"Any Friend of Yours is a Friend of Mine": Investigating the Utilization of an Interpreter in an Investigative Interview

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Abstract

Premised on a body of literature suggesting target-interviewer rapport is a critical component of successful interviews, we explored the effect of two interpreter-related variables – the physical placement of the interpreter in the room, and the nature of the relationship between the interpreter and the target – on target-interviewer rapport. A total of 125 bilingual (Spanish/English) participants viewed a mock crime video and were then interviewed, via an interpreter (or not). Interpreters either built rapport with the participant immediately prior to the interview or did not, and were either seated beside the interviewer or behind the target, commensurate with recommendations from training manuals. When the interpreter and target engaged in a short rapport-building session prior to an investigative interview, the target rated their interaction with the interviewer less negatively compared to when rapport-building did not occur. Furthermore, when the interpreter sat behind the target, the target viewed the interaction more negatively than when the interpreter sat beside the interviewer (triangular configuration). These findings suggest ways in which interpreters can be utilized more effectively, especially in terms of seating configuration, rapport development between a target and interpreter, and importantly, the potential for that target-interpreter rapport to transfer to the target-interviewer relationship.

Given interviewer-target rapport is cited as 'critical', 'vital' 'imperative', and 'essential' (Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014) to the success of an investigative interview, it is surprising that very little is known about how an interpreter may affect the target-interviewer relationship (Abbe & Brandon, 2012; Justice, Bhatt & Brandon, 2008). This may be of particular importance in the Human Intelligence (here after HUMINT) domain, given the sole objective of initial interrogations may often be to establish rapport and build a relationship with the target (Russano et al., 2014). As one experienced interrogator noted when asked about his approach: "I let them vent, and then I talk. I become their friend, I become their only friend there, and eventually, after three or four interrogations, they start confiding. That's what we call rapport building." (Russano et al., 2014, 852). Interestingly, although HUMINT interviews often involve the use of an interpreter (Russano, Narchet, & Kleinman, 2014), very little is known about how this additional party affects the dynamics of an interrogation, including the building of that primary relationship between a target and an interviewer. When a sample of highly experienced intelligence interrogators were asked whether they thought an interpreter affected the flow of an investigative interview, all participants said either "yes" (~84%) or "sometimes" (~16%). The idea that an interpreter can 'make or break' an interview was a common theme voiced by participants (Russano et al., 2014). Therefore, understanding the role of an interpreter and how rapport can be established and maintained in interpreter-facilitated interviews, is of critical importance for the practitioner community. To date, the majority of research in this area

has focused on the relationship between rapport and increased information gain (e.g., Vallano & Compo, 2015; Walsh & Bull, 2014). However, we are yet to understand how rapport may function independently from the established metrics of increased information elicitation. This research aims to investigate how the relationship between the interviewer and the target may be affected by the introduction of a third party.

While some researchers in the therapeutic context have speculated that a rapport-based relationship between a target and an interpreter might delay or detract from the building of a rapport-based relationship between the target and the interviewer (e.g., Searight & Armock, 2013), others have suggested that a rapport-based relationship between the target and the interpreter may actually provide positive benefits. For example, Abbe and Brandon (2012) theorised that rapport established with an interpreter may be able to be transferred to an interviewer.

To our knowledge, there has been no direct experimental research on how to effectively build rapport via an interpreter during an investigative interview. In related research, Baker, Hayes, and Fortier (2008) found that Spanish-speaking patients who communicated with a healthcare provider via an interpreter viewed the interaction more negatively (i.e., they viewed the provider as less friendly and respectful, and patients felt less comfortable) than those who were able to maintain a conversation directly. These findings suggest that the introduction of an interpreter may have negative consequences for the rapport relationship between a target and an interviewer. The lack of research on rapport in a triadic relationship, especially one involving an interpreter, opens up a myriad of questions, chief among them being: can rapport be effectively built between an interviewer and a target, via an interpreter? Would a rapport-based relationship

between a target and an interpreter facilitate, or detract from, rapport between a target and an interviewer?

