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**Development of an Information Sheet Providing Rapport Advice for Interpreters in  
Police Interviews**

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### Professional Biographies

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### Abstract

The present paper reports the development of an information sheet designed to aid interpreters in police interviews in recognizing, conveying and inadvertently obstructing rapport-building efforts by police interviewers. The contents of this sheet were informed by past research defining rapport, and rapport uses in police interviews. We used a mixed experimental design to test the information sheet. One group (Intervention,  $n = 35$ ) was randomly assigned to read an information sheet before responding to short vignettes of police interviewing foreign non-English speaking suspects about international crimes, while another (Control) group ( $n = 37$ ) simply responded to the vignettes. Perceptions of rapport cues by the intervention group exceeded that of the control group. However, the groups performed equally well at identifying appropriate methods to convey/avoid obstructing rapport. Feedback from the intervention group on the helpfulness of the information sheet was largely positive. The findings were used to improve the information sheet which can be used to alert interpreters to the importance of rapport in suspect interviews.

**Keywords:** Police interview; Investigative interview; Interrogation; Interpreter; Rapport; Verbal and nonverbal behavior

## Introduction

In an increasingly multicultural world, a significant proportion of suspects interviewed by police are non-native speakers of the language used by a criminal justice system, requiring the use of interpreters (Gallai, 2013; Nakane, 2014). For instance, interpreters are often critical when investigating crimes that cross borders (e.g., drug and people trafficking, terrorism, fraud and forgery), and crimes in regions with large non-native language speaking immigrant populations. Statements obtained from a suspect in a police investigative interview have significant evidential consequences in shaping the outcomes of the case (Collins et al., 2005; Evans & Webb, 1993; Fisher et al., 1987).

Techniques that facilitate the interview process are important to research. Interpreting scholars (Mulayim et al., 2014; Nakane, 2014) agree that rapport-building is one of the most important interviewing techniques commonly applied in police interviews. Similarly, expert police interviewers also maintain that rapport building is best practice (Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014). Rapport-building techniques can be used to secure cooperation from interviewees, gather as much reliable information as possible, and enable a “smooth, positive interpersonal interaction” between police interviewers and interviewees (Abbe & Brandon, 2013, 2014, p. 208).

However, the presence of an interpreter changes the dynamics of the interaction in a police interview due to its tripartite nature (Nakane, 2014). Unfortunately, legal interpreters are rarely trained to attend to rapport-building efforts. Some examples of the ways in which an interpreter who is unaware of rapport-building strategies can inadvertently interfere with the police interviewer’s goals include: providing explanations, advice or information; giving any instruction that is not part of the linguistic transfer process; taking control of the interview in another way; providing their opinion; unjustified omissions or addition of information; distorting meaning; and allowing their personal views to affect interpreting (Lai

& Mulayim, 2014). The present study considers whether an information sheet on the topic of rapport in the context of a police interview will prompt people to consider the verbal and nonverbal rapport-building techniques that may be used in police interviews.

## **Literature Review**

### **Rapport**

Rapport has been described by forensic psychologists as an elusive concept, especially insofar as objective behavioral nonverbal attributes are concerned (Alison et al., 2013). One definition used in past policing research distinguishes three behavioral (*nonverbal*) components of rapport i.e., mutual attention, positivity and coordination (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). Mutual attention refers to “spatial configurations and bodily postures that provide and signal communication accessibility” (p. 290; e.g., nodding, changing behavior in response to what is said, orienting towards the other person). Positivity refers to “mutual friendliness and caring” (p. 286) such as “smiling, head nodding” (p. 290) and gentle tone of voice. Finally, coordination refers to patterns of reciprocal responses between individuals that may reflect synchrony, complementarity, and “harmony” (p. 288) or accommodation, and is a form of shared understanding (e.g., “postural mirroring”; p. 290), gestures and speech rate.

*Verbal* rapport-building techniques include using preferred forms of address, paraphrasing, small talk, colloquialisms, positive language, and self-disclosure. In particular, self-disclosure can increase feelings of positivity in an interaction, make the encounter more personal, and increase the amount of information remembered about an event (Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). Disclosing intimate information also increases mutual liking (Collins & Miller, 1994), and can smooth the path for discussion of the suspect’s guilt in interrogation contexts (Kidwell & Martinez, 2010). Research in a variety of domains has shown that the use of these nonverbal techniques can build rapport between the parties

(Gremner & Gwinner, 2008; Nadler, 2004) and lead to positive outcomes for the users (Nadler, 2004; Royce, 2013; van Baaren et al., 2003).

