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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION IN LIFE NARRATIVES

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By
Delma Cole Hall
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COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION
IN LIFE NARRATIVES

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND POLICY STUDIES

By

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Lillie B. Cole, who because of the times and economics was denied access to an education beyond eighth grade, but who was a great teacher for her ten children and has become the matriarch of multiple generations of outstanding educators.

And, to my daughters, Toya and Kasi, who continually amaze me; your futures are limited only by you.

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Abstract

Researchers believe that 20 percent of the population endures high levels of communication apprehension. If a person experiences high levels of CA, she/he will find ways to avoid situations she/he has learned to associate with communication. Individuals with high CA levels tend to avoid communication and because of the avoidance are perceived less positively by those who do not experience high CA levels. Studies have indicated that those who have high communication apprehension are negatively influenced in their economic, academic, political, and social lives.

Communication apprehension researchers have defined communication apprehension and have studied the effects of CA on individual's lives. Work has been done to identify those who suffer from high levels of CA. Although researchers have reasoned possible causes of communication apprehension, no definite cause has been identified. Research is not evident that pursues in-depth information from the people who have experienced communication apprehension. The purpose of this research is to investigate the life of the person who suffers from high levels of CA as an entity that contains information about or clues to the beginning and development of high communication apprehension.

A phenomenological study was conducted with eight college students who scored 100 or over on the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension. Each student discussed his/her life narrative in 90 to 120 minutes interviews. The content of the interviews was analyzed and compared. The analysis of the life narratives revealed four main themes discussed by all participants: (1) Family and Early Childhood Development, (2) School and Teachers, (3) Naming and Explaining the Problem, and (4) Emotional

Experiences. Each theme contained several topics related to the theme. The themes that evolved from the life narratives enrich the understanding of CA and give voice to individuals whose fears have prevented them from being heard.

CHAPTER I

The Research Problem

Introduction

Communication apprehension is a life-determining affliction. Children take this affliction with them to school, and teachers can intensify it. Children, because of the affliction, do not do as well in school, and as adults are often isolated and are not as successful as others. Communication apprehension (CA) is "the most pervasive communication problem in our contemporary society" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 93). Communication apprehension research has been extensive in the past thirty years. Researchers have determined that those suffering from high levels of CA are negatively affected academically, socially, and professionally (Comadena & Prusank, 1988; Daly & Friedrich, 1981; Daly & McCroskey, 1977; Ericson & Garder, 1992; Fremouw & Scott, 1979; Garrison & Garrison, 1979; McCroskey, 1977; McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, & Payne, 1989; Monroe, Borzi, & Burrell, 1992; Phillips & Metzger, 1973). Work has been done to develop instruments to identify the communication apprehension level of individuals (McCroskey, Beatty, Kearney, Plax, 1985; McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, & Payne, 1989). When identified as excessive, treatments have been developed to lessen the effects (Allen, Hunter, & Donohue, 1989; Connell & Borden, 1987; Foss, 1982; Glaser, 1981). Some researchers have suggested possible causes of CA, but research has not revealed a definitive cause (McCroskey, 1977; Sawyer & Behnke, 1997). Further information is needed about when and how CA is intensified in the developing individual. Without knowledge of the cause, CA cannot be prevented. Without reference points about when and how, intervention techniques cannot be developed and used to

facilitate less stressful communication development. Information about the development of CA could assists families and educators to incorporate communication strategies and activities to eliminate or lessen the effects of high levels of CA.

Background of the Problem

Researchers believe that twenty percent of the population endures high levels of communication apprehension. If a person experiences high levels of CA, she/he will find ways to avoid situations she/he has learned to associate with communication (McCroskey, 1977). The high communication apprehensive person perceives him/herself as inadequate to communicate and protects his/her self-concept by avoiding CA producing situations (Giffin & Gilham, 1971). The situations vary with the individual. Some may have what McCroskey (1977) refers to as "trait apprehension" which is anxiety in many different types of communication encounters, or some may have "state apprehension" which is anxiety in a specific communication encounter. Whether state or trait, Phillips and Metzger (1973) refer to Harry Stack Sullivan's description of anxiety as "the most painful emotion a human can endure" (p. 225).

The difficulty of high CA levels causes the communicator to suffer "because his society places a penalty rather than a premium on non-participation" (Phillips & Metzger, 1973, p. 222). Individuals with high CA levels tend to avoid communication and because of the avoidance are perceived less positively by those who do not experience high CA levels. The less positive perception has an effect throughout the communicator's life. Studies have indicated that those who have high communication apprehension are negatively influenced in their economic, academic, political and social lives (McCroskey, 1977).

From elementary through college, communication apprehension sufferers receive differential treatment, achieve less and are less likely to persist. Even elementary teachers have been found to have different expectations for low and high CA students. Research indicates that teachers expect low CA students as opposed to highs, to do better in all academic subjects, to have more promising futures in education and to have better relationships with their peers (McCroskey, 1977). In the following, Comadena and Prusank (1988) show a negative link exists between high CA and academic achievement (AA):

> Results indicate that CA and AA are significantly and negatively related in these students. On three achievement tests from the Stanford Achievement Test (mathematics, language, and reading), students high in CA, compared to students low and moderate in CA, demonstrated the lowest levels of learning. In mathematics, students low in CA had achievement scores that were 23 percent higher than students high in CA. (p. 274)

The expectations are met by high CA students because they interact less with teachers, and verbal interaction between teachers and students help determine what and how much students learn (McCroskey, 1977; Garrison & Garrison, 1979). Those who do manifest high communication apprehension are affected not only in achievement but also in classroom seating, instructional strategies and settings, teacher expectancies and student attitudes toward school (Fremouw & Scott, 1979). "Overall it seems that highly apprehensive students view the educational experiences as being painful" (Monroe, Borzi, & Burrell, 1992, p. 275-276). Many high CA students quit school because of the stress of communication demands, and "over 26 percent of the variance in students' decisions to remain in high school is associated with communication apprehension" (Monroe, et al., 1992, p. 275-276).

Longitudinal studies report that CA has a major effect on college persistence. In one study the high CAs averaged a 43.4 percent dropout rate compared to 34.9 percent rate for those with low CA. A second study found a comparable rate (McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, & Payne, 1989; Ericson and Gardner, 1992). The dropout rate is disturbing because freshmen with high CA levels tend to drop out before the end of their first semester. Ericson and Gardner (1992) explain the effects in the following:

> That is, students who experience CA in academic settings which require any form of oral communication will attempt to avoid the circumstances which entails communication (such as meetings with peers or teachers to talk about subject matter), will attend to, comprehend, and remember class content less effectively, and will perform communication tasks required by the class less effectively because of anxiety. (p. 101)

Individuals with high levels of communication apprehension also suffer socially. They are often labeled shy, quiet, or they are ignored and forgotten which causes them to become isolated. How others perceive and respond to people with high levels of communication apprehension is explained by McCroskey (1977) in the following:

> People exhibiting high CA, compared to those with lower CA, have been found to be perceived less socially attractive, less attractive as a communication partner, less sociable, less composed and less extroverted but of slightly higher character. In addition, they are perceived to exert less leadership in a group (p.88).

High communication apprehension also affects life decisions. "High CAs would rather accept a position with lower pay and lower status than to take one with high communication requirements" (Daly & McCroskey, 1977, p. 89).

Little evidence has been found to indicate that high levels of CA are hereditary. However, many children do enter kindergarten with high levels of CA, and if communication apprehension is not inherited, the cause seems to be in early life experiences. A possible explanation is that CA is a learned trait. The child learns to have

high communication apprehension through reinforced behavior. If the child receives little reinforcement or negative reinforcement for communication behavior, the child may develop high levels of CA or lower levels of communication skills since communication experiences have been limited by the reinforced communication avoidance (Daly & Friedrich, 1981; McCroskey, 1977; Sawyer & Behnke, 1997). High communication apprehensives may have experienced more intense and frequent punishment for communicating than low communication apprehensives. Studies of the development of CA support the role of punishment as the instrumental reinforcer for communication trait anxiety (Sawyer & Behnke, 1997). Perhaps because of environment the skills of the high apprehensive child have not developed as quickly as those with low levels of apprehension. Skills such as referential communication, peer interaction skills, language use, reciprocity, sensitivity to social cues, interaction management, and an ability to integrate incoming social stimuli develop as the child matures. The high apprehensive child seems to not develop these skills as well as the low apprehensive child (Daly & Friedrich, 1981). The school environment may reinforce communication apprehension. Students with low skills and high apprehension will have less positive reinforcement form teachers and peers, except in situations which demand silence, then they will be positively reinforced for remaining silent (McCroskey, 1977).

Statement of Problem

Communication apprehension researchers have defined communication apprehension and have studied the effects of CA on individual's lives. Work has been done to identify those who suffer from high levels of CA. Research illustrates the magnitude of the problem of communication apprehension for twenty percent of the

population. Although researchers have reasoned possible causes of communication apprehension, no definite cause has been identified. Also, one source of rich data has been overlooked in contemporary CA research. Research is not evident that pursues in-depth information from the people who have experienced communication apprehension. Individuals with debilitating levels of CA have information about life experiences, situations, and feelings that could enrich the existing communication apprehension data.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to investigate the life of the person who suffers from high levels of CA as an entity that contains information about or clues to the beginning and development of high communication apprehension. The life experiences will be compared to see if they share similar events. One issue to be explored is the causes of excessive communication apprehension. The environment in which individuals with high CA are reared can be more completely understood and compared. Theorists predict that a negative communication environment is a cause of high CA (Daly & Friedrich, 1981; McCroskey, 1977; Sawyer & Behnke, 1997). The school environment may reinforce communication apprehension. Students with low skills and high apprehension will have less positive reinforcement from teachers and peers except in situations which demand silence, then they will be positively reinforced for remaining silent (McCroskey, 1977).

From the information gained from the life experiences of high communication apprehensive individuals, glimpses of significant experiences, situations, and ages will begin to evolve. The information can be explored for application to child development and educational practices. Identification of key intervention periods would allow parents

and educators to intervene effectively. This study will add to and move communication apprehension research forward. Much communication apprehension research deals with the college student (an accessible research population) and has been done with surveys to get information in a timely fashion. However, the total life experience has not been explored. "One rich, and as yet relatively untapped source of data about high CA is the thoughts about it of those who suffer from it" (Lederman, 1983, p. 233). People with high CA are often classified by terms such as "indifferent" or "unnoticeable" (Brooks & Woolfolk, 1987). This research will give voice and ear to persons who understand communication apprehension better than anyone else.

Research Question

In order to explore the total life experiences of persons with high levels of communication apprehension, the following question will be addressed: Do individuals who suffer from debilitating levels of communication apprehension share similar life experiences that they view as instrumental in the development and maintenance of high levels of CA?

Significance

Research concerning communication apprehension has been overwhelmingly empirical, quantitative work that leaves out the individual, holistic life experience. In comparing the whole life experiences of individuals, recurring information could provide touchstones for research to continue so that the cause/s of communication apprehension can be found. If indicators of the cause/s can be discovered, this could lead to ways of preventing the affliction from occurring. Parents can be made aware of the possible manifestation of CA in children and preventative measures can be taken. The research is

also significant in providing possible time lines of periods when CA intensifies. If participants concur on significant time periods, situations, or incidents when CA intensifies, then intervention can be introduced to lessen the effects of CA.

Not only is the information important for parents, it is also important for educators. Research indicates that CA impedes student and teacher interaction. Teachers expect less of high CA students and sometimes reinforce negative communication apprehensive behavior. If more is known about specific negative occurrences in the educational setting, teachers can be made aware of specific ages when CA might increase, actions that increase CA, and appropriate interaction techniques to lessen CA development. Through the comparisons of life narratives, the role of students with high CA can be better understood. The life narrative information should also address other pertinent effects of the school environment such as student interaction and seating.

Finally, and most importantly, the quiet, shy, anxious, apprehensive, noncommunicative, backward, etc. individuals among us will be given a voice. They have been treated as if they are invisible. The study gives them substance and a chance to enrich the existing CA research.

Definition of Terms

Communication Apprehension: An anxiety syndrome associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 1977, p. 28). Used inclusively to encompass reticence, shyness, speech anxiety, stage fright, communication apprehension (Daly & Friedrich, 1981).

High Levels of Communication Apprehension: A score of 80 (one standard deviation above the mean) on the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) (McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, & Payne, 1989).

Debilitating Levels of Communication Apprehension: Apprehension severe enough to interfere seriously with the communicator's normal, human interactions. A score of 97 (two standard deviations above the mean) on the PRCA-24.

Life History or Life Narrative: A person's interpretation of his/her life (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Significant Lived Experiences: The experiences participants emphasize as being remembered as major happenings (von Manen, 1990).

Limitations

A limitation of the study may be the ability/inability of the researcher to "bracket" out preconceived ideas (Langenbach, Vaughn, & Aagaard, 1994). Reviewing literature prior to the study could impede the researcher from listening to what participants are revealing about communication apprehension. Since having prior knowledge can interfere with researcher interpretation, a second researcher will also analyze the data. The collaboration will help to offset any researcher contamination of data.

The phenomenological study has a limited population. Tesch (1988) places the number from such a study between five to ten participants. The phenomenological research requires the researcher to do in-depth interviews and in-depth analysis to be able to report and illustrate the themes with rich description and appropriate quotations. The sample, then, is small but directed in purpose. Data can be compared across the sample

but is not generalizable to the whole population or to all who suffer from high communication apprehension.

Summary

Communication apprehension is a disorder that affects twenty percent of the population. Quantitative researchers have revealed many facts about communication apprehension, but what is known could be enriched by allowing communication apprehension victims to disclose how they experience this life-determining phenomenon. Communication apprehension sufferers have the potential to add layers and dimension to communication research that could aid families and educators to prevent or intervene at significant periods to lessen the effects of communication apprehension. To further understand how the phenomenon of communication apprehension has been developed and maintained by individuals, a four-part study is proposed.

The study will be divided into literature review, a phenomenological study, analysis of research findings, and the results of the findings. First, the literature pertaining to communication apprehension will be reviewed. Research literature from communication, social psychology, and educational psychology will be researched to help establish the historical background of communication apprehension. Of particular interest will be research of the past thirty years. In this research the causes, life effects, and communication apprehension research methodology will be explored. Second, a phenomenological study will be conducted to explore the lived experiences of individuals who suffer from debilitating levels of communication apprehension. The research procedure and participants will be defined. Third, an in-depth analysis of the research findings will be presented. The themes that evolved from the phenomenological

interviews will be illustrated with appropriate quotations. Fourth, the results of the findings will be discussed to see what recurring themes evolve. The significance of the information will be related to current communication apprehension research.

CHAPTER II

The Literature Review

Introduction

Communication apprehension is a life-determining affliction that plagues approximately 20 percent of the population. Because of the severity of this communication problem, much research has been and continues to be done concerning CA. This chapter will first review the background of communication apprehension research. The early work done in stage fright explored apprehension in public speaking. Research followed that explored reticence, speech anxiety, unwillingness to communicate, shyness, communication apprehension, and communibiological perspective. These research areas will be discussed. Secondly, the effects of communication apprehension will be reviewed. Researchers have shown in contemporary research how CA determines life outcomes. This section will review the literature that illustrates the severity of the communication disorder. From elementary and college educational experiences to professional choices, individuals are affected by communication apprehension. Third, the literature will be reviewed concerning the cause of CA. Researchers have hypothesized about varying causes of CA, but questions still exist about the manifestation and/or intensification of communication apprehension in individuals.

History of Communication Apprehension Research

The earliest research into the apprehensive speaker evolved from public speaking situations. Researchers observed the phenomenon when speakers presented speeches. Since the speakers became frightened in a performance type situation, the condition was

labeled "stage fright." Scientific investigation of the phenomenon labeled "stage fright" began in the early part of the 1900's with Elwood Murray (1936), Franklin Knower (1938), Chenoweth (1940), and Howard Gilkinson (1943) (Ayres, 1977, p. 2). In the following, Clevenger (1955) defines stage fright:

> Stage fright is any emotional condition in which emotion overcomes intellect to the extent that communication is hampered, either in audience reception or in speaker self-expression, where the immediate object or stimulus of the emotion is the speech-audience situation. (p. 30)

The symptoms of stage fright identified by early investigators included "qualities of shyness, seclusiveness, withdrawal, depression, guilt feelings, inhibited disposition, and a variety of personality problems" (Phillips, 1968, p. 43). Clevenger and King (1961) did a factor analysis of "eighteen commonly recognized observable symptoms of stage fright" (p. 296). The dimensions that emerged from the analysis they labeled "Figetiveness, Inhibition, and Autonomia" (p. 296). Essentially they determined that speakers feel threatened in the performance situation, and the speaker's ability is weighed against the audience's expectations. The more the perceived ability falls below the perceived expectations, the higher the level of stage fright (Ellis, 1995; Phillips, 1968).

Contemporary research into the phenomenon that inhibits people's communication began in the late sixties with Phillip's research into what he labels "reticence." Phillips (1968) defines the reticent "as a person for whom anxiety about participation in oral communication outweighs his projection of gain from the situation" (p. 40). The reticent individual avoids communication because he/she feels incapable. He/she will seek ways to get out of situations that produce the intense anxiety caused by communication situations. Once a way to escape is found, the reticent individual "habituates it and extends it to other contexts" (Phillips, 1968, p. 42). People who are

reticent have reported that "they felt tangible threat when attempting to communicate in environments where talk was accorded a different value than in their home societies" (Phillips, 1968, p. 47). The society in which the reticent person must exists "places a penalty rather than a premium on non-participation" (Phillips, 1973, p. 222). Rosenfeld and Plax (1976) discuss the reticent person in the following description:

> In summary, a reticent individual is one who consistently avoids social interaction and, when confronted with a social situation from which he or she cannot extricate himself or herself, conforms to whatever leadership exists. Also, it appears that the reticence syndrome is linked to a poor self-concept, replete with feelings of interpersonal inadequacy and self-doubt. (p. 31)

Phillips (1968) lists nine characteristics of the reticent person: 1) shakiness, 2) physical symptoms (butterflies, loud or rapid heartbeat, excessive perspiration, etc.), 3) break off communication abruptly because of fear and apprehension, 4) inability to communicate with important people, 5) others called communicative inadequacies to attention, 6) see selves as excessively quiet and on fringes of social gatherings, 7) compelled to be unnaturally apologetic, 8) prefer to communicate in writing 9) inability to talk with parents. Reticence is described by Phillips (1968) as "withdrawal from the game of interaction," and he further states, "At best, reticence is a behavior with no particular social merit" (p. 45).

Zimbardo's (1977) concept of communication inhibition is known as "shyness." He believes that "shyness is a learned phobic reaction to social events" (p. 42). Zimbardo (1977) explains in the following how the learned reaction comes to be:

> This learning may be the product of:

- a prior history of negative experiences with people in certain situations, either by direct contact or by watching others getting 'burned;'
- not learning the 'right' social skills;

- constantly anxious about your performance;
- learning to put yourself down for your own 'inadequacy'—'I am shy,' 'I am unworthy,' ' I can't do it,' 'I need my Mommy!'(p. 42)

He believes parents and teachers place shyness expectations on children. Parents and teachers put the label on children even when it is not deserved, or they are insensitive when it is deserved. They may also establish or perpetuate environments that create shyness (Zimbardo, 1977). Sometimes "shyness is triggered by the personality of the parent" or "the character of the system" (Zimbardo, 1977, p. 58).

A shy person explained to Zimbardo (1977) what happens when the shy label is attached to a child. People "work to prevent us from changing, for better or worse. They fill in for, or make excuses for, our deficiencies, suppress our excesses, and hold us on a steady course to ensure that 'we act like ourselves'" (Zimbardo, 1977, p. 63).

Burgoon (1976) identifies individuals who are unusually quiet and who avoid social and verbal interaction as being "unwilling to communicate." She sees unwillingness to communicate as "a nonspecific anxiety that is aroused in a broad range of contexts" (Burgoon, 1976, p. 61). The person who suffers with this communication disorder "is threatened by face-to-face contact, and is intimidated by superordinates" (Burgoon, 1976, p. 62). The reason for the unwillingness is that they "expect others to reject or criticize their communication efforts" (Burgoon, 1976, p. 61). In the following, Burgoon (1976) describes the actions and feelings of a person with unwillingness to communicate:

> He/she is hesitant about expressing ideas and problems, is highly apologetic when his/her opinions are challenged, and interprets questions about the content of his/her communication as personal criticisms. Moreover, the reticent or communication apprehensive person is insecure, feels inadequate in

> communication, is easily embarrassed, shy, withdrawn and prone to agree with others. (p. 62)

McCroskey in the 1970's introduced the term "communication apprehension" to refer to individuals who "will usually be unwilling to talk, remain quiet, and be scared speechless most of the time" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998, p. 44). Since the 1970's communication apprehension (CA) has been defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977a, p. 78; McCroskey & Beatty, 1998, p. 215). In the 30 years since its formulation, the CA construct has grown from just talking to now encompass all forms of communication (talking, writing, singing, etc.) (Ayres, 1977). However, the CA instruments such as the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) deal only with oral CA (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998). It is this component of CA with which this research is concerned.

Communication Apprehension

CA is a problem for all those involved in a communication transaction. It is a problem for the individual whose communication is restrained by it, and CA is a problem for those who must communicate with the highly communication apprehensive individual (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998). Butler (1983) compares low and high apprehensives in the following description.

> Highly apprehensive persons, when compared to their low apprehensive counterparts, were characterized by emotional instability, restraint, submissiveness, timidity, low self-assurance, conservatism, and tension. (p. 897)

McCroskey, Daly and Sorensen (1976) describe CA as "a broad-based fear or anxiety related to the act of communication held by a large number of individuals" (p. 376). The individual expects communication situations to have negative outcomes. Rather than

force him/herself into a situation that evokes high anxiety feelings, the person avoids communicating. S/he will organize his/her life so that communication with other people can be avoided as much as possible (McCroskey & Daly, 1976). The picture of the highly communication apprehensive person drawn from research is a negative one. In their review of research McCroskey, Daly, and Sorensen (1976) constructed a composite of the individual suffering from high CA. The description is presented in the following:

> Aloof, prefers working alone, rigid, has hard time expressing self, quiet, reserved, stiff, changeable, dissatisfied, easily annoyed, strongly influenced by emotions, lacks leadership, a follower, submissive, conforming, obedient, serious, reflective, slow, cautious, silent, seeks low interaction occupations, undependable, irresolute, lacks internal standards, low task orientation, withdrawn, has feelings of inferiority, rulebound, restrained, avoids people, free of jealousy, concerned about others, good team worker, pliant, permissive, worrier, moody, avoids participation in groups, dislikes interaction, likes quiet environment, shy, ineffective speaker, little success in groups, lacks self-control, inconsiderate, unconscientious, indecisive, tense, restless, impatient, frustrated, low morale, closed minded, amoral orientation to life, manipulative, low tolerance for ambiguous or uncertain situations, low need to achieve, and sees external forces as controlling her or his life. (p. 378).

