

**USING HIGH ROPES COURSES IN INDIVIDUAL
PSYCHOTHERAPY: A SOCIAL
CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH**

By

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Abstract

The application of Adventure Therapy mediums for therapeutic, recreational and team building purposes have become increasingly popular over the past thirty years. These activities take place in a variety of contexts. One such a context that is designed and built with the explicit aim of providing challenging, adventurous activities is the high ropes course. Documented application of Ropes Courses largely consists of group-focussed application and the use of these courses in contexts where the focus is on the individual has been explored to a lesser degree. In this study analysis focuses on the interaction between a therapist and a client during a shared high ropes activity. At the time of the study, participants were also engaged in an individual psychotherapeutic process independent of the study.

The study is informed by a Social Constructionist approach and in particular by Discursive Psychology. The work of members of the Discourse and Rhetoric Group at the University of Loughborough (in particular that of Potter and Edwards) forms an integral part of the epistemology and methodology applied in this study. In this approach there is a strong emphasis on the accomplishment and management of action in interaction. Discourse is conceptualised as a resource that functions to accomplish action and discursive analysis focuses on the manner in which discursive resources are employed to achieve action in interaction.

Discursive psychologists view the material context as well as embodiment as important contributors to the construction of action. These aspects are particularly relevant in a Ropes course context where physical activity is prominent. A theory of action in interaction proposed by Charles Goodwin informs the current exploration of the contribution of embodiment and materiality to the organisation of action.

Key words: Adventure Therapy, high ropes course, individual psychotherapy, Social Constructionism, Discursive Psychology, discourse, action, context, materiality, embodiment, discursive analysis.

Samevatting

Vir die laaste dertig jaar neem die gewildheid van Avontuur-mediums vir terapeutiese, ontspannings en spanbou doeleindes toe. Avontuur aktiwiteite vind plaas in 'n verskeidenheid kontekste. Een van hierdie kontekste wat ontwerp en gebou word met die doel om uitdagende, avontuurlustige aktiwiteite moontlik te maak, is Hoë Toubane. Gepubliseerde werk aangaande die toepassing van Toubane sluit grootliks toepassings in wat fokus op groepe, en die toepassing van toubaan-aktiwiteite in kontekste waar die fokus op die individu val, word minder gereeld ondersoek. Hierdie studie fokus op die interaksie tussen 'n terapeut en kliënt tydens gesamentlike deelname aan 'n Toubaan-aktiwiteit. Die deelnemers was tydens die verloop van die projek ook gesamentlik betrokke by 'n individuele terapeutiese proses wat onafhanklik van die navorsingprojek plaasgevind het.

Hierdie studie word gedoen vanuit 'n Sosiaal Konstruksionistiese benadering en in die besonder vanuit 'n "Discursive Psychology" benadering. Die werk van lede van die *Discourse and Rhetoric Group* aan die Universiteit van Loughborough (in die besonder die werk van Potter en Edwards) vorm die basis vir die epistemologie en metodologie wat in hierdie studie toegepas word. "Discursive Psychology" plaas 'n sterk klem op die uitvoering en hantering van aksie in interaksie. Diskoers word beskryf as 'n bron vir die uitvoering van aksies in interaksie en "discursive" analise fokus op ontleding van die manier waariop "discursive" bronne bydra tot die organisering van aksie in interaksie.

Skrywers in hierdie benadering beskou die materiële omgewing en beliggaamdheid as belangrike rolspelers in die organisering van aksie in interaksie. Hierdie aspekte is veral belangrik in 'n Toubaan-konteks waar die fokus op fisiese aktiwiteit val. 'n Teorie deur Charles Goodwin wat aksie in interaksie bespreek, word in hierdie studie toegepas ten einde die bydrae van die materiële konteks en beliggaamdheid tot die organisering van aksie te ondersoek en beskryf.

Sleutelwoorde: Avontuur Terapie, Hoë Toubane, individuele psigoterapie, Sosiale Konstruksionisme, "Discursive Psychology", diskoers, aksie, konteks, materiële konteks, beliggaamdheid, "discursive" analise.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Problem

My interest in the field of Adventure Therapy and in particular high ropes courses started with personal experience. Before I elaborate on this experience I would like to give a brief description of high ropes courses. High ropes activities take place within a specific physical and institutional context. The high ropes course itself is a structure consisting of wooden poles, cables and ropes. In South Africa courses are usually outdoors and they provide challenging activities to be attempted several metres of the ground. The activities could be dangerous and participants are therefore always outfitted with safety harnesses and assisted by ropes course facilitators who control the belay ropes (a rope attached to the harness of each participant as a back-up mechanism). The challenges put participants in unfamiliar situations that entail a perceived risk (Gass, 1993). Adventure Therapy and high ropes courses will be described in more depth in a later section. For now we turn to the experience that kindled my own interest. I would like to describe this experience in brief in order to make my orientation towards high ropes activities more overt.

My experience on the high ropes course was not part of a therapeutic program but it proved to be valuable, leading to positive changes in my interaction with others. The contribution of physical aspects (belonging both to the material environment and the physical bodies of participants) to the construction of interaction forms an important part of analysis in this study. For this reason I would like to describe a physical feature that contributed significantly to my own high ropes experience. I am severely short-sighted as a result of a genetic eye disease called Macular Degeneration. This affects all areas of my life but the relevance here will hopefully become clearer on further reading.

As I mentioned earlier, my high ropes experience did not start as part of therapy. I enrolled in a workshop for training as a ropes course instructor. The training involves development of knowledge and skills focused on safety regulations and practical implementation of ropes course activities. Training helps to prepare instructors to

facilitate the technical and safety aspects of ropes course activities. I had never participated in any ropes course activities prior to the workshop, but it sounded exciting and I wanted to expand my career options. I was not at all convinced that I had the physical strength, the people-skills or the self-confidence to successfully complete the training. On the first day, my heart sank. I was terrified of the height of some of the activities and as the trainer was describing the equipment situated several meters up in the air, I realised that I was unable to see the equipment he was referring to. I had to climb up before I could understand what he was talking about. I was ready to turn and run. Somehow I managed to stay. I started trying out the easier activities and gradually developed enough faith in the equipment, the trainer, my fellow trainees and myself to start risking the most challenging activities. Pretty soon I was doing things I never thought possible and having fun doing them.

I realise that I could be making this experience sound a lot easier than it actually was. My experience on the high ropes course touched on some of my most painful insecurities and often caused a great deal of anxiety. Still, it provided me with countless opportunities to consider new options, new ways of dealing with myself, my world and other people. My high ropes experience was valuable and enriching and I started wondering about the possibility of applying some of these activities in a therapeutic context.

The work I was involved with as an Instructor consisted of the facilitation of practical group activities. These activities consisted of high and low ropes activities and usually did not have explicit therapeutic goals but were mainly focused on team building. Since my training as a psychologist was different from my high ropes training and up until then had focused more on the individual, I became curious about the possibility of applying high ropes activities in individual Psychotherapy.

The word “therapy” can have different meanings for different people and different therapists use a wide variety of activities and methods for therapeutic purposes. In more traditional psychotherapeutic approaches for example, therapeutic activity often mainly conceits of talking while approaches like Adventure or Wilderness Therapy also employ physical activity. As a therapist in training I have been trying to

construct, out of a variety of possibilities, a meaning for the word “therapy”. My understanding of therapy has been influenced by a variety of people proposing a variety of theories ranging from Psychodynamic and Object Relations theories to Systemic, Interactional, Strategic Social Constructionist and, most recently, Discursive Psychology theories. Over the past few years my ideas on therapy have changed and evolved and I expect that these ideas will continue to change and expand with experience. Currently I am left with a few basic aspects that I view as important parts of therapy.

I view therapy as something that can take place within the space that is created between people who engage in a therapeutic endeavour. Participants can include a client and therapist in an individual therapy context or multiple participants in a group or family therapy context. The space within which therapy can take place is created through participant’s interaction with each other. The “something” that takes place in therapy will be unique for every person. It involves interaction that opens up new possibilities. New ways of experiencing yourself and other people, new ways of expressing yourself and new ways of interacting with others. It can involve “coming into contact with” or co-constructing parts of yourself and other people (for instance the therapist or other members of a therapeutic group) that had previously been “inaccessible” in the sense that these aspects were not available as resources in interaction. Such aspects could for instance include the skill of constructing an effective request for help in order to gain help or support. The space that is created between participants (for instance client and therapist) also provides an opportunity to experiment with new behaviour, unfamiliar emotions and bodily reactions and unfamiliar reactions from others. If the work done in therapy is more effective, experimentation with new skills and ways of interacting can also move to contexts outside of therapy. This can disrupt familiar patterns of behaviour and interaction and can be very strenuous, often causing feelings of anxiety and affecting participant’s interactions with the people they relate to on a day to day basis. For these reasons a balance between the challenges provided in therapy on the one hand and support and empathy on the other, can increase the effectiveness of therapy.

The unusual, apparently dangerous physical context of a high ropes course seems to provide the majority of participants with ample opportunity to face challenges. Participants are challenged on a physical level to perform activities that are unusual and at times strenuous, but they can also be challenged on an interactional level when they take part in shared activities that provide an opportunity for new ways of interacting with others. If Ropes Course activities are used for therapeutic purposes, special attention to supportive, empathic interaction is likely to enhance the effectiveness of the activity as a therapeutic experience. Ropes Course facilitators are not necessarily trained in therapeutic skills. Also, high ropes courses can more or less guarantee challenges but support is not necessarily built into facilitation of these activities. For these reasons it is recommended that therapists who choose to use this medium take care to attend to supportive mechanisms in this context.

1.2 Research Question

The field of interest described above focuses on the application of high ropes activities in Individual Psychotherapy. This interest was refined to a focus on the exploration of interaction that takes place on a high ropes course. More specifically the research question focuses on the interaction between a therapist (clinical psychologist) and a client during a shared high ropes activity.

In order to explore and describe interaction, the principles of Discursive Psychology (DP) are applied in this study. Discursive Psychology developed from discourse analytic work. In this tradition of exploration thinking already shifted from focussing on constructs like characteristics or personality traits and categories to inquiry into the practical and interactional role of such constructs in conversation. Discursive Psychology is concerned with the actions that are accomplished through discourse in interaction and research questions usually focus on the manner in which discursive resources function within social interaction to accomplish action.

Discursive psychologists view action as central to people's lives and Potter & Edwards (199) describe action as the range of practical, technical and interpersonal tasks that people accomplish while living their lives. People accomplish actions while

doing their jobs, interacting with others or engaging in various cultural practices. A person can for instance *do* the action of assigning accountability or blame while constructing a factual account of how an accident happened, or elicit an invitation while expressing an interest in a certain event or hobby.

A comparison between DP's approach to representation and that of Social Representations Theory (SRT) could help to explain the construct *action* as it is applied in this study. Potter & Edwards (1999) explain that while SRT views social representations as "cognitive phenomena which enable people to make sense of the world" (p.448), DP views social representations as discursive objects that people construct in talk and text. Instead of focusing on the sense-making role of representations, DP focuses on the way in which representations are constructed to be factual. It also focuses on the role of representations in the accomplishment of action. According to Potter & Edwards (1999) representations are constructed specifically for the role they play in action. It is this role of discourse (talk and text) in action that is explored by considering the manner in which various features of discourse (called discursive resources) are organised to contribute to the accomplishment of action. Discursive resources include the construction of utterances, its action-orientation, the specific sequential situation of utterances within a conversation or text as well as its institutional and rhetorical situation. These features can function in various ways to contribute to the doing of various actions in interaction.

Typically the discursive psychologist's focus on action leads to questions like: "what is discourse or talk doing?" or "how is X done?" This form of questioning stems from a focus on interaction rather than cognition, concrete contexts rather than abstract scenarios and on processes rather than outcomes (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). Therapy often forms the starting point for analysis, which enables researchers to describe how therapy is done (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). It also considers topics like the manner in which interactional resources are used to serve arguments for or against social or political change or the way in which descriptions are constructed to constitute a factual account (for instance in court or in scientific journals) (Potter in Camic, Rhodes & Yardley, 2003). An activity (accomplished

through talk, text or physical action) can for instance be made accountable by using discursive resources in a way that presents the activity as rational or justifiable.

In this study the research question can be phrased as follows: how are discursive resources used during interaction between a therapist and client on a high ropes activity to accomplish action?

1.3 Literature Review

In this study a number of social institutions are involved. They include a tertiary training institution, the institution of individual psychotherapy and the comparatively novel institution of Adventure Therapy. Participants' orientations to these institutions are likely to influence their participation and the construction of action.

Through my inquiry into the application of high ropes activities, I discovered the broader field of Adventure Therapy – a field largely dedicated to the development of group-applications of Adventure Therapy activities. Itin (2001) describes Adventure Therapy as a concept that has existed for nearly thirty years and discusses different possibilities for defining Adventure Therapy. He states that general agreement exists among practitioners that Adventure Therapy involves the use of specific activities like high adventures and wilderness experiences in combination with a philosophy that proposes active exploration of the unknown, views challenges as opportunities and emphasises the contribution of the group to individual success. Itin (2001) points out that a distinction is often made between therapeutic adventure and Adventure Therapy on the grounds of the level of change that the activity is aimed at. When the activity is directed only at change in behaviour, affect and cognition it is termed therapeutic adventure. Such activities can for instance be aimed at decreasing undesirable behaviours that interfere with client's lives and increasing beneficial behaviours that contribute to the client's quality of life. Adventure Therapy on the other hand is aimed at change on a meta-level. Itin (2001) describes meta-level change as change that occurs on a level above that of concrete behaviours that addresses the underlying issues that contribute to the undesirable behaviour. Adventure Therapy then facilitates change on a concrete level as well as on a meta-level and seeks to explore historical

issues that contribute to problematic behaviour. Itin (2001) states that a focus on meta-level change requires advanced skill on the part of practitioners in order to facilitate access and exploration of meta-level change processes. In short, for an adventure oriented activity to be called Adventure Therapy, there has to be a focus on more fundamental change that addresses the cause of problematic behaviour so that change is likely to be lasting.

Adventure Therapy is a relatively new field and can be described as a set of specialised techniques and tools that are applied in a variety of profession rather than a profession in itself (Itin, 2001). Adventure Therapy involves a code of ethics as well as a body of specialised knowledge but it is not represented by any specific academic entity. Adventure Therapy activities are applied in the field of psychology, sociology and recreational therapy to name but a few and it can be described as an interdisciplinary field. The following section includes references to work in the field of Experiential Education (EE). This type of work differs significantly from Adventure Therapy but takes place in a physical context similar to that of AT and also incorporates physical activities into programs. EE applies adventure activities similar to the activities used in AT but instead of applying these activities for therapeutic purposes, they are incorporated into the traditional education curriculum (Long, 2001).

The success of group-application in Adventure Therapy (especially when they form part of a larger, long-term therapeutic program) and Experiential Education is well-documented (Gass, 1993; Itin, 1998; Long, 2001; Priest & Gass, 1997), but individual therapy applications have apparently been left largely undocumented. Long (2001) describes a study where the influence of experiential education (involving ropes course activities) on a group of girls with emotional and behavioural disorders was explored. She states that experiential education activities are becoming increasingly popular since they provide a fun, active, exhilarating experience by incorporating adventure activities into a more traditional education curriculum. Adventure activities (like rope course activities) are cited as effective “hooks” for drawing adolescents into treatment programs. According to Long (2001) experiential education is a technique that has been useful as a method of treatment as well as prevention. Experiential

education has often been used as an alternative to classic teaching methods and proved to be particularly effective with children who struggled in a normal classroom context. The behaviour of these children changed significantly when they were engaged in experiential activities and they became interested, alert and responsible. The effectiveness of experiential education activities as alternative methods for education resulted in the expansion of application to include therapeutic application, particularly involving outpatient treatment of adolescents in hospitals. The study that Long (20001) reports on focused on group application and specifically on the influence of experiential education activities on the group and on the roles that participants play in the group.

An article written by Gayleen Eilers (1997) describes the individual experience of a client on a high ropes course. The experience of people like Gayleen Eilers (1997) of Adventure Therapy mediums (in particular high ropes activities) suggests that high ropes could be a beneficial component of individual psychotherapy. She describes her Adventure Therapy experiences as life changing and attributes much of the effectiveness to the involvement of her therapist, hinting at the value of a high ropes experience where both client and therapist are involved.

Adventure Therapy moves away from using mainly conversation in therapy and explicitly incorporates the material context and the physical body into therapeutic activities. It focuses on placing participants in (physical) activities that challenge dysfunctional behaviour and reward functional change through natural consequences (Gass, 1993). Activities are often aimed at functional changes that have present and future relevance for the participant and his/her social context. The foundations of Adventure Therapy links with post-modernism in the sense that the client is viewed as a participant, someone who is equally responsible for what happens in therapy. Participation requires a level of motivation, energy, involvement and responsibility from clients (Gass, 1993). This type of involvement has implications for the selection of participants that will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Eilers' (1997) high ropes experience formed part of a broader therapeutic program at a treatment facility in Wisconsin. The therapeutic consequences that she experienced

are documented in “My lessons for living from Adventure Therapy” (Eilers, 1997). She reports the powerful impact of Adventure Therapy, in particular that of her experience. For Eilers (1997) the Adventure Therapy medium is immensely powerful and valuable. She describes how Adventure Therapy activities enhances established therapeutic goals and often provides valuable metaphors relevant to her recovery process. The lessons she learned on the high ropes could be translated to her life. Possible consequences of a high ropes experience that can be predicted from Eilers’ account are the experience of and experimentation with new behaviours, self acceptance and acceptance from others and awareness of own behaviour patterns. An aspect that is emphasised is an experience of “true sharing” and “connectedness” with the people who shared in the same challenge. She explains that she could relive life-struggles on the high ropes and experience thinking, doing and feeling differently with regards to these struggles. Eilers (1997) describes an immediacy to the Adventure Therapy situation that could provide an opportunity to work in the here and now. This immediacy involves confrontation with the self and with your way of dealing with challenging situations. It could not only provide the therapist and client with information about the manner in which they deal with challenges but also provide an opportunity for experimentation with alternative ways.

Eilers (1997) describes a valuable and enriching high ropes experience that formed part of a broader treatment program. Therapeutic gains from individual and group psychotherapy are enhanced by high ropes experiences and the utilisation of high ropes activities in conjunction with other therapies also enhances the effectiveness of high ropes experiences. In the current research project high ropes activities are used in combination with a broader therapeutic medium in the sense that participants are also engaged in an individual therapy process.

Adventure Therapy is not proposed as a substitute for more traditional approaches to therapy. Rather, it is suggested as a means to enhance therapeutic objectives through providing an enriched therapeutic environment that facilitates a multi-dimensional experience (Gass., 1993). Such an experience could for instance include physical, affective, cognitive and interactional aspects.

One of the institutions that are relevant in this study is that of individual psychotherapy. Since a client and a therapist engaged in an individual therapy process share the high ropes challenges, it is likely that the experience will influence the therapeutic relationship in some way.

Fruggeri (in McNamee & Gergen, 1992) describes psychotherapy as the social construction of change. In psychotherapy the therapist relates to the client in a manner that is “prescribed” by his/her understanding of the system. However, the effect of an intervention is determined in equal measure by the clients’ interpretation of the therapists’ and their own actions. Thus, the outcome of therapy is as much a result of the interpretations and actions of the client as it is a result of the interpretations and actions of the therapist.

Almost every theoretical perspective in the field of Psychology emphasise the therapeutic relationship or alliance as well as the trust between therapist and client as crucial components in therapeutic endeavours. Kutash and Wolf (1986) describe the importance of the therapeutic relationship in classic psychoanalysis, psychodynamic psychotherapy and client-centred therapy. Hoyt (1996) describes the importance of this relationship in conversationalist, narrative and strategic therapies. Weakland, Hoyt and Meichenbaum (in Hoyt, 1996) use the term therapeutic alliance and describe this as a collaborative relationship between client and therapist that provides the context within which other therapeutic procedures or techniques become meaningful or useful. Weakland (in Hoyt, 1996) emphasises the importance of a good therapeutic relationship but expresses frustration at the extent to which this aspect of therapy has been left unexplored and un-described. It is unclear which forms or patterns of action or interaction contributes to the establishment of a good therapeutic relationship.

The aim of this study is not to construct an ideal or optimal pattern of interaction for establishment of a good therapeutic relationship. The aim is to explore the manner in which actions and interactions contribute to the development and interactional management of aspects like trust, accountability and limitation in the therapeutic relationship. Trust is usually conceptualised as an internal characteristic that an individual possesses, but in this study the focus will be on the construction of features

like trust between people. Description of actions and interactions could highlight the contribution that interpersonal exchanges make to the development and management of such constructs in relationships. The focus then falls on the way in which aspects that are presumed to exist within individuals develop through peoples' interactions.

