How to study experience

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How to study experience

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Abstract

Social analysts find it hard to throw off the dualism of traditional psychology. Discursive psychology offers a non-dualistic approach to psychological matters that works with the displays and orientations of participants, and recognizes that psychological matters are managed immediately and subtly through the normative resources of interaction. James Cresswell (20**) attempts to provide an alternative account of 'experience'; drawing on the writing of Bakhtin he offers a kind of socialized dualism. His account is illustrated by analysing talk from an open ended interview. The current paper (a) offers an alternative analysis of that talk highlighting the operation of highly conventional repair sequences; (b) questions Cresswell's inferences from the interviewee's talk to their underlying 'experiences'; (c) illustrates how matters that might classically be considered as 'experiential' can be handled from a non-dualistic interactional perspective, using an example from a research programme on crying and upset; (d) offers some general principles for the study of 'experience'.

HOW TO STUDY EXPERIENCE

Contemporary discursive psychology addresses psychological matters in term of the ways in which they figure in discourse. This can involve, in no particular order, work on (a) managing the psychological implications of talk, e.g. how particular descriptions implicate discrete motivations; (b) the practical use of psychological terms and categories in ascriptions and avowals, e.g. the moral weight in claiming to have been made angry; and (c) the way psychological issues ('thoughts', say, or 'feelings) are displayed and responded to (or not) in talk and embodied conduct, e.g. the way 'upset' is registered and managed in a phone call between relatives. All of this can be, but need not be, mobilized as part of a broader set of debates with mainstream psychological perspectives such as social cognition and psychoanalysis, or as another set of debates with alternative 'qualitative' perspectives such as interpretative phenomenological analysis or social representations. However, it inevitably involves a respecification of the classic empirical objects and explanatory categories used by psychologists. For example, the classic inner psychological 'attitude' is reworked in terms of the range of different sorts of evaluation that people can build, and the practices that those evaluations are used in. Even after some 20 years since the publication of *Discursive Psychology* (Edwards & Potter, 1992) researchers from all flavours still have difficulties accommodating to this radical move.

Overwhelmingly discursive psychology has focused on material from actual settings – police interrogations, child protection helpline talk, school board meetings, family meal times, mediation in neighbour disputes, and mundane telephone talk. Where parties are co-present then the strong preference is for working with video as the parties are dealing with one another as embodied in a way that will be lost in the auditory record. Analysis will

focus on the practices being done, and this will involve attending to the organization of the talk, the turns and sequences, as well as orientations to the setting and the institutional tasks where relevant. One reason for this focus on naturalistic data has been an evolving critique of the use of open ended interviews as a technique for generating discourse data and developing analytic conclusions (Potter & Hepburn, 2005, in press). However, a more important reason is that working with such materials promotes innovative analyses, pushes researchers off well-worn social science agendas, and provides powerful leverage on real life problems and issues. It offers a platform for application that is much firmer than work based primarily on interviews or other 'got-up' social science procedures (see papers in Hepburn & Wiggins, 2007, and Stokoe, 2011).

Contemporary discursive psychology draws heavily on the methods and findings of conversation analysis (Potter, 2010). Discursive psychology has exploited the increasingly sophisticated understanding of sequence, position and turn design provided by conversation analysis and the way this normative apparatus sets the conditions for human understanding. Turn organization provides a major resource for understanding other people; indeed, Schegloff has suggested that it is a major resource for sustaining intersubjectivity and the practices of conversational repair can be seen as ways of (re)accomplishing intersubjectivity when it is under threat (Schegloff, 1992). Problems of who knows what and how is knowledge shared – that is, classically psychological problems – have been tackled in subtle ways (see papers in Stivers, Mondada & Steensig, 2011).