Another issue involving interpreters that has practical significance (and which may ultimately affect rapport-building) is where the interpreter should be seated in the interview room. The U.S. AFM 2-22.3 (U.S. Department of the Army, 2006), the manual for US HUMINT interrogations, discusses the two most common placements – the interpreter behind the target, with the target and interviewer facing one another, and the interpreter to the side of the HUMINT collector, across from the target (aka triangular formation). Some posit that the triangular formation makes it more difficult to emphasize the primary relationship between the interviewer and the target (e.g., Wiener & Rivera, 2004) whereas others (e.g., Tribe & Lane, 2009) argue that the triangular configuration works best. Interestingly, samples of highly experienced HUMINT investigators and interpreters report more commonly using, and preferring, the triangular configuration (Russano, Narchet, & Kleinman, 2014; Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014). Research on the effect of seating configuration on rapport building during an interview is scant, although one recent study found that target-interviewer rapport was not affected by interpreter placement in the context of an investigative interview (Ewens et al., 2014).

Synthesis and Current Research

Despite widespread agreement that target-interviewer rapport is often critical to the success of an interview (e.g. Walsh & Bull, 2012), there has been very little systematic research conducted on building rapport via an interpreter. The purpose of the current research was to explore how interpreter-utilization factors (namely the nature of the target-interpreter relationship and the placement of the interpreter in the room) affect rapport-building between the interviewer and target in the context of an investigative interview (because of space limitations

and ongoing analysis, effects on information gain will be reported in a separate manuscript).

Specifically, we pose the following questions: (a) can rapport between a target and an

interviewer be established during interpreter-facilitated interviews; (b) will a rapport-based

relationship between a target and an interpreter facilitate or hinder the building of rapport

between a target and an interviewer; (c) does interpreter placement affect the target-interviewer

rapport-building process; and (d), will target-interpreter relationship and seating configuration

interact, such that, for example, rapport transference may be more likely to occur in the

triangular configuration as opposed to the interpreter behind configuration (perhaps due to the

continual visual presence of the interpreter)?

Methodology

Participants

Forty seven male and 78 female bilingual (Spanish/English) undergraduate students ($N =$

125) at a Southwestern University in the United States participated in exchange for course credit

in a psychology class. Most participants self-identified as Hispanic (94.4%), consistent with

population demographics, with 76.8% stating that Spanish was their first language. Participants

ranged in age from 18 to 45 years old ($M = 21.15$, $SD = 4.38$).

Design and Materials

The experiment was a 2 (interpreter-target relationship: rapport-building vs. no rapport-

building) x 2 (seating configuration: triangular vs. interpreter behind target) + 1 (no interpreter

control) between-participants factorial design, with participants randomly assigned to

experimental condition. Each participant completed measures of rapport developed by Bernieri

(2005) after the completion of the interview. The Bernieri (2005) measure of rapport has formed

the basis of many rapport measurement scales found in the literature (e.g. Vallano & Compo,

2011). The Bernieri (2005) measure conceptualizes rapport as the nature or the quality of the relationship between two people; therefore, the Bernieri rapport measure consists of eighteen 9-point Likert-like items that assess characteristics of the interaction between two people. Participants completed this measure twice: once to assess rapport between the participant and the interpreter (manipulation check for rapport manipulation) and once to assess rapport between the participant and the interviewer (primary dependent variable). Finally, participants completed a brief post-debriefing questionnaire, which was designed to collect basic demographic information and to assess the extent to which our manipulations were successful.

Dimension Reduction – Bernieri (2005) Rapport Scale

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the Bernieri (2005) rapport measure for both the ratings of the interaction between the participant and the interviewer, and between the participant and the interpreter. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to extract factors with eigenvalues over 1.00. The criteria for interpreting factor loadings was set at .55 (meaning a 30% overlap variance with the underlying factor), considered "good" by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). It became clear that one of the items, "engrossing", was misunderstood by participants (i.e., it was viewed as negative, and was likely interpreted as akin to "disgusting"); therefore, the "engrossing" item was removed from the factor analyses. Each of the factor analyses produced slightly different results; however, a discernible overall pattern emerged that allowed the identification of three underlying factors common across both analyses.