### **Rapport in Police Interviews**

A growing body of empirical research has addressed techniques that are effective for building rapport in investigative interviews (e.g., Alison et al., 2013; Collins et al., 2005; Goodman-Delahunty & Howes, 2016; Kelly et al., 2013; Kelly et al., 2015). Verbal and nonverbal techniques may be used to build rapport and trust between the interviewer and interviewee in this context. The main goal of rapport-building efforts in investigative interviews is to elicit as much accurate information as possible using as little coercion as possible (Cotterill, 2000; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2013).

The effectiveness of rapport-building techniques in facilitating communication and obtaining reliable and accurate information in police interviews has been demonstrated empirically in both laboratory and field studies (Alison et al., 2013; Goodman-Delahunty, 2015; Goodman-Delahunty & Howes, 2016; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2013; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2014). For instance, interviewers using nonverbal rapport-building techniques in mock interviews (e.g., gentle tone, relaxed posture, a friendly manner, and smiling), elicited more correct information from interviewees about a dramatic event they had witnessed than interviewers who behaved in an abrupt or neutral manner (Collins et al., 2002). Rapport-building techniques (e.g., interviewer self-disclosure) used by interviewers also reduced susceptibility to misinformation and increased recall of mock-crime videos (Kieckhafer et al., 2013; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). Rapport-based interview methods (e.g., cooperative, helpful, friendly manner, expressing a positive attitude, showing personal interest, creating a personal conversation, smiling, nodding and making eye contact) led to an increase in reported accurate information, which persisted six months after exposure to the information (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014).

### **Rapport in Interpreter-Mediated Interactions**

Research on rapport in investigative interviews often focuses on building and maintaining rapport in dyads i.e., between a suspect and police interviewer (Collins et al., 2002; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). Thus, little is known about how rapport between the suspect and police interviewer is affected by the presence of interpreters who mediate communication (Abbe & Brandon, 2014). In most police interviews, interpreters use the consecutive rather than the simultaneous mode of interpretation (Russell, 2002).

In one study of 12 interpreters who consecutively translated narrative interview responses to eight open-ended questions in a simulated job interview, rapport was manipulated verbally and uni-directionally in the form of a personal disclosure to the interviewee by the interviewer. Rapport was measured uni-directionally by mean adjectival ratings provided by interviewees of the interviewer, i.e., the extent to which the interviewer appeared bored, smooth, positive, satisfied, awkward, engrossed, involved, friendly, and active (Ewens et al., 2014). This non-interactive rapport measure was the manipulation check measure used in a prior study by Vallano & Schreiber Compo (2011). Since the rapport manipulation by Ewens et al. incorporated no nonverbal rapport cues and the measurement of rapport was not interactional, it is perhaps unsurprising that no effects were found of the interpreter's presence on rapport in that study.

Interpreters may unwittingly enhance the style of the original utterance. This may be done in several ways, for instance, by increasing its coherence through omission of powerless features (including hedges "I think," "it seemed like," "sort of;" hesitations "uhm," "er;" overpoliteness "sir" "please;" by using adverbial intensifiers (e.g., "surely," "very;" Conley et al., 1978; Loftus & Goodman 1984); by adding politeness markers (Berk-Seligson, 1990/2002; Hale, 2004); and by insertion of powerless features (Mizuno & Akar 2012; Mizuno, Nakamura, & Kawahara, 2013).



An analysis of one police interview in which Russian sailors were questioned about a murder on a docked ship in the UK revealed that the interpreter edited or deleted utterances that were important for rapport-building. For example, colloquialisms, linguistic hedges and diminutives were deleted or changed, and the addition of particles, polite forms and stylistic shifts in the rendered statements meant that these witnesses were inaccurately represented to the police interviewer (Krouglov, 1999). These findings led interpreting scholars to express concern over the ability of interpreters to accurately portray the nonverbal pragmatic or prosodic force in communications between police interview participants (Hale, 2007), but to date, little research on interpreter-mediated police interviews has examined rapport.

While few studies of interpreter-mediated police interviews have examined rapport, this topic has been considered in the context of medical patient-provider interviews (Van de Poel et al., 2013) including those mediated by interpreters. For instance, a review of nine healthcare studies of interpreter use examined nonverbal and verbal concomitants of rapport (Fernandez, 2010). Results showed that interpreters focused primarily on conveying the speech content and that rapport interpretation was generally neglected or omitted. Statements intended to build rapport were edited or converted to directive, authoritative statements. Overall, interpreting had a negative impact in patient-provider rapport. Rapport interpretation was perceived as problematic because of potential ambiguity as to whether the source was the speaker or interpreter, and raised ethical dilemmas for interpreters trained to be ‘neutral’ (Knapp & Hall, 2007). As a consequence, recommendations were made to include training in handling verbal and nonverbal rapport in interpreter training, e.g., to increase awareness of communication goals such as rapport-building, and to increase awareness of the nonverbal dimensions of relationships in medical interviews (Fernandez, 2010).