How should discursive psychology address 'experience'? This is a complex topic, but it is worth highlighting some of the key issues and problems as a backdrop to the more detailed discussion below. Underpinning many debates in this area is the clash between two broad visions of the human conduct. On the one hand, the cognitivist vision takes

conduct to be fundamentally dependent on putative individual entities such as beliefs, attitudes and knowledge. On the other, is an focus on practices, the normative organizations that provide their intelligibility, and their involvement with organizational structures. Discursive psychologists start with practices and people acting in relation to one another and bracket off issues of cognition (this is largely, but not entirely, true of conversation analysis – see papers in te Molder & Potter, 2005). Although the focus on practices is often easier to mesh with the critical themes in *Discourse & Society*, the cognitivist vision has an enduring draw leading thinkers back to Husserl, Lacan or Bakhtin.

There is no knock down counter to either vision. Nevertheless, there are some challenging issues for researchers who are wanting to remain within a cognitivist perspective.

First, there are classic and well trodden conceptual critiques of cognitivism derived from Wittgensteinian philosophy and ethnomethodology. Famously, Wittgenstein argued against the idea of mind as a ghostly correlation of the stream of speech and claimed instead that 'language is itself the vehicle for thought' (Wittgenstein, 1953: #329). Coulter (2008) has usefully summarized conceptual critiques against cognitivism.

Second, if these critiques are not deemed sufficient what kinds of things might count as experience. Is it something propositional? If so should the same propositions be used to describe it? If not, what propositions are adequate and what criteria are there for their adequacy?

Third, researchers who are not persuaded by the conceptual arguments against there being a separable domain of experience, and are not troubled by the ontological issues of what kind of 'thing' it is and how it might be formulated, are faced with the

research problem of how experience can be accessed in a rigorous, public and methodic way.

Fourth, when considering contemporary approaches such as interpretative phenomenological analysis it is clear that this problem is managed by simply asking people about their lives and organizing their answers into themes, completely sidestepping any tricky questions about the status of the mental or cognitive.

Fifth, if you interview people about their experience then what is the status of this interview talk? Given that much 'cognitive' language is orientated to action, how will those actions be suppressed for mere description when talking to a social researcher? These are generic issues with qualitative research interviews, but much exaggerated when the interviews are about 'experience' (inner life, interiority).

Ultimately, however, the success of either vision will depend on the success of its cumulative body of studies and, in this case, the way they can throw light on the issues that have been treated as the domain of psychology. James Cresswell has performed a useful service by offering a concrete illustration of how individual 'experience' can be identified from a research interview. It is an opportunity to clarify some of these issues.

Cresswell: Experience and 'Broader Social Discourses'

James Cresswell (in press) has developed an intriguing and ambitious paper that ranges over a series of important and fundamental issues in the analysis of discourse. He claims that discursive psychology is limited by its failure to address what he calls 'experience' and that conversation analysis is more powerful in its analytic capture of what he calls 'broader social discourses'. He suggests that the study of race and refugees will be enhanced by a modified form of discursive psychology which can capture things such as the

'immediate feeling of relief when two ex-patriots from the same country meet on foreign soil, an immediate revolt at a racist remark, or an immediate experiential commitment to an ethnic identity' (Cresswell, in press, ms. P. 3). An attractive feature of this paper is that it illustrates its argument with actual materials. It offers three alternative analyses of an interview conducted with a couple of 'Chinese origin' now living in Canada. One of these is described as a discursive psychological analysis, one as a conversation analytic analysis and one claims to show how 'experiences' can be identified from the interview. This latter analysis is supported by a reading of Bakhtin's work. Overall, Cresswell suggested that what he has produced is a 'more robust approach' that offers 'additional insights' (ms. P. 37).

There are fundamental problems with all three forms of analysis, and little space to explicate them. I will not attempt to correct the interpretation of Garfinkel or Bakhtin; however, the coverage of discursive psychology and conversation analysis has a number of problems and surprising omissions, some of which will be commented on. I argue that Cresswell's illustrative analyses of his interview extract capture neither contemporary discursive psychology nor conversation analysis; hopefully the reasons why will become clear as I address his analysis of 'experience'. I will focus on the core of Cresswell's critique, but I will note some critical points on the way to that core.