For participant-interpreter rapport, three factors were extracted with eigenvalues of 8.45, 1.90 and 1.01, respectively; the factor rotation converged in five iterations. The first factor explained 49.73% of the total variance in participant responses, and the factor appears to represent positively-charged perceptions of the interaction. The following eleven items loaded on

the "positive" factor: (a) satisfying, (b) well-coordinated, (c) comfortably paced, (d) positive, (e) focused, (f) involving, (g) active, (h) friendly, (i) worthwhile, (j) cooperative, and (k) harmonious. The second factor explained 11.19% of the total variance, and the factor appears to represent negatively-charged perceptions of the interaction. The following five items loaded on the "negative" factor: (a) cold, (b) awkward, (c) boring, (d) slow, and (e) dull. The third factor accounted for 5.93% of the variance, and consisted on one item: intensity. For participant-interviewer rapport, the same three factor structure emerged (in five iterations), with one exception: "worthwhile" loaded onto the "negative" factor. The eigenvalue for the "positive" factor was 8.67, and it explained 51.00% of the variance. The "negative" factor explained 8.78% of the total variance, with an eigenvalue of 1.49. Finally, the eigenvalue for the "intensity" factor was 1.09, and it explained 6.43% of the variance.

Given that conceptually "worthwhile" fits better with the "positive" construct, we proceeded with reliability analyses on the factor structure that emerged from the participant-interpreter factor analysis. We conducted an internal-consistency reliability analysis of the "positive factor" for each dyad interaction (participant-interpreter and participant-interviewer). The reliability analysis for the positive factor suggested that a highly reliable measure was formed by the combination of the eleven items for both the participant-interpreter interaction ($N = 101$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$) and the participant-interviewer interaction ($N = 128$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$). Therefore, we averaged the eleven items, creating a measure of "positive" perceptions that has a scale ranging from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating a more positive view of the interaction as compared to lower scores. We also conducted an internal-consistency reliability analysis of the "negative" perceptions factor for both dyad interactions. The results suggested that the combination of the five items produced a measure with a good degree of reliability for

the participant-interpreter and the participant-interviewer interactions ($N = 102$, Cronbach's $\alpha =$ .81; $N = 128$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$, respectively). We therefore averaged the five items, creating a measure of "negative" perceptions that has a scale ranging from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating a more negative view of the interaction.

In sum, data reduction analyses of the Bernieri (2005) measure resulted in the emergence of three factors that assess components of rapport, two of which explained the majority of the variance. Those two measures will be used as our primary measures of rapport; specifically, an eleven-item measure of positive perceptions of the interaction and a five-item measure of negative perceptions of the interaction. Given the small percentage of variance accounted for by the "intensity" item, no further analyses were conducted on that item.

Research Assistants

Interpreters: We utilized 10 research assistant interpreters, seven of whom were bilingual undergraduate students and three of whom were professional interpreters. None of the undergraduate interpreters had any formal training, although they all self-reported engaging in some form of interpretation/translation via work duties on an almost daily basis, as is common with people living on the USA/Mexico border. Six of the undergraduate interpreters were female, and one was male. All professional interpreters were female and were court certified as translators and interpreters for the Texas and/or New Mexico Court Systems. Interpreters were blind to condition and naïve to the hypotheses; however, given their involvement in our interpreter-rapport and seating condition manipulations, our manipulations were likely to become apparent to them during the course of the research. Therefore, we gave the interpreters some misinformation during their training, informing them that we were assessing recommendations for the use of interpreters in terms of seating configuration and giving the interpreter and

interviewee time to get to know each other, but that 1) we did not expect these to have an effect, and 2) our main manipulations were contained in the interview and video the participant viewed (interpreters and interviewers were led to believe that there were five versions of the video, when in reality there was only one). Interpreters were told they must remain faithful to each participant's version of events and not allow their prior experience with the interviews to influence their translation since there were both major (e.g., who the protagonist is) and minor changes (e.g., the color of the car) between videos. During training, interpreters were instructed to interpret everything that was said by each person, rather than summarizing. Interpreters were randomly assigned to condition using a random number generator. On average, undergraduate interpreters completed 9 interviews each; professional interpreters completed 12 interviews each.

