



“Please Listen to Me, Even Just for A While”: Approaching the Stutters' Lives

By Hangzhou No14. High school

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To know the opinions of stutterers themselves and different groups of people on stammering, we conducted interviews and surveys. Beyond our expectations, few people have a negative attitude towards stuttering.

Introduction of interviewers

Zha Shufu, a high school student. He always tries to communicate with others but he seldom can say those words clearly. So sometimes his classmates will laugh at him about those inconsecutive words.

Similarly, Yuan Junhao is also a high school student who has stammer, but he is talkative and outgoing despite laughers at his stammer. He is passionate to math and sometimes he discusses with others about complicated math problems in order to help them.

The definition of stammer

Stammer is an act or instance of stuttering, and it also means to speak with involuntary disruption or blocking of speech (as by repetition or prolongation of vocal sounds).

Inner Thought of Stutterers Themselves

“My name is Zha...Zha...Shufu.” Zha, a classmate of ours stuttered, bringing everyone to laugh. Confronted with the ridicules, he laughed with us and said that he did not care about the ridicules since stutter melts embarrassing, which encouraged him to tease himself to create humors.”

Yuan Junhao, another stutterer interviewed, partially agreed with Zha’s idea. However, he argued that people are seemingly to have some malice if they make fun of him. Additionally, he usually feels anxious while others are listening attentively to him. For instance, in an English class, his stuttering became more severe when he answered a question under the eyes of all his classmates. According to him, he was panicking, standing for a long time without a word and feeling bad of his stuttering.

Besides, it is hard for the stutters to perform well in interviews and oral-based exams, such as TOEFL. They could not have a good impression on interviewers. They could only speak limited number of words because of their stuttering, leading to a potential low grade.

Views of People Around Stutterers

After interviewing those stutterers, we interviewed some of their friends about their opinion. Yan Xing, a friend of Zha said he was very sorry for him. When he first met Zha, Zha made such a great effort to introduce himself that Yan thought it would be inconvenient for Zha in his life.

“Yeah, it is difficult to communicate with Zha.” Guo Ying, a classmate of Zha said, “When I ask him to teach me something, I cannot understand him at all, because he can hardly say a complete sentence, driving me mad. But in other cases, he was very humorous.”

By contrast, Wu Qitian, a classmate of Yuan said that Yuan’s characteristic of stutter could be helpful, especially in presentations. “His speaking slowly could stall for time to meet the need when we still had some time left and we do not know what to say.” said Wu.

We then asked to stutters how they want to be treated. They answered that they only wanted to be considered as normal people. They were pleased right now since their classmates and most of other young people treated them equally. Nevertheless, they also wanted strangers such as shop employees to listen to them patiently. Besides, they hoped that their parents and some elderly relatives to eliminate the stereotypes of stutterers.



On June 22th, 2019, in order to get first-hand data, our group is interviewing stammers and their friends by asking their personal opinions of stutters in a classroom of Hangzhou No.14 High School. (Photo by Guo Ying)

“Their opinion is that it was difficult for me to get employed and find a girlfriend in the future. But I believe these difficulties can be solved through my effort.” Yuan said optimistically.

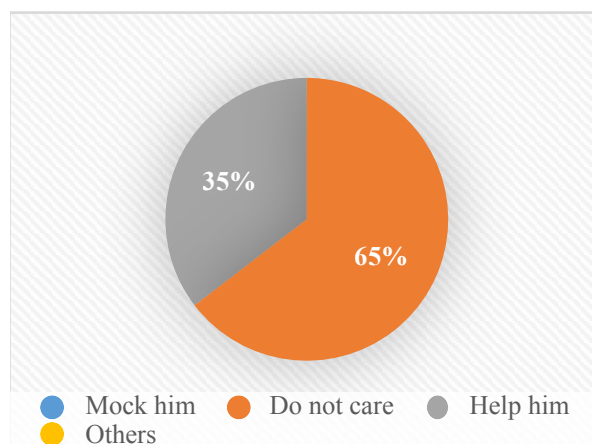
According to the interview above, we found that stutterers don't care about the fact they are stammer at all. Nonetheless, in some cases, when they are confronted with in tense situations, they might be annoyed by themselves because they

cannot express their feeling successfully.

We also designed an online questionnaire with 9 questions to interview our schoolmates. The responses to the question “have you ever met any stuttered people?” are more than half of the people (54.17%) voted “no”. This means most of the normal people only hear about stuttered

patients instead of truly meet them in the real life. For nearly 59% of people voted that they think stuttering will bring negative impression when people are having conversations with each other. Others think it is just OK when people stuttered talk to them without complete sentences. Most people can appreciate stutterers' defects in the expression, also willing to tolerate these defects, and take them actually as the normal, although these defects will cause certain influence in the daily communication. Ninety percent of students thought that they don't care about whether the person they talk to is shutter or not, although there are forty-four percent students thought that stuttering will affect daily life. As for the way people with stuttering are treated, 64.58% of the interviewees think they should ignore their shortcomings and communicate normally; 35.4% said they should help stutterers as much as possible and guide them to communicate normally, and no one thinks they should laugh at stutterers.

