotions**
- 'we aim to toughen the stutterer to the threat, confrontation and experience of fluency failure'**

Therapy

- 2 participants: therapist and client
 - Meaning co-constructed negotiated between participants
 - footings*
 - Each role, a *co-constructed voice* to expresses role
 - Eg summarizing what a client says
 - T a voice of alignment
 - Footing as animator and principal but not as author
the client
 - The SLT shifts footing in voicing the client's opinion
 - retaining the therapist's principal role
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Text

- VR: Well C, here we are again eh I felt your
2. pulse and it was racing... but you've had a hard |week
3. C: |yes
4. having to identify your stuttering I guess and I'd like to
5. know if the thing has happened to you
6. that usually happens to many stutterers after they begin
7. to explore their stuttering to catalogue it... to take a look..
8. to feel it a lot of emotion usually rises up, any in you?
9. C: Yes I find it very hard to I to elaelaelau look
10. at my stuttering em it just I feel like in the past week I've
been (+t) stuttering
11. a lot more more severely
12. T: and I did that to you didn't I? eh the dirty dog
13. C: (laughs)
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Analysis

- VR's cursory mention of C's 'racing' pulse: medical reference
 - VR's authoritative voice, socially distant from the client
 - VR assumes responsibility, displaying self-deprecating humour
 - Refers to himself as 'the dirty dog' : what C might well be thinking
 - derogatory words that a client could not express openly
 - Instance of VR *speaking for C* in an affiliative manner: C's voice
 - Schiffrin (1993) *speaking for another*
 - Positive if 'chipping in'; negative if 'butting in'
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Footings + Humour

- VR enters C's perspective as *animator* conferring the *principal* role on C
 - C's laughing response provides support
 - Humour: a warmer, more understanding voice than that of officious expert (Kovarsky, 1990)
 - humour helps build solidarity and affiliation
 - mitigates embarrassment solicits cooperation
 - Simmons-Mackie & Schultz (2003)
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Medicalization: voice of authority
peppered with humour

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- 14. VR: all I can say is that this is par for the course (....)
 - 15. by having to confront it (....) y-you're looking at it now eh all the old
 - 16. emotion which has always been underneath is beginning to come out
 - 17. It's like pus that starts to ooze out once you lance the wound (...)
 - 18. *and I bet you hate me sometimes*
 - 19. C: *(laughs)*
 - 20. VR: you have to take this hard look at what's there (..) purpose of our
 - 21. session (..) is to try to take away some of the evil colouring from
 - 22. .. stuttering itself . if one can be able to remove some of this awful
 - 23. emotional fraction of the handicap (.....) and
 - 24. your job of course (....) is to try to learn how to stutter....
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Authority Humour Alignment ... Disempowerment?

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- VR authority voicing expectations
 - emotions in graphic medical metaphors (17)

 - humour used to lighten topic

 - VR (18) shows alignment predicts reaction

 -try to learn how to stutter....?
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C tells of his recent stuttering

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- 28. C: It's lilike (...)I've been stuttering whwhat I feel to be
 - 29. really bad I haven't felt this way in a long time I just
 - 30. been really (coughs) em scared|
 - 31. VR: |scared|
 - 32. C: |because it's just like I I haven't had these
 - 33. bad. of eh blocks eh in a long long
 - 34. VR: **and feelings of fear and shame too come up embarrassment**
 - 35. C: Yeah like eh there'd be times when I would just stutter and I'd keep on
 - 36. going and going... and I'd say 'when is this going to stop....
-

Putting words in C's mouth

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- C reports on increasing stuttering severity and being 'scared'
 - VR overlaps on 'scared' (31) 'chiming' (Watanabe, 2001) alignment
 - but**
 - interrupts C, adding expected emotional reactions (34)
 - VR's strategy describing emotions dev client awareness of feelings
 - putting words into C's mouth, acting as animator to C's principal, giving voice to C's yet to be voiced emotional state C agrees 'frustration'*
 - VR both in empathetic therapeutic frame, displaying affiliation and empathy with C, simultaneously in expert frame as he describes emotions associated with stuttering*
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When is a joke not a joke?