In sum, verbal and nonverbal rapport-building techniques may be prevalent in police interviews with which legal interpreters should be familiar. Table 1 summarizes some of

these rapport-building techniques. In the present paper, we develop an information sheet that may prompt interpreters in the context of police interviews to consider the importance of recognizing, conveying and avoiding inadvertent obstruction of verbal and nonverbal rapport-building techniques that may be prevalent in police interviews.

#### TABLE 1 HERE

The present study tested an information sheet designed to help interpreters in police interviews to recognize, convey and avoid inadvertently obstructing rapport-building efforts between police and suspects. Specifically, we examined whether participants who received the information sheet exceeded the control group who do not receive the information sheet at (1) perceiving the level of *rapport* between the interviewer and interviewee; (2) *recognizing* verbal and nonverbal rapport cues; and (3) *conveying* (and not inadvertently obstructing) rapport-building efforts. We conducted an experiment, as described below, to compare the effects of the information sheet.

### Method

#### Design

We used a mixed experimental design. Group (information sheet v. none) was the between-subjects variable, and police interview vignette was the within-subjects variable.

#### Participants

Participants were university students and staff who volunteered to participate in the study without financial incentive. They were approached by one of two research assistants on the university campus (e.g., library, canteen, etc.) and introduced to the study. Those who volunteered to participate were assigned to experimental (hereafter called ‘intervention group’) and control conditions in an alternate order. The total sample size was 77. An a priori statistical power analysis indicated the required sample size for a one-tailed, independent samples *t*-test with an alpha level of .05 to detect a medium-sized effect ( $d = .50$ ) was 35

participants in the experimental and control conditions, respectively ( $N = 70$ ). There were 35 participants in the intervention group and 37 in the control group.

Thirty-nine percent of the sample was male. The mean age was 23.99 years (range = 19- 49). Fifty-two percent of the participants described themselves as non-White. Sixty-five percent were native English speakers, and 68.8% reported that they were fluent in more than one language. Just over a third of the sample (36.4%) reported some experience acting as an interpreter,<sup>1</sup> and just over a quarter (27.3%) said they had been interviewed by the police.

### **Stimulus Materials and Dependent Measures**

An information sheet for interpreters was developed, based on the aforementioned literature (see also Table 1). It defined rapport and explained why rapport is important in police interviews. It listed examples of verbal and nonverbal rapport-building techniques often encountered in a police interview, and provided tips for interpreters on how to recognize and convey rapport, as well as avoid inadvertently obstructing rapport. Finally, the information sheet emphasized the importance of cultural differences in rapport cues and suggested that interpreters convey these differences when aware of them.<sup>2</sup>

Participants read and responded to written vignettes depicting police interviews of non-English speaking male suspects. Each vignette described eight verbal exchanges between a police interviewer and a suspect, in which the police officer delivered the caution and allegations against the suspect, followed by suspect denial. The officer then presented some aspects of the case against the suspect, and the suspect provided his own account. The officer asked the suspect a final question to which the suspect responded. The verbal and nonverbal

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<sup>1</sup> Interpreting experience was statistically independent of the experimental and control conditions,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.94$ ,  $p = .162$ .

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of verbal [and nonverbal] rapport cues is not universal; but varies according to culture and language (Rivera & Ward, 2007; Sanchez-Burks et al., 2009; see also Berry, 1994). The information sheet highlighted this issue because interpreters may be uncomfortable giving advice or clarifying cultural differences for fear of stereotyping (Hale, 2013) or of compromising their neutrality (Knapp & Hall, 2007).

rapport cues included in the vignettes were those mentioned in the information sheet and were initiated by both the officer and the suspect.

The questionnaire elicited responses in relation to the vignettes, and comprised four sections, one of which applied only to the intervention group (see Appendix A for relevant excerpts of the questionnaire; a full copy is available from the first author upon request). Section One assessed whether objective 1 of the information sheet (*Help interpreters to recognize rapport-building efforts between the interviewer and interviewee in police interviews*) was fulfilled. This was assessed via four vignettes as summarized below (see also Appendix A).

Vignette 1 (*human trafficking*) included no mention of any rapport cues specified in the information sheet. Vignette 2 (*smuggling art*; see Appendix A) included two verbal and two nonverbal rapport cues (nonverbal: orienting towards each other and gentle tone, verbal: colloquial language and self-disclosure), Vignette 3 (*drug trafficking*) included four verbal rapport cues (fillers, signaling paying attention, small talk and self-disclosure), and Vignette 4 (*money laundering*) included four nonverbal rapport cues (showing concern, gentle tone, relaxed posture and signaling attention). All rapport cues described in Vignettes 2- 4 were specified in the information sheet.

