Power Dynamics in Police Interviews: A Comparison Between Witness and Suspect Interviews in Canada

Major Research Paper (MRP)

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1. Introduction

Interviewing is a critical component in police investigation and the judicial process. As a type of institutional discourse, police interviews are asymmetrical talks, in which participants are expected to speak and act within their own institutional and discursive role (Thornborrow 2002). In general, the interviewers have more power to influence and control the interaction through different discursive practices (Fairclough 1989; Thornborrow 2002), such as the selection of topics, the choice of question types, including questioning sequences, and the overall control of the duration of talk by other participants. However, it is not uncommon to see resistance from the interviewees too. There are typically two types of police interviews: interviews of suspects and interviews of victims or witnesses. Despite the different goals and purposes, studies have shown that suspect and witness interviews in Canada share similar features, such as the dominance of the interviewers, reliance on closed-ended questions and frequent interruptions from the interviewers to name a few. These practices raise concerns as they can contaminate interviewees' memory and may lead to false confessions (Snook *et al*. 2012; King & Snook 2009; Wright & Alison 2004).

With limited studies focusing on victim or witness interviews, the resistance strategies of interviewees and, more generally, police interviews in Canada, this major research paper explores power constructions and resistance in interviews of suspects and witnesses in Canada through a high-profile murder case. Section 2 discusses some relevant literature related to the theoretical frameworks and police interviews in Canada and defines some key concepts. Section 3 introduces the data and the data collection, transcription and coding process. Section 4 focuses on the analysis of individual interviews, with excerpts from the data. Section 5 compares the discursive features across interviews. Finally, Section 6 summarizes the findings and briefly discusses the limitations and future research ideas.

2. Literature Review

To better facilitate the analysis, it is essential to understand more about the theoretical frameworks of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and conversation analysis (CA), define the key concepts of "power" and "institutional discourse" and discuss some relevant research in police interviews in Canada.

2.1. Analytical Frameworks: Critical Discourse Analysis & Conversation Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), also known as critical discourse studies (CDS), is the "discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk 2015: 466). It is a multidisciplinary theoretical framework that could be found in all areas of discourse studies. Some of the general properties of CDA include: it primarily focuses on social and political problems, explains discourse structures in terms of social interaction and social structure and, in particular, emphasizes how discourse structures enact, reproduce or challenge relations of power abuse in society, among others (van Dijk 2015; Fairclough & Wodak 1997). There are two levels of approaches in the CDA framework of van Dijk (2015): the micro- and the macro-level. The micro-level consists of language use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication, whereas the macro-level consists of power, dominance and inequality. One of the goals of CDA is to bridge the societal macro-micro gap in order to achieve a unified critical analysis and eventually act as the force against the discursive abuse of power.

Conversation analysis (CA) is an interdisciplinary field founded by Emanuel Schegloff, Harvey Sacks and Gail Jefferson, with the overall aim of discovering the underlying structures in naturally occurring social interactions (Sidnell & Stivers 2013). It is also an inductive qualitative

method ideal for understanding the structures of talk-in-interactions, from everyday conversations to institutional talks, such as telephone conversations, courtroom examinations, classroom interactions and new interviews. To conduct a CA analysis, it is essential to turn a spontaneous interaction into a detailed CA transcription, which captures not only what is said but also how something is said (Hepburn & Bolden 2013). The transcription captures micro-details of talk such as timing, sequential position, speech delivery, intonation and visual behaviours. In addition, CA analysis also concerns the aspects of turn-taking, sequence organization and repair in conversations. By examining the structures of social interaction in individual cases, the ultimate goal is to generalize the identified patterns across cases (Sidnell & Stivers 2013: 2).

2.2. Key Concepts: Power & Institutional Discourse

The central notion of CDA is power or social power of groups or institutions, which van Dijk (1995, 2008b, 2015) defines in terms of control. In general, the dominating groups have higher chances to directly and indirectly control other groups. Controls might not be exercised in obvious acts of abuses, but through controlling the contexts and discourse structures and manipulating people's minds and actions (van Dijk 1995). Such power might even be considered "natural" (van Dijk 2015) and taken for granted in our daily life (Foucault 1980).

Giddens (1982) argues that power is not given by others. A person is already granted access to some forms of power by merely participating in an interaction (Giddens 1982). Heydon (2005: 12) further views power as something residing within language that forms part of the interaction. In the context of police interviews, participants have access to some resources to control the interaction. For instance, a suspect can choose to withhold information to manipulate the information-gathering process (Heydon 2005: 12-13). However, power is not absolute but relative. An increase in power and control in one participant does not diminish the power of the other, as

participants can always use their resources to consolidate their power (Heydon 2005: 13). Going back to the example of the police interview, if a suspect refuses to answer a question, the officer can always increase control to pin down an answer.

In Fairclough's (1989) approach, there are two aspects of power relationships: 'power in discourse' and 'power behind discourse'. 'Power in discourse' refers to the power relations enacted and exercised. It is an "unequal encounter" consisting of the powerful participants controlling and constraining the contribution of the non-powerful ones (Fairclough 1989: 44). It is concerned with the micro-level features such as overlapping and interruptions that an individual asserts control and dominance. 'Power behind discourse' deals with a broader social framework and the macro-level structures. There are conventions that pose constraints on the settings, subjects, topics and sequence of activities of a particular discourse type. It often involves the power holders, who are from a higher position of the institutional hierarchy, in charge of the policing of conventions.

Thornborrow (2002) elaborates that power is a "contextually sensitive" (p.8) and "contextually relative" (p.35) phenomenon that can be accomplished on both a structural level and an interactional level. Speakers tend to use the available linguistic forms as discursive resources to accomplish their goals. However, the outcome is shaped by the context they are situated in and will be different across contexts. This echoes with the view of van Dijk (1995; 2015), Fairclough (1989) and Gidden (1982) that power is not absolute nor a permanent or unchallenged attribute of any individuals or groups. The dominating groups may only control other groups in specific situations or domains and not all members of the dominating groups are always more powerful than the others. Those in power also have to reassert their power constantly, while those without power always attempt to challenge it.

Finding a working definition for institutional discourse is not a straightforward matter (Haworth 2006; Mason 2020). Drew & Heritage (1992) proposes that institutional talk involves at least one participant associating with the institution. This type of discourse is not solely determined by the context but shaped by the interaction. It also features the asymmetrical roles and unequal distribution of knowledge between participants (Drew 1991; Mason 2020). Such "inequivalences" in turn create conditions and lead to the dominance of one side of the participants in an interaction, such as the rights to manage topics and access knowledge (Linell & Luckmann 1991: 5-6). At the same time, they also reflect the social institutional structures (Mason 2020). Thornborrow (2002) argues that in institutional talk, participants' identity, institutional roles and relationships are established by the context. Participants are expected to speak and act within their own institutional and discursive role, which is a local phenomenon that "shapes the organization and trajectory of the talk" (Thornborrow 2002: 5). Haworth (2006: 741), on the other hand, stresses the significance of "the interplay between the discursive and institutional roles of participants".

Institutional speakers may sometimes abuse their power (van Dijk 2015). For instance, Harris (1984) analyzes the forms and functions of questions asked in magistrates' courts based on a series of audio recordings and transcriptions in the Arrears and Maintenance division of the Nottinghamshire Country Magistrates' Courts. Based on the syntactic forms and the nature of responses required, Harris reveals that most questions asked in the court are in conducive forms, require only a minimal response and contain propositions, and concludes that questions are a powerful means of control in discourse. On the other hand, Johnson (2002) compares the distribution and function of so-prefaced questions in child witness and adult suspect interviews in England. She finds that so-prefaced questions are exclusively used by the interviewers. In child interviews*, so* is mainly used in the rapport phase to scaffold narratives, whereas in adult interviews

it is used in the questioning phase to evaluate and label previous utterances in order to produce weighted evidence. However, it is not uncommon to see resistance from participants. Newbury & Johnson (2006) adopt a qualitative Hallidayan approach to explore resistance to confirmation and information-giving in a suspect interview in the UK. They identify four resistance strategies the suspect employed to "resist acknowledgement, coercion, culpability and confession and attempt to maintain and preserve another identity" (p.230): contest, correction, avoidance and refusal. These strategies also allow the suspect to assert their power and negotiate their position without violating the Cooperative Principle (Grice 1975). This leads to their conclusion that police interview is "a site of resistant struggle" (p.231), where the interviewer struggles to control resistance while the interviewee struggles to resist control. In addition, resistance can be found in other institutional talks. Greatbatch (1986), for example, examines the use of agenda-shifting procedures by interviewees as a tool for topic management in news interviews. Instead of complying with the turn-taking system in traditional news interviews, Greatbatch finds that interviewees typically adopt strategies such as violative talk (pre- and post-answer agenda shifting), the non-production of answers and speaking out of turn to influence the topical development. As a result of breaching the standard question-answer format, they are often resisted and sanctioned by the interviewers and might even create a less favourable impression to the audience.

2.3. Police Interviews

The police interview is a "highly regulated form" of institutional discourse where participants negotiate the organizational goals through interactions (Heydon 2005: 4). Police officers consider interviewing the most important stage of an investigation (Baldwin 1992a: 66-72). The interrogation practices and goals can vary depending on the jurisdiction. In North America, the guilt-presumptive Reid model (Inbau *et al*. 2004) is used to induce a confession and

produce evidence that works against the suspects. By contrast, police interviews in Australia and the UK tend to take the "reaching the truth" approach (Schollum 2005: 39). Nevertheless, studies have shown that officers are not merely seeking the truth.

Baldwin (1993) points out that police interviews are concerned with "future rather than past events" (p.350) and "the construction of proof" (p.327) that might be used later in court. By evaluating 600 suspect interviews conducted in England, Baldwin finds that officers tend to anticipate a confession from the interviews. They start with an assumption of guilt and use a series of leading questions. This approach of "put[ting] words into a suspect's mouth" (p.341) has led to his conclusion that greater efforts are needed to train officers about their interview techniques. Heydon (2005) takes a different approach, adopting Goffman's (1974) participation framework, along with CA and CDA to investigate power negotiation and the fulfilment of institutional requirements of suspect interviews in Australia. Heydon shows that participant roles are not equally distributed in police interviews. In the opening and closing sections, the officer does not align with the assigned institutional roles of author and principal but instead takes up the role of an animator. However, in the information gathering section, the officer avoids occupying the three roles while the suspect fulfills them. In addition, the analysis reveals how the officer utilizes the allocated interactional resource of topic management to have the suspect align with the police version of events.

David & Trainum (2010) also adopt Goffman's (1981) participation framework and the concept of footing to examine the co-construction of confession narratives between the police officer and the suspect in eighteen criminal cases in the U.S.. The result exhibits a similar pattern to Heydon (2005) in terms of topic management. David and Trainum demonstrate how the officers employ the sequences of (1) "Tell us what happened", (2) "Now let me tell you what happened",

and (3) “Tell me again what happened” to obtain a confession narrative. Specifically, the officers first request the suspects for a narrative. If it does not match with what they believe to have taken place, the officers become storytellers and provide their version of the story. Lastly, they invite the suspects to re-tell the narrative to establish ownership and eventually attribute the confession to them. This finding not only highlights the joint production of confession in an interrogation but also how the police can “contaminate the interrogation and destroy the reliability of a confession” (p.131). In fact, David & Trainum points out that police interrogation training “can actively encourage challenges, forceful denials, intentional deceptions, and other interactional (and psychological) approaches” (p.119). For instance, the Reid technique training encourages officers to be “accusatory” and use “active persuasion” (Inbau *et al.* 2005: 5), with the only and ultimate goal “to obtain a confession from a guilty individual” (Gordon & Fleischer 2011: 27-28).

The Reid model (Inbau *et al.* 2004) is the most commonly taught questioning technique in Canada (King & Snook 2009). It is guilt presumptive and stresses on putting psychological pressure on the suspect to elicit a confession (Mason 2020). It consists of nine core steps (see Inbau *et al.* 2004 for the detailed guidelines), which are arranged sequentially with the aim “to disarm the suspect through a confrontational tone, prevent the suspect from denying his or her guilt, and suggest various ‘themes’ (for each crime) that ‘explain’ the suspect’s behavior” (Mason 2020: 70-71). King & Snook (2009) is one of the first to evaluate the use of the Reid model inside Canadian interrogation rooms. The analysis of 44 video recordings of suspect interviews in Atlantic Canada shows a positive relationship between the use of core Reid components and the interrogation outcome. King & Snook observe that interrogators generally do not strictly adhere to the core components of the Reid model. They also find a greater number of Reid components, alternative

questions, influence tactics and coercive strategies in interrogations ending with confession, which raise concerns about the potential for false confessions with such interrogation practices.

Indeed, studies have found that Canadian police interviews do not always follow the best practices. Snook *et al.* (2012) examine the questioning practices of 80 interviews with suspects and accused persons in Canada. A quantitative method is used to analyze the types of questions, length of response and ratio of words spoken by participants. The results highlight that the lack of open-ended questions, the overuse of probing and yes-no questions and the dominance of the interviewers decrease the likelihood of obtaining complete and accurate information. Interestingly, similar results are also observed in adult witness interviews. Wright & Alison (2004) is the very first study that uses Canadian adult witness interviews as data. Through assessing the questioning contents and sequences in 19 adult witness interviews, the findings suggest that interviewers speak for a significant proportion, frequently interrupt the witnesses, ask very few open-ended questions and rarely employ any cognitive techniques to enhance witnesses' memory. Wright & Alison further identify how the questioning sequences may introduce bias and prevent witnesses from providing an objective and untampered version of events.