1.4 Goal

In general, the goal of this study is to explore the possibility of applying high ropes activities in individual psychotherapy. Consideration of such a possibility raises questions regarding the “nature” of therapy and the “nature” of the activities that take place on a high ropes course. In the researcher's view of therapy that was briefly described earlier, the emphasis falls on the interaction between client and therapist and the possibilities for change that can be constructed on various levels through this interaction. Since the focus falls on interaction and the construction of possibilities for change, a theory that can facilitate exploration of interaction seems suitable for the purposes of this study.

Discursive Psychology focuses on exploration of the manner in which actions are accomplished through discourse in interaction and can facilitate description of interaction. In the context of this study (the high ropes course) shared participation provides the opportunity for action on an interactional level (for instance invitation, decline, or assignment of accountability) and the physical context of the ropes course provides an opportunity for physical action. Participants can employ discursive resources (features of discourse) as well as physical movement or stance in order to accomplish action. The following summary gives a brief overview of the most important ideas and concepts from Discursive Psychology that shaped the current conceptualisation of action in interaction. It also explains how this conceptualisation is expanded, using ideas from Goodwin's (2000) theory of action, for the purpose of clarifying and describing the role that contextual features (specifically physical surroundings and the physical body) play in the organisation of action. These ideas will be described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Discursive Psychology is a school of thought that developed in the early 1990's from rhetoric and discourse analytic work. It was distinguished from Discourse Analysis for two main reasons. First as an attempt to distinguish this tradition of work from Discourse Analysis done in linguistics and second to emphasise that the school of Discursive Psychology embodies a reworking of what psychology is (Potter in Camic, Rhodes & Yardley, 2003).

A central feature in Discursive Psychology is the conception of talk or discourse as the performance of action (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). Discourse is viewed as a productive contributor to the construction of the world as we know it and both mind and reality are viewed as the product of human action (Potter in McHoul & Rapley, 2003). Analysis focuses on the actions accomplished through discourse and the question "what is discourse or talk doing?" is often asked. In other words analysts are interested in the action-orientated features of discourse and considers the manner in which discourse is put together to perform actions.

In order to build action, various resources are available to participants in discourse. These resources include features of discourse itself as well as features of the context. Discursive psychologists describe a number of features of discourse that can contribute to the construction of action in interaction. These features, called discursive resources, can contribute to discourse in a variety of ways so that each can help to construct different actions in a variety of ways. Discursive resources and include action-orientation, construction, sequential situation, rhetorical situation and institutional situation. Although these resources are described as features of discourse, they are in close reciprocal relationship with aspects in the environment. Certain features of the material surroundings and physical actions are viewed as important contributing factors in the interaction that is explored in the current study. For this reason a clear conceptualisation of the relationship between discourse and context was needed. In order to elaborate on the relationship between discourse and context, ideas from a theory of action in interaction produced by Goodwin (2000) is included in this conceptualisation.

The conceptualisation of context employed in this study reflects consideration of relevant aspects in the environment at any given moment. Goodwin (2000) states that context can only be described if the temporal unfolding of the relevant interaction is taken into consideration. This means that the interaction and context that is being studied cannot be divorced and has to be analysed as an interactive, reciprocal system. Context is not viewed as a set framework that provides a stable environment for the construction of discourse. Instead it is viewed as a fluid, ever-changing myriad of features and structures that can be relevant to the construction of discourse to a varying degree at different times.

During the unfolding of interaction the relevance of different resources, both in the context and in discourse, is continuously changing. Goodwin (2000) uses the term semiotic resources to indicate a variety of sign phenomena that can be employed in interaction towards the construction of action and meaning. Semiotic resources include features of discourse as well as features of the context whereas discursive resources only include features of discourse. In the current conceptualisation, features belonging to both discourse and the context are considered for its contribution to the construction of action. However, DP's understanding of discursive resources will be applied to all features (discursive and "semiotic") since this conceptualisation focuses on the contribution of resources to the construction of action and not on the meaning represented by these features. Discursive psychologists do not usually refer to features in the context as discursive resources but I am arguing that these features can function as discursive resources and can be analysed for their contribution to the organisation of action. The word discursive resources will be used henceforth to refer to features of discourse as well as features of the context that can contribute to the organisation of action.

The construction of context as a dynamic framework that is in reciprocal relationship with discourse lends itself to a concept that Goodwin (2000) calls contextual configuration. This provides a means for exploration and description of the manner in which a variety of discursive resources "come together" to build and organise action in interaction. Contextual configuration can be described as the variety of resources (both from discourse and context) that are relevant to the building of action at a

particular time in interaction. Discursive resources that form part of the contextual configuration can change from moment to moment as new semiotic fields become available and relevant and others become irrelevant. The temporal relevance of discursive resources is co-constructed by participants in interaction and is influenced by features like mutual orientation, reflexive awareness and the creation and maintenance of a participation framework. These concepts are explained in more detail in Chapter 2. The contextual configuration is constructed through the juxtaposition of various discursive resources belonging to the physical, social and institutional context as well as resources specific to discourse.

Both Itin (2001) and Newes (2001) emphasise the urgency of methodologically sound research within the field of Adventure Therapy, towards the development of Adventure Therapy as a recognised profession. The methodology proposed by Discursive Psychology demonstrates the possibility of qualitative analysis of interaction in a rigorous, cumulative and repeatable manner (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). The methods that are proposed flow from a social constructionist perspective and allow for analysis and description of the temporal unfolding of human action within relevant contexts. The discursive resources that are described in Discursive Psychology as well as concepts from Goodwin's (2000) theory of action in interaction are used as guidelines for analysing and describing the manner in which this particular interaction takes place. Interaction is viewed as constructive and the manner in which participants use discursive resources to manage actions within interaction is central to the analysis. Analysis focuses on the contribution of discursive resources, belonging both to context and discourse, to the organisation of action in interaction in a specific physical context – a high ropes course. More specifically, the goal of this project is to describe the manner in which discursive resources are put together to build action during the interaction between a therapist and client participating in a shared high ropes activity.

1.5 Research results

Analysis of the interaction between therapist and client on the high ropes course highlighted several aspects regarding the organisation of action that were relevant specifically to the context of the high ropes course. A variety of these aspects are discussed in detail in Chapter four. This discussion describes the contribution of physical elements that are specific to the Wild Woozy activity, an activity that provides the opportunity for mutual participation. Analytic results explore the construction of actions that took place on an interactional or interpersonal level as well as the contribution of physical movements and stance to the construction of these actions.

1.6 Conclusion and Recommendations

In Chapter five a concluding description of client-therapist interaction is presented along with recommendations regarding future research in this field, as well as recommendations concerning the application of high ropes activities in the field of individual psychotherapy.

Chapter 2: Discursive Psychology

I would like to introduce this Chapter with the following statement by Goodwin (2000) on the use of a colour chart for the archaeological classification of the colour of dirt samples:

“It is precisely here, as bits of dirt are shaped into the work-relevant categories of a specific social group, that ‘nature’ is transformed into ‘culture’.” (p. 1513)

2.1 Basic Principles

Discursive Psychology studies naturalistic interaction, focusing on the detailed order of discourse in an attempt to explore the manner in which talk and text are used to perform actions within society (Potter in Camic et al., 2003).

An important feature of Discursive Psychology that distinguishes it from many other theories, is its development as an approach to knowledge rather than a theory of knowledge (Potter & Edwards, 1999). As an approach to knowledge DP is relativist and reflexive and views knowledge as contextual and consensual. DP considers that which counts as knowledge to be dependent on the social and cultural context. Instead of attempting to discover or describe the nature of reality (producing knowledge), it focuses on description of the practices involved in the construction and application of knowledge or meaning in a specific context. Potter (in Hardy & Bryman, 2003) describes the aim of discursive analysis as follows:

“In this form of Discourse Analysis the aim is to make visible the ways in which discourse is central to action, the ways it is used to constitute events, settings and identities, and the various discursive resources that are drawn on to build plausible descriptions.” (p. 4)

A central feature in discursive approaches is the conception of talk as the performance of action (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). The Discourse Analytic principles

underlying DP becomes evident when the discursive conceptualisation of talk and text is considered. This conceptualisation is central to the discursive understanding of action and differs significantly from more traditional approaches. In more traditional paradigms talk and text are viewed as the product of mental processes and perceptual experiences and what people say reflects their perception or understanding of the world. Discursive Psychology views discourse (talk and text) as having a much more active role in that it constructs the nature of the world. Discursive psychologists maintain that both reality (traditionally viewed as existing independently outside of the observer) and the mind (including mental representations, internal structures and so on) are constructed conceptually in language and in the performance of social practices. The concept of action takes a primary position in Discursive Psychology and mind and reality are viewed as the product of human action (Potter in McHoul & Rapley, 2003). Action here refers to the accomplishment of interactional or social tasks both through physical action and the production of discourse. The production of discourse is viewed as an important means of taking action. This view echoes the social constructionist focus on the role of language as a force involved in people's construction of their world.

In Social Constructionism language is viewed as more than a tool for reflection of the world. It embodies the distinctions we draw on the world and the frames we use to interpret the world. Language recursively influences possible future distinctions and interpretations, giving rise to "truths". The term discourse is used to embody the conceptualisation of productive language. Burr (1995) defines discourse as a coherent, organised set of statements that are shared between people. Gergen & Gergen (in Steier, 1991) along with Fruggeri (in McNamee & Gergen, 1994) focus on the social context of language and state that descriptions and explanations are collectively generated by people through social processes. Our frames of reference are socially generated in language. In this way discourse shapes our reality in that it creates and maintains our view of the world by providing the structure within which our observations become meaningful. As Potter (in Hardy & Bryman, 2003) explains: "Discourse constructs and stabilises versions of the world." (p. 8).

The DP conceptualisation of talk as the performance of action puts the focus of analysis on talk itself as the object of study. Talk is not viewed as merely representative of “what is really going on”. In other words, talk does not simply reflect constructs like underlying affection or trust or hostility, instead such constructs are viewed as created and maintained through talk in interaction.

Discursive Psychology’s focus on interaction as the object of study reflects the influence of Conversation Analytic work where practices of interaction themselves are considered the object of study (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). Discursive Psychology focuses on interaction in its natural context. Potter (in Bellack & Hersen, 1998) describes naturalistic interaction as interaction that would take place regardless of the researchers’ involvement and applies the “dead social scientist”-test to draw this distinction. If the interaction would take place even in the absence of the researcher, it is considered naturalistic interaction.

One aim of studying naturalistic interaction is reduction of the influence of the researcher on research findings. The researchers' frame of reference or preconceived ideas are embodied in research questions or interview structures and influences the research process from the selection of data, right through to the conclusions that are drawn. An important advantage of studying naturalistic materials is that it allows the researcher to directly study the discourse that is being considered. If counselling is being studied the research material consists of actual conversations in counselling, not representations of counselling, reports of counselling, memories of counselling or theories on counselling. Naturalistic materials also capture the action-oriented and situated nature of talk that would be disrupted by interview questions (Potter in Camic, Rhodes & Yardley, 2003). Although the influence of any observers’ frame of reference on that which they describe can never be escaped, “bracketing” of preconceived ideas can contribute towards a more open and receptive approach towards data. The study of naturalistic interaction can ensure more direct access to human social practices so that these can be studied in as pure a form as possible (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998).

The focus on transcripts of naturalistic interaction as research material reflects the strong influence of Conversation Analysis on Discursive Psychology. Conversation Analysis is a discipline that demonstrated the possibility of qualitative analysis of interaction in a rigorous, cumulative and repeatable manner (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). Similar to Discursive Analysts, Conversation analysts strive to limit the effect of a researchers' assumptions and expectations on conclusions by using transcripts of conversation that was not guided by research or interview questions (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). By analysing naturalistic interaction, conversation analysts as well as discursive analysts are often able to describe an order to social interaction that participants were unaware of and therefore unable to formulate.

A focus on fine detail is a core feature of discursive analysis that distinguishes it from Discourse Analysis. Although both paradigms developed from Social Constructionist foundations, the focus of discursive analysis differs significantly from that of Discourse Analysis (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). Where discourse analysts focus on social relationships or social perception, discursive psychologists analyse social interaction. Similar to the discourse analytic focus on the way in which talk and text performs actions, discursive analysis focuses on the manner in which discursive resources are used to perform actions within interaction. Discourse Analysis often considers the interplay between various discourses in a community and looks at the options for action and interaction that evolve from such interplay. It considers the "ways of being" that are provided for by relevant discourses. Discursive Psychology on the other hand focuses on micro-analysis of interaction considered in fine detail and mostly analyses transcripts of naturally occurring conversation (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). Where constructs (like those depicting or representing mental states or meanings) are mentioned in DP the aim is to describe the manner in which these constructs contribute to participants' actions and the manner in which they are constructed to help manage interactional business.

Potter (in Bellack & Hersen, 1998) explains that detail that may seem trivial or coincidental and insignificant (like pauses, repetitions, hesitations or self-repair) are important features of conversation. The specifics of what is said and in particular the manner in which it is said forms an integral part of the actions that are performed

through talk and contributes to the outcome of an interaction. Talk is ordered in its detail so that even seemingly trivial features serve a purpose within interaction. Hesitation for instance could alert a listener to discomfort or anxiety on the part of a speaker and this could lead to the co-construction of a more encouraging or supportive context.

The emphasis on the ordered detail of talk has important methodological implications. Potter (in Bellack & Hersen, 1998) emphasises the importance of using a method of data collection and transcription that captures these details. He refers to the work of Gail Jefferson in this regard and recommends a system of data transcription developed by her to capture features of talk that have interactional significance.

Potter (in Camic et al., 2003) states that Discursive Psychology's understanding of human action strongly influences their approach to analysis and that this conception of human action emphasises certain features of discourse (Potter in Hardy & Bryman, 2003). These features are called discursive resources and are central to Discursive Psychology's conceptualisation of human action. Discursive resources are characteristics of discourse that function together to construct versions of the world and to accomplish action in interaction. Examples of discursive resources include construction, action-orientation, sequential situation, rhetorical situation and institutional situation. Discursive Analysis takes into consideration all the above mentioned discursive resources. It analyses ways of talking in order to describe the manner in which discursive resources are used in the construction of descriptions so that discourse that is produced performs actions (Potter in McHoul & Rapley, 2003).

2.2 Discourse and Construction

Potter (in Hardy & Bryman, 2003; Potter in Camic et al., 2003) describes discourse as being simultaneously constructed in the sense that it is built from various resources (words, idioms, discursive resources like rhetorical devices and so on) and constructive in the sense that it gives rise to new descriptions or “truths”. Discourse is constructed in the course of interaction and in the performance of actions and in turn discourse constructs and stabilises versions of the world (of events, actions and people’s phenomenological world).

The focus of social constructionist research on the constructed and consensual origins of knowledge forms a stark contrast to traditional positivist research. Fruggeri (in McNamee & Gergen, 1992) refers to the turning point in social sciences that was brought about by the social constructionist recognition of the constructive role played by any observer in the creation of knowledge. Steier (1991) states that researchers create worlds through their questions and through that which is considered, by the scientific community, reasonable answers to these questions. People generate reality and knowledge and there is not one “truth” for any situation, instead there are multiple descriptions or multiple “truths” (Gergen, 1999). The construction of these “truths” starts with the distinctions that we draw. Keeney (1983) states that, in order to observe we draw distinctions (for example between foreground and background or research participant and colleague) and any description can only be partial in describing certain aspects of a bigger system (Keeney, 1985).

Our way of understanding and describing the world relies on the beliefs or frames of reference we use to draw distinctions and interpret the world. These frames of reference are informed by culture and a specific time in history (Burr, 1995). In social constructionist terms, our distinctions and frames of reference are represented in and developed through language.

Both Discourse Analysis and discursive analysis emphasise the reciprocal relationship between discourse and the context from which it is constructed. In classical psychological theories people are described as acting within social settings on the

basis of internal psychological entities (such as emotions, intentions or drives) (Potter in Hardy & Bryman, 2003). Discursive Psychology views both settings and psychological entities as constructs that develop in discourse through talk-in-interaction, that means that these constructs are created between people and maintained in discourse. The conceptualisation of the world or reality as constructed is not meant to render knowledge or descriptions so relative that each observer is isolated in his/her own private version of the world. Rather, it emphasises the active role that observers play through their actions (the production of discourse in talk and text and physical actions) in the creation and maintenance of the world, as they know it. Analysis in this study focuses on the interactional role of relevant constructs in a particular context and the way in which these are employed to accomplish action within interaction. The 'nature' or meaning that a construct may represent will only be considered in terms of its significance in a particular interaction (for instance if participants acknowledge a meaning as important or relevant and this contributes to the action that is accomplished).

2.3 Discourse and Action

Discursive Psychology's understanding of action has an important influence on the approach to analysis of human interaction. As mentioned earlier, talk and text are viewed as productive discourse in that it performs actions (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). It contributes to the construction of both mind and reality and is not viewed as merely representative of an external reality. Discourse is viewed as constructed specifically to perform actions as part of broader social practices. In order to explore the manner in which discourse is constructed to perform action, discursive analysts consider the organisation of discourse in fine detail. This organisation reveals the performance of practical, interpersonal or technical tasks that can include greetings, invitations, social practices like counselling and so on.

Discursive Psychology views action-orientation as an important feature of discourse and explores it as a discursive resource. Action-orientation refers to the manner in which discourse is put together to perform actions, for example to invite someone to an event. This feature of discourse reflects the conceptualisation of discourse as a

productive contributor to the construction of the world as we know it. People use talk in interaction to attend to and manage their interests, to negotiate and construct shared meanings, to maintain or challenge social structures, to establish shared participation in social practices and to justify actions or make them accountable.

2.4 Discourse and Situation

Discourse is situated sequentially, institutionally and rhetorically. The situated character of discourse refers to the way in which talk and text is occasioned within a sequence of interaction. In other words talk is usually a response to something and is also followed by a response. Even though these three aspects (sequential, rhetorical and institutional situation) set the conditions for future actions, Potter (in Camic et al., 2003) emphasises that Discursive Psychology does not propose a contextual determinism since participants are free to either orient themselves to aspects of the situation or to ignore them.

2.4.1 Sequential Situation

Potter (in Hardy & Bryman, 2003) explains that talk and text are embedded in conversational sequences or sequences of interaction and that all actions are “responses” and “causes” that set the conditions for future action. Sequential situation refers to the primary environment of what is being said (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). That is, to whatever directly preceded that which is being said and directly follows that which is being said. Discourse is oriented to but not determined by its sequential organisation. An utterance is to an extent determined by something that preceded it and is often also influenced by that which the producer of discourse views as a likely response. If for instance a suitor expects or fears that his invitation will be declined, he may take pre-emptive action by making the invitation more inviting or exciting or even by portraying himself as sensitive to rejection. All of these actions will help create a context where the invitation is likely to be accepted. In order to gain a better understanding of the significance of the sequential organisation of an utterance, it could be helpful to consider how the interaction would have been influenced if the particular utterance were situated differently within the conversation. Potter (in Camic

et al., 2003) cites an example from a phone call to a child abuse help-line where the counsellor asks “So what is going on?”. This question is situated at the beginning of the conversation and the caller responds by describing the problem (reason for calling). Potter points out that the counsellor’s question would have played a very different role if it had for instance been placed at the end of the conversation. If it was produced after the caller had disclosed information regarding his/her problem it could easily come across as challenging, suggesting that the caller was not telling the whole story.

2.4.2 Institutional Situation

As mentioned earlier, Discourse Analysis studies the manner in which talk and text are used to perform actions within society (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). For example, inauguration ceremonies are used to signify and sanction specific power relationships within a community. Discourse Analysis often focuses on analysing the way in which dominant discourses contribute to the establishment and maintenance of power relationships within the community. Dominant discourses play an important role in the establishment of institutions within communities. These discourses often become institutionalised through social interactions whereby shared meaning-structures are created. They contain socially sanctioned meanings that are widely shared and seldom challenged. Institutions can be described as social structures that serve an organisational purpose in society. This implies power relationships that allows certain courses of action and facilitates certain discourses (for example regarding distribution of resources) while restricting or even prohibiting others. Institutionalised discourses as well as the courses of action supported by them are unlikely to be challenged.

Institutional contexts form part of the context within which discourse operates. Discourse reflects the producers’ orientation to existing institutions (institutions may be supported or challenged) and it is to some degree rooted in this orientation. Institutional identities and tasks are socially constructed through discourse and the orientation of any producer of discourse to these identities and tasks, may be relevant to actions that are taken (both physical actions and actions performed through discourse) (Potter in Hardy & Bryman, 2003). Institutional identities are constructed

in interaction and provide participants with guidelines or even prescriptions regarding the roles that are provided for within an institution. Institutional identities allow for specific kinds of action and interaction that contribute to the integrity of the institution. A news reader for instance will strive to come across as neutral, a servant as submissive and a pre-school teacher as caring and responsible.

Institutions form part of the context of discourse and institutional orientation is related to the manner in which people attend to interests (both their own and those of others). In the above mentioned examples the newsreader, the servant and the pre-school teacher all have an interest in maintaining the institutions that provide them with employment. Whether they are aware of this or not, their actions contribute to the construction and maintenance of these institutions and the institutions reciprocally maintains the identities they adopt as employees.

