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Research Article

Suspect Power in Selected American Police Interviews: A Sociopragmatic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The present study scrutinizes power as an influential social variable in three selected American police interviews with three suspects: George Huguely, Bryan Greenwell, and Lee Rodarte. The study aims at identifying the most and least exploited power strategies by suspects, the statistically significant differences between the various power strategies, and the devices that manifest each power strategy. In association with the aims, the study sets out three hypotheses: (1) denial is the most dominant strategy whereas mitigation is the least used by suspects, (2) significant differences can be noticed among the various suspect power strategies, and (3) each power strategy is manifested in discourse by specific devices, such as politeness and hedges. To achieve the aims and verify these hypotheses, the study develops a model consisting of two layers for the analysis. The first layer is composed of suspect power strategies that serve as an umbrella for the model. The second layer is based on Fairclough's (1992, 2015) and Cotterill's (2003) models and is composed of the devices that manifest the power strategies in discourse. Based on the findings, the study concludes that: (1) *denial* is the most dominant strategy whereas *no comment* is the least used in regards to suspect power strategies, (2) there are no statistically significant differences between suspect power strategies in impact, which suggests that all power strategies are effectively used, and (5) seven devices are utilized by suspects to manifest their strategies including cooperative principle, hedges, politeness, formulation, topic management, silence, and questions.

Keywords: sociopragmatics, police interviews, power, suspect power.

1. INTRODUCTION

The term power is defined differently by various scholars. For Dahl (1957, pp. 202-3), power correlates with obligation and imposition. His intuitive conception of power is "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do". Similarly, Wang (2006) describes power as "the ability to control and constrain others; as the capacity to achieve one's aim; as the freedom to achieve one's goals and as the competence to impose one's will on others" (p. 531). Other scholars consider power to be an influential social variable that affects social interaction. Negura et al. (2019, p.1) confirm that "power is omnipresent in social interactions". That is, "there is and can be no interaction without power" (Victoria, 2009, p.131).

Consequently, power plays a significant part in everyday interactions, especially when there is a disparity between the participants. As unique forms of institutional discourse, police interviews represent an excellent example of power asymmetry because the institutional positions of the participants vary

significantly. As asserted by Shuy (1998), police interviews are characterized by "the inequality of status and power of the police interrogator and the suspect" (p.178). Such asymmetrical power essentially imposes restrictions on the participants' contributions (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 25).

Police interviews involve various strategies that have been studied by different scholars; however, the researcher has not found a clear-cut framework of analysis for the strategies that designate power and resistance. Therefore, she tried her best to gather suspect power strategies (henceforth SUPS) and put them into a framework of analysis. In addition, these strategies represent an upper term that cannot be measured by themselves, so they need tools or devices to be represented and manifested in discourse. The present study seeks to bridge this gap by pinpointing power strategies and recognizing the manifestations of these strategies in discourse, particularly in the selected data.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Sociopragmatics

Sociopragmatics is an approach to the study of language and discourse (Angermuller et al., 2014, p. 259). Leech (1983) is one of the first linguists to recognize sociopragmatics as a crucial component of general pragmatics. He subdivides general pragmatics into two areas: *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics*. The former refers to the linguistic part of pragmatics that constitutes "the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions", i.e., the relation between pragmatics and grammar. The latter refers to the "sociological interface of pragmatics", i.e., the relation between pragmatics and sociology. It is based on the language used in different cultures and different social situations. In other words, sociopragmatics is more concerned with how discourse relates to specific "local conditions on language use" like social classes, gender, power, etc. (p.10-11).

In social interaction, language is determined by the social context in which it is used. In other words, people use language differently in different social situations. Sociopragmatics highlights the interaction between language and its social context. Culpeper (2011, p. 1) proposes that sociopragmatics is that part of pragmatics that "concerns itself with any aspect of the social context". Swann et al. (2004, p.247) suggest another view of sociopragmatics, emphasizing the "social or cultural factors that influence language use", i.e., how language is subjected to social factors such as power, gender, and authority.

A sociopragmatic approach is adopted in the present study rather than pragmatics proper because pragmatics alone is believed to be insufficient for its purpose. Mey (2009) states that "pragmatics does not suffice to explain the intricate interface of language and the law". He justifies his view by asserting that the relationship between the two disciplines "cannot be reduced to a simple combination of a few pragmatic concepts". Consequently, legal contexts such as courtroom interactions or police interviews (henceforth PIs) require a multidisciplinary and broader approach. He asserts that a sociopragmatic explanation in terms of power is essential in this regard. The relevance of this approach to the data under scrutiny is derived from the fact that the relation between power and language requires a kind of study that accounts for the social situation (p. 518).

2.2 Police Interviews

A PI is a unique type of interviews that differs from the everyday conversation because it involves both getting "accurate, relevant and complete information" from the suspects on the one hand, and imparting information to keep them informed about what is happening and what will happen next, on the other hand (Schollum, 2005, p.10). Royal and Schutt (1976, p.21) define police interviewing as "the art and mechanics of questioning for the purpose of exploring or resolving issues". For Bruijnes et al. (2015), a PI is "a situation of conflict" since suspects usually do not cooperate with the POI, who, in

general, behaves in a confronting manner. However, the police interviewer (henceforth POI) has the challenging task of convincing the suspect to "cooperate and tell the truth in an interview: resolve the conflict" (p. 318).