As noted in Chapter I, researchers have identified two kinds of CA. State CA is apprehension "specific to a given situation" (McCroskey, 1977a, p. 79). State apprehension might be manifest in situations such as giving a speech or interviewing (Behnke, Sawyer & King, 1994). Beatty and Behnke (1980) view it as "a transitory condition evoked during actual communication" (p. 320). State CA is not a pervasive condition; it is situation specific (Beatty, Behnke & McCallum, 1978). However, trait CA is a pervasive, cross-situational condition. McCroskey (1977a) states that trait CA "is characterized by fear or anxiety with respect to many different types of oral communication encounters" (p. 79). Richmond and McCroskey (1998) use the term "trait-like" to describe "an enduring orientation about communication and usually doesn't

change unless there is some form of intervention or behavior modification" (p. 44). The term "trait-like" is used to distinguish CA from an actual trait such as eye color or height. "A true trait is something that is invariant and cannot be changed" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998, p.43). CA does not meet the terms of this definition. In the following, Richmond and McCroskey (1998) explain trait-like:

> Trait-like personality variables, such as CA, extroversion, and dogmatism, are highly resistant to change, but this does not mean that they cannot be changed. Individuals, usually adults, might succeed at consciously changing aspects of their personalities, but such changes are usually accomplished in conjunction with some long-term effort on the part of the individual or a treatment program. Hence, trait-like CA is viewed as 'a relatively enduring, personality-type orientation toward a given mode of communication across a wide variety of contexts.' (p. 43)

McCroskey and Beatty (1984) summarize the distinction between the two types of CA. "Generally, the trait orientation operates from a predispositional orientation while the state orientation operates from a situational orientation" (p. 79). This research project will be concerned with the more pervasive, trait-like orientation.

As seen from the above review of research concerning the anxiety constructs associated with an individual's communication, "an impressive mass of findings has accumulated on communication apprehension, shyness, reticence, performance anxiety and related concerns" (Clevenger, 1984, p. 219). The broad, trait-like, pervasive anxiety has been "fairly consistently related to avoiding, withdrawing from, and abbreviating communicative interactions" (Zorn, 1993, p. 525). Daly and Stafford (1984) concur that "while the constructs associated with each of these labels differ in emphasis, the general thrust of all is the differing proclivity of people to participate in and enjoy, or avoid and fear, social interaction" (p. 125). From their research they believe the many labeled anxiety disorders can be subsumed under a "single, broader construct (Daly & Stafford,

1984, p. 142). Zorn (1993) in a review of research explains that most of the labels "reflected the same general construct" (p. 523). Similarly, Daly and Friedrich (1981) state that "whatever the label (audience anxiety, stage fright, reticence, shyness, speech anxiety, communication apprehension, etc.) there is little doubt that the characteristic plays a significant role in social interaction" (p. 243). The larger, broad construct is "united by a common interest in examining, explaining, and correcting disruptions that occur in the communication process as a function of fear people associate with sending and/or receiving messages" (Ayres, 1997, p. 4). The term chosen by Allen and Bourhis (1996) is communication apprehension. They state, "Communication apprehension (CA) refers to a family of related terms like: (a) reticence, (b) shyness, (c) unwillingness to communicate, and (d) stage fright" (p. 215). Ayres (1997) also chooses communication apprehension "to refer to a fear associated with communication" (p. 4). Therefore, communication apprehension is the term chosen for this research as a term inclusive and representative of the constructs dealing with the anxieties many people feel when communicating or anticipating communication.

Communication Apprehension Effects

For the last 30 years a great amount of research has been done concerning communication apprehension. Richmond and McCroskey (1998) state that "the reason for the intensive focus is because it permeates every facet of an individual's life--school, work, friendships, and so on" (p. 41). Oral communication and speaking before others has been reported to be "what Americans fear most" (McCroskey, 1977b, p. 28; Weaver, 1998, p. 105). Perhaps this can be associated to the research that indicates approximately 15 to 20 percent of "American college students suffer from debilitating communication

apprehension" (McCroskey, 1977b, p. 28). Debilitating levels is defined as being "of sufficient levels to interfere seriously with the individual's functioning in normal human encounters" (McCroskey, 1977b, p. 28). In the following, Wheeless's (1971) research underscores the extent of communication apprehension among college students:

> While surveys have indicated that from six to ten percent of the population have some variety of speech disorder, research has indicated that ten percent of the college student population has *severe* communication apprehension which interferes to a major extent with communication. An additional thirty percent or a total of forty percent has sufficient apprehension to warrant special treatment outside of the classroom environment. (p. 297)

McCroskey (1977a) states that it is not just the American college student who is affected by high levels of CA:

> We now know that unacceptably high levels of CA are experienced by about 20 percent of the children in our schools and the adult society. It is vital that we learn more about why this is true and what we can do to eliminate what is clearly the most pervasive communication problem in our contemporary society. (p. 93)

Although CA is pervasive it is not recognized by the HEW (Health, Education, and Welfare) [Department of Education] as a communication disorder; therefore, neither the children, young adults, nor adults receive "any special help in order to maximize their learning potential" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 27). CA is devastating for the individual whether child or adult. McCroskey and Beatty (1998) emphasize the effect of CA. "CA can become an extremely negative, dominating force that controls virtually all of an individual's life" (p. 220). McCroskey and Richmond (1976) in the following description explain the potential negative outcome for individuals who have high levels of CA:

> Even though high apprehensives perceive other high apprehensives to be more homophilous than low apprehensives, they do not consider them more credible, attractive, or desirable as a potential opinion leader. On the other hand, low and moderate apprehensives see low apprehensives as more homophilous and also as more credible, attractive, and desirable as an opinion leader than high

> apprehensives. Simply put, the results indicate that no one likes a high apprehensive, even if they are one. (p. 21)

Even in childhood high apprehensives are perceived negatively. Richmond and McCroskey (1998) state that "the quiet child's peers perceive the quiet child as less approachable, less friendly, and less intelligent than the talkative child" (p.73). Also the judgments about quiet children begin in early elementary school and remain consistent all through the school years (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998).

After reading research results like that stated above, the success of high CA individuals compared to low CA individuals is not surprising. Richmond and McCroskey (1998) contrast the two in the following:

> The talkative person is more likely to be successful in the school environment, to establish good social relationships, and to be successful in the world of work. The quiet person is less likely to be successful in school, has difficulty establishing interpersonal relationships, and has difficulty obtaining and retaining employment. (p. 76)

Although researchers have tried to prove a connection between intelligence and the amount a person talks, no relationship between the two has been found. However, because of stereotyping, those who are quiet are "often perceived as less competent and less intelligent than their counterparts" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998, p. 69). Perhaps such faulty stereotyping can lead to self-fulfilling prophecy for students because students with high CA do not perform as well in the educational setting.

> Students with high CA, as compared to those with low CA, have been found to have lower overall college grade-point averages, to evidence lower achievement on standardized test administered at the completion of high school, to receive lower marks in small classes in junior high school and college and to develop negative attitudes toward school in both junior high school and college. (McCroskey, 1977a, p. 90)

Students suffering from high levels of CA do not persist in college classes that require speaking. In one study 50-70 percent of high CA students were found to drop a speaking class compared to five to ten percent of students with lower levels of CA (McCroskey, 1977a). The quiet student may be as bright as other students and have as good or better vocabulary, but he cannot "perceive himself succeeding in the situation as he imagines it. He has the tools. What he lacks is the understanding that he can use them" (Phillips, Dunham, Brubaker, & Butt, 1970, p. 137). The negative self-image that the high CA has of him/herself is mirrored back because others perceive him/her negatively. Negative self-image and CA are associated but are not causes of the other (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Individuals with high levels of CA limit his/her opportunities and experiences as illustrated by Daly and Stafford (1984) below:

> In essence, highly anxious individuals make attributions that tend to confirm their anxiety, thus preventing them from incorporating positive experiences into their lives. This consequently limits their opportunities to modify their anxiety. (p. 138)

Researchers confirm that people with high CA will respond in three typical patterns and one atypical pattern. The typical responses are communication avoidance, communication withdrawal, and communication disruptions. The atypical response is excessive communication (McCroskey, 1984; McCroskey & Beatty, 1998). The person who withdraws from the communication situation may withdraw completely or partially (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998). When the person withdraws from communication, he/she is perceived negatively by others who do not have high levels of CA.

Another typical response form a person with high levels of CA is avoidance. McCroskey (1976) states that avoidance would be expected "because he or she would experience negative reactions from anxiety that would surpass projected gain from

interaction" (p. 39). McCroskey and Beatty (1998) explain to what extent the high CA individual will go to avoid communication situations:

> In order to avoid having to experience high CA, people may select occupations that involve low communication responsibilities, may pick housing units that reduce incidental contact with other people, may choose seats in classrooms or in meetings that are less conspicuous, and may avoid social settings. At the lowest level, if a person makes us uncomfortable, we may simply avoid being around that person. Avoidance, then, is a common behavioral response to high CA. (p. 225)

In the educational setting, people with high levels of CA will avoid speech classes or classes known to have oral presentation components. CA acts as a barrier to formal study of communication and to experiences that would provide needed skills development. They avoid classes that might cause them discomfort and situations in which practice would improve skills (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998; McCroskey & Richmond, 1998).

The third typical behavioral response of the person with high CA is communication disruption. The person may have excessive nonfluencies or rhetorical interrogatives in his/her communication. He/she may also have "unnatural nonverbal behaviors" (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998, p. 225). The individual may experience disrupted communication or make comments that are not relevant. High levels of CA seem to disrupt the thought processes. High CAs avoid disagreements, and even a small amount of disagreement will make the high apprehensive believe they are in conflict. The response when they perceive conflict is to submit, and in the small group will agree with the group (Richmond, 1984; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998).

CA affects individuals differently, and each reacts differently. However, there is one effect of CA that is universal across individuals. The universal effect is "an

internally experienced feeling of discomfort" (McCroskey, 1984, p. 33; McCroskey & Beatty, 1998, p. 223). In the following, Richmond and McCroskey (1998) describe the universal response:

> The internal feeling the high CA individual experiences is one of discomfort, fright, being unable to cope, being inadequate, and possibly being dumb. Common physiological effects associated with this internal fear might be rapid beating of the heart, queasy stomach, increased perspiration, some shakiness, and dry mouth. (p. 52)

In a focus group study, Lederman (1983) found that people with high CA "feel fear associated with talking" (p. 236). They also did not want to engage in talking, and they indicated "relationship between fear and their behavior" (Lederman, 1983, p. 236).

The internal feeling of fear that manifests in withdrawal from, avoidance of, or disruptions in the communication patterns of the high CA person has devastating results. Such communication patterns have "a negative impact on an individual's economic, academic, political, and social life" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 85). Socially, high CAs perceive themselves to have fewer social skills but more social anxiety. They also perceive themselves to be less physically attractive. In dating, the person with high levels of CA will avoid blind dates and are likely to date one person exclusively (Daly & Stafford, 1984). Richmond (1984) describes high CAs in social situations as being stereotyped as "wall flowers." They often withdraw from communication and "migrate to the recesses of a room in order to avoid interaction" (p. 146). If high CAs are approached in the social setting, "they will avert their eyes, stare into their drinks, and seem generally anxious or aloof and unfriendly" (Richmond, 1984, p. 146). Even though the high CA seems uninterested in interacting, research shows that he/she, just as the low CA, desires social relationships. However, low apprehensives report having two times as

many dates as high apprehensives report. Those with high CA tend to "find someone and hang on to them for dear life" (Richmond, 1984, p. 146). In the social environment, the individual must be able to communicate to form relationships. Richmond and McCroskey (1998) illustrate in the following that even in forming and maintaining friendships high CAs do not fare well:

> Of particular interest is the fact that more than a third of the quiet people reported having no good friends at all while not a single talkative person reported having no good friends. When asked to list the names of their good friends, over half of those named by the quiet persons were relatives such as parents, siblings, or cousins. Less that five percent of the talkative persons mentioned any relatives in this category. (p. 74)

Living accommodations are chosen by high CAs to inhibit communication with others. They choose houses, apartments, etc. that will prevent them from making incidental contact with others. Thus, possible social interaction and relationship formation is prevented because of the internal fear caused by high levels of CA (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998).

As might be assumed from the evolving picture of those suffering from high levels of CA, these individuals prefer occupations that require little communication (Daly & McCroskey, 1975, p. 312). The positions self-selected by those with high CA are those with "comparatively lower status and lower economic standing" (Richmond, 1984, p. 153) because jobs with higher salaries have higher communication requirements. Employers also might be unwilling to place the quieter person in the higher positions that require higher communication levels. Quieter individuals, first of all, are less apt to be given an interview (McCroskey, 1977a). If those recommending ever mention shyness, reticence or quietness, the apprehensive individual will probably be passed over (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). If the person with high CA gets the interview, he/she

is less likely to get the job. Richmond (1984) describes how high CA applicants are perceived:

> Studies suggest that more verbal job applicants are perceived as more task-attractive, more competent, in need of less training to do the job, and as having a greater likelihood for success. The reticent individual is perceived as being less competent, less task-attractive, projected to be less successful on the job, to require more training, to be less satisfied on the job, and to have more difficulty establishing good relationships with co-workers. As a result, the quiet person is less likely to be offered employment, or even an interview. (p. 154)

High CA people do better in "routine, nonsupervisory positions" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998, p. 75). If apprehensive people get jobs, they will not be promoted as often, but they don't anticipate promotions nor desire promotions that raise the level of needed communication competence (Daly & Stafford, 1984; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Perhaps this is related to the findings that high CA employees are less satisfied with their jobs and especially with their supervisors. Because of the dissatisfaction they affect the work climate of an organization and are more likely to be less productive and quit or be dismissed than other employees (Richmond, 1984, pp. 154-155). High CAs are often caught when "cutbacks" must be made because they will go quietly. They "tend to fall into a 'last to be hired, last to be promoted, first to be fired' pattern similar to that of several minority groups against whom systematic discrimination has been practiced" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998, p. 76). As Monroe and Borzi (1988) state, "The consequences for a highly apprehensive individual are universally debilitating" (p. 119). Richmond and McCroskey (1998) summarize the behaviors of the high apprehensive:

> From the behaviors of quiet versus nonquiet persons, we can draw some generalized profiles of each. Quiet persons tend to avoid classes that require a lot of interaction and to avoid discussion in small groups. When they do communicate in either situation, they may make irrelevant comments; they sit where interaction demands are lowest, select occupations that require little

> communication with others, date less than others, marry early, and choose housing in a low interaction area. (p. 67)

Explanations of Causes of Communication Apprehension

From the above description, CA can be viewed as a "broad-based personality-type characteristic that has a major impact on an individual's communication behavior" (McCroskey, Daly, & Sorensen, 1976, p. 378). The explanations of what causes CA are multiple. Daly and Friedrich (1981) believe the apprehension level of the individual is dependent on "a complex interaction of home, peer, and school variables" (p. 246). The crucial period for the development of CA seems to occur prior to school, and some believe within the first three years of life (Daly & Friedrich, 1981; Giffin & Heider, 1967). Through communication children validate the "self," and the early interaction determines the self-concepts that are carried throughout their lives. "Positive early communication experiences are likely to produce a positive self-concept" (Giffin & Heider, 1967, p. 314). The child through communication with parents learns "interpersonal trust," and either learns the world is a "reliable, stable, good place" where his/her needs are meet and communication brings rewards, or he/she learns to fear and not trust others or him/herself (Giffin & Heider, 1967, pp. 312-313).

The correlates that offer some explanation of the etiology of CA are genetic predisposition, reinforcement, skills acquisition, and modeling (Daly & Friedrich, 1981; Daly & Stafford, 1984). McCroskey and Beatty (1998) succinctly state that "two major explanations of the differential trait behaviors of individuals hold sway: heredity and environment. Simply put, we can be born with it or we can learn it" (p. 218). The most significant environments for learning CA are the home and the school. To prevent CA, a positive communication environment should be provided by the significant others within

the environment. The significant others "should provide high levels of positive reinforcement for interaction attempts, offer good skills training, and present adequate models of communication and sociability" (Daly & Friedrich, 1981, p. 245).

Ayres (1997) in his component theory of CA believes there are three variables that explain it. The three variables are "self-perceived motivation, self-perceived negative evaluation, and self-perceived communication competence" (p. 39). The individual must be motivated to communicate to be apprehensive. If he/she has no desire to communicate then there is no goal and no need to experience fear. However, if the desire to communicate is present, then the feeling of fear is present (Ayres, 1997). The same idea is expressed by Zorn (1993). He states, "Applied to communication, motivation is what sets in motion our communication efforts, directs us toward specific strategies, and impels us to continue" (p. 517).

Once the individual is motivated to communicate, he/she may begin to suffer the internal fear because he/she expects others to negatively judge his/her communication efforts. It is the expectation of a negative outcome that "seems requisite for communication apprehension to arise" (Ayres, 1997, p. 41). The conflict between motivation to communicate and expectancy of negative outcome causes distress. It is the discrepancy between the individual's assessment of his/her abilities and other's perceptions of the abilities that causes the expectancy of failure (Ayres, 1986, 276). The perceived assessment of others has been found to be directly related to the apprehension levels of the individual (Beatty, Dobos, Balfantz, & Kuwabara, 1991, p.54).

After experiencing the fear of CA, perhaps the fear itself becomes an issue. Kirsch (1985) reports that it is the expectation of fear that causes subsequent fear and

avoidance. The individual who experiences intense fear finds it extremely aversive, and when he/she expects such fear to occur, he/she has high motivation to avoid the negative experience (pp. 227-228). Giffin and Gilham (1971) find " a relationship between speech anxiety and two relatively stable personality characteristics conceptualized in psychological literature as (1) motive to achieve success, and (2) motive to avoid failure" (p. 70). The two characteristics have been shown to be directly related to "self confidence as a speaker" (p. 71).

When individuals fail at communication attempts, they are likely not to try such interactions in the future. This is related to the individual's self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is related to "the beliefs people have about their abilities" (Rubin, Martin, Bruning, & Powers, 1993, p. 217). The individual's self-efficacy determines whether interpersonal goals are accomplished. Self-efficacy is acquired from experiences, and once self-efficacy is secured, it mediates future actions. Rubin et al. (1993) explains how self-efficacy determines choices:

> According to Bandura's model, people have efficacy expectations (a belief that they are capable of performing a particular behavior), which influence their actual behavior. People also have outcome expectations, or the belief that a given behavior will or will not lead to a give outcome. If efficacy expectations and outcome expectations are mismatched, the outcome is fear or anxiety. (p. 211)

Booth-Butterfield's (1987) action assembly theory reiterates the effect of self-efficacy on high apprehensives. He states that "action assembly predicts that high trait CA people frequently experience a state of anxiety because they have greater difficulty assembling output representations that guide efficacious behavior" (p. 389). In their assimilation theory, Beatty and Behnke (1980) state that anxiety experiences are

categorized into the individual's level of communication apprehension. From the categories expectation and conditions are delineated that affect the behavioral response.

Related to self-efficacy is self-esteem. High CA and self-esteem have consistently shown to have an inverse relationship, and self-esteem must be considered an integral element in the CA construct (Daly & Stafford, 1984; McCroskey, Richmond, Daly & Falcione, 1977; Richmond, 1984). Richmond and McCroskey (1998) define self-esteem and its relation to CA in the following:

> Self-esteem refers to the way a person evaluates herself or himself in terms of overall self-worth. People with low self-esteem tend to feel that they are not worthwhile, that they are more likely to fail than to succeed, and that they are less competent than other people around them. In contrast, people with high self-esteem see themselves as valuable members of society, and as winners who are competent and likely to be successful. People with low self-esteem tend to have higher levels of communication apprehension. (p. 56)

High CA individuals with low self-esteem evaluate and perceive themselves negatively. They believe low evaluation, but have difficulty believing positive evaluations. High CAs do not expect to be successful when communicating and if attention is given them, anxiety levels intensify (Ellis, 1995; Daly & Stafford, 1984). "Expectations of harmful consequences account for a great deal of human fear and avoidance..." (Kirsch, 1985, p. 827). Those suffering from high CA avoid interaction because of the expected negative evaluation. People with high CA levels expect the outcome of communication attempts to receive little positive reinforcement (Daly & Friedrich, 1981; Kirsch, 1985).

Reinforcement as a possible cause of CA has received a large amount of attention and is probably the most common explanation (Daly & Friedrich, 1981). Based on social learning theory, researchers believe negative communication experiences at home and

school are responsible for developing communication apprehension in children (Ayres, 1997; Daly & Stafford, 1984; Friedrich & Goss, 1984; Hovarth, 1998; McCroskey, 1977; Phillips, Dunham, Brubaker, & Butt, 1970; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Friedrich and Goss, 1984, illustrate how reinforcement influences communication in the following:

> The more your communication attempts are positively reinforced at home, the less likely it is that you will have high levels of communication apprehension. Encouragement is the key to minimizing the development of communication apprehension. It was also found that the more students were corrected for 'inappropriate' speech in grade school, the more communication apprehension they would develop. This effect was not as strong in high school, suggesting that levels of communication apprehension are established during the early years of schooling. Altogether these results suggest than communication apprehension has its beginnings early in life through negative experiences while interacting with others. (p. 183)

Because of early negative experiences the child begins to expect communication attempts to be unsuccessful. If the child "has failed before it is increasingly likely that he or she will fear failure again, and hence become more apprehensive" (McCroskey, 1984, p. 26). Communication apprehensives have been subjected to "more intense and frequent punishment" than those with lower levels of communication apprehension (Sawyer & Behnke, 1997, p. 211). Often communication itself is the weapon that reinforces high levels of CA. In the following, Phillips presents a possible explanation of how communication can increase CA:

> In homes where children observe hostility of parents toward each other and toward the children it may not be possible to learn that there are social rewards to be reaped from communicative effectiveness. If the schools do not make this clear, suspicion concerning responses of others and anticipation of hostile responses to verbal efforts may habituate reticence in the child. It is easy for a child who perceives speech as an aggressive weapon to misinterpret the suggestions and directions of teachers and the normal evaluations of peers. (p. 47)

The child's self-concept is compromised by the continued negative feedback. The child will become guarded in situations that require communication to avoid the negative

evaluation that "validate a negative self-concept" (Giffin & Heider, 1967). Giffin and Heider (1967) explain the effects of the parent-child relationship in communication development in the following:

> Healthy development of a child rests upon initial parent-child communication which encourages the development of trust, initiative, and a positive self-concept--all factors that play a part in adult communication. The probable effect of suppression of a child's communication has been described, revealing how mistrust, a lack of initiative and guilt, and a poor self-image can result. Since the early parent-child relationship shapes the future adult, the child is likely to show the results of these experiences throughout his life. (p. 320)

A child develops expectations concerning the outcome of communication interactions. He/she knows by experience that certain communication behaviors result in positive feedback, others result in negative feedback. If the child finds the situations to be consistently predictable, he/she can gain confidence in his/her ability to choose appropriate communication strategies. However, in some environments children are given inconsistent feedback. One night talk at dinner is accepted, the next night talking is punished. When the child cannot predict what expectations will receive reward and what will receive punishment, anxiety is produced (McCroskey, 1984). Richmond and McCroskey (1998) explain how the individual responds to such helpless situations:

> Children and adults alike are often unable to sort out the situational differences that produce different responses from others even though their own behaviors are the same. Hence, they become helpless and the only solution for them is to withdraw from communication. Such withdrawal is characteristic of the highly shy, quiet person, and such people often report feeling helpless in communicative situations. It is quite possible, then, that expectancy learning and reinforcement function together to produce the shy person. When expectations are learned, it is a result of consistent reinforcement patterns. When reinforcement patterns are inconsistent and unpredictable, expectancies are not learned, and helplessness followed by communication withdrawal is the consequence. (p. 34)

Learned helplessness and learned negative expectations are believed by McCroskey (1984) to be the basic components of CA. It is the inconsistency and unpredictableness

that reduce the individual to doing nothing and seeking to escape the situations in which he/she is trapped without a learned response. The inconsistent reinforcement comes from parents, teachers, peers, etc. When called on to respond the person is fearful or anxious, and the continued feeling of helplessness will result in high levels of trait-like CA (Ayres, 1986; Miller, 1987; O'Mara, Allen, Long, & Judd, 1996; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998).

