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This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by Vincent Greenwood entitled The Effect of the Interviewer's Status Upon the Linguistic Style and Impact Messages Generated by the "Obsessive Personality" has been approved by his Committee as satisfactory completion of the dissertation requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology.


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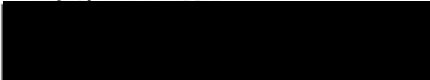

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The Effect of the Interviewer's Status Upon the
Linguistic Style and Impact Messages Generated
by the "Obsessive Personality"

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study addressed some of the peripheral statements emanating from Kiesler's (Kiesler, Bernstein & Anchin, 1976) core communications theory by examining (1) a specific component of the communication style of the obsessive personality, (2) the distinctive emotional engagements the obsessive personality elicits when interacting with others, and (3) a situational determinant that is hypothesized to trigger relatively intense expressions of the obsessive's self-defeating communication style, as well as a higher level of state anxiety.

Specifically, the study examined the effects of a high or low status interviewer upon one expressive measure of speech and upon relationship consequences for groups of psychometrically-defined obsessives and non-obsessives. The speech measure used was the revised edition of the Modifiers category of the Psycholinguistic Scoring System for the Obsessive Personality (Kiesler, Moulthrop & Todd, 1972). Modifiers, representing expressions of doubt and uncertainty, were hypothesized to occur more frequently in psychometrically-identified obsessive personalities, particularly in the high status interviewer condition. The emotional reactions evoked in others by an indecisive communication style were assessed by the Impact Message Inventory-Modifier Scale (Greenwood, 1976). It was hypothesized that more intense emotional reactions synonymous with an indecisive communication style would be elicited in observers by the obsessives, particularly

in the high status interviewer condition. A wide range of emotional reactions evoked by the obsessive personality were assessed using the Impact Message Inventory (Kiesler, Anchin, Perkins, Chirico, Kyle & Federman, 1976). Finally, the state anxiety of all subjects was assessed before and after the experimental interview using the Anxiety-State Scale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch & Lushene, 1970). Here again it was predicted that obsessives would display a higher level of state anxiety, especially in the high-status interviewer condition.

None of the experimental hypotheses were supported. The results for the predictions were discussed. It was suggested that the experimental analogue situation may not have been appropriate in some respects, particularly with regard to whether the subject selection criteria were adequate in producing a theoretically and clinically relevant group of subjects. Suggestions were offered to mitigate the possible flaws in the present analogue study. It was noted that the nature of the communication task appears to play a large role in the distinctive communication behavior that is evoked and, therefore, that communication task variables should be investigated in future studies. Finally, it was recommended that single-case design studies, using actual obsessive patients, might be the most viable strategy to study theoretical constructs vis a vis the obsessive personality.

INTRODUCTION

Kiesler (1973), in the tradition of Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967), has developed a communications approach to psychotherapy which emphasizes the therapist's use of metacommunication (i.e. communicating about communication behavior) with the client to modify his aberrant communication patterns. Psychopathology, within this communications framework, results from an individual's self-defeating interpersonal and/or intrapersonal communication style. Kiesler (1973) states:

As individual's "abnormal behavior" results originally and cumulatively from his inability to detect the self-defeating, interpersonally unsuccessful aspects of his communications. Self-defeating consequences result when the individual emits unaccountable evocative messages from significant others. Others, in turn, counter-communicate aversively to him. This represents an unintended, unwanted, and unaccountable consequence for the speaker (p. 3).

One of the critical tenets in Kiesler's theory is the relationship between the denotative and the connotative or relationship level of communication. The denotative level refers to the manifest symbolic content of the communicative message while the connotative level refers to some internal

affective or attitudinal state of the speaker. The identification of the client's connotative messages lies at the heart of the communications approach to psychotherapy.

Kiesler, Bernstein and Anchin (1976) have cited four major discriminative cues which facilitate the therapist's identification of connotative messages in the client: (a) the linguistic verbalizations of the client, (b) the client's nonverbal behaviors, their interchannel congruity - incongruity, and their congruity - incongruity with messages on the linguistic channel, (c) the syntactic stylistics of the client's productions on the speech channel, and (d) the therapist's dominant and repetitive emotional reactions while interacting with the client.

The first step in constructing the empirical groundwork for Kiesler's communication theory consists of delineating the specific, self-defeating communication behaviors of emotionally troubled individuals. In order to do this is necessary to go beyond the traditional assessment of linguistic and instrumental kinesic channels and investigate the above mentioned nonverbal communication domains of behavior. Unfortunately, the assessment strategies available to evaluate these communication behaviors are in a relatively rudimentary stage of development.

It is apparent that Kiesler's approach focuses on how the client is expressing himself across a number of behavioral channels rather than, as in most other schools of therapy, restricting attention to the manifest symbolic content of

the linguistic channels. Kiesler is far from being the first to argue that an individual's personality style is reflected in the expressive manner of his communication behavior.

Sullivan (1954) has observed:

Much attention may profitably be paid to the tell-tale aspects of intonation, rate of speech, difficulty in enunciation, and so on - factors which are conspicuous to any student of vocal communication. It is by alertness to the importance of these things as signs or indicators of meaning, rather than by preoccupation only with the words spoken, that the psychiatric interview becomes practical in a reasonable section of one's lifetime (p. 5).

Weintraub and Aronson (Aronson & Weintraub, 1972; Eichler, 1966; Weintraub & Aronson, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1967, 1974) have made pioneering empirical efforts to relate a number of formal aspects of speech of various psychiatric groups to notions of intrapsychic conflict and defense. Their research deals directly with what Kiesler has labelled syntactic stylistics of speech. The present study will deal directly with this same communication channel. Weintraub and Aronson's (1962) research efforts are based on the assumption that:

Content cannot be understood - let alone objectively scored - out of context. It is necessary to know a great deal about a person before we can

take one of his statements and be reasonably sure we understand what he consciously intends to communicate. To a greater extent, a formal characteristic of speech can be isolated and scored, even out of context, and much useful information can be collected in this way (p. 174).

While a few attempts have been made to investigate the expressive dimension of speech in maladjusted individuals, no effort has been directed towards systematically identifying the emotional reactions that one experiences while interacting with a maladjusted individual. In order to empirically assess this neglected domain, Kiesler, Anchin, Perkins, Chirico, Kyle & Federman (1976) developed the Impact Message Inventory (IMI). The IMI is a self-report state inventory that provides a measure of the affective and behavioral reactions an individual experiences as a consequence of his interaction with another person. The IMI is one of the first state measures of relationship factors and can be used to identify the interpersonal consequences of a maladjusted individual's communication style.

Underlying the present study is the essential notion that attending both to the expressive dimension of the client's speech and to his own ongoing emotional engagements enriches immeasurably the therapist's perception and understanding of the client. More specifically, the expressive dimension of speech can provide insight into the self-defeating interpersonal style of the client. In addition, the therapist's

awareness of his own moment-to-moment emotional reactions while interacting with the client can provide valuable clues to the salient relationship issues that the client is experiencing. In this vein, the major purposes of the present study are twofold:

(1) To determine whether a particular syntactic behavior, the use of Modifiers, is associated with a homogeneous group of "abnormal" individuals, obsessive personalities.

A number of investigators (Kanfer & Marston, 1961; Watson, 1967) have done research on individuals from normal populations who are exhibiting obsessive personality styles rather than on clinically diagnosed obsessive neurotics. To select "normal" obsessives these investigators have used such psychometric instruments as the Maudsley Personality Inventory (Eysenck, 1959), the Bendig (1962), Pittsburgh Scales of Social Extroversion-Introversion and Emotionality, and the Hysteroid-Obsessoid Questionnaire (Caine & Hope, 1967). The present study also investigates psychometrically identified obsessive personalities drawn from a normal population.

The extensive use of Modifiers is considered to be synonymous with the expression of doubt and uncertainty in an individual's speech. Since doubting has been one of the most salient, clinically noted features of the obsessive personality, it is expected that such individuals would display a higher incidence of Modifiers in their speech. In addition, the effect of interacting with a high status (i.e., more experienced, knowledgeable and older) interviewer on

this syntactic behavior will be investigated in these psychometrically identified obsessive personalities as well as non-obsessive individuals.

(2) To assess whether obsessive personalities elicit emotional reactions in others that are consonant with an indecisive communication style. In addition, the effect of interacting with a high status interviewer on the quality and intensity of the interpersonal behavior and resultant emotional reactions evoked in others will be examined in both the non-obsessive and obsessive personality.

An overview of research related to the issues involved in the present study will be presented in the following sections. Specifically, the review will cover studies and issues involving stylistic syntactic behavior, the communication style of the obsessive, the phenomenon of doubting by the obsessive, transference and countertransference issues vis a vis the obsessive, and the communications assessment of relationship factors.

Stylistic Syntactic Behavior in the Psychodiagnostic and Psychotherapeutic Context

Systematic study into the relationship between formal aspects of speech and the various psychopathological types is lacking. The majority of studies in the communications area have focused on language content rather than on the stylistic features of language. Gottschalk et al (1961) have done the most extensive content-analysis work in analyzing language behavior. Major reviews in this area are

offered by Marsden (1965), Auld and Murray (1955), Gottschalk and Auerback (1966) and Kiesler (1973).

Few investigators have considered syntactical behavior alone a fruitful area of study for the clinical psychologist. Yet it is reasonable to hypothesize that differences in syntactical stylistics may be diagnostic of differences in cognitive styles and personality functioning. Steingart and Freedman (1972) have offered a cogent rationale for the systematic study of syntactical behavior in psychopathological groups:

Wittingly or unwittingly, grammar forms peculiar to one type of patient, rather than another, enter into the diagnosis. But the use of grammar, like any behavior, can also be taken as evidence for theoretical constructs with more general import, relevant to the comprehension of any personality. Common sense argues that what a person says is much more influenced by transient situational characteristics than how he says it. Therefore, as between language content and grammar, grammar would appear a priori to possess certain advantages for the exploration of such personality constructs (p. 135).

Attempts have been made to investigate syntactical behavior in the psychotherapeutic and psychodiagnostic context. A few investigators have used various syntactical behaviors as indicators of progress in psychotherapy. Zimmerman and Langdon (1953) found consistent changes in the

use of grammatical tense and person as patients progressed in therapy. Use of the present and future tenses increased during the course of therapy, while use of past tense decreased. In addition, use of the first person singular pronoun ("I") was negatively correlated with progress in therapy, while use of the third person singular pronouns ("he," "she"), second person singular pronouns ("you") and the first person plural ("we") were positively correlated with movement toward greater health. Grummon (1953) also related syntactical behavior to progress in therapy. He found that the use of the grammatical negative (e.g. "no," "can't") was negatively correlated with progress in therapy.

Kahn and Fink (1958) investigated the effect of electroshock treatment on syntactical behavior in depressed patients. They found that characteristic and identifiable changes developed during the course of electroshock treatment and that these changes were related to clinical response to treatment. Some language changes noted during the course of treatment included greater use of the second or third person as a syntactic style, more frequent use of the past tense and greater use of stereotyped expressions and cliches. Kahn and Fink concluded that "language changes are not random or bizarre, but form a patterned reorganization of communication characterized by an alteration in the patient's attitudes to his problems and illness (p. 163)."

Studies attempting to link stylistic features of speech with particular nosological groups are typically of large-

grained, descriptive nature. These studies suffer from a failure to define in narrow terms the nosological groups investigated. In addition, Steele (1975) observes that since diagnostic groups and variables of interest vary from study to study, no formal measure of speech has been found to reliably differentiate diagnostic groups. Mahl and Schulze's (1962) conclusion that "it is necessary to shift to finer methods of studying individual differences, one involving the use of personality traits organized into meaningful patterns (p. 78)" is still a very appropriate analysis of the state of the art.

There are, however, three lines of personality research which stand out by their use of theoretically-bound and narrowly defined stylistic variables of speech. Weintraub and Aronson (1962) developed twelve formal measures of speech which (1) were recognized as having defensive functions by clinicians, and (2) were sufficiently objective to provide reliability between raters. Most of their categories involve syntactic behaviors. For example, "retractors" are any words, phrases, or clauses which partially or totally detract from the statement which has immediately preceded it, while "negators" consist of all negatives (e.g. "not", "no", "nothing", "never") in an individual's speech. These categories have subsequently demonstrated differences in language style in impulsives (1964), patients with delusional behavior (1965), sociopaths (Eichler, 1966), depressives (1967) and compulsives (1974). Weintraub and Aronson

persuasively argue that these stylistic differences reflect important attributes of intrapsychic conflict and defense.

Groman and his students, from a Gestalt Therapy framework, have recently investigated the effect of neurotic anxiety and emotional stress on various syntactical behaviors. Alban and Groman (1975) tested the notion that personal pronoun usage reflects the psychological distance one takes from one's own feelings. Healthy communication is characterized by the appropriate use of the three grammatical persons - I, you and it. That is, the psychologically healthy speaker uses "I" when referring to himself, "you" when referring to the listener, and "it" when referring to some abstract other. Alban and Groman found that moderate level anxiety neurotics, as identified and measured by the Maudsley Personality Inventory and Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale, displayed a significantly higher level of inappropriate pronoun usage under a high stress interview condition than did high or low level anxiety neurotics.