Interviewers: We had eight male research assistants who served as interviewers and who were trained in general rapport-building principles of positivity, mutual attentiveness and coordination (e.g. Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990), and an information-gathering, open-ended questioning style. Interviewers were provided the misleading information about the seating configuration manipulation and multiple versions of the video in order to motivate them to not allow their previous interviews to inform the questions they asked each participant. All interviewers were randomly assigned to condition using a random number generator. During data collection, interviews were randomly assessed for fidelity, and if issues were found, those interviews were discounted from analysis and the interviewer was re-trained. Interviewers were blind to rapport-condition, and naïve as to the hypotheses of the study.

There was no significant influence of any of our RAs on any of our primary dependent measures, nor were there any significant interactions (all ps > .15).

Audio Control Equipment

All persons involved in this research were fully Spanish/English bilingual; therefore, it was imperative to exert experimental control over what could be heard by whom, and when. In order to achieve this, we utilized specialized equipment designed specifically for this kind of research. All persons involved in the interview wore a headset comprised of a set of headphones with a microphone. Each headset was connected to a console. For the interviewer and interviewee, the console had a "talk" button and volume control button. For the interpreter, their headset was connected to a slightly more complex console which had 2 talk buttons (one for the interviewer feed, one for the interviewee feed) and a volume control button.

The equipment was designed in such a way that there was no audio feed directly between the interviewer and interviewee; both of their audio streams fed directly to the interpreter's headset. The interpreter was the only person in the interview would could hear both parties speaking. To ensure that either party could only hear the interpreter talking to them, whenever the interpreter activated the "talk" button for the interviewer, the interviewee received white noise, and, whenever the interpreter activated the talk button for the interviewee, the interviewer received white noise.

In control conditions, where no interpreter was used, and the interviewee and interviewer both spoke in Spanish, the equipment was still utilized to ensure comparability across all conditions. In these conditions, the interviewer would wear the interpreter's headset and would depress the interviewee "talk" button to talk to the interviewee in order to communicate.

Procedure

Bilingual students were recruited to participate in a study about communication via an interpreter. When a participant arrived to the laboratory, he/she was greeted by a lab manager, who informed the participant that they were waiting for two more participants to arrive (actually

both confederates of the study). The first confederate arrived almost immediately (hereafter "the interpreter"), and while they continued to wait for the second confederate (hereafter "the interviewer"), the lab manager explained that each student would take on the role of interviewer, interviewee (aka target), or interpreter. The target, who was the only actual participant, watched a video, and was told that it was the job of the interviewer to get as much accurate information about the video as possible from the target, through the use of an interpreter (the reference to the interpreter was excluded in the control condition).

Setting the Scene: When the interviewer was approximately 7-8 minutes late, the lab manager received a call from the interviewer and had a mock conversation in which the interviewer said he was "running late" but would be there shortly. In the meantime, the lab manager informed the participants that they would be randomly assigned to their role by selecting a piece of paper out of a hat (in reality, this is a ruse in which the actual participant was always assigned the target role). Upon selecting their papers, the confederate announced he/she had been assigned to the interpreter role, and the participant's paper revealed he or she had been assigned to the target role.

Participants then watched a short film about the activities of a man who appeared to be planning an act of violence (4 minutes, 40 seconds in length; Duke, 2013). After the participant finished watching the film, the participant and the interpreter were reunited. The lab manager explained that in order to model the real-world incentives where interviewers are motivated to elicit as much information as possible from someone they are interviewing, the interviewers in this experiment were told they would receive $1 for every piece of accurate information they were able to elicit from the target.

Interviewer Lateness Ruse: The interviewer then, unhurriedly, entered the room. Despite arriving 20 minutes late, he/she was unapologetic and cavalier, noting that he/she stopped at a very popular coffee shop close to campus on the way and there was a long line. Our goal for the lateness ruse was to make the participant irritated at the interviewer. During many investigative interviews, interviewers are faced with the challenge of building rapport with a target that is at best wary, and at worst, overtly hostile; we attempted to model that negatively charged atmosphere within our paradigm.

