My feedback to "CSDiuagrad"

§ Survey on Interoceptive Awareness

Thank you for the survey. I sent it to you!

Also, below are some questions that I didn't quite understand:

"*When I'm aware of stuttering, I feel like someone else has control of my speech.*"

→ who else can speak inside my body? I'm not sure I get the question)

"I feel helpless when I experience a sensation of stuttering"

→ There are various forms of helplessness. The opposite of helpless is "capable", "empowered", or "self-sufficient". During a stutter I might be helpless to properly and completely address fear-panic response that triggered my unique approach-avoidance conflict, yet I feel capable to do the best I can, and I accept stuttering so that I won't be ashamed about it. The point I'm trying to make is, this research question refers to helplessness but since you didn't specify this term in more detail, I'm afraid different people who fill in the survey will likely randomly pick one form of helplessness while they most certainly experience other forms of helplessness, and that might have the opposing effect on them, don't you think?

"The importance of my message increases my awareness of stuttering"

→ I think that this looks like a fallacy trap. I'll try to explain what I mean: Some people stutter more when drinking coffee, while others stutter less. "Coffee" here is considered a conditioned stimulus in this case. So, stimuli are themselves double-sided and can function both ways depending on our needs/expectations/beliefs/demands/etc.

The same with "importance of the message." If someone views it as important to say something and he associates that importance with *'it makes sense to loosen the stutter mechanism or reduce the approach-avoidance conflict'*, it may reduce stuttering. Whereas if PWS view "importance of a message" — deeply subconsciously, in that specific moment in time when he stutters — as stutter pressure, or pressure to speak more fluently, it may increase stuttering.

However, this same pressure is again a stimulus in and of itself, meaning that pressure itself also functions as a double-sided effect depending on how we view it (i.e., what association we attribute to this deeper-level stimulus and speech execution — or rather, the fine-tuning of the approach-avoidance conflict that governs speech execution).

In people who stutter, such "evaluations" (of various conditioned stimuli) can change weekly, or remain constant for a longer-term period - depending on how they themselves perceive their experiences and beliefs, etc.

So, the point I'm trying to convey is: yes, sure, there are many research studies mentioning that "the importance of a message" may increase stuttering. However, on a deeper or more broader level, if we zoom out a bit, it's actually a conditioned stimulus with a double-sided effect that varies depending on our perceived needs.

So asking a stutterer if he stutters more during an important message is the same as inquiring about someone's conditioned stimulus at a very specific moment in his life (because coincidentally, that outcome occurred through random conditioning — i.e., encountering and processing random experiences), and which may completely 180 degrees switch at any given notice. Hence why I consider it a fallacy trap.

"My thoughts about stuttering seem out of my control" & "I have thoughts about stuttering that disrupt my ability to say what I want to say".

→ In my opinion: Every stutterer has different (fluency) goals, some aim for being ok with (severe) stuttering and aim for learning to not care about it. While others aim for significant fluency, which can be people who aim for controlled fluency, while others aim for subconscious fluency. Additionally, every stutterer has ultimately achieved a "fluency state" or phase where they are in currently. So each stutter phase they reside in can vary greatly between stutterers.

This - the fluency goal and stutter phase - can lead those stutterers so answer these 2 questions differently. The first question uses the term "out of my control", but depending on one's (fluency) goals and what stutter phase one resides in, this definition varies greatly. The same goes for "my thoughts", some may not even view their own subconscious, intrusive, distorted thoughts as their own conscious thoughts, while others view them as one and the same.