Kiesler and his students are also attempting to use communication variables grounded in personality theory to study narrowly defined personality groups. Kiesler (1969) has persuasively argued for the necessity of developing research designs and treatment strategies aimed not only at what Maddi (1967) has termed the "core" of personality i.e., the essential psychological characteristics and processes common to everyone, but also at the "periphery" of personality i.e., the psychological characteristics and processes

that distinguish individuals from one another. Recent efforts have been made by Kiesler and his students (Kiesler, Moulthrop & Todd, 1972) to delineate communication behaviors in two neurotic personality styles, the obsessive and the hysteric.

Obsessive Communication Style

Analysis of the obsessive personality or obsessive neurotic's communication style is a particularly relevant enterprise since many theorists have stressed the intricate and powerful role that the obsessive's use of language plays in his defensive system. Identifying the specific self-defeating syntactical indexes of the obsessive can serve a number of useful purposes. First, such indexes would provide an objective assessment of the obsessive within a communications framework. Secondly, they would enable the therapist to concretely identify and focus on the salient communication defects of the obsessive. Finally, they would provide a tool to operationalize some of the more loosely defined dynamic constructs and defense mechanisms of the obsessive.

Consider the following illustrations. In discussing their obsessions, obsessive neurotics rarely say, for example, "I have been contaminated," but rather, that they "might" have been contaminated. Another prototypical obsessive remark: "Things seem to be going better with me... even though plenty is still wrong." Such linguistic styles provide subtle yet exquisite insight into the subjective

experience of the obsessive. They also bring down to earth such reified concepts as ego-dystonic and undoing, as well as pinpoint objective targets for therapy.

Earlier investigations of the obsessive personality's and obsessive neurotic's communication style, albeit of a wide-band focus, have laid the groundwork for Kiesler's more focused efforts. Vetter's review (1969) of descriptive studies of neurotic language contains three reports of obsessive linguistic styles. Balkan and Masserman (1940) analyzed the verbal productions of 50 neurotic patients according to a set of 10 criteria, measuring such characteristics as obsessive ambivalences and compulsive tendencies in thinking. The obsessive neurotics differed as a group from hysterics, from a group of patients with anxiety states, and also from normals on a number of communication styles. They scored highest on compulsions (e.g., I have..., I must...) and on qualification/certainty ratio (expressions of qualification/expressions of certainty). They scored lowest on a pro-con ratio (expressions of possibility and probability/expressions of impossibility and improbability), and on a certainty/uncertainty ratio. Some clinically observed classical defense mechanisms of obsessiveness such as ambivalence, undoing and negativism appear to be reflected in these linguistic tendencies.

Lorenz and Cobb (1954) looked at simple word-count data for a number of patient groups, including obsessive neurotics. Obsessives demonstrated a low use of connectives (prepositions,

conjunctions and articles) and a greater use of verbs and adverbs as compared with normals. In comparison with hysterics, obsessives used the past tense significantly more frequently.

Lorenz (1955) also differentiated stylistic characteristics of obsessive neurotic and hysteric language. Some of the recurrent indexes of obsessive language include:

...the frequency of prefatory statements and introductory remarks, the frequency of modifying clauses introduced by that or which, the frequent use of disjunctives or, if, and but, the frequency of localization in time and place, and the repetition of words and phrases (p. 359).

Lorenz describes the impact conveyed by such stylistic devices as that of an aloof individual who scrutinizes rather than expresses feelings.

Weintraub and Aronson (1974) found that compulsive patients displayed a significant tendency to do more explaining and to use more negators, retractors and evaluators than did normals. The authors concluded that these linguistic styles were consistent with the psychoanalytic conception of the compulsive as one who has a harsh superego (reflected in the use of evaluators), rationalizes (explaining), exhibits undoing (retractors), and denies awareness of impulses (negators).

Other investigators have studied communication behavior in psychometrically identified obsessive personalities. Kanfer and Warston (1961) studied communication stylistic

variables of subjects selected for their high scores on the hysteria (Hy) and psychasthenia (Pt) scales of the MMPI. They found that the Pt groups displayed a significantly longer latency reaction time than the Hy group. This finding is consistent with the notion that the obsessive type is deliberate, cautious and indecisive in his approach to novel problems.

There also is empirical validation of the clinically noted behavioral rigidity and the extreme intellectualization of obsessives. Watson (1967) found obsessives to be inflexible in the sense that they can't utilize novel responses in an experimental learning task. Veron and Sluzki (1970), using an elaborate semantic coding procedure, found that obsessives emphasize intellectual topics at the expense of emotions and tend to communicate in an impersonalized and abstract manner.

✓ Less operationally defined linguistic styles have also been noted by a number of clinicians. Kiesler and Moulthrop's (1969) Obsessive Language Check List highlights a number of stylistic features vis a vis various psychological themes as well as dyadic linguistic behavior in a psychotherapy context. Spiegel (1967) observes that the obsessive avoids direct experiencing of feelings by overvaluing logic and thought. Schmiel (1974) remarks that obsessionalism is a "disease of adjectives" where communication is garbled and encumbered by endless qualifications and reservations. Horowitz (1974) comments on the uncanny skill of the obsessive to disrupt the communication process by a linguistic

trait he terms "shifting":

[By a shift to "something else" the obsessive is able to jam cognitive channels and prevent emergence of endurance of warded-off contents, or to so shift meanings as to stifle emotional arousal. That is, by shifting from topic to topic, or from one meaning to another meaning of the same topic, the emotion-arousing properties of one set of implications are averted (p. 776)]

Salzman (1972) also notes the obsessive's ability in "leading any exchange into blind alleys, irrelevancies, and often far from the original intent of the communication (p. 331)." If these shifting observations are valid, the question becomes: what verbal mechanisms does the obsessive use to accomplish this? Various clinicians have noted the use of "autistic" symbolism, semantic paradoxes, excessive use of detail, stereotyping, negative automatisms (e.g., saying "no, you're right") when agreeing with the therapist, constantly changing the meaning of specific words, and perseveration. Such linguistic devices predictably leave the therapist lost in a fog of verbalisms.

Kiesler and his students are attempting to identify some of the specific syntactic behaviors of the obsessive personality. Kiesler (1973) has noted that frequent use of particular syntactic styles probably functions as a meta-communicative "evoking" message (Beier, 1966) by qualifying the manifest symbolic content on the speaker's linguistic

channel. The syntactical style of the obsessive most likely modifies in a systematic fashion the impact of his communicative message.

The present review only sampled the wealth of clinical literature on the communication style of the obsessive personality. Empirical investigations of the linguistic style of the obsessive have, for the most part, supported clinical observation. The present study continues this effort of empirical confirmation by assessing the extent to which obsessives exhibit a linguistic style reflecting uncertainty.

Uncertainty Dimension

In line with much of the above clinical and empirical literature Kiesler has hypothesized that one of the self-defeating communication patterns of the obsessive personality involves frequent expressions of uncertainty and doubt. This communication style serves to diminish the strength and clarity of an individual's expressions. Kiesler (1976) has theorized that the obsessive personality uses this indecisive communication style because he fears negative evaluation by others. By consistently injecting uncertainty and doubt into his expressions, the obsessive personality never makes a clear cut stand and thereby protects himself from evaluation by others.

Other clinicians have also addressed the pervasive doubting of the obsessive personality and the obsessive neurotic. Shapiro (1965) observes that, when faced with a decision, the obsessive usually manages to perfectly balance

the pros and cons involved. Shapiro feels that the obsessive fearfully avoids closure on interpersonal issues because of a more basic fear of commitment. Rather than ambivalence, therefore, evasion of responsibility creates the obsessive's pervasive doubting. The obsessive strives to reduce interpersonal issues into technical problems, in which some rule can be invoked. Shapiro notes that this often leaves others feeling irritated, lost and dehumanized.

Salzman (1972) concludes that expressions of uncertainty represent a controlling tactic by the obsessive. By constantly being uncertain, the obsessive maintains the option of reversing himself with others, thereby avoiding commitments and rationalizing mistakes. Sullivan (1956) also argues that doubting is a primary obsessive device for keeping the therapist at a distance. That is, the obsessive needs to avoid clarity in interpersonal issues, lest he be overwhelmed by panic. To clearly articulate and acknowledge interpersonal realities represents a terrifying experience for the obsessive.

Empirical investigations attest to this severe doubting by the obsessive. Reed (1968) found that, while obsessive neurotics demonstrate no formal defect in decision-making skills, they quickly become distressed about the conviction of their decisions. Lidell (1974), using a self-report questionnaire, found that obsessive neurotics complained more frequently of decision-making problems than did a group of mixed neurotics or normals.

The obsessive's overwhelming need for certainty and

his reluctance to take risks have also been demonstrated in experimental tasks. Walker (1972) set up an experimental choice situation in which costs and probabilities could be manipulated. The task was an expanded judgment test in which obsessive neurotics were asked to discriminate among various shapes, and could elect to make additional observations before reaching a decision. Compared with other neurotic patients, obsessives made significantly more observations on the expanded judgment task. Milner, Beech and Walker (1971) similarly found that requests for repeating trials in a decision-making test were significantly higher among obsessive neurotics in contrast to a group of mixed neurotics.

Empirical support is also available for the notion that obsessives have an exaggerated sensitivity to negative evaluation from the environment. Carr (1974) compared physiological measures of obsessive patients with normals during a decision-making task involving low cost and high cost conditions. She found that both normals and obsessives showed stress responses in the high cost condition, but that obsessives displayed significantly higher stress reaction in the low cost condition. This finding suggests that decision-making problems are more pervasive for the obsessive.

In summary, there is empirical support from a range of laboratory tasks that obsessives experience more uncertainty than normals. In addition, a number of clinicians have noted that indecisiveness is a core variable in the obsessive's personality style.

The goal of the communications approach to psychotherapy is to identify the crucial components of maladaptive personality styles in communication behavior. In that vein, Kiesler, Moulthrop and Todd (1972) have developed a psycholinguistic scoring system that outlines some of the syntactical styles of the obsessive personality. To date, three such scoring systems have been operationalized:

1. Modifiers - expressions of doubt and uncertainty.
2. Isolators - indirect expressions of feeling.
3. Evaluators - expressions of assessment of self and others.

The Modifier scoring system (revised, 1977), used in the present study attempts to assess specific utterances which detract from the crispness and clarity of an individual's messages. Examples of speech containing Modifiers would include the following:

It seems that I should hate her.

I think maybe it will improve the situation.

To some extent what you say is correct.

Hence, if indecisiveness is in fact a salient component of the obsessive personality style, it should be reflected empirically in a syntactical style dominated by the use of Modifiers.

Transference Issues

Since it was originally invoked by Freud, the theoretical construct of transference - the process whereby the client develops distorted and "unrealistic" feelings toward his

therapist - has been redefined and modified by a number of influential thinkers. Freud felt that transference reactions were specifically linked to the psychoanalytic interaction and represented a reliving of the Oedipal conflict in which the client reacts to the therapist in a similar way that he reacted to significant others in his early instinctual strivings. Since that time a number of neoanalytical clinicians have argued for a more comprehensive interpretation of transference.

Sullivan (1953), Fromm-Reichmann (1950) and Reich (1949), among others, theorized that transference reactions represent inappropriate generalizations that appear in a wide range of interpersonal contexts. Transference reactions thus represent persistent and generalizable reactive modes which are elicited by various classes of significant other people in the client's life. This broadened notion of transference is congruous with one of the critical assumptions of the communications model as Kiesler et al (1976) note:

Kiesler's theory asserts that the (emotional) impact messages a therapist experiences with his clients have components very similar, if not identical, to those decoded by other significant persons with whom the client interacts in his daily life... If, for example, a therapist recurrently feels pulled into a competitive struggle with his client, it is likely that other significant people in the client's life (spouse, colleague, etc.) experience the same

interpersonal consequences (p. 155).

This more extensive view of transference allows for the direct investigation of meaningful interpersonal behavior in the analogue situation. That is, the habitual self-defeating stylistics of a maladjusted individual should be evidenced in a laboratory interview. The thesis of the present study is that individuals with similar communication stylistics should emit similar connotative messages (i.e., transference reactions), thereby eliciting similar emotional reactions from those with whom they are interacting.

What are the typical self-defeating ways in which the obsessive engages significant others, i.e., ways which lead to personally aversive feelings or which trigger aversive countercommunications from others? A number of psychodynamic therapists have provided some answers to this question in their description of transference and countertransference problems in the treatment of the obsessive. The outstanding issues that emerge from these discussions center around the obsessional's striving for perfection, demands for emotional control, dependency conflicts, negativistic style, and pervasive uncertainty.

Perfectionist drives: The most frequently mentioned transference problem is the obsessive's striving for perfection which typically injects competitiveness and tension into the patient-therapist relationship. There are many subtle and complex ways in which the patient's striving for perfection might be manifested in the connotative messages

occurring in therapy.