Another explanation of the phenomenon of CA contributes the anxiety to "an inadequate behavioral repertoire" (Glaser, 1981, p. 326). When the apprehensive individual does not have the necessary skills to handle communication situations, the results will be negative, and anxiety will develop. The anxiety because of not knowing appropriate behavior will lead to communication avoidance (Daly & Friedrich, 1981; Glaser, 1981; Phillips, 1973; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Children develop communication skills at different times. Some may not acquire skills as rapidly or as well as others develop the same skills (Daly and Friedrich, 1981; Daly & Stafford, 1984). Children may perceive the lack of skills and because of the perception, perform at a lower level (Phillips, 1973; Schunk, 1983). An illustration of this are those high in public speaking anxiety rate themselves significantly lower on 22 speech skills (Ellis, 1995). The home and school environments provide skills training or deficits in skills training. The most important variable in skills development is "the amount of perceived encouragement and reward the individual received for communicating" (Daly & Friedrich, 1981, p. 251). Responsive mothers who are interested in the child's communication have highly verbal children (McCroskey, Richmond, Daly, & Falcione, 1977). Environments associated with high CA "tend to lack both interaction and in many

cases, stimulation for interaction" (Daly & Friedrich, 1981, p. 245). The early environment can determine skills acquisition and development of the individual.

Reinforcement in conjunction with modeling is believed to make a large contribution to the formation of high levels of CA (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998, p. 32). Children watch the significant others within their environment and emulate the communication behavior of them. If the emulation produces positive reinforcement, they probably will continue the behavior (McCroskey, 1984; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Researchers have found that "a father's apprehension level and parental modeling were significantly related to apprehension in children" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Daly and Stafford (1984) concur that "children tend to imitate their parents' communicative styles" (p. 131).

A child's interaction with and modeling of significant adults within his/her environment play a major role in the development of communication competence. However, peer interaction "appears to play a significant role in the child's acquisition of social knowledge, social cognitive skills, and social competencies" (Burleson, 1986, p. 148). Children are accepted or rejected by peers based on their behavior, and one of the major causes of rejection by peers is "inadequate skill in communication and social interaction" (Burleson, 1986, p. 144). The child's self-concept development is intertwined with communication with others. Giffin and Heider (1967) explain, "In this sense the 'self' that an individual perceives is largely determined by his interaction with the world primarily through interpersonal communication" (p. 313). Weaver (1998) argues that through communication interactions with others "the essence of ones personality emerges" (p. 96). Children accepted by peers develop more positive self-

concepts and have higher self-esteem. Rejected children are more likely to be lonely, to be socially dissatisfied, and to develop other psychological problems (Burleson, 1986, pp. 146, 147, 153). Burleson (1986) summarizes the significance of peer interaction in the development of the child and the child's communication skills:

> Frequent interaction with peers appears to facilitate (a) the growth of certain cognitive, logical, and intellectual skills; (b) the development of self-esteem, a positive self-concept, and a sense of emotional security; (c) the inhibition of aggression and other antisocial behaviors; (d) the formation of a prosocial orientation; (e) the elaboration and refinement of social-cognitive abilities such as role-taking skills; (f) the learning and application of competent social behaviors; (g) the acquisition of mature forms of moral reasoning; and (h) the development of sophisticated functional communication skills. (p. 150)

Family and peers can be significant in the development of CA. They can facilitate the conditioned anxiety response or function in the assimilation of CA producing events. The conditioned anxiety response "presumes that previously neutral communication situations have become paired with anxiety" (Glaser, 1981, p. 324). As more and more communication situations have negative outcomes, the person will become increasingly more apprehensive and negative toward the communication situation (Phillips, 1968, p. 43). In viewing the development of CA in this way, McCroskey and Beatty (1984) find support for "the conceptualization of CA as an accumulation of communication state anxiety experiences" (p. 83). The accumulated negative past experiences cause trait-like personality qualities to develop. The personality traits are "summaries of past experiences" (Beatty, Dobos, Balfantz, Kuwabara, 1991, p. 48). One explanation is that behavioral disruptions occur and the person observes him/herself behaving in a disruptive manner. The self-reflection, or self-observation, becomes a source of apprehension after repeated observations of anxious behavior (Beatty et al., 1991). Sawyer and Behnke (1983) believe that stressful events

become part of the individual's mental scheme and can be distorted by experiences and "the subjects emotional state at the time of recall" (p. 214). The concept is closely related to the assimilation theory of CA proposed by Beatty and Behnke (1980). In this theory, state anxiety experiences are categorized "into the individual's level of communication apprehension" (p. 324). From the categories, expectations and conditions are delineated by the affected behavioral responses. Beatty et al. (1991) explain the influence of state anxiety experience on CA levels:

> Based on these findings, it is reasonable to conclude that (1) state anxiety experienced during performance influences subsequent levels of communication apprehension, (2) behavioral disruption influences subsequent levels of communication apprehension and (3) state anxiety and behavioral disruption contribute uniquely to the prediction of communication apprehension. (p. 53).

Capella (1991) believes researchers should not become focused solely on the social construct to try to understand CA. Capella (1991) states that "biological origins are as important to understanding aspects of human communication as are its social origins" (p. 5). Beatty, McCroskey, and Heisel (1998) also argue for a biological perspective. They offer the explanation that "communication apprehension represents individuals' expression of inborn, biological functioning, which has been shown to be antecedent to social experience and, therefore, independent of social learning processes" (p. 197). The research supporting the biological perspective is based on studies of identical twins. Twin studies reveal personality differences from birth. Social traits such as sociability have been measured shortly after birth, and twins have been found to differ sharply (Beatty, 1998; Hovarth, 1998; McCroskey, 1984; Valenic, Beatty, Rudd, Dobos, & Heisel, 1998). Rudimentary adult patterns can be found in infants. Genetics is reported to account "for approximately 74 percent of the variance in sociability, 98

percent in activity, 94 percent in distress, 60 percent in fearfulness, and 56 percent in anger" (Hovarth, 1998, p. 85). Because of the research on the genetic influence on personality variables, Beatty and McCroskey (1998) have proposed a paradigm of trait-based communication based on neurobiological structures. The possible explanation of CA related to neurobiological structures is referred to as "communibiology." Beatty, McCroskey, and Heisel (1998) summarize the paradigm:

> Adapted to the theoretical treatment of communication apprehension, the basic propositions are: (1) All psychological processes—including cognitive, affective, and motor-involved in social interaction depend on brain activity, which, thereby, necessitates a neurobiology of communication traits; (2) Brain activity precedes psychological experience; (3) The neurobiological structures underlying temperamental traits and individual differences, such as those associated with communication apprehension, are mostly products of genetic inheritance; (4) Environment has only a negligible affect on trait development; and (5) Differences in interpersonal behavior are principally a consequence of individual differences in neurobiological functioning. (p. 198)

What the research proposes is that "some people are 'born' to be comfortable with communication, whereas others are sentenced to suffer from communication anxiety throughout their lives" (Hovarth, 1998, p. 88).

Hovarth (1998) suggests that the genetic influence be viewed as "probabilistic causation." That is, "it increases the likelihood of the manifestation of that trait" (p. 89). In studies of adaptive and nonadaptive families researchers found that "fifty percent of correlations between environment and infant development could be explained through genetic factors, and the remaining fifty percent could be explained by purely environmental influence" (Hovarth, 1998, p. 77). Other researchers concur that even though the biological predispositions are important, how the environment and those in it interacts with the predisposition will determine the development of CA (Beatty &

McCroskey, 1998; Daly & Stafford, 1984; Hovarth, 1998; McCroskey & Beatty, 1998; McCroskey & Richmond, 1998; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998).

Communication Apprehension and Education

Whatever the cause may be CA has a profound influence on a child's education. From the beginning of the National Association of Teachers of Public Speaking in 1914 to now, the field of communication has been concerned about what is happening in the classroom (Porter, 1982, p.40). Much of what happens in the classroom takes place through interaction between the teacher and student. The interaction has been called "the central instructional system" and is thought to be "the essence of effective instruction" (Chesebro, McCroskey, Atwater, Bahrenfuss, Cawelti, Gaudino, & Hodges, 1992, p. 354). Friedrich (1982) found that "interactive discourse accounts for between 34 and 53 percent of all class time," and "classroom communication accounts for up to 25 percent of achievement variance (pp. 58, 66). The spoken exchange with teachers and other students establishes the social aspect of school and the burden of instruction in the classroom (Garrison & Garrison, 1979). Some researchers believe the school environment has more influence on the child's communication apprehension level than does the home. The communication responses the child receives in the school environment will help to increase or decrease the CA level of the child (Daly & Friedrich, 1981; Phillips, Dunham, Brubaker, & Butt, 1970). School has been referred to as "a verbal game" and those students who are good communicators perform better and are, therefore, more successful in the school environment. A student's success and failure are determined by his/her ability and willingness to interact with others in the school environment (Conner, 1987; Garrison & Garrison, 1979). The children who are

unwilling to talk "are often misunderstood, overlooked, labeled as 'different,' and are less likely to be involved in the mainstream of school life" (Conner, 1987, p. 525). Conner (1987) illustrates the possible outcomes from a child's communication skill:

> Common characteristics and consequences of student's willingness or unwillingness to talk are listed below:
> Verbal Students: Take leadership roles; choose seats of focal points; seek help; influence group actions; attain higher test/class grades; like school; are perceived by teachers as more attractive, credible, intelligent, desirable as students.
> Quiet Students: Are reluctant to answer; disclose less; will not seek help; do poorly in group work; have lower test/class grades; are more negative about school; are perceived by teachers as less attractive, credible, intelligent, desirable as students (p.525).

Communication apprehension increases with grade level. Comadena and Prusank (1988) report a "17 percent increase in CA from grade two to grade eight" (p. 275). Research has also shown a marked increase in kindergarten and again in third and fourth grade. Researchers have not established with certainty what causes the increase, but they do know the increases are maintained into adulthood (Garrison & Garrison, 1979; McCroskey, Anderson, Richmond, & Wheeless, 1981).

Communication apprehension obviously has an effect on the student socially, but it also affects him/her academically. CA has been found to have a negative impact on learning which affects academic achievement (AA) (Comadena & Pursank, 1988; Scott & Wheelis, 1977, McCroskey, 1977). As stated above, researchers have found no correlation between CA and intelligence; however, students who have high levels of CA have lower grade point averages. The grade points of high CA students were approximately one-half grade point lower on a four-point scale than those with low CA. They also score lower on standardized achievement test (McCroskey & Daly, 1976; Daly

and Stafford, 1984; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998; Comadena & Prusank, 1988; McCroskey, 1977; McCroskey, 1977).

College students with high levels of CA enjoy college less, prefer large lecture classes, will not consult counselors or professors, score lower on tests and will sit along the sides and rear of the classroom. High CA's will drop classes that require communication, especially public speaking classes. Over 50 percent of high CA students drop such classes within the first three weeks (McCroskey, 1977; Richmond, 1984). In a summary of research, O'Mara, Allen, Long, and Judd (1996) paint a negative picture of highly apprehensive students:

> Even though no meaningful relationship has been found between CA and intelligence, students who are highly apprehensive on average score lower on standardized achievement tests, achieve less than their aptitudes would justify, ask fewer questions, participate less frequently in class, attend to and recall less content, and are evaluated lower by instructors than are more talkative students. (p.110)

The relationship between negative academic achievement and communication apprehension is "communication withdrawal behavior of the high apprehensive" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 33). In the existing educational system "students must communicate to learn. Those who communicate less, learn less" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 33).

Perhaps this helps to explain why students high in CA express a general dissatisfaction with the school experience. Monroe, Borzi, and Burrell (1992) have found that "over 26 percent of the variance in students' decisions to remain in high school is associated with CA" (p. 276). CA is also significant in high school seniors' decisions to attend college (Monroe & Borzi, 1992, p. 127). College freshmen with high CA are more apt to drop out than low CA students. Many drop out within the first semester of college

(Ericson & Gardner, 1992, p.132). In a similar study, McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, and Payne (1989) found that 43.4 percent of high CAs drop out compared to 34.9 percent of the low CAs. Students with high CA "view their educational experiences as being painful" (Monroe et al., 1992, p. 275). They do not persist in the educational setting to eliminate the anxiety of the communication demands. McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, and Payne (1989) explain why the high CA student does not persist in college:

> The high CA student is simply less likely to become involved with campus activities, less likely to communicate with peers, advisors, counselors, or professors who could offer social comfort and academic assistance. Even under circumstances of superior academic achievement, a student who feels disconnected from and unrelated to the people and traditions of the university is likely to abandon the university for a safer place (p. 101).

When the child high in CA begins school, he/she may have lower communication skills because communication avoidance has limited his/her experience. In school, communication demands are made of him/her, but the child has not developed appropriate skills and will not receive the reinforcement more communicative children receive (Daly and Friedrich, 1981). Phillips et al. (1970) explains the significance of a child's verbal behavior:

> The teacher actually evaluates verbal performance as though it revealed mastery of subject matter and nothing else. There appears to be no awareness that oral communication may express the state of the personality as well as the intellect. The student who can 'psych out' the teacher's wants and respond in line with his expectancies wins. The student who cannot do this loses, regardless of how much he knows. The teacher is thus placed in the role of critic-evaluator of communication, a role for which his teacher training did not prepare him. (p. 130)

The apprehensive child also responds to the school's/teacher's demands for silence. They will easily and gladly comply to this requirement. They often receive positive reinforcement for their quietness and observe the negative effects of other children's talking. The withdrawal behavior of the child is reinforced. This rewarded

behavior might then be utilized in other settings such as social or professional situations. The individual is then sanctioned for the behavior that was rewarded by the school/teacher (McCroskey, 1977, p. 80; Phillips, 1968, p. 46).

The nonverbal responses of the child appear to be significant in how teachers form expectations of the child. Teachers often describe the nonverbal behaviors of students as a source of early impressions (Brooks & Woolfolk, 1987, p. 52). The expectations of their teachers affect the students (Zanna, Sheras, & Copper, 1975, p. 279). When a teacher observes a child high in CA, he/she reacts to the nonverbal display, and the student is "subjected to different expectations of the teacher" (McCroskey & Daly, 1976; McCroskey, Richmond, Daly & Falcione, 1977; McCroskey, 1977). The nonverbal response acts as negative reinforcement for the teacher's nonverbal response to the student and affects the teacher's evaluations of the child's abilities (Allen & Atkinson, 1978; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Quiet children do not "engage the teacher on a personal level, do not allow him/her to offer the counsel and expertise he/she is ready to give, and offer little or no feedback for the efforts the teacher is making" (Zimbardo, 1977, p. 70). When the child does not make eye contact with the teacher, he/she may interpret this as passive/aggressive behavior or that the child prefers to be left alone. If this interpretation is made, the child then becomes "unnoticeable" (Brooks & Woolfolk, 1987, p. 56). Eye, contact, posture and smiling are important in impression formation. The teacher interprets these as signs of attention and readiness. From the nonverbal, the teacher forms evaluations of "students' competence, learning, 'teachability', and attitude" (Brooks & Woolfolk, 1987, p. 55).

The students who are perceived positively (high expectation) have opportunities to learn more. To these students teachers present more material, present more difficult material, give them more opportunities to answer, give more time to answer, give more attention to their answers, award more praise, and create a warmer climate for them by smiling, nodding and using warmer vocal tone (Woolfolk & Brooks, 1985; Cooper, 1979; Brophy & Good, 1970; Zimbardo, 1977). However, the negatively (low expectation) perceived students are subject to a different response. Woolfolk and Brooks (1985) report that "teachers waited less time for low expectation students to answer, gave up more quickly on their wrong answers, called on them less often, paid less attention to them except when they misbehaved and placed their seats farthest from the teacher" (p. 516).

The apprehensive child is often "incorrectly perceived as poor readers or lazy students, they are placed in slow groups. Many are never able to overcome this poor start, and they become what they were incorrectly perceived as being---the slow student" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998, pp. 72,73). High CA students suffer academically and are consistently given lower evaluations (O'Mara, Allen, Long, & Judd, 1996).

One of the reasons for the negative evaluation of high CA students is that they present less immediacy than others. When CA levels rise, immediacy declines. O'Mara et al. (1996) describe what happens to the high CA:

> By avoiding both verbal and nonverbal interaction high CAs evade the communication invitations of others and as a consequence others do not develop a desire to communicate with them. Because their nonimmediate behaviors dampen others' reciprocity, high CAs are likely to be less effective in those situations where communication is an unavoidable necessity. Lack of reciprocity and the concomitant exacerbation of ineffective communication would certainly affect instructors' impressions of students. (p. 121)

Individuals who display less immediacy are viewed as "less likeable, less friendly, and generally less attractive" (O'Mara et al., 1996, p. 112). Similarly, individuals who do not choose to communicate are perceived by others and themselves as less attractive, less sociable, and less friendly. Because of the lack of immediacy and the negative expectations, students high in CA probably will not attempt to ask questions or get needed clarification from teachers (O'Mara et al., 1996). Brophy & Good (1970) explain how teachers' expectations affect the students:

> (a)The teacher forms differential expectations for student performance; (b) He then begins to treat children differently in accordance with his differential expectations; (c) The children respond differentially to the teacher because they are being treated differently by him; (d) In responding to the teacher, each child tends to exhibit behavior which complements and reinforces the teacher's particular expectations for him; (e) As a result, the general academic performance of some children will be enhanced while that of others will be depressed, with changes being in the direction of teacher expectations; (f) These effects will show up in the achievement tests given at the end of the year, providing support for the "self-fulfilling prophecy" notion. (pp. 365-366)

McCroskey and Daly (1976) call for changes in teacher preparation to familiarize educators with the problem of high CA and teacher expectancy. Unless teachers become aware of the potential effects of high CA and expectancy and learn to recognize and react differently to high CA students, many will continue to be negatively affected by unknowing teachers.

Communication apprehension also has a negative effect on teacher. Students high in CA "perceive their teachers as less animated, impression leaving, dramatic, friendly, open, affliative, and immediate than low apprehensives" (Daly & Stafford, 1984, p. 136). Research indicates that a large number of elementary teachers have high levels of CA (McCroskey, Anderson, Richmond, & Wheeless, 1981, p. 129). The effects of high CA is explained by Richmond and McCroskey (1998):

> Research indicates quiet teachers are not like as well by their students a talkative teachers. This has an impact not only on the way teachers are evaluated but also on their effectiveness. Students are less inclined to follow the recommendations of quiet teachers than they are to follow the recommendations of more talkative ones. It appears that quiet teachers, particularly those who are high communication apprehensives, are sensitive to the fact students might respond negatively to them. They overwhelmingly choose to teach in the lower elementary grades. They report they are less afraid to communicate with the younger children than they would be to communicate with children in the upper grades, junior high, or in high school. (pp. 73, 74)

Teachers in interaction with students act as models of appropriate/inappropriate communication behavior. Since talking is a learned phenomenon, the teacher who interacts freely with students and encourages them to communicate will probably develop less communication apprehensive students (Conner, 1987; Daly & Friedrich, 1981). The supportive teacher uses appropriate suggestions, sues, and reinforcement to increase the child's confidence and encourage his/her interactive, communication behavior (Daly & Friedrich, 1981).

If the child comes to the school environment with excessively high levels of CA, intervention in the classroom is difficult. Requiring students to do show and tell or to do formal presentations can be valuable and rewarding for students with moderate or low CA. However, such experience can be traumatic for those with high CA. Teachers need to be aware of CA, attempt to assess the CA level of students, and find alternative instructional strategies for students who might approach oral presentations with excessive fear (Chesebro, McCroskey, Atwater, Bahrenfuss, Cawelti, Gaudino, & Hodges, 1992; McCroskey, 1977; McCroskey, 1977; Phillips, Dunham, Brubaker, & Butt, 1970; Scott & Wheeless, 1977).

Diagnosis and Treatment of Communication Apprehension

When teachers are aware of CA levels in students, they can provide extra reinforcement and reward, not punishment for communication attempts. The major problem with students who have high levels of CA is the lack of diagnosis and treatment. To avoid the negative effects of CA, treatment should take place as early as possible (Comadena & Prusank, 1988; McCroskey, 1977; McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, & Payne, 1989). Monroe et al. (1992) have found, however, that "the vast majority of diagnostic remedial programs are available at the college, rather than at the elementary or secondary level" (p. 277).

Traditionally only one method has been used to help those who are fearful to communicate. That method is skills training, specifically public speaking class. The method is many times not effective for the high CA and can be harmful (McCroskey, 1977a). Skills training is used to correct skills deficits. This training operates under the assumption that the individual is apprehensive because he/she lacks the skills necessary to be proficient in communication behavior. If the skill can be acquired, the person will be competent and no longer apprehensive. If lack of skills is the only problem this method will probably be successful; however, CA is often more complex and involves basic personality and behavioral tendencies (Allen, Hunter, & Donohue, 1989; Glaser, 1981; Kelly, 1984).

Communication apprehension does respond to intervention "when treated as a phobic response" (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998, p. 228). The two therapies that have been successful in treating CA are systematic desensitization and cognitive restructuring. The therapies do not "cure" the individual "but rather teach the individual to manage these

tendencies in order to be able to communicate effectively without extreme apprehension" (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998, p. 229).

Cognitive restructuring is a therapy that attempts to "modify the cognitive dimension of communication avoidance problems" (Fremouw, 1984, p. 215). In this process irrational fears are identified and more rational beliefs are substituted in the cognitive process. As part of the process work is also done with negative self-talk. More positive, adaptive coping statements are learned to modify the cognitions concerning communication (Glaser, 1981; Allen et al., 1989).