Cresswell suggests that discursive psychological work fails to focus on what he calls 'broader social discourses'. The precise nature of such discourses is not specified, but it is an odd complaint given that discursive psychology arose out of a tradition that used notions of interpretative repertoires, rhetorical commonplaces and ideological dilemmas in the analysis of racism (Billig, et al., 1988; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Guided by critical anti-racist thinking, for example, Wetherell and Potter (1992) did not focus on *minority* group members (as Cresswell does) but on the accounts of powerful *majority* group members.

The aim was to map the resources and practices through which inequalities were made either invisible or natural. Its project was to document the commonsense ideology through which racist social organizations were sustained. For that reason, its interviews were conducted with white (Pakeha) school teachers, social workers, politicians and professional people rather than Maori or Polynesian Islanders. Moreover, the analysis of interviews was backed up by analysis of newspaper and parliamentary materials. It specifically developed a critique of psychological work on prejudice that sees racism as a basically psychological problem, and identifies some of the ideological roles of the notion of individual psychological prejudice in accounts that sustain a racially organized status quo.

Even if individual experience were a coherent *conceptual* and *analytic* object , the sorts of arguments developed by Wetherell and Potter (1992) suggest important limits on the critical potential this as a research focus. This is particularly so when the participants are themselves minority group members who risk being socially disadvantaged through racism and then further victimized by having their thoughts and claims picked over by social researchers.

Contemporary discursive psychology shares a number of the concerns of this earlier work, but develops a particular focus on respecifying psychological matters as parts of interactional practices. One of the most central features here was a move away from working with the now all pervasive open ended interviews and concentrating instead on naturalistic materials. Cresswell retains a focus on interview material, but as is common with much of this work he does little to accommodate to its thoroughgoing institutional nature and the role of recruitment protocols and interviewer questions in flooding the interaction with social science agendas (Potter & Hepburn, 2005, 2012). Nor does he consider the increasing body of work on questions as social actions and they way they set up

constraints for their recipients, and how recipients resist those constraints (see, for example, Clayman & Heritage, 1992, and papers in Freed & Ehrlich, 2010).

It is worth spending some time focusing on Cresswell's interview to ground this debate. Cresswell uses the section below to illustrate how an interview can reveal the 'linguistically constituted phenomenological experience' (ms. P. 2) of the interviewee. The relevant part of the interview has been retranscribed to the standard Jeffersonian style appropriate for conversation analysis. Cresswell is to be complimented on making the original video available for inspection in this way.

James Cresswell interview

```
01    Jim:        yeah. ((looking at notes and table))

02                ↑Why do y'think it's important (0.4)

03                for: the Chinese way (.) to be passed o:n.

04                [((gaze to Linda, hand over mouth))

05                [          (1.5)

06    Linda:      °Hmm well° simply because (0.2) I grew up

07                i:n (0.2) uhm: (0.2) in thee (0.2) ch- Chinese

08                (.) culture. <[in the Chinese]community:.

09    Jim:                      [  ((nods))    ]

10                ((through fingers)) Mhm

11                (0.2)

12    Linda       'cause I: (1.0) I moved he:re:, (1.0) uhm

13                eighteen years ago,

14    Jim:        ((through fingers)) °Okay

15    Linda:      So I was already an adult. when I moved

16                her[e.

17    Jim:           [Mhm, ((through index finger, nodding))

18    Linda:      so the r- ↑id is↑ th-the root where y'came

19                from I think,=it [buil:d up.
```

```
20                           [((circles hand once))

21              (0.4)

22   Jim:       Mm.=

23   Linda:     =Deep. ((nodding to Jim))

24              (1.5)

25   Jim:       >I'm sorry.<=it's b-build up you said?=

26   Linda:     =Buil-Yeah:, it's'all:  (.) that's  where I

27              built myself (.) up from.=

28   Jim:       =Ohh: Okay ((nodding))=

29   Linda:     =An' it's the root.

30              (2.6)

31   Jim:       So kinda who you are:.=as- [as Chine:se:.]

32   Linda:                                [Yeah who I: Y]eah.

33   Linda:     Who I[ :   a ]:m, as: an- an where I got my

34   Jim:            [First.]

35   Linda:     education:_ an where I grew up,

36   Jim:       Mm

37   Linda:     i' seems i's a big par:t. I can't deny it.

38   Jim:       Right. ((nodding))

39              (0.2)

40   Jim:       .hhh  [((looks up to ceiling))]

41                   [         (1.0)          ]

42   Jim:       So does that imply that…((conts))
```