First, the obsessive's perfectionist drives will often result in a state transference issue. Many obsessives come to therapy to strengthen their defensive styles. They seek greater control over themselves and their environment. Often an impasse will occur in therapy when the obsessive realizes that the therapist is not collaboratively working with him to attain perfection.

Obsessives will often articulate rigid and lofty interpersonal goals for themselves. The evoking message here is one of moral righteousness which implicitly challenges the therapist to justify his goals, which are often more limited but also more realistic than are the obsessive's (Salzman, 1968).

Another characteristic of the obsessive's perfectionist drives is the struggle to prove his omniscience in therapy. The therapist is often perceived as a direct challenge to the obsessive's omniscience. Therapy consequently is perceived as a battlefield by the obsessive, where he vigilantly struggles against being pushed around or directed.

The obsessive will often view the therapist as an authoritarian and critical antagonist, who expects infallible behavior from him. These projections by the obsessive will usually result in a superficially "cool" but underlying volatile transference relationship. Salzman summarizes the feelings that the obsessive projects onto the therapist:

He tends to attribute every deficiency which he despises in himself to the therapist. His charges

will range from his feeling that the therapist is a perfectionist, a procrastinator, and an indecisive person to ideas that he is a hypocrite and phoney whose standards are so flexible that they lack integrity. One can get a very clear view as to what ails the patient by examining his distorted views of the therapist (p. 208).

This subtle yet pervasive tendency of obsessionals to compete with the therapist was captured in a case described by Spiegel (1972). Spiegel reports an excerpt from a therapy interview with an obsessional in which the patient expressed self-recriminating statements about feeling hurt at an inconvenience to which she had been subjected. Spiegel attempted to support the patient by stating that she felt the patient had in fact been treated callously and understandably should feel offended. The patient reacted to the therapist's intended support with dejection, saying she "could never win an argument" in therapy. It was evident that the patient's self-esteem was not involved in the event she was describing, but rather in her contest with the therapist.

Emotional control. The obsessive demands not only that he be able to control his reactions, but also those of significant others. Again, this demand will manifest itself in therapy in a number of subtle ways. The obsessive will often only express certain feelings that have been examined for their acceptability. The impact message here is one of

only being allowed to tread on certain areas, which the patient has predetermined. The therapist may therefore experience a suffocating feeling of being pigeonholed and only "allowed" to have certain feelings. Salzman warns that this tactic of gaining emotional control may be an exquisitely artful process, especially with well-educated patients aware of the role that is expected of them in therapy. These patients will appear to communicate in an intimate and emotional manner but will carefully avoid any direct experiencing with the therapist.

A more extreme tactic of emotional control is evident in the avoidance of any involvement with the therapist. The obsessive strains to transform therapy into a technological rather than human undertaking. Here there is a stronger impact of "keep out." In the presence of such an emotional fortress, the therapist may begin to feel cautious and wary of articulating impact messages.

One factor that accounts for the obsessive's reluctance to risk such few emotional expressions in therapy is his inclination to view the world in extremes. Other people are seen by the obsessional as exceptional or ordinary -- which the obsessive equates with worthlessness. In the transference relationship the therapist may soon come to feel either deified or intense disrespect as the result of the obsessive's predisposition to dichotomize all realms of his experience into extraordinary or mediocre camps.

A second factor which constrains the obsessive's

expressiveness is his fear of receiving only a moderate response to his self-disclosures. Such a reaction would be an affront to the obsessive's perfectionist drives. Giving the obsessive realistic feedback about his interpersonal behavior thus becomes a precarious venture since the obsessive self-righteously believes that he should be free of criticism since he is at least aiming for perfection.

Dependency conflicts. The obsessive's extreme demand for emotional control does not allow for the recognition of realistic dependency needs. The obsessional demands of himself total self-sufficiency. It is therefore not surprising that the obsessive will often feel in a double-bind at the beginning of therapy. He seeks help because he wants to achieve greater control over himself and yet makes an implicit contract for an undertaking in which he is partially dependent on another. Any recognition of dependency needs is humiliating to the obsessive. He may try to escape this bind either by taking control of the therapy relationship or by a blatant denial of the dependency issue. In the former case the obsessive may develop an arrogant attitude towards the therapist in order to feel "above" therapy. In the latter case he may simply distance himself from the therapist.

Negativism. Many therapists have observed the negativistic style of the obsessive. While most clinicians feel that this is a defensive device, Schmiel (1972) argues that negativism is a characterological feature of the obsessive.

The negativistic person will not agree with anyone or anything and will attempt to discredit and demean whenever possible. Schmiel notes that for the negativistic person there is no such thing as a beautiful day. He will only admit, "It seems to be a beautiful day." This sort of person is likely to trigger irritability, if not anger, in the therapist. Schmiel cautions therapists not to react to the obsessive's behavior as deliberately hostile, since much of his negativistic bent does lie outside of his awareness.

Uncertainty. One of the principal objectives of the present study is to pinpoint the interpersonal consequences of the obsessive's pervasive doubting. As noted before, one of the most prominent self-defeating communication styles of the obsessive involves his continual expression of doubt and uncertainty. A few therapists have remarked on the emotional reactions provoked by this style. Sullivan (1954) has observed that "the obsessional actually goes through the motions of operations that look as if he is getting absolutely panicky at the prospect of having something formulated clearly in the realm of his personal problems (p. 240)." It is therefore not surprising that Sullivan describes working with obsessives as "frustrating" and "maddening." In his therapy dealings with obsessives, Schmiel (1974) has discerned:

He has to know and to feel that he appears "right" in the eyes of the therapist and it becomes thusly

a transference matter. I presume he monitors his own verbalizations, editing or correcting, within a sentence, or a word, what he fears may be apprehended by the listener as wrong, or not quite right, or whatever (p. 95).

In working with the obsessive, clinicians have noted a range of transference reactions. One of the goals of the present study is to assess the reciprocal emotional impacts generated by the obsessive's self-defeating interpersonal stylistics. Empirical validation of such heretofore elusive interpersonal phenomena represents a new and valuable direction in psychotherapy research.

Status as Situational Determinant of
Obsessive Stylistics

Another of the critical assumptions of Kiesler's model is that an individual's communication style must be characterized in relation to specific classes of other persons. That is, an individual's communication style does not manifest itself transituationally as assumed by traditional personality theorists (Mischel, 1968). In Kiesler's model, the important interpersonal situational stimuli may consist of the perceived personal characteristics of the other member of the dyad, or the contextual characteristics (e.g., role expectancies) of the specific interpersonal situation. Maccoby and Maccoby (1954) also emphasize role as an important element in relationship situations and status as an important dimension of role, noting: "In general we know that people

are more anxious to communicate to those above them in the hierarchy than to those below them...The content of the communication, of course, will be affected by the status relationships: The person of lower status will be motivated to present himself in a favorable light to someone who might be in a position to influence his future" (p. 462).

The present study manipulates the interpersonal contextual cue of status, whereby status is anchored in the dimensions of experience, age and psychological expertise. The clinical literature strongly suggests that the self-defeating stylistics of the obsessive are more conspicuous when interacting with high status others. Schmiel (1972) observes that the obsessive tends to integrate durable situations with other people they regard as inferiors. However, in the presence of significant others, the speech of the obsessive includes, even when unchallenged, statement and qualifications as defense against possible challenge. He notes that the overall strategy of the obsessive, when interacting with dominant others, is to accept nothing perceived as personal fault nor ever to acknowledge the other's correctness or authority. Fromm-Reichmann (1954) notes that authority figures - paradigmatic of the disapproving parent - are anathema to the obsessive. Salzman (1972) remarks that the obsessive typically moves through many of life's situations with a generally calm and often impressive aura of self-contained competence. These illusions of mastery and control, however, are challenged by high status others.

Consequently, the evaluation anxiety and defensive stylistics of obsessives are heightened in the presence of such high status others.

While the transference construct has not been investigated directly in analogue research, there have been a handful of studies that have researched the effects of the interviewer's status on the interviewer's behavior. Pope and Siegman (1972) found that normal subjects were significantly more productive when interviewed by a high status as opposed to low status person. They also found that subjects in the high status condition displayed a shorter latency reaction time in responding, but had a higher "silence quotient," i.e., sum of silence time/total response time. They concluded that subjects are more anxious and cautious when being interviewed by a high status person.

Silver (1973) studied the effect of the therapist's status and "aggressiveness" (i.e., frequency of interpretive remarks) on the subject's personal comfort and frequency of self-disclosure. He found that subjects tended to be most self-disclosive and to report greatest personal comfort when engaged with high status interviewers who behaved non-competitively and non-evaluatively. Mulgrew (1971) manipulated counselor status in an initial interview with normals. He found an inverse correlation between the counselor's status level and the client's perception of the counselor's warmth, congruency and empathy. Overall, there are conflicting findings on the effects of status on interviewee behavior.

It would appear that subject differences need to be explored, as in the present study, in order to identify more precisely the influence of the interviewer's status. The clinical literature reviewed indicates that the self-defeating stylistics and resultant impact messages generated by the obsessive personality are more marked when interacting with high status others.

Assessment of Relationship Factors

While many theorists (e.g., Sullivan, 1954; Cashdan, 1973) have placed the client's interpersonal style as the central focus of therapy, the empirical investigation of interpersonal behavior is in a rudimentary stage of development. Kiesler's (Kiesler, Bernstein and Anchin, 1976) communication model represents one of the first attempts to empirically assess relationship issues and behavior as they occur between client and therapist. His theory pinpoints domains of behavior which are measurable and reflect meaningful relationship factors. Kiesler, Bernstein and Anchin (1976) assert:

Relationship, then, need not remain either mystical or elusive. No assumptions about impossible to verify intrapsychic factors are required. Assessment of the relevant behaviors are in the public arena. Communications theory defines relationship in a scientifically acceptable manner. It's therefore inappropriate for behaviorists, or anyone else, to shy away from addressing

directly these relationship factors in their theoretical, assessment, and therapeutic efforts (p. 126).

Kiesler has integrated theorizing (Beier, 1966; Sullivan, 1954; Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson, 1967) and research (Knapp, 1972; Mehrabian, 1972) in the area of communication with work in the field of interpersonal behavior (Leary, 1959; Carson, 1969; Lorr and McNair, 1963, 1965, 1967) to specify the processes whereby interpersonal interaction becomes aversive, conflictual and confusing. Kiesler et al (1976) define relationship as the "momentary and cumulative reciprocal emotional engagements occurring between encoder and decoder, or between client and therapist (p. 120)." The central constructs in this process are what Beier (1966) has termed the "evoking" message and what Kiesler (1973) has labelled the "impact" message. The evoking message is a connotative (i.e. relationship defining) message sent by one member of a dyad (the encoder) to the other member (the decoder). Kiesler explains:

The evoking message is one that imposes a condition or command on the decoder as the result of which the decoder behaves as the encoder wishes without being aware of his compliance. The encoder is also unaware that he imposed a condition or sent a command message i.e., the encoder obtains responses for which he cannot account, even though he himself elicited them (p. 2).

The impact message, in contrast, is the resultant immediately-elicited reciprocal emotional engagement experienced by the decoder to the evoking message.

There are two crucial processes in Kiesler's model whereby interpersonal communication becomes aversive. First, there is a lack of awareness by both the encoder and decoder that a connotative message has been sent. Secondly, the evoking message defines the relationship between the interactants. That is, the evoking message elicits a distinctive emotional impact from the decoder which, in turn, "pulls" a particular range of behaviors in response to the evoking message. Emotionally troubled individuals manifest an evoking style which elicits negative feelings and aversive countercommunications from significant others. One of the main research as well as therapeutic tasks, then, is to assess both the behavioral components and the resultant distinctive impact messages of an emotionally troubled individual's evoking style.

In the present study, the Impact Message Inventory (IMI) was used to assess the impact messages generated by the obsessive personality. The IMI was derived from research in interpersonal behavior (Carson, 1969), which demonstrates that two major dimensions underlie interpersonal interaction: affiliation (love-hate) and status (dominance-submission). This evidence further suggests that this two-factor structure yields fifteen intercorrelated first-order interpersonal styles as follows: dominance, competitiveness, hostile,

mistrustful, detached, inhibited, submissive, succorant, abasive, deferent, agreeable, nurturant, affiliative, sociable and exhibitionistic. The evoking and impact messages described above fall in this two-factor space and thus reflect the major relationship issues occurring between two interactants.

Another relatively ignored behavioral domain investigated in the present study involves the manner in which individuals put their words together in sentences. Kiesler (1973) hypothesizes that such syntactical stylistics of speech contribute notably to the emotional impacts generated in a dyadic interaction. The present study investigated this hypothesis by assessing a particular syntactical style (the use of Modifiers) as well as the emotional engagements synonymous with such a style.

The Impact Message Inventory-Modifier Scale (Greenwood, 1977) served as a dependent variable to measure the impact messages that are synonymous with an indecisive communication style. A previous study (Greenwood, 1976) found no difference between obsessives and non-obsessives in the use of Modifiers. If this finding were replicated in the present study, the IM-Modifier Scale could provide evidence as to whether an evoking message of indecisiveness is being transmitted by the obsessive on other unspecified communication channels.