Consideration of the institutionally situated nature of discourse alerts us to issues of public interest. Institutions to a large degree depend on the support of a number of people for its continuation. Public institutions in particular are usually dependent on the support of a substantial amount of people, often the majority of the population in a community, to survive. In order for such institutions to gain and maintain enough support their actions have to be made accountable. Their concern with making there actions accountable (for instance by displaying it as rational, justifiable or responsible) contributes to the manner in which discourse is constructed and an awareness of such concerns can help the discursive analyst to discern the actions that are being accomplished in discourse. An awareness of the institutional orientation of participants in discourse helps the analysts to describe the manner in which people attend to their own interests and those of others (Potter in Hardy & Bryman, 2003).

2.4.3 Rhetorical Situation

Discourse is rhetorically situated in the sense that claims or descriptions are designed to counter actual or potential alternatives or competing descriptions (Potter in, McHoul & Rapley, 2003). Discourse is constructed in a manner that makes argumentative cases and resists disqualification by actual or potential alternatives

(Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). Discourse is organised to make argumentative cases or counter competing alternatives as part of the way in which people attend to their own or other peoples' interests.

The rhetorical organisation of discourse does not refer to a deliberate, focussed attempt to convince someone else of your point of view or to bring a point across but refers to a more basic core feature of discourse. Discourse (including its rhetorical organisation) flows from frames of reference that already embodies certain orientations and interests that the producer of discourse is often unaware of, so that interests may not be deliberately defended but they are created and maintained through discourse. Gadamer (1977) views prejudices as an inevitable part of our frames of reference but he does not view this condition as problematic. Frames of reference, with its accompanying prejudices, are viewed as a prerequisite for understanding or interpretation of the world. He states that we can strive to be critically aware of our historically situated prejudices in order to understand new experiences but that it is not possible to be aware of all the prejudices that influence our interpretations. For this reason our understanding is always partial and subject to the interplay between our own frames of reference and attempts at understanding, and the new experiences or information that we encounter.

The rhetorical organisation of discourse is strongly influenced by the institutional situation of discourse. Conversations that take place within a counselling context for instance have been shown to differ in various respects from mundane talk in telephone conversations. Jefferson (1988) described a build up through a series of steps that takes place before people talk about their troubles in mundane conversations. In counselling contexts however, these steps are often not taken before talk focuses on troubles. Talk about troubles in counselling contexts is usually also one-sided in that trouble that is experienced by the counsellor is not explored. These differences make sense if the interactional context as well as the institutional context is taken into account.

2.5 Discourse and Context

The aim of this section is to elaborate on the relationship between discourse and context as it is conceptualised in this study. My conceptualisation of context reflects consideration of relevant aspects in the environment at any given moment. Context is not viewed as a set framework consisting of specific features that provide a stable environment for the construction of discourse. Instead it is described as a fluid, ever-changing myriad of features and structures that can be relevant to the construction of discourse to a varying degree at different times. Goodwin's (2000) statement that context can only be described if the temporal unfolding of the relevant interaction is taken into consideration, links with my conceptualisation and will be discussed in some detail.

Aspects of human experience that exist outside of discourse (for example having a physical body and a material environment) are considered to play an important part in the construction of discourse by contributing to the context out of which discourse develops. Potter (in Hardy & Bryman, 2003) reminds us that although the focus of analysis falls on talk as opposed to embodied actions, objects or contexts, these extra-discursive aspects enter decisively into interaction and therefore have a significant impact on discourse. Inclusion of extra-discursive aspects helps to guard against a solipsistic view where the focus on the observer can lead to an extreme form of relativism (Gergen & Gergen in Steier, 1991). This approach acknowledges that the cognitive input of the observer is not the only factor contributing to research findings. Willig (in Nightingale & Cromby, 1999) criticises the social constructionist focus on discourse for ignoring the embodied origin of discourse. Nightingale & Cromby (1999) point out that the physical body provides the material preconditions for subjectivity, thought, emotion and language and that our bodies are what makes it possible for us to interact with each other and our world. Discourse or text is always the product of embodied beings and our way of interacting with and constructing our world is influenced by the possibilities and restrictions imposed by our physical characteristics and capabilities. Similarly the material context in which discourse develops plays an integral part in the possible directions that discourse can take.

Ideas from a theory produced by Charles Goodwin (2000) proved helpful in this regard. His theory of action in interaction will be used to elaborate on the dynamic interplay between discourse and context that is proposed by Discursive Psychology.

The physical environment and physical bodies of participants play an important role in this particular research context. For this reason it is important to elaborate on the context of interaction. Analysis takes into consideration the contribution of the physical environment as well as physical actions to the organisation of social action. In order to capture these aspects of the context video recording was used instead of audio recording.

Goodwin (2000) produced a theory of action within interaction, which employs social constructionist ideas and elaborates on the context of social interaction. Goodwin's conceptualisation of action and the context, from which it is built, links well with the principles used in Discursive Psychology. His ideas can be fruitfully employed to map out relevant aspects from the context within which interaction occurs.

Although DP describes a reciprocal relationship between discourse and the context it is embedded in, discursive studies focus on analysis of actions accomplished through the use of features of discourse and not features of the context. In so doing the role played by relevant aspects in the context is usually not explicitly analysed. Even so, discursive resources analysed in DP are significantly influenced by the surroundings that discourse develops from. Each of the identified discursive resources is in reciprocal relationship with aspects in the context. Construction and sequential situation is influenced by the immediate context of words and linguistic devices and also contributes to the construction and maintenance of this context. Rhetorical and institutional situation relates to the social and cultural context of discourse – the place where people attend to and manage their interests through social action. For action orientation as a feature of discourse the context of larger social practices is relevant to the performance of specific actions. These resources surround participants in discourse and all of the resources can be relevant, to varying degrees, to the

construction of action at a particular moment. In writing about context I have in mind a rather open and dynamic concept that will be described in more detail.

Goodwin (2000) elaborates on the relationship between the organisation of actions in interaction and the context that it develops from in his conceptualisation of contextual configuration. He argues against the dichotomy that is created between text and context when language is isolated from its environment. Before contextual configuration can be explained we need to turn to Goodwin's description of semiotic resources. This construct is comparable with discursive resources described in Discursive Psychology and touches on the resources identified in this approach. Goodwin (2000) describes semiotic resources as a variety of structurally specific kinds of sign phenomena that are available to participants in interaction for the building of action. These resources include sign phenomena present in speech, the body (like gestures, posture or physical orientation), graphic and socially sedimented structures in the surroundings, sequential organisation and encompassing activity systems. Graphic structures form part of the physical surroundings but also represents certain social meanings or consensual knowledge. The is an example of such a structure. It has material substance that provides a framework for physical and interactive action and its employment as a semiotic resource requires mutual orientation. In other words, in order for the to become part of the contextual configuration, participants have to make the relevant through their interaction. If participants do not orient themselves to the in some way or another, it remains an inactive feature of the surroundings and does not become part of the contextual configuration.

Goodwin (2000) locates semiotic resources within semiotic fields, which he describes as subsystems that build signs in a particular way. The word semiotic is used to indicate that signs are deployed during interaction to accomplish action. Goodwin's focus seems to differ slightly from that of DP in that there is a more representational slant. His description of semiotic resources reflects representational ideas where symbols or signs are viewed as abstract representations of entities like internal mental conditions (such as attitude or personality trait) or aspects of an external reality. In my conceptualisation of action in interaction I do not wish to introduce representational

ideas into a Discursive Psychology approach. Rather I aim to employ the DP description of discursive resources but include aspects of the physical surroundings, embodied action and social, cultural setting with discursive resources that are available in the context. That is, aspects that are usually viewed as features of the context and not analysed in detail will be analysed in the same manner as the discursive resources proposed by DP. I am arguing that aspects that are often glossed over as features of the context can function as discursive resources and can be analysed as such. I would like to describe some of the concepts proposed by Goodwin (2000) in more detail.

Goodwin (2000) proposes a theory of action that takes into account the details of language use as well as the contribution of various aspects from the surrounding context to the organisation of action. Aspects from the context that are considered range from concrete features, like physical objects and participant's bodies, to more abstract features like knowledge or meaning and include social, cultural, material and sequential structure in the environment (semiotic resources).

Goodwin (2000) holds that action in interaction is accomplished through “the temporally unfolding juxtaposition of different semiotic resources.” (p. 1490). In saying this, he includes the occasioned and sequential features of discourse as well as language-features and features from the physical and social context. Goodwin (2000) describes a dynamic process where the relevance of different resources changes from moment to moment and multiple resources are used at any given moment to accomplish action. He uses the term contextual configuration to depict the variety of semiotic resources that are relevant at a particular juncture. The semiotic resources that form part of the contextual configuration can change from moment to moment as new semiotic fields become available and relevant and others become irrelevant. Goodwin (2000) describes the contextual configuration as a frame of resources that is constantly in a process of change and constitutes and makes visible the actions of the moment. Relevant resources are ones that participants in discourse demonstrably orient themselves to. That is, particular fields of sign phenomena are taken into consideration by participants and contribute to the organisation of action at a specific time. Participants' orientation becomes clear when the sequential organisation of their

actions and utterances are taken into account and can also be demonstrated in their physical orientation.

Participants display particular fields as relevant through the orientation of their bodies and the organisation of their action. The orientation displayed by participants should be used as a guideline in determining relevant aspects of the context for analysis. If a participant changes the direction of her gaze for instance, a new semiotic field becomes available since new objects become visible in her line of sight and can be oriented to. Goodwin (2000) cites an example where a participant averts her gaze (looks away from her co-participant) and by doing so brings a new semiotic field into play. Her co-participant responds by abandoning a semiotic resource she had been using (hand gesture) and starts referring to aspects in the physical surrounding that have now become part of the first participant's field of vision. In this way the relevance of semiotic resources shifts continuously so that the contextual configuration changes from moment to moment. The space available for action, if it is to be relevant, is built through the contextual configuration.

Within this changing configuration, participants work to establish mutual orientation in order to create and maintain a participation framework. Goodwin (2000) states that participants demonstrate a reflexive awareness of the orientation of other participants in that they adjust their actions to maintain or re-establish mutual orientation. Reflexive awareness is described as ongoing analysis by a participant of how others are positioned to co-participate in the interactive frameworks necessary for the accomplishment of action. Reflexive awareness will not be considered as an internal mental process but as interactive responses to the actions (or changes in action) of co-participants. In other words the reflexive moves made by participants (as demonstrated in the sequential organisation of their actions) will be taken into consideration for its contribution to the organisation of action.

Reflexive awareness is relevant to the interactional context of talk. Consideration of the interactional effect of discourse can help in describing the actions that are performed in discourse. By interactional effect I am referring to the reaction that discourse or even a single utterance provokes in people who are involved in an

interaction. This could for instance consist of a change in the type of involvement (for instance physical as opposed to verbal involvement), a change in the level of involvement (for instance withdrawal from the interaction as opposed to renewed or intensified involvement) or maintenance of the type or level of involvement. In other words, the actions that discourse performs on an interactional level is important.

Goodwin's (2000) conceptualisation includes the role played by participants' bodies in the construction of action within interaction. The body is depicted as a source for the production of signs and as such is viewed as a semiotic resource. Emphasis is put on the public visibility of the body, especially on its ability to demonstrate participants' orientation. Consideration of demonstrated orientation can help with the exploration of a particular contextual configuration, as a systematic, dynamically organised frame for the production of action. The conceptualisation in this study does not focus on the meaning represented by gestures or posture or stance but considers the manner in which physical actions contribute to participants' actions in interaction. Consideration of the sequential organisation of physical actions can highlight the effects of these actions on the contextual configuration (for instance by demonstrating orientation) and help demonstrate the kind of social actions that are being accomplished.

The public visibility of the body has specific relevance for reflexive awareness and for the constitution of a participation framework. In Goodwin's (2000) example a participant demonstrates reflexive awareness by responding to a change in her co-participant's orientation after this change is demonstrated in physical action (physical inattention). Reflexive awareness can be demonstrated in physical action and physical actions can also serve as cues for adjustment of the employment of resources in order to maintain mutual orientation. Mutual orientation is important since Goodwin (2000) views a shared recognition of meaningful events as a prerequisite for social action. He elaborates on this idea by describing a participation framework as a public field of mutual orientation within which social action takes place. This framework is dynamic and interactionally organised and remains open to challenge, modification and negotiation. Establishment and maintenance of a participation framework is not

dependent on the involvement of a single party. It has to be continually achieved through reflexive reaction to public displays of orientation.

In this study, shared recognition is not considered as parallel internal processes that occur within individual participants. The term mutual orientation will rather be used. Mutual orientation is considered as an act of shared attention to particular aspects of the surroundings. Participants construct certain aspects in the physical, cultural and social surroundings as relevant to the interaction and the relevance is demonstrated in the form of orientation towards (or attention to) these aspects. As mentioned by Potter (in Camic et al., 2003) DP does not propose a contextual determinism thus, any aspect or resource in the environment can become relevant or lose its relevance as action unfolds in interaction.

An abstract concept like orientation may not be directly observable but a physical action like looking away as well as a reaction like abandoning hand gesture can be observed and the sequential organisation of this interaction can be analysed and described. Goodwin (2000) also proposes that the embeddedness of physical action in larger sequences of action figure significantly into the organisation of smaller strips of action or talk. These larger actions are closely linked with the institutional and rhetorical situation of discourse and can include actions like playing a game or compiling a research report. Such actions involve multiple participants with a mutual orientation towards the structure of the activity. A game for instance can only be played if different participants reach consensus regarding the governing rules. In this way the encompassing activity provides resources for the construction of actions. These actions (physical actions or actions through talk) recursively maintain the encompassing activity.

Goodwin's (2000) quote at the beginning of this chapter highlights the relationship between the activities of researchers during the production of knowledge, and that which becomes treated as knowledge as a result of those activities. Discursive Psychology, as an approach to knowledge, can be described as a relativist and reflexive approach where that which counts as knowledge, is considered within a specific social and cultural context (Potter & Edwards, 1999). The manner in which

knowledge (including descriptions and representations) is constructed is explored within its specific cultural context so that knowledge is treated as *a version of the world* or *a truth* that is acknowledged and treated as such within a particular context (for instance the context of data gathering). Discursive psychologists attempt to treat that which they view and create as knowledge in the same manner. For this reason they adopt a reflexive approach and take into consideration the relationship between their own frames of reference (categories, claims, textual forms and so on) and that of their participants. This reflexive awareness also extends to the relationship between their own frames of reference (including research designs, measurement instruments and research methods) and the results or research findings that they treat as knowledge.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

I would like to introduce the discussion on methodology by referring to a quote from Sparkes (1998) that demonstrates the relativist, constructionist and consensual assumptions underlying Social Constructionist research:

“In this view, methods or procedures cannot be used to establish contact with some external reality beyond ourselves. They are just the practical activities of those who engage in the practical tradition of qualitative inquiry.” (p. 375)

3.1 When

This project was undertaken in partial fulfilment of the criteria for a MA degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of Pretoria. Data collection started in December 2003 and the project was completed in February of 2004.

3.2 Where

high ropes activities take place within a specific physical and institutional context. The high ropes course itself is a structure consisting of wooden poles, cables and ropes. The course provides challenging activities to be attempted several metres of the ground. The challenges put participants in unfamiliar situations that entail a perceived risk (Gass, 1993). In this project the physical context of the as well as the institutional context of the Team and Leadership Development Centre, the University of Pretoria and private clinical practice are relevant.

The major stage of data collection involved video recording of the interaction between a therapist and client during high ropes activities. high ropes activities routinely include a briefing before activities start, interaction during the activities and a debriefing afterwards. During the briefing, safety regulations as well as the challenges provided by the activities are discussed with participants by the facilitator. Debriefing refers to a conversation between participants and the facilitator about the high ropes experiences directly after the activities have been completed.

Participation on the ropes course involved two high ropes activities, the first an individual activity allowing participants an opportunity to adjust to the unfamiliar context and the second an activity allowing for interactive participation that includes the therapist and client.

high ropes activities took place on a high ropes course under the management of the Team and Leadership Development Centre and activities were facilitated by qualified instructors. In order to ensure physical safety, rigorous safety regulations are employed by professional instructors. Ropes courses are often used as a tool for positive and lasting change with individuals, teams, organisations and communities. (www.rcd.co.uk). They are used for recreation, training, development and therapeutic purposes and provide an opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to experience a sense of adventure.

The therapeutic context (in particular private practice in Clinical Psychology) will also be of great importance since the experiences of participants will be embedded within a therapeutic relationship. The physical context within which this study takes place will be prominent, and is expected to have a significant impact on the experiences of both client and therapist and the interaction between client and therapist forms the focus of analysis.

3.3 Participants

The study begins with a conversation between the researcher and a therapist (clinical psychologist) who agreed to take part in the study. The conversation is aimed at deciding which client (currently engaged in a individual therapy process with the therapist) to approach to take part in the study. A collaborative “selection” process is important since the therapist must be willing to allow the high ropes experience to become part of the ongoing therapeutic process and participation in Adventure Therapy activities requires a level of motivation, energy, involvement and responsibility from clients (Gass., 1993). Participants are a client and therapist who are engaged in an individual therapy process independent of this study.

Correspondence between the researcher and all participants was maintained for about two months after the high ropes experience as part of the research process and the researchers' contact details were provided to participants so that queries arising from the high ropes experience could be addressed.

3.4 Data

3.4.1 Data Gathering

a) Naturalistic interaction

Discourse researchers often use open-ended interviews and focus groups but there has been a general move towards considering naturalistic materials and texts. Discursive Psychology focuses on interaction in its natural context (Potter in McHoul & Rapley, 2003; Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). That is interaction that occurs naturally in everyday life. The data that is used is not provoked by interview questions and is usually not directed by a specific research question. The use of naturalistic interaction reflects the influence of Conversation Analysis where researchers strive to avoid the limits that are imposed by the assumptions and expectations that are embodied in such questions. These assumptions and expectations are believed to limit what the researcher is able to see in the data (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). In this study data was not gathered from an event that occurs in everyday life but material was naturalistic in the sense that the interaction that was analysed was not provoked by specific research or interview questions and the researcher was not directly involved in the interaction.

Naturalistic interaction includes any interaction that would take place regardless of the researchers' involvement thus if the interaction would take place even in the absence of the researcher, it is considered naturalistic interaction (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). The aim of studying naturalistic interaction is to reduce the effect of the researchers' preconceived ideas and expectations on the research findings. These preconceived ideas and expectations (frame of reference) are embodied in research questions and interview structures and influence the research process (selection of

data, distinguishing between relevant and less relevant information and so on) and ultimately the conclusions that are drawn. Apart from reducing the effect of the researchers' frame of reference on the research process, the use of naturalistic interaction has other advantages. It allows the researcher to directly study the discourse or interaction that is being considered instead of using reports on the phenomena or other cognitive representations. Potter (in Camic et al., 2003) calls this feature of transcripts of naturalistic interaction actuality and says that such transcripts document the thing that is being studied directly. In this way data is not reduced to countable behaviours or to the cognitions of the researcher or any other participant so that the researcher has more direct access to the discourse of interest (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998).

The use of naturalistic interaction has certain advantages that are important for discursive analysis. Transcripts of natural interaction capture the action-oriented and situated nature of talk that would be disrupted by interview questions (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). The actions that are studied are embedded in interactional sequences and disruption of these sequences is likely to lead to analytic difficulties. This is important in Discursive Psychology where these discursive resources and the manner in which they are used within interaction forms the focus of analysis. By studying transcripts of counselling sessions for instance researchers are able to describe an order to interaction that participants are often unaware of and therefore are unable to report on. Studying transcripts of natural interaction provides a rigorous method for directly studying human social practices. This rigorous method helps to reveal the organisation and management of interaction and demonstrates the use of discursive resources. It also helps to demonstrate participants' orientation to contexts and institutions without focusing on a person or an institution in itself. It focuses more on situated practices, which can be understood as interaction considered within relevant contexts (including institutions). These relevant contexts could also refer to the situation of an action within a larger social practice. Social practices like games or research projects contribute to the context of social action by providing certain guidelines for action.

Some of the difficulties in using naturalistic interaction include the infrequency of certain topics in naturally occurring conversation, inaccessibility of sensitive or private topics and the potential for reactivity. The effect of reactivity can be managed through acclimatisation at the beginning of recording, exclusion of un-acclimatised material before analysis or by recording activities where reactivity has little impact for instance practically oriented activities (Potter in Hardy & Bryman, 2003). Since the recorded activities used in this study were practically oriented, the effect of reactivity is expected to be minimal. Even so, the embeddedness of the particular interaction within the broader practice of research as well as the practical involvement of researcher and recording equipment contributes to the organisation of the interaction that is used as data. This contribution (in particular the effect of the research process on the production of data) has a constructive effect and should be considered during analysis. A reflexive approach described by Lomax and Casey (1998) provides valuable guidelines for consideration of the relationship between the process of data gathering and the process of data production. This will be discussed in more detail later on.

b) Video recording

The data used in this study was gathered by means of video recording. The use of video material has important advantages but also presents some challenges. Video material gives the researcher access to important information regarding non-verbal activity. The role of non-verbal activity in interaction was particularly relevant in this study since the High provided the physical context for embodied action. In fact a large portion of the interaction consisted of physical actions and significant information regarding the manner of interaction on a would have been lost if only audio recording was used.

