

Week 7 (March 21-27)

Formulations 2: Identifying Transformations in Therapists' Formulations

Introduction

This week focuses more specifically on the details of therapists' formulations. You will recall from last week's reading that Korman, Bavelas, and De Jong (2013) proposed that formulations are not neutral because they selectively *preserve*, *omit*, *alter*, or even *add* to what a client has said. The exercise for this week is an analysis of these transformations in the formulations identified in the therapy dialogue in last week's exercise.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the five ways that a formulation transforms what the client said. These are *exact preservation*, *deictic preservation*, *preserving in altered form*, *omitting*, and *adding*.
- Gain a basic understanding of the analysis procedures and stages of a microanalysis of formulations in therapy dialogues.
- Conduct a microanalysis of the transformations in the therapist's formulations in an excerpt from a therapy session.

Readings

Review the reading from Week 6:

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. **See especially pp. 38-40.** (You downloaded this reading last week; it should be in the Week 6 sub-folder in your desktop folder for the course.)

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

Korman, H., Bavelas, J.B., & De Jong, P. (2009). *Formulations manual with stages I-IV*. **See especially pp. 2-3; 20-28.** (You also downloaded this reading last week.)

Exercise

Last week you completed Stages I and II of a microanalysis of formulations as described in the two Korman et al. sources. That is, you identified both the formulations (Stage I) and the exact words that made up each formulation (Stage II) in the therapist utterances in the "Mike and William Miller" video. You completed last week's analysis in ELAN using tiers and selections.

This week you will complete Stages III and IV. These stages concern the various ways in which therapists' formulations preserve, omit, alter, and even add to what clients say. Stages III and IV are summarized in Korman et al. (2013, pp. 38-40) and Korman et al. (2009, pp. 2-3, 20-28). Use these two sources to guide your analysis. As you will soon see, we will ask you to complete

this week's analysis in a Word document using colors just as the analysis is described in Korman et al. (2009). We believe that completing the analysis in a Word document with colors versus in ELAN on tiers will give you a clearer sense of how the therapist's formulations transform what the client says.

1. Begin by doing the assigned reading; it will serve as a guide to this exercise and make the "Week 7 exercise demonstration" video more easily understandable and useful.
2. Download and watch the "Week 7 exercise demonstration" video. This video can be downloaded from the Week 7 sub-folder in the Dropbox folder: "Downloads; IMA online course."
3. Next, return to the Week 7 sub-folder in the Dropbox folder: "Downloads: IMA online course." Download the Word document named "Mike and William Miller, Formulations, Stages III-IV analysis." Save a copy with your initials on it or simply add your initials to the title: "Mike and William Miller, Formulations, Stages III-IV analysis, xxx."

Open the document. Please notice several things about its design that were described in the exercise demonstration video you watched. The transcript of Mike and Miller's utterances compose the first two columns. The third column gives abbreviated classifications to each therapist utterance (Q = a not knowing question, G = a generic listener response, and F = a formulation). The fourth column, where applicable, gives any therapist deictic expressions and what the deictic expression refers to (i.e. substitutes for) in what the client said. The fifth column may be used for any notes the analyst cares to make such as his or her rationale for the analysis decisions reached or when application of the rules for analysis seem challenging and reasons for that.

As the title of the document indicates, Stages I and II of a formulations analysis of the "Mike and William Miller" video are already completed in this Word document (see the second column). Not only are Stages I and II completed but this is a *resolved* analysis as well. As described in Korman et al. (2013, p. 36), the analysts in that study resolved any disagreements in a previous stage of analysis before proceeding to the next stage. Instead of asking all of you to fully resolve differences in your Stage I and II analyses of last week (a useful but time-consuming exercise), we are providing everyone with a resolved analysis in this Word document. That way, everyone will start their Stage III and IV analyses for this week from the same point.

Lastly, notice that we have completed a Stage III and IV analysis for the first two of Miller's nine formulations. We used the rules and a similar coloring scheme as described in Korman et al. (2009, pp. 20-28). And, as described in the Week 7 demonstration video, we completed the steps for a Stage III analysis on each formulations we analyzed before moving on to the Stage IV analysis. Ideally, we (and you) would do a reliability check on Stage III for each formulation

before moving on to Stage IV, but the course schedule does not permit time for this check, so after completing the Stage III analysis we moved directly to the Stage IV analysis.

4. Do a Stage III analysis of the remaining 8 therapist formulations in the Word document following the Korman et al. (2009, pp. 20-23):

- a. Highlight in **green** the words that the client had said that reappeared in the therapist's formulation using the same words (see Korman et al., 2009, pp. 20-21). Highlight these words both in the therapist formulation and the previous client utterance(s).
- b. Use ~~strike-out~~ to indicate those client words in previous client utterances that the therapist did not preserve exactly.
- c. Highlight deictic expressions in **blue** (pp. 21-23). Then write a comment in the appropriate column to the right of the formulation containing the deictic expression(s) indicating what the deictic expression substitutes for in the previous client's utterance(s).
- d. Complete your Stage III analysis of one therapist formulation before moving on to the next therapist formulation. Complete your Stage III analysis of all the therapist formulations before moving on to the Stage IV analysis.
- e. Use the "Notes" column to record any observations or questions that occur to you while doing the analysis that you might wish to address in your posting for this week.

5. Do a Stage IV analysis of the remaining 8 therapist formulations in the Word document following the Korman et al. (2009, pp. 25-28):

- a. Highlight in **yellow** the things the client said that reappear in the therapist's formulation using different words with essentially the same meaning (pp. 25-26).
(Note: The change to the use of yellow here from the manual's use of teal for "preserving in altered form" has been done because the words are more readable under yellow than teal.)
- b. Highlight in **pink** anything that the therapist has added to what the client said (pp. 26-28).
- c. Use the "Notes" column to record any observations or questions that occur to you while doing the analysis that you might wish to address in your posting for this week.

6. Upload your completed analysis in the Word document with your initials on it to the sub-folder for Week 7 in the Dropbox folder: "Uploads; IMA online course."

Posting

1. Questions

- a. Did the therapist's formulations introduce transformations of what the client had said? Give some examples.
- b. What parts of the analysis were simplest for you to do; what parts more difficult? Explain.

c. What would formulations that only preserved all of the exact words of the client with no transformations be like?

("Questions" post due by midnight Saturday March 25.)

2. Comparisons

Download two other class members completed exercises in Word for this week to your Week 7 sub-folder in your desktop folder for the course. After reviewing each of these, pick one other class member's Word file and post on a comparison of his or her analysis of the transformations in the therapist's formulations to your own analysis. Discuss your agreements and disagreements. How would you resolve your disagreements?

("Comparisons" post due by midnight Monday, March 27.)