Rationale and Hypotheses of the Present Study

Kiesler (1972) has persuasively argued for the necessity of integrating diagnostic and therapeutic systems around isomorphic themes, specifically the communication patterns

of patients and therapists. In the empirical development of such a system, the initial task is to identify common communication behaviors in a homogeneous group of individuals. Hence, one major purpose of the present study was to assess whether individuals with obsessive personality styles use significantly more Modifiers in their speech than other people. Such a demonstration would both (1) provide construct validation for Kiesler's (1973) conceptualization of the obsessive communication style, and (2) identify a specific communication variable in a homogeneous group of subjects.

Kiesler's communication theory rests on the assumption that impact messages received by a decoder are directly related to and result from an encoder's style of interpersonal behavior. The present study tested this assumption by assessing a specific component of the obsessives hypothesized communication style (Modifiers) as well as - using the IMI-Modifier Scale - the extent to which synonymous emotional reactions were elicited in others by this personality type.

In addition, a broad range of emotional impacts elicited by the obsessive were assessed. Identification of these emotional engagements should provide vital cues for targeting the self-defeating interpersonal style of the obsessive. Anchin's (1976) assessment of the obsessive's self-defeating stylistics is cast directly into the circumplex of interpersonal styles as operationally defined by the IMI. Such a casting allows specific predictions of the impact message likely to be experienced by those interacting with or observing the obsessive. The five styles identified by Anchin

as best fitting the obsessive are consistent with the transference and countertransference themes vis a vis the obsessive reviewed earlier. These styles are: Dominance, Competitiveness, Detachment, Hostility and Mistrust.

The level of state anxiety (i.e., the moment-to-moment transitory response of anxiety in a particular situation) elicited in subjects was also assessed. Many theorists (e.g. Sullivan, 1953; Salzman, 1968; Barnett, 1972) have posited the internal state of anxiety as the primary eliciting stimulus of the obsessive's communication stylistics. Sullivan (1953), in particular, hypothesizes that the obsessive's communication style is developed to avoid the anxiety generated by various interpersonal situations. Salzman (1968) agrees that the obsessive is more prone to anxiety, particularly in situations in which he is asked to reveal feelings. Likewise, Barnett (1972) asserts that anxiety in the obsessive is integrally linked with honest self-disclosure. The present study provided an empirical evaluation of the relationship between concurrent anxiety and the obsessive's hypothesized self-defeating stylistics, as well as the effect of the interviewer's status on the state anxiety of obsessive and non-obsessive subjects.

Finally, the communications model adopts an interactionist position (Endler and Magnuson, 1976) regarding the determinants of an individual's communication style. That is, an individual's communication style can best be predicted and explained by taking into joint account the effects of

individual differences and situational factors. Kiesler's theory is somewhat unique in that he specifies other persons as the most salient situational factors. The present study teased out some of these crucial decoder-encoder interactions by investigating the effect of the interviewer's status on the communication behavior of obsessive and non-obsessive interviewees. The clinical literature strongly suggests that the self-defeating stylistics of the obsessive are more prominent when interacting with high status others.

In accordance with the above rationales, the present study investigated the effects of the interviewer's status on the communication behavior of groups of obsessive and non-obsessive interviewees. A formal measure of speech, hypothesized to reflect doubt and uncertainty (Kiesler, Moulthrop and Todd's Modifiers - revised by Greenwood), was applied to the speech samples of non-obsessive and obsessive subjects under conditions of low or high interviewer status. The emotional reactions that would be elicited by a communication style reflecting indecisiveness and uncertainty were assessed by observers using Greenwood's IMI-Modifier Scale. Finally, a broad range of emotional engagements elicited by the obsessive were assessed using the IMI.

The following hypotheses were investigated in the present study:

1. Obsessives should display a greater use of Modifiers in the interview session than non-obsessives, regardless of the interviewer status condition.

1a. Furthermore, since expressions of doubt and uncertainty have been hypothesized as integral devices used by obsessives to avoid emotional expression and interpersonal evaluation, a greater use of Modifiers should be exhibited by obsessives particularly in the high status interviewer condition. Use of Modifiers by non-obsessives is not expected to be significantly affected by the interviewer status condition since the uncertainty expressive style is not conceptualized as a universal expressive mode for all people, but rather is specifically restricted to the obsessive personality.

2. Consistent with the above hypothesis, it is predicted that obsessives should elicit from observers more intense emotional reactions synonymous with an indecisive communication style, regardless of the interviewer condition.

2a. In addition, since the obsessive's defensive stylistics are expected to be more salient in the presence of high status others, more intense emotional reactions elicited by the obsessive's hypothesized indecisive communication style, should occur in the high status interviewer condition. The interviewer status condition is not expected to significantly affect the communication style and resultant impact messages of non-obsessives. The dependent variable is the IMI-Modifier Scale, which was designed to specifically assess the emotional impacts of individuals interacting with someone displaying an indecisive communication style.

3. This hypothesis concerns the differential intensities of

a range of impact messages generated in observers by the obsessive personality. The dependent variable is the IMI which consists of 15 scales, each of which measures a "pure" interpersonal style. A priori selection of five scales, corresponding to the various obsessive stylistics discussed earlier, were used in the main data analysis. These scales are Dominance, Competitiveness, Hostility, Mistrust, and Detachment. The score derived from the observers and used in this analysis were the sum of these five scales.

It is expected that obsessives should generate higher scores on these scales, regardless of the interviewer status condition.

3a. Furthermore, it is expected that the mean impact message score for obsessives on the five scales should be significantly higher in the high status interviewer condition.

4. This hypothesis concerns the level of state anxiety elicited in subjects. The dependent variable is the A-State Scale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, and Lushene, 1970). The A-State Scale was administered to all subjects before and after the interview. The pre-interview - post-interview change scores were used in the data analysis.

Spielberger's (1966, 1972) state-trait model of anxiety posits that individuals high in trait anxiety (1) are more prone to experience state anxiety in a wider range of situations, and (2) respond with higher levels of anxiety to

threatening situations than do individuals with low trait anxiety. Subsequent research (Auerback, 1973; Kendall, Finch, Auerback, Hooke, and Mikulka, 1976; Kendall, 1976) has demonstrated that Speilberger's trait construct is uni-dimensional, measuring an individual's tendency to perceive interpersonal situations as more threatening. The present study most likely represents an interpersonally threatening situation in that subjects are asked to reveal personal feelings to a stranger.

There is a substantial amount of research which indicates that psychometrically-identified obsessives (i.e., individuals high on both the neuroticism and introversion dimensions of personality) possess high trait anxiety as conceptualized by Speilberger (e.g. Beech, 1974; Kiesler, 1969; Wiggins, 1968). While it should be noted that all subjects in the present study will be selected from the middle range of the neuroticism dimension, it is predicted that, in line with Speilberger's model, obsessive subjects should respond with higher levels of state anxiety regardless of the interviewer condition.

4a. Moreover, since it has been argued that interacting with high status others represents a greater interpersonal threat for the obsessive personality, it is predicted that the state anxiety of the obsessive subjects should be significantly higher immediately after being interviewed by a high status, as opposed to a low status, interviewer. The state anxiety of non-obsessives is also

expected to be somewhat higher after interacting with a high status interviewer. However, it is not expected that the state anxiety of the non-obsessive subjects should be significantly affected by the interviewer status manipulation.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 32 Caucasian female undergraduate students selected from the subject pool at Virginia Commonwealth University. The subject pool consists of students enrolled in introductory psychology courses who can earn extra credit toward their final grade by volunteering to participate in departmental research studies. The 32 subjects (i.e., 16 obsessives and 16 non-obsessives) forming two groups were selected from a larger sample of subjects by their scores on two paper and pencil tests. The selection procedure was as follows:

1. All female volunteers of the subject pool were administered the Bendig (1962) Pittsburgh Scales of Social Extroversion - Introversion and Emotionality and the Hysteroid - Obsessoid Questionnaire (Caine and Hope, 1967). The Bendig is a revised version of Eysenck's (1959) Maudsley Personality Inventory, containing norms for American college students. Two orthogonal dimensions have been factor-analytically derived from the Bendig: Emotionality (EM) and Social Extroversion (SEI). Research (summarized by Kiesler, 1969) supports the contention that obsessives may be defined on the Bendig as neurotic introverts (high EM, low SEI). However, for the present study, subjects

with medium level EM scores and low SEI scores will be selected. Previous research (e.g., Greenwood, 1976; Anchin, 1977) suggests that analogue subjects with high EM scores display high levels of anxiety in the experimental situation which likely disrupts and distorts their habitual communication style. In addition, recent research (Slade, 1974) has identified two distinct sets of maladaptive personality traits in the obsessive personality. The present study focuses on the group of obsessives characterized by rigidity, irritability, moroseness and a relative lack of anxiety. The HOQ was constructed to measure personality trait constellations, as opposed to symptomatology, and thus is particularly appropriate for selecting from a normal sample. Specifically, the HOQ was designed to measure a component of personality which has been clinically observed in two neurotic syndromes: hysteria and obsessive-compulsive neurosis.

2. Subjects were divided into three groups according to their scores on the above instruments.

a. Obsessives. The selection of obsessives involved several steps. First, subjects who had a Bendig EM score between thirteen and seventeen and an SEI score of 15 or less were identified. The EM range of scores is within two points of the mean (approximately one-third of a standard deviation) of the female normative sample. The

upper limit of the range of SEI scores is two points (approximately one-third of standard deviation) below the female normative sample. These subjects were then ranked-ordered on the basis of their HOQ scores. All items on the HOQ are scored in the hysteroid direction (i.e., low scores represent obsessoid responding), with a mean raw score of 24. Obsessives are defined as those scoring 21 or lower. The 16 most extreme HOQ scores in the obsessoid direction were chosen as the obsessive personality type subjects. (See Table 1 for a summary of group means and variances for the subjects in the present study.)

b. Sixteen non-obsessive subjects were randomly selected from the subjects with an EM score of 15 or less, an SEI score between 17 and 25, and an HOQ score between 23 and 30. This insured selection of subjects who fall in the middle range of the instruments used.

c. Rejects. Subjects whose scores do not place them in one of the above mentioned groups were not considered for further use in this study.

Procedure

Selected subjects were contacted by phone and asked to report to the Psychological Services Center at 800 W. Franklin Street at a specified time. When the subject arrived, she was taken to a waiting room by the author. There the author

Table 1

Descriptive Data on Subject Test
Scores on HOQ and Bendig

	HOQ	Bendig	
		EM	SEI
Non-Obsessive			
Mean	26.24	10.47	22.89
Var.	5.86	8.07	9.06
SD	2.42	2.84	3.01
Obsessive			
Mean	18.25	16.75	11.70
Var.	3.76	3.31	4.93
SD	1.94	1.82	2.22

asked the subject to fill out a copy of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) A-State Scale. The author informed the subject that he would return in five minutes to pick up the questionnaire. Then the author read the subject the following set of instructions:

This study has to do with communication. We are interested in how people form judgments of individuals being interviewed. In order to study your communication, we need as complete a record as possible, so we will videotape your interview. To do this we must have your consent. Please understand that the tapes will be kept confidential. They will be seen only by eight graduate students in clinical psychology directly connected with the study. On the tape you will not be identified by name. Nor will your name be referred to in data analysis or publication of results. All tapes will be erased after the study is completed.

Then the author gave the subject a consent form to read and sign. Next, half of the obsessive and half of the non-obsessive subjects were told the following:

Your interviewer today is Ms./Mr. _____. She/he is an undergraduate student who has consented to help us in this study.

The other half were told:

Your interviewer today is Dr. _____. She/he is an experienced psychotherapist who has consented to help us in this study.

Subjects were then taken to the interview room and introduced to the interviewer. The interview room is furnished with two chairs, a table, a television camera, a television monitor, a videotape deck, and a microphone. Prior to starting the interview, the interviewer read the subject a second set of instructions (see Appendix 1) asking the subject to answer all questions as honestly as possible but also

stating the right of the subject to refuse to answer any questions deemed objectionable. The interviewer then administered the interview questions (see Appendix 4). The questions for the present study were designed to be open-ended and focus on areas and experiences (e.g. human fallibility, loss of control) that have been hypothesized to be integral thematic concerns of the obsessive personality. The questions were selected from a pool of 50 questions that were rated on a 10-point Likert scale according to their relevancy vis a vis the obsessive personality by 10 graduate students in clinical psychology. For the present study, the twelve questions with the highest criterion rating were used.

At the end of the interview, the subject was led to an adjoining room by the author and asked to fill out the STAI A-State Scale. She was then debriefed as to the nature of the experiment. The subject was asked not to discuss the experiment with anyone until the end of the semester because to do so might seriously alter its results.