After reading each vignette in Section One of the questionnaire, participants responded to five questions on 11-point scales anchored at each end (e.g., ‘none at all’ to ‘a lot’): “Overall, what was the level of rapport between the officer and the suspect?” “Overall, how easy/smooth was the interaction between the officer and the suspect?” “Overall, how much do you think the parties like each other?” “Overall, how much were the officer and suspect paying attention to each other?” “Overall, to what extent do you think the parties are cooperating with each other?”

Section Two of the questionnaire assessed whether objectives 2 and 3 of the information sheet were achieved (objective 2: *Help interpreters to convey rapport-building efforts between the interviewer and interviewee in police interviews*, and objective 3: *Help interpreters avoid inadvertently obstructing rapport-building in police interviews*). Five different vignettes tested this objective as summarized below (see also Appendix A).

Vignettes 1 (*producing drugs*) and 2 (*fake credit card*) included four nonverbal rapport cues (Vignette 1: orienting toward each other, not interrupting, showing concern, gentle tone, and Vignette 2: relaxed posture, matching posture, gentle tone, changing behavior in response to situation). Vignettes 3 (*terrorism*) and 4 (*forging passports*) included four verbal rapport cues (Vignette 3: linguistic filler, self-disclosure, repetition, positive language, and Vignette 4: small talk, colloquial language, open-ended question, linguistic hedge). Vignette 5 (*human trafficking*; see Appendix A) included two verbal and two nonverbal rapport cues (verbal: preferred form of address, self-disclosure, and nonverbal: showing concern, changing behavior in response to a situation).

After reading each vignette in Section Two, participants imagined they were interpreting the exchange between the two parties, and indicated how they would respond to the vignette. Participants responded to four closed-ended questions specific to each vignette. These had the same sentence stem i.e., “How appropriate is it for the interpreter to....”, but the ending referred to the particular verbal and nonverbal rapport cues presented in that vignette (e.g., in Vignette 4 one of the questions was “How appropriate is it for the interpreter to recognize and convey small talk?” because this vignette mentioned the use of small talk by the interviewer). Participants rated the appropriateness of different interpreter responses on 11-point scales (0 = ‘very inappropriate’ to 10 = ‘very appropriate’). Two of the four closed-ended items were negatively worded and thus were reverse coded for analysis.

Section Three, which was administered only to the intervention group, assessed the usability of the information sheet. Participants responded to the following three questions on 11-point scales, anchored at each end: “How easy or difficult was the wording/language in it to understand?” (from ‘very easy to ‘very difficult). “Was the information sheet too short or too long?” (from ‘too long’ to ‘too short’). “Were the amount of words and pictures appropriate?” (from ‘too many words’ to ‘too many pictures’).

Finally, Section Four of the questionnaire elicited participants’ basic demographic data: age, gender, ethnicity, education level, work experience, bilingual proficiency, native language, interpreting experience, and if they had ever been interviewed by the police.

### **Procedure**

Data were collected individually. After reading about the study and signing the consent form, participants in the intervention group were given the information sheet to read. All participants (in the intervention and control groups) completed the questionnaire. Participants in the intervention group had access to the information sheet throughout data collection. The order of the vignettes in each section of the questionnaire was randomized across participants to eliminate any order effects by participants who responded to the vignettes presented in the same order. Participation took approximately 20-30 minutes and no time limit was imposed on participants.

## **Results**

### **Perceiving Rapport**

Five items assessed participants’ ability to identify the level of rapport between the interviewer and interviewee in each of the four vignettes in Section One of the questionnaire. Reliability analysis demonstrated that these items measured the same construct, with an internal consistency of  $\alpha = .88$ . Therefore, responses to the items were averaged yielding one

overall perceived rapport score per vignette. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of the overall perceived rapport score by vignette.

#### TABLE 2 HERE

A repeated measures ANOVA was computed with group (intervention v. control) as the between-subjects factor and vignette (no rapport, verbal rapport, nonverbal rapport, and verbal and nonverbal rapport) as the within-subjects factor. The interaction effect of group x vignette was not statistically significant,  $F(3, 210) = 2.11, p = .100, \eta_p^2 = .029$ . However, as expected, a significant main effect emerged of group on perceived rapport,  $F(1, 70) = 3.24, p = .038, \eta_p^2 = .044$ . The intervention group perceived more rapport on average across all four vignettes (see Table 2).

There was also a significant main effect of vignette on perceived level of rapport,  $F(3, 210) = 50.54, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .42$ . Paired-sample *t*-tests were computed to explore this effect. These tests compared the responses of both groups of participants to the vignette with no explicit mention of rapport cues against the vignettes containing verbal cues only, nonverbal cues only, and both verbal and nonverbal cues. Compared to the vignette containing no explicit mention of rapport cues, participants perceived significantly greater rapport on average in the vignette with both verbal and nonverbal rapport cues,  $t(71) = 2.50, p = .008, d = .32$ .<sup>3</sup> The difference was in the opposite direction when compared against the vignette containing verbal cues only,  $t(71) = 9.42, p < .001, d = -1.24$ . Finally, no statistically significant difference emerged when comparing against the vignette containing nonverbal cues only,  $t(71) = 1.59, p = .058, d = -0.21$ .