3. Research Questions

By drawing on data from police interviews in a high-profile murder case in Canada, this major research paper seeks to address the following research questions:

RQ1: How do participants make use of (1) topics, (2) questions, (3) question-answer sequences and (4) allusions to institutional status to construct and resist power and control?

RQ2: Does the use of features change when the interviewee's identity changes from a witness to a suspicious witness to a suspect?

4. Methodology

4.1. The Data

The data selected involves the case of Jennifer Pan and her immigrant parents. On November 8, 2010, a home invasion took place in Markham, Ontario. Three masked men carrying guns broke into the house and demanded cash. According to Pan, the invaders tied her to the banister upstairs and took her parents to the basement and shot them. Her mother was killed at the scene and her father was critically injured but later became a key witness of the case. After the incident, Pan was interviewed three times: twice as a witness and once as a suspect. At first, the motives of the invasion were unclear. As the story unfolds, the police discovered that not only had Pan been living a double life and lying to her parents about her education, career and relationship, but she was also involved in plotting and staging the invasion. After the 10-month trial in 2014, she was sentenced to life without parole for 25 years.

The data of this study consists of the three police interviews between two York Regional police officers and Jennifer Pan. The video recordings are publicly available on YouTube[1]. They differ in terms of type, the interviewer and the identity of the interviewee. They are labelled as Interview 1, Interview 2 and Interview 3 respectively (see Table 1 for the details). Interview 1 is a witness interview conducted by Detective Randy Slade a few hours after the incident. Interview 2 is conducted two days later by the same officer for further questioning with Pan being a witness under growing suspicion. Interview 3 took place after her father regained consciousness and talked to the police, in which Pan was interrogated as a suspect by Detective Bill Goetz. As Pan's identity

[1] From The Mob Reporter: Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview3

changes in each interview: from a witness to a witness under suspicion, and ultimately to a suspect, the data allows a direct comparison between witness and suspect interviews within the same case.

Table 1. Details of the interviews

	Interview 1	**Interview 2**	**Interview 3**
Date & Time	Nov 9, 2010, ~2:45am	Nov 11, 2010, ~9:45am	Nov 22, 2010, ~2:40pm
Interviewer	York Regional Police Det. Randy Slade	York Regional Police Det. Randy Slade	York Regional Police Det. Bill Goetz
Interviewee	Jennifer Pan	Jennifer Pan	Jennifer Pan
Identity of Interviewee	Victim/ Witness	Victim/ Witness (with suspicion)	Suspect
Length of Recording	1hr 47mins	4hrs 3mins	4hrs 41mins

4.2. Analytical Frameworks

This study uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. The analytical framework mainly follows Haworth (2006), which examines power dynamics in a police interview with a high-profile murderer in the UK, Dr. Harold Shipman, by using conversation analysis (CA), critical discourse analysis (CDA) and pragmatics. CA was used in data collection to transcribe naturally occurring data into detailed transcripts while CDA was used in identifying power and control in the interactions. Haworth believes that this approach combines the strengths of CA and CDA and recognizes the significance of considering both micro and macro features in the analysis of power in discourse. Haworth also identifies four discursive features that are constantly used by the participants to construct and resist power in the interaction: (1) topic, (2) question type, (3) question-answer (Q&A) sequence and (4) allusions to institutional status. These four features are also the primary focus of my analysis, but I have replaced the term "question type" with "question" to avoid confusion. For easier comparison in the analysis, I have developed the criteria listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Criteria for the features

(1)	**Topic**	• Who introduces a new topic/ a topic change? • How is it achieved?
(2)	**Question**	• What is the most common question type? • What is the most common function?
(3)	**Question-answer (Q&A) sequence**	• Do participants not stay in their pre-allocated position? • What is the reason? • What is the response of the other participant?
(4)	**Allusions to institutional status**	• Do participants ever orient to their institutional status? • Do participants attempt to undermine other's status?

4.3. Transcription and Data Coding

Given the length of the recordings, I was not able to transcribe the interviews manually. I utilized an online transcription tool to generate the transcriptions. I first used a free YouTube video downloader to download the audio files to my computer. I used a podcast transcription app called Podium to transcribe the interviews which I then verified. These machine transcriptions are mostly accurate in identifying the words spoken, except for parts where the audio overlaps and when participants speak in a low voice. Once the transcriptions were generated, I was able to download them in .txt files (Appendix 1 - 3). All transcripts were gone through manually at least three times. The first scan was for a general understanding of the interviews. The second scan focused on transcription accuracy and timestamp alignment. During this process, I also highlighted and extracted questions to a separate Excel file for further analysis. This approach allows me to better capture questions in declarative form with rising tone compared to using concordance software. Special attention was given to Interview 3 as the audio quality is relatively poor compared to Interview 1 and 2. In the third scan, I identified topics and colour-coded instances of violating Q&A sequence and allusions to institutional status. Specific excerpts were also reviewed before quoting as examples in this paper. There are two types of transcription used: basic content

transcription and CA style. The basic content transcription is used in analyzing topic, question and allusions to institutional status. For excerpts involving the feature of Q&A sequence, I further made a detailed CA-style transcript to capture features such as pauses and overlaps. It should also be noted that while the recordings of Interview 1 and 3 do not appear to be edited, there is a one-minute redacted segment and a 30-second loss of video from the VHS recorder in Interview 2. However, there were no impacts on the analysis.

The questions were coded from a functional perspective, meaning only questions and utterances that require a response are counted as questions. Several types of questions were excluded, including any questions from the commissioner of oaths, questions in quotes, rhetorical questions, self-asking questions, incomplete questions and questions unrelated to the incident (See Table 3 for examples of excluded questions).

Table 3. Examples of excluded questions

Questions
He was like "where's your money?"
What's the word I'm looking for?
You know what? We know what you did...
Did you hear, so before this, this is when.
Hmm?
Can I use the washroom?

In addition, the questions were coded in terms of speakers, question types and functions. I mainly followed the approach of Haworth (2006), a modified version of Harris's (1984) system of forms and functions of questions that fits into the context of police interview. I first classified the questions according to the restrictiveness of the required response. Typically, open questions consist of *why* and *how* questions, whereas restrictive questions include 'yes/no', multiple choice and other wh- (*which, where, when, who, what*) questions. As Haworth mentioned, the syntactic

form does not always correspond to the question type in the context of police interview. For instance, even though "do you have any questions?" is in 'polar interrogative' form, the required response is open in nature. Therefore, question form was not included in the coding criteria. For question functions, I also followed Haworth's classification system. As some of the questions in my data do not fit into the existing four functions, I have included two additional functions, clarification-seeking and facilitation. Since a question might have more than one function, the classification is based on the primary function of the question in the context. The coding criteria with definitions and examples are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Question coding criteria

Speaker • Police (P) • Jennifer Pan (J)
Question Type • Open – Questions allow for a less restricted response • Restrictive – Questions that request only a minimal response
Function (* = newly added and not identified in Haworth (2006)) • Information-seeking – To collect or recollect information (A-event information/ B-event information/ A-B event information (Labov 1972))[2] o "*Tell me about this guy*" o "*And where does he go from that point in time*" o "*Do your parents have life insurance policies?*" • Confirmation-seeking – To confirm information that is previously mentioned or A-event information o "*Is that what you did that day?*" o "*You knew this was going to happen, right?*" o "*Is that correct?*" • Explanation-seeking – To seek justification of one's behaviour, feeling and manner o "*Tell me about why you're nervous*" o "*Why did you have the first meeting?*"

[2] I have used 'A' to refer to the police, the interviewer, and 'B' to refer to Jennifer Pan, the interviewee. In this study, 'A-event information' refers to the things that the officer knows but Jennifer does not; 'B-event information' refers to the things that Jennifer knows but the officer does not; 'A-B event information' refer to knowledge shared by the officer and Jennifer.

- "*How did that work?*"
- *Clarification-seeking – To ask for a repeat or clarification of question/ answer
  - "*Pardon me?*"
  - "*What do you mean?*"
  - "*Back home means?*"
- Accusatory – To claim that the interviewee is lying or not telling the whole truth[3]
  - "*So, this wasn't some evil plot that you thought up to?*"
  - "*Jen, you did leave the door open for them, didn't you?*"
  - "*Why would somebody shoot someone they didn't have to shoot and actually not shoot the person they're supposed to shoot?*"
- *Facilitation – To explain the procedures/ orient topics
  - "*You want to check to make sure that's your phone?*"
  - "O*bviously we've spoken to a lot of people, right?*"
  - "*I didn't go to university, but I told my parents that I went for a few years, right?*"

5. Results and Analysis

In this section, the three interviews will be analyzed individually. The analysis will start by giving a general view of question type and function of the questions. Following the topics, the use of discursive features will then be discussed, with short excerpts given as examples (see Appendix 4 for the transcription convention). At the end of each sub-section, a short summary will be included for easier comparison across interviews.

5.1. Interview 1 (Witness Interview)

Interview 1 is a witness interview conducted right after the incident. It lasted for around 1 hour 26 minutes excluding a 20-minute break, which is the shortest among the three interviews. It covers three parts: (1) opening, (2) the incident and (3) closing. Table 5 summarizes the question type and function of all questions found in Interview 1.

[3] Harris (1984) notes that accusatory questions also ask for information but that is not their primary function

A total of 355 questions are identified in Interview 1. Around 98% are posed by P, with the remaining attributed to J. Notably, over 90% of P's questions are restrictive which require only minimal response from the interviewee (Harris 1984). It seems to have suggested the dominance of P in using questions as a mode of control. In terms of function, information- and confirmation-seeking questions constitute over 97% of P's questions, with very few explanation-seeking (1.72%) and facilitation questions (0.86%) and no clarification-seeking or accusatory question. As for J, more than half of her questions are clarification-seeking, while the remaining are information- and confirmation-seeking.

Table 5. Question type and function of questions in Interview 1

	Police (P)		**Jennifer Pan (J)**		**Total**	
Question Type						
Open	28	8.05%	-	0.00%	28	7.89%
Restrictive	320	91.95%	7	100%	327	92.11%
Function						
Information-seeking	260	74.71%	2	28.57%	262	73.80%
Confirmation-seeking	79	22.70%	1	14.29%	80	22.54%
Explanation-seeking	6	1.72%	-	0.00%	6	1.69%
Clarification-seeking	-	0.00%	4	57.14%	4	1.13%
Accusatory	-	0.00%	-	0.00%	-	0.00%
Facilitation	3	0.86%	-	0.00%	3	0.85%
Total	**348 (98.03%)**		**7 (1.97%)**		**355**	

5.1.1. Opening

P starts with the routine booking process (Mason 2020), reviewing a form about the criminal consequences of making a false statement, bringing in a commissioner for oath and setting up the agenda. This section is filled with long narratives and a combination of information- and confirmation-seeking questions from P as he gathers basic information from J, reads aloud the criminal codes and checks her understanding. While participants are expected to stay in their

discursive position, as soon as the interview starts, we do observe an instance of J taking up the role as a questioner. Before P can finish his question, she interrupts and asks a clarification question in (1):

(1) P: So, this isn't suspecting that you're not going to tell the truth. This is more of a feature that you understand the importance of telling the complete truth, [okay?

J: → As much] as I can remember?

P: That's all I asked for. But, so, this form, please don't take it personal, okay? But it's something we go through with everyone.

The interruption occurs at a "turn relevant place" (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) in which the other speaker might have assumed that the first speaker has finished speaking based on the syntax or intonation (Harris 1989). Thus, this instance cannot be interpreted as an intentional interruption. Although it still represents a challenge in the assigned discursive roles, P shows understanding and is willing to comply with the role-switch for clarification as this will facilitate the interview. P maintains overall floor control for the rest of the segment before explicitly introducing the next topic. As we will see, while interruptions and the breach in Q&A sequence are considered challenges, they will not always be dismissed by P. Depending on the impact on the overall goal of the interview, P might be "constrained by the institutional context" (Haworth 2006: 745) and must accommodate the challenges.

5.1.2. The Incident

After wrapping up the opening segment, P asks an open question to signal a shift in topic (2). The main theme of this topic is the details of the incident, with several sub-topics related to the people involved in the incident and around J, such as her parents, the three invaders and her

friends. As P constantly jumps between the main and sub-topics, I have loosely grouped them under one segment.

(2) P: … Now I want you to, so, take yourself back to earlier on today, yesterday, meaning the 8th of November, and tell me about your day, okay? Start at any point in time, wherever you feel comfortable. And then we are going to move forward, okay?

Besides topic orientation, the main function of (2) is to seek B-event information (Labov 1972). In particular, P hands more discursive freedom to J to let her pick any time of the day to talk about. This is the only point out of the entire interview where J is able to speak at length and provide long narratives without interruptions. However, this does not last long. After J has finished telling her story, P takes over the floor and asks a list of restrictive questions to delve into the details. This section is dominated by a mix of information- and confirmation-seeking questions, with a common pattern of an information-seeking question followed by a confirmation-seeking one when P confirms the newly collected information in declarative forms (Example in (3)).