Interviewers

The interviewers for the study were an undergraduate male and female (age 19 or 20) and a graduate student male and female (age 28 or older) in clinical psychology. Interviewers of both sexes were used in order to enhance the generalizability of the interviewee-interviewer interactions. All interviewers were trained by the author with the aid of videotape feedback to deliver all questions in a standardized manner. The interviewers attempted to facilitate the subject's

talking at least two minutes on each question by employing two sequential standard prods and one feeling reflection comment per question. Thus, if the subject stopped talking in less than two minutes, the interviewer asked "Can you tell me a little more about that?" If, after the first prod, the subject again stopped talking in less than two minutes, the interviewer asked "Can you tell me any more about that?" In addition, once per question the interviewer attempted to make an accurate restatement of the emotional tone of the subject's discourse. The interviewer attempted to deliver his/her feeling reflection comment in a crisp and clear manner and in an interested and empathic tone.

Dependent Variable Measures

State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) A-State Scale. The STAI (Spielberger, Gorsuch and Lushens, 1970) consists of separate 20-item self-report scales for measuring state anxiety and trait anxiety. In the present study only the STAI A-State Scale was used. This scale, a measure of momentary or transitory anxiety, requires people to describe how they feel at a particular moment in time. It has been demonstrated that scores on the A-State Scale increase in response to situational stress and decline under relaxed conditions (Spielberger et al., 1970).

Impact Message Inventory (IMI). The IMI (Kiesler, Perkins, Anchin, Chirico, Kyle and Federman, 1975) is a 90-item self-report state inventory that provides a measure of the affective and behavioral reactions an individual experiences

as a consequence of his/her interactions with another person. Each of the 90 items is keyed to one of 15 scales. These scales are anchored to the fifteen personality dimensions used by Lorr (1967) in his Interpersonal Behavior Inventory. These dimensions are dominance, competitiveness, hostility, mistrust, detachment, inhibition, submissiveness, succorance, abasiveness, deference, agreeableness, nurturance, affiliativeness, sociability and exhibitionism.

The procedure is that the observer records the extent to which each item reflects the impact that interviewee has on him/her. Each item describes a feeling characteristically elicited by a person high on one of the 15 dimensions. For example, some of the items keyed to the "dominant" interpersonal category include "He makes me feel bossed around" and "I want to put him in his place." If an item is rated high, then the interviewee receives a score on the corresponding dimension. Each item is given a rating: 1 - not at all, 2 - somewhat, 3 - moderately, and 4 - very much so. In line with the keying of each item to one of the respective IMI scales, the total score for a given scale is the sum of the ratings given to each of the 6 items comprising that particular scale. Thus, for example, a scale consisting of 6 items may yield a score ranging from 6 to 24.

In the present study the score used in data analysis from the IMI was the sum attained by adding the scores recorded by the observers on the dominance, hostility, competitiveness, mistrust and detachment scales. The potential range of

scores for each observer on these five scale will vary from 30 to 120.

Impact Message Inventory (IMI)-Modifier Scale. The IMI-Modifier Scale is a 21-item scale which, like the IMI, is designed to assess the relationship domain of live dyadic human behavior. This scale attempts to focus on the emotional impacts and action tendencies elicited by a communication style characterized entirely by indecisiveness, tentativeness and lack of clarity.

This scale was developed by having 15 graduate students in clinical psychology "simulate" an interaction with an individual who typifies an indecisive communication style. This was accomplished by having each graduate student read the following paragraph and focus on the immediate affective and behavioral reactions he or she would be experiencing if in the company of the person described by the paragraph.

K is a person who rarely expresses himself in a crisp or clear manner. He frequently qualifies what he says and is indecisive. K typically mulls over his thoughts rather than expressing his attitudes and feelings without hesitation. K has an extreme fear of being thought of poorly by others and therefore never takes a clear cut stand on anything. When faced with a decision he usually manages to perfectly balance the pros and cons involved.

Students were asked to record their reactions. The item pool generated by this procedure was then reduced using a series of filtering strategies (see Appendix 6). The potential range of scores for each observer on the IMI-Modifier Scale will vary from 21 to 84.

Psycholinguistic Scoring System for the Obsessive Personality. An altered version of the Modifier category of the Psycholinguistic Scoring System for the Obsessive Personality (Kiesler, Moulthrop and Todd, 1972) was applied to the interview data. A decision was made to revise the Modifier scoring system based on a previous study (Greenwood, 1976) which indicated that one of the syntactical categories was not reflecting an indecisive communication style.

The unit scored was the sentence. Rules for unitizing sentences are adopted from Auld and White (1956). While the contextual unit scored is the sentence, instance of Modifiers can occur in three separate types of scoring units: (a) clauses (e.g. I wonder whether, it's possible, it may be), (b) phrases and adverbs (e.g. maybe, to some extent), (c) independent sentences (e.g. It depends, I don't know). A Modifier's Ratio was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Modifier Ratio} = \frac{\text{Number of Modifiers}}{\text{Number of Units Spoken by Subject}}$$

Scoring and Coding of the Interview Data. Six graduate students in clinical psychology observed all of the videotaped interviews. Each observer viewed four videotaped interviews during an observation session. Thus, there was a total of eight observation sessions for each observer. Each observer was permitted only one observation session per day in order to avoid any possible carryover effects or becoming satiated from viewing a large number of interviews in a short period of time.

From each videotaped interview a randomly sampled six minute segment was selected for observation. All comments by the interviewer were erased so that the observers would only hear and see the subject. Each graduate student observer filled out an IMI and IMI-Modifier Scale at the end of each interview. The sequence of the presentation of the videotapes to the observers was counterbalanced to eliminate any possible order effects. Reliability between coders for the scoring of Modifiers was calculated using both the intraclass correlation coefficient formula suggested by Ebel (1951) and percentage agreement scores.

RESULTS

Coder Reliability

The reliability between coders was calculated for one of the dependent measures, the Modifier category of the Psycholinguistic Scoring System for the Obsessive Personality (Kiesler, Moulthrop and Todd, 1972), as well as for unitizing sentences of the subject's typescripted interviews. Reliability was determined both by using the Ebel intraclass correlation coefficient (Guilford, 1954) and by percentage agreement (i.e., agreements/agreements + disagreements) of the ratings. The intraclass correlation formula provides two estimates of reliability; r_{11} indicates the intercorrelation among two coders, while r_{kk} indicates the reliability of the mean of the two coder's ratings.

The reliability estimates of the two coders for the Modifiers measure are presented in Table 2. As can be seen, the r_{11} and r_{kk} values for the coders ratings are quite high,

Insert Table 2 about here

demonstrating that this dependent measure was scored in an objective manner with little inference from the coders. In addition, the percentage agreement for the Modifiers Scoring System, although lower, still suggests that the scores used in the subsequent analyses are highly reliable. The percentage agreement formula is probably a more sensitive measure in the present study since it reflects agreement between coders

Table 2

Ebel Intraclass Correlations and Percentage Agreements for
Two Coders Rating Modifiers for 32 Interviews.

Ebel Intraclass Correlations		<u>Percentage Agreement of the Ratings</u>	
Modifiers	$\frac{r_{11}}{.968}$	$\frac{r_{kk}}{.982}$	81.9%

rather than just agreement of summary scores across interviews.

The reliability estimates for unitizing sentences are presented in Table 3. These values also indicate that the two coders, who followed a slightly altered version of the

Insert Table 3 about here

guidelines for unitizing developed by Dollard and Auld (1959), applied the guidelines in a very consistent manner.

Explanation of the Analyses Performed

Data were obtained for each subject on the Modifiers Category of the Psycholinguistic Scoring System for the Obsessive Personality (revised), the Impact Message Inventory - Modifier Scale, the five specified scales of the Impact Message Inventory, and the A-State Scale of the State - Trait Anxiety Inventory.

A Modifier Ratio, as described in the Method section, was obtained for each subject. These ratio data were then subjected to an analysis of variance in a 2 x 2 factorial design in which the subject's personality style (non-obsessive or obsessive) and the interview condition (low status or high status interviewer) were the two factors.

In addition, summary scores from each observer for the IMI-Modifier Scale and the five specified scales of the IMI were obtained for each subject. These summary scores were subjected to an analysis of variance in a 2 x 2 factorial design as noted above.

Table 3

Ebel Intraclass Correlations and Percentage Agreements for
Two Coders Unitizing 32 Interviews.

	Ebel Intraclass Correlations		<u>Percentage Agreements of the Ratings</u>
Unitizing	$\frac{r_{ll}}{.954}$	$\frac{r_{kk}}{.971}$	86.4%

Finally, raw scores were obtained for each subject on the A-State Scale of the STAI before and after their participation in the experimental interview. These data were subjected to a repeated measures analysis of variance in a 2 x 2 factorial design again corresponding to the Personality Style x Interviewer Status experimental design. The results for each main dependent variable will be grouped separately.

Modifier Ratio

Hypothesis 1 predicted a main effect for the subject's personality style and the interviewer status condition, as well as an interaction between the subject's personality style and the interviewer status condition. As can be seen from the results presented in Table 4, this hypothesis was not confirmed.

Insert Table 4 about here

Neither the subject's personality style, the interviewer status condition, nor an interaction of these factors affected the use of Modifiers. There was a slight trend supportive of the predicted effect that obsessive subjects would display more Modifiers in their speech than non-obsessive subjects. The results for the Modifier Ratio measure are graphically illustrated in Figure 1.

Impact Message Inventory - Modifier Scale

Hypothesis 2 predicted that obsessive subjects would

Table 4

2 x 2 Analysis of Variance for Modifier
Ratio Scores

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Main Effects	0.010	2	0.005	0.909	ns
Personality Style	0.003	1	0.003	0.593	ns
Interviewer Status	0.006	1	0.006	1.225	ns
Two-way Inter- action					
Personality Style x Inter- viewer Status	0.002	1	0.002	0.440	ns
Explained	0.012	3	0.004	0.753	ns
Residual	0.147	28	0.005		
Total	0.159	31			

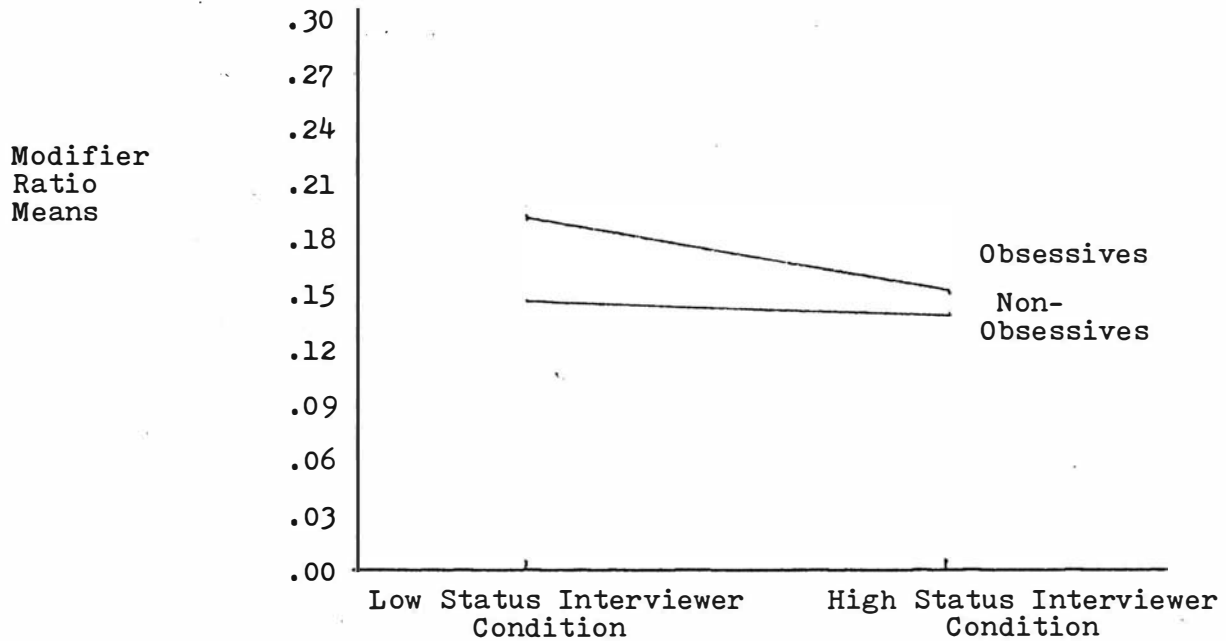


Figure 1. Modifier Ratio means for obsessive and non-obsessive subjects in the high and low interviewer status conditions.

elicit more intense emotional reactions congruent with an indecisive communication style than would non-obsessive subjects, particularly when interacting with a high status interviewer. This hypothesis was not confirmed. The results of the analysis of variance for this prediction presented in Table 5 indicate no significant effect as a function of the subject's personality style or status of the

Insert Table 5 about here

interviewer. The results for the IMI-Modifier Scale are graphically illustrated in Figure 2.