### **Recognizing and Conveying Rapport-Building Cues**

In Section Two of the questionnaire, four closed-ended items assessed participants' ability to judge the appropriateness of interpreter responses to rapport-building efforts in the

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<sup>3</sup> All effect sizes were computed using the following online calculator: <http://www.uccs.edu/~lbecker/>

communication between interviewer and interviewee. Since rapport-building cues were specific to each vignette, responses to the four closed-ended items per vignette were aggregated, and separate independent-samples *t*-tests conducted for each vignette to examine differences between the intervention and control groups. Table 3 presents means and standard deviations of the aggregated responses for each vignette by group.

#### TABLE 3 HERE

There was no statistically significant difference between the intervention and control groups in the identification of the appropriate interpreter responses for either of the vignettes containing verbal rapport cues (terrorism:  $t[70] = -.27, p = .395, d = -.06$  and forging passports:  $t[70] = .81, p = .212, d = .19$ ). Similarly, there was no significant difference between the intervention and control groups in identifying appropriate interpreter responses for the two vignettes containing nonverbal rapport cues (producing drugs:  $t[68] = .90, p = .185, d = .22$  and fake credit card:  $t[70] = .47, p = .319, d = .11$ ). Finally, there was no significant difference between the identification by intervention and control groups of appropriate interpreter responses in the human trafficking vignette that included both verbal and nonverbal rapport cues,  $t(70) = .19, p = .426, d = .05$ .

#### **Feedback on Information Sheet**

Participants in the intervention group provided feedback on the information sheet. On average participants thought the language and wording was quite easy to understand ( $M = 7.66, SD = 1.97$ ), that the length was satisfactory ( $M = 5.80, SD = 1.95$ ), and the word - picture ratio was satisfactory ( $M = 5.68, SD = 1.70$ ).

#### **Discussion**

Rapport-building techniques play a key role in investigative interviewing. Although there is a growing body of research on interpreter-mediated verbal and nonverbal rapport, little is known about how rapport is affected by the presence of an interpreter in police



interviews. The fact that legal interpreters are not routinely trained in attending to rapport-building techniques increases the risk of a miscarriage of justice in such cases.

In the present paper, we developed an information sheet designed to help interpreters in police interviews to recognize, convey and avoid inadvertently obstructing rapport-building efforts between police and suspects. The content of the information sheet was informed by a review of the extant research on defining rapport, rapport in police interviews, and interpreters and rapport. We examined the potential usefulness of the information sheet using a rigorous experimental design in which participants were randomly assigned to receive either this intervention or not, before responding to police interview vignettes that contained verbal and nonverbal rapport-building techniques. Multiple vignettes were used to depict a wide-range of examples of verbal and nonverbal rapport cues.

Several findings emerged regarding the information sheet. First, the information sheet was successful in encouraging participants who received it to consider and perceive verbal and nonverbal rapport cues. Thus, the first objective of the information sheet, namely to assist people to perceive the level of *rapport* between the interviewer and interviewee, was fulfilled.

Second, with or without the information sheet, participants perceived significantly greater rapport in the vignette in which both verbal and nonverbal rapport cues were present compared to the vignette in which there was no explicit mention of rapport cues. However, this was not the case for the vignettes when only verbal or nonverbal cues were present. This finding suggests that when a combination of verbal and nonverbal rapport cues are used, their salience and perceptibility is enhanced compared to when either type of rapport cue is used on its own.

Third, the information sheet was not particularly effective in helping participants who received it to judge the appropriateness of interpreter responses to rapport-building efforts in

the communication between interviewer and interviewee during a police interview.

Therefore, the information sheet needs to be strengthened so that it is able to fulfil the objective of increasing people's awareness of rapport-building strategies.

Finally, the intervention group reported that the information sheet was fairly easy to understand, that its length was suitable, and the text-to-picture ratio appropriate.

### **Revision of the Rapport Information Sheet**

Based on the findings of the present research, several changes were made to the information sheet to make the contents clearer, easier to understand, and more salient and memorable. In order to clarify the 'take home message' in the information sheet we added a short paragraph to explain the importance of recognizing, conveying and avoiding obstructing rapport-building efforts in police interviews. In addition, a sentence was inserted on the goals of reading the information sheet (i.e., "After reading this leaflet you should be able to"). The heading 'Objective' was also replaced with 'Recognize', 'Convey' and 'Avoid Obstructing' to highlight these behaviours. On the second page of the information sheet, the heading 'Rapport is important because' was replaced with 'Scientific research has shown that rapport is important because', in order to emphasize the importance of rapport-building in police interviews and the persuasive force of the message. The details of types of verbal and nonverbal rapport-building strategies were bullet-pointed to make the information more accessible and readable. Similarly, the section of the information sheet providing an example of a police interview was bullet-pointed and shortened for greater clarity. Finally, the layout of the information sheet, font, and font size were changed to make the information more visually appealing and clearer.