While P undoubtedly knows that they need to gather as much information as possible, it appears that there is not a clear and organized topical agenda at this early stage of the investigation. P has to rely on J narratives to decide on the next sub-topic. For instance, in (3), the original discussion is about the location of J's mother at a certain time of the incident. It is not until J brings up the fact that her mother goes dancing every week P transitions to the sub-topics of dancing and then her parents' occupations. Meanwhile, towards the end of (3), it is P's decision to switch back to the main topic of the incident using a discourse marker *so*. This indicates that the interviewer does not always have an absolute power over topic management. The interviewee, to a certain extent, can influence the topical agenda too.

(3) P: A half hour? Where is it, your mom was before here?

J: → She goes dancing every Monday at the St Paul. I'd like to say St Paul, but I'm not 100% sure.

P: And where is St Paul's?

…

J: The last one, I remember she said that there was one on Birchmount and Finch. Yeah, Birchmount and Finch on the southwest corner.

P: → At Birchmount and Finch?

…

P: Okay. What does your mom do? What does she do for a living?

…

P: What does he do?

J: He does, he wears many hats from like assembly line worker, but I think his title is tool and die operator.

P: → Okay. So, 9:15**.** You see your mom down on the downstairs couch, and you see your dad. He's at the [cou

J: → Com]puter =

P: → And where is the computer located?

At the end of (3), an instance of J talking out of turn is also observed. She interrupts P before he can finish the sentence, trying to correct the fact that her father was at the computer, not the couch. Unlike (1), this interruption occurs in the middle of an utterance, which is not a turn relevant place. Although it is considered an "intentional interruption" (Harris 1989: 148), it can be explained by the fact that it is a correction. Notably, P stops speaking. The attempt is once again not being dismissed as it contributes to the overall aim of the interview: to gather as much accurate information of the event. As we can see, the next question is about the location of the computer, demonstrating that the topic choice is somehow based on J's response.

In (4), P invites J to describe the three invaders. Although P starts off with an open question, giving J the freedom to discuss any aspects related to the first invader, she only offers very limited

information and claims that she does not remember anything about the clothing. However, she still tries to be cooperative by providing an alternative answer: the dreadlocks. This tactic of "I don't remember" is known as "avoidance resistance" (Newbury & Johnson 2006: 222), which suspects use to avoid being accused of lying by providing an ambiguous answer or not answering at all. At this stage, P has no idea that the description is fabricated. So, instead of accusing J of lying, P asks additional restrictive questions to provide direction.

(4) P: → Okay. So, tell me about this guy.

J: He was medium build.

P: Okay

J: I didn't, don't remember any of his clothing, unfortunately. The only thing I can remember was him was he had dreadlocks.

P: → He had dreadlocks. So, can you describe his race to me?

J: He was black.

P: → Was his head covered? Was his face covered? Do you remember anything about that?

…

P: → Okay. Now his complexion. …

…

P: → Any facial hair?

…

P: → Okay. So, can you give an age approximation for this guy?

Interestingly, as they move on to the second invader in (5), P also starts with an open question. This time, the question is effective in a way that J is able to cover the same aspects of the description based on the previous conversation.

(5) P: → Okay. Can you describe the other person who brings the shoelace?

…

J: He had a hoodie and like a bandana over his face.

P: Yeah

J: His complexion, it was really dark, but I could tell that he was darker than the first guy.

P: So, he's a male black as well.

J: But thinner build

P: But thinner build. So, we got a medium build, thin build. …

(4) and (5) show that an open question may not always be ideal and effective in seeking information. In cases where a young and inexperienced interviewee is given too much discursive freedom or even attempts to lie, the police might lose control on the amount of information they could gather. In contrast, restrictive questions do not only help elicit specific information but also function as scaffolding to guide the discussion.

"Avoidance resistance" (Newbury & Johnson 2006: 222) is a common strategy J uses in this part of the interview. Beside scaffolding her narratives as in (4), it is observed that P uses two other ways to manage the resistance. One of them is simply to move on quickly, as in (6):

(6) P: Okay. Do they find what they're looking for?

J: → I don't remember.

P: → Okay. What happens next?

(7) shows another common approach: to show understanding and to reassure her that uncertainty is acceptable.

(7) P: … How long later that you hear these voices?

J: My mom had to be home for maybe 20 minutes. I don't really have that window. I think around like maybe 9:40.

P: → 9:40? Okay. Estimates is fine. I'm not expecting to hold you down to times, because we can probably get that from who you were speaking to, right? …

In (8), P even explicitly states that it is okay for J to say "I don't know", granting her the right and permission to employ such resistance strategy:

(8) P: → … So, if you don't know, then it's okay to say.
J: I don't know.
P: → It's okay to say.
J: I'm not sure.
P: Okay …

This approach is in contrast to Newbury & Johnson's (2006) observation that police in a suspect interview would attempt to pin the suspect down for an answer. However, it must be borne in mind that this is a witness interview that happens almost immediately after the incident and that P has very limited knowledge of it. Together with the assumption that the interviewee does not lie, there is simply no ground for P to suspect the credibility of J. Until this point of the interaction, power and control is pretty much under negotiation.

As the sub-topic moves to the legal domain, a subtle change in the dynamic is observed. In (9), P asks J on the type of gun used by the invaders. While J claims that she understands the difference between a pistol and a revolver, she seems to be unsure and has to defer to P's knowledge with a confirmation question, which shows her recognition of P's expertise in this aspect. Note that Jennifer is not given any room to speak or asked a question, constituting another instance of challenging the questioner-responder roles. Nonetheless, this appears to be a genuine question and this act of acknowledging P's professional status mitigates the challenge.

(9) P: Do you know the difference between what a pistol and a revolver is?
J: Yes.
P: Okay. Do you know if it was a pistol or a revolver?
J: That particular one that he was holding, I believe should have been a pistol.

P: A pistol. Okay.

J: → The difference is the round part, right?

P: So, you tell me what's a pistol and what's a revolver, which one has the round part.

Throughout this segment, J occasionally interrupts or talks out of turn for various purposes. Other than correcting P as in (3), she also attempts to assist in completing P's statement. (10) is also an intentional interruption as it does not take place at a turn relevant place. Although P makes a small pause, he continues to complete his utterance and immediately pose another question to steer the direction of the conversation:

(10) P: Your father being late be[cause of (.) coming home af-

J: Coming home after work]

P: -ter work. And what time did he arrive home?

While it seems that P is very lenient and let pass every disruption, this is not always the case. After J has confirmed that the first invader uses a pistol, she tries to introduce a new topic and provide a new piece of information of the other 'gentleman' in (11). However, unlike the previous instances, this attempt is rejected by P:

(11) P: What you're saying, not a revolver.

J: No. .hh

P: [Okay.

J: → The] other gentleman though.

P: → We'll go to the other gentleman. We'll go this in stages so that we're not doing a little. We'll call this guy number one because you're saying that he seemed to be running the show. He was in control.

P stands firm in maintaining the topical agenda, clearly indicating that they will go in stages and returning to the discussion of the first invader. At this point, P seems to have a more established and organized agenda compared to the beginning of this segment. It is possible that after learning more about the incident, he does not have to depend heavily on J in deciding the next sub-topic and can exercise greater control on topic management. The rest of the segment pretty much follows the expected turn-taking pattern. Any interruptions or talking out of turns also resemble the pattern mentioned above. P then leaves the room for approximately 20 minutes.

5.1.3. Closing

Before concluding the interview, P asks some follow-up questions and reviews a consent form with J to access her phone records. While P is completing the form, J breaks the silence twice to initiate a conversation. In particular, she asks two information-seeking questions, demanding information with regard to the investigation in (13):

(13) P: H-A. Pan? (-) So, hmm (-)

J: → My question is far deep into this well, that you look for my phone just like comment, like regular phone calls to people, just stuff like that?

P: Really, it's just the time stamping of the, you know, we were putting nine days down because it may come back to you that, um, oh, I spoke to him and it may be able for us to be able to identify people that we may need to go back and interview…

…

P: … Today is now the 9th of November. (-) And I'm going to sign to witness it. (.)

J: → So, will you, will we be in, will I be informed of who, of my, if anybody, if they contacted on that?

P: Um, the chances are, if you're going to be so, you can almost guarantee that Adrian and Edward are going to be. We're going to need to speak to them, right? Because Adrian was in your house, remember, um, if they're doing forensic testing in your house to try and get DNA and anything else in there, they're also going to need stuff to eliminate people…

These two questions are different from the counter-question in (9). Although they also seek information within P's domain, they do not contribute to the investigation but can be characterized as J's personal questions. In other words, they are out of the scope of the interview. P in this case is not bound by any institutional context nor he has "institutional obligation" (Thornborrow 2002: 53) to answer these questions. However, he still patiently explains the details to J, which reveals something about her identity. Rather than viewing J solely as a key witness, P also treats her as a victim who needs to understand how the police are going to handle the case. P then calls the interview to an end by repeating some of the confirmation questions in the opening.

5.1.4. Summary

In sum, power and control in this interview are under negotiation. Although P dominates in the overall topic management, he has to depend on J on sub-topic selection. P generally uses discourse markers, statements and questions to indicate a change in topic. This interview is dominated by restrictive questions that seek information. In the main discussion, there is a general pattern of an information-seeking followed by confirmation-seeking questions observed. Occasionally, J interrupts to ask questions and to contribute to P's narratives. However, P does not reject most of the disruptions as they contribute to the goal of the interview: to elicit as much accurate information as possible. Other than that, no instances of allusions to institutional status are found.

5.2. Interview 2 (Witness Interview)

Interview 2 is also a witness interview but took place three days after the incident. It lasted for approximately 3 hours 30 minutes excluding two breaks of 45 minutes in total. There are 5

parts: (1) opening, (2) the incident, (3) Jennifer's history, (4) Jennifer's relationship with Daniel, (5) closing. Table 6 shows the question type and function of all questions found in Interview 2.

Table 6. Question type and function of questions in Interview 2

	Police (P)		Jennifer Pan (J)		Total	
Question Types						
Open	82	11.58%	-	0.00%	82	11.52%
Restrictive	625	88.40%	5	100%	630	88.48%
Functions						
Information-seeking	503	71.15%	-	0.00%	503	70.65%
Confirmation-seeking	145	20.51%	3	60.00%	148	20.79%
Explanation-seeking	42	5.94%	-	0.00%	42	5.90%
Clarification-seeking	1	0.14%	1	20.00%	2	0.28%
Accusatory	16	2.26%	-	0.00%	16	2.25%
Facilitation	-	0.00%	1	20.00%	1	0.14%
Total	**707 (99.30%)**		**5 (0.70%)**		**712**	

There is a total of 712 questions in Interview 2. Over 99% are asked by P, suggesting the dominance of P as a questioner. Similar to Interview 1, P predominantly uses restrictive questions (88.40%) to control the amount and type of responses from J. The question functions are consistent with Interview 1. Information- and confirmation-seeking questions also comprise over 90%. However, P asks more explanation-seeking questions (5.94%) to have J justify her behaviours. Accusatory questions are first introduced to accuse J of lying (2.26%). Clarification-seeking questions are rare (0.14%) and no facilitation question is found. Among the five questions from J, more than half are confirmation-seeking and the rest are for clarification and facilitation.

5.2.1. Opening

The opening of Interview 2 resembles Interview 1. It also starts with P going through a sworn video statement form, reading aloud the criminal codes with a series of confirmation

questions and bringing in a commissioner of oaths. The difference is that P emphasizes ‘starting fresh’ and instructs J to forget everything they have discussed before, as in (14). As we will see later, this rule is only applicable to J.

(14) P: … I want to take, before we get this, try and take that first interview that we had, which was, you know, hours after what what it transpired. Put it aside. It's almost like we've never spoken before, okay? So, we're starting to fresh, we're starting from new. That way, you're not going to say I think I already told him that. Don't worry about what you've already told me. …

J appears more expressive than in the first interview. In particular, she expresses that she is a bit nervous about this interview in (15). P reassures her before moving on to setting the agenda up and introducing the first topic: the incident.

(15) P: So, there's nothing that's going to influence your statement.

J: Just a little nervous.

P: Don't be nervous, okay? I know that's tough to say, but don't be nervous. The truth is always the best way to relieve anxiety, okay? We are investigating an allegation of murder of your mom, Bich Ha Pan. …

5.2.2. The Incident

This topic has been addressed in the first interview. But this time, P is more meticulous about the details. In (16), he reiterates the importance of disregarding the first statement and asks an open question, handing J the floor to start at any time of the day of her choosing. This question only makes sense in this interview as it is combined with the request to disregard the previous statement. A noticeable difference is that P has a more well-established topical agenda. He creates boundaries on the discussion topics and informs J that they will start from incident recall to some follow-up questions.

(16) P: So, I want you to forget or put aside the first statement that we had talked about, okay? This is going to be where, I'm going to ask you to start from the day, okay, on the 8th leading up until when you, when the police become involved in an incident that takes place in your house. I want you to tell me about your day, what you do, your interaction with your parents, okay? So, we're at, what we are is we're dealing with the incident. We're not dealing with your history right now. We're dealing with the incident again. See if anything else comes, forgetting what you've already told me … And there's some questions with respect to that statement that I'm going to ask you about, okay? But I'm going to let you start again and let's move forward from any time in that day where you want to start, if it's the time you woke up or if it's the time that your first interaction. It's your choice.

However, instead of answering directly, J mentions in (17) for the second time that she is feeling nervous. Unlike the opening, P shifts the focus to her concern and asks for the reasons. He also talks about his plan on using a different technique, foreshadowing what they will do at a later stage before going back to the main topic. This not only demonstrates that he is well-prepared but also asserts his dominance in topic management.