PIs are distinctive forms of institutional discourse. Heydon (2005) explains why PIs are categorized as "institutional discourse". She maintains that PI's "institutionality is constructed through the participants' interaction as they negotiate the organizational goals" (p.4). Correspondingly, she argues that the institutionality of PIs is derived from the participants' identities rather than the setting of interaction (p.37).

2.3 Suspect Power

PIs provide a rich source of power asymmetry as there are significant differences in the participants' institutional roles or social statuses; POIs have the privilege of legitimate authority and status in contrast to suspects. Still, power is not entirely one-sided, i.e., power is not limited to POIs. Instead, "all participants have access to certain resources of power that enable the interaction to be controlled". Namely, the increase of power for one participant does not necessarily mean that others will "lose" it. For example, in addition to the POI's right to ask questions, suspects have the power of withholding responses to those questions (Heydon, 2005, p.13). Aptly noted by Conley and O'Barr (2005): "power may exclude, but those excluded remain on the scene, ready to turn local-level episodes of oppression into moments of resistance" (p.10). Likewise, Negm (2015) maintains that "power and resistance of power are inseparable"; it is often the case that the exercise of power stimulates resistance to such power. He also insists that power is "a two-way dyadic interactive relation rather than a one-way relation" since no participant is entirely more powerful than the others. Besides, he assures the idea that "power shifts from one participant to another" simply because no participant remains powerful during the entire interaction (p.285).

Accordingly, suspects are "not completely powerless participants" in the speech event of PIs. Even when they are in a completely powerless situation, they can "employ strategies of resistance despite the asymmetry of power". Some specialists like Philips (1998), Heydon (2005), Seligson (2009), and others suggest a number of strategies which are briefly explained below:

1.   Providing Information

Suspects often try to resist accusations and prove their innocence by providing additional information and presenting evidence. Heydon (2005, p,100) argues that by providing "multi-component answers", suspects sometimes initiate new topics or change the current ones. They provide additional unrequired information, while in fact, the POIs require more direct responses. In other words, suspects are able to minimize POIs' power over the interaction by "initiating a new topic and providing information not requested", (p.178), for example:

> (1)   *POI: What sort of connection do you have to the shop?*
>   *Suspect: Nothing. <u>Betty and I, we've been together for nine years</u>.*
>   *POI: Who's Betty?* (Heydon, 2005, p. 101).

2.   Repetition

Repetition is another striking strategy of resistance. Seligson (2009) believes that using repetition in situations of asymmetrical power relations can empower the suspect to defend himself and resist the POIs. He observes that there are two types of repetition: "self-repetition" and "allo-repetition", i.e., repeating others. Moreover, suspects can either utilize an exact repetition or paraphrase. He adds that by repetition, suspects barely add any new information to their answers; yet, they sound as if they were behaving in "a cooperative manner with the authorities" (p.91-2), for instance:

> *(2)* **Suspect***: She must have known something really sparked him off to <u>get me going like that. Something had to be going.</u>*
>
> **POI***: What happened then?*
>
> **POI***: <u>She get me going to do something like that</u>* (Heydon, 2005, p. 105).

3. Mitigation

Mitigation denotes that the suspects, while telling their side of the story, attempt to reduce the seriousness of the circumstances .They, for instance, intend "to remove blame from themselves and, in some cases, to put it onto others". Additionally, they may depict their actions in a way that reflects them as moral and blameless. They try to defend their purpose as merely human so as to be viewed positively by POIs (Philips 1998, p.93), for example:

> *(3)* **Suspect***: "Yeah. There's a big difference. I mean, I shouldn't have went with my gut and just stayed out of it. But I'm <u>not that type of person. If I see somebody needs help, I try to help</u>"* (Appendix B. Case 2).

4. Fragmented Style

Suspects can hold information to resist police questioning by the use of fragmented style strategy. Seligson (2009, p.80) asserts that this strategy is marked by "brief, unelaborated answers to questions" instead of the required narrative detailed answers. That is, the delivered answers are not as satisfactory as needed. Accordingly, this strategy denotes uncooperativeness. In the example below, the suspect provides only part of the truth.

> *(4)* **POI***: "So what did you do when you got home?"*
>
> **Suspect***: "<u>I just went to bed</u>"* (Appendix A. Case 1).

5. Obscurity

Obscurity refers to the process whereby suspects provide answers to questions that can be "uninterpretable or obscure", making no sense and contributing nothing to the account of events. That is, suspects tend to be uncooperative (Philips 1998, p.93). Seligson (2009) calls this strategy: "the use of vague and euphemistic language" because it is mainly characterized by the use of vague and unspecific expressions (p.88). This strategy is also referred to by Fairclough (2015) as "ambiguity or ambivalence". He affirms that it can be effective in the hands of those with less power when dealing with those with more power (p. 150). The example below is related to the previous one, where the suspect uses obscurity strategy, saying:

> *(5)* **Suspect***: "yeah but it wasn't sort of the only reason I didn't sort of say it because if I's said it, it would've looked sort of more suspicious"* (Carter, 2011, p.119).

