
A comparative study of the CCRT and cycles model methods using a session of psychotherapy

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GENERAL AIMS: The objective of this work is to relate the obtained results by using analysis in a session of Psychotherapy through two narrative analysis methodologies: Cycles Model (CM), and Core Conflictual Relationship Theme (CCRT).

THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS: In this research we combine two study methods that observe patient's narratives, the CCRT (*Luborsky, 1990) and the CM (*Mergenthaler, 1993).

The CCRT is an empirical research method that focuses on the narrative of the patient expressed in Relationship Episodes (RE). In this narrative W (subjects' wishes, needs and intentions); RO (other's responses to W) and RS (subject's responses to RO) are surveyed. The final aim is to arrive at de CCRT (Core Conflictual Relationship Theme) of each patient (i.e, his prevailing interactional pattern usually coinciding with his transference pattern).

Luborsky says "one index of change in dynamic therapy is the extent to which the maladaptive theme becomes less pervasive in the relationships of a patient by the end of treatment"[\[1\]](#).... "this change was related to the self reported change in symptoms and the clinician-rated health-sickness rating"[\[2\]](#)

On the other hand, in the Penn sample, Luborsky et.al, demonstrates that most patients need to increase their self-understanding (insight of their Core Conflictual

Relationship) to improve in psychotherapy. [\[3\]](#)

The Therapeutic Cycles Model is a method able to identify the presence of stylistic patterns in the discourse of the patient. These patterns detect and note the key moments and the Key sessions in the therapeutic process.

The patterns are a combination of the content analysis variables "emotion tone" and "abstraction" allowing a description of therapeutic cycles.

Mergenthaler says "successful patients differ from patients that do not change in a positive way or even worsen by having a higher percentage of the emotion-abstraction pattern D (connecting) (KEY MOMENT = INSIGHT)...Pattern D (connecting) will appear more frequently at the end of a successful treatment"[\[4\]](#) "Defense is strongly connected to abstraction"[\[5\]](#)

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS: The different RE's of one patient were analyzed. The resulting fragmentation (including the blanks provoked by the absence of episodes of the CCRT classification) was matched with the 150 wordblocks fragmentation made by the Cycles Model. The content of these two analysis technics was compared. The aim was to observe if the analysis of these different technics has some degree of relationship. Although the fact that the CCRT doesn't contemplate the therapist speech, the analysis of this speech was made in search of the characteristics of the Therapist Speech, when it provoked a change into the patient pattern.

The next table shows in standard way de structure of the CCRT with the addition of the C.M. components the block numbers and the phases. The use of colors in this table is to be able to see how the patterns and ERO'S match between them.

Here is comparative table showing the CCRT and CM elements (with one color to each phase of the

CM) and all the contents of the CCRT.

**CCRT SCORESHEET
AND EMOTION-ABSTRACTION PATTERNS
-Abstract-**

Patient: Alfredo **Date:** December 1996

Judges: CS., CMLM. **Sesión N° 6 date:** 5/01/1993

LB., SK.

		CCRT		Block number	CM Pattern
E.R.	Wish, need or intention	R.O.	R.S.		
# 1 girlfriend	(w) to be in control (21) 1 to know what do I laugh about (21) 1	(-) girlfriend misunderstand him (2) 5 (-) girlfriend gets angry (4) 5	(-) I laugh (13) 6 (-) I laugh when I'm laughing(13) 6 (-) My reaction disturbs me (2) 2 (-) I don't know what do I laugh about (2) 2	1	Connecting
# 1 girl- friend (cont.)			(-) When I argue with my girlfriend I laugh and I can't stop it (13) 6 (-) Time ago I use to get angry (13) 6	2 3	
# 2 father	(w) his father carry out his obligation (13) 3 (w) to understand his father (4) 5	(-) his father forgot his obligation (19) 3 (+) His father explains himself (11) 8 (+) It wasn't so serious (11) 8	(-) Recriminate my father (21) 7 (+) I lament (1) 1 (+) I relief(1) 1	4	
# 3 mother	(w) his mother carry out his obligation (13) 3	(-) his mother forgot her obligation (19) 3 (+) mother explains herself (11) 8 (?) mother was surprised (11) 8	(-) Recriminate my mother (21) 7 (?) Inform my mother (7)1	5 6	Reflecting
# 4 pa- rents	(w) He want to understand (4) 5 (w) See his parents to make a fool of (16) 2 parents being alone there (16) 2 to worry because other people doesn't come (16) 2 To avoid seeing his parents arguing(14) 4	(-) parents don't carry out their obligation (19) 3 (-) parents are wrong (19) 3	(?) I found funny the story (7) 1 (+)I try to understand (1)1 (-) I laugh at this story (21) 7 (+) I would enjoy it (21) 7	7	