A third method for learning to deal with communication apprehension is systematic desensitization. In this method students learn relaxation techniques. The person then is asked to think of stressful, apprehension-causing situations while relaxing. When the fear becomes paired with relaxation, the apprehension decreases (Allen et al., 1989; Glaser, 1981). Of the three methods Allen et al. (1989) have found that "the most effective method of reducing anxiety was a combination of all three treatments while the least effective was skills training alone" (p. 62).

Search for the Etiology of Communication Apprehension

In the research discussed above, the picture of CA becomes vivid. Researchers have defined it and investigated its effects on the individual. Presented also are numerous ideas and potential explanations about the etiology of the phenomenon of communication apprehension. In 1955 Clevenger called for stage fright to be studied more thoroughly. He asked the following questions:

> What are the various emotional conditions that may give rise to it? What are the general characteristics of persons who are likely to experience it? Is it predictable? Is it preventable? Is it functionally tied to some other facet or facets of the socio-emotional adjustment to the speech situation? (p. 30)

The lack of research into the factors causing speech anxiety was reported by Giffin and Heider in 1967. In 1977 McCroskey in his summary of CA research called for research to find the causes of CA. Daly and Friedrich stated in 1981, "While extant literature on communication apprehension is replete with 'effects oriented' research, little attention has been devoted to the isolation of its etiological foundations" (p. 243). A similar call for attention to finding the causes of CA was presented by Porter in 1982. Another call to find "the causes of communication dysfunctions" (p. 185) was made by Friedrich and Goss in 1984. The same year McCroskey (1984) stated that "the etiology of CA has received comparatively little attention in the literature" (p. 22). In presenting their idea on the communibiological perspective, Beatty, McCroskey, and Heisel (1998) reported that "relatively little progress has been made regarding etiological factors" (p. 197). They also stated, "Put simply, after nearly thirty years of research, a coherent explanation for why some people develop a predisposition to avoid communication or consistently experience anxiety reactions when social interaction is unavoidable remains to be offered" (p. 197).

The research concerning CA has been voluminous. Researchers have proposed possible causes, but to this point none have been shown to be complete explanations of why 20 percent of the population must endure intense fear when communicating or even anticipating communication. The etiology of communication apprehension needs to be found so that it can be prevented. Parents and teachers need to know how and when so they can more readily intervene in the developmental process.

CHAPTER III

Design and Methodology

Choosing an appropriate research design to study life experiences of those who experience debilitating levels of communication apprehension is to break from the mainstream of communication research. Much empirical research has been done concerning certain aspects of CA. The research design proposed in this study takes a developmental approach toward communication apprehension. It is studied as a lived experience.

Research Design

The research design of this study is qualitative. Yow (1994) states, "The qualitative researcher learns about a way of life by studying the people who live it and asking them how they think about their experiences" (p. 7). The study attempts to understand "the insider's perspective" (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996, p. 476). Most research in communication has been empirical (Lindlof, 1995). However, in empirical research the social world is treated "as being hard, real and external to the individual" (Cohen & Manion, 1985, p. 8). Communication apprehension is not external to those who know it. In interaction with apprehensive students, they describe CA as personal, and they feel they are the only ones who know the fear. They describe it as painful. They report symptoms of stomach cramps, nausea, sweating, and trouble breathing. As an internal, personal phenomenon, CA requires a research approach that is more appropriate to the world of natural phenomena. "The qualitative research tradition produces an interpretation of reality that is useful in understanding the human condition" (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998, p. 25).

The type of qualitative research done in this study is phenomenology. The phenomenological researcher seeks to find how it is that the individual understands the phenomenon in his/her existence. This view of the phenomenon is to understand the perspective of the individual in relation to the phenomenon. "Phenomenology is the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structure, the internal structures, of lived experience" (von Manen, 1990, p. 10). The phenomenologist's goal is "to construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience" (von Manen, 1990, p. 41).

To explore the lived experience of communication apprehension, a life history approach was applied. "History is what the people who lived it make of it and what the others who observe the participants or listen to them or study their records make of it" (Yow, 1994, p. 22). Participants in this study were asked to relate their life histories. Bogdan and Biklin (1998) state that what the researcher is trying to understand is the "subjects' careers ['careers' refers to the various positions, stages, bench marks and ways of thinking people pass through in the course of their lives] emphasizing the role of organizations, crucial events, and significant others in shaping subjects' evolving definitions of self and their perspectives on life" (p. 57).

The main research tool the phenomenologist uses to access the life history is the interview. Yow (1994) explains the task of the oral history interview:

> This is the great task of qualitative research and specifically oral history interviews: to reveal the meanings of lived experience. The in-depth interview offers the benefit of seeing in its full complexity the world of another. And in collating in-depth interviews and using the insights to be gained from them as well as different kinds of information from other kinds of records, we can come to some understanding of the process by which we got to be the way we are. (p. 25)

The interview is not used as a question/answer agenda but as a "dialogical reflection" of the researcher and participant working together (Langenbach, Vaughn, & Aagaard, 1994). The interviewer/interviewee interaction is a significant part of this research method. Yow (1994) refers to the collaboration as "shared work" in which there is a possibility of discovering something not known previously. The objective of the "shared work" is "the understanding of the multiplicity of experiences in a total life context" (p. 24). The interview helps the researcher understand the participants' perspective. "The researcher expects the special nature of what they [participants] have experienced to result in a special articulation: words that can be expressed only by someone who has 'been there'" (Lindlof, 1995, p. 162). This study focuses on how the individual perceives his/her own experiences concerning communication apprehension. The information based on the participants "psychological reality" can be obtained "in no better way than to ask in the context of the life review" (Yow, 1994, p. 15). Finding out about communication apprehension from those who have "been there" is the goal of this study. What the interviewee adds to the present CA research is "thick description." This term used by Geertz implies "not a single view of the experience, but a larger number of testimonies that give great variety in detail" (Yow, 1994, p. 19). Tesch asks and answers an important question, "What would we gain? The phenomenologist's answer is a better understanding of the meaning an experience has for others (and also for ourselves)" (as cited in Langenbach et al., 1994, p. 145). Individuals with high level of CA provide this "better understanding" of the phenomena of communication apprehension. What the researcher wants to know is "How does he construct this view? Where do his concepts

come from? Why does he build this persona and not another? What are the consequences for this individual?" (Yow, 1994, p. 23).

In a phenomenological study, the researcher becomes an essential part of the study (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998; Langenbach et al., 1994). The capabilities of the researcher become an important issue. In this study, the primary researcher has taught communication classes at the university level for eighteen years. She has a Masters Degree and thirty hours of doctoral study in communication. Her communication apprehensive students continue to be a frustration to her. They are challenging because the affliction is an internal struggle that is difficult to conquer. The researcher is trained in interpersonal communication, listening, nonverbal communication, and interviewing which provide an effective background to conduct the interviews necessary for the phenomenological study.

Participants

The participants in this study are college students in a small state university located in the southwestern part of the United States. The students were enrolled in the freshman level communication class. At the university all students in all sections of the freshman level communication classes are given the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) (Appendix A). The PRCA-24 is one of the main instruments used to measure CA levels. The instrument has reliability of .94 with a mean of 65.6 and a standard deviation of 15.7 (McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, & Payne, 1989). The instrument measures four communication contexts: public speaking, speaking in small groups, speaking in meetings, and speaking in dyads. The contexts are "indicators of the broad-based, trait-like orientations which communication apprehension is presumed to

be" (McCroskey, Beatty, Kearney, & Plax, 1985, pp. 166-67). Students scoring 80 are classified as high apprehensives; those scoring 51 are considered low apprehensives. For this study, students scoring 97 (two standard deviations above the mean) or above on the PRCA-24 were chosen to participate. Individuals at this level have suffered debilitating communication apprehension. Debilitating is defined as apprehension severe enough to interfere seriously with the communicator's normal, human interactions. Students with the highest scores will be asked to participate in the study. Tesch states, "phenomenological researchers have traditionally worked with at least five to ten people when investigating a specific phenomenon" (as cited in Langenbach et al., 1994, p. 147). Seven participants will be asked to tell their life narratives in interviews.

Methodology

After participants were identified, each was asked to relate his/her life narrative in an interview. The interviews were conducted in a small, seldom used classroom that is away from the main traffic flow of the hall. The classroom is a neutral, unintimidating, easily accessible environment. The researcher's reason for choosing this room was that the apprehensive individual could find it easily and would feel more comfortable in this private and familiar setting. A conference room would require following and /or asking for directions to find. Apprehensive students would find this disturbing and probably would not overcome the obstacle to come to the interview. The interviewer's office is territory of the interviewer's position and is less private. The participants were briefed in an initial meeting that the interview would taped but would remain confidential with only the interviewer knowing the participant on each tape. They were also informed about why the research project was being conducted and how the results will be used. They will

be reassured of the confidentiality of the interview and asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix B).

The in-depth interviews were conducted in a single session. They took 90 to 120 minutes. The participants were asked demographic questions to break the ice such as "tell me who was in your family" or "where did you go to high school." Yow (1994) suggests that the researcher arrange the interview guide to "place the nonthreatening questions first. People generally like to talk about their birthplace, early childhood memories, and significant people and events in the years they grew up" (p. 37). The interviewee was asked to relate his/her life story with special emphasis on experiences, feelings, and situations that he/she remembered in connection with communication. If events are significant to the participants, they probably can be recalled in some detail. Memories of events that caused strong feelings are usually recalled with consistency. "In in-depth interviewing it is the very interpretation of the event and the remembered feelings about it that are sought" (Yow, 1994, p. 21). Researchers have reported the intensity of the emotions involved in communication apprehension; therefore, numerous significant events and significant interactions might be recalled. An interview guide of topics to be covered was used to provide basic consistency in the interview (Appendix C). However, the guide was only a strategy for the interview. Yow (1994) states, "The guide contains the topics the interviewer will pursue but does not limit the interview to those topics because the narrator will have the freedom to suggest others" (p. 36). The interview was interactive, and if clarification was needed to understand the significance of reported information, the participant was asked to elaborate. The interviewee was initially asked to relate the earliest memories of communication. Follow-up questions

were used when new areas of information not in the guide were presented (Yow, 1994, p. 13).

A warm, conversational tone was used throughout the interview to encourage responses. Also, nonverbal responses were used to increase immediacy. Occasionally, the interviewer paraphrased long answers to make sure the interviewee meant what was said and to encourage the participant that the interviewer was listening. The interview tapes were coded to ensure participant anonymity; a pseudonym was given each participant. A professional typist then transcribed the tapes. The researcher verified the accuracy of the tapes by listening to them while reading each transcript.

During the data collection, the interviewer kept observer comments and a field log/diary. Comments were written before and immediately after the interviews to capture the atmosphere of the interview. The field log/diary was kept updated during the entire study. The log was used "to keep track of the development of the project, to visualize how the research plan has been affected by data collected, and to remain aware of how he or she has been influenced by the data" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 108). Yow (1994) cites Jack Douglas to explain the usefulness of reflecting on the subjectivity of this type of research:

> Rather than trying to eliminate the subjective effects, the goal must be to try to understand how they are interdependent, how different forms of subjective interaction with the people we are studying affect our conclusions about them, and so on. Qualitative researchers therefore must constantly reflect on the ways their own assumptions and biases impinge on the research process. (p. 7)

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were finished the collected data was sorted and arranged systematically. The researcher spent time immersed in the data to get a sense of the large quantity of information. "Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell others" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, p. 157). The transcripts were read numerous times to assess possible themes. Theme is a means of gaining control over the meaning conveyed by participants. According to von Manen (1990) "grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of seeing meaning" (p. 79). Coding categories were developed to help sort the data into themes. The data was coded using Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) system. The categories suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) include: setting/context, situation, perspectives held by participants, participants way of thinking about people, object, process codes to order life history, activity, events, strategy, relationship and social structure, and methods. The data analysis utilized but was not limited to these categories.

The research repeatedly read the transcriptions, and themes were developed for each participant. The themes common to all interviews and also any variations of participants were discerned. Once the independent evaluations had been done, the researcher discussed the data and emerging themes with a second researcher to find consensus and provide validity. The second researcher understands the purpose and process of qualitative research. The primary researcher wanted confirmation that nothing has been overlooked in the categorizing process. After coding, the transcripts was

divided by themes, and each theme sorted into folders. Each theme folder was read and reread to organize data. Appropriate examples that represent the data outcomes were considered for use in writing the results because "a good qualitative paper is well documented with description taken from the data to illustrate and substantiate the assertions made" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 176).

From the information gained from the life experiences of high communication apprehensive individuals, glimpses of significant experiences, situations, and ages began to evolve. The information was explored for application to child development and education practices. This study will add to and move communication apprehension research forward. In CA research the total life experience has not been explored. "One rich, and as yet relatively untapped source of data about high CA is the thoughts about it of those who suffer from it" (Lederman, 1983, p. 233). People with high communication apprehension are often classified by terms such as "indifferent" or "unnoticeable" (Brooks & Woolfolk, 1987). This research gives voice and ear to persons who understand the isolation and pain of communication apprehension better than anyone else.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Introduction

Communication apprehension is a speech disorder that affects approximately 20 percent of the population. As research has shown, it is an affliction that determines much of the person's life. CA is a fear that is felt by the individual when approaching or participating in communication. Ayres (1997) describe the phenomenon of CA:

> Thus, communication apprehension is a subjective phenomenon and is best understood when approached from that perspective. When one defines CA as it is defined here, the proper departure point for an explanation of communication apprehension is from the perspective of the individual who experiences fear in certain communication situations. (p. 15)

The subjective experiences of the individual who experiences high levels of CA are what were explored in this research project. Eight college students told their life narratives in 90 to 120 minute sessions. The participants included four males and four females who ranged in age from 18 to 37. All were enrolled in a beginning speech class in which they had taken the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA). Their PRCA scores ranged from 104 to 120, indicative of extremely high levels of communication apprehension.

The sessions began by asking the students to tell about their lives from their earliest memories. A loosely structured agenda of questions (Appendix C) was used, if necessary, to help the respondents move through their life narratives. Appropriate follow-up questions were used to further explore information in answers. Even though each participant reported high levels of communication apprehension, each also seemed more than willing and even excited to discuss his/her life. High apprehensives might be

expected to be hesitant to communicate with an unknown interviewer, but this was not the case. After a short explanation of what the researcher was doing and how the research might be used, the participants talked easily and were very open about experiences in their lives. This confirmed what Phillips, Dunham, Brubaker, and Butt (1970) reported about high CA individuals. They stated, "When they find a situation comfortable enough to let them talk about their problem, they speak at length about fears and inadequacies they receive in their communication" (p. 136). Each participant talked freely, but the conversations were marked with non-fluencies, incomplete sentences, hesitancy or stuttering, and repetition. These communication patterns will be apparent in the examples used to illustrate information in this chapter.

The analysis of the life narratives revealed four main themes discussed by all participants. In each theme, several topics developed (Bogdan & Biklen, p.189). Topics for each theme were those areas discussed by all or most all of the participants. The themes herein are those related to providing answers to the research question. The themes that evolved from the life narratives also enrich the understanding of CA and give voice to individuals whose fears have prevented them from being heard. The following themes and topics evolved:

I. Family and Early Childhood Development

   A. Negative/aggressive communication from a significant other

   B. Grandparents, fathers, stepfathers, mothers

   C. Similar others

   D. Self-contained families

E. Concern for children

II. School and Teachers

A. Weak early memories

B. Difficult beginnings

C. Junior high/ high school

D. Being put on the spot

E. Labeling

F. Good and bad teachers

G. Participation

H. College and beyond

III. Naming and Explaining the Problem

A. Name it

B. Timeline of CA

C. Causes of CA

D. Coping with CA

E. Better or Worse

F. Ability to perform

G. Effects of CA

H. Communication situations

I. Comfort zone

IV. Emotional Experiences

A. Traumatic experiences

B. Expectations and pressure

C. Fears

D. Worrying

E. Isolation

The participants' conversations were intense, sometimes emotional, and often revealing. The information was always revealing to the researcher, but the respondents were sometimes startled at their own revelations. The interviews were a self-reflective process for the individuals who attempted to express and understand the life events that were significant to them. In the self-reflective process the participants gave interpretations of the life events as they had experienced them in interaction with others in their environments. What each explained was her/his reality as he/she had lived it.

Family and Early Childhood Development

Participants began by discussing their families and their memories before starting school. Families were diverse in make-up. Alex, Debbie, Gloria, and Heath had divorced parents. Three of these, Alex, Debbie, and Gloria, now have stepfathers as part of their families; Heath was reared by a single mother. The four mothers worked outside of the home. The divorces happened within the first three years of the participant's lives. The other four respondents, Bob, Carol, Edward, and Fran, were reared in traditional homes; two had stay-at-home mothers, and two had mothers who worked outside the home. Five

of the participants reported being the oldest child; two reported being the youngest; one was reared as an only child.

Negative/aggressive Communication from Significant Others

Whatever the family makeup, each participant reported someone significant during his/her early years who was negative toward him/her and who used communication as aggression. Being "yelled at" excessively was described by two of the participants. Alex, an eighteen-year-old male from a rural high school, told about his stepfather who yelled excessively and who was reported to the authorities for hitting Alex's younger sister. Alex stated, "...I remember him having a short temper." One incident he remembered is his stepfather kicking him off the front porch for pestering his younger sister. His stepfather often threatened to leave Alex and his sister because he was unhappy with their mother's drinking. The stepfather was Alex's primary caretaker; he does not remember his mother during this period of his life. Heath, a traditional college sophomore from a rural high school, considered his mother to have been "mentally abusive" and remembered being "yelled at" and feeling badly because of it. He also reported that his mother was "authoritarian" and "fussy."

Demanding others within their early environments were described by Bob, Debbie, and Edward. Bob is a divorced, nontraditional student who has shared custody of his three children. Bob had a mother who was a strict disciplinarian. He stated, "I mean, when I was out in public I walked the chalk because I knew what I would get if I didn't." He recounted being spanked a great deal and knowing when he did something less than what she expected he would "get it later." Bob referred to his mother as "a force." Her mother's remarriage when she was six and a new stepfather caused much

distress for Debbie. She is a traditional college student who went to several different schools and graduated from a larger high school. As a college student she still lives at home with her mother, stepfather, and two younger brothers. She and her stepfather clashed from the very beginning. Debbie stated, "And it was just fighting and arguing." She felt as though he was griping at her all the time. She also was forced to call him "Dad." If she did not call him "Dad," he would not answer, nor talk to her. Edward dropped out of college his first time around, but at 24 has returned. Edward was born five and eight years after his sisters. His oldest sister he refered to as extremely "bossy." She bossed him around and had to have things her way. Only as an adult has he been able to form a relationship with this sister.

Significant others caused pain in numerous ways. Carol, Fran, and Gloria explained how others actions affected them. Cousins who were her playmates assumed a significant role in Carol's early life. Carol, a traditional college freshman from a larger high school, was the quietest of the respondents and the most difficult to get to tell her life narrative. She related several incidences when her cousins were mean to her. They called her names, made fun of her and many times excluded her. She remembered this as hurtful and referred to incidents with the cousins numerous times during her interview. An older sister was important in Fran's early life. Fran is a nontraditional student who is married for the second time and has two daughters. Her sister was three years older than she and had psychological problems. The sister did not want Fran around. She told Fran she was "dumb, lazy, and anything to make me feel bad." Fran said, "She just took part of my confidence from me." The sister was important in Fran's early years because her sister was the person with whom she spent the most time. Gloria was reared by an

extremely abusive stepfather and an emotionally detached mother. She was abused mentally, physically, and sexually. She reported, "Basically, I grew up being told how stupid I was—how ugly I was. My sisters were always better." She is now in her late twenties, married, and has a five-year-old daughter.

Grandparents, Fathers, Stepfathers, Mothers

Other significant people in all the participants' early development were their grandparents. Alex, Bob, and Carol reported that they were close to their grandmothers and spent time with them. Debbie and her mother lived with her grandparents after her mother and father divorced. Both grandparents were important, but she referred to herself as "Nana's little girl." Heath and his mother also lived with his grandmother after his parents' divorce, and his grandmother took care of him while his mother returned to school. Fran's grandparents also took care of her after her parents moved back home. Edward grew up next door to his grandparents. Although Gloria's family was abusive and distant, she reported feeling closest to her grandparents.

Participants also described their fathers/stepfathers. The relationships with these men were/are important and were illumined by each participant's reference to his/her father/stepfather repeatedly in the interviews. Throughout their lives, Bob and Edward have seen their fathers as their good friends, and Carol and Fran described their fathers as protective and enjoy close relationships with them. Debbie, too, described her stepfather as protective, but she described the protectiveness as controlling. Her father left when she was three after taking her to see "101 Dalmatians." When she got up the next morning he was gone. She has not seen him since but still talks about him and mourns his absence. Gloria's abusive stepfather controlled her life completely until she left home.

Alex has relationships with both his father and stepfather. Even though his stepfather continually yelled at him when he was young, he feels close to him and enjoys hunting and fishing with him. About his father, Alex stated, "And for some reason when he got older he just like, work was the only thing. Matter of fact it still is. It's all he does. He does it seven days a week." Alex also reported that their communication centers solely on how Alex is doing in school and how he is doing financially. At his father's insistence Alex at 18 already has a retirement account. Heath's father has always been absent. Heath saw him only on holidays but now visits him once a week. His father is in a wheelchair, does not work, and lives on social security. Heath described him as "weak, immature, and unmasculine." The most hurtful thing his mother can say to him is, "You're just like your dad." Whether good or bad the fathers/stepfathers have been an influence in the lives of the participants.

Alex does not remember his mother in his early life. He only remembered his stepfather. His mother worked outside the home and had a drinking problem. Bob, Carol, Debbie and Edward were/are close to their mothers. Edward, however, said he was/is closer to his father. Fran reported being closer to her father. Her mother often frustrates her. Heath's relationship with his mother is close but antagonistic. He reported that they argued/argue continuously.

Similar Others

Family members were instrumental in the early development of each participant. During the interviews each participant revealed someone with whom he/she acknowledged as having a similar communication style. This identified person was not necessarily a model for the communication style but rather an attempt to explain why the

participant performs as he/she does. Some of the recognized persons were people the participant did not wish to model.

Alex and Carol can trace their communication style through three generations. Alex identified with his father. He stated, "I'm afraid I'm going to be just like him, and I think he was just like his father and that scares me." Carol related what her mother told her, "She says that she used to be really shy and quiet like me. She says that her mom was too." Bob and Debbie both identified their mothers as having their communication styles. Edward stated that his mom is "real timid" and "Daddy was probably pretty well the same way." Fran said about her dad, "He's very, he, he's like me in a way. He doesn't like to talk a whole lot or argue with anybody." Gloria described her mother as very quiet like she is. However, when she met her biological father when she was older, she discovered that "he's real quiet, too." Gloria also reported, "And his sisters are real quiet, very soft spoken." Heath identified with his grandmother. He related, "Grandma was always there, but she hasn't a real concept of communication or social skills, she really doesn't. She has the same thing I do." During the interview process the identifications were presented by respondents as explanation for their communication problems. Interestingly, sometimes the explanations had been presented to the participants by other family members to help them understand why they are as they are.