One of the drawbacks of using video material is the increased level of intrusion (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). It is at times argued that the video camera has a distorting effect on the research phenomena since participants demonstrate a reactive effect (Lomax & Casey, 1998). People seem to be more conscious of the fact that they are being video taped than when only their voices are being recorded and they may

need more time to adjust to the research context in order for this effect to be minimised. Although the effect is argued to be less when the recorded interaction is practically oriented, participants still demonstrate orientation towards the recording equipment as well as to the researcher. Even marginal participation (like the mere presence of the researcher or video camera) seems to contribute to the organisation of the interaction and analysis of this contribution can lead to valuable insights (Lomax and Casey, 1998).

Even though the effects of video recording on the production of data warrant special consideration, this method of data collection can be particularly appropriate for certain kinds of research. Lomax and Casey (1998) view this method of data collection as particularly appropriate for the study of situated social interactions since it provides access to the richness and complexity of human interaction. Although they refer specifically to conversation analytic methods, discursive analysis also focuses on situated social interactions and considers the fine detail of interaction that is captured by video recording. Video recording adds a dimension to the data that can supplement analysis of discourse. It was mentioned earlier that the physical context as well as physical action is particularly relevant to the interaction considered in this study. Video recording of data provides access to the sequential organisation of physical action and orientation displayed towards the physical context. This enables the researcher to consider the contribution of the physical context as well as physical movement to the organisation of action.

Video material also presents some challenges for transcription. Non-verbal activity is difficult to represent in transcript format and more elaborate description is needed. In this study physical actions were described in a column adjacent to the transcript of verbal interaction. This was done in order to gain a better understanding of the role that physical actions played in this particular interaction.

c) Transcription

Jefferson demonstrates the importance of capturing the fine detail of talk through the method of transcription in a Chapter on the transcription and analysis of laughter

(Jefferson in van Dijk, 1985). In this Chapter she demonstrates the different conclusions drawn from analysis when laughter is indicated or represented in different ways. When it is simply indicated by noting in brackets following a word or sentence that there was laughter, important details that could help demonstrate the effect or function of laughter within a utterance is lost. Jefferson (in van Dijk, 1985) demonstrates a more sequentially detailed representation of laughter where it is indicated by an (h) in the exact position (as far as possible) that it occurred within the utterance. By applying this method of transcription Jefferson (in van Dijk, 1985) could generate alternative descriptions for the presence and effect of laughter. Instead of viewing laughter as un-containable and therefore “flooding out” that which is being said, it can also be described as a methodical device or interactional resource that can be managed to serve a specific purpose. It can be initiated, sustained and terminated with a certain aptness and serve a purpose in interaction. It could for instance obscure an obscene utterance, making it difficult for others to hear so that acknowledgement of the obscenity on the part of the listener can be viewed as an acknowledgement of prior knowledge of such obscenities, thus making the utterance “safer” for the producer. Potter (in Bellack & Hersen, 1998) points out that such rigorous study of human interaction can reveal the organisation and management of discursive resources within human interaction.

Discursive psychologists view discourse as ordered in its derail and focus on this order in their analysis of talk and text as part of a method that reveals the actions that take place through discourse. If for instance the order of words, grunts or sighs in an utterance is changed, the utterance can have a different effect in interaction and a different action can even be accomplished. Even though participants in talk are not conscious of the detailed order of their speech, rigorous microanalysis of naturally occurring talk reveals a detailed order (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). This focus on derail has important methodological consequences for gathering and transcription of data. It was mentioned earlier that video or audio recordings of naturalistic interaction is often used in discursive research. The quality of these recordings is important since derailed transcription is only possible when recordings capture the finer details of talk. The method of transcription itself also needs to represent talk in fine detail, in fact high quality transcripts are often viewed as a prerequisite for

analysis (Potter in Bellack & Hersen, 1998). A method of transcription developed by Gail Jefferson in the 1960's and 1970's is widely used by discourse researchers and strongly recommended for discursive analysis (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). Jefferson (in van Dijk, 1985) calls transcription a way of paying attention to records of actually occurring events, touching on a feature of transcripts of naturalistic interaction that Potter elaborates on. He (Potter in Camic et al., 2003) emphasises that transcripts of naturalistic interaction capture actuality in that they document the thing that is being studied directly. In this study description of embodied action as well as physical stance accompanies the transcription of talk. Italic font is used in the parts of the transcript that describes physical movement or stance. Inclusion of descriptions of action and stance facilitates consideration of the contribution of embodied movement to the organisation of action. A difference in font helps the analyst to separate talk from physical movement in the transcript.

Even though this method of transcription is demanding and time consuming (taking up to twenty hours to transcribe one hour of interaction) it enables the researcher to represent and analyse features of interaction that are important in discursive analysis. The Jefferson system captures a range of interactional phenomena and emphasises practices of interaction in itself and does not attempt to represent underlying structures or meanings. The Jefferson system of transcription is quick to learn and easy to follow since it is relatively intuitive. In this system symbols are used to signify features of vocal delivery (like emphasis, intonation and overlap) that are considered to be of particular significance for participants in talk. Analytic notes are usually provided parallel to the transcribed material. Transcription using the Jefferson system requires very careful listening and thus a profound engagement with the research material. This profound engagement with research material often leads to the development of important and revealing analytic insights already during the transcription phase. For this reason Potter (in Hardy & Bryman, 2003) recommends that the researcher be involved in transcription of recorded material.

The capacity of Jefferson's system to capture detail in interaction is particularly important in DP since access to detail helps the analyst to discern the actions that are accomplished through talk. Jefferson (in van Dijk, 1985) cites examples of the

transcription of laughter and considers the effect that different ways of transcribing this interactional phenomenon has on the conclusions drawn in analysis. She explains that laughter has often only been mentioned and rarely indicated in the sequence it actually occurred in. Transcription notes would for instance simply say that an utterance was “flooded out” by laughter, not indicating the precise location of laughter within the utterance. One of the conclusions that was drawn from this description was that laughter could not be contained or controlled by the speaker and invaded the talk. Jefferson then goes on to demonstrate how detailed transcription of laughter that preserves its sequential organisation gives the analyst access to interesting interactional phenomena. Through detailed transcription Jefferson demonstrates how laughter can function as a methodic device to serve a purpose in interaction. She describes examples where laughter only occurs when the speaker is saying an obscene word. This makes it difficult for other participants to hear what is being said and only after the word has been repeated a few times (again with interspersed laughter) does one participant acknowledge its meaning. Listeners had to strain and work to figure out what was being said instead of simply hearing it. Jefferson explains that a listener has to refer to his/her own “guilty” knowledge in order to hear and respond to a distorted utterance. The speaker has in effect set a task for the listeners since recognition of what is being said requires consideration of their own knowledge. In summary an utterance that is interactionally difficult or risky because of the presence of an obscenity is distorted by interspersed laughter so that its meaning gradually emerges through explication by various participants. Jefferson reasons that a transcript that does not reflect the complexity of an exchange like this (for instance one that merely notes that laughter has occurred) leaves out important interactional phenomena. If the obscene word is simply written with a comment in brackets indicating laughter, the transcript obscures the fact that listeners had to strain and work to hear what was actually said. An important interactional effect of laughter (distortion) as well as the manner in which this effect is managed interactionally is then left out. From a DP perspective the detailed sequential features of an utterance is important since it helps the analyst to consider the contribution of various discursive resources to the organisation of action. Laughter for instance could contribute significantly (though its detailed organisation) to the construction of action in

interaction. Jefferson (in van Dijk, 1985) maintains that laughter can be managed as an interactional resource.

Part of the transcribed material is usually presented in articles or reports along with analytic notes and conclusions and transcripts are even considered the prime medium for presenting material in publication. This forms part of an attempt on the part of discursive researchers to provide an opportunity for readers to make their own judgements concerning the quality of the research. The claims and conclusions that are drawn are thus made accountable to the details of empirical (transcribed) material (Potter in Hardy & Bryman, 2003).

Although discursive psychologists attempt to study interaction or social practices in themselves, it should be kept in mind that transcripts are always only representations of talk and they should be considered in combination with recorded material.

Coding can be viewed as a form of data reduction. It is not a discrete stage in the research process and it involves selection of relevant materials from a large body of transcript to facilitate analysis. Instead of being a once of stage, coding can re-occur during the research process in a cyclical manner depending on changes in the researchers understanding of the phenomenon and refinement of ideas. A researcher could for instance sift through a large body of material in search of “instances of a phenomenon” (Potter in Hardy & Bryman, 2003) in an attempt to draw more general conclusions regarding the interactional organisation of the phenomenon in question. The distinction between relevant and less relevant material will be strongly influenced by the researchers’ frame of reference (as embodied by the focus of the research or by the research question).

Various authors including Goodwin (2000), Jefferson (1988) and Potter (in Hardy & Bryman, 2003) point out the importance of considering the larger, encompassing activities that actions are embedded in. To make this possible selection of material should be inclusive rather than exclusive so that the sequential organisation of included material will be kept largely intact. Inclusion of deviant cases (problematic, doubtful or conflicting instances) is also important since these cases often enrich

analytic conclusions and highlight more common or patterned instances as well as the acts committed through these interactions.

3.4.2 Data Analysis

Discourse Analysis can be viewed as an approach to the exploration of social and psychological issues through the study of language (Antaki, Billig, Edwards & Potter, 2003). More specifically discursive analysis focuses on the actions that are accomplished through talk in interaction. In keeping with the discourse analytic tradition, language and talk are viewed as active contributors to the construction of the world within which our observations become meaningful. Talk not only helps to create a context of meaning but also helps to construct the context within which we relate to or interact with each other. Construction of this social or interactional world takes place through interaction both in the form of verbal conversation and in the form of physical actions. In studies where discursive analysis is used, the focus usually falls on verbal interaction rather than physical actions and the material that is most often used consists of transcripts of naturalistic interaction. In this study the emphasis also falls on verbal interaction but further reading will demonstrate the important contribution of physical actions in this particular interaction. For this reason a description of physical activities during the production of talk accompanies the transcript. The contribution of these actions in interaction is also taken into consideration during analysis.

Discursive Psychology proposes rigorous analytic procedures for studying the performance of action in interaction in everyday talk (Potter in Camic et al., 2003). Discursive analysis considers discourse in fine detail in order to reveal the effect that the particular manner in which an utterance is said or written, has in interaction. Discursive analysts have demonstrated that certain features of discourse (discursive resources) function in varied ways within interaction and that variation in "application" of these features have varied effects in interaction. In other words

discursive resources are "moved around" or manipulated to perform various actions within interaction. I use the word "application" with caution since these resources are not necessarily consciously and deliberately manipulated. Rather, the manner in which they occur within a particular interaction is different in various instances and the effect of each variation on interaction is different so that each variation helps to accomplish different tasks within interaction. One and the same task can even be accomplished through different means.

Potter (in Camic et al., 2003; in Bellack & Hersen, 1998; in Hardy & Bryman, 2003) describes discursive resources in detail. He provides guidelines for consideration of these resources in order to gain an understanding of the actions that are committed through talk and the manner in which discursive resources are employed to achieve these actions.

Before the role of discursive resources and contextual configuration in analysis is explored further we turn to some general guidelines for effective analysis. Antaki et al. (2003) comment on the wide variety of discourse analytic methods that are used under the umbrella term of Discourse Analysis. Even though these methods embody a variety of methodological and theoretical assumptions these authors propose basic requirements for all discourse analytic methods and make a strong argument against an approach where "anything goes". They warn against methods that give a superficial appearance of Discourse Analysis but does not analyse data adequately. The following paragraphs elaborate on methods of analysis that are viewed as inadequate for the purposes of discursive analysis.

The first example of under-analysis involves summarisation of themes that are extrapolated from what was said by participants (Antaki et al., 2003). Summarisation of themes could highlight some of the representational aspects of discourse (involving meanings that are constructed by participants) but is likely to obscure the actions that are accomplished through discourse. This method loses important discursive detail like the sequential and rhetorical organisation of discourse since it is phrased in the analyst's words and is, for obvious reasons, insufficient for the purposes of discursive analysis. The next example cited by Antaki et al. (2003) involves the use of the

analyst's own moral, political or personal point of view. This is often offered as part of an attempt to employ a reflexive approach but does not in itself constitute analysis. An author might for instance demonstrate sympathy for victims or disapproval towards perpetrators and design his writing rhetorically with the aim of constructing a similar orientation in the reader. Using devices like excessive, selective quoting or, more subtly, describing participant's utterances by using words like "realises", "acknowledges" or "appreciates" can help to construct a similar orientation in the reader. The author may reason that he/she is empowering victims by giving them a voice but this constitutes a "political" task rather than an analytic one. The same can be said about critical dis-alignment. Position taking can be analysed discursively in terms of the manner in which resources are used to make a point or portray something in a particular way, for instance as factual or accountable.

Another method that is likely to lead to under-analysis involves over-quotation or isolated quotation (Antaki et al., 2003). This technique is usually evidenced in a low ratio of analyst's comments to data extracts and comments merely refer to extracts instead of analysing them. Listing of quotations as well as the use of single, isolated quotations is often used for rhetorical purposes rather than analytic purposes. This technique divorces utterances from the discursive context and is likely to impede discursive analysis, especially when features in the context is also being considered during analysis for their contribution to the construction of action.

The next example of under-analysis occurs through the circular discovery of discourse and constructs (Antaki et al., 2003). This happens when circular argumentation is used. In this type of reasoning various utterances are used and lumped together to demonstrate the

existence of a specific "general" or "shared" discourse. The argument becomes circular when individual utterances are then explained in terms of the discourse that they were said to prove. Circularity can also occur when discourse is interpreted as an expression of underlying mental constructs like thoughts, ideas or attitudes. Discourse can for instance be viewed as the expression of a conservative attitude. If this construct (conservative attitude) is then explained in terms of the discourse that evidenced the existence of such an attitude, a circular argument is constructed. In

discursive analysis general discourses and mental constructs can be analysed for the manner in which they form part of the organisation of action in interaction. Analysts can consider aspects like the manner in which discursive resources are used to construct a discourse as general or the manner in which mental constructs are used to accomplish actions in interaction.

Another means of achieving under-analysis is called false survey (Antaki et al., 2003). This involves subtle, unaccountable generalisation from the data to the world at large by constructing findings as if they were true for all members of a chosen category. The last method cited by Antaki et al. (2003) as a means of doing under-analysis is called feature spotting. In this method established features of discourse are identified in the data but the manner in which such discursive devices function in interaction is not explored. Antaki et al. (2003) emphasises that analysts should strive to explore how participants use discursive resources or devices to manage their interactional business. How is a feature handled sequentially and rhetorically to do specific things, accomplish specific actions in interaction?

The danger of under-analysis seems to be far greater when analysis is not the main focus. Instead of considering utterances as part of a larger corpus of data that is situated within the social activity of research, analysis singles out certain parts of data for its rhetorical significance instead of their interactional significance. This seems more likely when the research process is focussed on making a point or proving a theory or ideology instead of analysing what happens in interaction.

It was mentioned in the previous Chapter that discursive analysis usually focuses on the contribution of features of discourse (discursive resources) to the organisation of action in interaction. However, various authors, including Willig (in Nightingale & Cromby, 1999) and Cromby & Standen (in Nightingale & Cromby, 1999) emphasise the importance of acknowledging and addressing extra-discursive aspects in research. These include aspects of human experience that exist outside of discourse (for example having a physical body and a material environment), yet play an important part in the construction of discourse by contributing to the context out of which discourse develops.

The features of discourse that DP focuses on are called discursive resources and include construction, action-orientation, sequential situation, institutional situation and rhetorical situation. Since the high ropes course is designed to facilitate physical participation and interaction, the physical features of the context as well as the human body was considered to be significant contributing factors to the construction of action in this particular study. In order to facilitate analysis and description of the contribution of the physical context, a DP conceptualisation of action in interaction was expanded by inclusion of ideas from an approach proposed by Goodwin (2000). Inclusion of these ideas was discussed in detail in the previous Chapter and the following discussion will only elaborate on the implications for analysis. Goodwin's theory of action in interaction presents a description of the relationship between context and discourse as fluid and reciprocal. His conceptualisation allows for analysis of the role played by relevant discursive resources as well as by features of the context on a moment to moment basis.

The manner in which discursive resources contribute to the construction of action is central to discursive analysis. In this study the focus of analysis includes the role played by extra-discursive aspects, in particular aspects from the physical environment and the human body. Aspects that are viewed as features of the context are usually not analysed in detail in DP but they can function as discursive resources and can be analysed in the same manner.

The construct *contextual configuration* allows for exploration and description of the interplay between resources available in the environment and in discourse. This interplay is described as ever changing and involves juxtaposition of various resources to produce action from moment to moment. The relevance of different resources to the construction of action changes continuously and Goodwin (2000) proposes that participant's visible orientation be used as guideline for consideration of relevant resources during analysis of each particular juncture in interaction. In short, analysis of discursive resources will be used in conjunction with Goodwin's (2000) theory of action in interaction (including constructs like conceptual configuration, participation framework and mutual orientation) to explore and describe the

contribution of discursive resources as well as features from the context to the construction of action.

3.5 Quality of the research

Several widely accepted standardised methods exist for enhancing and evaluating the quality of quantitative studies. This matter is more complicated and often disputed in the relatively younger field of qualitative research. Sparkes (1998) explores various criteria that have been used in qualitative research as substitutes for validation, reliability and generaliseability. He argues that qualitative research represents a different paradigm to positivist or post positivist research and suggests that a set of criteria unique to qualitative research should be developed. The enhancement and evaluation of research however is not dependent on a stagnant set of abstract criteria but is described as a practical, interactive process. This process necessitates actions on the part of the researcher to make his/her methods accountable and evaluation by readers and colleagues. He comes to the conclusion that valuable methods for the enhancement and evaluation of qualitative research exist (for example consensual validation, respondent validation/member checking and authenticity criteria) but states that these methods do not provide universal criteria for all qualitative studies. Researchers should select criteria that are appropriate and valuable within the context of their particular study. In this regard Sparkes (1998) suggest that the researcher provide the reader with some rationale for choosing specific criteria or techniques. This will give the reader an opportunity to judge the value or relevance of the chosen criteria. In this way more fluid, open-ended and flexible criteria is constructed and a researcher becomes accountable for the criteria chosen. Evaluation of the quality of research then becomes a practical task within a specific context and judgements about quality are no longer based on abstract standards.

Knowledge is described as an ongoing self-referential process whereby descriptions give rise to new descriptions. Fruggeri (in McNamee & Gergen, 1994) conceptualises knowledge as a process that takes place within a specific context where our beliefs and frames of reference are generated in communication. Knowledge as the product of a self-referential process, is thus constructed rather than discovered and cannot rely

solely on objectivity since even the most “objective” observation already relies on a socially constructed frame of reference.

In Discursive Psychology at least part of the transcribed material is presented in articles or reports along with analytic notes and conclusions. Transcripts are even considered the prime medium for presenting material in publication. This forms part of an attempt on the part of discursive researchers to provide an opportunity for readers to make their own judgements concerning the quality of the research. The claims and conclusions that are drawn are thus made accountable to the details of empirical (transcribed) material (Potter in Hardy & Bryman, 2003).

From the social constructionist perspective the study of an object cannot be separated from the study of the knowing subject (Gergen & Gergen in Steier, 1991). A valuable tool that can assist the researcher in acknowledging his/her constructive role in the creation of knowledge, is reflexivity. Malterud (2001), Burr (1995) and Steier (1991) suggest that the effects of a researcher on his/her findings should be taken into account and shared with the reader in order to present a more comprehensive view of the processes involved in constructing the conclusions. In order to achieve this openness, social constructionist writers employ reflexivity as part of their writing and investigative process. Reflexivity allows for constant evaluation of the research process and can be described as a guiding relationship that allows for circularity in research. On a more practical note, the application of a reflexive attitude to the relationship between the process of data gathering, in particular by means of video recording, and production of data will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

If the research process is viewed as a constructive process it follows that the actions of the researcher, including the activity of data collection, contribute to the construction of data and eventually of conclusions. The practice of recording, be it audio recording, video recording or taking notes during observation helps to organise the activity that is being recorded. In this regard Lomax and Casey (1998) write that the very act of recording data contributes to the construction of the interaction that is subsequently available for analysis. That is, to the construction of material that is considered data. Respondent validation techniques are often used in an attempt to

account for the effects of the video camera on the data (Lomax & Casey, 1998). This usually takes the form of interviews where participants are asked about their experience of the recording process and the effect of the camera on their behaviour (questions like “Do you think your behaviour would have been different if there was no video camera”). This raises some epistemological questions since such a technique assumes that the participant’s post-recording account is more valid than the recorded account. Lomax & Casey, (1998) point out the inconsistency inherent to an approach that analyses recordings of situated interaction (as a means of directly studying natural interaction) and then uses self-report to validate findings. Even though the technique is to an extent reflexive, it again does not account for the effect of the researcher or the interview context on the participant’s responses. From a DP approach, these techniques are problematic because they return to participant’s reports on phenomena or social reality instead of granting more direct access to naturally occurring interaction.