# 5 lawyers	(w) to protect his father (12) 8	(-) lawyers attack his father (19) 3 (-) Lawyers aren't trustworthy (19) 3	(+) I defend my father (1) 1 (+) Justify my father (1) 1	8	
CCRT					CM
E.R.	Wish, need or intention	R.O	R.S.	Block number	Pattern
# 6 mother	(w) His friend not to be use by his mother (3) 6 to be requesting (3) 6 (w) his mother request him (3) 6 People he loves to be protected by him (12) 8 His parents take charge of situation (3) 6 (w) to understand (4) 5	(-) His friend is used by his mother (2) 5	(+) I got very angry (21) 7 (-) There are some things that I don't understand (2) 2	9 10 11	Relaxing
# 7 mother	To be respect by his mother (3) 6 Not to be hurt by his mother (14) 4	(-) They deprived him of attention (6) 5 (-) Mother deprived him of attention (6) 5 (-) Mother isn't trustworthy (19) 3 (+)Mother is trustworthy (11) 8 (-) Mother pretends she agree (8) 4	(+) I ask my mother (7) 1 (+) I ask my mother not to bother my friend (7) 1 (+) I complain about my meddling mother (7) 1	12 13	Experiencing
# 7 mother (cont.)		(-) Mother investigate at the back (8) 4			
# 8 conflictive group	His mother not to be contradictory (14) 4	(-) Mother lies (19) 3 (?) Mother doesn't know where he is (19) 3	(+) I complain about the contradictory answer of my mother (21) 7	14	Relaxing
# 8 (cont.)	The lawyers to be more specific (14) 4		(+) I complain about the lawyers (21) 7	15	Reflecting
#8 (cont.)	Justify parents (4) 5			16 17	Relaxing
# 10 self	Stop suffering (14) 4		(-) It hurts me very much (22) 7 (+) I try to get off pain (22) 7 (-) I can't find relieve (22) 7	18 19	Connecting

			(-) It hurts me (22) 7 (+) I try to avoid the subject (22) 7 (-) I remember my father (23)7 (-) I remember my parents being together (23)7		
# 11 parents	(w) To comfort his father (12) 8 (w) To know why parents cry (4) 5	(+) His father read him the letter for the judge (11) 8 (-) Father cry likes a child (11) 8 (+) Father calms down (11) 8 (-) His mother speaks about his father and cry (11) 8	(+) I comfort my father and I cry (9) 1 (-) I don't know why my parents cry (2) 2	20 21	
#11 parents (cont.)	(w) Parents don't cry (13) 3		(-) I feel bad because my parents cry (22) 7	22	Experiencing
				23	Connecting
				24	Reflecting
		CCRT			CM
E.R.	Wish, need or intention	R.O.	R.S.	Block number	Pattern
# 14 family (past)	(w) Family wouldn't change (11) 5 He wants his daddy at home (11) 5 (w) He wants his house to be a home again (11) 5	(+) The family used to enjoy music (11) 8 (-) The family don't enjoy music any more (12) 5	(+) I miss homelife(23) 7 (+) I miss my daddy (23) 7 (?) I don't stay home (20) 7 (+) I miss so much (23) 7 (?) I think problems will not solve with house moving (20) 7	25 26	Reflecting
# 15 father	(w) Things wouldn't change (14) 4		(-) I feel daddy didn't make a good change (20) 7 (-) I feel daddy can't move back (20) 7	27 28	Relaxing
# 15 father (cont.)	(w) He wants his daddy at home (11) 5 (w) To be nearer from his father (11) 5 (w) To feel comfortable at his father's home (3) 6	(-) His father replaces him for a woman (8) 4	(-) I cry (22) 7 (-) I feel I have half a father (20) 7 (-) I have not private life in my daddy's house (20) 7		