Self-contained Family

As participants discussed their early development, their families were emphasized. The family and /or extended families were the point of socialization. Edward emphasized that his family was very self-contained. He recognized his father as his best friend and in elementary school his same age cousin was his "real good friend."

Because of the abusive situation, Gloria recognized that in her family, "We didn't do a whole lot together as a family." However, they did not socialize outside the family. She and her twin brother "were really close." She added, "But 99 percent of the time we were alone." As an only child, reared in the country by his grandmother while his mother was in nursing school, Heath stated, "Family--family wise, it's just been very lonely." Fran's family lived away from her grandparents when she was preschool, but they visited them every weekend. During early elementary, the family moved back close to the grandparents. She stated, "Family is very important to me, you know." As a child Debbie remembered, "The only people I socialized with were mom and dad and my sister and my grandparents, just family members; I didn't socialize with anybody else." Carol feels close to all of her family: mom, dad, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and many cousins. Her cousins were her earliest playmates. She stayed with her grandparents while her parents worked. Several cousins also stayed with the grandparents. Alex had three families who were significant in his early life, his mother's family, his father's family, and his stepfather's family. Bob's family also lived away from grandparents when he was young, but they returned to the grandparents' home at least twice a month, and he and his dad spent time on weekends fishing and hunting. He considers his father his friend. The families of each participant operated as the center of socialization to the exclusion of outside influences.

Concern for Children

Now, as adults, the participants are concerned about their own children or siblings. Bob recognizes the "shyness" in his son who is 13. He also believes it has gotten worse for his son, and he would like to be able to help him. Debbie has a younger

brother whom she described as "real sensitive." Debbie stated, "So I am trying to help them, help my brothers so they're not shy like me." Gloria now has a five-year-old daughter. She told how she communicates with her daughter. "I just try to tell her how wonderful she is, how much I love her, and nothing is wrong. You can learn from your mistakes. And it's funny, cause she tends to be real shy and quiet. I'm like, 'No, no, I don't want you to grow up that way.'" Fran worries because she has observed teachers reacting to her daughters the way they reacted to her. She also knows her oldest daughter responds like she did, and this concerns her. Perhaps Heath, who has no children, summarized the concern for children. He stated, "If I ever have a son or a daughter, I hope I do. God willing I will one day. I don't want them to go through this. I don't want them to go through this. I don't know what I can do to keep them from going through what I went through."

School and Teachers

Because the participants were college students, much of the content of their life narratives was concerned with school. School experiences and teachers had significant influence in each student's life. School experiences were often related with emotion, and because of their importance to the individual, some incidents were referred to several times in the telling of the life narratives.

Weak Early Memories

A consistent report from all the participants was few or weak memories of their early lives and elementary school. Their not remembering was a surprise to several of the interviewees. Bob and Debbie both stated that they do not remember much without looking at pictures. Debbie stated, "I, to be honest with you, I don't remember a whole

lot just because, and I don't, you know, I don't even know why I don't remember it." Alex related, "I don't remember a lot." Carol was probably the most surprised that she did not remember. When asked if she had memories of early elementary school, she replied, "I guess not. I thought I did, but I don't remember a lot of it now." After some thinking about elementary school, she concluded, "I don't remember too much about it. It's mainly, the first years and then from fifth and up. The middle I don't remember too much about." Edward and Alex remembered being in first grade and their teachers but cannot remember anything particular about the people in their classes. Gloria stated, "Remember a little bit about first grade, not a whole lot." Heath described elementary as "this smoky hazy, slow motion." He also emphasized that he "can't remember any details; they are not always accurate." Fran described her first grade experience in the following:

> There was only one time where I felt like I was, I did something right. You know, I guess, some of that stuff I don't want to remember. But I said something, when I first got into the class, I did something right. And then, from then on I just, just seemed to not do anything. I don't remember a whole lot of it. That's what's bad; I don't remember a whole lot of it.

The participants did not explain why their memories are sketchy. Most did not realize they did not remember until they began talking about their life experiences; however, weak memories of early life and school experiences were a consistent report.

Difficult Beginnings

Alex and Bob were scared to go to school. Both remembered crying during their first week. Bob reported that he did not want to go, but his mother forced him to attend. Carol remembered her kindergarten teacher having two students who were "pets." These

students sat in big desks at the front, and she was put in the back. She also remembered that in first grade, "Um, there's lot of times that they would not talk to me. The other kids wouldn't talk to me or anything." Debbie also remembered others in the class making fun of her for pronouncing words wrong. This made her feel "stupid." She remembered not knowing how to walk up and talk to the other children. She stated, "You know they'd talk to me, and I just kind of, I'd sit there and ignore them talking to me 'cause, you know, I didn't know what to say back. But I'd walk up to somebody and steal their crayons just to get attention. Well, maybe, maybe somehow I could start, you know, start a conversation or something." Gloria reported that she sat on the playground and talked to teachers or her brother. She recalled other kids laughing at her. She stated, "They thought I was stuck up because I didn't talk very much." Fran's most vivid memory was her teacher putting her in an ability group and moving her to the back of the room. She only remembered doing something right one time. Heath related a memorable kindergarten experience:

> I can remember in kindergarten they were teaching us the difference between left and right; something that's pretty common. And you had to do it on paper, which was reversed. And I got it mixed up. I put left and right, right and left. She put an unhappy face on it. She looked down at me. I remember that just sour look. I'm thinking—I—it upset me at the time.

Junior High

Late elementary and junior high was a time when other students had a significant effect on the interviewees. Carol was picked on and made fun of by other girls in fifth and sixth grades. By junior high she had more friends, and the "making fun of" had lessened. Debbie reported changing schools in seventh grade and having some girls think she was "stuck up." But overall she felt a part of school and of a group. Alex confirmed

the importance of his group of friends. He felt pressure to maintain his status with the "more popular people in the class." Bob reported having friends and socializing during junior high. Edward simply stated, "It just wasn't--junior high just wasn't that big a deal." Gloria also reported that in junior high her life got a little better because she made a few more friends. Heath described his junior high experience, "Junior high wasn't too bad. I actually found some calling. You know, I was okay at football."

The men in the study reported late junior high or early high school as being a time of intensification and awareness. Alex discussed his early high school experiences:

> And I kind of, see my younger part of it was—uhm—like my ninth and tenth grade year—uhm—I was always—a matter of fact, the class above us was the, the elite class. Even when they were young they were still like popular. And so, it always kind of bothered me when we played sports cause they were better at sports. So, I was always—always tried my best but didn't—they were kind of snobbish. So that's—I think that's when I started getting nervous about stuff.

Bob could not explain why but during tenth grade he reported a change in himself and his attitude. He stated, "For some reason I just got the attitude that I just kind of quit studying." He further stated, "And I just kind of lost interest in school, in the regular classes, I guess." Edward also reported that his sophomore year was traumatic. He became the quarterback for his high school football team. He described himself as "real timid, real scared." He related how he felt:

> I just was kind of, my sophomore year I was kind of just thrown to the wolves. You know I just wasn't ready, shouldn't have been playing, shouldn't, or shouldn't have been starting. You know, but I was, I, that was it. You know I was the only one so, and all. And I, it was awful, you know and I just was not happy with myself.

Heath described ninth grade as "the worst year of my life." His coach began by telling him he was going to groom him to be an all state tackler and champion power lifter. Heath explained his feelings:

> You know, I'm in practice, and I'm giving my all, and I'd press some of the older guys, and I'd knock down a guy bigger than me, you know. I, I don't like doing it. I, I don't like it, it's not me, it's I, I'm just not athletic in that sense. I've got athletic ability but mentally no, not really. I mean, I missed 33 days that year. Any other school would have held me back. They let me go, play and pass. I made three F's. I flunked, uh, flunked algebra completely because he would always call on us in class. I hated that man.

His coach was also his algebra teacher. He called on the students repeatedly. Heath detested this so much he would stay home saying he was sick. His sophomore year he told the coaches his ears were too bad to play football. His grades and attendance improved. The freshman/sophomore years seem to be important in all of these men's lives and development.

Being Put On the Spot

Heath's coach/algebra teacher's approach to teaching is common and reported as stressful for the students involved in this study. All reported that their apprehension intensifies if they are "put on the spot." Gloria described how teachers reacted to her as a student who did not talk much:

> Different teachers did different things. Some would try to put me on the spot to try to get me to talk which would make it even worse because then you feel like you're on the spot and everybody's watching you. And then, some would just talk to me, and they'd get me like competing with my brother and that kind of helped me open up. Mostly, some even forgot that I was there. People would come in and ask for me to give me a message, and 'I don't have a student by that name.' Yeah, I'm over here. So, I mean, they would just forget. I could get a pass to go to the bathroom and come back the end of the class; they wouldn't even know I'd be gone the whole time.

Gloria further explained the incidents of being put on the spot that she most remembered:

> Math is usually right there. I remember you had to go up and work the problems on the board. And you'd be sitting there like the longest time. And everybody got theirs and you're still, don't know how to do it. And of course you have the whole class watching you. You know probably three-fourths of them probably couldn't do it either. But I was the one up there.

Fran also remembered dreading having the teacher call on her. She explained, "Yes, cause I didn't want the teacher to call on me. I didn't want to do--I didn't want to read. Cause if I said something wrong it'd really make me feel dumb, I guess, is what you'd say."

Labeling Students

Heath, Fran, and Gloria think that teachers label students. Gloria believes that teachers tend to "just label you 'shy' and that's the way you are...And they pass you by." Fran remembered hearing teachers talking about another student, but she knew that the student was like her; therefore, she felt the teachers were talking about her also. She still feels this way when others talk and related the emotion to being put in a group and moved to the back of the room. She knew then, as a first grader, the label was put on her, and she still maintains the label. She has no fond memories of any elementary teacher. She only remembers being treated "like I can't accomplish nothing." Heath confirmed the label came very early in elementary school by the judgments that were made about him. He related that the label was intensified by things such as always having the same students on teams in soccer. He was always on the team that was backed into the fence. He stated, "And that was just kind of being classified, you know, right there."

Good and Bad Teachers

The participants reported distinct differences in what they consider good and bad teachers. The disposition of the teacher was important. In talking about those teachers considered "bad," Alex, Bob, and Edward used the following descriptors: grouchy, strict, cranky, didn't seem happy, real mean, and hateful. Edward reported that his third grade teacher would pick students up and shake them. He was never shaken but related, "I was probably always nervous thinking that she might do that to me." He also did not care for his fifth grade teacher and was diagnosed as having ulcers that year.

Carol, Fran, and Gloria reported specific actions that caused their negative reactions to their teachers. Carol had two teachers in junior high whom she just could not understand, but she was afraid to approach them. When asked why she did not like them, she replied, "I think they paid more attention to the other students, I guess, the ones who talked more and everything." Fran still suffers from her first grade teacher's actions. She recalled that very significant first grade experience:

> In first grade the only thing that I can really remember about my first teacher, she was, and uh, that, and her separating the class. You know that's the only thing I can remember about that particular. I couldn't grasp what she was telling me on the math. I could get the adding, but subtracting was really, really, like, what is going on, you know? What are you doing, you know? And I, I think a lot of people, lot of kids do that, but, but she separated the class on how fast you picked up on things.

This experience was devastating to Fran. Her description was intense and emotional, and she referenced this experience several times during her life narrative.

Gloria, too, had teachers all through the grades who made her feel less capable. She explained:

> The worst thing you can tell somebody is 'you should already know this, this is not rocket science.' You tell people, 'oh, this is just basic.' They automatically assume what they know is what you should already know, and it just reaffirms that feeling of 'oh my gosh, I don't know that so I must be dumb.'

Heath's teachers have little significance to him. He stated, "Most of them were kind of delegated to the background." He thinks because he was quiet, teachers responded differently to him. He explained:

> I think, and this is sad, a lot of them seemed more concerned, especially, you know, that they're going into this teachers' lounge and smoking than doing anything else. So, I, I know that, you know, they got involved with other kids, they just seemed to ignore me. I didn't talk; I was quiet; I faded into the background; they didn't notice me, I think.

The "good" teachers were those who helped and who made the participants feel special or who interacted with them. Alex liked most of his teachers, but his favorites were his third grade teacher and his senior math teacher. He reported that both teachers made work fun and his math teacher "helped me out." He also said that she interacted with the students continuously. Bob and his high school principal had mutual respect. Bob remembered him because "he was friendly towards me." Carol reported that her sixth grade teacher and home economics teachers were her favorites. She related, "They were really nice, and they helped me out." Edward was close to his coaches because they worked closely with him. Fran, too, reported it was those teachers who helped who were important to her. Her business economics teacher took a special interest in her and encouraged her to compete in interscholastic meets. She stated, "So I felt like I was a little more important there, you know." Gloria's sixth grade teacher talked with her and encouraged her to compete with her brother. He "cheered me on" which made her believe that maybe she could do the work if he believed in her.

Participation

Although these students realized they were "quiet" or "shy" they were not necessarily always in the background. Four reported being disciplined in school for talking. Alex reported being "really mouthy" in junior high. All reported participation in class and/or school activities. Bob and Carol stated that they enjoyed reading aloud in class because they were good at it. Alex and Bob enjoyed answering questions if they knew the answers. Alex, Bob, Carol, Debbie, Edward, Fran, Gloria, and Heath participated in extracurricular activities and enjoyed them. Alex, Debbie, Edward, and Fran were successful athletes. Bob participated in sports in junior high but was active in Future Farmers of America in high school. Carol became active in Future Homemakers and was elected to an office in Future Business Leaders of America at vo-tech. Gloria liked singing in the chorus. Heath was an officer in Future Business Leaders of America at one time. Several also participated in band.

College and Beyond

The participants have all had at least one semester of college. They all have ambitions and at this point have been fairly successful in college. All reported grade averages of C+/B- or higher. Gloria made a 4.0 GPA her first semester, and Heath has a two year cumulative GPA of 3.8. All participants believed that they can handle the subject matter required to get a degree. However, the demands of communication and the college environment causes/has caused some distress. Alex is hesitant to ask questions and speak up in class. He said he is "afraid the teacher will look at me, and I just 'duh'." He was not like that in his small, rural high school where he was the valedictorian and

star football player. He also knew everyone in his home environment. Now, he knows very few people, and that makes him afraid to talk.

Bob also went to a small, rural school where he knew everyone. He related how he felt when he went to a large comprehensive university:

> I realized, I mean, where I went to school I was, you know, one of the big fish, I guess, and when I got up there [to the university] everybody's smart more or less. I mean at least as smart as you are. When you, when I got to [the university], I, it's just, everybody's a big fish. You just felt, and you're a number.

Carol never asks questions in class but will answer questions if asked. She admited that when she is asked a question, "It makes me really nervous. I can't think of what to say." Debbie was overwhelmed her first semester but feels more comfortable now that she knows what to expect. Fran only takes three to six hours a semester while working full time on campus. She feels the classes help her to grow. Gloria reported, "First, I was overwhelmed, but um, but now I'm getting the hang of it. It's because I want to get A's." She had always wanted to go to college but was afraid she was not smart enough. She made all A's her first semester. Heath went to a small, rural school, and even though the state university he now attends is small, he said, "But to me it was a culture shock." However, he reported that most of the time he has "thoroughly enjoyed" college. Heath thinks he is "made to be in academics" and plans to continue until he gets his Ph.D.

Now that they are fairly successful in college, each has some focus on what degree he/she wants. Alex is the most uncertain. He thinks that he will probably pursue business management, but in the midst of a rough semester, he is not totally committed. Bob said that he will probably finish his degree in finance because he is interested in stocks and because he has set the curve in finance class. However, he has no plans to use

the degree; he likes farming. Carol, the most timid and quiet of all those interviewed, has chosen early childhood education as her major. She hopes to teach kindergarten. She does not want to teach students over second grade because she does not think she "could get up and teach them." Debbie is an English education major. She said if she has students like her who do not like "to get up in front of a class and talk" she will not make them. Edward has decided on cartography because he likes to be outside. Fran hopes eventually to major in family and consumer science and teach home economics. It was her favorite class in high school, and she thinks it is important for students to know. Gloria is an early childhood major. She stated, "I want to become a teacher because I realize that at such a young age—I mean, you're affected at such a young age. And, I just want to be like my sixth grade teacher and my daughter's teacher." Heath has chosen sociology as his major. Even though he admitted he is never comfortable around people, he would like to study them in society. He stated, "I have always been fascinated by people and how they interact with each other. And, I've always thought that society plays a much bigger role in individual society."

Naming and Explaining the Problem

The interviewees discussed their communication problems throughout their life narratives. They talked about what happens to them in communication situations, and they also told what they thought might be the cause of their particular communication problem. The participants revealed how they talk and think about their lived experiences with CA.

Name It

During the conversations, each participant named his/her affliction. Five of the participants used the term "shy" to describe their inhibited communication style. As Gloria explained, " I've always been really shy. Um. I always, always felt stupid. A—a lot of it was probably from my dad. But growing up with that, I've always been very shy." Carol used "shy" to describe herself, but she also used the term "quiet" as did Heath. Edward used the term "bashful." He stated, "Yeah, I'd say I was kind of bashful.... I was probably always kind of bashful or whatever." Bob referred to himself as "apprehensive."

Timeline of CA

Whatever the term used to describe his/her communication style, each was asked when he/she thought it started or when he/she recognized it. Alex says that he really was not "shy" until he was 14 or15. Some older students were better at sports than he and were "always kind of snobbish." He identified this as the point when he became unsure and nervous about "stuff."

Bob identifies no particular point but feels the "apprehension" has always been there. Carol related that others reported to her mother very early that she "hardly ever talked." Her mother recalled that she talked continuously at home. She thought she has always been "shy or quiet," but she did not become aware of it as a problem until she was in late elementary/early junior high. She believes she became aware of the "shyness" as a problem when she "had to get up more." Debbie's awareness came at about the same time as Carol's. She reported that it started about sixth grade [her junior high started in

sixth grade] "when I started being in band and stuff." She explained how she thinks the "shyness" developed:

> I think it was there, but I don't think, I think it was just starting. But it hit me the hardest in junior high because I was having to do more of getting up in front of the class, more of, more outgo--, more band stuff and more stuff was forcing me to do it. And teachers were forcing me saying you have to do this, and they wouldn't take no for an answer. I think it was inclining, as I, maybe when I was born it was inclining, and it just hit me the hardest in junior high.

Edward identified two times when he thinks his "bashfulness" increased. He first recognized it when he was a sophomore and he felt pressure from his parents, coaches, and teachers. He also dropped out of college after a semester and a half. At that point he became isolated, and he did not wish to communicate with others. Fran identified the first grade as the point when she was aware of her "shyness." She thinks it was because she "was unfamiliar with what was going on." Gloria thinks she has always been "shy," and her abusive early childhood exacerbated it. Heath sees the development of his being "quiet" as developmental. He believes he has always had a tendency to be "quiet," but the negative judgments he felt in early elementary increased the "quietness." He further feels it continued to increase through school and was "entrenched by high school."

Causes of CA

The participants named their communication problem and identified when they felt it began/or became apparent to them. The next step was to identify what each thought might be the cause of the communication disorder. Six of the eight participants had an explanation. Although her mother says she has always been shy, Carol identified being made fun of and being left out of things by her cousins and children at school. Debbie realized the cause of her shyness may be genetic because her mother is the same

way. However, she thinks a major part of the problem comes from being sheltered and not being pushed to experience things. Edward stated, "I think that's probably just personality." Yet, he does see the possibility of environment being the cause. Edward identified his parents as both being shy. He, therefore, thinks the cause could be the "way I was brought up." He stated, "Or, maybe it's just what I seen, so that's what I did." Fran thinks her abusive older sister picking on her caused her to be shy. The sister called her names and told her she was "weak" and "dumb." Fran stated, "It is like she took part of my confidence away." Gloria knows that her shyness could be from her biological mother and father. Both are quiet. However, she feels much of it comes from the environment in which she was reared. She described the environment:

> So it might be a little bit of, but I mean just, growing up, being told how stupid you were, you know, you're no good, you'll never amount to anything. But he always told my sisters every time they made a mistake, 'Do you want to grow up like her?' So I mean, just hearing that all that time, I was, I would be—tell myself, 'No, I'm not, no I'm not.' But I was afraid that if I talk in front of anybody or answer any questions, I'd kind of, they'd see through me and realize that I really was.

Gloria has also realized since leaving the environment that she has grown and that being out of it has made a big difference in her. Heath does not believe his quietness is genetic. He said that since he is a sociology major he is "going to lean toward nurture." Heath identified his grandmother as a source of his believing he is "not as good as everybody else." He also thinks being picked on and called names also increased the quietness.

Coping with CA

Because of the apprehension (shyness, quietness) the participants reported that they have developed ways of coping with stressful communication. Bob said that what

he prefers to do is to withdraw from the situation. If he gets in a situation that is "tight" or controversial, he feels he needs to step away for a day, think about it, and then come back. Carol stated the way she learned to handle situations was withdrawal. She stated, "I think I just stopped talking or anything. I just went to myself, I think." Debbie chooses carefully where she sits in a classroom. She explained her strategy:

> And when I go to classrooms, I sit in front of every classroom I go in, front row or second row, cause no one can, no one behind me can see me. And the people in front of me are turned so they can't see me. So, the person that sees me is the ones over here that are beside me and the teacher, nobody else. So, if I answer a question, only so many people are seeing me, and the rest of them aren't. So, if I say the wrong answer I don't totally, you know, embarrass myself.

Debbie also reported, "getting into her shell," ducking her head and refusing to answer questions. Fran explained it by stating, "You know I just hold things in. That's another thing; I just hold things in." Because of the abusive situation, Gloria explained, "We just learned to be quiet and make yourself scarce." At one time she would not talk to anybody, and she stared at the floor a lot. Once she came to realize people expected eye contact, Gloria learned to "zone out in the face." She reported looking at them but not seeing them. Heath explained his method for coping:

> That's how, oh, that's how I always got by, in later years. I keep my mouth shut, and I don't talk. That's how I've always kind of avoided bringing the wrath of others, so to speak. I, I don't say anything, and if I don't say anything, if I blend in, I become the proverbial ninja or something.

He also reported keeping his eyes down. Heath stated, "If they can't make eye contact with you, they can't see you." This strategy has been affirmed by the reactions of others. He related how it was effective with a high school teacher:

> But she, uh, she ran to the door. First thing you do, each one of my questions, you shut your mouth like that, everybody. That, that turned out to be okay. That, I got over that because I kept my mouth shut, and she was busy yelling at people that didn't.

Withdrawal, whether physically, mentally, or verbally seems to be the method of choice reported by the participants in this study.