The final version of the information sheet is presented in Appendix B. This version of the information sheet is currently being tested in a live simulated police interview study with

Spanish-English interpreters (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2014) to examine the impact of the intervention on verbal and nonverbal rapport maintenance.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The use of a non-interpreter student sample is a limitation of the present study. We are therefore currently studying the effectiveness of the information sheet in another study with a participant sample of 100 Spanish-English bilinguals and trained interpreters. Half of the participants are provided the information sheet in advance of interpreting in a live simulated police interview of a non-English-speaking Colombian suspect charged with importing methylamphetamine into Australia. The interview consists of 60 question-answer exchanges that include a variety of verbal and nonverbal rapport-building strategies (e.g., changes from last name to first name use, self-disclosures, colloquialisms, changes in tone of voice and posture, nodding, signals of attentiveness, and active listening). This realistic interpreting task lasts approximately 30 minutes, providing numerous opportunities to assess whether interpreters who read the information sheet are better at conveying and maintaining rapport than their counterparts who do not receive the information sheet. The interviews are videotaped so that the interpreters' nonverbal behaviors can be objectively rated separately from the verbal rapport cues.

Although the present study tested the rapport information sheet in the context of police interviews of suspects, it is also potentially applicable to police interviews of victims and witnesses. For instance, in human trafficking cases, because victim-witnesses rarely speak the same language as the investigators, reliance on interpreters is crucial. Indeed, this has led to the development of a dedicated chapter in the 2009 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *Anti-Human Trafficking Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners* (Module10). The Manual guides investigators on issues related to interpreter use, rapport development, and role boundaries in such cases. It instructs interviewers that rapport-building

with victims is crucial to forge a productive relationship with the victim and advises investigators to devote extensive time to rapport building to establish a relationship of trust before discussing any evidential issues (UNODC, 2009, Module 8). The Manual, however, does not explain how investigators in trafficking cases can alert interpreters to the importance of rapport. Future research could explore how the information sheet developed in the present study can be applied in interviews of human trafficking victims-witnesses. The information sheet, for example, may need to be adapted to deal with the sensitivities of sexual exploitation and mistrust that victims may have developed of others, including interpreters and the police.

Future research should also test the effectiveness of the rapport information sheet across cultures. Indeed, past research has revealed that rapport can be culturally bound (Bernstein et al., 2002). For example, several aspects of rapport pertinent in an interview context have been shown to vary by culture. These include, for example, turn-taking (Berry, 1994), maintaining eye contact (Vargas-Urpi, 2013), back-channel responses (Rivera & Ward, 2007) and mirroring behaviors or mimicry (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2090). Thus, care must be exercised to ensure that the rapport strategies advocated are culturally appropriate for the target cultural groups.

### **Implications for Practice**

The use of effect sizes (i.e., Cohen's *d*) beyond significance testing suggests that the present findings have some practical significance. Indeed, the information sheet developed in the present study is a practical tool that can be used by police practitioners to alert interpreters to the importance of recognizing, conveying and maintaining rapport-building strategies used with suspects in police interviews. The information sheet can also be used to train legal interpreters to work more effectively in police interviews. However, before this is done, the effectiveness of the information sheet needs to be validated in an interpreter sample as we are

currently doing in the aforementioned study. Helping interpreters to convey rapport between interviewers and suspects may increase the effectiveness of police interviews.

### **Conclusion**

Police investigations are increasingly conducted via an interpreter who may be unfamiliar with interview strategies such as rapport-building. We developed and tested an information sheet designed to aid interpreters in police interviews in recognizing, conveying and inadvertently obstructing rapport-building efforts by police interviewers. The findings were used to improve the information sheet, which can ultimately be used to alert interpreters to the importance of rapport in suspect interviews.