(Thanks to Alexa Hepburn for producing the new transcript – see Hepburn and
Bolden, in press for a full overview of Jeffersonian transcription
principles and symbols).

Let me start this commentary with two general observations.

The first focuses on the methodological procedures for dealing with interview

material. Cresswell starts his extract from the interview at a point where Jim is asking a

follow up question (lines 2-3). In so doing he partially obscures the role of the researcher in

setting up the issues being addressed in the topic initial question or questions (which have not been reproduced). In fact, by presenting reasonable transcript and at least part of the interviewer's talk Cresswell provides considerably more for the reader to work with than many published contemporary qualitative studies (see Silverman, 2009, on this). Nevertheless, omitting the topic initial question(s) prevents us assessing the adequacy of Jim's formulation of Linda's claim in lines 2-3 and also the precise significance of what the follow up question pursues.

The second general observation focuses on the action that Jim's follow up question is doing. We can see from line 2 that Jim's question calls for an account for Linda's claim. In mundane settings calling for account with a 'why' interrogative as we see here is often heard as challenging (Bolden & Robinson, 2011). That is, this is an environment where it is important to pay particularly close attention to the business done by the interviewer and its consequence for the unfolding interview. Note that this challenge is also in an environment where the relevant and highly salient category memberships of interviewer and interviewee are overlain by two further category memberships, at least one of which has been made relevant in the question in lines 2-3, and can be characterized as 'white Canadian' and 'Canadian of Chinese origins' (the precise category relevance will need more analytic work with more materials – see Kitzinger, 2008; Stokoe, in press. That is, race and ethnicity are potentially *doubly* salient with this question in ways that are not addressed by Cresswell.

Cresswell neither analyses nor theorizes the institutional nature of the material he is dealing with here, and we do not have good baseline evidence on how such interrogatives might be seen in research interviews. However, we can at least note that Jim's request for an account exposes Linda to some interactional risks. For example, if she says that the importance of the 'Chinese way' is because it is good, or rational, or successful it could be

heard as a form of self praise, something that interactants generally avoid (Pomerantz, 1978). Moreover, in terms of the category memberships that have been made salient through the design of questions, and are likely to have figured in the recruitment setup of the interview, Linda might be heard to be asserting the superiority of her 'Chinese way' over that of the category her interviewer is a member of. Perhaps unsurprisingly, her answer avoids such dangers by treating her stress on the 'Chinese way' as something which is either *rooted*, *built* or *deep* within her. These metaphors account for her stress on the Chinese way as something that does not require the kind of rational or calculated defence that might leave her asserting the superiority of Chinese over Canadian.

My aim in discussing the early part of the extract in this way is partly to offer an analysis that highlights some potential race and ethnicity relevance, but mainly to provide a context to the section of the interview that is key to Cresswell's claim to have used the interview to get at some separable thing which is Linda's *experience* of her Chinese roots. This is important because this has been chosen by Cresswell as a best illustration of his argument that the interview can be used to go beyond conversation analysis and discursive psychology to the linguistically constituted yet separable world of the phenomenological experience of the participant. If the analysis of his best case falls down then the argument for a new and more robust approach to experience that fills in putative gaps in discursive psychological work is surely cast into doubt.