(17) J: Okay. I'm just, I'm very nervous and I don't remember.

P: Why are you nervous? Let's, why are you nervous? Tell me about why you're nervous.

J: Because I don't want to say the wrong things

…

P: … And I'm going to show you a technique after we go through this that will show it to you, okay? So, let's just start. … Let's start from the beginning of the day, when you wake up, and let's start moving forward from there.

Indeed, P has comparatively stricter control over the topical agenda and how he handles resistance than in Interview 1. In (18), he sanctions J's uncertainty about the estimated time she woke up by using a restrictive question to provide guidance and to press for an answer. As Haworth (2006: 746) mentions, it would be a blatant challenge if the interviewee fails to answer for a second time. In this case, J interrupts and provides an estimate. It should be noted that P has a differential

treatment when it comes to the answer “I’m not sure”. Whenever the specific information he is looking for cannot be corroborated by other evidence, such as J’s phone record or other witnesses, he sanctions the ambiguous answer.

(18) J: What I can remember is when I woke up, I had some breakfast. And I went upstairs to do some piano history, and I was on the computer.

P: What time is that around?

J: → hh (-) I’m not 100% sure =

P: → Time, is it like, is it, you know, time is important meaning. Is it in the beginning of the morning, is it the light out? Is it in the afternoon, like [what

J: Pro]bably, maybe before noon.

In addition, it is observed that P frequently interrupts for follow-up questions:

(19) J: And I went back up on the computer to do a little studying, taking a break and playing some games. =

P: → Do you remember speaking to anyone during the day on your phone or on Facebook?

J: Later on in the day, yes. I spoke to a longtime friend, Andrew. … But just the usual, he just asked if we could hang out anytime soon. But I explained to him that I wasn't able to leave the house and I couldn't meet up with him …

P: → We'll go in later when we talk about your past, about why you couldn't leave the house, okay? So, that hasn't gone unnoticed. But we're not going to talk about that right now. We're talking about that day.

J: Okay.

P: → So, continue on.

Several observations in (19) are worth noting. First, P has complete control on “speaker collection” (David & Trainum 2020: 120), meaning when J has to stop and when she can continue with her narratives. Besides, he takes great effort to maintain the topical agenda by ensuring that they are not mixing up the topic of the incident and J’s history and foreshadowing the next topic. He also builds up a professional image as a knowledgeable police interviewer as he now knows

more about J's background. Furthermore, the first question in (19) seems to be an ineffective question frame because it is plausible for the interviewee to answer "I don't remember", an avoidance resistance strategy that P would want to avoid at all costs. Therefore, "do you remember" might not be an ideal question frame to elicit information in the context of police interviews.

So far, we have seen P trying to maintain the topical agenda and doing all the foreshadowing work. Interestingly, topic management in this interview is a collaborative effort:

(20) P: Do you have more than one phone?

J: I had one, but I keep it, I just keep the SIM card.

P: Yes.

J: → Again, we will go into it the history.

P: Sure.

…

P: And again, the history stuff. You're right. I don't want it to get convoluted in here, but we need to. You know we'll talk about that stuff after. …

In (20), P introduces a new sub-topic, phone, with an information-seeking question. After providing enough information to P's question, J withholds the reason why she only keeps the SIM card. She then takes over P's role in topic management and states that she will explain it later. At first, P seems to be expecting more information or an explanation. But since it is related to the topic of the history and it aligns with his agenda, he accepts the arrangement and even agrees with J's approach. This indicates that J acknowledges P's role in managing topics and understands the importance of following his agenda. It also demonstrates how topic management can be achieved by both participants.

As the interview progresses, P gets confused about some of the details. When he points out the contradicting information in (21), J tries to interrupt and requests to clarify the narratives by

asking a question. Although it violates the institutional pre-allocation of questions and answers and challenges the turn-taking sequence, the "request for permission to speak" (Schegloff 1980) acknowledges the breach and the fact that she is talking out of turn. The attempt is unsuccessful as P continues to speak and prevents her from formulating a question. She has to wait for her turn before speaking up again.

(21) P: … As you had said that number two talks to your mom and says 'where's your purse' =

J: → Can, [can I

P: And] pushes her down. So now, you said that number two didn't speak. So, let's clarify that.

J: Okay. What I meant was…

During this segment, it is a common practice for P to compare J's narratives to her first statement. Recalling from the beginning of the interview, J is told to forget everything and 'start fresh'. However, because of P's institutional status, he is not constrained by this rule and can constantly compare the two statements, emphasizing an imbalance in power between them. Whenever there is an inconsistency, P will question J, and this is where we start to see changes in his attitude. In general, P adopts three approaches to bring the inconsistent information to J's attention, and these approaches are employed in sequence. At first, he only repeats the information and reframes it as a confirmation question (22). This way, J is able to pick up the signal and correct the answer.

(22) J: All I could tell was he had a vest, and his face was like a long oval face.

P: → He had a vest?

J: No, hoodie.

As more inconsistencies emerge, P directly challenges her answer by stating that her words are different from the last interview, as shown in (23):

(23) J: I did not see anything, no.

P: → Are you sure? Because we would. When we spoke the last time, there was some mention of some other money that went missing. (-)

J: They are. Yes, the US currency.

Later in (24), after pointing out another discrepancy, he further seeks an explanation from J on how she came up with the answer:

(24) J: I'm not sure how much she took out for our trip, but I can only estimate about a few hundred dollars.

P: → Few hundred. Because at the time, the last time, [you told me you were pretty adamant about

J: Or eleven hundred?

P: → About eleven] hundred dollars. So, I'm curious to know how you came up with that number.

J: I believe it's…

P: → … because you're pretty solid saying that it was eleven hundred dollars that went missing, that it was taken and that you saw it when we spoke. …

Haworth makes a remark with regard to explanation-seeking questions:

> … explanation-seeking questions are by their nature open. But it must also be noted that they clearly exercise a significant degree of power and control over interviewees, generally requiring them to justify themselves and/or their actions.
>
> (Haworth 2006: 749)

Indeed, (22) – (24) highlight the way P replaces confirmation-seeking with explanation-seeking questions to exert a greater degree control over J as he finds more inconsistencies in her narratives. This is a different tension that is not seen in Interview 1.

P gets to introduce the next sub-topic using another discourse marker *okay*. In (25), he asks J to demonstrate the way she was tied to the banister during the incident. She remains silent for a while and then explicitly refuses to follow his instruction. But in order to appear to be cooperative, she offers an alternative way: to answer verbally. P insists and explains in detail that such demonstration is necessary to prove that she was able to call 911 despite being tied to the banister. As a reminder, J was later proven to have only been tied up right before the police arrived, but not during the entire incident. To avoid being accused of lying on the spot, she surely has no choice but to conform.

(25) P: Okay, you're now bound to the railing. Can you show me, can you stand up and turn around and tell me just show on the camera how your hands are bound and how you are against the railing. You don't have to sit down. I just need to see how you were. (-)

J: → Can I just tell you?

P: The only reason that I'm trying to I need to do this is that I'm also going to ask you is that it. I want to take this back, to take it out of a traumatizing event, which it is, and put yourself into a more clinical position, because I want to see how you could physically get your phone out of your waistband. We're obviously going to need to know that it's very important. … We know you made the phone call and what I've obviously raised is that if my hands are bound and I'm against the railing, how do I talk to a 911 operator. Okay? So, clinically, this is now a clinical demonstration. … So, just take your sweater off. Stand up and turn around, put this in the side that you believe it was in. Great. …

After that, P introduces a technique that he mentions at the beginning of the interview: reverse chronology, a memory retrieval technique used in cognitive interviews to invite the interviewees to recall the events in reverse order (Eades 2010). This is where J is able to speak at

length without interruptions or follow-up questions asked. Similar to (15) and (17), J in (26) chooses not to answer the question directly and emphasizes not wanting to say the 'wrong thing'. P then has to reassure her and persuade her that this is a useful technique. As J is recalling the incident, P constantly praises her too. In fact, praising or flattery is one of the top three Reid tactics seen in police interviews (King & Snook 2009). It is a privilege that only P can enjoy as it can only be performed one way: from the interviewer to the interviewee. This is also a way for him to assert his institutional status and control J to provide the needed information.

(26) P: … So now, as an event, as to try and see, this is the little technique that we use to try and see if there's something during the course of what you've told me that boom, I trigger something, another memory, okay? … It's the reverse chronology of what you just described, okay, leading us back to the time you're upstairs talking to Edward. So, I want you to start right now, with your police officers arrive and they're cutting you free, and now let's start going backwards from that. (-) Okay.

J: I just don't want to say wrong things. I'm just

P: Don't. This is. Don't worry about saying wrong things, because you'll be corrected as you're moving backwards, okay? It's a very well-practiced technique to help in memories, so especially in traumatic events.

…

P: You're doing great, okay? You're doing great.

Interestingly, after J has finished the narrative, she confirms with P on whether or not he is satisfied with her answer in (27). While this obviously has breached the Q&A sequence and challenged the questioner-responder role distribution, the question implies that she acknowledges P as the one in charge of the interview and therefore a confirmation is needed. After answering the question, P quickly regains control and reasserts his discursive position with a follow-up question.

(27) J: … That's when I told Ed I'd call him back and put my phone in my back. Is that okay?

P: Yes. … Did you hear your father going down the stairs whenever at that point in time?

5.2.3. Jennifer's History

Wrapping up the incident recall phase, P transitions to the topic he has been foreshadowing for the first half of the interview: J's history (28). This topic is not previously discussed nor did J mention anything related to it. It is developed after P has conducted more research on J's background, consisting of sub-topics such as J's relationship, education and lies that she has been telling her parents.

(28) P: … What I want to do now is I want to go into your past, okay? And start talking about things that have been going on with you in relation to your life, okay? …

It is observed that the questioning sequence P adopts is different from the time when he gathers new information. As shown in (29), he first brings up the information collected from his own research or witness testimony in the form of confirmation questions. Then, he asks either an information- or explanation-seeking question to let J elaborate with a free narrative. If necessary, he poses follow-up questions to elicit more information.

(29) P: → … Do you have a boyfriend?

…

P: Tell me about your relationship with you and Daniel.

After learning that J has been hiding her relationship with her ex-boyfriend Daniel for seven years and lying about her education to her parents, P starts to show signs of distrust. In (30), he wants to hear more about Daniel from J. He specifically notes that Daniel has been interviewed. On one hand, this asserts P's institutional status and demonstrates his knowledge of Daniel. On

the other hand, as Daniel is involved in drug-related activities, this acts as a reminder to J that she'd better be honest about everything about him.

(30) P: So, tell me about Daniel. We've interviewed Daniel, okay? So, tell me about Daniel.

In (31), P also questions J on why she did not mention the lies in the previous interview, suspecting her of hiding information:

(31) P: Now, why didn't you tell me about that when I spoke to you the other day?

J: Everything had just happened. I wasn't.

In (32), he further double-checks some of the information with the accusatory question "100%?" to ensure she is not lying. Note that this question function is not used in the first interview, indicating that J's credibility has been severely damaged.

(32) P: Are these text messages you're receiving, are they fictitious? Are you making that up?

J: No.

P: → 100%?

J: Yes.

Towards the end of this segment, P shows appreciation for J's honesty. J sees this as an opportunity to save her threatened face. In (33), she breaches the Q&A format and poses a confirmation question in the form of declarative with tag: "I can't lie, right?". This is a "highly conducive form" (Harris 1984: 17) that can be used to persuade the other speaker to believe in the proposition. In this case, J tries to assert her honesty and add credibility to herself by persuading P that she cannot lie in the context of police interview.

(33) P: … I appreciate the fact that you were honest with me to tell me that these things were made up, okay? It's very important.

J: I can't lie, right? And =

Nevertheless, things do not go as planned. Not only does P not fall into that, but he also confronts her in that there is indeed a possibility for her to lie, which directly threatens her face (34). He further uses another declarative with tag question to suggest that what she has lied about are some 'significant threats'. J has no choice but to agree with the proposition. In order to save her damaged face, she takes the initiative to switch the topic by volunteering a piece of new information that P has no knowledge of. This saves her from being further challenged and also helps rebuild the image of being a cooperative and honest interviewee.

(34) P: → You can. Because it well if you're, if you were raped and you received bullets, those are some pretty significant threats, right?

J: Yes. I understand that.

P: Okay.

J: → There was also one other thing.

P: Yeah.

J: We were getting private phone calls at my house as well…

5.2.4. Jennifer's Relationship with Daniel

After a 30-minute break, P returns with more follow-up questions about J's relationship with Daniel and his girlfriend, Christine. It is observed that there are more challenges from P to suspect and even accuse J of lying. More acts of subversion from J are also found.

(35) is an example of "a subtle form of subversion" (Haworth 2006: 746), which gives an illusion that J is conforming to the adjacency pair of Q&A but in fact not answering the question. Meanwhile, she also challenges P's presupposition that it is her friends who gave the phone to

Daniel, not her. With the possibility of misunderstanding the question, P repeats the question and, surely, J answers this time:

(35) P: When did you give it to Daniel?
J: → I gave it to a friend to give to Daniel.
P: How long ago?
J: A couple of, maybe a week.