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**Table 1. Examples of Verbal and Nonverbal Rapport Cues**

Verbal cues	Nonverbal cues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preferred forms of address (e.g., first name or title)</li> <li>• Signal paying attention (e.g., ‘uh-huh’, paraphrasing, repetition)</li> <li>• Small talk</li> <li>• Self-disclosure</li> <li>• Colloquialisms</li> <li>• Linguistic hedges and fillers (e.g., ‘um’, ‘you know’)</li> <li>• Particular question types (e.g., questions inviting open-ended answers), and</li> <li>• Positive language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching the gestures</li> <li>• Posture and speech rate of the other person</li> <li>• Orienting towards the other person</li> <li>• Nodding and intonations that signal attentiveness</li> <li>• Changing behavior in response to what is said (e.g., showing empathy by changing tone of voice or posture)</li> <li>• Gentle tone of voice</li> <li>• Not interrupting the other person</li> <li>• Having a relaxed posture, and</li> <li>• Showing kindness and a caring attitude (e.g., offering a hot drink, asking about the person’s welfare)</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Overall Perceived Rapport by Group and Vignette**

Vignette	Group					
	Intervention		Control		Total	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
No rapport cues	6.84	1.53	6.09	1.90	6.45	1.76
Verbal rapport cues	4.25	1.90	4.21	1.76	4.23	1.82
Nonverbal rapport cues	6.19	1.92	5.97	1.75	6.08	1.83
Verbal and nonverbal rapport cues	7.61	1.71	6.48	1.72	7.03	1.80
Total	6.22	2.15	5.69	1.97		

**Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Ratings of Appropriateness of Interpreter Responses by Group and Vignette**

Vignette	Group			
	Intervention		Control	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Terrorism: Verbal rapport cues	6.36	1.70	6.47	1.75
Forging passports: Verbal rapport cues	6.28	1.54	5.97	1.64
Producing drugs: Nonverbal rapport cues	6.69	1.76	6.31	1.75
Fake credit card: Nonverbal rapport cues	6.21	1.73	5.99	2.19
Human trafficking: Verbal and nonverbal rapport cues	6.43	1.54	6.35	1.93

## Appendix A

### Instructions for Section 1 of the Questionnaire

Imagine a situation where an individual suspected of a criminal offence is being interviewed by the police. The interview is video-taped and takes place with one officer and the suspect present in the room. The investigating officer tells the suspect he/she does not have to say anything, but it may harm their defence if they do not mention something which they later rely on in court, and that anything they do say may be given in evidence. The suspect is then asked to state for the record his full name, address, date of birth, country of citizenship, and occupation.

Your task will be to read excerpts of four different police interviews and answer some questions about each scenario.

#### **Scenario [Vignette 2 includes two verbal and two nonverbal rapport building techniques]**

The suspect, Mr Uri Ben-Zeev is being questioned because he is suspected of smuggling art to the UK.

**Officer:** Mr. Ben-Zeev, you are here because we want to ask you about your involvement in smuggling art into the UK. I am going to ask you questions about this. You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention something which you later rely on in Court. Anything you do say may be given as evidence.

**Suspect:** This is ridiculous I am a hardworking man! I would never smuggle anything! I have children! (*Crosses his arms and sits back in his chair*)

**Officer:** We know that you have children Uri (*Pauses and sits down in front of the suspects and lay his hands on the table*). I reckon you're just the middleman in all this and I wanna help you mate, but you need to help me too. So let me ask you a few questions ok?

**Suspect:** (*Sits straight up, opens his arms and looks straight to officer and interpreter*) Do you know what it's like to work hard for peanuts? I tried everything to give my two boys a good education. I want them to have a better chance in life than I did!

**Officer:** I want to help you and your children Uri – but the best thing you can do for your kids now is to tell me everything you know. So can you tell me why you were driving the van that had the stolen artwork in the back?

**Suspect:** (*Looking down, rubbing his hands*) Well this guy I work with asked me to move some furniture for extra cash and I needed the money.

**Officer:** (*Lowers his voice and speaks slowly and calmly*) Ok that's good, what else can you tell me about him?

**Suspect:** Well he usually shows up to work on Saturdays and usually goes straight up to my boss' office.

## Instructions for Section 2 of the Questionnaire

Imagine a situation where an individual suspected of a criminal offence is being interviewed by the police. The suspect does not speak English so the police have asked for the assistance of an interpreter. The interview is tape-recorded and takes place with one officer, the interpreter, and the suspect present in the room. The investigating officer tells the suspect he/she does not have to say anything, but it may harm their defence if they do not mention something which they later rely on in court, and that anything they do say may be given in evidence. The suspect is then asked to state for the record his full name, address, date of birth, country of citizenship, and occupation.

Your task will be to read excerpts of five different police interviews. After each one, we will ask you how you would respond as an interpreter.

### **Scenario [Vignette 5 includes two verbal and two nonverbal rapport building techniques]**

Mr Victor Adebayo is questioned by the police about his alleged role in producing drugs.

**Officer:** Mr Adebayo, I am speaking to you today because you are suspected of producing Class A drugs. I am going to ask you questions about this. You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention something which you later rely on in Court. Anything you do say may be given as evidence.

**Suspect:** *(Looks directly at investigating officer alertly and sincerely)* I don't take drugs or have anything to do with them!