6. Denial

Denial can be utilized by suspects when they "often directly deny some element of a crime for which there must be evidence" (Philips 1998, p.93). Hence, they refuse to cooperate and reject to admit that they have done something wrong, for instance:

(6) ***POI:*** *So we got an independent witness that says you hit him.*

           Suspect: *<u>No, I didn't hit</u>. I missed him. <u>I didn't even touch him NEVER come into contact</u> <u>with</u>* (Carter, 2011, p.116)**.**

7. No Comment

      No comment strategy is highly dependent on the suspects' Miranda rights, i.e., the right to remain silent and refuse to answer questions posed to them by POIs. Accordingly, "suspects do not have to say anything" if they are not willing to (Stokoe et al., 2014, p. 1). Within the context of PIs, the practice of this legal right has a significant role in terms of "power asymmetry and the suspect's resistance to power"; suspects' silence or 'no comment' response indicates the "lack of cooperation" in interaction (Nakane, 2014, p. 14). The following examples indicate this strategy:

      (7)   ***POI****: Last night, Peters was assaulted quite badly and I believe that you were there and you obviously I believe that you saw what went on.*

            Suspect*: [<u>Silence</u>]*

            POI*: Can you tell us what happened?* (Carter, 2011, p. 125).

      (8)   ***POI:*** *Is there anything else that you said to that security guard?*

            Suspect: *<u>No comment</u>* (Stokoe et al., 2014, p. 13).

3. METHODOLOGY

      The current research utilizes a mixed-methods approach in a form of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This combination causes both methods to complete and strengthen each other, resulting in a "richer and more comprehensive" research (Neuman, 2014, p.167; Creswell, 2009, p.203). The qualitative part of this research is represented by sociopragmatically examining the concept of power in selected American PIs. Meanwhile, the quantitative part includes using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) as a statistical tool to enrich the findings of the study, support the researcher's interpretation, and avoid bias or subjectivity.

      The data collection followed in the current research is internet-based. At first, the researcher searched for data and found about **(94)** scripts of PIs. Later, following specific criteria, she downsized these interviews into three video-recorded PIs. The selected data includes publicly available scripts of three American PIs with murder suspects. The website from which the data are obtained is (https://criminalwords.net/police-interrogation-transcripts/), whereby videos of the PIs along with their scripts are published using three links within this website.

  The following criteria are taken into account:

  First, the current study focuses exclusively on real video-recorded PIs documented "as part of the standard police procedure" and then published on YouTube (de Pablos-Ortega, 2019, p. 9).

  Second, all the data include male suspects in order to avoid any interference of gender differences in the interpretation of results.

  Third, the data include suspects who would later be proved to be guilty. The reason is to assess the truthfulness of a confession and the observance or non-observance of Grice's maxims.

  Forth, all texts deal with suspects who are accused of murder rather than other types of crimes such as robbery, sexual assault, or fraud offenses; the aim is to avoid the impact of crime type on the intensity of suspects' resistance. In the present cases, they are all murderers.

      Regarding the analysis model, the researcher has developed a suitable model that embraces two layers to cope with the nature of the targeted data and the aims of the study. The first layer is composed of SUPS (cf. 2.3.2), while the second layer is composed of devices that assist in the manifestation of these

strategies in discourse. Thereby, the study has selected specific devices out of certain models of powerful interaction, namely those of Fairclough (1992, 2015) and Cotterill (2003). These models are closely related to the strategies resisting power. The selected devices include **questions, topic management, silence, cooperative principle(CP), formulation, hedges,** and **politeness**.

4. DATA ANALYSIS
4.1 Analysis of Case 1

The murder of Yeardley Love, George Huguely's ex-girlfriend, is the focus of the ensuing investigation. Yeardley and George were both University of Virginia students. They were also members of the lacrosse team at college. The couple's relationship was turbulent, with frequent fights, excessive alcohol consumption, and domestic abuse. One week before the assassination, Yeardley supposedly sent George messages, stating that she had sexual relations with another man when she was out of town. After a few days, they found themselves face to face in a bar. Yeardley then aggressively stormed into George's apartment. Because she was violent, one of his roommate's girlfriends had to evict her. After the last fight, Yeardley refused to speak to George. However, he attempted to email her several times to talk about what had happened. On 2 May 2010, after a heavy drinking day, George decided to leave the bar and go to Yeardley's apartment. Shortly after midnight, he entered Yeardley's apartment through the front door. After discovering that Yeardley would not allow him to go to his apartment, he kicked a hole and hit his arm to open the door. He began to argue with Yeardley about the previous events that had irritated him, though she yelled at him to leave and leave her alone. George said he shook her and wrestled with her in an attempt to calm her down. Then he threw her onto the bed and walked away. When Yeardley's roommate returned at 2:15 a.m., she found the body and called the cops. On 30 August 2012, Huguely was officially convicted for the second-degree murder conviction for 23 years. In the following PI, the participants are George Huguely, the suspect, and two police investigators ("Murder of Yeardley Love",2021).