Interpreter-Rapport Manipulation: After greeting the interviewer, the lab manager explained that he/she needed to get the interviewer up to speed on his role in another room. In the no rapport-building condition, the lab manager stated that they needed to provide joint instructions to the interviewer and the interpreter. The participant was left alone in the room for approximately five minutes. In the rapport-building condition, the lab manager left the interpreter and the participant alone for five minutes, during which time the interpreter initiated a short rapport-building session, based upon widely cited rapport principles of positivity (the interpreter came across as approachable and friendly), mutual attentiveness (the interpreter paid attention to the participant and what they said) and coordination (the interpreter mimicked the participants body language; see Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthall, 1990). The interpreter initiated conversation with the participant by asking them what they are studying and how their semester is going. After 5 minutes of rapport building or being on their own, the interviewer, interpreter, and participant were reunited and escorted into the interview room.

Seating Manipulation: Participants were randomly assigned to the triangular versus interpreter-behind-the-interviewer seating configuration. The seats were arranged in their positions prior to the participants' arrival.

The Interview: Once seated in the interview room, participants were provided basic instructions about the headsets they would be wearing for the duration of the interview. Just prior to beginning the interview, the lab manager reminded the trio that for every piece of accurate information provided by the target, the interviewer would receive $1. The interpreter then asked whether there was a way for the target or the interpreter to earn money, and the lab manager responded apologetically that there was not. At that point, the lab manager finished providing the interview instructions, including that the first thing the target and interviewee should do was to engage in a "getting to know you" session (i.e., a rapport-building session). In terms of the questioning specifically about the video, the interviewer followed a general protocol for a standard information-gathering interview approach. It followed the format of an initial open-ended recall phase of "tell me everything you remember from the video" with follow-up questions where appropriate. Once the interview was finished, the participant completed the rapport measures and post-debriefing questionnaire. Participants were then fully debriefed. This research received IRB approval from the institution where it was conducted, and all participants were treated in accordance with APA ethical guidelines and standards.

Results

Research Questions and Overview of Analysis Strategy

Our primary research question centered on target-interviewer rapport, and whether perceptions of rapport were influenced by the introduction of an interpreter, as well as the logistics of an interpreter's presence (such as seating position of the interpreter and the nature of the target-interpreter relationship). First, we will present the results of our manipulation checks, and then we will compare interpreter-facilitated interviews and non-interpreter facilitated interviews on our primary (i.e., the positive and negative factors from Bernieri) dependent

variables. Finally, we will explore the effect of seating configuration and nature of the target-interpreter relationship on the dependent variables.

Induction of Irritation towards the Interviewer

Free-response items to the question "please describe how you felt about the interviewer being late" were coded as being either "positive" (e.g., it made me happy), neutral (e.g., I didn't feel anything) or negative (e.g., I felt annoyed). The majority of participants (62%) described negative feelings such as "frustration," "anxiety," and "anger/annoyance." Importantly, the participants' feelings towards the interviewer being late did not differ by condition, $\chi^2(4) = 2.68$, $p = .61$, Cramér's ø'= 0.15.

Target-Interpreter Rapport: Manipulation Check

An independent-samples t-test was run on the positive factor score from the Bernieri scale for the participants' interaction with the interpreter. All scores for the interaction with the interpreter were high, with a pattern for the scores to be slightly lower in the non-rapport building condition ($M = 7.18$, $SD = 1.12$) compared to the rapport-building condition ($M = 7.46$, $SD = 1.58$); however, this pattern in the data did not reach significance, $t(112) = 0.79$, $p = .43$, $d = 0.20$, 95% CI for the mean difference [-0.30, 0.71].

A further independent-samples t-test found that participants reported less negativity in their interaction with the interpreter when they engaged in a rapport-building session with the interpreter ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.66$) compared to when they did not engage in a rapport-building session ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.62$) immediately prior to the interview, $t(112) = 2.19$, $p = .03$, $d = 0.43$, 95% CI for the main difference [-1.26, -0.63]. These findings suggest that our interpreter-rapport manipulation worked in terms of lessening participants' negative perceptions of the interaction, a key component of Bernieri's (2005) measure of rapport.