Lomax and Casey (1998) do not view the effect of the camera as problematic in itself but find approaches that ignore the effect of the camera problematic. For this reason they recommend reflexive analysis of the relationship between data gathering and the production of data. Video recording can capture a version of the research process and affords a researcher the opportunity to analyse the contribution of the research process to the production of data. They argue that an object like a video camera becomes part of the situated activity that is being recorded. Participants are aware of it and orient to it in a particular way so that the organisation of their activities are to a degree influenced by the presence of the camera. Similar to the way in which a researcher contributes to the construction of knowledge, the video camera and researcher contribute to the interaction that is recorded. The ability of the camera to preserve and re-present interaction as well as participant’s awareness of this ability gives the camera a certain social significance (Lomax and Casey, 1998). The effect of the camera may not be equally relevant at all instances of interaction. Visible orientation displayed by participants at various instances can provide guidelines regarding the significance of the camera to the organisation of specific actions. Verbal as well as physical actions can display a specific orientation. If, for instance a participant orients to the camera as an intrusion, she/he can display this by turning her/his back towards

the camera, by placing some object between him/herself and the camera or by saying that certain activities should not be recorded or will not be interesting. Lomax and Casey (1998) use a few examples to illustrate the effect of the research process on the interaction that is recorded. They mention talk about topics that are unrelated to the business of the interaction under investigation as well as talk about the research (for instance practical matters concerning recording of data) that would not have taken place if the interaction did not form part of a research process. Even though the researcher attempted to stay as uninvolved as possible she was drawn into “appropriate” social interaction with participants. They started conversations with her (involving research or unrelated topics), offered her tea and cake and also talked to each other about the research process when the researcher was absent. In their discussion of non-participation Lomax and Casey (1998) state that it is impossible to enter a participant’s home and set up camera without becoming interactionally involved. Overt dis-engagement or apparent dis-attention is socially awkward and could be viewed as socially inappropriate. Unless the researcher is accountably dis-engaged, participants often put interactional pressure on the researcher to become part of the interaction. When interaction is considered in detail something like other-directed gaze seems to function, for instance, as an invitation to take part in an interaction. Lomax and Casey (1998) cites an example where the researcher is invited to share in the laughter when a participant looks at her after telling a joke. Detail is important so where researcher or method is oriented to, it should be examined.

According to Lomax and Casey (1998) the contribution of the researcher as well as the contribution of the method of data collection to the organisation of action in interaction should be taken into account when data is analysed. Instead of ignoring the influence of the research process or declaring data invalid because of this influence, exploration of the relationship between the research process (including data collection) and the production of data can add valuable insights regarding the interaction under investigation. For instance participant’s interaction with the researcher provided information regarding their orientation to activities as relevant or “part of business”. When the researcher was absent from the room where the interaction was being taped, a participant would inform her when she could come and stop the video camera, signalling what was regarded as the “end of business”.

The wide variety of discourse analytic methods reflect the variety of theoretical assumptions that underlie Discourse Analysis (Antaki et al., 2003). Even so, some authors propose basic requirements for all discourse analytic methods and make a strong argument against an approach where “anything goes”. Antaki et al. (2003) consider various methods that lead to under-analysis of data and identify six methods that lead to inadequate analysis. Methods that lead to under-analysis include summarisation of themes, position taking, over quotation or isolated quotation, false survey, circular discovery of discourse or constructs and feature spotting. All of these methods lose important discursive details and do not consider the action-oriented nature of discourse. Utterances are often taken out of context so that the sequential organisations as well as the embeddedness of actions in larger social practices are disrupted. Summarisation of themes could highlight some of the representational aspects of discourse (involving meanings that are constructed by participants) but is likely to obscure the actions that are accomplished through discourse. Position taking involves the use of the analyst’s own moral, political or personal point of view often in an attempt to employ reflexivity. On close investigation these writings are rhetorically designed with the aim of constructing a specific orientation in the reader. This orientation could for instance consist of sympathy for victims or disapproval towards perpetrators. Position taking is often employed as a “political” task rather than an analytic one. Over-quotation or isolated quotation is usually evidenced in a low ratio of analyst’s comments to data extracts and comments merely refer to extracts instead of analysing them. Circular discovery of discourse and constructs occurs when circular argumentation is used. Various utterances are lumped together to demonstrate the existence of a specific “general” discourse and individual utterances are then explained in terms of the discourse that they were said to prove. Circularity can also occur when discourse is interpreted as an expression of underlying mental constructs like thoughts, ideas or attitudes. If a construct is then explained in terms of the discourse that evidenced the existence of such an attitude, a circular argument is constructed. False survey involves subtle, unaccountable generalisation from the data to the world at large by constructing findings as if they were true for all members of a chosen category. Feature spotting occurs when

established features of discourse are identified in the data but the manner in which such discursive devices function in interaction is not explored.

The devices described above are often used for rhetorical purposes rather than analytic purposes. None of these methods are viewed, in themselves, as analysis and they are viewed as inadequate for the purposes of DP since discursive details and sequential and rhetorical organisation is disrupted. For the purposes of DP they can be analysed for the manner in which they form part of the organisation of action in interaction.

Antaki et al. (2003) emphasises that analysts should strive to explore how participants use discursive resources or devices to manage their interactional business. In keeping with the principles of DP the focus should be on the manner in which a feature or resource is handled sequentially and rhetorically to do specific things or accomplish specific actions in interaction.

The use of naturalistic interaction as research material makes direct analysis of the contribution of the researcher difficult since this type of material is likely to happen independent of the involvement of the researcher. Although a reflexive approach is applied in this study, the manner in which the researcher is “present” within the data could not be discursively analysed since there are no comments from the researcher present in the transcripts that were analysed. The context of the high Wild Woozy facilitates minimal interaction between participants and researcher during the activity. The researcher is at a distance from the participants that makes communication very difficult.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

Notation: T - therapist, C – client, I – instructor; italic font is used in descriptions of physical stance or movement. A complete list of notation symbols appears in Appendix A.

After completing two individual high ropes activities all participants walked over to the high Wild Woozy where a client and therapist participated in a shared high ropes activity. The activity is designed for two participants and can only be completed if participants lean on each other for physical support. It involves crossing a space of about 5 meters on horizontal cables that are suspended 16 meters of the ground between poles. Each participant walks sideways on a cable holding hands with their partner while facing him/her. At the starting point both cables are attached to the same pole and participants start by standing within centimetres of each other. The cables then go out horizontally but at an angle to each other so that they are spaced progressively further apart, each ending at a different pole. Between these poles at the end of the cables there is a platform where participants who completed the activity can sit and rest before they are let down on belay ropes. Participants are connected to these ropes at all times during the activity as a safety regulation. Although rigorous safety regulations minimise the risk of any serious injury the perceived risk on the Wild Woozy is usually high. It can be a scary activity and is also physically quite demanding.

The following drawing (Figure 1) illustrates the physical surroundings provided by the high Wild Woozy as well as the angle at which the activities were recorded. From this illustration it becomes clear that “closest foot” or “closest hand” refers to the hand or foot closest to the pole at the starting point and therefore also closest to the camera. “Furthest” refers to a foot or hand furthest from the camera.

EMBED P13.Image

Figure 1

Interaction during this activity involved two high ropes instructors, the therapist and client and peripheral involvement of the researcher and cameraman. Transcription focuses on interaction between client and therapist but where the utterances of instructors were audible they were also included since participants demonstrably orient to these utterances at times. Participants attempted to move away from the pole three times before they finally managed to start moving away on their fourth trial. At the beginning of each extract the trial that the extract was taken from will be noted in brackets.

4.2 The struggle to get going

4.2.1 Extract 1 (trial 2)

Starting position: *both T and C standing on high cables facing each other, holding each other's hands, hands held high. T standing with both feet on cable, C with furthest foot on cable and closest foot on staple. Both are looking down at cables.*

- 1 C: wha- (1,0) can't even get my foot =
- 2 C: *lifts closest foot of staple and puts it on cable*
- 3 =off. (4,0)
- 4 T: jis:: (4,0)
- 5 C: no:t a chance (10,0)
- 6 T: *[looks towards pole, lets go with closest hand and grabs on to the pole*

7 *C: looks towards the pole, lets go with closest hand and grabs on to the pole]*

Discussion

The physical context in which the interaction in this extract occurs is very specific. Each participant is standing on a very high cable that is suspended between two poles with only each other and the pole that both started out from in close proximity. The other physical objects that are close by are the belay ropes that are fastened to participant's harnesses at the back so that they are not in their line of sight. The physical position that participants find themselves in facilitates access to certain discursive resources. In this instance the physical context provides participants with height, cables, a pole with metal staples, belay ropes and their own bodies and that of their co-participant. Their physical stance in this particular context limits the possibilities of movement and therefore the resources available for the building of action. In the starting position they are holding hands. For as long as they are physically oriented to each other in this way hand gesture as resource is not available to them. The act of holding hands however is already contributing to the construction of action. It helps to construct their physical stance as a mutual stance and the Wild Woozy as a mutual activity. Their stance involves looking down. For as long as they keep looking down, facial expression as resource also remains unavailable. The direction of their gaze provides guidelines regarding their orientation towards aspects of the context. Both are looking at the cables and more or less at each other's feet. This demonstrates that the cables and the feet (perhaps the whole body) of a co-participant are relevant to the interaction since participants are in some way oriented to these aspects. This mutual physical orientation makes certain aspects in the context available to participants for the establishment of a participation framework. It can be argued that the starting position in this extract already demonstrates some level of mutual participation or co-operation. Apart from C's placement of his foot on the staple, all aspects regarding physical stance can be described as mutual, possibly demonstrating a mutual orientation towards "the business at hand" or at least towards relevant aspect in the surroundings.

The placement of C's foot on the staple has significance that is not yet clear in this interaction. It is for instance possible that the difference between his physical orientation to the activity and T's orientation makes it impossible for the moment to start moving across the cable. If this is the case, further analysis could show that a high level of mutual orientation is central to the Wild Woozy-activity.

In line 1 the activity is constructed as harder than expected when C says, “wha- can’t even get my foot off”. The utterance “wha-“ is somehow interrupted so that something is apparently left unsaid. This utterance can help to construct the activity as difficult or simply constructs something in the context or interaction as disruptive.

The sequential organisation of “can’t even” helps to demonstrate C’s orientation towards the activity. This utterance occurs at the beginning of an attempt to move across the cables and the word even is used in reference to “getting his foot off”. It suggests that “getting his foot off” is experienced as more difficult than he expected. It also demonstrates his orientation towards the activity that will follow (the actual movement across the cable or simply standing with both feet on the cable). Even somehow implies that there is more, something else where difficulty would be expected, so it can be argued that an “expectation of difficulty or struggling” is constructed. C is also talking about his own limitations or constructing himself as limited in this particular instance. In doing so, he refers to his own body and in particular the part of his body that is not oriented in the same manner as T’s body – his foot. This reference to own limitations could function as an appeal for help or for caution, a request to wait or even a request to go back or quit. It is difficult to make the distinction from this extract. Although T responds by keeping quiet and not moving it does not necessarily demonstrate help or waiting. The only subsequent movement in this extract involves returning to the pole so it can be argued that C’s construction of an expectation of difficulty and of himself as limited contributed to the construction of going back. Since going back did not follow immediately after C’s statement this construction warrants closer consideration. With his construction of limitation and expectation of difficulty C provides justification for going back possibly opening up the possibility of going back.

Even while he is stating that he cannot get his foot off, C does lift his foot from the staple and puts it on the cable (line 2). In doing this he establishes mutual physical orientation and helps to create the possibility for shared participation. C demonstrates reflexive awareness in the sense that he reacts to the discrepancy between his physical stance and that of T by correcting his footing to complete the mutual physical

orientation. C makes the discrepancy overt by verbally referring to it and corrects it almost simultaneously. In doing so he demonstrates how he is actively working to establish a participation framework and that he orients himself to the activity as a mutual or shared activity. In making his struggle to lift his foot overt, he justifies not having his foot on the cable yet and indicates to T that he is busy with “joining in” even though it is hard. T contributes to the construction of a participation framework by standing still. He maintains the previous level of mutual physical orientation allowing C to “catch up” or to complete mutual physical orientation.

The word “off” is uttered at the instance when C lifts his foot of the cable. This helps to construct C as working actively to overcome the limitation he is referring to. He does not wait for help or any reaction from T before he acts to overcome the struggle he expresses. Even though the overt expression of his struggle contributes to the construction of the encompassing activity as a shared activity, some (perhaps smaller) activities are constructed as individual. C states what he is busy struggling with but completes the action on his own without waiting for a response or assistance from his co-participant.

T’s utterance in line 4 (“jis:::”) follows C’s construction of himself as struggling and the activity as hard. It is also situated between two four second pauses during which both participants maintain their mutual physical orientation. The utterance can function as an acknowledgement of C’s construction and it contributes to the construction of the activity (standing on the cables, away from the pole while holding hands) as difficult. Constructing the activity as difficult helps to justify not going and could help to justify failing at the activity in some way (for example by falling or quitting). In this way difficulty could help to open up the possibility of not completing the activity by going back to try again or even quitting. Making not going accountable is particularly relevant at this instance since there is an eight second period during which not going and T’s “jis:::” are the only actions that take place. Although the participants are not moving forward or backward during this period, they are not doing nothing. They are maintaining their mutual physical orientation and T’s utterance likely displays his orientation towards the current activity. In other words

staying in this position and maintaining the mutual physical orientation is constructed as difficult.

C responds to “jiss:::” after four seconds with “no:t a chance” (line 5). The idea of chance is introduced and used in a manner that no longer constructs the activity as merely difficult but as impossible. The impossibility that is constructed here is emphasised by the lengthening of the o-sound as well as the volume-emphasis on “chance”. This strengthens the justification of not going and helps to build a case for returning to the pole or quitting or a case against trying to cross the cables. Since they are already standing on the cables in an appropriate starting position for attempting the activity, impossibility seems to refer to the larger encompassing activity of crossing the cables. If this is constructed as impossible quitting, going back or failing will be justifiable, even expected. At the same time any progress in the activity, no matter how small, can henceforth be constructed as an achievement.

The next significant feature in this interaction is a ten second pause that is followed by a change in physical orientation where both participants first look towards the pole, then let go with their closest hands and grab on to the pole. During the ten seconds there is no verbal exchange but they are occupied with maintenance of their mutual physical orientation. Even though the current activity has been constructed as difficult and the encompassing activity as impossible and a case has been built for returning to the pole or quitting, none of these things happen for ten seconds. The interaction has been organised in a manner that makes going back justifiable but somehow it also makes it possible for the participants to maintain their appropriate starting position for a while. If the activity of maintaining their position on the cables and away from the pole is difficult and crossing the cables is impossible, then maintenance of their position for even ten seconds becomes an achievement.

After achievement of ten uninterrupted seconds on the cables both participants look towards the pole and then grab on to it. This can be described as a mutual change in physical orientation that helps to maintain the participation framework. These simultaneous actions strengthen the construction of the activity as a mutual activity. This brings me to a feature of participation that seems to be very specific to the

context of the high Wild Woozy. As soon as mutual physical orientation is established participants are almost “caught up” in the participation framework. Once participants are holding hands and both have their feet on the cables, the range of options for movement are limited. This is especially true once they have moved away from the pole. In order to maintain or change their position (to go back or forward) their actions have to be more or less simultaneous. If either one moves more than a few centimetres without co-ordinating the movement with their participant, loss of balance and a fall from the cable is almost inevitable. Although a belay-system makes this a safe activity the perceived risk is high and participants tend to try and stay on the cables. The point is that mutual physical orientation and mutual change in orientation soon becomes the safest option making disruption of the participation framework very unlikely and possibly even dangerous.

In the interaction displayed in this extract a mutual change in orientation (both looking at the pole) precedes simultaneous movement. Both participants display the change in their orientation and then reacts to these displays by changing their physical stance. They seem to be in agreement on going back to the pole and both are actively working to maintain the participation framework. Through their actions they are strengthening the construction of the activity as mutual. Consideration of the sequential organisation of their action within this extract demonstrates that the pole is being oriented to as a safe place and mutual participation or co-operation as a safe way of getting to the pole. They react to the construction of the activity as an impossibility by simultaneously moving back towards the pole.

4.2.2 Extract 2 (trial 3)

Stating position: *both standing on high cables with both feet on cable, closest hand on pole and furthest hand on own belay rope behind head. Both are looking down.*

13: T: sha' we try

14: C: ey hhh

15: T: if- if we fall they- nothings gonna happen we're jus gonna swing

16: C: > if we fall I'm not coming back up here< (3,0) 'cause 'ats one o my greatest fears 17 life (0,5) heights- I hate heights, (10)

Discussion

In this extract participants adopt a similar physical stance that remains the same throughout the extract. Since they are not holding hands their stance allows more manoeuvrability. A grip on the pole with one hand makes hand gesture with the furthest hand possible but they do not use this resource in the extract. Their current stance also allows for individual action. For as long as they hold on to the pole and not to each other they are not “caught” in shared participation and will not be influenced so directly by each other's movements. Both are looking down and by doing this demonstrating that they are physically oriented to something below them. This orientation can include the cables they are standing on, the feet of their co-participant or the expanse of air between them and the ground (the height of the cables).

In line 13 T initiates the interaction with an invitation by saying “sha' we try”. This invitation is different from invitations occurring previously in trials one and two where invitation took the form “lets go”. “sha we try” is a more tentative statement that could reflect a change in orientation towards the activity. After two trials the activity is oriented to as more difficult than expected (something that may not be accomplished in the first try) or as something that requires mutual orientation and co-operation. Where “lets go” constructs the activity as doable and leaves little room for anything but going, “sha we try” is closer to a suggestion and constructs going as a possibility that could perhaps be challenged or negotiated. It also helps to construct the possibility of failure, turning back or quitting. Going becomes an activity that entails trying instead of one that guarantees completion or success.

The suggestion made by T is said with a flat intonation rather than a rising, questioning intonation and “try” is emphasised. The lack of a questioning intonation

makes the invitation sound more like a command than a question. While the emphasis on “try” helps to construct going and going back as possibilities the command-like quality of the utterance helps to make a case against not trying.

C responds to the invitation with an utterance that does not directly accept or reject the invitation and demonstrates reluctance or hesitation. By not accepting T’s invitation immediately he helps to construct the activity as a mutual activity where negotiation is relevant. C emphasises his reluctance with a sigh (“hhh”) and demonstrates an orientation towards the activity as hard or daunting. Demonstration of such an orientation helps to justify his reluctance by demonstrating that he has a good reason for not immediately accepting the invitation.

T acknowledges the reluctance that is demonstrated by C by also demonstrating hesitation or reluctance in the manner in which his response is organised (“if- if we fall they-“ in line 15). He repeats words and leaves sentences unfinished so that his response is almost stuttering. This acknowledgement helps to establish a mutual orientation towards the activity which, in turn, helps to build shared participation. This is particularly important if participants attempt the high Wild Woozy since movement across the cables is only possible when mutual participation is established.

In response to C’s demonstration of reluctance T tries (in line 15) to construct the activity as safe. This can function as an attempt to influence or change C’s reluctance or simply as an attempt to make the initial invitation more appealing. In other words an attempt to address C’s rejection or decline of the invitation. In his attempt to make the activity safe T introduces the possibility of falling as well as the presence and contribution of the instructors and belay system.

T makes the possibility of falling overt but moves away from talking about this to talk about the instructors and the belay ropes as the things that will make them safe. His quick change in focus helps to construct falling as unpleasant or undesirable and the reference to the instructors (“they”) reinforces this construction. In his talk he spends very little time talking about falling and does not even complete his “falling-sentence”. Instead his talk turns to the instructors and belay ropes as back-up system.

Falling becomes something that should be avoided or something of which the effects should at least be minimised when T says “if we fall they- nothings gonna happen we’re just gonna swing”. At the same time falling is constructed as something that will have insignificant consequences due to the belay system (“nothings gonna happen we’re just gonna swing”). Falling is made insignificant and swinging becomes the worst thing that could possibly happen. Of significance here is that T uses reference to the belay system to make the activity safe and not reference to co-operation or leaning on each other. In doing this shared participation or co-operation becomes less important and secondary to the contribution of the belay system and instructors. This introduces the possibility of not co-operating and could help to justify individual actions that are not co-operative or co-ordinated with the actions of a co-participant.

In using the back-up system to make the activity safe the activity itself becomes unsafe or risky in that back-up is presented as necessary. Safety lies in minimisation of the effects of falling not in any guarantee that they will not fall. A focus on the back-up system even constructs falling as a likely possibility but T is still making a case for trying. He justifies trying in the face of risk or danger by constructing a safety net in the form of the belay system.