Illustrative Excerpt

- **"Investigator2:** *We can stop each one of us. I know we touched about what happened last night but sum it up for me. Lead up to it for me, how did you guys break up exactly? Why?*
- **George Huguely**: *Why?* <u>**Well we are, not, the same as we were before and I'm going… well she wants to move to New York and I'm not exactly sure what I'm doing yet but wanna go to San Francisco. And um so we've been like talking about this. Found a text message in my phone from another girl and then we broke up because of that. So like, an ongoing type deal…**</u>
- **Investigator2:** *Cause funny that you mention putting your hands around her neck and holding her back that way. Is that another reason you two broke up? And the arguments, any past physical violence?*
- **George Huguely**: <u>**Um that happened…**</u>
- **Investigator2:** *Keep in mind, before we talk to you we've to talk to other people too.*
- **George Huguely**: *No.* <u>**I understand that. I mean, that night that she found the text messages in my phone, I was more drunk than I probably have ever been. And she did the same thing like yelling at me and hitting me and I'm drunk. And I actually laid on her, like detained on her kind of, and she ended up leaving but that happened that night…**</u>
- **Investigator2:** *How did you detain her?*
- **George Huguely**: *I mean, sir, like that night I was…*

- ***Investigator2:** Did you get all off her yourself or did other people have to get you off of here?*
- ***George Huguely**: Uh, <u>I, really don't remember that night… at all"</u>*

(Appendix A, Case 1)

Regardless of the strength of the evidence against him, the suspect maintains his position and disagrees with the investigator's proposed accusations. Although he is deprived of completing his turn and being interrupted by the investigator for four times. he utilizes three strategies in three of his turns to resist confessing his domestic harassment of the victim the week before the assassination. These strategies are:

1. Providing Information

The suspect intentionally utilizes *providing information* strategy to signal his cooperation on the one hand and to mislead the investigator by providing him with irrelevant and unnecessary details on the other hand*.*

Four power devices manifest this strategy: *topic management*, *observance and violation of CP,* and *hedges*. Initially, he *changes the topic* by asserting that they, George and Yardley, are not the same as they were before, explaining this shift in their relationship by stating that they have decided to travel to different places, "***<u>Well</u> we are, not, as the same we were before and I'm going… <u>well</u> she wants to move to New York and <u>I'm not exactly sure</u> what I'm doing yet but wanna go to San Francisco. And um so we've been like talking about this".*** His answer also represents a *violation of the relation and quality maxims* as he presents unrelated and fake reasons. Moreover, to enhance his answer's tentativeness and fuzziness, he employs the *three hedging expressions* underlined above. Then, he adds another reason saying, "***Found a text message in my phone from another girl and then we broke up because of that"***, wherein he *observes the maxims of relation and quality* as he tells part of the relevant and appropriate answer,

2. Mitigation

George adheres to *mitigation* strategy to reduce his crime's seriousness and escape the responsibility of his offense. Although he admits to laying on the investigator, he attempts to shift the blame away from himself and put it onto Yeardley, claiming that she behaved aggressively towards him when she discovered his phone's text messages. Meanwhile, he was heavily intoxicated.

He exploits *hedges* to assist in the manifestation of this strategy. To avoid commitment to what he says and to enhance the uncertainty of his answer, he uses the six underlined hedging expressions in ***"I <u>understand</u> that. I <u>mean</u>, that night that she found the text messages in my phone, I was <u>more drunk than</u> I <u>probably</u> have ever been. And she did the same thing like yelling at me and hitting me and I'm drunk. And I <u>actually</u> laid on her, like detained on her <u>kind of</u>, and she ended up leaving".***

3. Denial

The suspect's final exchange, "***I, I really don't remember that night…at all",*** exemplifies the use of *denial strategy*. His *denial* is manifested via the *violation of the quality maxim* as he protects himself by knowingly providing misleading facts because he remembers that night.

4.2 Analysis of Case 2

In Louisville's Shelby Park neighborhood, Jodie Cecil and Bryan Greenwell were convicted of murdering a woman and leaving her husband badly wounded. The victims were Derrell Wilson and Jennifer Cain, who were Jodie and Bryan's neighbors. On May 13, 2016, Jennifer Cain had several gunshot wounds and died due to her injuries. Meanwhile, Derrell Wilson was rescued from certain death and played a vital role in the suspects' confession. According to police reports, Derrell Wilson, who was

still hospitalized and in poor health, claimed that Jodie and Bryan were both actively involved in the assault. During the PI, the suspects were shown a recording of Derrell Wilson and a police officer. Once confronted with the victim's audio recording of the allegation, Bryan and Jodie claimed that their neighbors were involved in a domestic violence incident, and they rushed to help. Rather than calming down the situation, as they presumably intended, Derrell and Jennifer ended up being shot by Bryan. Jodie stated that there was a fight over the gun, whereas Bryan said he freaked out and did not realize what had happened. The participants of the following PI are the suspect, Bryan Greenwell, and the investigator. The aim is to identify the guilty person and to obtain a confession from Bryan (Lee, 2019a).