Presence or Absence of an Interpreter

One of the primary questions of our investigation was whether the presence of an interpreter affects target-interviewer rapport. In order to answer this question, we had to first equate the cell sizes for this analysis to be reliable; because of the hanging control design, only 27 participants were interviewed without an interpreter as compared to 102 who were interviewed with an interpreter. The cell sizes were equated by selecting the first 6 or 7 participants in each of the 4 interpreter conditions into the analysis, resulting in 25 participants in the "interpreter present condition" and 27 participants in the "interpreter absent condition" for the purposes of this analysis. Next we conducted an independent samples t-test to assess the effect of the presence or absence of an interpreter on target-interviewer rapport. Participants were equally positive about their relationship with the interviewer in the interpreter ($M = 6.92$, $SD = 1.65$) and no interpreter ($M = 6.91$, $SD = 1.27$) conditions, $t(50) = .03$, $p = .98$, $d = 0.01$, 95% CI for the main difference [-0.82, 0.80]. Similarly, participants reported no differences in their perceptions of negativity surrounding the target-interviewer relationship between the interpreter ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.62$) and no interpreter ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.57$) conditions, $t(50) = .01$, $p = .99$, $d = 0.01$, 95% CI for the mean difference [-0.88, 0.89]. These data suggest that if an interpreter needs to be utilized in an investigative interview context, the presence of an interpreter does not detract from the interviewer's ability to build and maintain rapport with the target.

Seating Configuration and Nature of the Target-Interpreter Relationship

Primary DV – Bernieri Positive Factor: We conducted a 2 (seating configuration: triangular vs. behind) x 2 (target-interpreter relationship: rapport vs. no rapport) x 2 (interpreter status: professional vs. non-professional) between-participants factorial ANOVA on the positive

Bernieri factor for target-interviewer rapport[1]. We found a significant main effect of seating configuration, such that participants rated their interaction with the interviewer as being more positive in the triangular configuration ($M = 7.14$, $SD = 1.51$) as compared to the behind condition ($M = 6.51$, $SD = 1.52$), $F(1, 94) = 4.63$, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. There was no difference in ratings between the interpreter-rapport condition ($M = 6.95$, $SD = 1.63$) and no rapport condition ($M = 6.71$, $SD = 1.44$) on positive feelings regarding their interaction with the interviewer, $F(1, 94) = 1.04$, $p = .31$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. The participants' positive perceptions of their interaction with the interviewer did not significantly differ as a function of whether the interpreter was a professional ($M = 6.81$, $SD = 1.55$) or a non-professional ($M = 6.86$, $SD = 1.55$), $F < 1$. Neither the 2-way interactions between seating configuration and interpreter status, nor the 2-way interaction between target-interpreter relationship and interpreter status, were significant (both Fs < 1). The 2-way interaction between seating configuration and target-interpreter relationship was also non-significant, $F(1, 94) = 2.36$, $p = .13$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Finally, the 3-way interaction between seating configuration, target-interpreter relationship and interpreter status was not significant, $F < 1$.

   Primary DV – Bernieri Negative Factor: A 2 (seating configuration: triangular vs. behind) x 2 (target-interpreter relationship: rapport vs. no rapport) x 2 (interpreter status: professional vs. non-professional) between-participants factorial ANOVA was conducted on the negative Bernieri factor. A main effect of seating configuration was observed; consistent with the positive factor main effect, participants reported less negativity about their interaction with the interviewer when the interpreter was seated in a triangular configuration ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.59$)

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[1] In order to investigate whether a different pattern of results would emerge for professional and non-professional interpreters, we included interpreter status as a variable in the analyses of our primary, standardized measures of rapport.

as compared to when the interpreter sat behind them ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.59$), $F(1, 94) = 5.68$, $p = .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. A main effect of target-interpreter relationship was also found, with participants rating their interaction with the interviewer as more negative when they did not engage in rapport-building with the interpreter ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.62$) as compared to when they engaged in rapport-building with the interpreter ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.58$), $F(1, 94) = 4.58$, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$.