Five Specified Scales of the Impact Message Inventory

This hypothesis involved the differential intensities of a range of emotional reactions generated in observers by obsessive and non-obsessive subjects. It was predicted that obsessive subjects would elicit higher scores on the five specified scales hypothesized to reflect various obsessive stylistics. Furthermore, it was predicted that the mean impact message score for obsessives on these five scales would be significantly higher in the high status interviewer condition. As can be seen from Table 6 these predictions were

Insert Table 6 about here

not confirmed. There was no significant effect on the mean impact message score for the five specified scales of the IMI as a function of the subject's personality style or the status

Table 5

2 x 2 Analysis of Variance for Impact Message
Inventory - Modifier Scores

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Main Effects	18.450	2	9.225	0.195	ns
Personality Style	18.374	1	18.374	0.389	ns
Interview Status	0.075	1	0.075	0.002	ns
Two-way Inter- action					
Personality Style x Interviewer Status	0.018	1	0.018	0.000	ns
Explained	18.468	3	6.156	0.130	ns
Residual	1323.515	28	47.268		
Total	1341.984	31			

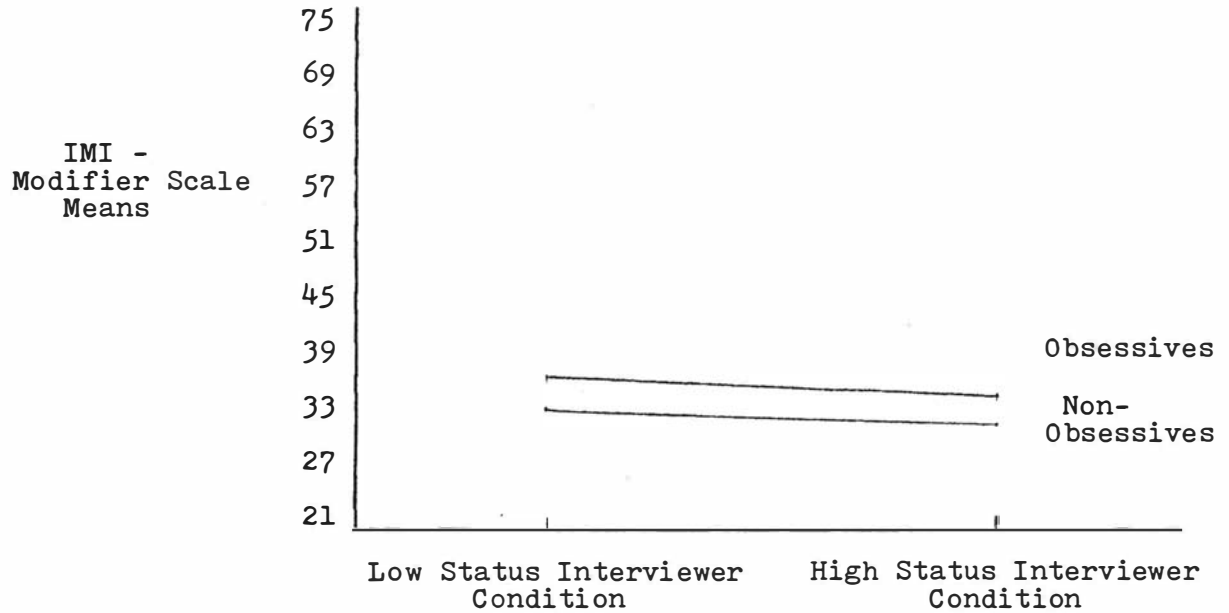


Figure 2. Impact Message Inventory-Modifier Scale means for obsessive and non-obsessive subjects in the high and low interviewer status conditions.

Table 6

2 x 2 Analysis of Variance for the Five Specified
Scales of the Impact Message Inventory

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Main Effects	0.019	2	0.010	.013	ns
Personality Style	0.008	1	0.008	.010	ns
Interviewer Status	0.012	1	0.012	.016	ns
Two-way Inter- action					
Personality Style x Inter- viewer Status	0.039	1	0.039	.051	ns
Explained	0.058	3	0.019	.026	ns
Residual	21.070	28	0.752		
Total	21.128	31			

of the interviewer. The results for hypothesis 3 are graphically illustrated in Figure 3.

The Anxiety State Scale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory.

The repeated measures analysis of the subjects "state" anxiety resulted in one significant finding. As can be seen from Table 7, the level of anxiety of subjects before and

Insert Table 7 about here

after the interview was associated with an F value of 6.98 ($p < .025$), indicating a significant increase in self-reported state anxiety, regardless of the subject's personality style or the interviewer status condition.

Hypothesis 4 had predicted (1) that the state anxiety of obsessives would be greater than non-obsessives, (2) that the subjects in the high status interview condition would report more anxiety than subjects in the low status interview condition, and (3) that the state anxiety of obsessive subjects would be particularly elevated when interacting with a high status interviewer. None of these predictions were confirmed. There were slight trends in the predicted direction for the effect of the subject's personality style and the status of the interviewer. The results for hypothesis 4 are graphically illustrated in Figure 4.

Ancillary Analyses

In addition to analyzing the mean impact score of the five specified scales of the IMI (Detached, Hostile, Mistrust,

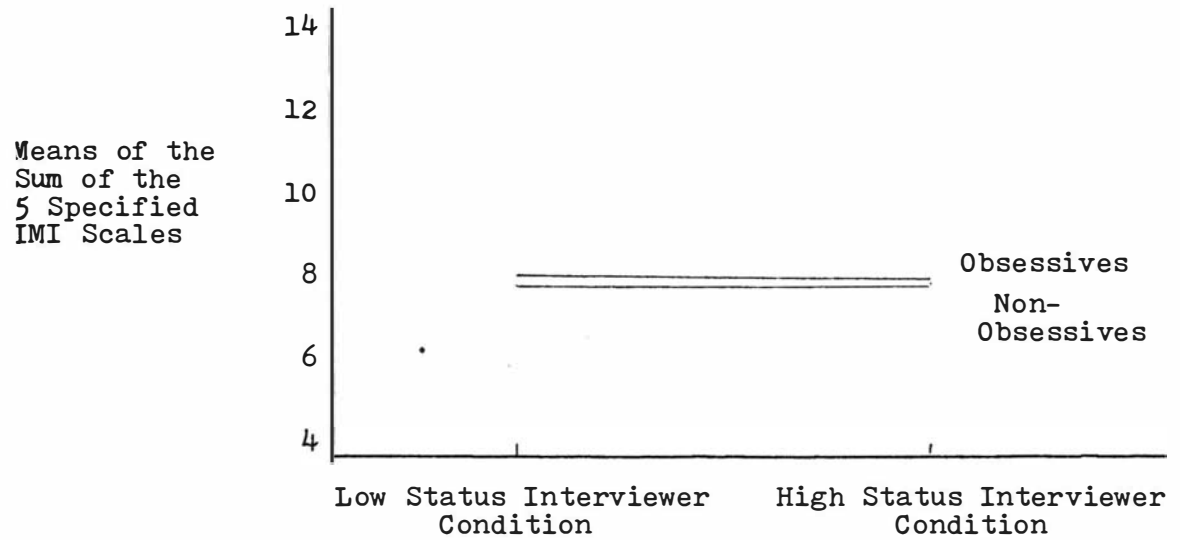


Figure 3. Mean Scores of the Five Specified Scales of the IMI for obsessive and non-obsessive subjects in the high and low interviewer status conditions.

Table 7

2 x 2 Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance for the
A-State Scale of the State - Trait Anxiety
Inventory

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Between Subjects	3075.61	31			
Personality Style	268.14	1	268.14	2.71	.10
Interviewer Status	40.64	1	40.64	.41	ns
Personality Style x Interviewer Status	.82	1	.82	.008	ns
Error	2766.01	28	98.79		
Within Subjects	1141.50	32			
Pre-post	199.52	1	199.52	6.98	.025
Pre-post x Personality Style	40.63	1	40.63	1.42	ns
Pre-post x Personality Style	90.01	1	90.01	3.15	.10
Pre-post x Personality Style x Interviewer Status	91.15	1	91.15	3.19	.10
Error	800.19	28	28.58		
Total	4217.11	63			

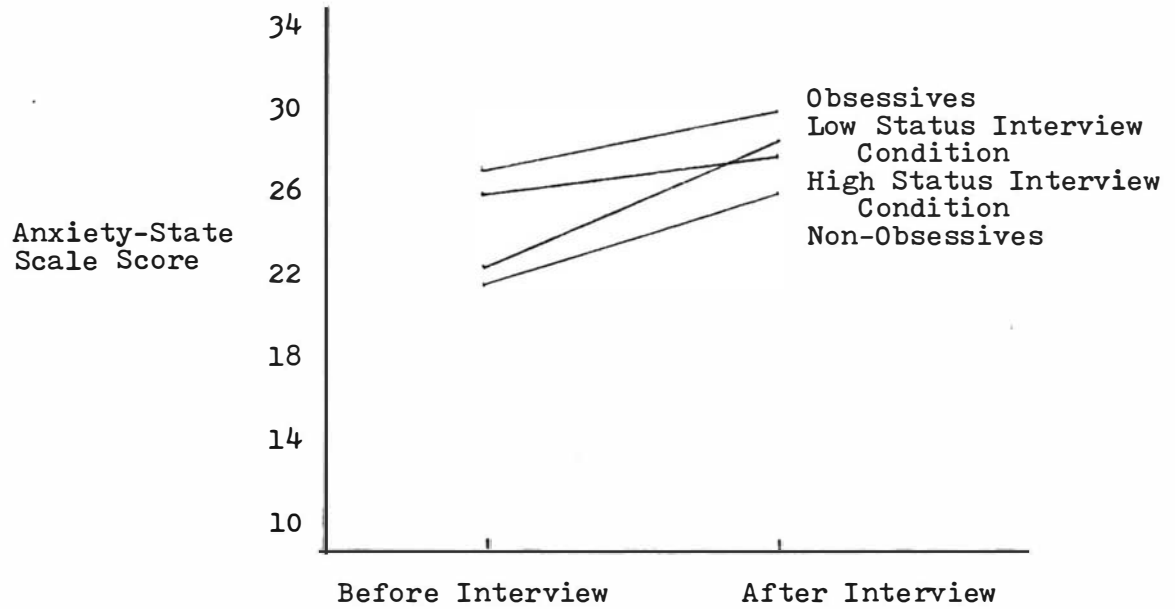


Figure 4. Mean scores for obsessive and non-obsessive subjects, and subjects in the high and low status interviewer conditions on the Anxiety-State Scale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory.

Competitive, Dominant) hypothesized to reflect various obsessive stylistics, each of these scales were subjected to an individual analysis of variance in the same 2 x 2 factorial design as the experimental hypotheses. The Inhibition scale, measuring another hypothesized emotional engagement of the obsessive, was also subjected to the above-mentioned analysis.

In line with the experimental hypotheses, a main effect for the subject's personality style and the interviewer status condition, might be expected for each of these scales. However, as can be seen from the results presented in Tables 8-13, this expectation was not borne out for any of the six scales.

Insert Tables 8-13 about here

Table 8

2 x 2 Analysis of Variance for the Detached
Scale of the Impact Message Inventory

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Main Effects	0.031	2	0.015	0.151	ns
Personality Style	0.030	1	0.030	0.291	ns
Interviewer Status	0.001	1	0.001	0.012	ns
Two-way Inter- action					
Personality Style x Interviewer Status	0.002	1	0.002	0.019	ns
Explained	0.003	3	0.011	0.107	ns
Residual	2.840	28	0.101		
Total	2.873	31			

Table 9

2 x 2 Analysis of Variance for the Hostile
Scale of the Impact Message Inventory

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Main Effects	0.014	2	0.007	0.151	ns
Personality Style	0.010	1	0.010	0.203	ns
Interviewer Status	0.005	1	0.005	0.099	ns
Two-way Inter- action					
Personality Style x Interviewer Status	0.014	1	0.014	0.292	ns
Explained	0.028	3	0.009	0.198	ns
Residual	1.330	28	0.048		
Total	1.359	31			

Table 10

2 x 2 Analysis of Variance for the Mistrust
Scale of the Impact Message Inventory

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Main Effects	0.038	2	0.019	0.177	ns
Personality Style	0.018	1	0.018	0.165	ns
Interviewer Status	0.020	1	0.020	0.190	ns
Two-way Inter- action					
Personality Style x Interviewer Status	0.033	1	0.033	0.309	ns
Explained	0.071	3	0.024	0.221	ns
Residual	2.991	28	0.107		
Total	3.062	31			

Table 11

2 x 2 Analysis of Variance for the Competitive
Scale of the Impact Message Inventory

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Main Effects	0.010	2	0.005	0.176	ns
Personality Style	0.005	1	0.005	0.201	ns
Interviewer Status	0.004	1	0.004	0.151	ns
Two-way Inter- action					
Personality Style x Interviewer Status	0.007	1	0.007	0.258	ns
Explained	0.016	3	0.005	0.204	ns
Residual	0.755	28	0.027		
Total	0.771	31			

Table 12

2 x 2 Analysis of Variance for the Dominant
Scale of the Impact Message Inventory

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Main Effects	0.006	2	0.003	0.056	ns
Personality Style	0.002	1	0.002	0.036	ns
Interviewer Status	0.004	1	0.004	0.076	ns
Two-way Inter- action					
Personality Style x Interviewer Status	0.049	1	0.049	0.911	ns
Explained	0.055	3	0.018	0.341	ns
Residual	0.501	28	0.054		
Total	1.556	31			

Table 13

2 x 2 Analysis of Variance for the Inhibited
Scale of the Impact Message Inventory

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Main Effects	0.099	2	0.050	0.224	ns
Personality Style	0.073	1	0.073	0.329	ns
Interviewer Status	0.026	1	0.026	0.119	ns
Two-way Inter- action					
Personality Style x Interviewer Status	0.041	1	0.041	0.183	ns
Explained	0.140	3	0.047	0.210	ns
Residual	6.202	28	0.222		
Total	6.342	31			

Table 14

Descriptive Data on Modifier Ratios
and Total Number of Modifiers

	All Subjects	Obsessives	Non- Obsessives	Low Status Condition	High Status Condition
Modifier Ratio (Means)	.164	.174	.154	.178	.150
N Modifiers (Means)	13.17	13.18	13.16	13.31	13.03
Modifier Ratio (S.D.)	.072				
N Modifiers (S.D.)	7.06				

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to build the empirical groundwork of a communications approach to psychotherapy by assessing a specific component of the communication style of the obsessive personality assumed to reflect the stylistic dimension of indecisiveness and uncertainty, as well as the distinctive emotional reactions that the clinical literature suggests are elicited by the self-defeating interpersonal behavior of the obsessive. In addition, the present study investigates the effect of one situational factor, the status of the interviewer, on the interpersonal stylistics of obsessives and non-obsessives.