In line 16 C responds to T’s attempt at making the activity safe by presenting falling as something of significance to him personally. He responds quickly with “> if we fall I’m not coming back up here <” (line 16). The increased rate of this utterance makes it hard to interrupt, ensuring that C has the opportunity to finish his utterance and perhaps demonstrating that his orientation will be difficult to challenge. He brings the focus back to falling and makes it significant in spite of the back-up that is proposed by T. Falling is so significant for him that it will be reason enough to quit. He demonstrates his individual orientation towards the activity and towards falling as different from T’s and in doing so moves away from construction of the activity as mutual. Although falling is constructed as mutual (“if we fall”) the decision to try again is constructed as individual (“I’m not coming back up here”) and the utterance can be described as building a case for individual choice.

In this specific activity a refusal on the part of one participant to try again necessarily prevents the other participant from trying again. C does not quit even though he “threatens” to do so. Instead he pauses for three seconds after his first utterance in 16 and then resumes the interaction by justifying his reluctance or potential refusal after a fall. This pause provides an opportunity for T to respond and demonstrates that C’s utterance could function as an appeal for reflexive reaction. Demonstration of an individual orientation that differs from that of a co-participant provides the opportunity for that co-participant to react in a manner that can establish mutual orientation. T does not react during this pause and establishment of a mutual orientation between C and T seems difficult at this point in the interaction. This difficulty is demonstrated in the physical stance of participants. Both of them maintain the individual stance adopted in the starting position. They maintain their grip on the pole and do not move any closer to a stance where they can hold on to each other so that movement away from the pole becomes possible. At this point staying on the cables (that is staying safe) still depends on the grip of each individual on the pole and not on shared participation or co-operation. Physical attempts to establish co-operation and co-ordinated movement will disturb their individual-oriented stance and the security provided by this stance. Establishment of a stance that can facilitate movement thus entails risk and reluctance or hesitation serves to keep them safe for the moment.

In lines 16 and 17 C justifies his reluctance by constructing fear of height as one of his greatest fears. He constructs himself as limited in this specific context by something that is highly unlikely to be overcome. The fear is generalised to his whole life, reinforcing the notion that it cannot be overcome. At the same time it is specific to the one feature of the physical context that is most prominent in the current activity - height. By constructing fear in this way any form of not trying (reluctance, refusal, quitting) is made justifiable and any form of trying becomes an achievement. C emphasises his fear of height by saying “I hate heights”. The activity is constructed as difficult, possibly even daunting and personally challenging. By constructing the activity as personally challenging on the basis of a pervasive, intense fear C makes a strong case for not trying or for quitting. A personal fear is hard to challenge or

disprove and provides strong justification for avoiding the object of fear, in this instance height.

4.3 Co-operation and establishment of co-ordinated movement

4.3.1 Extract 3 (trial 4)

Starting position: *both are standing on top of the cables. They are facing each other and holding on to each other's shoulders with their furthest hands. Both are holding on to the pole with their closest hands. Heads are close together and both are looking down.*

1 C: les try

2 T: okay

3 C: *puts closest hand on T's closest shoulder*

4 T: *puts closest hand on C's closest shoulder*

5 C: hold on to this is easier

6 C: *takes one step with closest foot*

7 C: s:te::p (2,0)

8 C: *takes one step with furthest foot*

9 T: *[starts shaking*

10 C: *starts shaking]*

11 C: you shaking

12 T: *lifts his head and turns it slightly to the side, looking away*

13 T: *ja (10,0)*

14 C: *takes half a step back with closest foot*

15 T: *looks down and takes one step with closest foot*

Discussion

Extract 3 is situated at the beginning of trial four, the trial in which participants finally manage to move away from the pole and cross the cables. In the starting position they are already holding on to each other with their furthest hand while still holding on to the pole with their closest hand. This time they are holding on to each other's shoulders instead of holding hands. They are starting to hold on to each other for support and to move away from an independent, individual stance to a mutual or co-

ordinated stance. Their stance demonstrates a level of co-operation that requires mutual orientation and mutual participation. Physical contact demonstrates orientation to the other person's body and the direction of their gaze demonstrates orientation that can include the cables, their feet or the height of the cables.

C initiates interaction in this extract when he says, "les try" and T accepts the invitation in line 2 with "okay". The invitation takes the form of a suggestion and again uses the construct of trying. This acknowledges previous constructions of the activity as difficult and reinforces failure, quitting or trying more than once as possibilities. C's invitation does not take the form of a request or question. The invitation is structured as if an agreement to try has already been reached and it merely signals the start of trying. T's immediate acceptance of the invitation reinforces the notion that a level of agreement and mutual orientation has already been reached. Directly after T's acceptance of the invitation, first C and then T lets go of his grip on the pole and takes hold of his co-participant's shoulder. In this way mutual physical orientation is achieved and both are now in a position that enables them to attempt moving across the cables. In this extract the activity is again constructed as a mutual activity and both are physically moving away from the security of an independent, individual stance to a mutual stance where they have only each other to hold on to.

C's utterance in line 5 can function as reassurance or encouragement. In a previous discussion between C and T that is not cited in this extract, T wanted to maintain a hand-to-hand hold while C argued for a hand-to-shoulder hold. In the end T agreed to try a hand-to-shoulder hold. In line 5 C seems to be arguing for the shoulder hold again and justifies his suggestion by saying that it is easier. He is even physically demonstrating that the hold he suggested makes the activity easier. If C's statement functions as reassurance it can be described as a reflexive reaction to the doubt in this way of holding that was expressed earlier by T. When the action taken by C directly after his utterance is taken into consideration, the utterance could very well also function as a warning or a means of preparation. In line six C takes a step away from the pole with his closest foot and immediately after this he says, "ste:p".

By taking a step C changes his physical orientation so that the mutual orientation that had just been established is somewhat distorted. He names the action that he is taking and in doing so demonstrates awareness of what he is doing. In stating what he is doing he warns or informs his co-participant of his actions. This information can function as a request for reflexive action that can contribute to the maintenance of mutual physical orientation and a participation framework. The sharing of this information strengthens the construction of the activity as a mutual activity. C is attempting to involve T in his actions. The deliberate, drawn out manner in which C pronounces the word mimics the manner in which he takes a step on the cable. His physical action as well as his utterance of the word seems to serve as a demonstration that is aimed at making the movement appear simple and easy. C is taking the lead by starting to move away from the pole first but he is still oriented to T as co-participant and reacts to a disturbance in mutual orientation by trying to encourage, coax or invite T to join him in moving across the cable. By taking the lead C helps to construct himself as competent in this particular situation, perhaps even as more competent than T.

In line 8 C reinforces the possibility of moving across the cables by taking another step. At the same time his movement disrupts the mutual physical orientation further and both participants start shaking (lines 9 and 10). The sequence of these events help to reinforce disruption of shared participation or co-operation as dangerous or risky and again reinforces construction of the activity as mutual. Now that both participants are holding on to each other and no longer to the pole neither can escape the effects of their co-participant's actions on their own situation. If one of them start shaking, loses his balance or lets go of his grip on the shoulders of his co-participant, both will feel the effects and will probably fall. The struggle of either participant becomes a shared struggle.

Even though both start shaking and it is impossible from watching the video tape to determine who started first, C makes T accountable for the shaking (“you shaking” in line 11) and T acknowledges accountability (“ja” in line 13). C points out the effect of the disturbance in mutual orientation in a manner that attributes responsibility for this undesirable effect to T. Both of them are contributing to the construction of C as

more competent or struggling-less than T in this particular instance. C by making T accountable for the disturbance in movement and T by acknowledging the accountability. Agreement concerning the location of accountability can help to create a mutual orientation towards C as the appropriate person to take the lead. Such an agreement on leadership can help to facilitate co-operation and movement across the cable.

Just before T acknowledges accountability, he turns his head so that he is looking away from the cables and away from the pole. It is not clear whether he is looking at the platform at the end of the cables but the direction of his gaze visibly shifts away from the cables that C is still looking at. T demonstrates a change in orientation. He is no longer focusing on the task at hand in the same way that C is. This demonstration of a difference in orientation can function as a request for reflexive action from C. In this instance it could be a request to slow down or to stop or even to turn back. C does not respond immediately, instead both participants struggle to maintain their physical stance for about ten seconds during which they keep on shaking.

In previous trials where they managed to let go of the pole and hold on to each other they also managed to maintain their stance for a few seconds but then they looked towards the pole and grabbed on to it again every time. In this trial however C keeps on looking down, T keeps on looking to his right and both maintain their stance until C takes half a step back towards the pole. After this step T also looks down and then takes his first step away from the pole. Here C's action contributes to re-establishment of mutual orientation in that T changes the direction of his gaze back to the cables. The manner in which both physically orient themselves to the task at hand is again similar. First C enhanced this similarity by stepping back and then T enhanced it by looking towards the cables and then by stepping away from the pole. Both demonstrate reflexive reaction that contributes to the maintenance of a participation framework. In doing so they acknowledge and strengthen previous constructions of the activity as mutual.

By stepping back C introduces the possibility of moving back towards the pole without changing handholds to hold on to the pole again. From this point onward they were able to move across the cables and eventually onto the platform.

4.3.2 Extract 4 (trial 4)

Starting position: *both standing more or less in the middle of the cables holding each other's hands. Hands are held high. T's upper body is leaning forward, knees slightly bent and buttocks pushed out slightly. C is leaning forward with his whole body, knees are straight and buttocks pushed out slightly.*

29: C: my h(h)a:nde is moeg

30: T: > ja myne ook <

31: *T: takes one step with furthest foot*

32: *C: takes one step with furthest foot*

33: I: lean in

34: *T: leans forward by pushing buttocks in slightly*

Discussion

In this extract participants have already moved halfway across the cables but the most difficult section lies ahead and every step from here on makes maintenance of their physical stance more difficult. They are “caught” in shared participation in the sense that the only alternative to co-operating and maintaining a level of mutual orientation is falling. In order to avoid falling (either by maintaining their stance or by moving forward) they have to co-ordinate their movements. Their physical stance at this point is very similar. The only difference is that C is leaning slightly further forward by keeping his body straight while T pulls his weight back by bending his knees and pushing his buttocks out. Leaning forward can be perceived as more risky but if both lean in this is the best way for participants to stabilise themselves on the cables.

In extract 4 C initiates the interaction by talking about physical limitation in the form of being tired. He states that his hands are tired and sighs while pronouncing the word for hands (“h(h)ande”). His sigh helps to demonstrate tiredness and emphasises the content of what he is saying. Being tired can help to justify struggling or not going or even falling, especially since the activity they are busy with has been constructed at numerous instances as difficult. Since they are more or less trapped in their current physical orientation towards each other and their surroundings, it becomes difficult to display any change in orientation towards the activity through the use of physical movement, posture or stance. C’s utterance helps to display his orientation towards the activity and also provokes a display of orientation from T. By saying “my h(h)ande is moeg” (my hands are tired) he is still constructing the activity as difficult and also as tiring and himself as struggling more as a result of the effects of the activity. His utterance could function as a request for reflexive action from T in the sense that C could be making a case either for slowing down or quitting or for hurrying up to get the task done. Neither of these actions can be accomplished without T’s co-operation so by displaying his own orientation C can work towards establishment of a mutual orientation and eventually shared participation.

In his talk about the effects of the strenuous activity that they are involved in C speaks in Afrikaans, which is T’s home language. This switch is important. Since neither of them are fluent in the other’s home language the rest of their conversation takes place in English which is at least their second language. This can help to demonstrate that C is actively working to establish a mutual orientation by constructing himself as a co-operative and accommodating participant. The switch to T’s home language can serve to emphasise and enhance C’s request for mutual orientation. In his attempt to enhance mutual orientation C refers to a specific part of his body – hands. This is the part of his body that is in contact with T’s body. He is referring to the physical link between himself and T and in effect referring to how strenuous and tiring it is to maintain physical contact. He demonstrates awareness of the effects of the activity on his own body and uses this awareness in his attempt to enhance mutual orientation. The content of his utterance is focused on an experience that T is very likely to share so on a different level he is again referring to a connection or link between them.

Up to this point verbal interaction in trial 4 consisted of talk that is specifically relevant to movement along the cables. It focuses on instructions like “hold on to this is easier” and requests like “wait for me”. In line 29 of extract 4 C speaks in a tone of voice that sounds light-hearted and moves away from the task-focused utterances that characterises verbal exchanges up to this point. Even though he is referring to his own limitations (in the form of tiredness) his light-hearted tone of voice seems to convey that he is not overwhelmed by these limitations. This helps to construct the activity as manageable and limitation as something that can be overcome. C’s light-hearted tone of voice and the change to T’s mother tongue creates the impression that he is constructing an invitation to broaden the topic of discussion and perhaps to adopt a more relaxed approach to the task. Adopting a more relaxed approach will not facilitate quick or hurried movement across the cable since this will require focus and concentration. C’s light-hearted tone supports the notion that his utterance is a request to slow down or take time out from the serious, focussed approach that was demonstrated so far rather than a request to hurry up.

T responds by saying that his hands are also tired. He acknowledges C’s experience of being tired and displays a similar experience. The manner in which T produces his utterance, “> ja myne ook <” (yes mine too) is very different from the manner in which C produced “my hands are tired”. T’s tone of voice is serious, almost business-like and he speaks at an increased rate. He responds to C’s “invitation” by curtly acknowledging his own tiredness and then immediately returns to the business at hand by taking a step forward (line 31). If C’s utterance was meant as an invitation to enter into more light-hearted discussion or a request to slow down or take time out it did not function in that way. Instead of slowing down T speeds up his talk and momentarily his physical action. In other words he does not engage in light-hearted conversation but reacts to the utterance as if it is a request to hurry up and finish the task. He demonstrates a more serious orientation to the task at hand and seems eager to continue. Even though C also takes a step forward (line 32) he seems to be advocating a more relaxed approach to the task while T is advocating a more serious, business-like approach. They are maintaining a participation framework and a level of co-operation that allows them to continue moving across the cables but are demonstrating different approaches towards the activity.

In line 33 an instructor standing at the bottom offers a guideline or perhaps even a command by saying, “lean in”. This helps to construct the progress that is being made on the cables as an activity that is being monitored or evaluated, suggesting that the participants are in need of guidance or instruction. One or both of them are supposed to be leaning in more. The instructor presents leaning in as the correct way to act in this context and by doing so reinforces the construction of the activity as a mutual activity. T sanctions the guidance that is being offered as well as the guiding role assumed by the instructor by complying with the instruction when he leans forward in line 34. This helps to construct the instructor as the expert or at least as more competent than the participants in this context. By leaning forward T increases the similarity between his physical stance and the stance C is taking. This enhances their mutual orientation and is likely to promote stability on the cables as well as help to facilitate co-operation.

4.3.3 Extract 5 (trial 4)

This extract begins directly after T pulled his weight back a little and C “fell” further forward.

Starting position: both are standing on the cables about three quarters of the way to the platform. C’s whole body is leaning far forward, arms and legs are straight and buttocks pushed out slightly. T’s upper body is leaning forward bending at the waist, knees are bent and buttocks pushed back. They are holding hands and C’s shoulders are the same height as T’s waist.

59: *T: turns his head, looking towards platform*

60: T: Okay- lets grab ‘t

61: *C: “falls” forward more, hands now higher than shoulders and head*

62: C: (AAAH)

63: T: the wood

64: C: lean in

65: *T: pulls back further, almost sitting on haunches, [pushes hands down*

Discussion

The starting position in this extract demonstrates a significant difference in the physical stance adopted by the two participants. C's body is stretched out and he is leaning far forward while T is only leaning forward with his upper body. They are in a position where the physical stance or movement of one person inevitably and directly influences that of his co-participant. C's current physical position allows very little opportunity for individual movement. He is at this point able to maintain his stance and to step carefully to either side but he is no longer in a position that allows him to pull his weight back. The only way for him to regain a more upright stance on the cable is with the help of his co-participant who would have to lean further forward in order to push him back up. T's current physical stance allows for a wider range of movement. He could perform any of the actions that C's position allows him to perform and his nearly crouching position allows more manoeuvrability. The near-crouch provides a more vertical stance on the cable so that he has the option of either leaning forward (by straightening his body or his knees) or pulling his weight back (by bending his knees more or pushing his buttocks out further). Even though T has more movement possibilities these are still limited by the physical context of the high cables and the necessity of shared participation. He can only pull his weight back to a limited extent before it becomes impossible for C to maintain his position. If C is unable to maintain his position and falls, then so will T.

The different physical stances that participants find themselves in at this instance, influences the direction of their gaze and thus the range of semiotic resources that they can physically orient themselves to. The physical position that C is in allows him to look down towards the cables, towards both participants' feet or towards the ground. Looking towards the side (for instance in the direction of the pole or the platform) or up towards T is very difficult from the position that he is in. T's stance is a lot less limiting since his arms are not stretched out on both sides of his head and he is more or less in an upright position. He is able to look around to both sides and to look up or down.

In line 59 of extract 5 T makes the platform at the end of the cables relevant by turning his head and looking towards it. For him the platform becomes part of the resources from the surrounding physical context that can be used to build action. The direction of his gaze suggests that he is focussing on finishing or on completing the activity. T turns his head directly after C fell forward a bit more. The sequential organisation of this action suggests that the platform is oriented to as a place of safety or a way out of a situation that is becoming hard to control.

In line 60, T makes his focus on the platform overt when he says, “okay- lets grab ‘t’”. He is suggesting a change in handhold that would allow both participants a more independent position. The use of the word “okay” gives the impression that the activity is under control and that a mutual decision has been reached to focus on the platform. C has however not given any indication that he is oriented to the platform at all and his physical position makes it impossible for him to focus on the platform at this point. At least as far as physical orientation is concerned he is not able to orient himself to the platform. For him the platform appears to be irrelevant since at this point his physical position makes it impossible to use the platform as a resource for the building of action. The difference in orientation between the two participants is quite distinct at this point. T is focussing on a feature in the physical context that C does not have access to and referring to this feature in a manner that suggests mutual orientation. Instead of reacting in a reflexive manner that could re-establish mutual orientation, T keeps on focussing on the platform and seems to be ignoring the disturbance in mutual orientation.

C falling forward (line 61) and shouting out in line 62 (“AAAH”) follows T’s suggestion to grab on to the platform. C is no longer in control of his own movements and cannot orient himself towards the platform or even prevent himself from falling forward. His shout is loud and clear and emphasised by a comparatively high-pitched tone of voice. He is reacting to his forward fall with a “distress-call” in a voice that demands attention. His utterance can function as a request for help or for consideration but the emphasis that he puts on it structures it more like a demand for help or at least for T to focus on him. In this instance his utterance can be described as a demand for reflexive reaction on T’s part rather than merely a request. In order to

stay on the cables C needs co-operation from T that will enhance the mutual orientation in a way that will re-establish a mutual physical stance. Since he has no access to the resource that T is focussing on (the platform) and can therefore not use this resource, he needs to make his appeal strong in the hope that he can turn T's attention back to his own position.

Even though C makes a strong appeal for reflexive action T keeps his focus on the platform and refers to it again in line 63 ("the wood"), specifying what it is they should grab. He keeps on referring to the platform perhaps in an attempt to turn C's attention towards the platform so that a mutual orientation and co-operation can be established. He does not react visibly to C's shout and remains oriented towards the platform seemingly unaware of C's distress and his current inability to physically orient himself towards the platform, let alone grab on to it. Both participants are in their own way appealing to their co-participant for a change in orientation that would enhance mutual orientation. They are acknowledging the activity as a mutual activity in that they attempt to maintain a mutual orientation and to maintain their grip on each other's hands. However in extract five, near the end of the activity, they struggle to establish a sufficient level of mutuality in orientation to enable them to construct co-operative action.

In line 64 C reacts again to the disturbance in mutual orientation by urgently telling T to lean in ("lean in"). This instruction can function as an appeal for reflexive action that

would enhance or re-establish a mutual physical orientation. In this instance it is likely to have the more specific function of asking for or even demanding help. C is leaning so far forward by now that he is unable to independently correct his stance on the cables to a more upright stance that would allow him more control over his own movements. The only way to correct his stance so that he will be able to let go of T's hand and hold on to the platform would be with the help of his co-participant.

In line 65 T does the opposite of what C is asking him to do. Instead of leaning forward he leans further back so that he is almost sitting on his haunches. As a request for help, C's utterance in line 64 was apparently unsuccessful. T maintains his focus

on the platform and leans even further back, leading to greater discrepancy between his physical orientation and that of his co-participant. T is no longer demonstrating reflexive awareness of his co-participant's physical orientation and seems to contribute to the construction of the activity as more individual. He mentions the focus of his attention and then keeps on moving towards the object he is focussing on regardless of C's requests for help.