P's distrust of J continues to grow. In (36), P inquires about the last time J met and talked with Daniel. With an inconsistency between J's and Daniel's answer, P poses three questions to see if she will change the answer. It should be noted that the three questions follow the questioning sequence that P uses in the previous topic, and there is a significant pause between them. Although the first question also seeks information that has never been discussed in this interview, the main function is to confirm Daniel's testimony that they did not meet at other times. With no response yielded, P explicitly states that Daniel gave a different answer and attempts to seek an explanation. Again, without any responses, P moves on to the last question. Interestingly, he chooses to save J's face and accuses Daniel of lying instead. With the blame shifted to Daniel, J takes advantage of it and asserts her answer so as to save her face.

(36) P: … When is the last time you met with him and spoke with him?
J: I saw him here yesterday when I was leaving.
P: Did you talk to him?
J: Just briefly.
P: → You didn't see him or talk to him any other times other than right here in the police station? (-) And if I told you that Daniel says that you spoke to him you did have a conversation with him somewhere else? (-) He would be lying? (-)
J: The last time I spoke to him was when he asked for the blackberry.

'Refusal' (Newbury & Johnson 2006) is another subversive tactic J uses to challenge P. In (37), J interrupts P before he can formulate a question. She directly challenges P by stating that his proposition is invalid and, therefore, an answer is not needed. The question also stops P from going into further details. P recognizes the resistance. But rather than switching to another topic, he poses a follow-up question for clarification.

(37) P: When you weren't, when he wasn't working, and you were able to get out and see him how long =

J: → That hasn't happened in a long time.

P: And how long is a long time.

When discussing the causes of the incident, P makes a further move. In (38), he turns the focus to J and points the finger at her. He builds up the irregularities that she could not hear the invaders breaking into the house, hinting that she might be hiding parts of the information or is even involved. Before P can finish his narrative, J, again, interrupts to prevent him from building a damaging accusation. She restates the fact that she was watching TV and was on her phone and does not know anything about it. In this chaotic situation, P tries to interrupt and control the floor. Although his attempt is unsuccessful, he mentions later that this might not be a random event, suspecting that someone might be hiding certain information.

(38) P: … I'm trying to find a rhyme or reason for why your house was targeted. I'm still trying to figure out how they got in your house, like you didn't hear. You didn't hear a doorbell, you didn't hear a door knock, you didn't hear a door kicked in, [you didn't

J: → I was.] I've said I was watching [TV on the phone.

P: No. But]

J: I don't know how

P: So, it's very confusing. … But generally random events are not, in most cases, random. There's a rhyme or reason why they've come to your house.

The suspicion and accusation do not stop there. P moves on to indirect accusation in (39). He brings up her words from earlier in the interview, re-confirms them and explicitly asks if she is involved in the incident in any way. He points out another irregularity that the invaders did not hurt or kill her, which does not sound logical in a murder case. As J is involved in the incident, she cannot provide a reason. She remains silent for a while before coming up with a seemingly valid reason that P cannot verify at this stage, which helps her to shift the focus and blame away from her to the invaders.

(39) P: → All the comment you hear from number one really is is "it's time to go. We've been here too long. We've been here too long."?

J: Yes. And number three was the one that says was was my father and all like. What I heard from him was basically "There's more. You're lying."

P: → So, you're telling me that you you had no involvement in what happened, meaning not saying how the outcome came, but you had no involvement in in any type of illegal activity that would have drawn you or the attention of you to have bad people come to your house looking for large sums of money? You're not involved in this any which way? Because the question obviously stands Jennifer is, you're upstairs and they're downstairs, right? So, it's a natural concern when why would they leave you alone? Why would they not do the same to you? (-) You can't answer that question?

J: The only thing I can say is he said I cooperated, but I asked him to take me.

With no success in the accusation, P decides to try again and accuses J of lying four times in a row. In (40), P brings up the evidence that has severely damaged J's credibility earlier and confirms that she is not lying in this interview. Even though J has already rejected the accusation twice, he is not giving up on that. In the third attempt, he lists the specific events that she has lied about and makes a direct accusation. J interrupts and issues an immediate denial. P rephrases the accusatory question with more details in the fourth attempt to avoid misunderstanding and then introduces a new topic that can possibly explain her motives.

(40) P: (1) … Okay, there's no, you had no threats. And again, we're back to the fact that you admittedly lied. Okay. Not to me, right? =

J: No. =

P: (2) Not to me. =

J: No.

P: (3) You've admittedly lied. You've lied to your parents right about going to school. You've lied to Danny about being Daniel, about being raped and about receiving a bullet. Who's to say this whole thing isn't a lie, that what you're telling me is a lie. Because if you are lying, it's the most cold-blooded thing that [I have ever faced in my life.

J: No, I don't.] (-)

P: (4) There is nothing that you've said to me today is a lie. And I want to, there, I want to put a little preamble, not nothing in here that you might have mistaken because of order of events. I'm saying to you right now is there anything throughout the course of your statement today where you've lied to me? From your interaction with Danny Daniel. From your "I'm not involved in drugs, and I don't have anything to do with them and we don't have large sums of money. What about life insurance policies? …

Later in (41), P brings back the accusations again. It is worth mentioning that P uses declaratives in most of the accusations, which is a conducive form that anticipates agreement from the addressees (Harris 1984). But same as the other attempts, J firmly rejects all the propositions.

(41) P: So, this wasn't some evil plot that you thought up to? =

J: Oh my God, no.

P: No interaction, no belief. No, you didn't have anything to do with this thing at all [whatsoever.

J: No]

5.2.5. Closing

The closing is very different from Interview 1. After another break of 15 minutes, P comes back with the accusations to re-confirm that J has never lied to him (42). As usual, she rejects the accusations and asserts that she is being honest throughout the interview.

(42) P: Have you lied to me?

J: No

P: No? You haven't lied to me about anything?

J: I said whatever I could to help.

P then asks some open questions in (43) to let J volunteer any additional information that might help with the investigation and things that she wants to clarify in her statement, releasing the floor completely to J to discuss any topics of her choice. P also makes a comment that J did not change much of her testimony by comparing the two interviews. This ties back to the discussion at the beginning that P is not constrained by the rule of 'starting fresh' and is able to compare between statements.

(43) P: … So, is there anything else that you think that you can think of that might help us? (-)

J: There was this one person who added me on Facebook…

…

P: … You didn't really change much from your first statement to your second statement, right? You've explained more, we've covered off more. But is there anything in this course that you think you want to change?

Towards the end, P explicitly puts forward his concern about J lying and reiterates the accusatory question. This time, P does not stop after J rejects the proposition. He further seeks an explanation on the reason why she could not be lying. This instance indicates that P remains doubtful despite J has been repeatedly asserting her innocence. It also highlights the control he exerts over the second half of the interview, leaving J little room to resist.

(44) P: … My concern lies in the fact of your lying, okay? You've come clean. You've never lied to me before, right? I've never met you to be a liar. But the fact is that you've lied about stuff to Daniel. You've lied to your parents. So, could you be lying to me?

J: I can’t.

P: Why couldn't you be lying to me?

J: Because you're scaring me.

P: It doesn't mean that you couldn't be lying to me, right? I don't know you. I've known you now for probably five hours intermittent. I hope you're not lying to me, right? That's all I can hope for. But the fact of the matter is that those three things are sitting there saying you know like you have the ability to trick your parents for a long period of time. (.)

5.2.6. Summary

In Interview 2, P has a well-established topical agenda. Although he has the overall control on the main topics, topic management is found to be a collaborative effort between participants. Discourse markers, questions and statements are used to transition between topics. Restrictive questions remain the most common question type, with information- and confirmation-seeking as the most prevalent functions. P also starts using accusatory questions to suspect whether J is telling the truth, which is a new type of question function not seen in Interview 1. In Section 5.2.3, P adopts the questioning sequence of confirmation-seeking question followed by information- or explanation-seeking questions to verify the information he has collected. J occasionally interrupts to ask questions and to deny an accusation. Additionally, only P is allowed to refer back to the first statement for comparison, highlighting the power imbalance between participants in the context of police interview.

5.3. Interview 3 (Suspect Interview)

Interview 3 is a suspect interview that occurred after J’s father, a key witness and victim, regained consciousness. He mentioned in the police interview that J talked to the killers like friends and was able to walk freely in the house during the incident. As J was identified as a suspect, she was brought back for interrogation. Interview 3 is the longest out of the three interviews, which

lasted for around four and a half hours. It covers six parts: (1) opening, (2) Jennifer's background, (3) the incident, (4) the officer's responsibility, (5) confrontation and (6) closing. Throughout the interview, P adopts some commonly used Reid techniques, and every interaction has a common goal: to elicit a confession from J. Table 7 lists the question type and function of questions in Interview 3.

Table 7. Question type and function of questions in Interview 3

	Police (P)		**Jennifer Pan (J)**		**Total**	
Question Type						
Open	200	16.46%	8	38.10%	208	16.83%
Restrictive	1,015	83.54%	13	61.90%	1,028	83.17%
Function						
Information-seeking	732	60.25%	5	23.81%	737	59.63%
Confirmation-seeking	283	23.29%	-	0.00%	283	22.90%
Explanation-seeking	103	8.48%	1	4.76%	104	8.41%
Clarification-seeking	33	2.72%	15	71.43%	48	3.88%
Accusatory	53	4.36%	-	0.00%	53	4.29%
Facilitation	11	0.91%	-	0.00%	11	0.89%
Total	**1,215 (98.30%)**		**21 (1.70%)**		**1,236**	

There are 1,236 questions in total, with P dominating the questioner role (over 98%). More than 80% of P's questions are restrictive. A high proportion of information- and confirmation-seeking questions is observed (close to 85%). There is also a rise in explanation-seeking (8.48%), clarification-seeking (2.72%) and accusatory questions (4.36%) compared to Interview 2, while facilitation questions (0.91%) remain minimal. Other than that, J has asked more questions than Interview 2. The majority are for clarification and the rest seeks information and explanation.

5.3.1. Opening

The opening of Interview 3 differs from Interview 1 and 2. No commissioner of oaths was invited, and the criminal codes were not being read aloud. Rather, P reviews the rights, such as counselling a lawyer, and specifically confirms that J has sworn to tell the truth in the previous interviews, as in (45):

(45) P: … And on those sworn video statements, you promised to tell the truth.
J: Yes.
P: Is that correct?
J: Yes.

Similar to Interviews 1 and 2, confirmation questions are the most prevalent in the opening segment. In (46), P even states that J only has to answer 'yes' or 'no' to the questions, exerting his control to restrict the response:

(46) P: Do you understand that? You just have to say yes or no.

P also uses an open question to check her understanding and to ask her to repeat everything in her own words in (47). Later, he asks J to introduce herself. However, she does not respond for over 20 seconds, prompting P to guide her to talk about her hobbies in playing the piano and figure skating, education as well as her future aspirations. During the introduction, P constantly asks other restrictive questions too. Again, it indicates that an open question might not always be ideal in eliciting a narrative. Guidance and scaffolding with restrictive questions are sometimes necessary.

(47) P: Just tell me your understanding of what I've been telling you. Just tell me what you understand me to say in your own words. …
…

P: … So, if I were to ask one of your friends about you, or you wanted to tell me yourself, what would how would you describe Jennifer Pan? (-) Just maybe a bit about your history, where you grew up and where you went to school.

…

P: Okay. And what are you going to be taking?

Disrupted by a technical problem, P and J had to switch to another interrogation room before proceeding. P repeated some of the opening procedures and dives into J's background.

5.3.2. Jennifer's Background

This topic is an extension of the brief self-introduction from the opening segment. It addresses a variety of sub-topics that are picked by P, such as J's friends, relationship with Daniel, education background, schedule, part-time jobs, family, mental issues and how J has been lying to her parents for the past seven years. These sub-topics have already been covered in Interview 2. This segment is dominated by information-seeking questions, where P gathers new information while recollecting old information for written record. Although P claims that this process is for his own understanding in (48), it should also be noted that he already knows most of the information he is asking for. Therefore, these questions might be designed for any future audiences who might not know J. As we will see at a later stage, P will also make use of the information collected here to "develop a theme and explanation on why the murder transpired" (King & Snook 2009: 675), which is Step 2 of Reid (Inbau *et al.* 2004).

(48) P: … And I know you've said some of these things to the police before, but I just want to go over it from my own understanding. …

In addition, P uses this segment for rapport building. In (49), he finds common ground with J by mentioning that they both attended a Catholic elementary school with a church beside it. Note

that he uses the first-person plural pronouns “we” and “us” to relate to J and indicate that they share the same background. After that, P gives the floor to J with an open question to let her select the next sub-topic. This is one of the few instances where J can enjoy more discursive freedom and influence the topical agenda. At other times, P is the one deciding how much information to pursue on each sub-topic.

(49) P: … And did they go to church at school or not?

J: In elementary school, I had a church next to my school.

P: Yes, okay, I had the same thing. So, that's why I'm asking. Okay. And basically, we went every Friday morning to church because we were right beside it, right? So, they had a special service for us. Okay. Now, what else can you tell me about growing up?

J: I live on a schedule.

P: Okay. And tell me about that schedule.

In (50), P leads the conversation to the sub-topic of the piano with a request (“And tell me about the piano.”) and immediately asks a restrictive question to provide direction. The discussion involves the piano teaching qualification J is currently pursuing. In line (3) – (4), P asks two questions simultaneously, which is a common practice of P in this interview. It should be pointed out that his next question: “Can you charge more?” is out of the scope of the case. Instead of seeking information, this question aims to build rapport and establish an informal atmosphere, so that J will be less wary of P and more willing to cooperate. In fact, after J’s reply, both participants laugh (line 7-8), indicating that the question has achieved its goal.