Integrity of the Experimental Manipulations.

It appears that, while a few flaws may have occurred in the execution of the present study, the experimental procedure was followed as designed. All subjects satisfied the selection criteria outlined in the Method section for obsessives and non-obsessives. The interviewers appeared to have followed the training guidelines closely. The observers of the videotaped interviews also followed the observation instructions carefully. Finally, the coders attained very high levels of reliability and agreement in unitizing and coding of the Modifiers measure of the typescripted interviews.

On the other hand, a factor which may have had considerable influence on the results of this study involves how the low status and high status interviewers were perceived by

the subjects. Previous research (e.g., Pope & Siegman, 1972) suggests that subjects are more anxious when interacting with high status persons. However, in the present study, the high status interviewer was introduced as an "experienced psycho-therapist." Since subjects were asked to talk about experiences that were personal and potentially upsetting, it is possible that they did not feel more uncomfortable revealing themselves to an ostensible mental health professional. In fact, a few subjects remarked that they appreciated the opportunity to talk with a "nice", "understanding" therapist. A second possibility is that the high status interviewers (advanced graduate students in clinical psychology), despite their adherence to the interviewer rules, responded in a subtle way differently than the low status interviewers, thereby confounding the status manipulation.

Experimental Hypotheses and Implications for Future Research.

While there were slight trends for obsessive subjects to display more Modifiers in their speech and manifest a higher level of state anxiety than non-obsessive subjects, none of the hypotheses were confirmed in the present study. A possible explanation for the lack of results involves the fact that the experimental analogue situation may have been inappropriate.

Theorizing concerning the ubiquitous and integral part that indecisiveness plays in an obsessive's interpersonal style has been based on clinically diagnosed groups of obsessive neurotics, rather than on psychometrically - identified

obsessives. In addition, research efforts - albeit of a wide band focus - which have confirmed clinical impressions of the obsessive's communication style, have focused on obsessive patients (Balkan & Masserman, 1940; Lorenz & Cobb, 1954; Lorenz, 1955). Subjects in the present study, however, were selected from a normal college population. It is possible that one or more of the differences between psychometrically - identified and clinically diagnosed obsessives (e.g., level of distress, role expectations, motivation, etc.) may be significant moderator variables in eliciting the frequently noted indecisive communication style and other self-defeating interpersonal stylistics of the obsessive (e.g., Sullivan, 1956).

The complexity of the assessment problem in analogue research can be further gleaned by previous findings concerning the relationship between obsessive personalities and clinically diagnosed obsessive neurotics. Black's (1974) review of the few systematic studies of the obsessive neurotic's premorbid personality indicate that, on the average, marked obsessive personality traits were found in only 31 percent of 254 obsessive neurotic patients and no premorbid obsessive traits were found in 29 percent of 451 obsessive neurotics. While the studies in Black's review are difficult to compare because of widely varying criteria and methods used for the assessment of obsessive traits, it is evident that in some respects - as yet not clearly specified - obsessive personality and obsessive neurotic do not constitute the same homogeneous group.

Further evidence for this view comes from Slade's (1974) review of factor analytic studies of the obsessive personality and obsessive neurotic. Separate trait and symptom factors were found in these studies regardless whether other or self-ratings were used. In one study (Lorr & Rubinstein, 1956) an analysis of second order factors revealed that obsessive symptom items tended to load on an "anxiety-tension" factor, while obsessive personality trait items loaded on a "hostility-resentment" factor.

The above findings go to the heart of the Patient Uniformity Myth (Kiesler, 1966). That is, even within the obsessive spectrum, there are various subgroups that differ significantly from one another. It is conceivable that (1) experimental analogue research is not an appropriate strategy to evaluate the important theoretical constructs vis a vis the obsessive personality or (2) the subject selection criteria used in the present study were not adequate in producing a theoretical and clinically relevant homogeneous group of subjects.

(With regard to the later possibility, Weintraub and Aronson (1974) analyzed the verbal productions of a group of obsessive - compulsive patients. They found that two communication styles - lack of emotional expression and defensive avoidance of references to themselves - consistently noted in the clinical literature to be associated with the obsessive personality, were not evident in the verbal productions of the obsessive - compulsive patients. In fact, these patients

expressed more feelings and used less nonpersonal references than non-obsessives. In the same vein, Kiesler (1969) compared an aspect of communication behavior ("experiencing") of subjects selected from a normal college population with those seeking outpatient psychotherapy who had the same test scores on selection instruments (similar to the ones used in the present study). He found that, for males, there was a significant difference between the two groups in their ability to express, understand and integrate a wide range of feelings.

Thus, it is plausible that the communication behavior and resultant emotional engagements of psychometrically - identified obsessives differ significantly from obsessives who seek or are involved in psychotherapy. Replication of the present study with actual obsessive neurotic patients as well as the development of finer-grained assessment instruments that can delineate more homogeneous subgroups of obsessives would be important steps in answering this question.

The former recommendation suggests that the single-case design might be the most appropriate research strategy in studying the communication patterns of the obsessive personality. In addition, a careful reading of the clinical literature on the obsessive personality brings to mind a sampling difficulty that may only be addressed in single-case studies, which permit study of a variable over an extended period of time. A number of theoreticians, most notably Salzman (1972), point to the establishment of a certain level of intimacy in a

relationship as a prerequisite for the obsessive to display his defensive stylistics. He notes that intimacy is threatening since it draws the obsessive into an emotional arena he cannot control. Consequently, it may take a number of interviews before the defensive communication patterns of the obsessive are manifested.

The experimental analogue situation may not have been appropriate in another manner. The Modifiers scoring system, Impact Message Inventory - Modifier Scale, and Impact Message Inventory were designed to measure a subject's interpersonal communication patterns and resultant emotional engagements. The structure of the interview in the present study, while technically a dyadic situation, did not allow a free flowing reciprocal interaction between the subject and the interviewer. While the interviewers were allowed to interact to some extent with the subjects, their behavior was standardized in order to minimize any differential influences. It is possible that this artificiality influenced the nature of the verbal-stylistic and nonverbal behaviors of the obsessives. In support of this idea, Davis (1975) found that sensitizers (Byrne, 1961), who are psychometrically similar to the obsessive subjects used in the present study, needed the full complement of relationship cues before they felt they were interacting with another person and before they would perceive the situation as an interpersonal threat.

One of the related methodological problems of the present study concerns how the interviews were perceived by the

subjects. Task-confounding may have occurred in that the interviewers may have varied on dimensions other than status. Interviewer characteristics should not be left to chance when a small number of interviewers are used. Possible confounding interviewer characteristics (e.g., level of empathic understanding, attractiveness) should either be measured and controlled beforehand, or incorporated into the experimental design as additional independent variables.

Another issue involves the possible blunting effect of viewing videotapes in eliciting emotional reactions. Gottschalk (1961) has observed: "There is a special problem in using films as records of social interaction: the person analyzing the material has two stimuli to contend with - the social situation depicted in the film and the film itself" (p. 207). The effect of videotape presentations as opposed to live interactions should be evaluated in future studies. The nature of the data medium is a particularly crucial concern in this area of research.

An important ancillary finding involves how the subjects responded to one of the questions asked by the interviewer: What are the impressions you've made of me in the last few minutes? This question was qualitatively different from the other questions in the interview in that it asked subjects to express their feelings and perceptions about the interviewer to the interviewer, rather than talk about an experience in the presence of the interviewer. Subjects responded to this question with a significantly ($t = 5.95$; $p < .001$) greater

number of Modifiers in their speech than to the interview as a whole. All subjects displayed a Modifier in their speech approximately every sixth sentence during the course of the interview. However, to the question cited above, where the subjects were asked to comment on their impressions of the interviewer, the rate of the use of Modifiers jumped to almost every other sentence (Modifier Ratio = .43). However, it should be noted, there was no difference between obsessive and non-obsessive subjects in their use of Modifiers on this question.

This finding indicates that a certain type of interpersonal communication-actually addressing one's relationship with the other member of the dyad-is characterized by speech which is more uncertain and qualified. Modifiers appear to be a sensitive measure of this phenomenon. Since Modifiers do not discriminate obsessives from non-obsessives in this type of communication behavior, this would connote, as Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) hypothesize, a universal difficulty in attempting to communicate relationship ("analogic") information in a logical ("digital") manner; They note:

Human beings communicate both digitally and analogically. Digital language has a highly complex and powerful logical syntax but lacks adequate semantics in the field of relationships, while analogic language possesses the semantics but has no adequate syntax for the unambiguous definition of the nature of relationships (p. 62).

The finding that the speech of the subjects is significantly more uncertain when they were asked to share their impressions of the interviewer with him does suggest that profitable research can be done with analogue populations in the interpersonal communications area. A good deal of work needs to be done to pinpoint under what conditions certain types of communication behavior occurs, as well as the interpersonal consequences of such behavior. Analogue research can play a large role in delineating these heretofore unexplored behavioral domains, before research efforts turn toward replication studies with patient populations.

More specifically, while the taxonomy of interpersonal communication tasks is in a rudimentary stage of development, the present study would indicate that interpersonal communication be regarded as a multidimensional construct. The appropriate research strategy, then, would involve using factorial designs which incorporate subject (encoder), situational (decoder) and communication task differences. With regard to communication task variables, a starting point might be Barker and Kibler's (1971) concept of "dialogic" interpersonal communication. Dialogic interpersonal communication occurs when the focus of the spoken message is the relationship of the two interactants.

In summation, none of the major hypotheses were supported in the present study. It was suggested that the attenuating effects of the somewhat artificial analogue task as well as the selection of subjects from a normal population, may have

accounted for the lack of results. More explicitly, the constricted interaction between the interviewer and the subject, possible uncontrolled characteristics of the interviewers which may have confounded the status manipulation, and the possible loss of information that may have accrued from the use of videotapes were cited. Refinements and study in these areas are recommended for future analogue research. It was also suggested that future analogue research be expanded to include communication task variables. Finally, it was noted that single-case studies with obsessive patients might be the most feasible strategy to more rigorously investigate some of the clinically observed communication behavior of the obsessive.

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APPENDIX 1
INTERVIEWER'S INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for coming here today.

This is a study of how people communicate their feelings and attitudes, and of the impact conveyed by a person's communication style. It is our hope to discover the relationship between the way in which a person communicates and the impact he/she has on another person.

I'm going to ask you some questions and I'd like you to answer them as honestly as possible. Some of the questions are personal and you may feel uncomfortable in answering them. You may refuse to answer any question that seems offensive to you. Also, if at any time you feel like discontinuing the interview, please feel free to do so. You will still receive credit for participating in the experiment.

When you answer questions, please try to talk about them in detail. The more you can talk, the better. Please try to talk at least two minutes on each question. Please try as best you can to communicate your real feelings about the various topics.

I will not be able to answer any questions during the interview, but I will answer any questions you care to ask now . . .

Any questions?

Now, I will turn on the videotape recorder and begin the interview.

APPENDIX 2

CONSENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH

You are being asked to participate in a research study concerned with communication. Your participation in the study will consist of responding to various questions that you will be asked by a graduate student. In order to study your communication behavior we need as complete a record as possible, so we will taperecord your interview. To do this, we must have your consent.

The tapes will be kept as confidential as possible. They will be heard only by five graduate students in clinical psychology directly connected with this study. On the tape you will be identified by number and not by name. In addition, no names or identities related to participants will be referred to in data analysis or publication of results. All tapes will be erased after the study is completed.