Now, for me, if I could answer this question 'Are my thoughts about stuttering seemingly out of control?', then my initial pick would be "no". But then I read the following question "Do you have thoughts about stuttering that disrupt my ability to say what I want to say?". And sure enough, my answer to this is surprisingly 'Yes'. Here I'm referring to the fact that long-held beliefs thru conditioning is likely keeping me stuck in a vicious stutter circle of approach-avoidance conflict which leads to totally unnecessary stuttering. Here are examples for some relevant beliefs/thoughts that trigger my unique approach-avoidance conflict and fear-panic response that result in totally unnecessary stuttering:

My maladaptive beliefs thru conditioning:

- *I need to do something **better** (or more perfectly, clearly, accurately etc) to move the speech muscles (than I'm doing at this moment of trying to speak) (whether out of fear of*

> *social rejection due to poor performance, or simply a maladaptive defense mechanism in order to control speech movements better)*
> - *I need to control the automatic processes (rather than letting them go)*
> - *I believe I can detect when my stutter mechanism breaks down by focusing on specific thoughts or emotions. Poorly fine-tuning this stutter mechanism - in this way - is positive (i.e., good) because it makes speech execution easier. (maladaptive, distorted beliefs leading to malfunctioning or poorly fine-tuning of my innate mechanism to evaluate/execute speech movements)*

So, the point I'm trying to make is, if this is true, it would mean that the first question should also be answered with "Yes", even though on the surface it doesn't feel like it but only with deep analysis and prying further to get to the bottom can I conclude that it's actually the opposite (not "no" but "yes") to the first question.

"When I'm aware that I'm going to stutter, I think about strategies to avoid it "

→ This looks like a fallacy trap. Sure, many stutterers may feel a stutter coming especially during a feared anticipated word i.e., very obvious conditioned stimuli we are aware of (the imminent danger kind of pressure or anxiety). But, the point I'm trying to make is that most stutterers are often not aware of the subtle, less noticeable conditioned stimuli. Those subtle conditioned stimuli equally trigger their approach-avoidance conflict resulting in a reflexive fear-panic response, and thus stuttering. However, in cases where most stutterers stutter, but feel like it's absolutely random without a reason might attribute an association to this cue that "this is just my actually root stutter, or neurological stutter or whatnot", while ignoring the subtle conditioned stimuli that equally trigger their approach-avoidance conflict.

So to go back to your question "When I'm aware that I'm going to stutter". This awareness is very maladaptive or distorted in people who stutter, I'd say.

This question also uses the term "strategies to avoid it". I believe that some stutterers perceive the term "strategies" in this question as "speech techniques such as fluency shaping techniques", while overlooking or even outright dismissing other interventions or compensatory strategies. In my own viewpoint, in a broader sense of the word, the word "strategies" could mean:

- Secondaries
- Speech techniques
- Mindfulness techniques
- Acceptance and desensitization techniques
- Breathing techniques
- Or simply very natural, subtle interventions like waiting it out, waiting for more confidence to speak, waiting for anticipation to subside, convincing oneself of something e.g., convincing oneself that it will be okay, or that it will lead to fluency, or that it doesn't

matter that it will lead to fluency. Any of those thoughts (even if they on the surface) appear to be maladaptive or unhelpful, may temporarily break their vicious circle and thus temporarily resolve the approach-avoidance conflict, leading them to execute (a part of) the initial (planned or desired) speech plan

Some respondents consider these natural, subtle interventions (and breathing crutches) as interventions while others do not. This can distort the results of your research, such that, "no" or "yes" in response to this specific question can mean the exact same thing.

In my viewpoint, even when we are not consciously aware of it, and yet it seems the approach-avoidance conflict has still triggered. Our subconscious would still "react" to an aversive or conditioned stimulus, whether we could consider this reaction a "strategy" is up for debate. If we consider this a strategy (which I think we should) then some PWS may consider this strategy as such, while others do not, and again, this would then result in yes or no answers while meaning the same thing.

Our subconscious is always "evaluating" just before speech execution. Remember, this is an innate response, an unconditioned response in all humans, we are born with this mechanism, it's not learned. However, thru conditioning humans learn to either adaptively or maladaptively regulate this mechanism (learned "conditioned" response). Perhaps this is more a topic in Behavioral Psychology. Although many speech therapists likely overlook this detail, I believe it's a highly relevant point that's well worth highlighting in here.