Cresswell's Interview: Some sequential observations

One important feature of the section in which Cresswell claims to show how experience can be accessed analytically is a sequence involving conversational repairs. Schegloff (1992) has described repair as a set of conversational procedures for

accomplishing intersubjectivity. Cresswell is certainly noticing something of this kind in his

selection of his key example. He also notes that it 'allows the participants to move on'.

Repair interrupts the progressivity of conversation, and it is after repair is achieved that

progressivity can be resumed (Stivers & Robinson, 2006). However, we do not need to

move to a phenomenological realm supposedly existing behind the talk in the way that

Cresswell suggests; rather we can consider this as an unfolding repair sequence focused on

managing intersubjectivity as a practical problem, and displaying it, turn by turn in a way

that that is public and orientated to the conversational project at hand. Such sequences

suspend the onward progressivity of talk as the focus moves to sorting out trouble.

Jim initiates repair on line 25: `>I'm sorry.<=it's b-build up you said?=`. This

form of other initiated repair is highly conventional in its organization (Drew, 1997;

Schegloff, 2000). The 'I'm sorry' form may indicate that the speaker is taking some

responsibility for the trouble Robinson (2006); and by repeating 'build up' Jim targets these

words as the trouble source. Note that repair is not initiated in the first available slot – in

line 22 Jim has produced a continuer; that is, he has produced a turn that passes over the

opportunity to initiate repair (Schegloff, 2000). In doing so Jim has claimed (but not

displayed) understanding. Indeed, by initiating repair in the slot after Linda's line 25, and

targeting elements of what Linda said in 18-19, he has moved from claiming understanding

to claiming non-understanding. Linda responds to the repair initiation by starting what may

be a confirmatory repeat ('buil-) and then abandoning this for mere conformation ('yeah').

She then offers a revised version of what she said, thereby showing that she sees Jim as

having more than a hearing problem. Fixing a hearing problem would have just required a

clear repeat. Jim's news receipt (`Ohh:`) and the ok, combined with the nodding, are

sequence closing and again claim but do not display understanding. Despite the sequence

closing character of Jim's line 28 Linda follows it with an extension of her previous turn repeating 'the root' from line 18. Cresswell glosses what has happened here as 'Linda articulating an experience and thereby working at achieving it' (ms. 33). I suggest that we can see both parties using the normative resources of conversation to coordinate their understanding. We do not need to produce a Cartesian separation between talk and experience; language is the vehicle here.

Cresswell treats what comes next as a moment of communion between speakers, Jim articulating Linda's experience and Linda coming in with an early and therefore enthusiastic agreement. Note, however, that although his line 28 was sequence closing, his line 31 (after the notably long delay) is sequence expanding (see Bolden, 2006, on the use of 'so' for this job). In this environment '`So kinda who you are:.`' is a complete turn constructional unit and, despite its declarative syntax, is hearable as a question. As such it is not a turn designed for agreement or disagreement (enthusiastic or not), but designed for confirmation. That is, Jim is issuing a candidate understanding and Linda is confirming that understanding. At the point of overlap on 31 and 32 Linda is answering a question that she has been asked and Jim is extending his question with an increment. As is common in these situations, Linda drops out and recycles once Jim has recompleted.

The general point here is that the detailed organization of this interaction is explicable using the standard resources of conversation analysis, and we can see psychological matters as things that are attended to, managed, and formulated using these resources. Cresswell's chosen strong case does not force us away from this view; indeed, it provides an intricate example of how this can run off in a particular institutional environment. Claiming access to participants' experiences from this material would reflect a simple and unjustified dualism. To understand this interaction and how it works we need

to understand it from the point of view of the participants and how they are coordinating their understanding of each others' activities and claims.