Better or Worse

At this point in their lives, seven of the participants reported that their apprehension has gotten better. Alex explained that he is getting "more comfortable" every day. Carol thinks that growing up and a loud best friend have attributed to her being "a little bit better now." Debbie feels like when her parents allowed her more freedom during her junior year, she began to open up more. She believes she is improving in her ability to participate. Improvement came for Edward when he returned to college. He related that he has "come a long way." Fran's reported improvement has come after assuming a job requiring more interaction. Gloria's marriage and religious conversion "have just really made a huge difference." The college experience has helped Heath. He enjoys academics and feels he has found a calling. Even though all participants self reported high levels of apprehension, they also reported the feeling of improving with age and experience.

Ability to Perform

Each participant also reported the ability to perform if the demand or reward was sufficient. Alex was an honor society officer and valedictorian of his class. Both required he do public presentations. He was nervous but able to perform in the situations. Bob said he can do whatever needs to be done to "take care of business." During a bitter

child custody battle, he surprised himself at his ability to function in the courtroom. Carol stated that she can answer if she feels it is absolutely necessary. At vo-tech she ran and was elected vice-president of Future Business Leaders of America. She also made a successful speech during this time. Debbie believes, "I can do it if I set my mind to it." Even though he worries about communication situations he faces in his business, Edward reported "doing fine" when facing the situation. Fran also felt pressure in her job but was able to ask questions when she needed clarification. Gloria stated, "Usually I can deal with it; I force myself to deal with it." Heath also can "force" himself, but he is still afraid of what others are thinking. Perhaps "force" or "make myself" would summarize how the participants describe having to communicate. Communication is not easy for them, and they realize that these inhibitions have had serious effects on their lives.

Effects of CA

When telling his/her life narrative, each participant related how the CA had affected his/her life. Alex's comments began with an honest and intense explanation. He stated, "I just know it sucks." He feels he is not like other college students. The apprehension prevents him from going out and socializing as he sees others doing. He goes to school and he works. Alex also believes his grades would be better if he were more comfortable communicating in front of people. Bob, the oldest participant, believes he would have enjoyed life more if he were not afraid. He described spending a lot of time running scenarios through his mind trying to figure out all possible options. He also believes his being self-employed has been determined to some extent by his apprehension. The thought of a job interview is terrifying to Bob. In his work he spends many days not talking to anyone. Carol thinks her CA has kept her from meeting people.

Her comment revealed deep emotion. She said, "I don't like it; I wish I could be like others." Debbie, too, feels she has "missed out on getting to do things." She believes she would have had "more fun in school, more fun growing up" if she had not been so apprehensive. Her comment echoed Alex and Carol. She stated, "It stinks. I guess the main thing, it just, it really stinks." Gloria watches others and admires their ability to just walk up to someone and start talking. She stated, "I wish I could be like that. I would love to be outgoing." Gloria told about working in a busy doctors' office. By the end of the day when she arrived home she could not talk to her daughter or husband. When she arrived home she would hide her car, turn out the lights, unplug the phone, lock the door, and pretend no one was home. Gloria explained her behavior:

> So people would leave me alone. Um. Because people just sap the energy right out of me. That sounds weird, but I just. I'm around people all day long and have to deal with them. By the time I get home I have no energy left. I just, there's nothing else to give anybody else. It just takes a lot out of me. Usually I can deal with it; I force myself to deal with it, but at the end of the day I really suffer for it.

All participants are aware of the effects of communication apprehension on their lives.

Communication Situations

The participants also commented on different communication situations and how they feel in interpersonal and/or public speaking situations. Interpersonal communication is difficult for those discussing this type of communication. Alex and Carol simply do not know what to say. Both have the desire to talk to others but are unable most of the time. Carol as well as Debbie and Edward can participate in conversation if the other will approach them. Edward and Bob mentioned problems with initial conversations with women. Debbie said the difficulty initiating conversation is with friends as well as strangers. She is trying now to initiate conversations when she sits by someone in class.

She has had some success at this and feels good about it. Gloria can communicate if there is a particular reason for being together. She does not like to be just thrown together. The only people she is really comfortable "opening up" to are her husband, daughter, and one best friend. She explained how she feels with other people:

> I don't--I have a--have a hard time opening up to people. It makes me real uncomfortable, get nervous when they get around me. I always feel like speaking--you're dealing--you're, no matter what you're talking about, you're still giving them part of who you are, and that's really hard.

Participants unanimously dread public speaking or speech class. Bob said that if he had not been required to take public speaking he would not have taken it "for a million years." The class just happened to fit in his schedule this semester or he said, "I would have put it off 'til the last semester." The one word all participants used to describe how public speaking makes them feel is "nervous." Most also reported problems with eye contact. Carol's reason for not looking at the audience is then she doesn't know if they are looking at her. Collectively, the participants provided the following list of what happens to them during public speaking: can't breathe, twitch, throat twitches, shake, sweat, palms sweat, voice cracks, turn red, stutter, and look down. They fear that they will not make sense, that they cannot remember, that people will make fun of them or laugh at them. They have great concern for what people will think of them. To some there was a threat from others looking at them. Heath explained his public speaking experience:

> But I'm thinking how I look in front of those people. And they're all looking at me—have to find something wrong with you. They don't like you, don't want nothing to do with you. They just want you to shut up and sit down. Thoughts like that go through my head, and I can't breathe very well. I'm just—talking too fast, and I—I can get my—if I could just slow down and relax and get my breathing going, I'd be fine.

Gloria gave a second example of the emotional upheaval caused by public speaking:

> Well, a lot of times it's kind of the attitude people who don't experience that—they kind of laugh and think you're being ridiculous. You're just being self-conscious, or you just need to picture them all, you know, in their underwear type thing. And it's just like it's not like that. It's like you go up there and you might as well be in front of a firing squad. I mean, I feel like my stomach is in my throat; my mind goes completely blank. I can't think any more, and all I'm thinking about is, let me just get through this so I can go sit down.

Comfort Zone

Even though public speaking is not comfortable for any of the participants, they do have activities and environments in which they are comfortable and perform well. Alex was a star athlete in high school, and he was not nervous on the field. He stated, "I really don't because when I played sports I wanted to be the person that people noticed. I was always getting the fans going and stuff, and I wanted, I kind of showed off and stuff." Bob's comfort zone is when he is confident doing something. If he is sure he knows the answers he will be confident, comfortable, and ready to participate. Carol's comfort zone is her family. She becomes shy "around other people." Debbie was a confident tennis player and was not nervous in matches. That contrasted to playing her trumpet in band; she never felt she was good at this and was always scared of making mistakes. When he is in "a superior position," Edward feels confident. He likes people but not in large groups. Even in a restaurant he prefers to be in the corner and not in the middle of a bunch of people. He, like Bob, is confident when he knows what he is doing, and he does not mind talking. Edward was also a star athlete in high school and never got nervous in front of a crowd when he played football. Fran also was a high school athlete and enjoyed basketball. If she is sure and knows what she is doing she feels more

comfortable. Gloria, an early childhood major, stated, "in front of kids, I'm fine." She did admit that adults scare her. Her comfort zone with kids comes from their honesty. She explained, "You don't have to wonder what they're thinking about me. They, they'll tell you." Heath reported he has no comfort zone with people. He likes studying and academic work.

Emotional Experiences

The participants had specific events during their lives that they still remember as traumatic and intense. The incidents were told with strong emotion, and the memories were not easily discussed.

Traumatic Experience

At age 13 Alex began to work with his biological father. He explained this experience:

> I worked with him during the summers. He's a carpenter, and uh, I don't know, he's really, really--um—he wants to get work done, and everything has to be done his way. And there's a lot of things he didn't like about me. Um, he didn't like—he didn't want me to play in sports a lot. He always thought that wasn't important. It was to me. But I love sports, but he thought that work was more important—very strict. Always wanted me to do things his way like I'd get in trouble for the way I ate and stuff.

Bob related two early experiences he still remembers as very frightening. At three he was a ring bearer in a cousin's wedding. He recalled the incident:

> And it's a double wedding, and she asked me to be the ring bearer. And I, I did it, but I, I mean, I think I bawled and squalled, and I never was, I don't think I was in another wedding 'til I was in high school, cause I would not do it. I mean that was not that big a deal, but it was to me, and I can remember.

Bob also rememberd being very "scared" when doing a second grade play. However, applying for a job during college was traumatic, and he referenced this incident a number of times in telling his life narrative. Bob explained the extent of his fear:

> I mean, but anyway we, me and a friend of mine, went out to a dairy. I was going to see about getting a job. And so we went out and talked to the guy that was the boss. And we are sitting there waiting to talk to him, and—and he asked me my name, and I was so scared I forgot my name. My friend had to tell him my name. I mean, I was shaking in my boots.

Carol's cousins were a repeated topic in her life story. They often teased her, called her names and refused to let her play with them. She related a particular incident with her cousins:

> Yeah, they would call me names. Um. They wouldn't let me play with them sometimes. They wouldn't. One time I remember they wouldn't let me play on my own swing set. They made me get off my own swing.

For Debbie her mother's remarriage disrupted her young life. This change had major focus in all of her life narrative. She vividly and emotionally related the incident that changed her world:

> I got held back in the second grade, which hurt me a lot because I felt stupid again. It went back to, well, you know you're stupid; you are not smart enough to go on. Of course all my friends moved up to third grade, so they rubbed it in. You know, you're the stupid one cause you got all C's, and you got held back. But part of it was—was the transition. I lived in Prairie and, er, and I was used to going to school at Prairieview. Mom gets married. I have to move to Mountain City. I have to start a whole new life, with a new father that I, you know, I barely knew two weeks when they got married. And I just, I was con—I think I was confused. And I didn't pay a whole lot of attention in school because, oh, I couldn't do it. I just could not do it. I couldn't do the subjects. I couldn't do math. I couldn't add simple numbers just cause I didn't want to—because this wasn't my life. This wasn't where I was supposed to be. I was supposed to be—I was supposed to be in Prairie living with Nana and Papa with just mom. I wasn't supposed to be here.

Edward is back in college after dropping out the first time after one and one-half semesters. He told about an incident that occurred shortly before he dropped out of college:

> My second semester I had to take a humanities class. That's the first time I ever had to get up and talk, and I got up there and had to do my speech over a Greek goddess. And, I got up there and couldn't remember nothing. And I said maybe two or three sentences and went and put my book in my bag and walked out, never went back. I dropped out probably, maybe two or three weeks later.

Edward said that it was not the reason he dropped out of school; however, he did say that this was "probably the straw that broke the camel's back or something."

Fran repeatedly referred to the incident in first grade. When her first grade teacher separated the class "based on how fast we picked up on things," Fran's world changed. Being moved to the back of the room put her in a different category. Now in her thirties, Fran still carries pain and stigma from this.

All of Gloria's life was traumatic. She was abused mentally, physically, and sexually. School was a place of refuge. She loved her first grade teacher who was one of the first adults to be nice to her. Gloria told the story of her teacher's reaction to a mistake Gloria made:

> My first grade teacher, I really liked her. I thought she was really nice. And then I can't remember if she asked us--I can't remember what she asked. She asked--she asked a question, and I answered it wrong. And it kind of, everybody was laughing at me and she made just some offhand remark. Nobody else paid any attention. They were laughing cause it was funny, not at me. But I remember thinking, oh, my favorite teacher, just really, you know. It just hurt me that she would say something. I--I don't even remember what, I just remember thinking, here she was, I thought she was really nice, and she said something and then everybody laughed. And I thought that, that, thinking back, you know kids laugh and it'd be funny. But to me, I thought they were laughing at me and she was.

Heath recalled "getting taunted and picked on" most all the way through school. The worst for him was riding the bus during second grade. He stated, "And I was one of the last kids to get picked up. The bus was packed. I was a little fat kid, and there was a lot of cruel teenagers on the bus. And uh, I would usually just sit back by them. They terrorized me." The topic of "the bus" was revisited several times during Heath's telling of his life story. Heath also related a poignant incident that happened during elementary school. He explained the incident:

> I just remember one day him and, and Greg and Kevin, I think, Robbie, the, the guy that was in the pictures in the eighth grade—them holding me down, and they sat on my chest. One of them sat on my chest, and I couldn't move...I remember Greg punching me in the stomach. And he just, you know, he was driving my head into the dirt. I just know what that felt like, just utter helpless, and I can't move. I was pretty weak then, I could not move. And I get inside, they finally let me up, and I'm more or less crying. They're still people still picking on me there, and other people, oh, I'd forgotten about that, uh. Just a felling of utter helplessness, like, you know, you're nothing. You might as well just lay there and take it.

Expectations and Pressure

During the telling of their life stories, six of the eight participants revealed that they feel/had felt pressure to meet the expectations of others. Alex reported feeling that he must meet expectations from many in his mother and father's families, but he feels this most from his dad. He stated, "Yeah, I always feel pressure from my dad, a lot of pressure." The pressure comes form his father concerning work and making money. Since he was thirteen and began working for his father, he has felt the high expectations. He explained, "Yeah, he wanted me, he always wanted me to be a hard worker and make money." However, Alex feels he must also live up to how his family is viewed in his hometown. Both families are respected and have prominent positions in the community.

When he was a sophomore, his paternal grandmother gave him a book about "keeping the family name." His maternal grandfather who lives "back east" also increased the expectations. Alex knew he was his grandfather's favorite grandson because he excelled at athletics and academics.

Bob also feels he must meet expectations because of who his parents are. His father was a university professor, and his mother had been a schoolteacher. Because of this he feels/felt people have certain expectations of him. He said, "I mean, when your parents are school teachers or whatever, you're expected to do good in school." His mother insisted that he attend the large, comprehensive university where his father had done his graduate work. He felt he had always been pushed because his mother was a teacher. He also felt because of the way he was brought up that "I was expected to be a doctor or lawyer or teacher or something." He also felt pressure to make good grades. After flunking out of the comprehensive university, he eventually became a farmer and feels he has failed to meet the expectations of others. He explained, "I guess who I was, I mean my parents were teacher or whatever. I mean that what people—you make good grades or whatever, you're not supposed to be a farmer...They don't think smart people are going to choose to be a farmer." He is now back in college to get his degree so he can "hang it on the wall." He does not know if he will ever use it, but he will have it. That satisfies an expectation from a family in which all members have degrees.

Debbie sees her mother "as a perfect person," and she admits having "a mindset to—to be a perfect person." She is not that way in everything, but she stated, "There are some things where I have to be perfect. I have to, and it just makes me so angry if I don't." She feels she was "pushed" by her stepfather and if his expectations were not

met, she was not allowed to socialize with friends. She said, "It was like my reward to get to do something after I had accomplished what he wanted me to do in school."

Edward did feel pressure in high school. The worst pressure came from football and being quarterback. Edward said, "I wasn't going to play football my first, or my sophomore year, I guess. And, oh man, I really got the cold shoulder, and you know, I was just expected to, you know, I was expected to do certain things." However, he did want to meet the expectations his mother and father had set for him. He felt they had certain expectations for his behavior. He repeated his father's advice:

> Uh. Yeah, uh, I would say Daddy—Daddy probably does. Cause one of his famous sayings, you know, is, you know, if I was doing something that I wasn't supposed to be doing, you know, he'd, 'I don't do it, you're not going to do it. You know, it's not right for you to go out and do it, people look at you, and, you know, they know that you're my kid, and, you know, then it's a reflection on me.'

Edward's mother taught in his high school, and he felt she knew if he would "walk down the hall the wrong way." He also has two older sisters, one who had been valedictorian, the other a star athlete, whose behavior he described as "perfect." He stated, "My two older sisters were perfect. I mean, they've never drank, they've never been to a party." Edward referred to himself as "the black sheep" of his family. His greatest sense of not meeting expectations, however, came when he quit college. He explained:

> But like I say, I was always—I was always somebody or something until I quit school. Then I moved home, and you know, and life goes on, and you're not who you used to be as far as...You're just—you're not looked at the same way. You're not going to school, and you know if you stay in school, no matter if you're playing football or anything, you know, you're a college kid. You know, you're doing something with your life. Well, working, you're not doing nothing.

He stated the reason he returned to school was because "I was tired of being looked at the way I was being looked at."

Gloria who grew up with only negative expectations of her and who grew up being told she was ugly and stupid, now has high, self-imposed expectations. She says, "I have to get A's." She explained why A's are important. She stated, "And I guess that's why I want to get all A's, just to prove I'm not stupid, I can do it...If I had lower than a B I'd probably cry. I would be really upset."

Expectations from his football coach caused Heath to convince others and himself that he was ill. He described why he missed 33 days of school. He stated, "It would—it would, I think, one word or something—there was just pressure. I couldn't take the pressure." He described the pressure:

> I think it started with Coach [name omitted] putting all that pressure on me. He—he expected stuff of me. They expected me to be—to get mean—and football's a physical game. I mean, hey, you got to get an attitude about it when you get out they, and the guys I was around, they were just typical high school jocks, you know. Mr. Stud they thought they were, I guess. But I just didn't fit in with that. That just wasn't me, somehow, and I just—I felt pressure to be that way...

Fears

Not only did the participants express feeling pressure to meet expectations, but they also explained the things they fear when communicating. Bob, Debbie, Edward, and Fran all used terms to describe their fear of making mistakes. Bob simply said he feared making mistakes, but Debbie was more expressive in her description. She repeatedly talked about her fear of "messing up," "screwing up," "doing something wrong," and finally "drives me nuts to make mistakes." Edward said he is afraid he is "not going to do something like it's supposed to be done," and he is "scared he is going to mess up."

Fran expressed the fear that she was "going to be wrong." Fran explained the intensity of the fear:

> ...I'm always afraid that I'm going to be wrong. I don't like to be wrong. You know if, even now, when I'm typing something or even a word that I think I know, but it felt right—you know, you type it or something, you know it's right. I still look it up to make sure it's right because I don't want nobody to think that I'm not smart at all.

Bob, Carol, Debbie, Gloria, and Heath expressed a fear of how others might view them. Bob referred to this as a "fear of looking stupid." Carol and Debbie are "afraid of what people might think." Gloria thinks that when she communicates, she is showing her intelligence, and others may think she is " a ding-a-ling." She explained:

> And I just feel like you're just really leaving yourself open for people to criticize, and they're going to judge. Because, I mean, that's part of what you—they're going to have an opinion. They're going to judge; I'm just afraid I'm going to fall really short.

Heath simply said the thing he fears is "scrutiny." Bob also fears communicating on a personal, emotional level. Even with his children, he does not wish to discuss anything much more personal than homework. Besides making mistakes, Fran has a great fear of not being able to remember. Gloria has many fears and admitted that "a lot of people scare me." Another fear for her is any new situation.

Worrying

Because of the fear and expectations, Alex, Bob, Debbie, and Edward talked about worrying. Alex said, "Everything worries me." He listed some of the things about which he worries. These included keeping up the family name, being able to do what his dad wants him to, and deciding whether to stay in school or go to work. Bob worries

about what others think when he tells them he is a farmer because he feels they think "any dummy can do it." He also reported spending much time worrying about scenarios that might happen in communication situations. Debbie worries about "messing up." She, too, spends time worrying about the worst possibilities and playing out scenarios. Debbie believes this keeps her from participating in events she might enjoy. Edward also spends a great deal of time and energy worrying. Edward repeated several times during his life narrative that he worries about what people say and what people think of him. He explained, "I think I just really worry about the way people look—look at me and, uh, interpret me as a person and stuff like that. If I know somebody doesn't like me, or something like that, it bothers me." He also stated that he worries "about what people say a lot."

Isolation

One of the most moving revelations that came from listening to the participants tell their life stories was their feeling of isolation from others. Alex, a handsome, well-dressed eighteen-year-old, reported, " I don't mingle with a lot of people." He described his choice to be alone:

> Yeah. I'm not like them, and I don't know why really. I try to sometimes, at work you know. I try to, if I see people I try to talk to them or something. But most of the time I just can't. I'd rather keep to myself, or I don't know why that is , but I just try to keep to myself. Most of the time I'd rather sit at home like I said, sit at home and watch a movie, as to be around a bunch of people.

Bob reported having no close friends. The one person he considers a good friend he sees only occasionally even though he lives close to him. Bob spends many days without talking to anyone. Carol reported that other than family she has two best friends with

whom she is "pretty open." She stated, "Other than that I'm pretty shy around everybody." Debbie described the isolation by saying, "You live in this box with no friends...."

Before returning to college Edward reported, "I just didn't want to go anywhere or did not want to do anything. I did not want to go see anybody. I didn't, I mean, I'd go to work, come home and sit until it got time to go to work the next morning." Edward reported that his best friend is his dad. He said, "I do more with him and talk to him more than I do anybody. As far as having a lot of friends, no, not really."

Fran stated, "I don't socialize a whole lot now. Well, I don't think I ever have. I've tried—but--." Gloria said about friends, "I do not make them real easy. Usually I only have one or two." Heath described his life as isolated." He rememberd playing by himself most of the time. He attended a rural school where he felt like an "outsider" and had difficulty making friends. He admitted that he had never been on a date and had only recently gotten enough courage to ask out a girl who turned him down. He has no friends.

Summary

The life narratives of the participants in this study revealed similar experiences among those telling their stories. The major themes of their reports focused on their early experiences with their families, school experiences, and emotional experiences related to communication apprehension. They also named their communication problem and addressed what they thought caused them to have high levels of CA. The individuals talked freely and openly about a communication disorder that has disrupted and continues to disrupt their lives. It has prevented and continues to prevent them from being as

actively involved in their "worlds" as they would like. This project gives voice to individuals who understand CA as reality in everyday living.

CHAPTER V

Discussion and Implications

Introduction

The development of speech so that language may be acquired is basic in the child's life development. Language provides the child access into his/her social existence. For most children language acquisition is celebrated and encouraged, and it is used as a measurement of his/her ability to become a functioning, successful individual (Phillips, Dunham, Brubaker & Butt, 1970). As reported in Chapter IV the communication development of some individuals is impeded by a communication disorder that disrupts the normal give and take in communication. Porter (1982) refers to communication as "the most central element in the learning process" (p. 52). Porter (1982) further states that "events are significant when they occur in the person's 'life stream'" (p. 52). Listening to the life narratives of individuals who suffer from high levels of communication apprehension (CA) emphasizes the similarities of many of the life experiences of each. Having lived through childhood with the communication disorder and now living through adulthood, each is able to share insights and concerns. The "life stream" events provided by the participants in this project both confirm past research and present possible perspectives to be explored in future research.