"I feel tension in my body at the thought of saying some words or sounds"

Here, the word "tension" could refer - in a broader perspective - to:

- Muscle tension
- Cognitive tension such as an approach-avoidance conflict
- Psychosomatic tension but NOT muscle tension
- Physical arousal
- etc

For example, right before I stutter, what happens is, that a conditioned stimulus triggers my approach-avoidance conflict and fear-panic response. Resulting in psychosomatic pain in my head and neck which would lead to fainting if my subconscious won't inhibit (or prevent me) from executing the speech plan. Resulting in totally unnecessary stuttering. Not because of muscle tension, there is none, there is no muscle tension in my personal experience. Yes sure, many research studies discuss muscle tension (in response to the awareness of stuttering) but I have unlearned the act of tensing the speech muscles during SLP around 8-10 years old. From then onwards, my tense blocks have turned into silent blocks. To answer your question if you are wondering if "relaxing the muscles" had improved my speech blocks? The answer is: No. The amount and during of my - now silent speech blocks - had not improved in any way. So "relaxing" is what I consider yet another "conditioned stimulus", it may or may not (depending on what association we attribute to them) lead to more fluency or more stuttering.

The real question is: Should we rely on positive value judgments (such as "I believe that relaxation improves my approach-avoidance conflict")? Some PhD researchers claim it be better not to attribute negative or positive value judgements to our stuttering or speech attempt, for example, see:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-FHICJcnt4Mly2_Ubd7ST3xVAifxDjMO/view?usp=sharing

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wlQUzx-fzXh4KGxNKSq4g3e974YcYhkA/view?usp=sharing

Also, Assistant professor, SLP and researcher, Evan Usler, discusses many things I have discussed in this document, see:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Vhwa6vdphscbS3beajCWBZhRkraPsEwjm8AI497Q8og/edit?usp=sharing

So to go back to your question: I think that some PWS may consider the different forms of tension that I mentioned, while others do not. Which results in both "yes" and "no" answers to this question, even though they convey the exact same point.

"When I experience stuttering while planning to speak, I worry about how my communication partner will react."

→ Let's say that I don't stutter when speaking alone. Then I switch to a social situation: I add my mother. Whenever I speak to her, I don't feel pressure, anxiety, worry, or whatnot — although it still leads to my subconscious triggering the approach-avoidance conflict, resulting in totally unnecessary stuttering.

In this case, I did not consciously worry about stuttering, or about my speaking partner, or whatnot. Yet, my subconscious did trigger a fear-panic response. However, from a different angle or perspective, one could say that my subconscious **worry** *did* lead to triggering the approach-avoidance conflict. Sure, it may not have been a worry in the form of an internal thought-discussion, but rather, what happened was that my subconscious had adopted and relied on maladaptive or distorted "worry" (long-held conditioned from my stuttering development) beliefs that eventually led me to stutter.

Again, some PWS may consider this kind of "indirect worry" also a form of worry — which can result in both yes and no answers while ultimately meaning the same thing.

When I experience stuttering while planning to speak, I worry about how my communication partner will react & Knowing that I'm going to stutter makes me worry about how my communication partner will feel

→ Regarding these 2 questions. My initial answer would be "no" or 1 out of 5. However, at the same time, it's also a fact that most conditioned stimuli (such as anticipated words, speaking to

a person, feared situations, stutter pressure etc) are ultimately linked to the fear of social rejection (unconditioned stimulus i.e., that is not learned).

For example, if we keep asking the question: Why [the stimulus]? For example: Why do I fear an anticipated word or situation? Sure, one could answer with: Because I might stutter. But if we keep asking deeper questions: But why do I fear I might stutter? One could answer: Because I might feel ashamed of stuttering. But why? One could answer: Because of negative judgements. But why fear negative judgements? Finally, we came to the final answer: Because of fear of social rejection.

If we keep asking these deeper questions to most conditioned stimuli, ultimately they are linked to the fear of social rejection. In other words, it's actually "yes" because fear of social rejection includes worry about how my communication partner will react or feel or whatnot.

So, to go back to your question, it uses the words "I worry about my communication partner". So, even if I would initially answer with "no" because I don't consciously worry about them on the surface level. If we dig deeper and analyse further, we may come to the conclusion that fear of social rejection is what mostly (but not always I think) triggers our approach-avoidance conflict resulting primarily in most of our stuttering.