Illustrative Excerpt

- *"**Investigator:** Mm-Hm. It was strip clubs, you're right. Alright, um, what do you actually know about what happened over there? What have you heard? What do you know?*
- *Bryan Greenwell: <u>**I just heard that somebody got shot, somebody got killed or something like that**</u>. Then <u>**we stayed away for a couple days**</u> because that's when I found out that supposedly they were there for her, and us, <u>**you know what I'm saying**</u>? It was supposed to be us. I was like, <u>**you know**</u>, um, we made the decision <u>**to stay away for a couple of days**</u> because hell, somebody wanted to talk to her they, the landlord knew her phone number, her cell phone number, knew her name, everything else. <u>**Nobody ever tried to contact us**</u>. At least, as far as I know, <u>**nobody ever tried to contact us**</u>. Which I mean the house, the apartment wasn't even, it was her apartment, wasn't in my name, or nothing like that.*
- *Investigator: Right. Alright. Did you know that there were two victims there? Did you know that?*
- *Bryan Greenwell: <u>**No.**</u>*
- *Investigator: Both of those two people I showed you.*
- *Bryan Greenwell: <u>**No, they told me it was just the... uh... lady.**</u>*
- *Investigator: Well, both of them were shot. And uh, this is what I want to show you".*

(Appendix B, Case 2)

This excerpt covers three turns in relation to the suspect's part. Each turn implicates the utilization of certain power strateg(ies). The first turn involves two strategies: *obscurity* and *providing information*. The second turn includes *denial* strategy, whereas the last turn incorporates the use of *fragmented style* strategy. All in all, to resist the investigator's power, the suspect employs four power strategies:

1. Obscurity

When asked about what he has heard regarding the night of the murder, Bryan pretends to be ignorant "***I just heard that <u>somebody</u> got shot, <u>somebody</u> got killed or <u>something like that</u>***". In this line, he uses *obscurity* strategy as manifested by two power devices: *hedges* and *violation of CP*. First, to increase the ambiguity of his answer, he uses the above underlined three *hedging expressions*. Second, by being obscure and vague, Bryan *violates the maxim of manner*.

2. Providing Information

Within the first turn, *providing information* is the second power strategy employed by the suspect to escape confessing the crime and resist the investigator's control. This strategy is manifested through three power devices: *topic management*, *violation of CP,* and *politeness*.

Firstly, *topic management* is a parent in the *topic change* device wherein Bryan shifts again to talk about the dope issue. He tries to gear the conversation in another direction so as to avoid the investigator's demand for more accurate and direct information.

Secondly, *violation of CP* is manifested as he deliberately *violates the maxim of relation* when he talks about an unrelated topic and provides additional and unrequired information. The *maxim of a quantity* is also violated since Bryan repeats certain utterances more than once and more than needed only to sound cooperative. For instance, **"we stayed away for a couple days… to stay away for a couple of days her"**; "**phone number, her cell phone number**"; *"Nobody ever tried to contact us… nobody ever tried to contact us"*. Finally, he *violates the manner maxim* because he is neither brief nor orderly in presenting his account of events.

Lastly, Bryan uses *positive politeness* when he asserts a common ground with the investigator using the expression "**you know what I'm saying?"**. He does so to convey the idea that he is cooperative.

3. Denial

By answering the investigator's question in **"Did you know that there were two victims there?"** with only one word, "**No**"*,* Bryan utilizes *denial* strategy to resist the investigator's power. This strategy is realized by the *violation of quality maxim* because he lies when he denies knowing the victims.

4. Fragmented Style

Bryan moves from the previous strategy of denial to another one, the strategy of *fragmented style*, as he claims that he knows only about the lady rather than both victims, saying, "**No, they told me it was just the... uh... lady".** *Fragmented* style is manifested by *the violation of quantity maxims* because he is less informative than is required. It worth mentioning that this excerpt demonstrates the suspect as resistant since no signs of powerlessness are detected.

4.3 Analysis of Case 3

The murder of Savannah Gold on August 2, 2017, is the focus of the subsequent investigation. Rodarte worked as a chef and manager at the Bone Fish restaurant when he slew 21-year-old Savannah, a waitress there, in his car in the parking lot. Though he dated other women, Rodarte was known to have an off-and-and-on relationship with Savannah. Immediately after the murder, he sent the victim's brother and mother misspelled text messages saying she was traveling with a boyfriend. Security cameras captured the incident, but investigators were unable to see what happened inside the car. When questioned by police, Lee initially denied any information, but three days later, he confessed that he cut off her tire and killed her. Then he directed the police to her corpse in a Westside pond. The medical examiner could not determine the exact cause of Savannah's assassination, but he labeled it as violent murder. Later, Lee was captured and charged with assassination. He was sentenced to 24 years in prison for second-degree murder in February of 2021. In the following PI, the participants are Lee Rodarte, the suspect, and two police detectives, Reeves and Sally. The detectives' speeches are perceived as referring to one participant in the analysis because both deal with police power (Lee, 2019b).

Illustrative Excerpt

- **"Detective 1**: Your feelings in it? I don't really care about your feelings. What I care about finding her. So, where is she?*
- *Lee Rodarte: I don't know where she is.*
- *Detective 1: Where is Savannah?*
- *Lee Rodarte: I don't know.*
- *Detective 1: I need to know Savannah is so I can let her family is.*
- *Lee Rodarte: I don't know where she is.*
- *Detective 1: You don't know because you had something done with her and you weren't involved with that part? I don't know. Tell me something. What can I work with?*

- ▪ *Lee Rodarte: <u>I told you the last time I saw her.</u>*
- ▪ *Detective 2: That's not true because we have proof. We have proof. And that's why we're sitting here, Lee. At this point where we need this for her. I mean, I look at that little girl and I think of my little girl. My little girl that's her age. That's who I think about. If that was my little girl, I couldn't imagine. I don't care what she said about you or whatever. But my little girl is that age.*
- ▪ *Lee Rodarte: <u>[Silence]"</u>*

(Appendix C. Case 3)

Prior to this excerpt, the suspect agrees with the detective's description, **"that's pretty cheap",** regarding concealing Savannah's whereabouts. However, he adds nothing and never admits his guilt. Accordingly, he exploits three strategies to resist the detective's power.