In the interaction that follows after extract 5, T lets go of C's hand and takes hold of the platform while supporting C with his other hand. He then pulls C closer to the platform until he can also get one hand onto the platform, after which both climb onto the platform by themselves. Although this part of the interaction is not included in the extract it helps to demonstrate that T is, at least to an extent, still oriented to the activity as a mutual activity. It demonstrates that his sustained focus on the platform was not necessarily an action that occurred "regardless of C's requests for help" or as a result of a lack of reflexive awareness. If T was oriented to the platform as a safe way off the cables it is even possible that his sustained focus on the platform demonstrates reflexive awareness in the sense that he is working towards making himself and C safe. When actions during the larger encompassing activity are considered, T demonstrates an orientation towards the activity as mutual. He also demonstrates a focus on making himself and his co-participant safe since he keeps holding C's hand until C also has a firm grip on the platform and is able to help himself up. This orientation towards making or keeping both safe may demonstrate something of T's orientation towards the institution of psychotherapy. If it does it is possible that he orients himself to therapy as an activity or institution that should provide a safe space and the therapist as the person responsible for making it safe.

4.4 Looking Back

4.4.1 Extract 6 (Trial 4)

Starting position: *T is sitting on platform facing back towards the cables but looking at C who is still on the pole, climbing up towards the platform. C's body is turned in the opposite direction to the direction that T is facing.*

- 1 T: >sorry I was< (0,2) shivering so ba:d
- 2 C: heh you were an you were pushing me down
- 3 T: ja- sorry

Discussion

The interaction in extract 6 takes place directly after both participants have reached the safety of the platform. T is already sitting on the platform and C is climbing up the pole towards the platform when they start talking about the activity they have just completed. T starts the interaction by apologising in line one when he says, “> sorry I was <”. By apologising he constructs their attempt at completing the activity as unsuccessful and makes himself accountable or at least in part accountable for the failure. He also constructs C as having been influenced negatively as a result of his part in the attempt so that he would be justified in blaming T or perhaps in being angry with T. T starts his apology at an increased rate, which makes his utterance difficult to interrupt and helps to ensure that this is the utterance that initiates conversation after completion of the activity. By offering an apology in this manner T takes pre-emptive action perhaps in an attempt to control or minimise the blame that is likely to be directed at him.

The rest of T's utterance in line one (“shivering so bad”) helps to justify his contribution to the failure. Justification is important at this instance since he is

acknowledging awareness of having done something that contributed to the failure. He is demonstrating awareness of his contribution to the failure, therefore he will have to justify his contribution convincingly if he is to avoid or minimise blame. His use of the word shivering (instead of shaking for example) can help to construct his contribution as something that was out of his control. He cites “shivering so bad” as the reason for their failure or as the manner in which he contributed to the failure. Shivering refers to an action that is usually involuntary and is brought on by external, environmental factors, like cold weather, that cannot be controlled. By using this word T is constructing his contribution to their failure as an involuntary movement that was brought on by something in the physical context. As such the “shivering” was out of his control and he is not really to blame for it.

T uses a word that has an evaluative quality (bad) to depict the degree or level of shivering he was subjected to. This creates the impression that shivering is bad. The word “bad” is emphasised through lengthening of the a-sound. This emphasis can serve to demonstrate acknowledgement of the negative impact that shivering had on their progress as well as to enhance justification. The worse the uncontrollable shivering, the less accountable it would make T for his contribution to the failure.

In line two C responds with a short laugh before acknowledging T’s accountability. He does not accept or reject the apology immediately and the laughter makes it seem like he is not taking the apology seriously. His laughter could help to construct the apology as insufficient or unacceptable. He agrees with T by saying, “you were” and contributes to the construction of T as accountable for their failure or struggle. After this he elaborates on T’s contribution to the struggle by referring to the effect that T’s actions had on him (“an you were pushing me down”). C emphasises “down”, a word that refers to the direction of movement they had been trying to avoid all along. This helps to highlight the significance and severity of the effect C was experiencing. In the context of the high ropes course, going down (especially in the form of falling) is the main action that participants have to avoid in order to remain safe and to complete the activity successfully. On the high Wild Woozy they can only avoid going down by working together.

C helps to make T accountable not only for shivering but also for pushing him down. In doing so he contributes to the construction of the apology as insufficient or unacceptable but also works to expand the area to which T's apology is applicable. In light of the construction of the apology as insufficient, the laugh at the beginning of line two could be oriented towards expansion or enhancement of the apology. In other words the laughter could be "designed" to create the earlier impression that the apology is not being taken seriously as part of an attempt to make expansion of the apology possible.

In line three T acknowledges the expanded attribution of accountability by saying, "ja- sorry". He acknowledges C's construction of the effect that his actions had on C and apologises again. By apologising again T is accepting the accountability that is being attributed to him and in effect expanding his initial apology.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Concluding Remarks

The aim of this study was exploration of the application of high ropes activities in the context of individual psychotherapy. More specifically analysis focussed on the interaction of a therapist and client during shared participation in a high ropes activity. For this purpose extracts from various instances during participation in a shared high ropes activity were analysed and discussed in Chapter 4. Presented here is a description of various instances during the high ropes interaction that are viewed as demonstrative of aspects of interaction that are specifically relevant to the high ropes context. It is not an exhaustive description of ropes course interaction or of any specific aspect thereof, but presents a more general description of instances that highlight the contribution of features that are specific to the high ropes context. The manner in which different aspects of the interaction are divided into separate sections in this chapter is somewhat artificial and does not provide a realistic representation of the interplay between various aspects. Different aspects are described separately but the organisation of action is never the result of the contribution of only one aspect. Instead there is a constantly changing interplay between different aspects and resources, so that the contextual configuration is always changing. At any given time, the interactional organisation of action involves several features of discourse as well as several features of the context. For this reason there is a lot of overlap in content between different sections in Chapter 5.

5.2 Physical Context and Embodied Action

Analysis demonstrated that the physical context of the high ropes course and specifically that of the high Wild Woozy, as well as embodied action has a significant impact on the organisation of action within interaction. Apart from the height of the activity, there are other features of this context that are unique to the high Wild Woozy and cannot be escaped if participants are to attempt crossing the cables. The most obvious feature that is central to all high ropes activities is the height of the activity. Participants demonstrate orientation towards this feature by looking down

and talking about height and, in this case, about a fear of heights. The height of high ropes activities contributes to the construction of a perceived risk (Gass, 1993). Even though courses and procedures are designed to eliminate any real risk, instructors count on a perception of risk that would help to present activities as challenging. High ropes activities are designed to be safe but to appear dangerous and risky.

In the interaction analysed here, participants demonstrate an orientation towards the activity as dangerous or risky at various instances. Orientation towards the activity as dangerous, difficult, or even as impossible is demonstrated before they start moving away from the pole as well as during their movement across the cables. Construction of the activity as hard or dangerous and especially as impossible helps to justify any failure whether it takes the form of falling, quitting or having to try again. It also helps to justify struggling or not going and any progress (even maintenance of a co-ordinated stance on the cables) becomes an achievement. In extract two both participants demonstrate their orientation to the activity as risky or dangerous. The therapist does this (probably inadvertently) during his attempt to make the activity safe (line 15). He constructs the belay-system and instructors as a back-up system or safety net and by doing this presents the activity itself as dangerous since it warrants a back-up system. Falling is also constructed as insignificant due to minimisation of its effects through the back-up provided by the belay-system. The client reacts by giving the possibility of falling personal significance and constructing a fear of heights as one of his greatest fears (line 16 and 17). It can be argued that for both participants there is a perceived risk and falling is constructed as something that should be avoided.

Another prominent feature that is specific to the Wild Woozy is its design that facilitates shared participation but makes individual participation impossible. Analysis demonstrates that this feature combined with perceived risk has important consequences for the organisation of action in interaction. Participants want to remain safe and if they attempt the activity, the only way to do this is by establishing co-operation in the form of mutual, co-ordinated participation. Once participants move away from the pole and establish a co-ordinated, mutual physical stance they become to an extent “caught” in shared participation. Since they have only each other to hold

on to and most people find it impossible to maintain their balance on the cable on their own, any uncoordinated change in physical orientation is highly likely to result in a fall. Participant's orientation towards the activity as risky and falling as undesirable makes it likely that they will work to maintain co-ordinated movement in order to avoid falling. The manner in which co-operation is established and managed in the interaction that was analysed will be discussed in the following section (under 5.3).

The importance of embodied action is emphasised by various social constructionist authors (Willig in Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). The significance of the contribution of physical movement to the organisation of action is acknowledged in this study by including descriptions of action in the transcripts and by analysing these actions along with the talk in interaction. Participants refer to their own bodies and movement or that of their co-participant at various instances during their interaction. Some of these instances will be explored next in an attempt to describe the contribution of embodied movement to the organisation of action in the context of a high ropes course.

In extract one C refers to his foot when he constructs a personal limitation in the form of struggling to control his own movement (line 1). He demonstrates that physical stance and limitation is relevant to the organisation of action. Embodied movement is influenced and often limited by the physical context and limitation in movement influences the building of co-operative action. Co-operation is particularly relevant in this context and entails a high level of co-ordination in movement. This means that participants have to use embodied movement to establish co-operation in the physical sense of the word in the form of co-ordinated movement. C's struggle to lift his foot as well as the fact that he is trying to lift his foot is relevant at this instance since it is the only part of his body that is preventing the desired level of mutual physical orientation. C uses reference to his body and his struggle to control it, to demonstrate reflexive awareness of the disturbance in mutual orientation and to justify not having achieved the desired level of mutuality yet.

In extract three C demonstrates awareness of a physical limitation on T's part, also in the form of a struggle to control embodied movement ("you shaking" in line 11). C's

reference to T's inability to control his own movement functions to make T accountable for the disturbing movement. He refers to a struggle in the form of movement that T is visibly demonstrating. By referring to T's embodied action C employs a resource that contributes to the construction of accountability in a manner that makes attribution of accountability difficult to challenge. T uses his body (the direction of his gaze in line 12) to demonstrate a change in orientation and then acknowledges his own accountability. C responds by enhancing the level of mutual physical orientation when he takes a small step back and T does the same by taking a step forward. At the point in time when both participants were shaking, there was a significant disturbance in mutual orientation since C had taken two steps forward while T maintained his position. By adjusting their physical stance, both participants demonstrate reflexive awareness and use their bodies to enhance the mutual orientation to a level that facilitates co-operation. They use embodied action to construct co-ordinated action.

In extract five the physical stance of participants impose different limitations on the range of available resources as well as the possibilities of movement for each participant. Their embodiment (or embodied stance) at this instance makes the platform available to T as a resource but for C it is inaccessible. Although participants are still holding hands there is a significant disturbance in mutual physical orientation that hampers co-operation. The struggle to maintain co-ordinated action that results from this difference in embodied stance will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

5.3 Co-operation and Non-co-operation

In the context of a high ropes activity that is designed for mutual participation, co-operation becomes very important. Co-operation can be described as co-ordinated action that involves more than one person and is facilitated by a level of mutual orientation.

Goodwin (2000) uses the term participation framework in reference to the temporally unfolding frame within which various participants contribute to the construction of action. In short, a participation framework can be described as the configuration of resources that allows shared participation at any particular instance in interaction. In order for more than one person to participate there has to be a level of mutual orientation. That is, all participants have to be oriented to more or less the same collection of resources and attribute similar meanings to relevant features in the context. A game for instance, can only be played if there is some consensus among participants regarding the rules of the game. Participants continually establish a participation framework through reflexive reaction to public displays of orientation. Goodwin (2000) explains that participants in interaction display reflexive awareness of the orientation of their co-participants when they react to a disturbance in mutual orientation by taking action that could result in re-establishment of mutual orientation.

In the Wild Woozy-context the range of physical actions that are available for the display of orientation as well as for reflexive action is limited. Yet at the same time participants depend on maintenance of a high level of shared participation to remain safe. Perceived risk in combination with the necessity of shared participation puts them in a “do or die” situation as soon as they move away from the pole and use each other for support. They have to establish a level of co-operation in order to avoid falling.

In the interaction analysed here, participants often demonstrate attempts to establish co-operative action. This involves invitation, displays of orientation to the activity as

mutual as well as demonstration of reflexive awareness. During the four trials that take place before participants manage to move away from the pole, both the client and the therapist construct invitations. Initially invitation takes a form that constructs “going” as the only possibility and the activity as easy enough to guarantee success (“lets go”). However, in further trials invitation from both participants are closer to suggestions and involve the concept of trying (“sha’ we try” and “lets try”). This form of invitation acknowledges that the activity is difficult and may require more than one attempt.

In extract two the therapist invites his client who responds in a hesitant manner. The therapist then enhances his invitation by constructing attempting the activity as safe (by presenting the belay-system as a safety net) but the client maintains and emphasises a different orientation. Davidson (1984) explains that invitations, offers, requests or proposals function to set up a “sequential next” that is expected to take the form of an acceptance or a rejection. If the recipient responds in a manner that is perceived as an actual or potential rejection, the producer of an invitation often offers a subsequent version of the initial invitation. In this subsequent version the producer attends to whichever aspect of the initial invitation they think may be troublesome. T responds to C’s utterance as if it constitutes rejection of his invitation. He reacts by enhancing his invitation through construction of the activity as safe by virtue of a back-up system that will minimise the effect of falling. C still does not accept the invitation and emphasises his individual orientation towards the activity as dangerous and falling as significant. Throughout this extract both maintain an individual, independent stance and apparently do not move any closer to mutual orientation.

In extract three the client constructs an invitation in a manner that suggests that an agreement to try has already been reached (“lets try”). The notion of some prior agreement is supported by the therapist’s immediate acceptance of the invitation. T’s acceptance occurs directly after a possible sentence completion point. According to Davidson (1984) recipients of invitations or offers often produce a response directly after a possible sentence completion point and failure to do so can easily be interpreted by the producer of the invitation as an implication of possible rejection.

T's response occurs at an instant that is associated with acceptance and there is no need for C to construct a subsequent version of his initial invitation.

Of note here is that participants had already reached a level of mutual physical orientation before the interaction in extract three starts and the level of mutual orientation is enhanced directly after T's acceptance. At the beginning of the extract they are holding on to their co-participant's furthest shoulder and after T's acceptance they also move their closest hand from the pole to the shoulder of their co-participant. This invitation seems to be more successful than the previous one, especially since it initiated the trial in which they were successful in their attempt to move across the cable. It is important to note however that it is not only the level of success that separates the two invitations. In the first invitation both participants demonstrate a physical orientation that is independent of their co-participant while in the second instance both are demonstrating a mutual physical orientation. The second invitation was thus not necessarily more successful as a result of the manner in which it was constructed but it was more timely in the sense that it was offered after mutual orientation (and possibly an agreement to try) had already been established.

At various instances in the interaction participants construct the activity as mutual. In extract three participants start shaking after C started to move away from the pole. C makes T accountable for shaking and T acknowledges his own accountability but a review of the video material shows that both of them are shaking and it is impossible to determine who started first. In this instance physical movement of one participant directly influences the other participant so that one participant's struggle becomes a shared struggle. In this manner physical movement helps to construct the activity as mutual. Similarly, demonstration of an orientation towards the activity as mutual sometimes takes the form of physical stance or movement. By taking hands or holding on to the shoulders of a co-participant or by waiting for the other person to catch up, participants demonstrate an orientation towards the activity as mutual. In extract three for example both participants react reflexively to a disturbance in mutual orientation and manage to establish co-ordinated movement. After both starts shaking, C takes a step back and T takes one step forward. By doing this they enhance the level

of mutual orientation and establish a level of co-operation that enables them to move across the cables.

Reflexive awareness is demonstrated in the manner in which participants react to disturbances in mutual orientation. In extract three there is a high level of mutual orientation and by line four participants have established a mutual, co-dependent stance that can allow them to start moving across the cables. C takes the first two steps away from the pole while he verbally encourages T to join him. Since T maintains his position at first, the mutual orientation is disturbed and both start shaking. After struggling for a few seconds to maintain this position C takes a small step back, enhancing the mutual orientation. By doing this C demonstrates reflexive awareness and works to re-establish mutual orientation and shared participation. He is aware that T is not moving with him and reacts in a manner that helps to facilitate participation by T, who reacts in a similar manner. T takes a step forward and also contributes to the establishment of co-operation. Together they create a level of co-operation that allows them to start moving away from the pole. The possibility of movement away from the pole as well as movement back towards the pole without changing their handhold to hold on to the pole (so that they would have to start over again) is constructed.

Demonstration of reflexive awareness is at times subtler. In extract one the client makes his own struggle overt when he says, “can’t even get my foot off”. He is referring to the part of his body that has not yet achieved the adequate level of mutual orientation and to his attempt to achieve this. In doing so he is demonstrating awareness of the “inadequate” level of orientation and a willingness to work towards enhancement of orientation to the desired level.

In this study participants often demonstrate reflexive awareness but at times still struggle to maintain a mutual orientation and establish co-operation. In extract two participants maintain an individual, independent physical stance and demonstrate different orientations towards the activity and towards falling. Both acknowledge the activity as risky or dangerous but they construct the significance of falling differently. T makes a case for trying even though the activity is dangerous by constructing the

belay-system as a safety net that would make falling insignificant. C on the other hand gives falling personal significance that is difficult to dispute by constructing a fear of heights as one of his greatest fears. T's invitation is treated with great reluctance followed by justification of C's reluctance to accept the invitation. In this extract participants cannot agree on the significance of falling and cannot establish a level of mutual orientation that allows them to attempt crossing the cables.

Extract five also illustrates a struggle to maintain mutual orientation. In this extract participants have already maintained a level of co-operation that allowed them to move three quarters of the way across the cables. There is a significant difference in physical stance that influences the availability of resources from the physical context to each participant. C's movement is limited by the degree to which he is leaning forward. He is no longer able to pull his weight back independently and he is not able to turn his head sideways in order to look at the pole on one side or the platform on the other. T on the other hand is almost in a crouching position with only his upper body leaning forward. He is still capable of forward and backward movement and his direction of gaze is not limited much by his stance. A clear difference in orientation is demonstrated. T visibly orients himself to the platform and suggests grabbing on to it while C is unable to turn towards the platform. Throughout the extract T maintains his focus on a resource (the platform) that is inaccessible to C. During this interaction both appeal for reflexive action but there is no visible change in the individual focus of either participant and a minimal level of co-operation is maintained until both can get a hand on the platform.

5.4 Limitation and Accountability

Limitation on various levels forms an integral part of the high Wild Woozy experience. Participants are confronted with their inability to complete or even attempt the activity on their own and once they have established a mutual, co-ordinated stance they are confronted with the limitations imposed by the very stance that facilitates movement along the cables. Once participants move away from the pole the independent, uncoordinated movement is very likely to lead to a fall. Under 5.2 it was already mentioned that the physical context of the activity limits the range of available resources that could be used or oriented to.

In line one of extract one temporal personal limitation already becomes relevant when C talks about a struggle to control his own movements. He communicates that he is trying to lift his foot but is unable to do so and constructs bodily movement as something that is not completely under his control in this context. C conveys a struggle to achieve the movement (move his foot) that would establish a mutual physical orientation. Before he even completes his utterance he overcomes the limitation he had been referring to by moving his foot onto the cable. By doing this C demonstrates an active attempt to overcome personal limitation by applying individual action. Even though he makes his struggle overt, he does not wait for a response (for instance help or advice) from his co-participant before he takes action to overcome the limitation. By making his struggle overt C acknowledges the mutuality of the activity and that his actions have an effect on T, but by overcoming the struggle without waiting for help he contributes to the construction of smaller actions within the activity as individual or personal. In extract two C makes use of another construction of personal limitation in the form of a fear of heights. He constructs himself as limited by a fear of an integral, inescapable feature of the context they are in. A limitation in the form of personal fear is very difficult to challenge and provides strong justification for quitting, failing or not trying and in this case for rejection of T's invitation to try. By constructing a pervasive, personal fear and warning T that he will not try again if they fall, C is making a case for individual choice. He demonstrates awareness of his own limitations and constructs decisions regarding attempts to overcome personal limitation as a personal and individual choice.

Personal limitation on the side of the therapist, is demonstrated in extract three in the form of a lack of control over body movement when both participants start to shake. The client and therapist both contribute to making the therapist accountable for shaking (in line 11 and 13). This helps to construct the lack of control as a limitation that is specific to an individual. Even though T acknowledges accountability he does not perform a physical action that could directly and immediately improve the situation. Instead he demonstrates a change in orientation that acknowledges or at least emphasises the disruption in mutual physical orientation when he looks away from the cables (line 12). C then demonstrates reflexive awareness by stepping back and enhancing the mutual physical orientation. This seems to make it possible for T to take a step away from the pole. T overcomes the limitation of the moment but it is made possible by the contribution of both participants. T contributed by visibly changing the focus of his gaze away from the cables and in effect the task at hand, and C by reacting in a manner that enhances mutual physical orientation (by stepping back in line 14). The involvement of both participants help to facilitate co-operation in the sense that T starts participating in the movement by taking a step forward. In this extract limitation becomes a shared experience and a shared struggle and participants establish co-ordinated action in order to overcome a limitation that was initially constructed as individual.