So my point is that some respondents may reply "yes" or "no" while meaning the same thing - depending on which of the 2 perspectives they, at that moment when answering the survey, think about first. It's basically a random yes and no while meaning the exact same thing.

"Making eye contact makes it more difficult when stuttering"

→ "Eye contact" itself is both a conditioned stimulus that can have a double-sided effect, as well as eye contact can serve as a strategy where we distract ourselves temporarily from the conditioned stimulus (similar to how reducing auditory feedback with a DAF device can temporarily bypass the approach-avoidance conflict resulting in less stuttering.. We distract ourselves from the conditioned stimulus that - at the moment of speaking - would normally trigger the approach-avoidance conflict.

Again, PWS could answer with both yes or no, while meaning the exact same thing.

"A sensation of stuttering in my speech makes me feel less confident"

→ Here, "confident" could refer to various things, most prominent are "being confident to socialize or convey a message despite stuttering" or "being confident to speak more fluently" (which is also what many stutterers tend to rely on). They both lead each to a yes or a no, while meaning the exact same thing.

"A feeling of stuttering or knowing I'm going to stutter makes me afraid"

→ Here, "afraid" could refer to conscious fear (like the imminent-danger-kind of anxiety), or it could refer to a subtle fear-panic response that triggers the approach-avoidance conflict even in

the absence of imminent danger such as a feared word. Remember, as I said before, ultimately there is a fear of social rejection (which is subconscious) and almost no one who stutters notices it during a stutter (for many reasons such as being ignorant of this concept/mechanism - i.e., they avoid this concept, they don't accept this mechanism and are often not mindful or patient enough to get to Understand this approach-avoidance phenomenon).

So, Both yes or no answers could mean the exact same thing.

"If I know I'm going to stutter, I have to think of a way out."

The probable reality is, that a speech plan is either prevented or allowed - after the subconscious evaluates feedback (i.e., conditioned stimuli). So if we want to continue speaking by moving forward with speech execution - during a block. Then we have to do something. So by definition, "having to think of a way out" can simply refer to doing at least something to execute the speech plan (or to fine-tune it's mechanism or whatnot).

So, here "yes" or "no" answers, could mean the same thing again. This question is so ambiguous that I wouldn't know what to answer to convey my own personal answer to the question. For example: I could answer with "no" because I accept/desensitize and let go of automatic processes. However, this in itself is a "strategy" (whether healthy or not) so it could also be considered at the same time: "yes" because I accept/desensitize and let go of automatic processes. Yes and no, here, mean the same thing.

"Fluency feels like my thoughts translate directly to my mouth"

→ Yes or no answer are the same again. What if someone uses control processes to obtain fluency? In this specific example, both yes and no are both applicable, and meaning the same thing.

"In rather relaxed situation, I always have anticipatory sensations before I stutter"

→ anticipatory sensations could refer to conscious sensations, or the subconscious sensations in response to fear of social rejection that triggers the approach-avoidance conflict. By default - humans always use an evaluation mechanism (i.e., an error-avoidance mechanism, that is a forward modeling mechanism) where the subconscious decides whether to prevent or allow speech execution (remember, this is not "learned", but an innate and natural response. It kicks in automatically without our conscious control. Whether it's a tense or relaxed situation doesn't matter.

So my point is exactly that this forward modeling mechanism is anticipatory in nature. Additionally, a fear of social rejection.. "Fear" in this context is an anticipatory emotion by itself.

Now back to your question: Both yes or no answers could mean the same thing due to the high ambiguity of the term "anticipatory sensations". So: No = Yes. And Yes = No. There is no other answer to this.

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Additionally:

The last 3 bonus questions are the same duplication. Perhaps a bug? Or perhaps you accidentally copied or duplicated the last question 3x times by accident? If so, I suggest removing the 2 unnecessary duplicated questions (at the end of the bonus survey).

Final conclusion:

So the formulated questions that I discussed could be improved. This is just my own take on it.