As for studying of think stuttering 89.58% think their study. that they willing to give of them still



the influence of stuttering on the patients, 10.42% of interviewees has a positive effect on them, while stuttering has a negative effect on Although the interviewees indicated understood stutterers and were them help and patience, the majority believed that stuttering had negative

effects on stutterers. About 88 per cent of them believe stuttering will have a negative impact on their interpersonal relationships, while nearly 96 per cent believe it will have a negative impact on their job search. When they are asked what else they are willing to say about stammer, their answers suggest their friendliness and kindness to stutterers, such as “we should help stutterers and respect them”, “We should not discriminate stutterers”, “A nice attitude toward stutterers will make them more confident.”

To conclude the deficient, we only asked student stutterers for their opinions. Although the result that student stutterers thought ridicules were harmless, we still think that the situation will be different for grown-up stutterers. In addition, normal people we interviewed were all stutterers' friends, which might lead to a biased conclusion. Consequently, we figured out another plan – to interview random people on the street.

Viewpoints of Experts



Bruce Xu is interviewing the Professor Wang on August 4, 2019 by Wechat.

Expert: Professor Wang, founder of Zhengzhou Stutter Correction Center. He is also a stutter patient before. By using the Internet, we can see the state of Mr. Wang's serious stutter before and the state of Mr. Wang after his stutter is corrected.

His video should be the only video in China that can see the two distinct states before and after the correction of severe stutter.

To have a deeper understanding of the real situation of stutter and stutter patients, we found Professor wang and conducted an interview with him about the origin of the stutter and solution of stutter.

Our first question to Professor Wang is about how to determine stutter. The truth is everybody can more or less in the ordinary life occurrence knot phenomenon so whether there is a professional standard to determine the stutter or not?

The answer is that there isn't any specific standard for judging stutter. The stuttering problem is different from hypertensions. People who have hypertension can be determined by blood pressure monitor but stutter just has an ambiguous standard. The people who feel that their stutter is so serious that their normal life will be affected by it can be determined as Stutterers. The professor also helps us to distinguish and define the stutter and stutter illness. The stutterers are the people who have a serious stutter problem. But the people who have the stutter illness is the people who believe that he or she has the stutter problem no matter how serious truly their stutter is. The stutter illness is more likely a kind of mental illness because they don't have enough confidence to communicate with others. For instance, if a person who is not afraid of communication, although he may have a serious stutter, he will not be defined as having stutter illness.

Because of the relationship between the stutter illness and mentality, we asked the further question about the physiological origin of the stutter illness. It is hard to get to know is the physiological problem leads to the mental effects or the mental problem is the origin of the stutter illness. The answer from the professor is beyond our expectation. Seldom stutter illness patients have a physiological problem because the only physiological case, which will lead to stutter is the illness

in the brain and voice organ. Most of the stutter illness patient is just because of mental problem.

Due to the information we get from the first interview that stutter may be deteriorated by certain harmful behavior or habits, we asked the third question about these behaviors. According to Professor Wang, there are three kinds of behavior may deteriorate the stutter. One is to imitate those who stammer. The second one is speaking cannot keep up with the speed of thinking because of the lack of vocabulary and the third one is being in a nervous state after being frightened. This information shows that some unintentional and inevitable behavior will truly deteriorate the stutter. Besides, the third one tells us that the stutter is easily be influenced by other people.

After getting to know about the cause of the stutter, the solution is the most important. We consulted how Professor Wang will help the stutterers and the stutter disease patients to cure these diseases. Professor Wang explains it specifically. The stutters as long as need to practice, such as reading at a slow speed, learning how to control the rhythm of speaking, etc. It is easier for stutters to be cured and after 3 months of training, they will certainly have a great improvement. However, due to the disease of stutter is more likely a psychological problem, the treatment will be longer and harder because doctors may need to help them to reconstruct their confidence. For example, when people are nervous, the handshakes. This handshaking is not caused by your hands, but being nervous, which is same as the disease of stutter. Furthermore, the cure probability is less than stutter because whether the stutter disease could be cured is more likely depending on the patient itself.

Conclusion

Based on our research, we can draw the conclusion that what bothers stutterers most is that they are treated differently by others because of their inability to express themselves. People around stutterers don't discriminate against them, but their casual teasing of stutterers can also hurt them. And the lives of people who stutter are affected more or less. What we can do is to respect them, help them out of difficulties and let them live like normal people.