1. Denial

The suspect does not respond to the detective except with *denials*; he repeatedly denies, saying, **"I don't know where she is".** In order to manifest his *denial*, Lee *violates the quality maxim* by deliberately lying to mislead the detective. Lee is aware of Savannah's place, but he keeps it a secret.

2. Repetition

The suspect uses *repetition strategy* three times, each of which is labeled as a self-repetition since he repeats his own denials. First, he says, **"I don't know",** in response to the detective's question of where Savannah is. Again when the detective recycles the same topic, Lee repeats his denial saying, **"I don't know where she is"**. Lastly, when the detective asks Lee: **"Tell me something. What can I work with?"**, Lee insistently answers: **"I told you the last time I saw her".** Again he takes up his turn and comfortably repeats the same thing. The three occurrences of *repetition* are manifested via *formulation*, more precisely, repeating *what has been said.*

3. No Comment

The suspect's last turn in this excerpt entails his refrain from reacting to the detective's accusation; therefore, he uses *no comment strategy*. That is, he neither agrees nor defends himself; instead, he makes use of his right to remain silent. The *intentional silence* device manifests the strategy because he purposefully refuses to provide an answer.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Power Strategies

The frequency and percentage of occurrence of SUPS in all cases are displayed in Table (1). The overall results show that *denial* strategy outnumbers other strategies. It is the most prevalent strategy in the data recording 106 times (27.89 %). *No comment* strategy, on the contrary, is the least used, as it only records 19 times (5 %). This result is congruent with the qualitative analysis because The suspects are realized to be obstinate and elusive in their refusal to confess the murder; they fight tirelessly to avoid confession and hide their prearranged plan to murder. Meanwhile, they are less likely to use *no comment* strategy, possibly because they do not want to be perceived as uncooperative; as a silent response to a question requesting information can be interpreted as a refusal to cooperate, or because they prefer to make denials using pre-prepared statements to defend themselves. Other strategies are arranged by percentage from the highest to lowest depending on the suspects' goals as follows: *repetition* (85 times, 22.37%), *obscurity* (54 times, 14.21%), *fragmented style* (42 times, 11.05%), *providing information* (41 times, 10.79%), and *mitigation* (33 times, 8.68%).

Table 1

The Frequency and Percentage of SUPS in All PIs

No.	Strategy	Fr.	Pr.
1.	Denial	106	27.89%
2.	Repetition	85	22.37%
3.	Obscurity	54	14.21%
4.	Fragmented Style	42	11.05%
5.	Providing Information	41	10.79%
6.	Mitigation	33	8.68%
7.	No Comment	19	5.00%
Total		380	100%

The statistical tool of One-Way ANOVA is employed to examine SUPS. Table (2) below displays the mean of the overall analysis of these strategies and their minimum and maximum occurrences. It reveals that *denial* has the highest mean of occurrences (35.33) and *no comment* has the lowest mean of occurrences (6.33); as such, the results are consistent with and support the prior analysis. This table is used to calculate One-Way ANOVA statistics.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of SUPS

Descriptive				
Strategy	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Denial	3	35.33	12	55
Repetition	3	28.33	7	50
Obscurity	3	18.00	12	22
Mitigation	3	11.00	5	15
Fragmented	3	14.00	10	22
Providing Information	3	13.67	6	25
No Comment	3	6.33	0	18
Total	21	18.10	0	55

Table 3

Difference Analysis of SUPS

One Way ANOVA						
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F		P. value
				Calculated	Tabulated	
Between Groups	1881.143	6	313.524	1.76	2.51	0.178

Within Groups	2482.667	14	177.333			
Total	4363.810	20				

The findings, shown in Table (3), indicate that the calculated value of (F) for the strategies is (1.76), which is smaller than the tabulated value of (2.51) at two degrees of freedom (20,7). At the same time, the P. value amounts to (0.178), which is greater than the significance level of (0.05), signifying that there are no statistically significant differences between SUPS in impact. The findings show that the suspects can effectively leverage all SUPS to counteract and resist police power. This finding agrees with the quantitative analysis, as the suspects employ a variety of strategies rather than relying on a single strategy. In other words, they transition from one to the next in their ongoing attempts to avoid admitting guilt.

5.2 The Devices of Power Strategies

The following section presents the analysis of the devices that are used to manifest SUPS.

1. Denial

Denial is manifested in discourse through four devices, including *violation of CP*, *formulation*, *politeness,* and *questions*. *Violation of CP* represents the most prominent device recording 111 times (73.02%). It comprises four maxims: *quality* as the most dominant (98 times, 88.22%), followed by *quantity* (10 times, 9%), and *relation* (3 times, 2.71%); *manner* has no occurrences. *Formulation* achieves the second rate (26 times, 17.11%). It involves two types: *what has been said* and *what is implied.* The former is only used recording 26 times (100%), whereas the latter registers zero occurrences. *Politeness* is ranked third recording 9 times (5.93%). It includes three strategies: *positive politeness* as the most frequent (7 times, 77.78%), followed by *bald on record politeness* (2 times, 22.22%); *negative politeness* is not used. Finally*, questions* achieve the last rate (6 times, 3.94%). It is observed that only *declarative-cross Q.* are employed; other types are not used.