# 16 Self	He wants his father's wife far from him (18) 2 (w) He doesn't want to be friendly with her(10) 4	(+) I feel she is guilty (21) 7 (+) I don't want my father's wife take advantage (11) 4 (+) I don't want to be friendly with her (11) 4 (+) I dislike exploitation people (21) 7 (+) I feel exploitation my father's wife (21) 7 (+) I reflect about it (2) 2	29 30 31	Experiencing
# 16 Self (cont.)	(w) She should ask him first (18) 2	(+) I don't want my father's wife try to be near (21) 7 (+) I feel my father's wife took me out my father (24) 7	32 33	Connecting
# 18 father's wife (past)	Don't bother him (10) 4	(+)His father's wife interrogate him (7) 5 (+) His father's wife had to shut her mouth (16) 3	34 35	Reflecting Relaxing

Nß	Cluster	Wishes	Frequency
4,11	5	To be close and accepting	7
10, 14	4	To be distant and avoid conflicts	7
3	6	To be loved and understood	3
12	8	To achieve and help others	3
13	3	To be controlled, hurt, and not responsible	3
16,18	2	To oppose, hurt and control others	3
21	1	To assert self and be independent	1

Nß	Cluster	RO	Frequency
16,19	3	Upset	7
2.4.6.7	5	Rejecting and opposing	6
1, 3, 11	8	Understanding	5
8	4	Bad	2

Nß	Cluster	RS	Frequency
20,21, 22,23, 24	7	Disappointed and depressed	15
1,7,9	1	Helpful	7
2	2	Unreceptive	4
13	6	Helpless	1

CCRT#

"I want to be closed and accepting, other upset me and I'm disappointed and depressed"

PRELIMINARY RESULTS AND COMMENTS: This pilot study doesn't have a representative character. The results lead to a comparative investigation with multiple cases. Some of the observed issues are:

The therapist's interventions previous to the Keymoment include the patient's CCRT elements. This fact could indicate a connecting phase provoked by the therapist's intervention. Previous to the RE N.10 (word block. 18 and 19) it's possible to observe within the therapist speech : a) A predominant patient W (to be close to others, Cluster 5). b) A predominant patient RO (upset, hurt, angry, CL 3) c) A predominant patient RS, when the therapist says "you are very angry and in pain" (disappointed and depressed, cl7). During the Key moment, the patient expresses his W by saying "pain, go away" and his RS is to express his pain, feel neglected by his parents and confront his parent's divorce alone.

Regarding the analyst's interpretation, two Freudian observations studied in the Penn sample, related de CCRT with therapist's interpretations: "(15) Interpretation hanges the expression of the pattern; (16) Insight into the transference pattern can benefit the patient"[\[6\]](#) "Most striking is the fact that the accuracy on the wish plus response from other scale is the best predictor of outcome"[\[7\]](#) "Accuracy of interpretations... represents the degree of congruence between the contents of the therapist's interpretations and the contents of a patient's CCRT"[\[8\]](#).

Another observation shows an explanation in a relaxing pattern after a therapist's expansion question made by a high level of empathy. In those ERO's it's interesting to observe the presence of the nuclear elements of the patient's CCRT, this could indicate a relaxing phase hold by an accompaniment feeling, more than an evasive action of the conflict situation.

The block one has a Key moment with a W a RO and a RS, which, however are not charactersitics of the patient's CCRT. For this reason we consider this as a special connecting. Their the patient, focuses and describe his problems and his expectations of understanding, but without going through the defense level. Here the W is "to be in control" (ST 21, CL.1), the RO is "The other are angry" (St. 4, Cl. 5), and the RS is "he feels out of control and not selfunderstood " (ST. 13 Cl. 6 , ST. 3, CL. 2).

New projects are being developing as a result of this first explorative study. These new studies use the preliminary results as hypotheses to be corroborated.

One of the projects is a comparative study of the two technics using 16 single sessions from different non diagnosed Borderline of psychotic patients. The second one is the study of six psychoanalytic treatments, trying to trace in a longitudinal way the results obtained in the present research.

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