- 140 **C** (*reading*) The- (+t) there was this (+t) golfer
— who had (+t) two pupils a
 - 141 fellow and a girl. both of them stuttered
pretty badly
 - 142. (.....) When they met (+t)ih- eh eh (.....
block of 17 seconds duration)
 - 143 **VR**: that's one of those
 - 144 **C**: (laughs)
 - 145 **VR**: boy, that's one of those that just make
you feel completely helpless
 - 146 ... impotent as though you can't]
 - 147 **C**. |tired
 - 148.**VR**: |tired just fatigued to
the bone
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Breaking cardinal rules + amplification

- In 143/6, VR interrupts C in a lengthy block but C's word
incomplete
 - VR breaks an accepted rule of interaction (Bloodstein, 1995)
 - Empathy (+ explanation to video audience)
 - animator to C's principal role
 - Paradox: increasing C's relative incompetence in stutterer role
 - /error-maker role
 - Break C's tension whose voice is then heard interrupting VR
anticipating his interpretation: good recovery and comeback
 - C's response is chimed, but then amplified by VR (148)
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Simultaneous voices with re-authoring

- VR expresses empathy : alignment
 - simultaneously voicing C's experience: affiliation
 - *C's own voicing of his feeling shows
his competence to speak for himself
in anticipation of VR's response*
 - VR *re-authors* C's 'tired' graphic description: authority
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Shift footing from affiliation
*taking over C's role*157 disempowering

- 151 **VR** *say it again*
- 152 **C** when the the-(+t)-meh the meh the meh
(.....)
- 153 **VR** *you said that five times . word that you're
afraid..is the next one*
- 154 **C** the man (+t)-introduced himself I'm P-(+t)-
- 155 **VR** *you had to do that on purpose*
- 156 **C** he said I'm P-(+t)-eter but
- 157 **VR** he said 'I'm Peter but I'm no s-(+t)-saint'
alright? And then what?
- 158 **C** the g-(+t) girlfriend (+t)-r-replied 'Hi Peter
I'm (+t) em-em-em-
- 159 **VR** *she didn't do it that way. she said I'm
MMMMMMM you're putting your kind of
stuttering in her mouth she didn't go uh-uh-uh*

From empathy to harsh critical evaluation

- Empathy expressed but though interruption
 - authoritative voice puts C in role of error-maker
 - harsh evaluation: **incapable of stuttering correctly**
- 'putting your kind of stuttering in her mouth'
dissociation of the stutter from the person
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Emotions explained to audience and to C

- 260. **VR** (...) well then you wouldn't do all those **darnfool** things you're
 - 261. doing like trying to say 'Mary' with 'ahahah',
Mary begins with M
 - 262. (...) **you started with aub-aub-aub—**(...) *so if you have to stutter*
 - 265. *you will stutter in this way* (...) but when you're so full of emotion
 - 267. no matter how you hide it, how you repress it (...)
 - 268. it's in you or you wouldn't be having it eh throw you out of
 - 269. gear as it usually does. (...) hold on to what you're doing until I let go OK?
 - 270. **C. OK**
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end of session

- 372 VR: it's worth it, it's worth the agony I feel for you. it may seem
 - 373. kinda brutal at times but hell, we gotta take care of the problems
 - 374. where they are presented. At the moment you're probably feeling
 - 375. it's been a hard hour
 - 376. **C: I'm tired (laugh)**
 - 377. VR: *I'm not sure that you see the vision which is here*
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Affiliative Voice

- empathic voice is evident in frequent use of humour
 - tasks are difficult swamping the affiliative effects of the humour
 - Du Pre's (1998) concept of 'hurting to help'
 - humour used to diffuse tension and anxiety
 - VR is unrelenting in criticism of C, unapologetic for harshness
 - This 'tough' clinical approach may be damaging for some clients as Duchan (2002) suggests, and may raise ethical issues
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The voice of exegeter

- commitment to the validity of his exposition of emotion
- *audience gains access to the heart and mind of presenter*

- 'I verbalized his feelings even better than he could...'
- 'we took the stuttering that he had and examined it, we catalogued it, analyzed it until he began to realize that that this was behaviour ... that he was doing and that a lot of it was absurd, it didn't make any sense at all in terms of the utterance of the word that he was trying to say...'

- VR's aware of authoritative voice silences the voice of C for reasons that are necessary

- C's stuttering at the end of the session has less tension
 - ? the effects of desensitization

VR's multiple voices

- VR speaks *through* the voice of the client

- usually (but not always) empowering for the client

- VR deftly balances voices
 - - address the video audience
 - - maintains control in the session
 - - clear voice of alignment with the client
 - - affiliative and authoritative voices

□ Van Riper leaving



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