

Week 6 (March 14-20)

Formulations 1: Identifying Formulations in Therapy Dialogues

Introduction

This week introduces *formulations* and how they function interactionally in a therapy dialogue. Garfinkel and Sacks (1970, p. 350), who were sociologists and conversation analysts, introduced *formulating* as a technical term in order to draw attention to a common occurrence in any dialogue. In their words, a formulation occurs when one person “describes, explains, characterizes, explicates, translates, summarizes, or furnishes the gist” of something the other person said previously. In therapy dialogues, formulations are called *echoing*, *paraphrasing*, or *summarizing*, which are usually considered neutral techniques. The central reading for this week (Korman, Bavelas, & De Jong, 2013) proposes that therapists’ formulations are not neutral because they always transform what the client said by selectively preserving, omitting, altering, or even adding to what a client has said. The article illustrates the role of formulations as an observable process through which co-construction takes place in dialogue.

This week's exercise focuses on locating which of a therapist's utterances include a formulation and then identifying the exact words within the utterance that constitute the formulation. Next week you will analyze the transformations the therapist makes of what the client has said.

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish formulations from questions and other contributions by the therapist.
- Learn the analysis procedures in the first stages of a microanalysis of formulations in therapy dialogues.
- Conduct a microanalysis of a therapist's formulations in a therapy video, identifying which of the therapist’s utterances contain formulations and then identifying the exact words that make up each formulation.

Readings

Required:

Korman, H., Bavelas, J. B., & De Jong, P. (2013). Microanalysis of formulations in solution-focused brief therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and motivational interviewing. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 32, 31-45.

Also consult the following sources as needed when doing the exercise for this week:

Bavelas, J. B. (2017). *Gold standard procedures for doing microanalysis*.

Generally, a microanalysis study involves multiple tiers and multiple analytical decisions. The ~~«Gold Standard»~~ document gives the time-tested, recommended procedures for conducting these analyses. We are introducing this document at this point in the course, because we are moving into more and more complex analyses with multiple

analytical decisions, such as ~~those involved in~~ this and next week's e-microanalysis of formulations.

Korman, H, Bavelas, J.B., & De Jong, P. (2009). *Formulations manual with stages I-IV*. **See especially pp. 5-15; 17-19.**

Note: When we did this study, we were not yet using ELAN; the Stage I and II analysis in this manual marks utterances that are formulations with an "F" (Stage I) and uses underlining to identify the exact words in the formulation (Stage II). As shown in the demonstration video, you will work in ELAN using tiers and selections to complete the Week 6 exercise.

Exercise

1. Be sure to do the required reading first as it will serve as a guide to this exercise and make the "Week 6 exercise demonstration" video more readily understandable and useful.
2. Watch the "Week 6 exercise demonstration" video. This video can be downloaded from the Week 6 sub-folder in the Dropbox folder: "Downloads; IMA online course."
3. Download the ELAN (eaf and pfsx files) titled "Mike and William Miller, transcript & formulations." These two files are in the Week 6 sub-folder in the Dropbox folder: "Downloads; IMA online course". The video clip for this ELAN is the same "Mike and William Miller" video which you downloaded for Week 2. So when you open the ELAN, either link to it in the Week 2 sub-folder in the course folder on your desktop or make a copy of the video and put it in your Week 6 sub-folder in your course folder on your desktop and link the ELAN to the video there. Next, open the ELAN and immediately **save it as**: "Mike and William Miller, Formulations, Stages I & II, pdj" (add your initials).
4. Before beginning your analysis, review the document: "Gold Standard Procedures for Doing Microanalysis."
5. Open your ELAN (i.e., the ELAN with your initials). You will see that Miller's and Mike's utterances are transcribed for you on the first two tiers. There are two more tiers (3 and 4) labeled "Contains a formulation" and "Exact words in the formulation." You will complete the formulations analysis for this week on tiers 3 and 4. This ELAN includes the analysis we completed through the first 32 seconds of the "Mike and William Miller" video clip in the "Week 6 exercise demonstration" video .
6. Here is how to continue the analysis. Begin by duplicating the location of each therapist utterance from tier 1 onto tier 3, leaving each selection blank (without an annotation) for now. You can duplicate the location of a selection by: 1) clicking on the selection you wish to duplicate; a blue column appears extending down across all the tiers 2) right clicking on the tier within the blue column on which you wish to duplicate the selection and clicking on "new annotation here."

7. Now, listen to each selection and decide whether or not this utterance by the therapist contains a formulation anywhere within it; it may contain other material as well. Refer to the definitions in the Korman et al. article and the manual "*Formulations manual with stages I-IV*" to make your decisions. (Remember, the manual used underlining to complete Stages I & II of a formulations analysis; you will use tiers and selection instead.) For each selection, use the annotation function to record your decision. That is, if the therapist utterance contains a formulation, enter "Yes" on tier 3; if it does not contain a formulation, enter "No." (Remember that sometimes an entire speaking turn is a formulation. However, many speaking turns that include a formulation also contain other material, such as a question or a request, and sometimes a formulation is even embedded within a question.)

Important reminder: You must listen closely to what both the client and the therapist are saying. Remember from your readings that you will not be able to judge whether something the therapist is saying is a formulation of what the client said if you haven't listened very, very closely to what the client actually said.

8. Next, on the fourth tier ("Exact words in the formulation"), create a duplicate selection for each utterance you decided contained a formulation (i.e., for each "Yes" on tier 3). Use this selection to annotate the exact words that make up the formulation. The words may be the whole utterance or part of the utterance, and the words may be divided by other material.

9. Once you have completed your analysis, save your ELAN to the Week 6 sub-folder in your course folder on your desktop. Then, upload your completed ELAN files (eaf and pfsx) to the sub-folder for Week 6 in the Dropbox folder: "Uploads, IMA online course."

Postings

1. Questions

a. Some utterances sound like questions and may even have a question mark in the transcript. How did you decide which were formulations and which were not-knowing questions?

b. What helped you decide which words were *not* in a formulation?
("Questions" post is due by midnight Saturday, March 18.)

2. Comparisons

Download the completed ELANs of two or three other class members to your desktop sub-folder for Week 6. As you open each one, you will have to link each ELAN to the "Mike and William Miller" video in your Week 2 sub-folder or your Week 6 sub-folder if you decided to make a copy of the video there. After reviewing each of these ELAN analyses of other class members, pick one and post on a comparison of its identification of the therapist's formulations and the exact words included in each formulation with

your own. Discuss your agreements and disagreements. How would you resolve your disagreements?
("Comparisons" post is due by midnight Monday, March 20.)