Family and Early Childhood Development

As suggested in the current communibiological research, people are born with "individual differences in neurobiological functioning" (Valenic, Beatty, Rudd, Dubos, & Heisel, 1998, p. 328). This research implies that some are born with the tendency to be

quieter, shyer, or less verbal than others; however, in his 1977 research McCroskey suggests as a possible explanation that communication apprehension is not a hereditary trait but that perhaps it develops during early childhood. He further purposes that the development of CA "must lie primarily in a child's experience during the formative years" (p. 80). In the telling of their life narratives, participants consistently reported early life experiences with significant adults, older siblings, or relatives that suggest the interactions negatively affected their communication abilities. Researchers such as Daly and Friedrich (1981) and Giffin and Heider (1967) report the most important period for the development of CA occurs prior to school, perhaps within the first three years of life. The early interaction determines the self-concepts carried throughout life. Through communication with significant people in their environments, individuals learn "interpersonal trust" and that communication brings rewards, or they learn to fear and not trust others or themselves (Giffin & Heider, 1967, pp. 312-313). If children fail at early communication attempts, their self-efficacy is shaken. Self-efficacy is acquired from experiences, and once it is secured, it mediates future actions (Rubin, Martin, Bruning, & Powers, 1993). An important element in developing skills necessary for competent communication is "the amount of perceived encouragement and reward the individual received for communicating" (Daly & Friedrich, 1981, p. 251).

The participants in this study reported significant people within their environments who did not encourage, but discouraged, communication attempts. Instead of rewards, the participants received punishment. Fran described the effect on her life from her older sister, "She just took part of my confidence from me." Communication was often used as a weapon to enforce compliance. Debbie's stepfather would not answer

her unless she called him "Dad," and she felt that he griped at her continuously. Alex and Heath were yelled at by significant others in their environments. Carol, Gloria, and Fran were called hurtful names and made fun of by significant people in their early lives. Bob and Edward had strict, bossy others who expected them to comply with demands.

Significant people within the life experiences of all participants were their fathers and mothers. Porter (1982) states, "A major characteristic of human beings is their need for maintaining vital relationships. One such vital relationship is the degree of security found in sibling and parental affiliation" (p. 47). Fathers and stepfathers were discussed in the life narratives more than mothers. Whether the relationships with the fathers and/or stepfathers were good or bad they were described as influential in each of the participants' lives. Researchers have found that a father's apprehension level and parental modeling are significantly related to apprehension in children" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998, p. 48). Daly and Stafford (1984) also state that "children tend to imitate their parents' communication styles" (p. 131). The participants' descriptions supported these research findings. Edward described his mother as "real timid," and he also said, "Daddy was probably pretty well the same way." Gloria's mother was described as very quiet, and her natural father who was not in her life until she was older is also very quiet. Fran said about her father, "He's very, he, he's like me in a way. He doesn't like to talk a whole lot or argue with anybody." Alex reported his father as being quiet and withdrawn as was his parental grandfather. Carol also related three generations of quiet/shy women in her family, herself, her mother and her grandmother.

Children learn appropriate behavioral skills. They acquire the necessary skills at home or in school. Environments associated with high CA "tend to lack both interaction

and, in many cases, stimulation for interaction" (Daly & Friedrich, 1981, p. 245). If parents are apprehensive, the child may have deficits in skills training. The skills deficits can cause anxiety to develop, and the anxiety, because of not knowing the appropriate behavior, can lead to communication avoidance (Daly & Friedrich, 1981; Glaser, 1981; Phillips, 1973; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). McCroskey, Richmond, Daly, Falcione (1977) report that responsive mothers who are interested in the child's communication have highly verbal children. Of the respondents, five described their mothers as apprehensive. A sixth, Heath, reported that his grandmother, who was his primary caretaker during his preschool years, was apprehensive.

A critical relationship identified by participants but not mentioned in CA research is the relationship with grandparents. All participants had close interaction with grandparents. Most specifically mentioned were grandmothers. Half of the respondents stayed with grandparents while their parents worked. This important relationship needs further exploration to see how, if at all, it interfaces with CA development.

The significant others within the child's environment can also act as models of communication behavior. Children watch the significant others and emulate the communication behavior of them (McCroskey, 1984; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Schlenker and Leary (1982) suggest that "people intentionally or unintentionally lay claim to particular self images that comprise their identities" (p. 643). The participants in this study each revealed someone with whom he/she identified as having a similar communication style. The identification might be viewed as the chosen model for communication behavior; however, the identification seemed to be more explanatory of the participant's behavior than as a model to emulate. At times the identified similar

other was someone the respondent did not want to imitate. Alex stated about his father, "I'm afraid I'm going to be just like him, and I think he was just like his father, and that scares me." Heath identified with his grandmother and said, "Grandma was always there, but she hasn't any real concept of communication or social skills, she really doesn't. She has the same thing I do."

For some, the identification and explanation had been given to the respondent by others within the family to explain his/her communication behavior. Both Carol and Debbie had the explanation given to them by their mothers. Carol related what her mother told her, "She says that she used to be really shy and quiet like me. She says that her mom was too." There are many reasons individuals are told they are "like" others. One reason is as a "put down" such as Heath's mother telling him he is "just like your father." Other reasons might be for a challenge or for motivation; however, as reported by the participant, the explanation seems to be given to reassure the CA individual that his/her behavior is acceptable and normal. Zimbardo (1977) in his discussion of shyness reported something similar to this in an example given by a shy person. The person said that people "work to prevent us from changing, for better or worse. They fill in for, or make excuses for our deficiencies, suppress our excesses, and hold us on a steady course to ensure that 'we act like ourselves'" (p. 63). Although modeling is important, the quick identification of others within the participants' environments whose behaviors are similar is an insight that needs exploration. Identification, all participants identified, may play a role in the maintenance and acceptance of the communication disorder. It may also serve an emulative or directive function after identification is made. The participants did not discuss when they made the identification, nor the influence, positive or negative, the

identification had on communication behavior. Further research is needed to explore the role of significant others in establishing the expectancy of the apprehensive behavior based on evaluations of the infant's or young child's personality. The respondents' families as a whole were/are reported to be the center of their social worlds. His family is described as "self-contained" by Edward. That term seems appropriate to all participants' families. Debbie described her early socialization as being with "just family members. I didn't socialize with anybody else." Others, whether isolated by abuse or location reported the family as their early social environment. Family members within the social environment also function as primary friends. Richmond and McCroskey (1998) report that over fifty percent of good friends listed by high CA individuals are "parents, siblings, or cousins" (p. 74). The discussants in this study substantiate this and perhaps explain the reason. In that the family is the primary place of social interaction, the friends necessarily evolve from that social world. Heath reported no friends, which more than 33 percent of those in Richmond and McCroskey's (1998) research also report.

School and Teachers

The early school experiences were not particularly rewarding for the participants, and all report not remembering much about early elementary school. The memories they do have are often painful. They remembered feeling isolated by other students or teachers and used terms such as "feeling stupid" and "being laughed at" to describe early memories. That they do not remember was a revelation to the participants. The gaps in memory are not discussed in CA literature.

School has been referred to as "a verbal game" (Conner, 1987, p. 54), and the students who know how to play the game will be more successful. Children who come to

school with communication skills already negatively affected by early life experiences may not perform as well at the "verbal game." Debbie reported not knowing how to initiate conversation and using inappropriate behavior to get attention. Conner (1987) says, "Throughout the literature, students' success and failure in school are bound up in their willingness to share and create meaning through verbal communication" (p. 524). If a child comes to school with lower level communication skills as the participants in this study, McCroskey (1977) believes the school environment might heighten the child's communication response. He stated that "while the school environment demands the child communicate, the lower skills level of the child likely will result in less reinforcement for communication than that given to other children (by both teachers and peers)" (p. 80). Also, the quiet child is often rewarded for being quiet and observes what happens when other children are not quiet (McCroskey, 1977). From the study, Heath gave an example from his school experience that illustrates this. He recalled, "But she in the door and, 'First thing you do you come in my class, you shut your mouths.' That turned out to be okay because I kept my mouth shut, and she was busy yelling at those who didn't."

Teachers' early perceptions of students often determine the teachers' expectations of students. If a child is perceived as having high levels of CA, the teachers' expectations are altered and the child is viewed differently (McCroskey & Daly, 1976). The participants reported coping skills they learned in early childhood such as not making eye contact and putting their heads down. Such nonverbal displays "appear to be significant elements in behavioral sequences that shape teachers' expectations and actions" (Brooks & Woolfolk, 1987, p. 52). Teachers are affected by specific nonverbal behaviors. Brooks

and Woolfolk (1987) report, "Nonverbal behavior such as posture, eye contact, and smiling seem to communicate attention during instruction and are related to positive teachers' evaluations of students' competence, learning, 'teachability,' and attitude" (p. 55). Teachers react and relate to students based on their evaluations of the students' nonverbal behavior. The consequences of the low expectations of students include giving them less time to answer, giving up on their answers more quickly, calling on them less often, paying less attention to them, and placing them away from the teacher (Woolfolk & Brooks, 1985). The research substantiates what Fran and Carol recalled from their first grade experiences when they were put in a group at the back of the room. At that point they knew they belonged to a less favored group.

The participants discussed being labeled and knowing they belonged to a less desirable group. Brooks and Wolfolk (1987) report "that teachers do not like students who avoid eye contact, and they tend to perceive these students as unhappy, inattentive, or uncooperative" (p. 56). When the students are classified, teachers may decide to simply leave them alone. They sometimes become, as Gloria reported, "invisible." Brooks and Woolfolk (1987) report classification terms such as "indifferent" or "unnoticeable" (p. 56) are applied to such students. Conner (1987) describes what happens to the quiet student. He states, "Quiet students who are less willing to talk are often misunderstood, overlooked, labeled as 'different,' and are less likely to be included in the mainstream of school life" (p. 525). The non-inclusion becomes the feeling of isolation discussed by the participants in this study. Individuals who have high levels of CA are perceived less positively (McCroskey, 1977); therefore, they are not sought out

for social interactions. Carol reported other students would not talk to her, and Gloria says she talked only to her brother or teachers on the playground.

Communication apprehension is reported to increase by grade level with a 17 percent increase from grades two to eight (Comadena & Prusank, 1988). The female respondents reported that late elementary (fifth and sixth grades) was particularly stressful. This period is the time when peer interaction seemed to increase and was important and, for the individuals reporting, often painful. However, by junior high (seventh and eighth grades) all participants reported peer interaction to be better with all reporting feeling "in" somewhat and having friends. This developmental aspect has not been reported in CA literature, although the importance of peer interaction in communication development is emphasized by Burleson (1986) and by Richmond and McCroskey (1998).

Another developmental aspect given little emphasis in CA literature is gender differences in CA development. The women reported that late elementary was a difficult period. The men in the study reported late junior high or early high school (ninth or tenth grades) as particularly difficult. McCroskey, Andersen, Richmond, and Wheeless (1981) found increases in CA levels in kindergarten and third and fourth grades, and after that time CA remains relatively stable. Comadena and Prusank (1988) report that there is a continual increase in CA by grade level. Gender differences were not reported as part of the developmental process. Bob could not explain his change during his sophomore year, but he knew his attitude was different. The other three men reported increased apprehension during this period. Each was in a situation where expectations and pressure to perform were intense. The three relate this time vividly and see it as a turning point.

The developmental increase reported by the men reflects the research done by Garrison and Garrison (1979). In their research seeking validity for the MECA (Measure of Elementary Communication Apprehension), they tested students from kindergarten through twelfth grade. They administered the MECA to both girls and boys and found that the boys had a significant rise in early high school. Further research needs to be pursued to see if CA is an affliction that stabilizes by junior high school, if it is a continual process, or if late elementary and early high school are pivotal developmental periods in CA development. Also, intensified gender-specific research in CA could more clearly explain the developmental process of CA in individuals.

One of the situations reported as intensifying apprehension by all participants and described in the same terms was being "put on the spot." Show and tell, math board races, and public speaking classes are examples of situations the discussants found/find stressful. All were students in a required public speaking class, and all described the class in similar terms. They "hated" or "dreaded" every speech. Even though all enjoyed other aspects of the class and had good relationships with their instructors, the class was approached with a feeling of intense fear. McCroskey (1977) states, "While required public performance training in public speaking has great value for people with moderate or low CA, for people with high CA such experiences are worthless at best, harmful in most instances, and deeply traumatic in many" (p. 16). Ellis (1995) corroborates that the traditional public speaking class may have negative effects on highly apprehensive students. Even though researchers have reported the negative effects of oral presentations and the need for alternative teaching methods for over thirty years (Chesebro, McCroskey, Atwater, Bahrenfuss, Cawelti, Gaudino, & Hodges, 1992; McCroskey, 1977;

Phillips, Dunham, Brubaker, & Scott; Scott & Wheeless, 1977), the traditional methods continue to be employed by classroom teachers. The discussants in this study all responded with derivatives of the phrase "I hate that" to explain how they feel when being "put on the spot." The participants' responses indicate that more emphasis needs to be placed on teacher preparation and in-service teacher education to provide alternative methods to teachers and to explain the response of the apprehensive child when he/she is "put on the spot."

The teacher is important in the classroom because he/she provides instruction and provides guidance and regulations of social actions. Most classroom interaction is based on positive/negative reinforcement from the teacher (Cooper & Allen, 1998). The participants were specific in separating "good" teachers and "bad" teachers. The male and female participants have distinct differences in how they describe the "bad" teachers. Male participants dealt with teachers' dispositions while the female participants described teachers in terms of actions. Research does show that boys receive more disapproval than girls (Dusek, 1975). This may relate to the males describing "bad" teachers as "grouchy, hateful, etc." Also, Daly and Stafford (1984) state, "In classrooms, highly apprehensive students perceive their teachers as less animated, impression leaving, dramatic, friendly, open, affiliative, and immediate than low apprehensives" (p. 136).

The women, on the other hand, described how the actions of the teachers affected them. Carol felt that two specific junior high teachers paid more attention to students who talked more. Fran still gets emotional when describing being put into a low group and moved to the back of the room. Gloria had teachers who would say, "You should know this already." Richmond and McCroskey (1998) report that teachers do not expect

quiet children to do well and because of the expectations may treat such children as if they are less intelligent. The quiet child may receive less attention, be perceived as poor readers and be put into slow groups. The participants confirmed their research findings. The varied descriptions of "bad" teachers indicate the need for more understanding of gender differences in CA.

Opposite of the "bad" teachers were those reported as "good." The participants did not report excessive numbers of "good" teachers. Alex and Bob were comfortable with all their teachers but were specific about their best teachers. Edward's coaches were his best teachers. All but Heath had at least one "good" teacher. Heath felt ignored by his teachers and that he was insignificant to all of them because he was quiet. The participants reporting "good" teachers all described them similarly. The "good" teachers were friendly, encouraging and "helped me out." Another vital element of the "good" teacher reported by the high CA students was that the teachers made them feel important. Daly and Friedrich's (1981) research states basically the same conclusions. They state that "supportive teachers tend to increase children's confidence while teachers who fail to reward student communication attempts engender reticent pupils" (p. 246).

In certain situations the participants seemed to disconfirm the negative picture of the high apprehensive pictured in CA research (see Chapter II). Even though these students all scored over 100 on the PRCA which indicates extremely high levels of CA, all report being active in high school, and half report being disciplined in elementary school for talking. The participants related being active in sports, band, and clubs. Most dated, and one was valedictorian of his graduating class. Although not as verbal as others, the students did not avoid or withdraw from all communication situations. They were

able to be successful, if not as individuals, then at least as part of teams or organizations. Some also served as team leaders and officers in organizations. The participants explained that if they feel confident in their ability, they do not mind participating. Some read out loud in class or comfortably did board races in math because they realized they were better than others. They expressed no hesitation in certain situations in which they felt comfortable. Rubin, Martin, Bruning, and Powers (1993) relate this to self-efficacy. High self-efficacy is related to the strength of self-perceived competence. When the respondents feel competent they report performing easily without apprehension. Most, however, describe high school as a comfortable, known environment. Many had attended the same school system with the same students for 13 years. Many also attended small schools.

McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, and Payne (1989) state that college students high in CA are less likely to become involved in campus activities, to interact with peers or professors. The participants who reported participation in high school, reported no participation in college organizations. However, seven of the participants work part time or full time. All reported little interaction with peers except roommates or a few close friends. Heath reported no friends, and Edward's friend is his father.

Research reports a correlation between CA and academic achievement (AA). CA is found to have a negative effect on AA (Comadena & Prusank, 1988; McCroskey, 1977; Scott & Wheelis, 1977). The participants reported grade averages that ranged from B/C+ to A. They seem, at this point, to be achieving academically in the university setting even though all admit feeling overwhelmed at the beginning of their college

experience. They were unsure and frightened coming into the strange environment from the familiar, comfortable, and often, smaller environments of high school and family.

The students also reported that they are committed to finishing their degrees, and each has a specific degree and career in mind, ranging from finance to early childhood education. At this point they are going against the odds. McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, and Payne (1989) found that 43.4 percent of high CAs drop out of college. The selected careers of high CAs are often those with "comparatively lower status and lower economic standing" (Richmond, 1984, p. 153). Some career choices of the participants are predictable based on CA research. Richmond and McCroskey (1998) discuss the high CA teacher. They state, "They overwhelmingly choose to teach in the lower elementary grades. They report they are less afraid to communicate with the younger children than they would be to communicate with children in the upper grades, junior high, or high school (pp. 73, 74). Carol exemplifies this research. She wants to teach kindergarten and never wants to teach above second grade because she does not think she "could get up and teach them." Gloria has also chosen early childhood. However, contrary to the research, Debbie and Fran want to teach in high school. Three of the male participants have chosen majors/careers that will somewhat limit their oral communication interaction. Bob is hoping for a degree in finance but never plans to use the degree for other than his own purposes. He plans to continue farming where he spends many days alone. Edward has chosen cartography because much work is done outside, and communication is limited to few people. Heath plans to pursue a Ph.D. and sees academia as his calling. He speaks of an academic career in insular terms and seems to

see the world as "out there" and academia as a place he can exists "inside" writing research.

The picture presented in research of the person with high levels of CA is most usually a bleak one as illustrated in the literature review in Chapter II. The picture often is that of a low or non-functioning person; however, the individuals in this study all make the point that they "can do it if I set my mind to it." The word used by Gloria and Heath is "force." They feel that they can force themselves to do what needs to be done. Communication is not as easy for them as for others, but they do function as characterized by Bob who said that he can do whatever needs to be done to "take care of business." All also report comfort zones where they are confident and perform/interact easily. Interestingly, an extremely high CA person such as Gloria can sing a song with confidence but is terrified to speak to the same audience.

Naming and Explaining the Problem

Because the greater majority of CA research has been done through surveys or instruments that can be quantitatively assessed, the individual who lives with high levels of CA has never been asked what he/she thinks it is that is affecting his/her life. This study sought to learn what those closest to the problem call it, what they think causes it, and what effects it has on their lives. Richmond and McCroskey (1998) distinguish between shyness and CA. They explain, "In other words, shyness is the behavior of withdrawing from communication or avoiding it, while communication apprehension is the fear of communicating which causes shy behavior" (p. 37). The participating individuals identify their problem as the behavior. Five refer to their communication style as "shyness." Only one, Bob, referred to his communication problem as

"communication apprehension." "Shyness" is probably a term more commonly used by people to describe communication hesitant individuals.

The participants were asked when they believed the CA started or when they became aware of it. The answers gave insight into potential developmental periods that may be important in intervention. Although Bob, Carol, Debbie, Edward, Gloria, and Heath all believe that they had a tendency to be apprehensive all their lives; however, all but Bob were not aware of it until they were in more demanding situations. One point in time identified by the participants was early elementary. Fran said in first grade she became aware of CA because she was unfamiliar with how things were done. Early elementary was also the point when Heath felt the judgments of teachers and peers. Late elementary was identified by Carol and Debbie as their time of awareness of CA because they were called on to perform more in class and in activities. Heath said by high school his CA was entrenched. Edward and Alex both identified the beginning of high school as a point of awareness or intensification. These points of awareness need more investigation by concerned researchers. If these points can be confirmed as potential periods of CA intensification perhaps intervention strategies can be developed for these points of awareness. CA research to this point has not discussed points of awareness but only the developmental progression. Little research has addressed gender differences in the development of CA. Children are often discussed as if they are a non-gender or one gender.

When the participants are in situations where they feel apprehensive about communicating, they reported in unanimous response that withdrawal is their chosen behavior. They also reported the nonverbal response associated with withdrawal is to

withdraw eye contact. Although they realize that it is illogical, three discussants said that if you do not look at them then it is like they cannot see you. Eye contact is important in impression formation and is seen as a sign of attention and attitude (Brooks & Woolfolk, 1987). In the classroom when a child does not make eye contact, teachers interpret this as passive/aggressive behavior or that the child prefers to be left alone and if this interpretation is made the child becomes "unnoticeable" (Brooks & Woolfolk, 1987). Since the participants recognize their behavior as actions to withdraw from communication, and researchers know the effects of the nonverbal withdrawal on others, especially teachers, the information gains importance. High CA students are at a disadvantage in the classroom. CA has been shown to affect 20 percent of the population, but the Department of Education does not recognize it as a communication disorder; therefore, special help is not available to individuals (IDEAPractices, 2002; McCroskey, 1977).

Reciprocal Influence

Some communication researchers believe individuals are born with CA (Beatty, McCroskey, & Heisel, 1998). Others argue that the accumulation of past experiences cause trait like CA (Beatty, Dobos, Balfanz, & Kuwabara, 1991). Modeling of significant others within the environment was proposed as a potential cause by Daly and Stafford in 1984 and reported by Richmond and McCroskey in 1998. The participants' explanations of what they think caused them to feel as they do when communicating included all of the researchers' proposed explanations. Carol, Debbie, Edward, and Gloria recognized the potential for being born with personalities that tended toward being apprehensive. They all thought that they had always been "shy" or apprehensive, and they recognized the

potential for this being genetic because of "quiet" or "shy" parents. Edward also discussed modeling and environment as possibly causing him to develop high levels of CA. Carol, Fran, and Gloria all felt negative experiences with individuals within their environments were significant in the development of communication apprehension. Gloria gave the strongest argument for the environmental effect on CA. She recognized that both her biological parents were "quiet" and that genetics perhaps has had an important influence on her CA. However, Gloria was reared in an extremely negative environment, and since she has escaped that environment, her ability to communicate has improved, and she believes her CA has lessened.

The picture of CA that these apprehensive individuals draw in their descriptions of effects, actions, and causes is one of a reciprocal influence of three elements: inborn tendency, environment, and behavior. Researchers have called for the need to find the underlying cause of CA for many years. The following list illustrates the recognized need to find the cause/s of communication apprehension: Clevenger (1955); Giffin and Heider (1967); McCroskey (1977); Daly and Friedrich (1981); Porter (1982); Friedrich and Goss (1984); McCroskey (1984); Beatty, McCroskey and Heisel (1998). During the search for the etiology of CA, researchers have proposed several possible, plausible causes. The participants in this small, qualitative project suggest that all the causes proposed by researchers work in combination to develop CA in the individual. Researchers have searched for the one solution that would give a definitive explanation of CA development; the participants suggest that inborn personality, environment and behavior function reciprocally to influence the development of CA within the individual.