2. Repetition

Repetition is manifested through three devices: *formulation*, *violation of CP,* and *politeness*. *Formulation* achieves the highest rate (85 times, 46.45%). It involves two types: *what has been said* and *what is implied.* The former is only used recording 85 times (100%), whereas the latter registers zero occurrences. *Violation of CP* records the second rate recording 81 times (44.27%). It comprises four maxims: *quantity* as the most prevalent (65 times, 80.24%), followed by *manner* (16 times, 19.76%); *quality* and *relation* have no occurrences. Lastly*, politeness* comes in third rank recording 17 times (9.28%). It embraces three strategies: *positive politeness* as the most dominant (16 times, 14.11%), followed by *negative politeness* (1 time, 5.88%); *bald on record politeness* is not utilized.

3. Obscurity

Obscurity is manifested via three devices: *hedges, violation of CP,* and *politeness*. *Hedges* record the highest rate of 176 times (73.94%). *Violation of CP* records the second rate recording 61 times (25.63%). It embraces four maxims: *manner* as the most prevalent (55 times, 90.16%), followed by *quality* (6 times, 9.84%); *quantity* and *relation* have no occurrences. Lastly*, politeness* comes in the third rank, recording only 1 time (0.43%) using *positive politeness. Negative* and *bald on record politeness* are not exploited.

4. Fragmented Style

Three devices manifest *fragmented style*: *violation of CP, hedges,* and *politeness. Violation of CP* records the highest rate with 37 times (50.69%). It embraces four maxims: *quantity* as the most dominant

(24 times, 64.86%), followed by *quality* (13 times, 35.14%); *relation* and *manner* have no occurrences. *Hedges* record the second rate with 30 times (41.09%). *Politeness* ranks last recording 6 times (8.22%) by using *positive politeness* (4 times, 66.67%) and *negative politeness* (2 times, 33.33%); *bald on record politeness* is not utilized.

5. Providing Information

Providing information is manifested through four devices: the *observance* and *violation of CP, hedges, topic management*, and *politeness*. As for *CP,* it achieves the highest rate recording 76 times (51.91%); observance amounts to 9 times (11.84%) whereas *violation* amounts to 67 times (88.16%). *Hedges* record the second rate with 30 times (21.27%). *Topic management* ranks third and amounts to 23 times (16.31%) using only *change*. Finally, *politeness* ranks last recording 12 times (8.51%) using only *positive politeness*; *negative* and *bald on record politeness* are not used.

6. Mitigation

As for *mitigation*, it is manifested through three devices: *hedges, formulation,* and *politeness*. *Hedges* ranks first with 54 times (51.93%). *Formulation* ranks second recording 25 times (24.03%). It includes two types: *what has been said* and *what is implied;* only the former is employed. *Politeness* is equal to formulation recording 25 times (24.03%). It involves using only *positive politeness* and *negative politeness* with 22 times (88%) and 3 times (12%) respectively.

7. No Comment

No comment strategy is manifested in discourse via *silence* device, primarily *intentional silence* since it records 19 times (100%) in contrast to *unintentional silence*, which has zero presence in the data.

The analyses of the seven strategies exhibit the prominent devices of each strategy. Tables (4 and 5) draw a comparison between these analyses.

Table 4

The Overall Analysis of Devices in SUPS

Power Device / Power Strategy		Questions		Topic Management		Silence		Formulation		Cooperative Principle		Hedges		Politeness	
		Fr.	Pr.	Fr.	Pr.	Fr.	Pr.	Fr.	Pr.	Fr.	Pr.	Fr.	Pr.	Fr.	Pr.
Suspect Power	Denial	6	100%	0	0%	0	0%	26	19.12%	111	30.33%	0	0%	9	12.85%
	Providing Information	0	0%	23	100%	0	0%	0	0%	76	20.77%	30	10.35%	12	17.14%
	Repetition	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	85	62.51%	81	22.13%	0	0%	17	24.29%
	Mitigation	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	25	18.37%	0	0%	54	18.62%	25	35.71%

Fragmented Style	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	37	10.11%	30	10.35%	6	8.58%
Obscurity	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	61	16.66%	176	60.68%	1	1.43%
No Comment	0	0%	0	0%	19	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	6	100.00%	23	100.00%	19	100.00%	136	100.00%	366	100.00%	290	100.00%	70	100.00%

Table 5

The Devices of SUPS

No.	Power Devices	Fr.	Pr.
1	**Cooperative Principle**	399	42.31%
2	**Hedges**	290	30.76%
3	**Formulation**	136	14.43%
4	**Politeness**	70	7.42%
5	**Topic Management**	23	2.44%
6	**Silence**	19	2.01%
7	**Questions**	6	0.63%
	Total	943	100.00%

The analysis reveals the following results:

1. **Cooperative Principle and Its Maxims**

The adherence to the conversational maxims is required on the part of the suspects. Their typical role is to observe the maxims and respond accurately to the POIs' questions. In other words, the default requirement for the suspects is to provide accurate answers to the questions by satisfying all maxims adequately. However, the analysis implies that if the suspects refuse the adherence to the maxims and choose to violate them, then they practice one of the resistance strategies that designates power. The analysis suggests that observing these maxims is urged by the goal to be viewed as cooperative, whereas violating them is mainly motivated by the need to construct preferred versions of events. Accordingly, CP occupies the first rank among other devices and records 399 times (42.31%). It aids in manifesting all SUPS except for *mitigation* and *no comment*.

