Critical Moments in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy:

A Study of Discursive Expertise

Andrew Beckwith

BMBS FRANZCP

School of Medicine

Discipline of Psychiatry

The University of Adelaide

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# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................. vii
Statement ................................................................................................................. viii
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................. ix

Chapter 1 Introduction.............................................................................................. 1

1.1 Introduction and Aims ....................................................................................... 1

1.2 An Overview of the Published and Submitted Papers ..................................... 5
  1.2.1 Paper One (Chapter 4): The Negotiation of the Problem Statement in CBT ......................................................... 5
  1.2.2 Paper Two (Chapter 5): Homework Setting in CBT: A Study of Interactional Strategies ............................................. 6
  1.2.3 Paper Three (Chapter 6): Termination in CBT: A Study of Interactional Strategies ...................................................... 7

1.3 Arrangement of the Thesis ............................................................................... 8

2.1 Overview .......................................................................................................... 10

2.2 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 11

2.3 Psychotherapy and the Evolution of CBT ....................................................... 13

2.4 The History of CBT ........................................................................................ 19
  2.4.1 The Development of Behavioural Therapy .............................................. 20
  2.4.2 The ‘Cognitive Revolution’ and the Development of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy ............................................. 24
  2.4.3 The Third Wave ....................................................................................... 26

2.5 The Form of Therapy that is Studied in this Thesis ......................................... 27

2.6 Limitations of the CBT Literature in Addressing the Interaction between Client and Therapist ......................................................... 28

2.7 Psychotherapy Process and Outcomes Research ......................................... 30
### Chapter 2

#### 2.8 The Adoption of Research Methods from other Disciplines into Psychotherapy Research

- Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis and Psychotherapy Research

#### 2.9 Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis and Psychotherapy Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.9.1 Discourse Analysis</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9.2 Discourse-Analytic Research into Psychotherapy</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9.3 Conversation Analysis and Psychotherapy</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9.4 Conversation Analytic Research into Psychotherapy</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.10 Theme-orientated Discourse Analysis

- Crucial Sites
- Expertise and Interactional Competence
- Practical Relevance

### Chapter 3

#### 3.1 Theme-oriented Discourse Analysis — An overview

#### 3.2 The Application of Theme-orientated Discourse Analysis in this Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Context, Including the Treatment Model of CBT</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Generalisability and a ‘Typical Case’ Design</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 Focal Themes</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.4 Main Analytic Themes</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.3 The Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 The Setting</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 The Data</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Recording and Transcription</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4 Ethics</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 4

The negotiation of the problem statement in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

#### Bionotes

#### Abstract
1 Introduction: Psychotherapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy ........... 84
2 The problem statement as a crucial site ............................................ 85
3 Discourse analysis, Conversation analysis and the Definition of a Client’s
  Problem in Psychotherapy ................................................................... 86
4 Data and Method ................................................................................ 88
  4.1 The Setting ...................................................................................... 88
  4.2 The Data .......................................................................................... 89
  4.3 Method of Analysis .......................................................................... 89
5 Analysis ............................................................................................... 90
  5.1 Overview of the two sessions ............................................................ 90
  5.2 Eliciting the client’s problem (Session 1, Phase 2) .......................... 91
  5.3 Explaining the model ...................................................................... 94
  5.4 Articulating the problem statement .................................................. 96
6 Conclusion ............................................................................................ 100
Appendix: Transcription conventions ..................................................... 102
Notes ....................................................................................................... 103
References .............................................................................................. 104

Chapter 5 Homework Setting in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: A Study of
  Interactional Strategies ......................................................................... 108
Bionotes .................................................................................................. 109
Abstract .................................................................................................. 110
1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 111
2 Homework and Psychotherapy ............................................................. 111
3 Discourse Analysis and Psychotherapy ............................................. 113
4 Method ................................................................................................. 114
  4.1 The Data and Setting ....................................................................... 114
  4.2 Method of Analysis ......................................................................... 114

iv
7.4.1 Politeness and the Need to Save Face ............................................ 163
7.4.2 Complexity of Discursive Strategies and Therapist Expertise .......... 164
7.4.3 The ‘Two Masters Problem’ ............................................................. 165
7.5 Implications for Clinical Practice and the Potential Practical Relevance. 166
  7.5.1 Therapists Reflecting on Their Own Clinical Practice .................... 166
  7.5.2 Training of Therapists ................................................................... 167
  7.5.3 Contribution to the Literature on Healthcare Interactions and Theme-
        Orientated Discourse Analysis ......................................................... 168
7.6 Limitations of this Research ............................................................... 169
7.7 Further Studies .................................................................................. 171
7.8 Conclusion ....................................................................................... 173
Appendix 1 1st Interview ........................................................................ 174
Appendix 2 The Initial Assessment ............................................................ 175
Appendix 3 Case Specific Measures .......................................................... 183
Appendix 4 Identifying & Challenging Negative Thoughts ....................... 189
Appendix 5 Paper 1 ................................................................................. 190
Appendix 6 Consent Form and Subject Information Sheets .................... 200
References ............................................................................................ 208
Abstract

This thesis investigates how the underlying treatment model of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is put into practice in the interaction between the therapist and client in the clinical setting through an analysis of the language used. The findings from three papers represent a detailed analysis of the therapist–client dyads using theme-orientated discourse analysis (Roberts & Sarangi, 2005; Sarangi, 2010). A form of psychotherapy that evolved from the separate but related traditions of behavioural therapy and cognitive therapy, CBT is a major form of psychotherapy recommended by a number of professional bodies and evidence-based treatment protocols for the treatment of a range of psychiatric disorders. There is a wealth of quantitative research attesting to the efficacy of CBT through randomised controlled trials; however, little is understood about how the treatment model of CBT, that is, the underlying theory and related techniques that inform the therapy, is put into practice in everyday clinical settings. In this thesis three crucial aspects of the treatment model are investigated. They are: negotiating the problem statement, homework-setting and termination (ending) of therapy. The analysis makes use of Candlin's concept of crucial sites and critical moments (Candlin, 2000) to focus on relevant parts of the transcript for further analysis. Theme-orientated DA is used as the method of analysis as it is specifically designed for health-related interactions and to connect professional concerns to the discourse analysis. In this case it enables connections to be drawn between aspects of the treatment model of CBT and discursive processes employed by the participants.
Statement

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Andrew Beckwith

29/ 04/2014
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