There was no significant main effect of interpreter status (non-professionals: $M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.72$; professionals: $M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.48$), $F < 1$. All possible 2-way interactions were non-significant (all Fs < 1). Finally, the 3-way interaction between seating configuration, target-interpreter relationship and interpreter status was also not significant, $F(1, 94) = 1.29$, $p = .26$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$.

Discussion

This work represents a first step towards an empirical assessment of whether an interpreter can influence the rapport dynamics during an investigative interview (see also Ewens et al., 2014; Goodman-Delahunty, Hale, Dhami, & Martschuk, 2014). With this research, we set out to answer two primary questions; first, does the presence of an interpreter affect target-interviewer rapport? Second, do certain interpreter-associated factors, such as seating position of the interpreter and whether the interpreter develops a relationship with the target independent of the interviewer, influence target-interviewer rapport? These questions are predicated upon a lack of understanding as to how a rapport dynamic between a target and the interviewer may be affected if rapport has to be built via an interpreter, and the extant literature that presents two schools of thought regarding the utilization of an interpreter: minimize the role of the interpreter and essentially view them as a "translation machine" (e.g., see Russano et al., 2014b; Searight &

Amock, 2013) versus having the interpreter take a much more active role, for example, by incorporating the interpreter into the interview strategy (e.g., see Russano et al. 2014b; U.S. Department of Army, 2006).

With respect to the first question of whether the presence of an interpreter affected target-interviewer rapport, we found that it did not. Rapport between the target and the interviewer was equally strong in interpreter-facilitated and non- interpreter-facilitated interviews. While these findings support those of Ewens et al. (2014), who also found no effect of interpreter presence on rapport in the context of an investigative interview, they contradict those of Baker et al. (2008) who found that when an interpreter was utilized in a medical environment, the patient's negative ratings of the interaction increased. One possible reason for our results differing from Baker et al. (2008), but being consistent with Ewens et al. (2014), could be the interview environment – our targets, as was the case in Ewens et al.'s (2014) study were interviewees, not patients in a health care context, as they were in Baker et al. (2008). These series of findings could start to point towards a theory of interpreter utilization which has to be context-specific. With that said, our data that an interpreter does not hinder rapport in an interview context, is an encouraging finding for the intelligence, military and law-enforcement communities, for whom the use of interpreters may be frequent and unavoidable (Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014).

A further intriguing aspect of the current research is the question of whether the professional status of the interpreter had an effect on our primary dependent measure. We utilized both professional and untrained (bilingual undergraduate students) interpreters in an attempt to understand the influence of interpreter-training on the rapport-building between a target and an interviewer. Across all of our experimental conditions, there were no significant effects of interpreter status on target-interviewer rapport. This suggests that if an interviewer is

operating in an environment in which non-professional, bilingual locals are being utilized as interpreters out of necessity, the use of non-professionals is unlikely to impact target-interviewer rapport. This is encouraging news both for the field environment and for researchers alike. However, an important question that was not addressed in the current study with regard to the professional status of the interpreter is: do professional interpreters provide more faithful, accurate translations than untrained interpreters? Recent work by Goodman-Delahunty et al. (2014) suggests that untrained interpreters make more errors and are less faithful in their translations than trained interpreters.

Our second main area of focus was to explore whether certain interpreter-utilization strategies might allow us to *capitalize* on the effect of an interpreter. Specifically, we wondered whether it is possible to enhance *target-interviewer rapport* (considered vital to the success of an investigative interview) by the strategic use of an interpreter. Is it more advantageous to minimize the role of the interpreter (e.g., by seating him/her out of the sightline of the target and discouraging a relationship between the interpreter and the target) or to make the interpreter a more active participant in the interview (e.g., by seating him/her in a triangular formation and/or encouraging the interpreter to establish independent rapport with the target)? Our findings suggest that the latter approach results in reduced negative perceptions of the interviewer by the target. Interestingly, our findings are consistent with self-reported experiences of HUMINT interrogators and interpreters; Russano, Narchet, and Kleinman (2014), and well as Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, and Meissner (2014) found that the majority of experienced interviewers and interpreters believe interpreters are key members of the interrogation team and report regularly using and preferring the triangular configuration. Our results begin to underpin these perceptions with science, as we found that a triangular seating arrangement and a rapport-based

relationship between a target and an interpreter can facilitate rapport between the interviewer and the target, specifically in this context, by lessening the target's negative perceptions of the interaction.