The thrust of Cresswell's argument is that discursive psychology does not adequately consider experience and that something more is required to do so. However, this depends on a dualistic or cognitivist notion of experience, and a prioritizing of the supposed inner psychological over the public, practical and interactional. In contrast, discursive psychologists make two moves. First, experience is treated as a loose term that collects together knowledge, feelings, emotions, thoughts, understandings and other items from the psychological thesaurus. Second, the key focus is on how these things become live in interaction. In this sense, discursive psychology becomes an empirically grounded approach to considering experience as a matter for participants. Conversation analysis has identified many of the resources that people use for managing psychological or experiential matters. In the example above, we see the operation of procedures of repair at work and thereby the way these parties coordinate their actions and understandings of what is going on. I will end this discussion by considering a brief example from a project on crying and upset in everyday and institutional settings. This is offered as an example of how the kind of thing that is commonly glossed as experiential can be tackled.

Discursive Psychology, Crying and the Study of Experience

Traditional psychological work on crying started from a cognitivist picture of underlying emotions driving behaviour (see Hepburn & Potter, in press for a review). Crying is treated in such work as a unitary phenomenon which must be accessed by starting with participants' experiences or perceptions of crying. Experiences and perceptions are accessed by the standard psychological methods of questionnaires, interviews, experiments

or brain scans. In contrast, discursive psychological work focuses on crying and upset as

made up of a number of distinguishable elements and as things that are displayed and

practically managed in actual settings (Hepburn, 2004). Rather than focus on their role for

individuals the focus is on their interactional role. For example, upset has been studied in

calls to a child protection helpline in the UK. One of the interests here is in the way upset is

displayed by callers and receipted by call takers (Child Protection Officers), and the way

these things fit into the broader institutional projects of receiving and assessing reports of

child abuse that can provide information that can be used in a referral to Social Services.

In the following extract a father reports to the NSPCC receiving a phone call from his

son claiming his stepfather has attacked him. He says he has already called the police and is

now phoning the NSPCC to see if there is anything more he can do. The caller's crying

episode begins 15 seconds prior to this extract, when he begins to give details of his son's

injuries.

```
JK Distraught Dad
01  CPO:    An 'is head hit the wall.

02  Caller: .Hh °°Yhess°°

03          (0.5)

04  CPO:    °Tch°

05          (0.5)

06  CPO:    Okay take yer ti:me.

07  Caller: .Shih

08          (2.0)

09          >.hih .hih<

10          (0.4)

11  CPO:    D'you want- d'y'wann'ave [a break for a ] moment.=
```

```
12  Caller:                              [ Hhuhh >.hihh<]

13          =>hhuhh hhuhh<

14          (0.6)

15  Caller: .shih

16          (0.3)

17  Caller: °°k(hh)ay°°

18          (1.8)

19  Caller: .shih >hhuh hhuh[h]<

20  CPO:                     [S]'very har:d when

21       →  they're not there with you isn't it.=

22          and [you're-] (.) you're tal:kin about it.

23  Caller:    [>.hhih<]

24          (0.8)

25  Caller: >.Hhuh .HHuh<

26          (2.1)

27  Caller: .shih

28          (0.2)

29  Caller: °.shih° (.) °°(Need) hhelp(h)°°
```

The 'take-your-time' in line 6 is a regular and recognizably institutional feature of this type of interaction; it shows an orientation to interaction being disrupted by the upset state of the caller (Hepburn & Potter, 2007). The 'take-your-time' both explicitly recognizes and licences that disruption (e.g., the whispered delivery followed by gaps on 3 and 5). The CPO's turn on line 11 offers an upgraded and extended version of the 'take-your-time'. Again, this is responsive to the disruption of the Caller's talk with a wet sniff (line 7), more delay (lines 8 and 10) and two sobs (line 9). It is not until after further sobs and another sniff that the Caller is able to respond with a whispered confirmation (okay) which is then followed by further delay and sobbing.