2. **Hedges**

Hedges are vital for manifesting SUPS; they rank second (290 times, 30.76 %) of all devices. They assist in manifesting four strategies as arranged by percentage from the highest to lowest as follows: *obscurity* (176 times, 60.68%), *mitigation* (54 times, 18.62%), *providing information* (30 times, 10.35%), and *fragmented style* (30 times, 10.35%) (see Tables 50-53).

A possible reason for this outcome is that the use of hedges generally correlates with less powerful participants. That is, the nature of PIs dictates power disparity between the two, POIs and suspects. Therefore, suspects resort to use hedges mainly to elude confession, mitigate their

responsibility, increase the fuzziness and vagueness of their responses, evade commitment to what they say, moderate the situation, and finally give the impression that they do not have the premeditation to kill.

3. Formulation

Formulation is ranked third on the scale in terms of manifesting SUPS. The rates illustrate that it records 136 times (14.43%). It used to manifest three SUPS, namely, *repetition* (85 times, 62.51%), *denial* (26 times, 19.12%), and *mitigation* (25 times, 18.37%). The suspects use formulation to build up their version of events while resisting the POIs' power. However, the results show that only *what has been said* is utilized, mostly because suspects insist on repeating their own statements to resist POIs' power.

4. Politeness

Tables (4) and (5) show that *politeness* occupies the fourth rank in manifesting SUPS since it records 70 times (7.42%). It is used to manifest all SUPS except for *no comment.* The highest rate of using *politeness* goes to *mitigation* since *politeness* is employed for 25 times making 35.71%. By comparison, the least rate goes to *obscurity* as *politeness* is exploited only 1 time making (1.43%). Other strategies vary in using *politeness* from 6 times (8.58%) up to 17 times (24.29%) depending on the suspects' aims.

The analysis shows that the majority of instances of using *politeness* by the suspects fall under *positive politeness*. The suspects mainly try to create a good relationship with the POIs in an attempt to create a mutual understanding. In contrast, *negative politeness* is used much lesser and primarily to express respect and deference so as to manipulate and resist police interviewers (POIs) and be perceived as friendly and cooperative as possible. *Bald on record politeness* is the least employed, maybe because the suspects try to avoid direct confrontation with the POIs while defending themselves.

5. Topic management

The analysis suspects can use this device to manifest *providing information* strategy by changing the current topic to another in order to resist POIs' power and evade confession. As such, it occupies the fifth rank among the devices of SUPS and amounts to 23 times (2.44%).

6. Silence

Since *no comment* strategy is deployed to suspects as part of their Miranda rights, *silence* is used to manifest this strategy. *Silence* occupies the penultimate rank as it records 19 times (2.01%). Although there are two types of silence, *intentional* and *unintentional*, only the former is used while the latter has zero occurrences because the suspects deliberately remain silent.

7. Questions

Questions occupy the lowest rank in manifesting SUPS; they are used only to manifest *denial* and record 6 times (0.63%) (see Tables 4 and 5). This result is attributable mainly to the suspects' pre-outlined role as respondents rather than interrogators, i.e., they do not have the right or authority to ask questions.

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the selected data, the study has arrived at the following conclusions:

1- Relying on the findings of the analysis, it has been deduced that power plays a significant role in the selection of these strategies and the degree of focus on one strategy more than others. The suspects have used almost all SUPS but with a special focus on *denial* strategy. The suspects are realized to be stubborn and evasive in their resistance to confess the crime; they work persistently to avoid

admission and conceal their predetermined intention to kill. Nevertheless, other strategies have been used in various frequencies and percentages wherein each strategy has a unique function to fulfill and helps suspects to maintain their positions and win the power struggle. Accordingly, the analysis reveals that hypothesis **No.1** is partially valid because *denial* is the most dominant strategy used by suspects, whereas *no comment* rather than *mitigation* is the least frequent strategy.

2- Contrary to expectations, the findings have shown that there are no statistically significant differences between suspect power strategies in impact. This suggests that all power strategies are employed interchangeably, and they complete each other. The suspects shift between their strategies to resist POIs' power as much as possible and escape confessing the crime. As such, all the strategies are of equal importance, and the difference in frequencies and percentages is a matter of focus. Hence, hypothesis **No.2** is refuted.

3- The analysis indicates that SUPS are manifested in discourse through certain devices, including *CP, hedges, formulation, politeness, topic management*, *questions*, and *silence*. Thereupon, the findings obviously verify hypothesis **No.3**.

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APPENDICES:

- **Appendix A: George Huguely Police Interview**

https://criminalwords.net/2019/09/09/george-huguely-police-interrogation/

- **Appendix B: Bryan Greenwell Police Interview**

https://criminalwords.net/2019/09/11/bryan-greenwell-interrogation-transcript/

- **Appendix C: Lee Rodarte Police Interview**

https://criminalwords.net/2019/09/15/lee-rodarte-interrogation-transcript