In extract one the activity is constructed as risky and even impossible. It is not clear whether the impossibility is based on personal limitation or on the limitations imposed by the features of the physical context. Either way, the limitations present in this situation are oriented to as overwhelming, rendering the activity impossible. It was mentioned earlier that in such an impossible context any progress becomes an achievement, so maintenance of a mutual stance for about ten seconds after the construction of impossibility becomes an achievement. Their stance becomes a mutual action that challenges the construction of impossibility and strives to overcome limitation. Since maintenance of their stance is mutual, this attempt to overcome limitation (and the modest success) constitutes a mutual or co-operative action.

Limitations that are imposed by features of the context become clear when the actions in extract five are taken into consideration. In this extract there are clear differences between the physical stance of individual participants and mutual physical orientation is significantly disturbed. The difference in physical stance is so great that one participant (T) has access to and focuses on a feature in the context that is inaccessible to the other participant (C). By virtue of his physical stance C's movement as well as the range of resources available to him is much more limited than the movement and resources available to T. T focuses on the platform and moves towards it while seemingly ignoring the limiting position of his co-participant. C can only maintain his position and appeal to T for help since he is at this point unable to overcome the limitation imposed by his physical situation on his own. T does not react visibly to C's request for help but eventually pulls him into a position that enables him to make use of the resource that was previously inaccessible to him (the platform). T assists C to a degree in overcoming limitation but only after he has reached the safety of the platform. If he had engaged with C's struggle at an earlier stage it would have become more of a shared struggle and enhanced the level of limitation that T was already experiencing. T sustains his focus on the safety of the platform and keeps the level of limitation he is experiencing to a minimum until he is physically in a position to use the stability offered by the platform. In doing this he could be demonstrating an acceptance of accountability for making himself and his co-participant safe.

In extract six the therapist does make himself accountable by quickly offering an apology for their "failure" (line 1). He acknowledges his contribution to their failure and justifies the blame he apparently expects from C. He takes pre-emptive action in the sense that he intercepts any blaming comment C could have made, possibly in an attempt to minimise or control the blame he expects. Acknowledgement of accountability necessitates convincing justification if blame is to be minimised. T uses the word "shivering" (line 1) in his justification of his contribution to failure. This is a word that is usually associated with involuntary movement that is the result of uncontrollable, external forces like cold weather. The use of this word helps to

construct his actions as an involuntary response to external forces that are out of his control and questions or minimises accountability. C acknowledges T's accountability but does not immediately accept the apology. Instead he reacts as if the apology is insufficient and then works to broaden the area to which the apology is applicable. He emphasises the negative effect that T's actions had on him by focussing on their significance in this particular context and makes T accountable for the negative effects he experienced. T acknowledges accountability for the effects that C experienced by apologising again. In summary C works to expand an "insufficient" apology and T acknowledges this expansion by apologising again and in effect, expands his initial apology. C's hesitant reaction to T's offering ("heh" in line 2) comes close to Davidson's (1984) description of weak agreements. According to Davidson (1984) offerings (for instance apologies) set up a possible sequential next that is expected to take the form of an acceptance or a rejection. Weak agreements (often taking forms like "uh-huh" or "yeah") can display invitations or offerings in their initial form as inadequate for acceptance. C's short laugh seems to be functioning in a similar manner in that it helps to construct the apology as insufficient. C's utterance differs from the more typical sequential organisation of weak agreements cited in Davidson (1984) in the sense that he does not wait for T to elaborate on his initial apology by constructing a subsequent version. Instead he plays a more active role by elaborating on the effect of T's contribution to their failure and helps to expand the area to which the apology is applicable.

When the overall interaction of participants throughout the activity is taken into consideration it is evident that the therapist carries a lot more accountability than the client. Both participants contribute to T's accountability. At various instances C attributes accountability to T who then acknowledges this accountability. Another interesting difference involves C's voluntary or apparently unprovoked construction of himself as limited. Although T acknowledges his own limitations when C points them out he does not volunteer constructions of himself as limited. It is possible that C's construction of himself as limited helps to protect him against attribution of accountability. He constructs himself as unskilled in this context and as unprepared for the activity and by doing this he minimises expectations and responsibility. For someone with a great fear of heights, failure is justifiable and expected and even a

few seconds on the cable is already an achievement. The difference in displays of personal limitation and in attribution of accountability could reflect participant's orientation towards the client-therapist relationship. If this is the case, the therapist is oriented to as the person who is held accountable for difficulties and struggling and the person responsible for keeping himself and the client safe. The role of the therapist would then not allow displays of personal limitation whereas the role of the client is more flexible, allowing for displays of personal limitation and also for attribution of accountability to the therapist and in effect minimisation of his own accountability.

5.5 Recommendations

This study focussed on generation of a more general description of the interaction that takes place on a high ropes course. A large amount of information that was gathered during the study could not be explored in detail and many of the aspects that were explored in more detail still warrant more in-depth exploration. Future studies could focus on various aspects that were demonstrated to be specifically relevant to the context of the high Wild Woozy. These aspects include the contribution of the material context and embodiment, establishment of co-operation and co-ordinated action, and construction and interactional management of limitation, accountability and invitation. The high ropes course could provide a valuable context for further exploration of the construction and interactional management of personal fear, specifically a fear of heights.

General recommendations regarding the field of adventure therapy include definition of the scope of adventure therapy, development of appropriate qualification (credentials) for adventure therapists, development of refined research and development of treatment programs that are consistent with theory (Berman & Davis-Berman, 2001). Various authors emphasise the necessity of adequate training of adventure practitioners. Berman and Davis-Berman (2001) state that there is a general consensus among some authors that adventure practitioners should be skilled in traditional psychotherapy methods as well as in the application of the adventure activities they employ. If adventure activities are aimed at meta-level change,

practitioners should be skilled at facilitation of meta-level change processes (Itin, 2001).

In a panel discussion about ethical issues relevant to this study a question was raised regarding the level of self-disclosure that a therapist would be subjected to during a shared high ropes activity. Analysis demonstrated that participation in high ropes activities can be quite exposing. Self-disclosure on the part of a client is usually accepted as part of therapeutic interaction but the appropriateness of self-disclosure on the part of a therapist is often questioned. Before a therapist gets involved in an experiential activity that is likely to involve a level of self-disclosure it is important that she/he is aware of this possibility. In order for a therapist to be confident and comfortable about their participation it is recommended that he/she is provided ample opportunity to experience and explore the adventure activity prior to shared participation with a client. Therapists who are familiar with adventure activities probably will not need a great deal of exposure prior to the activity but even skilled adventure practitioners may not be used to mutual participation that involves a client. Means of preparation and aftercare involving the therapist as well as the client should be negotiated before research projects involving adventure activities are initiated.

Adventure therapy activities are different from more traditional therapeutic endeavours in that they are experiential and the physical context as well as embodied action is particularly relevant in AT contexts. Participation requires a level of motivation, energy, involvement and responsibility from clients (Gass, 1993). The last statement about the manner in which clients participate in adventure therapy activities was not clearly demonstrated in this study. Although both clients demonstrated a level of motivation and responsibility, an unequal distribution of accountability demonstrates that the degree to which participants display responsibility can vary greatly. Unequal distribution of accountability in this study can possibly be explained in terms of participant's orientation towards client and therapist roles in an individual psychotherapy context.

Shared participation in high ropes activities could provide an opportunity for clients and therapists involved in individual psychotherapy for establishment and

interactional management of co-corporation with the aim of addressing challenges and overcoming limitation. If therapy is conceptualised as a vehicle for change, therapeutic interaction can be described as the construction of ways to overcome limitation through co-ordinated action. The value of the experience of participants on the high ropes course could be enhanced if it is generalised to the context of the therapeutic relationship and to other areas of their lives. Generalisation is unlikely if a high ropes activity is administered as a once-off intervention. If the gains from a high ropes experience is to be optimised, it is recommended that shared high ropes experiences is explored by the client and therapist during sessions that take place after participation in the high ropes activity. The scope of this study did not include exploration of the generalisability of the effects of a ropes course experience. This is an aspect that could be an appropriate focus for future studies.

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Appendix A: Notation Symbols

Notation is based on a Jefferson-style system of transcription (Wiggins, Potter & Wildsmith, 2003)

: Colons represent lengthening of the preceding sound, the more colons the greater the lengthening.

- A hyphen represents a cut-off of the preceding sound, usually by a stop.

(or (Vertical arrows represent marked pitch movement over and above normal rhythm of speech in the following sound

., ? Punctuation marks signify normal intonation, not grammar.

. for downward, ending intonation

, for continuative intonation

? for rising, questioning intonation

heh Represents laughter

hhh Represents hearable out-breath

.hh Represents hearable in-breath

[Square bracket, indicates the point at which an overlap starts.

] Square bracket, indicates point at which overlap ends.

() Single parentheses enclose problematic or uncertain hearings.

(()) Double parentheses enclose additional comments from the transcriber.

(1,0) Indicate length of silence in seconds.

(mmm) Degree signs enclose utterances with significantly lowered volume.

Down Underlining indicates stress, usually by increased volume.

= Equals joins talk that is continuous (no pause in between) but is separated across different line in the transcript.

AAAH Capital letters combined with underlining indicates a scream or shout.

> < Encloses speech that is noticeably faster than surrounding talk.

Notation that is specific to this study:

Italic font Used in descriptions of physical movement and stance in order to distinguish these from text that represents speech.

Appendix B: Transcription of Interaction During the High Wild Woozy Activity

Trial 1

Starting position: *both C and T are standing on the high cables at the starting point of the activity, holding on to the pole with their closest hand and to their own belay ropes behind their heads with the other hand. T has both feet on the cable and C has furthest foot on the cable and closest foot on the staple.*

- 1: T: jus before we go (2,0) les go (1,0) hhh a bit further. hhh .h hhh
- 2: T: *gives one step, hands in same position*
- 3: C: *gives one step, hands in same position, puts closest foot on cable*
- 4: T: *moves furthest foot a few small steps*
- 5: C: *moves furthest foot a few small steps*
- 6: C: ja, is as far as I can go.
- 7: T: 'kay (3,0)
- 8: C: *places nearest foot back on staple*
- 9: T: *moves a step back with both feet*
- 10: T: 'kay les take 'em right- =
- 11: T: *lets go of rope with furthest hand, holds hand up and out towards C*
- 12: = your left hand
- 13: C: *lets go of rope with furthest hand, takes T's hand*
- 14: C: 'kay
- 15: C: *lets go of pole with closest hand, holds hand out towards T*
- 16: T: you [rea:dy
- 17: C: ja-]=
- 18: T: *lets go of pole with closest hand, takes C's hand*
- 19: => Keep yo hans high <
- 20: T: [*pushes both hands up whole body shaking a bit*
- 21: C: [*pushes both hands up, whole body shaking a bit*]
- 22: T: *looks up at C*

- 23: T: jis: hhh (5,0)
24: T: *looks back towards the pole*
25: T: Les go back (in =
26: C: *glances at T, then at the pole*
27: => grab it <
28: T: *[lets go with closest hand, grabs on to the pole*
29: C: *lets go with closest hand, grabs on to the pole]*
30: C: 'kay
31: T: okay leave tis one, hhh
32: T: *lets go with furthest hand, grabs on to belay rope behind head*
33: C: *lets go with furthest hand, grabs on to belay rope behind head*

Trial 2

Starting position: *both T and C standing on high cables facing each other, holding each other's hands, hands held high. T standing with both feet on cable, C with furthest foot on cable and closest foot on staple.*

- 1: C: wha- (1,0) can't even get my foot =
2: C: *lifts closest foot of staple and puts it on cable*
3: =off. (4,0)
4: T: jis:: (4,0)
5: C: no:t a chance (10,0)
6: T: *[looks towards pole, lets go with closest hand and grabs on to the pole*
7: C: *looks towards the pole, lets go with closest hand and grabs on to the pole]*
8: T: *[shuffles closer to the pole*
9: C: *shuffles closer to the pole]*
10: T: leave tis hand
11: T: *[lets go with furthest hand*
12: C: *lets go with furthest hand]*
13: T: *holds on to own belay rope behind head*

- 14: C: *holds on to own belay rope behind head*
- 15: T: oei hhh hhh
- 16: C: (Its rough out there,(
- 17: I: hold on to each other, you can't do this on your own.

Trial 3

Starting position: *both standing on high cables with both feet on cable, closest hand on pole and furthest hand on own belay rope behind head. Both are looking down.*

- 1: T: I'm not sure heh hhh (6,0) how d' you feel?
- 2: C: the thought of falling is 'e one thing keeps me up (6,0) 's 'e one way I don wanna
- 3: die. CANT- (FA:LL (WHUAA
- 4: T: heh .h heh
- 5: C: I can't fall to my death
- 6: T: heh heh
- 7: C: my phone-
- 8: C: *moves closest foot to pole and lightly drags it back over cable*
- 9: C: someone 's sending me a message,
- 10: T: [heh .h
- 11: C: gotta get it]
- 12: T: heh .h (23,0)
- 13: T: sha' we try
- 14: C: ey hhh
- 15: T: if- if we fall they- nothings gonna happen we're jus gonna swing
- 16: C: > if we fall I'm not coming back up here< (3,0) 'cause 'ats one o my greatest fears 17 life (0,5) heights- I hate heights, (10)
- 18; C: bu =
- 19: C: *glances towards part of the course where individual activity was done*
- 20: = tha was fun tha wasn't high, (0,5) this is just- (0,5) not normal. (3,0)
- 21: T: *looks away to his right*

- 22: C: > how do they expect normal people to do this? < (3,0)
- 23: T: sha' we try
- 24: C: *glances up at T for a moment*
- 25: C: hhh yeah-
- 26: T: okay- stay there
- 27: T: *[moves feet a little*
- 28: C: *moves feet a little]*
- 29: C: use the shoulders
- 30: C: *[puts furthest hand on T's furthest shoulder*
- 31: T: *puts furthest hand on C's furthest shoulder]*
- 32: C: 'kay les go
- 33: T: you mean like that?
- 34: C: ja (.) >hold on<
- 35: T: its gonna be (...take hands)
- 36: T: *puts closest hand on C's closest shoulder*
- 37: C: *puts closest hand on T's closest shoulder*
- 38: C: *[starts moving feet*
- 39: T: *starts moving feet]*
- 40: C: *turns and grabs on to the pole*
- 41: T: *turns and grabs on to the pole*
- 42: C: heh hhh you have =
- 43: C: *puts closest hand on pole*
- 44: = no balance
- 45: T: no I don't have balance
- 46: C: your legs are shaking
- 47: T: ja
- 48: C: jus try as if your [standing on the ground
- 49: T: is gonna be] =
- 50: T: *lifts furthest hand from C's shoulder and holds it up in front*
- 51: = better fo me if we take it here
- 52: C: then I've got no balance in my hands 'cause your hands are shaking

Trial 4

Starting position: *both are standing on top of the cables. They are facing each other and holding on to each other's shoulders with their furthest hands. Both are holding on to the pole with their closest hands. Heads are close together and both are looking down.*

1: C: les try

2: T: okay

3: C: *puts closest hand on T's closest shoulder*

4: T: *puts closest hand on C's closest shoulder*

5: hold on to this is easier

6: C: *takes one step with closest foot*

7: C: s:te::p (2,0)

8: C: *takes one step with furthest foot*

9: T: *[starts shaking*

10: C: *starts shaking]*

11: C: you shaking

12: T: *lifts his head and turns it slightly to the side, looking away*

13: T: ja (10,0)

14: C: *takes half a step back with closest foot*

15: T: *looks down and takes one step with closest foot*

16: T: ah- (4,0)

17: C: *[takes one step with closest foot*

18: T: *takes one step with furthest foot]*

19: C: 'kay wait wait stop there

20: T: ('kay((27,0)

21: C: *takes one step with furthest foot*

22: T: *takes one step with closest foot*

23: C: *takes one step with closest foot*

24: T: *takes one step with furthest foot*

25: C: *takes one step with furthest foot*

26: C: *takes one step with closest foot*

27: T: *takes one step with closest foot*

28: T: slowly-

Position after moving to the middle of the cable: *both standing more or less in the middle of the cables holding each other's hands. Hands are held high. T's upper body is leaning forward, knees slightly bent and buttocks pushed out slightly. C is leaning forward with his whole body; knees are straight and buttocks pushed out slightly.*

29: C: my h(h)a:nde is moeg

30: T: > ja myne ook <

31: T: *takes one step with furthest foot*

32: C: *takes one step with furthest foot*

33: I: lean in

34: T: *leans forward by pushing buttocks in slightly*

35: C: 'kay- lean in

36: C: *takes one step with closest foot*

37: T: *takes one step with closest foot*

38: T: hhh 'kay (7,0)

39: T: *[takes a few steps*

40: C: *takes a few steps and leans forward more]*

41: T: > Okay wait fo me <

42: T: *[leans back slightly by pushing buttocks out*

43: C: *whole body "falls" further forward, shoulders now below T's shoulders]*

44: C: lean

45: T: *[pushes forward with upper body, bending more at the waist*

46: C: *pushes buttocks out slightly, bending more at the waist]*

47: T: *[takes two steps*

48: C: *takes two steps]*

49: T: hhh hhh eh hhh wait fo me

50: T: *[hands move up and down*

51: C: *hands move up and down]*

52: T: *[leans further back by pushing buttocks out more*

- 53: C: *“falls” further forward so that shoulders are more or less same height as T’s*
- 54: *chest]*
- 55: T: eh hhh wait for me hhh (4,0)
- 56: T: *[shaking, pulls back more by bending knees and pushing buttocks out more*
- 57: C: *shaking, “falls” forward more, shoulders now more or less same height as T’s*
- 58: *waist]*
- 59: T: *turns his head, looking towards platform*
- 60: T: Okay- lets grab ‘t
- 61: C: *“falls” forward more, hands now higher than shoulders and head*
- 62: C: (AAAH
- 63: T: the wood
- 64: C: lean in
- 65: T: *pulls back further, almost sitting on haunches, [pushes hands down*
- 66: C: *hands moving down], now in line with his shoulders*
- 67: T: *pushes hands up again*
- 68: T: hhh hhh hhh
- 69: C: *shifts position of left foot so that he is hanging almost horizontally on the*
- 70: *cable rather than standing, feet on the cable, hands in T’s hands*
- 71: I: stoot hom op, vorentoe
- 72: T: *lets go with furthest hand*
- 73: T: ek bewe te veel
- 74: T: *[grabs on to platform with furthest hand*
- 75: C: *stretches furthest hand out towards platform]*
- 76: T: okay
- 77: T: *pulls himself and C closer to platform*
- 78: C: *grabs on to platform with furthest hand*
- 79: T: *[lets go with closest hand*
- 80: C: *lets go with closest hand]*
- 81: T: *grabs on to platform with furthest hand*
- 82: C: *pulls himself closer to platform and grabs on with furthest hands*
- 83: C: a:h

Looking Back

Starting position: *T is sitting on platform facing back towards the cables but looking at C who is still on the pole, climbing up towards the platform. C's body is turned in the opposite direction to the direction that T is facing.*

- 1: T: >sorry I was< (0,2) shivering so ba:d
- 2: C: heh you were an you were pushing me down
- 3: T: ja- sorry =
- 4: *C: starts climbing onto platform*
- 5: = a- =
- 6: *C: puts one foot, then the other on platform*
- 7: = I thought =
- 8: *T: [makes a pushing gesture up in front of him with both hands in fists while*
- 9: *looking at C*
- 10: *C: looks at T]*
- 11: =ye know if I gonna lean froward (1,0)
- 12: *T: drops hands in lap, leans back and takes hold of rope behind head with left*
- 13: *hand*
- 14: T: I still- I didn't have any power any more
- 15: *T: makes grabbing motion in front of him with right hand*
- 16: C: mm?
- 17: *C: fiddles with his harness*
- 18: T: so I thought =
- 19: *T: makes grabbing motion in front of him with both hands*
- 20: = if I c'n jus grab here [I'll hold you
- 21: *T: drops hands in lap, turns head forward and looks away from C*
- 22: C: you mus] stay strong
- 23: *C: turns right and looks up*
- 24: T: (OOHF hhh
- 25: *T: lifts left hand slightly, drops it again*

26: C: stay strong is ze word

27: *C: turns left still looking up*

Appendix C: Consent Form

Research on High Ropes Courses in Individual Psychotherapy

Personal information

Name:

Age:

Postal address:

e-mail address:

Contact number: (home)

(Work)

(Cellphone)

Next of kin:

Contact number:

I, (name and surname of participant)

.....

the undersigned hereby willingly give consent to my participation in the above mentioned research project. I further give permission to Mrs. M.J. Dreckmeier-Meiring to record my high ropes experience on videotape. Also, I give Mrs. Dreckmeier-Meiring permission to use information regarding this experience and regarding written correspondence between Mrs. Dreckmeier-Meiring and myself during the research project for research purposes, as well as for publication of such information. The permission is given with the condition that all information will be handled confidentially and that I will remain anonymous and no identifying information will be disclosed.

In the event of me having any questions arising from the research project, I am free to contact the researcher at the address and contact number provided.

Signature..... Date.....