In 1978 Bandura proposed a social learning view of interaction based on reciprocal determinism "The term is used her to signify the production of effects by events, rather than in the doctrinal sense that actions are completely determined by a prior sequence of causes independent of the individual"(Bandura, 1978, p. 345). Bandura (1978) offers reciprocal determinism "as a basic analytic principle for analyzing psychosocial phenomena at the level of intrapersonal development, interpersonal transactions, and interactive functioning of organizational and social systems" (p. 344). He gives an example of two elements, behavior and environment in reciprocal determinism:

> For example, people's efficacy and outcome expectations influence how they behave, and the environmental effects created by their actions in turn alter their expectations. People activate different environmental reactions, apart from their behavior, by their physical characteristics (e.g., size, physiognomy, race, sex, attractiveness) and socially conferred attributes, roles, and status. The differential social treatment affects recipients' self-conceptions and actions in ways that either maintain or alter the environmental biases. (p. 346)

Bandura (1978) also proposes that behavior and environment function with cognitive elements in a reciprocal triadic response among the three factors and that these factors will vary in different individuals. Bandura's (1978) triadic response concept may also function as the basis of explaining a triadic response in CA among inborn tendency, environment, and behavior. Bandura (1978) states, "Personal and environmental factors do not function as independent determinants; rather, they determine each other" (p. 345). Also, communication researchers have stated that biological predisposition is important but how the environment and those in it interact with the predisposition will determine the development of CA (Beatty & McCroskey, 1998; Daly & Stafford, 1984; Hovarth, 1998; McCroskey & Beatty, 1998; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998).

Because all individuals function with different genetic possibilities, different environmental influences, and different behavioral actions/reactions, the reciprocal influence of the three elements for one individual will not be the same as for another individual. Certainly in the telling of Gloria's life narrative, she recognized the possibility of an inborn tendency to be apprehensive because both her biological mother and father were quiet. However, along with this tendency Gloria was reared in an extremely harsh environment. She had a withdrawn, non-communicative mother who did not like her, and within the first two years of her life, she had a stepfather who abused her in multiple ways. By the time she was five she had been physically, mentally, and sexually abused. She learned to lower her eyes, be quiet, and stay out of the way. She was told continuously that she was dumb, ugly, worthless, and would never be anything. Perhaps for Gloria the tendency to be apprehensive was acted on by a harsh environment that taught her what behavior was expected. The behavior then reciprocally caused those within the environment to respond negatively, and both reciprocally exacerbated her inborn tendency to be apprehensive. If the triadic relationship of the three elements were drawn in a triangle for Gloria's apprehension development, it might have a wider side on the side labeled "environment."

Bob, on the other hand, was reared in a fairly benign environment. His mother was strict and demanding, but he never felt that she was abusive. His father was/is his good friend. Bob believes he has just always been apprehensive. He learned to avoid eye contact and withdraw from communication because the apprehension ("tense situations" is his term) tends to block his thinking processes. When his thinking processes are blocked he cannot respond appropriately, which causes others within the environment to

respond negatively. The picture of Bob's triangle of reciprocal influence might, therefore, have a wider side for "inborn tendencies."

From the reports of the participants, the reciprocity of the three elements can be seen. One of the elements may be dominant or all may have equal influence, but there is reciprocity among the elements. The inborn tendency may be influenced by environmental factors, and in response to environmental factors, the tendency may be strengthened/weakened, and because of this increase/decrease, the environmental factors may be influenced. The same reciprocal response could occur with behavior. The inborn tendency causes the individual to behave in a way that causes the environment to respond which may increase/decrease behavior that may cause the inborn tendency to be more/less developed. Debbie's explanation of when she became aware of CA illustrates the reciprocal effects of the three elements:

> I think it [CA] was there, but I don't think—I think it was just starting. But it hit me the hardest in junior high because I was having to do more of getting up in front of the class, more of, more outgo—more band stuff and more stuff was forcing me to do it. And teachers were forcing me saying you have to do this, and they wouldn't take no for am answer. I think it was inclining, as I—maybe when I was born it was inclining, and it just hit me the hardest in junior high [Junior high for Debbie as sixth grade].

The idea of reciprocal influence may help to explain why cognitive restructuring is an effective treatment for some while systematic desensitization or skills training are effective for others (Allen, Hunter, & Donohue, 1989). It may also explain why one definitive etiology has never explained the whole concept of CA. If the development of CA is based on the reciprocal influences of inborn tendency, environment, and behavior, then each individual's triangle is different. This suggests that the answer to what causes

CA cannot be found by analyzing a set of numbers, but must be assessed one individual at a time.

Emotional Experiences

The participants in this study give a glimpse into the emotional world of people who score over 100 on the PRCA. In listening to the life narratives, some of the same emotional experiences were repeated by the discussants. The quote by Porter (1982) used in the introduction to Chapter V seems most important in this section on emotions. Porter (1982) says, " Events are significant when they occur in the person's life stream" (p. 52). In their "life streams" the participants all reported traumatic events that, in telling their life narratives, they felt were important enough to include. They were not asked to tell a traumatic experience; the incidences reported were simply included. Many of the experiences were told emotionally; all were recounted with intensity and significance. The experiences did not all happen as small children, but they were all revealed as points that made the participants or their lives different. Many of the incidents appeared to be a small occurrence of childhood, but to the individuals it was hurtful, or scary, or provided a sense of failure. For several it was a situation in which they were traumatized and had a sense of helplessness to change the situation. They were trapped by circumstances.

Alex identifies age 14/15 as the age his CA increased and he blames it on peers. However, his reported traumatic experience happened in a similar time frame. He began working for his biological father and felt he could never please him and remembered much criticism. He learned to expect and accept negative evaluation, and he received little positive reinforcement for communication attempts (Daly & Friedrich, 1981;Kirsch,

1985). Kirsch (1985) states, "Expectations of harmful consequences account for a great deal of human fear and avoidance..." (p. 827).

Older boys taunted Heath on the school bus when he was in second grade. Although he felt as if he were taunted and picked on all the way through school, the "bus incident" was the one revisited several times during Heath's life narrative. Giffin and Heider (1967) explain, "In this sense the 'self' that an individual perceives is largely determined by his interaction with the world through interpersonal communication" (p. 313). Children accepted by peers develop more positive self-concepts and have higher self-esteem. Rejected children are more likely to be lonely, to be socially dissatisfied, and to develop psychological problems (Burleson, 1986). Heath, more than all other participants, expressed his loneliness, his isolation, and his desire to interact more socially. Also, Carol had a similar experience. Her rejection, taunting, and harassment by her cousins probably appeared to be children playing on a swing set, but the incidents were repeated several times within her life narrative, and Fran repeatedly recalled being taunted by her older sister.

Glaser (1981) states that family and peers can facilitate a conditioned anxiety response or function in the assimilation of CA producing events. The conditioned anxiety response "presumes that previously neutral communication situations have become paired with anxiety" (p. 324). Debbie had been a child reared by her mother and grandparents since age three. Her mother's remarriage forced her into a strange environment with new communication rules and requirements. What had once been acceptable was now not acceptable. Her new stepfather used communication as a form of discipline. She had moved to a strange place, strange school and strange family. She had

trouble understanding the change. As a pretty and successful college freshman who lives at home, she continues to strain against the stepfather's communication demands, and in her discussion revealed instances of anxiety still caused by his communication.

From the telling of their stories the traumatic experiences can be viewed from two perspectives. The traumatic experiences could have had a causal effect on the CA levels of the participants. The other perspective is that because of the CA levels of the participants the incidents were experienced as traumatic. Because of the CA, incidents can be magnified. Richmond (1984) and Richmond and McCroskey (1998) explain that high CAs avoid disagreements, and even a small amount of disagreement will make the high apprehensives believe they are in conflict. Whichever it is, the cause or the outcome, the traumatic events were important to each individual in his "life stream."

Much research has been done on the negative effects of teacher expectations on students perceived as having high CA (Brophy, 1983; Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper, 1979; Cooper & Allen, 1998; McCroskey, Anderson, Richmond, & Shaw, 1975; McCroskey & Daly, 1976; Woolfolk & Brooks, 1985; Zanna, Sheras, Cooper, & Shaw, 1975). Zanna et al. (1975) state, "People are affected by the expectations others hold about them" (p. 279). The participants did not discuss expectations in terms of negative outcomes, but they did talk about the effect of the expectations they felt others held for them or that they held for themselves. The expectations were burdens or pressure that they carried as weights. Alex, Bob, Debbie, and Edward feel that there is a criterion within their families that they are expected to meet. All feel at this point that they have not met the expectations. Gloria had only negative expectations of her in her very

abusive family, but this has caused her to set extremely high expectations for herself to prove that she is not "stupid" or "dumb" as her stepfather continuously called her.

Perhaps because of the expectations the participants worry and are fearful of being wrong when they communicate and worry about what people will think of them. They are fearful they cannot meet the communication expectations of others. Perhaps Edward stated the fear best when he said he is afraid he is "not going to do something like it's supposed to be done." Glaser (1981) contributes this anxiety to "an inadequate behavioral repertoire" (p. 326). The anxiety because of not knowing appropriate behavior will lead to communication avoidance (Daly & Friedrich, 1981; Glaser, 1981; Phillips, 1973; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Because of the perceived inadequate skills, the fear of not knowing, and the fear that their response might bring the scrutiny of others, the participants spend large amounts of time worrying and playing scenarios of what might happen in their minds. Often the scenarios have negative outcomes. The negative scenarios suggest that the participants cognitively structure failure. They explain the worrying process in terms similar to cognitive restructuring (Fremouw, 1984). They identify the fear, but they do not classify it as irrational, nor do they try to modify it.

CA research reports that those with high CA will have few friends and limited social interaction (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). Every participant confirmed this research. They have a sense of isolation with a limited number of friends. These reports ranged from Bob and Heath who reported having no friends, to Edward who reported his father as the friend with whom he spends most of his time, to Alex, Carol, Gloria, and Fran who have only one or two friends. Most report this has been true for all of their lives. Beatty and McCroskey (1998) state, "CA becomes an extremely negative,

dominating force that controls all of an individual's life" (p. 220). Richmond and McCroskey (1998) state that the reason for the intensive focus on CA in communication research is because "it permeates every facet of an individual's life—school, work, friendships and so on" (p. 41).

All participants in this study feel that CA has affected their lives. They think being a high CA has prevented them from participating and socializing, and all feel they have "missed out on things." They stand as observers and admirers of those who do not have high levels of CA. They also want to know what can be done to prevent their own children or siblings from having to endure the effects of CA. Alex summed up the feelings about CA of all the participants when he said, "I just know it sucks."

Implications

Although this qualitative study was limited and the findings cannot be generalized, the implications of what was revealed by the participants do suggest directions for future research. Because little qualitative research has been done in CA, the outcome of the project seems particularly important to illustrate that qualitative research is an appropriate and effective tool in exploring the phenomenon of communication apprehension. In spite of cautious warnings from well-meaning colleagues, the project was attempted, and none of the participants who were asked to contribute their life narratives refused, backed out, or did not show for the interviews. Some confessed to worrying about the interview, but all seemed anxious to contribute to research that might shed light on their problem with CA. Additionally, most wanted to contribute so that others might not have to live through what they had. In most interviews the participants talked freely and honestly, often stating, "I've never told

anyone this." The information presented by each was often repetitious of what other participants had said, and it often confirmed findings compiled by researchers for the past 35 years. However, some information they discussed was new and has the potential to present new ways of seeing that may open new possibilities in CA research. Can qualitative research be done with those high in CA? The participants indicated that they were anxious to help look at the problem. Is qualitative research an appropriate methodology for communication apprehension? If the expansion of ways to view CA or the confirmation of CA finding is the researcher's goal, then qualitative research is appropriate.

Communication apprehension research presents a negative picture of persons with high levels of CA. The research often deals only with the problems that make the individual with high CA appear as an ineffectual recluse. The participants confirmed many of the problems reported in CA research, and if only the problems were reported, they could fit the same picture. However, in the telling of their life narratives, the discussants talked of having close relations with their families, having interesting jobs, having ambitions, and doing well academically. Perhaps researchers have concentrated so much on problems that they have failed to look at areas of success. As suggested by these participants, their challenges to have successes are many; however, an interesting research area would be to look at how, against odds, those high in CA do become successful, contributing individuals.

Although some research has been done concerning CA development and family characteristics, the participants' life narratives indicate the need for more research. Fathers were discussed more in this study than any other relationship. A new perspective

of "father" for several of the participants was that of "stepfather" or "no father" in the primary environment. The dynamics that this relationship, if any, may add to CA development need further exploration. Related to this dynamic is the effect of divorce. Half of the participants' parents had divorced within the first three years of their lives, and the biological fathers were no longer in the primary environments. The divorce and/or the father's absence need investigation to further understand the effects of family characteristics on CA development.

A second area concerning families that has implications for further investigation is their relationships with grandparents. All participants reported the importance of this relationship. All had grandparents who were involved in their lives, and all their grandparents lived close to them. Mothers were not discussed as much as fathers, but grandmothers were discussed as a special relationship in all the life narratives. The relationships and interactions with fathers and grandparents have impacted the individuals in this study. Huang (1999) and Kelly, Keaten, Finch, Duarte, Hoffman, & Michels, (2002) have suggested that family communication patterns and characteristics of the family have some influence on CA. The implication from this study would substantiate their research, but the information in this study extends the family to be studied. Communication patterns of fathers and grandparents in interaction with the CA child contain areas of possible CA research that need further investigation.

Part of family dynamics is the identification of someone within the family who has a similar communication style. Modeling is a suggested source of CA development (Daly & Stafford, 1984; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). However, in listening to the explanations of why the individual identified with his/her chosen person, more seemed to

be happening than choosing someone to model. There were two interesting aspects of identification. One, they sometimes identified those who they would choose not to imitate in communication behavior. Two, the identifications were often given to them by others. The question then becomes, "Is the behavior emulative or has the behavior been directed by the expectations established by significant others within the environment?" Because the child exhibits some tendencies to be quiet, he/she is then told he/she is just like her/his mother or father or uncle or aunt or a grandparent. With this picture established, the child may work to fit the expectations, or he/she may be guided into the chosen model. The concept of CA as modeled response may need to be expanded to study the family dynamics and expectancy involved in the process.

Another dynamic of the family is the "self-contained" family. All participants reported closed units with little to no outside social interaction. The participants grew up in an environment protected from outside influences. Other, larger environments such as school and interaction with those outside the environment, then, became frightening, and the individuals were unsure about the rules and necessary skills to perform and communicate in the other environments. Some research has been done concerning high school dropouts returning to the safe environments of home (Monroe, Borzi, & Burrell, 1992), and Burleson (1986) reports the significance of peer interaction in the development of the child's communication skills. Research needs to be expanded to see if the "self-contained" family enhances CA development.

To hear the individuals discuss their experiences with CA was enlightening. Especially revealing was the timeline reported by the participants concerning when they became aware of CA. From the CA literature, the affliction seems to be a condition that

the individual becomes aware of from his/her earliest interactions. In this study, however, only one, Bob, reported always being aware. The others reported different points of awareness, first grade, late elementary, early high school. These were reported as periods of awareness and intensification. More research needs to be done to see if others with high CA report similar points of awareness. If points of awareness/intensification can be identified, preventative or intervention techniques can be developed to insert into the child's developmental process to help lessen the intensification of CA.

A second revelation within the students' discussion of CA development was the gender differences in points of intensification. Late elementary was reported by women and early high school was reported by men as points of intensification. The gender differences need to be explored with others who have high levels of CA. If other men and women confirm the points of awareness, this could be indicative of a need for early gender-specific research. Another indication that gender-specific research may be needed is the different ways the men and women described negative experiences with "bad" teachers. Men described disposition, and women discussed actions.

Both women and men discussed particular teacher strategies that they found extremely stressful, and all had incidences with teachers that they remember as hurtful. McCroskey and Daly made a call for change in teacher preparation in 1977. Communication researchers have continued to emphasize the need for change since that time. However, the students in this study ranged in ages from 19 to 37, a 19-year period, and teacher strategy did not seem to change during that span of years. All identified "being put on the spot" as the most stressful strategy used in the classroom. Show and

tell, board races, and public presentations have been and are still activities in classrooms and in classes required to complete college degrees.

Another area of concern in the classroom is teacher expectations. The negative effects of teachers' expectancy on communication apprehensive children have been documented in CA research. McCroskey and Daly (1977) called for information on the effects of teacher expectancy to be stressed in teacher training, but the participants reported numerous incidents that could be linked to teacher expectancy. Those researching instructional communication have known for many years that teachers in interaction with students act as models of communication behavior. Teachers who interact freely with students and encourage them to communicate will probably develop less communication apprehensive students (Conner, 1987; Daly & Friedrich, 1981). The supportive teacher uses appropriate suggestions, cues, and reinforcement to increase the child's confidence and encourage his/her interactive communication behavior (Daly & Friedrich, 1981). Communication professionals concerned with instructional communication practices must become more aggressive and assertive in sharing this important information because when teachers become aware of high CA levels in students, they can provide extra reinforcement and reward, not punishment or banishment to the back of the room. The students in this study reinforced the need for increased efforts to educate teachers at all levels about a communication disorder that probably affects 20 percent of the students in the classroom.

One of the major revelations contributed by individuals in this group who have lived with high levels of CA is their explanations of what they think caused them to have this communication disorder. First, they have thought or do think about the cause. They,

more than any researchers, have something to gain from knowing the cause. Their participation in this project was in part driven by their need to know. All understand that they probably have always had the tendency to be shyer, quieter, or more apprehensive than others. However, they also realize that others within their environment, and incidents that happened within the environment have had an effect on the tendency they have had since birth. The individuals describe how they behave because of their uneasiness in communication situations, and because of the behavior, they know that others respond/have responded negatively toward them. Except for Bob, the participants do not see the cause as one-dimensional. They view it as a triad of causes that have interacted in the process of making them apprehensive when they communicate. The story is different for each, but all have been affected by the inborn tendency, environment, and behavior. The reciprocal influence of these three elements needs more explanation. The three factors need to be viewed, not as separate entities, but as interactive entities functioning in a reciprocal relationship. Over thirty years ago Giffin and Heider (1967) called for research to find the "causal factors" in speech anxiety. At that time they suggested, "There is a strong likelihood of a multifaceted etiology" (p. 311). This research project confirms what researchers have proposed for the past thirty years; however, the participants discussed the multiple causes proposed by researchers as the combined, interactive, reciprocal cause.

A qualitative study with a limited number of participants is not done in order to generalize to the greater populace. This study allowed individuals who have lived with a life-affecting communication disorder to explain in their own terms their lives with excessive communication apprehension. The objective of the project was to give voice to

a group of people who often remain "unnoticeable." When asked, they responded. The impact of their voices came when they spoke in unison and in echo, when they confirmed each other and confirmed CA researchers. Perhaps now others with CA can be given voice, and when the unison chorus of the "invisible" is loud enough, hopefully, we will listen and respond.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)

Directions: This instrument is composed of 24 statements concerning your feelings about communication with other people. Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Are Undecided, (4) Disagree, or (5) Strongly Disagree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Many of the statements are similar to other statements. Do not be concerned about this. Work quickly; just record your first impression.

_____ 1. I dislike participating in group discussions.
_____ 2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in a group discussion.
_____ 3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.
_____ 4. I like to get involved in group discussions.
_____ 5. Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.
_____ 6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.
_____ 7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.
_____ 8. Usually I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.
_____ 9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.
_____ 10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.
_____ 11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
_____ 12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.
_____ 13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
_____ 14. I have no fear of speaking up in a conversation.
_____ 15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.
_____ 16. Ordinarily I am calm and relaxed in conversations.
_____ 17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
_____ 18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
_____ 19. I have no fear of giving a speech.
_____ 20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
_____ 21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
_____ 22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
_____ 23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
_____ 24. While giving a speech I get so nervous, I forget facts I really know.

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

This research is being conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus. This document serves as the participant's consent to participate.

INTRODUCTION

The study, "Communication Apprehension in Life Narratives," is being conducted by Delma Hall and sponsored by Dr. Courtney Vaughn.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to look at the life of the person who suffers from high levels of communication apprehension (CA) as an entity that contains information about or clues to the beginning and development of high communication apprehension. Environment, personality, and modeling have been predicted to influence high CA. Participants can confirm or disconfirm such predictions. Participants will be asked to talk with the primary researcher for 90 to 120 minutes. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions will be double checked for accuracy. The research project will be shared with the participants and their opinions of findings will be sought.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS OF PARTICIPATION

The study may give the participant personal insight into his/her own level of communication apprehension and possible causes and effects of it. The information will add to knowledge about the possible causes of CA, the timeline of development, and possible prime intervention periods.

If the participant becomes uncomfortable talking about his/her life experiences, he/she can delay, postpone, or terminate the interview at any time. If the participant finds the discussion useful in learning how to cope with CA, further discussion/remediation can be arranged with communication professionals.

PARTICIPANT'S ASSURANCES

Participation in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. Your confidentiality will be protected at all times by keeping records in a locked file cabinet. Neither you name, title, or identifying material will appear in transcripts, written notes, papers, or published reports. If you have any questions about the research or about your rights as a research participant you may contact the research, Delma Hall, at (580) 310-5600 (work) or (405) 379-7055 (home); or Dr. Courtney Vaughn at (405) 325-1518.

I am eighteen years of age or older.
I agree to participate in the study described above.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____ _____

Researcher's Signature Date

Appendix C

Interview Guideline

I. Early Childhood
   1. Tell me about the earliest memories you have of your life.
   2. Tell me about your earliest memories of communicating with others.
   3. Tell me about the significant others in your early life with whom you communicated.
   4. Tell me how you were related to these significant people.
   5. Tell me about you relationships with these significant people.
   6. Tell me all about your life before you started school.

II. Elementary School
   1. Tell me what you remember about your first day of school.
   2. Tell me about the events you remember as significant in early elementary school.
   3. Tell me about the teachers you remember from elementary school.
   4. Tell me about your favorite activities in elementary school.
   5. Tell me about your least favorite activities in elementary school.
   6. Tell me about your playmates and friends in elementary school.

III. Junior High and High School
   1. Tell me what you remember about going to junior high.
   2. Tell me about the events you remember as significant in junior high and high school.
   3. Tell me about the teachers who were significant to you in junior high and high school.
   4. Tell me about your favorite activities in junior high and high school.
   5. Tell me about you least favorite activities in junior high and high school.
   6. Tell me about your friends and classmates in junior high and high school.
   7. Tell me about any special relationships developed during junior high and high school.

IV. Life After High School
   1. Tell me about what you have done since high school.
   2. Tell me about your decision to come to college.
   3. Tell me about your major and why you have chosen it.
   4. Tell me about your favorite and least favorite classes in college.
   5. Tell me about your friends and your relationships with other students.
   6. Tell me about significant relationships in your life.

V. Conclusion
   1. What information would you like for me to know about being a high apprehensive and trying to communicate everyday?
   2. If you could tell others something about being apprehensive, what would that be?