(50) (1) P: And tell me about the piano. When did you start with piano?
(2) J: When I was four.
…
(3) P: … What does the actual whole papers give you? What will you be able to do
(4) with that?
(5) J: It's just a formality.

(6) P: … Okay. Can you charge more?
(7) J: I don’t know. (laughs)
(8) P: (laughs)

After getting an overview of J’s background, P revisits some sub-topics in (51) to gather the missing narratives for later use, exhibiting his dominance in topic management. For instance, at this point, P already knows the fact that J’s parents had discovered some of her lies about her relationship and education, leading them to put in place some strict guidelines, such as no seeing or talking to Daniel, no leaving the house without permission and having a curfew of 9 pm. With regard to this, J felt trapped and depressed. P reformulates these into statements and calls for confirmation:

(51)
(1) P: … I get that feeling that it's pretty tough to live up to their expectations.
(2) Okay, like your dad ultimately would like to see you be like a doctor, that
(3) type of thing, and maybe you can't do it. Right? I'm not saying you can't,
(4) but I get the feeling that those were pretty high standards for anybody. Not
(5) everybody can be a doctor, okay. And but they may have acted like you
(6) could have done it no problem. Is that fair?
(7) J: I guess.
(8) P: Like, I don’t want to say something that’s not accurate. But I just get the
(9) feeling that their expectations were so high that few people would be able
(10) to reach that expectation.
(11) J: Yeah.
…
(12) P: I'm not just talking about you. I’m talking about anybody.
(13) J: Yeah.
(14) P: And it started at a young age.
(15) J: Yeah.
(16) P: It didn’t start just when you went to university.
(17) J: No.
(18) P: It's been an expectation that since you were a child, that you would be
(19) successful, better than everybody else.

There are two noticeable observations in (51). First, other than the question "Is that fair?" (line 6), everything else is presented as statements of facts in the highly conducive form: declarative. In fact, these propositions are not exactly J's words, but P's version of her narratives. J is left in a position to agree with them. Additionally, one instance of resistance is found. J's first reply is not a yes or no as expected by P (line 7). With an ambiguous answer, P rephrases the statement to pin down a confirmation (line 8-10). As mentioned, these propositions will be recycled numerous times later. At this stage, they allow P to show understanding of J's situation, make her believe that he is on her side and portray her parents as having unreasonably high expectations of her, attempting to shift the blame to them.

5.3.3. The Incident

This topic is also discussed in the previous two interviews. However, not every single detail of the incident is covered. The sub-topics are also selected by P. Only events that are found to be lies and that are useful in the confrontation are asked in detail. The tension in this segment resembles the second half of Interview 2, but P exercises even more control as he now has solid evidence to prove that J is involved and has been making false statements.

In (52), P transitions to this topic by using a discourse marker *now*. Right at the start, he makes a remark that they have interviewed many people to demonstrate his knowledge and seeks an explanation based on the witness testimony from J's relative (line 1, 3-4). J immediately denies it and provides her version of the story to challenge the presupposition, implying that an explanation is not necessary (line 5-7). In the next turn (line 8-9), P reformulates her answer as a statement with the frame "so, you're saying…". This collocation of 'say' with *so*-preface questions has a reconstructive function to "summarize, evaluate and label the previous answers in order to focus the questioning on a particularly important evidential detail" (Johnson 2002: 105). In this

case, P is trying to construct and highlight the fact that J did tell her relatives that the three killers liked her. In line (10), J attempts to interrupt and deny the proposition before P can formulate the next question. With the floor being taken away, P interrupts back to prevent further resistance (line 11) He changes the perspective from the reason to the meaning of the saying. Note that both questions carry the presupposition of "J did say that she thinks the three guys liked her", underscoring how questions can be used as a mode of control. This time, J adopts the avoidance strategy and claims that she does not understand (line 12). This allows her to avoid answering the question while challenging her relative's testimony.

(52) (1) P: … Now, obviously we've spoken to a lot of people, right?
(2) J: Okay.
(3) P: One of your relatives said that you had mentioned that these guys liked you,
(4) that broke into the house. Why did you say that?
(5) J: I didn't say that. I said that, I asked them why, like when they separated my
(6) parents away from me, I asked them, "why can't I be with them". And they
(7) were just like, "you cooperated. Just keep cooperating".
(8) P: Okay. So, you're saying you made that comment to a relative that they liked
(9) you though. Why =
(10) J: I don't =
(11) P: Is that what you mean, or what was?
(12) J: I don't understand. (-) I don't really understand.

Struggling to get an explanation, P switches to another perspective to ask for J's opinion (53). While she complies with a yes or no answer, she laughs before adding an explanation. This implies that she finds the question ludicrous and does not make sense at all, which directly threatens P's face:

(53) P: Okay. Did you feel like they liked you?
J: No. They were, like. (laughs) If you have a gun to your head, I don't think they liked you very much.

A recurring discussion in both Interview 2 and 3 is J's claim that she cooperated and, therefore, was not killed or injured in the incident (54):

(54)
(1) J: The only thing they could say was they kept saying that, you know, I
(2) cooperated and to shut up and cooperate, keep cooperating.
(3) P: Did you feel like your parents didn't cooperate?
(4) J: I don't know.
(5) P: Okay. Is there something that they didn't cooperate with?
(6) J: They were trying.
(7) P: That's what I mean, like. So really, they did cooperate when you think about
(8) it.
(9) J: [I think
(10) P: There was no money] to be found.
(11) J: No.
(12) P: They told the truth that he had $60, right? So, there wasn't anything that he
(13) wasn't cooperating with.
(14) J: I don't know.

After J reiterates her claim that 'she cooperated' (line 1-2), P tries to learn more about her interpretation of the event (line 3). Since the claim is fabricated, meaning answering either yes or no will lead to further questioning, J expresses uncertainty to avoid giving a definite answer. P reframes the question and asks her to provide additional context on what her parents did not cooperate with (line 5). Again, J is not able to give a valid answer (line 6). Therefore, P steers her response in the direction of her parents did cooperate (line 7-8). He particularly uses a statement to present this view, expecting agreement from J. Although J attempts to express her thoughts (line 9), P interrupts to present some irrefutable facts and uses a tag question to pressure her to align with his version of the story (line 10, 12-13). Here, P does not attempt to directly confront J but refutes her arguments with persistent questioning. He also includes an "underlying accusation" (Harris 1984: 20) in his questions: the claim of 'you cooperated' is a lie, giving her a chance to change her words and align with his version.

P then brings up J's first statement and briefly goes over some information in (55):

(55) P: Now, I have your statement here, the first one that you gave. So, I just want to go over some of the information there, just to make sure that I understand it, okay?

The questioning sequence here is similar to the segment of 'Jennifer's history' in Interview 2 (Section 5.2.3). P mostly uses confirmation questions in declarative for verification, followed by a mix of information- and explanation-seeking questions to elicit both old and new information, as in (56):

(56) P: So, Adrian came over. Is that right? Okay, and anything. Uh, you watch some shows. Did you talk about anything?

J: No.

P: Like, when you watch your shows, do you have talk about them after? How's the evening going with him?

J: We just watched and then what's next. If there's a joke he laughs.

Overall, P has control over which piece of information to confirm and which particular events to delve into. Unless P seeks an explanation, J has few chances to speak for an extended period and can only give minimal responses. There are only a few instances of violating the Q&A sequence and talking out of turn. Besides, it is observed that P sometimes asks silly questions. (57) is about J's routine in checking and locking the doors before bed. P asks a silly question about what J would do if the doors were not locked at night:

(57) P: Okay. And what would you do?

J: Make sure that they're locked.

P: → Okay. And if they weren't locked?

J: Lock them.

P: Lock them. Okay. …

One might think that the information P is looking for is trivial and it is common sense to lock the door at night. However, J was the one unlocking the door to let the killers into the house before the incident. As a result, this is an important question that allows P to establish a "degree of intentionality" (Stokoe & Edwards 2008: 91) in her action. It needs to be articulated for the written record as well.

The rest of the segment addresses two other events that J has been lying about: the claim that she was tied up during the entire incident and the description of the first killer. It is observed that P uses questions to exert stricter control over J. In line 2 of (58), J takes over the floor and expresses her thoughts of not wanting to go through the questioning again, trying to stop P from further probing the details. Despite this, P continues with the topic regardless. While P acknowledges her feelings, he explains that the details are essential in the investigation to prevent her from resisting (line 3-4). He further introduces a new sub-topic and invites J to reiterate the description of the first 'gentleman' (line 4-6). Note that P asks two face-threatening questions ("can you tell me that again?" and "can you help me with that?"). Initially, J remains silent and refuses to comply. Then, P reframes the action of providing the description as helping, which entails that if J continues to remain silent, not only would she lose her face, but she would also be considered an uncooperative interviewee who is unwilling to assist with the investigation. This leaves J no choice but to comply.

(58)
(1) P: Okay.
(2) J: I don't want to go through this =
(3) P: Okay. Well, these details are important because it shows us what they did,
(4) right? And we need to get that. Now, one thing I do want to go over is the
(5) description of the gentleman that you said you called him number one. Can
(6) you tell me that again? (-) The first person that you dealt with or that. (-) Can
(7) you help me with that? (-)
(8) J: He had dreadlocks. Slightly shorter than (inaudible).

Another interesting observation in (58) is that the description of the killers is a recurring sub-topic in the three interviews and both police interviewers approach it with an open question. With experience, J should be able to provide a detailed description, such as the appearance, height, race and accent. However, she sticks to the exact same description as in Interview 1 and 2: the dreadlocks (line 8). This, once again, indicates that open questions might not always be able to elicit information, especially when the interviewee intends to lie.

5.3.4. The Officer's Responsibility

P introduces a unique topic that was never discussed in the first two interviews: to explain his responsibility in the investigation. He transforms himself from an information-seeker to an information-giver and gives long narratives for close to 15 minutes. He also gets to control the knowledge and decide what to inform J:

(59) P: Now the reason why I'm here today, okay, is that I'm an expert, okay, in what we call truth verification, okay? … So basically, all my studies come into interviewing and detecting deception, determining if somebody's telling the police the truth, because every investigation that we run that's a homicide, we run a parallel investigation. ... My job is to determine whether everything somebody has told us as a witness or as a reporting party is actually the truth, okay? Now, in my experience as a police officer, no matter what the case is, okay, for some reason another people make mistakes in that they don't always tell the truth, okay? They may tell some of the truth, but they don't always tell all of the truth. Do you want what I mean?

In (59), P first asserts his institutional status by mentioning his job title as a truth verification expert and explaining in detail his work, responsibility and education. However, he does not just speak in length. Sometimes, he keeps J engaged and checks her understanding with questions. These questions and information are also tailor-made for this case. (60), for example, is about half-truths which J has been practicing for the past seven years:

(60) P: And I know in your life, you've already had occasions where you're well aware what half-truths mean, right?

J: Yeah

P: What do they mean?

J: You don't fully tell the truth.

In this segment, there is not a lot of dynamics found. P dominates and has control over the sub-topics and the type of responses J can give. Most importantly, everything he talks about is within his own domain that J has absolutely no knowledge about. As a result, J is turned into a listener instead of an information-giver like she used to be, and there is no way for her to interrupt or resist. P also explicates the technology the police use to detect deception, such as computer programs, forensics and even satellites. In (61), he explains how they obtain satellite information to see the movement of people in the house:

(61) P: So, we can go back and obtain satellite information, okay? And essentially, the satellite's a 24-hour video that's going on you know 24 hours a day, seven days a week, right? … And so, we would have to obtain that data for a specific address, get it for the dates and time that we're concerned with, okay? And basically, if people are moving around in a house, it's like an x-ray, okay, and basically, we're able to tell, you know, are those movements, are those actions, that number of people consistent with the story that we've been told …

It is worth noting that part of this narrative is a lie. Satellite is not used to obtain evidence in an investigation. In fact, Canadian police are legally allowed to lie to the interviewees when conducting interrogations[4]. This further underscores the power imbalance that P is allowed to lie without any consequences, whereas J always has to tell the truth. This is a comparatively short

[4] R. v. Cook, [1998] 2 S.C.R. 597 at para. 60.

segment, where P does the preface work that leads to the highlight of the interview: the confrontation.

5.3.5. Confrontation

In this segment, P constantly uses active persuasion to elicit a confession. P first spends another 5 minutes talking non-stop to confront J with the evidence he has on hand:

(62) (1) P: So, … I've spent literally a week on this case, going over information after
(2) information, accessing all these sources, speaking to every other expert on
(3) the case, okay? And at this point, Jennifer, I know that you've not been
(4) truthful with the police, okay? … Your rendition of what happened one, a lot
(5) of events you say that happened never did, okay? A lot of things that you told
(6) the police happened never happened, okay? They never happened in the
(7) sequence that you've told, okay? You've got to remember that your dad was
(8) there, okay? … There's lots of other things that tell me that you've not been
(9) truthful. All this analysis that I've been doing. But, on top of it, that yours
(10) doesn't match at all, except for very few factors that you've told truth, but
(11) you haven't told all the truth. … you've spent a considerable amount of time
(12) in the last seven years telling half-truths, okay? …
(13) And I know why this has happened, okay? You have spent your whole life
(14) trying to live up to expectations that you can't meet, okay? And it's stressed
(15) the hell out of you. You're a 24-year-old woman being treated like a 15-year-
(16) old, okay? You've never done anything that terrible in your life, but you're
(17) being treated like you have. You're not being treated like the adult that you
(18) are.
(19) Now, what we need to get down to here today, Jen, is what really happened.
(20) You need to tell me what went on because you know who was in that house
(21) that night.