During the interview you may refuse to answer any questions that you find offensive. You are also free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation in this study at any time.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Witness: _____

APPENDIX 3
SELECTION PROCESS AND ORIGINAL POOL OF
INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS

Instructions

I need to secure approximately 10 questions that are particularly meaningful for the obsessive personality. The following is a description of the obsessive personality to help you focus on the dominant themes and style of the obsessive. Please read through the following questions and rate them on the dimension of saliency vis a vis the obsessive personality. Please do this in the following manner. First, rate each question on a scale of 1 - 3 whereby 1 = most salient and 3 = least salient. Then, return to those questions rated 1 and rank-order them.

Clinical descriptions of the obsessive personality have highlighted a broad array of traits including rigidity in thought and behavior, a liking for order, conscientiousness, a meticulous use of words, paying attention to detail, inconclusive ways of acting and thinking, a tendency to brood over ideas, irritability, and moroseness.

The obsessive tends to overestimate his rational capacity and neglect the emotional factors in his life. The obsessive likes to avoid the expression of feeling and attempts to dampen, restrain, or deny emotional responses. He strives for omniscience through intellectuality. He has a tendency to dissect every experience with compulsive rigidity, which

confuses rather than enlightens. The obsessive constantly issues himself commands and believes nothing should get in the way of these directives. Many of these directives prescribe roles that the obsessive believes he must fill. The obsessive therefore strives to reduce life to a technical exercise whereby emotional factors are removed.

The obsessive experiences the possibility of the loss of control as painfully humiliating. Being dependent on others is interpreted by the obsessive as being out of control. The obsessive maximizes control over his life by limiting his commitment. He tends to avoid challenges and problems by being indecisive. The obsessive has perfectionistic strivings. To the obsessive, anything less than perfection is mediocrity, which is intolerable.

1. Tell me about something that frustrates you.
2. How do you like Richmond?
3. What is your favorite type of food?
4. How would you describe yourself?
5. Tell me about something you worry about.
6. What is your favorite sport?
7. What are your feelings about marriage?
8. Tell me about how you get along with your parents.
9. What has been your favorite job?
10. Tell me about an experience in which you feel you lost control.
11. Tell me about the best course you've taken in college.
12. What kind of entertainment do you enjoy most, and why do you enjoy it?
13. What has been your least favorite job?
14. Tell me about an incident in which you experienced rejection.
15. What do you see as some of your major weaknesses?
16. Tell me about something funny that has happened to you.
17. Tell me about the most difficult decision you've ever had to make.
18. What happens when you get angry?
19. What is the best thing that has ever happened to you?
20. What do you think about encounter groups?
21. What was the last thing you cried about?
22. How do you feel about masturbation?

23. How do you feel about Women's Liberation?
24. Tell me about something you are proud of.
25. Tell me about something that makes you feel relaxed.
26. What kind of people do you like least?
27. What is the worst thing you've ever done?
28. What kind of occupation did you pursue and why did you choose it?
29. Tell me about something exciting that has happened to you.
30. What are your feelings about premarital sex?
31. What types of movies do you enjoy?
32. Do you think people are naturally competitive?
33. Tell me about an experience in which you were the center of attention.
34. What do you see as some of your best qualities?
35. Tell me about an experience in which you failed miserably.
36. What are you most afraid of?
37. (To interviewer) What are the impressions you've made of me in the last few minutes?
38. Why should a promise be kept?
39. Tell me about one of the warmest experiences you have ever had.
40. Do you think it is appropriate for people to express their anger?
41. What do you think of Jimmy Carter?
42. What type of music do you like?
43. Do you believe in gun control?
44. Tell me about your high school days.
45. Tell me about the last time you were elated.
46. Do your friends hurt your feelings?
47. Can you confide in your parents?
48. Do you ever worry that you bore people?
49. Do you quarrel with members of your family?
50. Do you feel others treat you fairly?

APPENDIX 4
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about the most difficult decision you've ever had to make.
2. What was the last thing you cried about?
3. What do you see as some of your best qualities?
4. What is the worst thing you've ever done?
5. What happens when you get angry?
6. Tell me about how you get along with your parents.
7. Tell me about an experience in which you failed miserably.
8. Tell me about an experience in which you feel you lost control.
9. How would you describe yourself?
10. Tell me about an incident in which you experienced rejection.
11. What do you see as some of your major weaknesses?
12. What are the impressions you've made of me in the last few minutes?

APPENDIX 5
RESULTS OF PILOT STUDY

A pilot study involving five female undergraduate (two psychometrically-identified obsessives and three normals) and an undergraduate and graduate interviewer was conducted in December, 1976. The graduate student was introduced to the subjects as an "experienced psychotherapist," while the undergraduate was introduced to the subjects as "an undergraduate who has consented to help us in this study." The interviewers administered a set of twelve questions which were designed to focus on areas and experiences that have been hypothesized to be particularly stressful and/or salient for the obsessive personality.

The pilot study was run in order to (1) determine whether the interviewer status manipulation was effective, (2) find out whether interviews of sufficient length could be conducted, and (3) to check out the experimental paradigm for the existence of any unforeseen technical problems.

Post-experimental interviewers strongly suggested that the interviewer status manipulation was effective. In addition, the state anxiety - as measured by the STAI A-State Scale (Spielberger et al., 1970) - increased more for those (3) subjects seen by the high status interviewer, particularly the obsessive subject. Thus, it is evident that subjects experienced higher levels of anxiety when interacting with the high status interviewer. The interviews lasted an

average of just over 30 minutes which is felt to be of sufficient duration for the subject's habitual communication style to be evidenced. Finally, neither the graduate nor undergraduate student had any difficulty following the interview guidelines. In sum, it appears that the status manipulation is producing the intended effect and that the experimental procedure poses no serious technical problems.

APPENDIX 6

DEVELOPMENT OF THE IMI-MODIFIER SCALE

The IMI-Modifier Scale was developed by having 15 graduate students in clinical psychology "simulate" an interaction with an individual who typifies an indecisive communication style. This was accomplished by having each graduate student read the following paragraph and focus on the immediate affective and behavioral reactions he or she would be experiencing if in the company of the person described by the paragraph.

A is a person who rarely expresses himself in a crisp or clear manner. He frequently qualifies what he says and is indecisive. A typically mulls over his thoughts rather than expressing his attitudes and feelings without hesitation. A has an extreme fear of being thought of poorly by others and therefore never takes a clearcut stand on anything. When faced with a decision he usually manages to perfectly balance the pros and cons involved.

Students were asked to record their reactions on the Impact Message Rating Sheet.

The item pool (see Appendix 7) generated by this procedure was then reduced using the following strategy. First the author eliminated items phrased in extremely sophisticated and esoteric language. The author and another graduate student in psychology independently rated each of the remaining 140 impact messages on a scale of 1 to 4. A score of one was defined as "perfectly descriptive of my reaction"; a score of two was defined as "moderately descriptive of my reaction"; a score of three was defined as "minimally

descriptive of my reaction"; and a score of four was defined as "not at all descriptive of my reaction." Thus, the minimum possible score for any item was two and the maximum possible score was eight. Results for each item were tabulated according to score frequencies and means.

The author decided that the inclusion of seven items for each of the three major types of impact messages (type one consists of direct feeling impact messages, e.g. I feel frustrated; type two consists of action tendency impact messages, e.g. I want to avoid him; type three consists of perceived evocative messages, e.g. he wants to impress me) would be sufficient to representatively sample the universe of impact messages vis a vis the indecisive communication style. The author then selected the final 21 items for the Impact Message Inventory-Modifier Scale according to the following criteria - in descending order of importance: Inclusion of items with lower mean rating scores; inclusion of items representing a broad range of impact messages; and simplicity of item language.

APPENDIX 7

ORIGINAL POOL OF IMPACT MESSAGES FOR THE
IMPACT MESSAGE INVENTORY-MODIFIER SCALE

Direct Feelings

(Frequency counts in parentheses)

1. Intimidating
2. Restless
3. Inhibited in saying what I want
4. Superior (2)
5. Sympathetically attentive
6. Frustrated (7)
7. Distant
8. Put upon
9. Sad
10. Alienated
11. Angry (4)
12. Ineffectual as a communicator
13. Resentful
14. Confused (2)
15. Turned off
16. I like him
17. Annoyed with him
18. I'm getting a headache
19. Irritated (5)
20. Argumentative
21. Impatient (5)
22. Amused
23. Sarcastic
24. Bored (5)
25. Self-assured and confident
26. Cautious
27. Skeptical
28. Uncomfortable
29. Offended
30. Unchallenged
31. Sorry for him
32. Distrustful
33. Like he's not even there
34. That it's my fault that I don't like him

Action Tendencies

1. I want to finish his sentence for him.
2. Avoid him and minimize our contact
3. Want to talk for him

4. Get away from him, avoid him
5. Dismiss him, say "Forget it"
6. Stop listening
7. Don't want to be bothered with him
8. Tell him to get on with it
9. Tell him to make a decision
10. Ask him what he's afraid of
11. Want to shake him
12. Tell him that some of my best friends don't always agree with me
13. Tell him I like good arguments
14. I don't want to make his decisions for him
15. I should tell him to "shut up"
16. I shouldn't listen
17. Want to end the conversation
18. Want to force him to take a stand
19. Shake him and tell him to tell me how he really feels
20. Want to make him take a stand
21. I want to yell at him
22. Help him take a stand in different situations, to assert himself
23. Help him to be able to care less about what others think of him
24. Help him relax
25. Help him make his own decisions
26. Like to shake him up
27. Like to leave
28. Want to get rid of him
29. Want to say "Quit bullshitting and be real"
30. Want to confront him about his communication
31. Want to pull a straight answer out of him
32. Want to reinforce him for an honest answer
33. Boost his confidence
34. Must show him the reasons for his behavior
35. Try to establish some grounds for interaction
36. Feel like twisting him up
37. Move away
38. Attempt to end the conversation
39. To build his confidence
40. Like to politely get away from him
41. Should force him to make a decision
42. Don't want to be with him
43. Strangle her out of frustration

Perceived Evoking Messages

1. Thinks I am too pushy
2. Wants me to tell him exactly what to do
3. Wants me to constantly reassure him of how I feel towards him
4. Wants to impress me
5. Wants to avoid alienating me
6. Trying to be acceptable to me

7. Wants not to be misguided
8. Wants to hide and protect his inner core
9. Judge what he must do to win my affection
10. Trying to be popular and admired
11. Indecisive and wants me to carry the conversation
12. Does not want me to confront him
13. Is trying to avoid disagreeing with me
14. Wants to be told what to do - so he can disagree
15. He likes to "discuss"
16. Wants me to make up his mind for him
17. Want me to do things for him
18. Wants me to provide added reasons for his indecisiveness
19. Wants me to provide him with a reason for certain course of action
20. Wants me to reassure him
21. Wants me to tell him what to do
22. Wants me to be careful not to hurt his feelings
23. Doesn't trust me or he'd tell me how he really feels
24. Wants me to admire his logical, rational mind
25. Wants me to accept him
26. Doesn't really care what I think
27. Wants me to give my opinions first
28. Thinks I cannot handle opposing viewpoints
29. Thinks I am like everyone else
30. Wants me to like him
31. Doesn't want any hassle from me
32. Wants me to make the decisions
33. Wants me to be responsible
34. Wants me to like him
35. Wants me to argue with him
36. Wants me to take responsibility for all decisions that are made
37. Wants me to think he's a nice guy, whatever the cost
38. Isn't really very interested in me

APPENDIX 8

IMPACT MESSAGE INVENTORY - MODIFIER SCALE

This inventory contains words, phrases and statements which people use to describe how they are emotionally engaged or impacted when interacting or observing another person.

You are to respond by indicating how accurately each of the following items describes your reactions to the particular person on videotape. Respond to each item in terms of how precisely it describes the feelings this person arouses in you, the behaviors you want to direct toward her when she's around, and/or the descriptions of her that come to mind. Indicate for each item how that item describes your actual reactions by using the following scale: 1 - Not at all, 2 - Somewhat, 3 - Moderately so, 4 - Very much so.

Please be sure to blacken in only the one circle which best answers how accurately that item describes what you would be experiencing. For example, if an item is somewhat descriptive of your reaction, darken in the circle which corresponds to the number 2 for Somewhat descriptive.

$$\frac{1}{0} \quad \frac{2}{0} \quad \frac{3}{0} \quad \frac{4}{0}$$

IMI - MODIFIER SCALE

When I Am With This Person She Makes Me Feel....

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
|----|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| 1. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |frustrated. |
| 2. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |bored. |
| 3. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |cautious. |
| 4. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |angry. |
| 5. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |impatient. |
| 6. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |confused. |
| 7. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |irritated. |

When I Am With This Person She Makes Me Feel That I....

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |want to get away from her. |
| 2. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |want to shake her. |
| 3. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |want to end the conversation. |
| 4. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |want to help her relax. |
| 5. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |want to tell her to get on with it. |
| 6. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |want to force her to make a decision. |
| 7. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |want to build her confidence. |

When I Am With This Person It Appears To Me That She....

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |wants me to make her decisions. |
| 2. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |isn't very interested in me. |
| 3. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |wants to avoid alienating me. |
| 4. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |wants me to reassure her. |
| 5. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |wants me to carry the conversation. |
| 6. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |wants me to not hurt her feelings. |
| 7. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |is trying to protect herself. |