At this point in the interaction something really interesting happens in relation to the discussion of 'experience' and how it should be treated. We can see the CPO making an interactional move that is highly psychologically invasive. She uses a construction that includes a formulation of the Caller's psychological state: '[S]'very har:d when they're not there with you' (lines 20-21). This describes the Caller's difficulties in dealing with the current situation: '[S]'very har:d', and it glosses what makes it so: 'when they're not there with you'. Note the scripted quality of 'they're' and 'you', indexing things known in common about parents and children, and things any parent would feel in this situation (Edwards, 1994). Such scripting is one part of managing the epistemic asymmetry between Caller's and CPO's access to, and rights to, the Caller's psychological state. The scripting makes the state somewhat more standardized and therefore available. Note also that this is a sympathetic account of, and for, the caller's crying episode; it treats it as understandable. It is therefore an affiliative turn, which is not typical in this institution where reports are being carefully tested. They need to be strong enough for hard-pressed Social Services to act on them. However, it is common in episodes of heightened emotion such as this, where it works to keep the Caller on the line. In the extreme case, if Callers are not kept on the line children may die.

There is another fascinating and recurrent feature of this interaction which relates to the status of psychology as a social object. After the CPO formulates the Caller's state they tag format it. In standard linguistic terms, the formulation is the declarative part of the tag question and it is followed by the interrogative part: 'isn't it'. The interrogative treats the Caller as able to confirm the CPO's formulation of their state. On the one hand, this manages the epistemic relationship between Caller and CPO by treating the Caller as the authority over their own psychological states. On the other, and ironically, it does this by a

construction that further builds the nature of the Caller's psychological state. This heightens the affiliative nature of CPO's turn as it provides an account for the Caller's upset, but the tag question reasserts the authority of the Caller over their own psychological state or circumstances.

There is a further interesting and recurrent feature of the turn in lines 20-22. After the interrogative the CPO adds further talk – 'and [you're-] (.) you're tal:kin about it.' (line 22). This has the effect of turning the tag question into a turn-medial interrogative. This happens regularly in crying sequences on the helpline (Hepburn & Potter, 2010). One role that the turn medial form of tag question may have is to make a response less immediately relevant (though again note the overlapping sniff on 23, that may indicate some preparation to talk). Softening the response requirement may be an aligning move where the Caller is displaying difficulty in responding. Secondly, the positioning of the interrogative may be important. The CPO's 'isn't it' is positioned after '[S]'very har:d when they're not there with you', that is, just after the generalised mental state formulation (rather than the further issue of 'talking about it'). It is at this point that its epistemic downgrading and indexing of the caller's primary rights to this knowledge is most interactionally pertinent.

Conclusion

Let me highlight some of the ways in which we worked with this material. First, we worked with actual interaction as it happened, captured digitally, rather than with a simulation or report of that interaction. As this is a phone call, using the audio put us in the same position as the interactants in terms of their access to one another. Second, to help us with analysis, and communication of that analysis, we used a careful form of transcription modified from Gail Jefferson's original (Hepburn, 2004). These modifications are designed

specifically to capture features of delivery that are treated by participants as relevant to, or diagnostic of, distress and upset (Hepburn & Bolden, in press). The transcript is designed to give us a better record of how this interaction will be understood by the participants. Increasingly those working with interaction have found that minor changes in pitch, prosody and timing are treated as highly psychologically diagnostic. Registering these things in transcript is ever more important. Third, we used the normative organization of interaction as revealed in contemporary conversation analysis to help us understand the systematic departures that the CPO is picking up on and occasion the 'take-your-times'. Crucially, the normative organization of talk is a resource that the CPO can draw on to to make judgements about the psychological state of the caller.

The general point of this illustration is to offer an alternative to Cresswell's argument about the proper way to analyse 'experience'. The analytic power of contemporary conversation analysis can be used in the service of a discursive approach to psychology. Such discursive psychology has provided an increasingly subtle account of human subjectivity (Edwards, 1997; 2007). Despite the burgeoning of supposed 'phenomenological' research it is not clear that any other perspective provides as nuanced an account of psychological matters as they are threaded through peoples' lives and provides a more systematic, rigorous and repeatable form of analysis. This is an approach that rejects dualism and cognitivism, and suggests such pictures of human psychology are both conceptually and analytically flawed (Potter & te Molder, 2005). Cresswell's argument reflects a common but unnecessary nostalgia for a more classic form of 'interiority'.

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