In (62), P narrates his version of J's experience. First, he directly confronts J about her lies in previous statements with witness and expert testimony (line 1-12). Then, he presents the explanations developed in Section 5.3.2 as evidence of why the murder transpired (line 13-18). Further, he expresses solidarity by using the first-person plural pronoun "we" and asserts his authoritative power by demanding J to tell the truth with the open question "you need to tell me

what went on…" (line 19-21). Note that P uses the form of declaratives with tag in this narrative. Since an answer is not expected, they are not counted as questions for the purpose of this study. However, they allow P to present his knowledge as facts, force J to agree with him and eventually obtain a confession.

Nonetheless, J refuses to cooperate. In general, she employs three strategies to resist in this segment. The first is the 'avoidance resistance' strategy. In (63), J denies the accusation by responding, "I don't know" (line 1). P rejects her attempt, directly accuses her of falsifying the description of the 'number one' killer and claims that they have "done the homework" (line 2-5, 7-12). J attempts to interrupt to prevent P from further developing the accusation (line 6), but her narrative is terminated and rejected. P then reiterates the accusations, emphasizes the solid evidence they have on hand and re-orients the discussion back to the false description (line 7-12). However, J employs the same strategy for two more turns in order to maintain her position (line 13, 15). In the second attempt, P portrays J as a "good person" and even downplays her attempt to murder as "a mistake" and "some bad decisions" to make the confession easier (line 16-21, 23). He further asserts his institutional status as a police officer to warn her not to mislead or lie to him.

(63) (1) J: I don't know.
(2) P: You do, Jen. There's no question about that, okay? There's no question about
(3) it, okay? You have actually given an improper description of the person you
(4) were dealing with, upstairs, number one. You falsified the whole description
(5) of that person. We know that, okay? We know that, okay? He =
(6) J: No =
(7) P: Yes, you did, Jen, okay? You did. You've made a mistake here and we got to
(8) get to the bottom of that. That person did not exist in that house that night. I
(9) know that, okay? We've done the homework, okay? … It wasn't three black
(10) guys that left that house. You know that and I know that, okay? So, we need
(11) to get down to why you have purposely told us a false description of number
(12) one, o[kay?
(13) J: No] I, I =

(14) P: No, Jen. [It's
(15) J: No]
(16) P: totally wrong and it was done on purpose, okay, to mislead us, okay?
(17) Because you're involved in this, okay? … But what we also know is that
(18) you're a good person, okay, that's made a mistake here, right? You've made
(19) some bad decisions, okay? And it's, you know, how you made the bad
(20) decisions that not talking telling your parents what's up? You don't want to do
(21) that with us, okay? You don't want to do that with the police, do you?
(22) J: Yeah but =
(23) P: You don't want to mislead me, do you?
(24) J: No =
(25) P: Okay. So, let's not do that. …

In fact, this is step three of Reid (Inbau *at al.* 2004): "to prevent or discourage the suspects from denying involvement in the crime, by reconfirming one's belief in their guilt and reiterating the proposed theme after denials" (King & Snook 2009: 676). This also allows P to "project to the suspect that there is absolutely no doubt in his mind as to the suspect's guilt" (Gordon and Fleischer 2011: 27).

Another resistance strategy J employs is refusal. In (64), as P is not able to get the story he wants, he turns the conversation table and becomes the storyteller. In line (1) – (7), he recycles the testimony built up in Section 5.3.2, such as J's future aspiration, the unrealistically high expectations her parents had for her and the fact that she had been grounded at home, which allows him to shift the blame to her parents and demonstrate his "epistemic status" (Heritage and Raymond 2005; Heritage 2012; Mondada 2013) that he is "operating from a more knowledgeable position" (Mason & Rocks 2020: 124). He also regards the attempt as a human instinct and self-protective behaviour, trying to justify and rationalize her action (line 8-11). He further poses two declaratives with tag to persuade J to agree with the explanation (line 12-14). After eliciting an agreement in the second turn, he switches the focus to the incident. He uses the leading question

"… you wish you could turn it back, right?" to imply that J is involved and further asks an open question to seek the complete version of the event (line 16-19). Facing the accusations, J remains silent and refuses to provide an answer until P has repeated the question multiple times. Although J does respond, she provides a brief answer and emphasizes that she has already answered it before and does not see the need to elaborate further (line 20).

(64)
(1) P: After what you've been through, I'm surprised this didn't happen a lot earlier,
(2) truthfully, okay? You're 24 years old and you were a prisoner in your own
(3) house. You had lost your own identity. There was no Jennifer anymore,
(4) okay? … The Jen that just wants to be a piano teacher. Why isn't that good
(5) enough? Why was that not good enough? That was great expectations. Why
(6) not just be a lab technician? Why a doctor? Why does it always have to be
(7) something bigger? Why can't it just be what you want?
(8) And all that has resulted in what's happened on, on November 8th. … At
(9) some point, the nicest dog, when it's cornered, bites back, okay? It's called
(10) self-preservation, okay? And in your case, all that's happened here is self-
(11) preservation. …
(12) Yes, their intentions might have been good, but they're not realistic. They're
(13) not, Jen, were they? (-) Jen?
…
(14) P: You couldn't live up to them, could you? You tried to. Right? Am I right?
(15) J: Yeah.
(16) P: And finally, you had to bite back, right? … And I know right now you wish
(17) you could turn it back, right? You wish you could go back before that night
(18) and stop this, right? (-) Right, Jen? (-) Right? (-) What happened? (-) What
(19) happened? (-)
(20) J: Like I said, it happened.

J continues to show signs of withdrawal. In (65), P shows understanding of her situation by describing it as a common case in North America (line 3-7). He also prevents resistance by specifying the expected response to the question "you knew this was going to happen, right?" (line 8-9). During this interaction, J refuses to reply to any questions related to the incident and selectively answers those that can portray her as a cooperative interviewee (line 10-11). She then

violates the Q&A sequence and uses an information-seeking question “what happens to me?” to redirect the conversation toward her concerns (line 14). In fact, she has asked this question five times in this interview. While it is not a valid answer to the question, it does imply that she is aware of her “mistake” and the possible consequences she has to face. In line (15) – (16), P further employs another top three Reid technique: appeal to self-interest (Leo 1996; King & Snook 2009) to establish a connection between the ability to get justice for J’s mother and compliance (Mason 2020). He also provides benefits that J would be able to find the lost self and take control of her life if she cooperates (line 18-20).

(65)
(1) P: … How did it start, Jen? (-) Ey, look at me. How did it start? (-) What was
(2) your plan? Let's just go through the plan that you had, okay? …
(3) Now I do a lot of reading. And over 300 kids in North America every year
(4) are involved in their parents' deaths, okay? … there's always a common
(5) factor that those kids have had to live up to expectations that weren't
(6) reasonable … You had no choice here, and I know that. And anybody else in
(7) your situation would have done the exact same thing. …
(8) Now I want you to answer a simple question for me, okay? … I just want to
(9) hear yes, okay? You knew this was going to happen, right? Jen? Jennifer?
(10) (-) … You want to be a part of the solution here? Jen?
(11) J: Yes
…
(12) P: Okay. And you know, when a good person makes a mistake, they have to
(13) face that mistake, right? Right?
…
(14) J: What happens to me?
(15) P: What do you think should happen? I don't know. What would you like to see
(16) happen in this case?
(17) J: (inaudible) Justice for my mom.
…
(18) P: Okay. So, to get that justice, we have to hear the whole story, right? … Well,
(19) one thing. So that you’re going to be Jen again, right? That I’m going to
(20) promise you, you're going to be a person making decisions for Jen. …

Power and control undergo negotiation for a fair amount of time until J comes up with another made-up explanation that the original plan of hiring the hitmen to kill herself went wrong, and they shot her parents instead. While this is unexpected for P, J does admit that she put the plan in motion. Therefore, P probes for more information on how she came up with it in (66). Although P is well aware that the narrative is not the whole truth, he does not directly confront J but uses accusatory questions to point out anything that is seemingly illogical (line 6, 8).

(66)
(1) P: … So, when did you make that call?
(2) J: A month ago. Two months ago.
(3) P: Okay. And what did you discuss?
(4) J: Just that. Just to make sure I had the money. …I told him that I wanted to
(5) be killed.
(6) P: And did he think that was something crazy?
(7) J: He said are you sure that's what you want, and I said yes.
(8) P: Because I don't think many people get that request, do you?
(9) J: No, but that's what I wanted. And he asked me over and over to make sure I
(10) was sure, and I said I was sure.

In (66), another resistance strategy is also observed: contestation (Newbury & Johnson 2006: 216-217), meaning the interviewee answers ‘no’ when ‘yes’ is expected. The question in line (8) is again a declarative with tag, in which ‘yes’ is the preferred answer. However, J openly contests the proposition and claims that this is what she wants (line 9-10).

After eliciting the details, P directly confronts her that the narrative does not make sense and is a half-truth. In (67), P reasserts his expertise in truth verification and rejects the claim that the plan was made for her. Note that P gets to select which part of the narrative to accept, and which to be challenged and corrected. In general, he only accepts claims that align with his version of the event, whereas parts that do not match with what he believes to have happened are refuted.

Other than that, we can also observe another instance of contestation, in which J objects to P's proposition and refuses to correct her story to align with his version.

(67) P: I realize that, but it doesn't seem to make sense.

J: I know it doesn't make sense to me, because that was supposed to be.

P: → … remember everything I told you about what I do for a living? Okay. I'm an expert in determining truth and half-truths. Okay. What you've just told me is half the truth, okay? Now, what I do believe is that you went to somebody, and I do believe that night you paid them the $2,000, okay? That's the truth part, okay? Right? But what's not true is it was never for you? Okay, Jen, no.

J: Yes.

With no success, P switches the focus to how the killers got into the house and gets J to admit that she was the one unlocking the door that night. He then revisits the topic of the false description of the 'number one' killer but encounters the same resistance strategies. At last, he comes back to the discussion of J's parents as the target of the plan:

(68)
(1) P: … There's a lot more things that you don't even know that I know. That's
(2) why you're not going to be able to tell me things, okay, that I don't know
(3) already, okay? So, I will know when you're telling me the full truth. I already
(4) know you made the plan. So, I can't just say, okay, yeah, don't worry about it.
(5) You made the plan for yourself when I know that's not true, okay? ... So, I do
(6) need you to tell me that you made the plan for your parents, okay? Because
(7) that's what really happened, Jen, okay? I'm not asking you to lie to me.
(8) J: [I'm not going to lie.
(9) P: I'm just asking you to] tell me that you made the plan for your parents. …
(10) Can we understand each other, Jen? Okay.

In (68), P reveals his knowledge: "There's a lot more things that you don't even know that I know" to prevent J from further resisting (line 1-4). He asserts that he knows the plan was made for her parents and all that is left is to confess (line 5-7). He also affirms that his version of the story is nothing but the truth. Nonetheless, J poses a serious challenge to P in line (8), where she

declares that she is not going to lie. This indicates her belief that P's narrative is fabricated and undermines his professional status. P is not swayed away by the accusation. He repeats his request and reasserts that they have to "understand each other", once again, persuading J to align her story with his version (line 9-10).

J resists until the very end despite the strict control P has over her. This is when P demands her to directly repeat after him: "All you have to do is here is tell me right now that Bill yes, I made a mistake", leading her to the confession. J eventually admits that she "made a mistake", although she does not specify that the plan was made for her parents. However, as David & Trainum (2020: 129) mention, "it is easier to admit to making a mistake than to committing a crime". Indeed, it allows P to attribute the confession and narrative solely to J, which can be used as evidence "to satisfy the needs of law enforcement and prosecution" (David & Trainum 2020: 120) later in the judicial process.

(69) P: … Tell me what happened.
J: I told you what happened.
P: Okay. All of it.
J: I did.
P: → Okay. All you have to do is here is tell me right now that Bill yes, I made a mistake.
J: Bill, yes, I made a mistake.
P: This plan was for my parents. …

5.3.6. Closing

With a confession elicited, J is now officially under arrest for murder. This final segment is dominated by confirmation questions as P informs her of the charges and her rights to consult a

lawyer. To leave no room for J to resist, P specifies that she only needs to say "yes or no", as shown in (70).

(70) P: … At this point in the investigation, okay, I'm going to be arresting you for murder, okay? Also, attempted murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Do you understand that? Just have to tell me if you understand those charges. Just say yes or no. …

Nevertheless, J is by no means fully complying. In (71), J expresses her feelings of betrayal and sentiment towards P. Her narrative is then terminated by P who clarifies his neutral role in the investigation. Finally, P guides the discussion back to the original question. He also collects J's personal belongings and contacts a duty counsel before concluding the interview.

(71) P: So, do you have a lawyer?

J: → You said that you were on my side. Then [now

P: O]kay. I am on your side, Jen, okay? I know what happened here, okay? I'm on the side of truth, okay? … But at this point you need to deal with the lawyer you said, okay? I have to honour that request. … So, we have options, okay? You can do you know anyone you who are a lawyer yourself?

