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Using Specific Model Statements to Elicit Information and Cues to Deceit in Information-Gathering Interviews

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Model Statements are designed to modify an interviewee's expectation of the amount of details required during an interview. This study examined tailored Model Statements, emphasising either spatial (Spatial-MS), or temporal (Temporal-MS) details, compared to a control condition (no-MS). Participants (63 liars, 63 truth-tellers) were randomly allocated to one of three interviewing conditions. Truth-tellers honestly reported a spy mission, whereas liars performed a covert mission and lied about their activities. The Spatial-MS elicited more spatial details than the control, particularly for truth-tellers. The Temporal-MS elicited more temporal details than the control, for truth-tellers and liars combined. Results indicate that the composition of different Model Statements increases the amount of details provided and, regarding spatial details, affects truth-teller's and liar's statements differently. Thus, Model Statements can be constructed to elicit information and magnify cues to deceit.

Keywords: Model Statement, Lie-detection, Investigative interviewing, Information gathering

General Audience Summary

A Model Statement (MS) is an example of a detailed statement, on an unrelated topic to that of the interview, designed to raise interviewees' expectations of how much information they should convey during an interview. In this experiment, we tested whether the type of detail emphasised in a Model Statement makes interviewees include more of such details within their own accounts. This study included two Model Statement conditions emphasising either spatial details (Spatial-MS) or temporal details (Temporal-MS), which were compared to a control condition without a Model Statement (no-MS). A total of 126 participants (63 liars, 63 truth-tellers) were randomly allocated to one of these three Model Statement conditions. Truth tellers honestly reported a 'spy' mission, whereas liars performed a covert mission and lied about their activities. More spatial details

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were elicited in the Spatial-MS condition than in the control condition, particularly in truth-tellers, and more temporal details were elicited in the Temporal-MS condition than in the control condition, particularly in truth-tellers. In addition, more truth-tellers and liars could be classified correctly based on spatial details in the Spatial-MS condition (81.0%) than in the control condition (61.9%), and more truth-tellers and liars could be classified correctly based on temporal details in the Temporal-MS condition (69.0%) than in the control condition (51.9%). Thus, Model Statements can be constructed to elicit specific types of information, thereby magnifying cues to deceit.

Cues to deceit are typically faint and unreliable (DePaulo et al., 2003; Hartwig & Bond, 2011). As a result of this, researchers have started to design theoretically driven interview protocols aimed at actively eliciting cues to deception (Vrij & Granhag, 2012, 2014). One such manipulation is encouraging interviewees to provide more details (Vrij, Fisher, & Blank, 2015; Vrij, Fisher, Blank, Leal, & Mann, 2016), for example by using a Model Statement (MS). Previous Model Statement research has successfully elicited more information from interviewees (Bogaard, Meijer, & Vrij, 2014; Ewens et al., 2016; Leal, Vrij, Warmelink, Vernham, & Fisher, 2015). The aim of the current experiment was to examine the utility of tailored Model Statements (i.e., Model Statements emphasising a specific detail category) as a means of eliciting information about the emphasized category. We also examined whether such Model Statements help differentiate liars from truth-tellers.

Strategic Interviewing

Methods that encourage interviewees to provide more information are based on the theoretical assumption that truthful interviewees do not spontaneously provide all the information they know. Therefore, they require encouragement through the use of specific prompts (Vrij, Hope, & Fisher, 2014). One means of eliciting more detailed statements from truthful interviewees is by administering a Model Statement. A Model Statement is an example of a detailed statement, on an unrelated topic to that of the interview, designed to modify the interviewee's expectations of what is required from his or her statement (Leal et al., 2015). Unlike cognitive mnemonics that focus exclusively upon aiding retrieval by exploiting the nature of the memory trace (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992), a Model Statement is built upon a social component to encourage individuals to disclose more information.

Social comparison theory provides a theoretical explanation for the application of a Model Statement to interview settings (Festinger, 1954, see also Cialdini's [1984] social proof). According to social comparison theory, in the absence of objective information, people will compare themselves to others. An assumption of everyday communication is that individuals provide the required quantity of information to their conversation partners (e.g., the Maxim of Quantity; Grice, 1975). Forensic interviews are not everyday exchanges of information, and therefore interviewees may not know the appropriate level of detail to disclose. Thus, in a forensic interview setting, interviewees will use the Model Statement as a point of reference, and if

the Model Statement is detailed, they will become more detailed themselves. Hence, research has shown that providing interviewees with a Model Statement containing numerous details causes interviewees to adjust their recall and to incorporate many more details into their own statements (Bogaard et al., 2014; Ewens et al., 2016; Leal et al., 2015).

It is plausible that using a Model Statement will affect liars' and truth-tellers' information management strategies differently (e.g., Granhag & Hartwig, 2008; Hartwig, Granhag, Strömwall, & Doering, 2010). For liars, disclosing detailed information can be problematic. Liars may lack the imagination to invent details that sound plausible (Köhnken, 2004; Leal et al., 2015; Vrij, 2008) and may be reluctant to disclose additional information out of fear that such details may provide leads for investigators to check (Nahari, Vrij, & Fisher, 2014). As a result, liars may be motivated to withhold detailed information from investigators (Colwell, Hiscock-Anisman, Memon, Taylor, & Prewett, 2007; McCornack, 1992; McCornack, Levine, Solowczuk, Torres, & Campbell, 1992). Unlike liars, truth-tellers can be forthcoming with information (Hartwig, Granhag, & Strömwall, 2007; Hartwig et al., 2010) and therefore adopt a "tell it all" verbal strategy, freely disclosing detailed information (Hartwig et al., 2007; Strömwall, Hartwig, & Granhag, 2006; Vrij, Granhag, & Porter, 2010). Consistent with these different strategies used by truth-tellers and liars, meta-analyses have shown that truth-tellers typically provide more details than liars (Amado, Arce, Fariña, & Vilariño, 2016; DePaulo et al., 2003; Oberlader et al., 2016).

Implicit Coaching

A Model Statement can, in theory, be constructed to incorporate specific types of details. For truth-tellers, such details need to be accessible from genuine memory if the Model Statement is to be effective as an information elicitation technique. This will then, at the same time, also distinguish them from liars who are unlikely to have a genuine memory of the events they report, or who may choose to avoid or withhold information.

Reality Monitoring is a verbal content analysis technique (Vrij, 2008, 2015). It assumes that verbal reports of experienced memories differ in quality from imagined (e.g., fabricated) events (Johnson & Raye, 1981). Memories of real experiences are obtained through perceptual processes and therefore contain perceptual information (e.g., smells, tastes, sounds, visions) and contextual information (e.g., spatial and temporal details; Johnson, Foley, Suengas, & Raye, 1988; Johnson,

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