This research is a starting point in an investigation into rapport dynamics in interpreter-facilitated interviews. Given the bilingual nature of our participants it was necessary to utilize headsets and language equipment to ensure that communication was truly interpreter-facilitated. However, this control is also a potential limitation of this research: given all of our participants were wearing headsets while building rapport, any aspects of rapport building which occur through vocal intonation was not possible here. Moreover, in order to control for any such effects of the headsets across our conditions, we ensured that the headsets were used even in our non-interpreter control condition; however, the use of the headsets may have created an awkward dynamic that interfered somewhat with the rapport-building process across conditions. It is also possible that participants engaged in lip reading, which could perhaps mute the effect of the interpreter (anecdotally, our interviewers indicated that they did not engage in this behavior). Although we cannot rule out the possibility that some participants attempted this, given that lip reading is a skill that takes a fair degree of effort, skill and practice, we believe it is unlikely that this behavior influenced the results to any practical degree. There is a further possible implication of lip-reading in this scenario, and that is whether it influenced the participant's ability to understand non-verbal indicators of rapport. Therefore, given the limitations associated with the use of the headsets, the next logical step for this research is to replicate these findings in an interpreter-facilitated interview in which headsets do not need to be utilized.

These findings provide preliminary empirical support for an advanced role for an interpreter, as described by the AFM 2-22.3 (i.e. involving the interpreter as an active participant

in the interrogative strategy and encouraging direct interaction between the interpreter and target) as well as the utilization of the triangular seating arrangement introduced by the AFM 2-22.3 (U.S. Department of the Army, 2006). The underlying process as to how a rapport-based relationship with an interpreter facilitates the reduced negative perceptions of the interviewer is for now unclear. It may be that rapport-building with an interpreter places a target in a more pleasant mood, which in turn makes it easier for the interviewer to establish rapport with the target. Alternatively, it may be that "rapport transference" (Abbe & Brandon, 2012) occurs such that the rapport transfer may be a function of the target's perception that the interviewer and the interpreter are closely associated, and rapport with the interpreter is extended to the interviewer (akin to the adage, "any friend of yours, is a friend of mine"). Regardless of the mechanism, while a rapport-based relationship with an interpreter may not move targets to feel more positive about the interaction with the interviewer per se, it does appear to result in their feeling less *negative* about the interaction.

This research represents one of the first evaluations of interpreters in the HUMINT context and is beginning to suggest ways in which interpreters can be utilized more effectively, especially in terms of seating configuration, rapport development between a target and interpreter, and importantly, the potential for that rapport to transfer to the target-interviewer relationship. Interviewer-target rapport is often cited as fundamental to the interrogative process, with practitioners citing that establishing rapport may often be the sole goal of an interrogation session (Russano et al., 2014), and therefore, the discovery of methods to develop and/or maintain target-interviewer rapport during interpreter-facilitated interviews is a critical step for the operational community. In addition, the question as to whether rapport-based communication results in a higher quality of information elicitation than any other interview

technique/strategy is of significant and practical interest (Collins et al., 2002; Evans et al., 2011; Evans et al., 2013; Redlich et al., 2014; Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014; Wright & Holliday, 2007). Recent research by Ewens et al. (2014) suggests that when an interpreter is utilized, an interviewee talks less than when they are speaking in a native language; however, given that Ewens et al. (2014) did not find any effect of interpreter placement on target-interviewer rapport, an interesting question remains: under conditions in which rapport effects *are* observed, will rapport facilitation translate into either the prevention of information loss or, possibly, even information gain?

In sum, we believe this research is a starting point for the development of strategies which maximize the likelihood of successful and productive interpreter-facilitated investigative interviews. The hope is that this research will be the seed for further research and eventual best-practice recommendations which will affect training and actual practice. Given the frequency with which interpreters are utilized in the HUMINT context, we believe the time has come for this vital issue to be addressed empirically and science-based approaches to be adopted.

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