**Officer:** Well, Victor, when two officers searched your house on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2013 they found equipment used for producing drugs, and a bag of methamphetamine.

*(Suspect waits to see if the officer has anything else to add)*

**Suspect:** Officer, please you have to understand I wouldn't ever go near drugs! *(Suspect looks anxious and is shaking).*

**Officer:** Ok Victor, I know this is distressing *(Lowers voice and smiles softly)* but please don't worry I'm just asking you some questions at this point. Now, can you tell me about what the officers found in your house?

**Suspect:** I don't know why it was there. Someone must have put it there.

**Officer:** Do you have any idea who might have put the drugs in your house Victor?

**Suspect:** Well, one of my friends came to visit me and brought his cousin. I thought he might be up to something - he was behaving strangely. He asked me if he could have a look around the house.



## Appendix B

### Final Version of Rapport Information Sheet

# Rapport in Interpreter Assisted Police Interviews



Guidance developed by Professor M. K. Dhami at Middlesex University (UK) in collaboration with Professor J. Goodman-Delahunty at Charles Sturt University and Professor S. Hale at the University of New South Wales.  
Sponsored by the FBI.  
May 2014

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## Objectives of this information sheet

Interpreters play a very important role in police interviews. Their ability to recognize and convey the rapport-building efforts between the interviewer and interviewee, and avoiding obstructing rapport can be vital to the outcome of a police interview.

After reading this information sheet you should be able to...

**1: Recognize rapport-building efforts between the interviewer and interviewee in police interviews.**

**2: Convey rapport-building efforts between the interviewer and interviewee in police interviews.**

**3: Avoid inadvertently obstructing rapport-building in police interviews.**

## Importance of rapport in police interviews

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*Rapport helps build trust and aids co-operation.*

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### Rapport...

...refers to a smooth and positive interaction between two or more people. Rapport can often be identified by efforts that people make to pay attention to each other, being friendly and showing liking, and mutual coordination (turn-taking) or reciprocity.

### Scientific research has revealed that rapport is important because...

...it can facilitate interaction and increase interviewee cooperation. Rapport can enhance the quantity and quality of information provided by an interviewee.

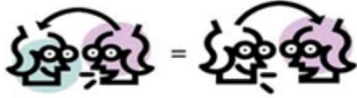
### Building rapport

The interviewer will often use rapport-building techniques that are both verbal (e.g., small talk) and non-verbal (e.g., nodding). It is important to recognize when these techniques are being used by both the interviewer and interviewee, and to convey them.

## Recognizing and conveying rapport

Verbal rapport-building techniques include...

- using preferred forms of address (e.g., first name or title)
- signaling paying attention (e.g., 'uh-huh', paraphrasing, repetition)
- small talk
- self-disclosure
- colloquialisms
- linguistic hedges and fillers (e.g., 'um', 'you know')
- using particular question types (e.g., questions inviting open-ended answers), and
- using positive language



Non-verbal rapport-building techniques include...

- matching the gestures
- posture and speech rate of the other person
- orienting towards the other person
- nodding and intonations that signal attentiveness
- changing behavior in response to what is being said (e.g., showing empathy by changing tone of voice or posture)
- gentle tone of voice
- not interrupting the other person
- having a relaxed posture, and
- showing kindness and a caring attitude (e.g., by offering a hot drink, asking about the person's welfare)



Suppose...an individual suspected of a criminal offence is interviewed by the police, and your assistance is needed. Some common ways you may interfere in their rapport-building efforts include:

- not conveying what you consider to be irrelevant information,
- converting open-ended questions and answers into yes/no ones,
- relaying a question asked directly (e.g., 'did you go to the shopping mall?') in an indirect format (e.g., 'he asked if you went to the shopping mall'), and
- having a brief private conversation with each of them or by positioning yourself so that you are sitting facing both of them.



## Tips for interpreters

*It is not your job to build rapport between the police and suspect, but you ought to avoid interfering with their rapport-building efforts.*

**Tip 1 – Everything that is said and how it is said is relevant and important to convey.**

**Tip 2 – Use direct language (i.e., don't use reported speech e.g., 'he said'), so the interaction between the two parties remains spontaneous.**

**Tip 3 – Do not summarize, edit, filter or add to what is said.**

**Tip 4 – Do not have any private conversations with either party during the interview, but you can ask each to repeat or clarify what they are trying to convey.**

## Other issues to consider

### Cross-cultural differences



There may be subtle cultural differences in the meaning of some rapport-building techniques, especially non-verbal ones. For instance, avoiding direct eye contact may show lack of consideration in some cultures but respect for authority in others.

Another example is where interrupting someone while they speak may show warmth and caring in one culture but rudeness in another. Similarly, responses such as 'uh-huh' may show attentiveness in one culture but lack of interest in another.

It is important to convey these subtleties if you are aware of them.