5.3.7. Summary

In short, P dominates this interview. Although J gets to select some of the sub-topics in the self-introduction, P has full control over the main themes and the depth of each topic. In particular, he narrates his version of the story and asks J for confirmation. Topic changes are achieved through discourse markers, questions and statements. The most common question type is restrictive questions, with the functions of information- and confirmation-seeking. Explanation-seeking and accusatory questions also play a significant role in eliciting a confession. With the strict control of P, there are fewer instances of violating the pre-allocation of question and answer. Most of J's questions are used to seek clarification. Whenever she tries to talk out of turn, P immediately

sanctions her and terminates her turn, leaving her little room to resist. Additionally, P frequently asserts his institutional status by using expert and witness testimony to demonstrate his knowledge. He also spends the entire Section 5.3.4 explaining his role in the investigation. Apart from that, there are two instances of J attempting to undermine P's institutional status.

6. Discussion

The aim of this paper is to compare the power dynamics of the interviews of suspects and witnesses in Canada using Jennifer Pan's case as a case study. In Section 5, I have examined how power and control is constructed and resisted within individual interviews. In this section, I will compare the use of the four discursive features: (1) topic, (2) question, (3) Q&A sequence and (4) allusions to institutional status across the three interviews.

6.1. Topic

Attributed to the institutional role of an interviewer, P has overall control over topic management across interviews. Both police interviewers consistently take on the role of selecting and introducing the main topics. While J occasionally gets to choose the sub-topics, this can only be found in Interview 1 and the first half of Interview 2. It is noteworthy that this power is granted by P, and it is at his discretion whether to pursue the sub-topics or not. At other times, J remains in a discursively restricted position, highlighting the asymmetrical nature of the exchanges. Another notable difference is the topical agenda. Other than Interview 1, P has a well-established agenda. He creates clear boundaries between topics and can decide how much details to delve into on each topic. Besides, I found that topic management is a collaborative effort in Interview 2, with J helping to preserve the topical agenda in the interactions.

These differences could be attributed to the type of interview and the relative knowledge the officer has about the case. Interview 1 is a witness interview that occurred shortly after the incident. P is in a less knowledgeable position and wants to hear the entire incident from J. Therefore, J controls the knowledge and enjoys more discursive freedom to discuss any sub-topics related to the incident. Although Interview 2 is also a witness interview, it occurred a few days later, giving P more time to conduct background checks and gather information from other witness testimonies. Thus, he can plan the agenda and exercise stricter control over the topics. In contrast, Interview 3 is a suspect interview. The goal is not only to elicit a confession but also to construct a story that can be used as evidence later in the judicial process. Indeed, P only selects particular events to include in his version of the narrative and calls for confirmation when shaping the confession narrative. This is the biggest difference between Interview 1 and 3 and supports David & Trainum's (2020) finding that topic choice is one of the unique qualities of a confession narrative.

6.2. Question

Focusing on the use of questions as a mode of control, both officers employ an overwhelmingly high number of restrictive questions across all interviews (over 80%), which require only minimal responses from J (Harris 1984) (Figure 1). This aligns with findings by Wright & Alison (2003) and Snook *et al*. (2012) that investigators in police interviews ask very few open questions and rely on closed questions. While studies (e.g. Fisher et al. 1987; Wright & Alison 2003; Snook *et al*. 2012) suggest that the lack of open questions gives the interviewee little chance to recount their version of events, my analysis reveals that open questions might not be ideal to elicit information in every situation. In cases where interviewees like J intend to lie and give a false statement, open questions might not be as effective as restrictive ones. Overall, there is an upward trend in the use of open questions, in which the percentage in Interview 3 is twice of

Interview 1. It should be noted that a higher number of open questions does not necessarily entail less control. As mentioned in the analysis, open questions that seek explanations require interviewees to justify themselves, which is a way for interviewers to exercise control (Haworth 2006). Indeed, P uses explanation-seeking questions to have J justify her answers and actions in Interview 2 and 3. This echoes with Haworth (2006) that open and restrictive questions is not always a valid indicator of power dynamics in the context of police interviews and underscores the importance of considering question function in the analysis.

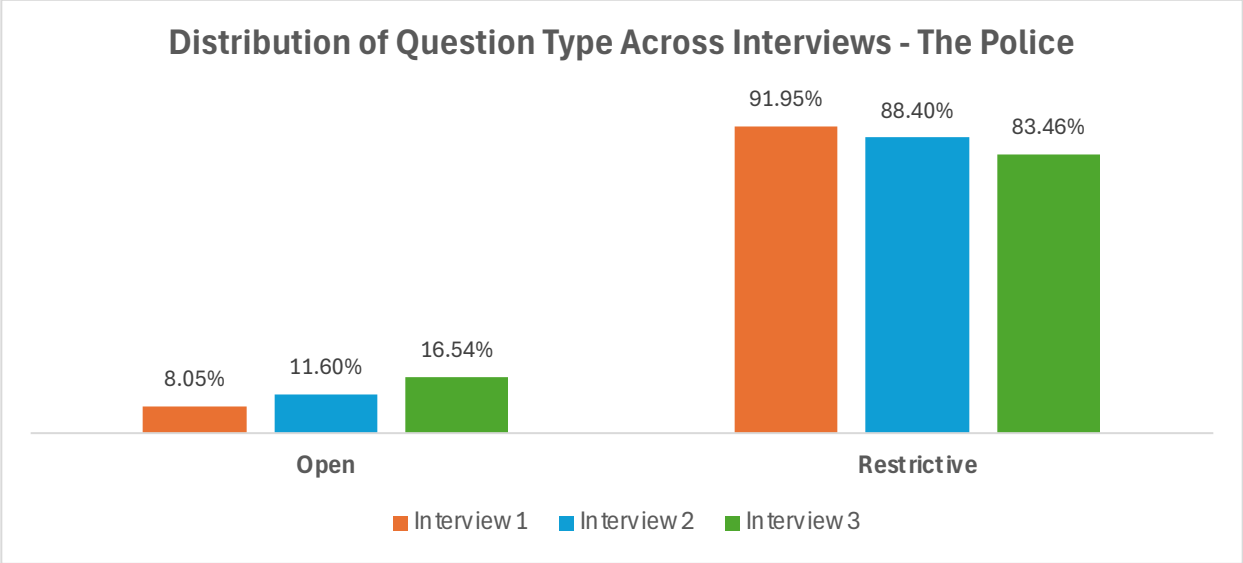

Figure 1. Distribution of question type across interviews – The police

In terms of question function, all interviews are dominated by information-seeking questions, followed by confirmation- and explanation-seeking ones (Figure 2). From Interview 1 to 3, there is a gradual decrease in information-seeking questions and an increase in explanation-seeking, clarification-seeking and accusatory questions, whereas confirmation-seeking and facilitation questions remain at the similar levels. This distribution could be explained by the primary goal of the interviews. In Interview 1, P uses information- and confirmation-seeking questions to collect as much information about the incident as possible. Although he also gathers

details of the incident in the first half of Interview 2, the second half is used to question J's credibility, which explains the gradual decrease in information-seeking questions and the increase in explanation-seeking and accusatory questions. Interview 3 resembles the second half of Interview 2, but P exerts even greater control by employing more explanation-seeking and accusatory questions to pin down a confession from J.

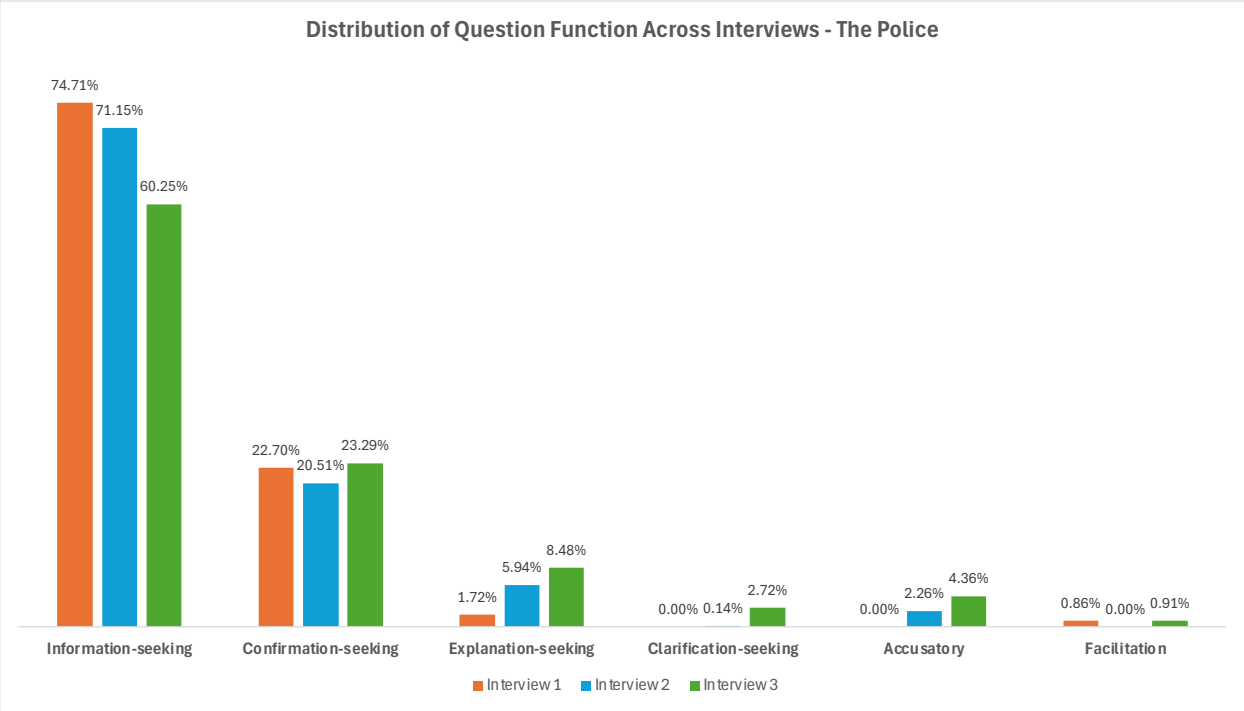

Figure 2. Distribution of question function across interviews – The police

6.3. Question-answer Sequence

While P dominates the role of a questioner and has the power to set the turn in all interviews, J occasionally subverts the ascribed roles. Notably, she takes on the information-seeker role in both Interview 1 and 3 to seek information related to the investigation and to address her concerns. The way both officers manage these questions is particularly interesting. The officer in Interview 1 does take up the role as a responder and provides the necessary information. In contrast, the one in Interview 3 does not comply. Instead, he uses her questions as a means to exchange for a

confession, showcasing his ability to turn the conversation table to regain control. This suggests that interviewees will attempt to disrupt the institutional pre-allocation of questions and answers in all interviews. It is up to the interviewers to manage the disruption and re-establish their discursive position.

6.4. Allusions to Institutional Status

In my data, there are limited instances of allusions to institutional status. There is none in Interview 1, but I observed more examples in Interview 3 than in Interview 2. Although both interviewers use testimonial evidence for comparison, the one in Interview 3 further dedicates an entire section to informing J his work and responsibility and even lies about using satellite to obtain evidence. It seems to have suggested that police officers are more likely to allude to their own institutional position in suspect interviews than in witness interviews. However, this result should be interpreted with caution as it contrasts with Haworth's (2006) finding, where the officer in her data rarely alludes to his institutional status. It is also observed that J only undermines P's status in the suspect interview but not in any of the witness interviews. For instance, she states that P is instructing her to lie in the interview ("I'm not going to lie" – excerpt 68). This is an intriguing finding and I would argue that it supports Haworth's view on power and control:

> Power and control can always be challenged by the use of discursive strategies, regardless of the subject matter, the status of the participants, or any other factor.
>
> (Haworth 2006: 755)

Indeed, J challenges and undermines P's position despite the imparity in their professional status. I cautiously propose that attempts to undermine other's institutional and professional status

might be exclusive in suspect interviews, although I also recognize the need for further investigation in witness interviews.

7. Conclusion

This paper explores power construction and resistance in the interviews of witnesses and suspects in Canada by using the case of Jennifer Pan as a case study. I adopted a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods and have analyzed the nuanced differences in witness and suspect interviews in terms of topic, question, question-answer sequence and allusions to institutional status. The results revealed that institutional roles do strongly influence the interaction, in which P enjoys the privilege of managing the topical agenda, seeking and confirming information and explanation and setting a preferred response. Apart from that, the degree of control depends on the interview type, the overall goal and the relative knowledge of the police interviewers. In my analysis, P tends to exercise greater control over J in the suspect interview than in the two witness interviews. In particular, he strictly controls the topical agenda to focus on specific events and uses questioning techniques to leverage J's responses when shaping a confession narrative. He also constantly asserts his professional status to put himself in an even stronger discursive position. As Newbury & Johnson (2006: 231) points out, "control can be resisted, even with the most coercive questioning". Indeed, it is not uncommon to find different forms of resistance in the data. Similar to P's control, more resistance is observed in the suspect interview, where J employs all four resistance strategies: contest, correction, avoidance and refusal, identified in Newbury & Johnson (2006).

Although one of the purposes of this study is to investigate both power and resistance in police interviews, the analysis focuses more on power, and resistance is not thoroughly examined. However, the result does support Haworth's (2006) view that power and control can always be

challenged regardless of participants' identity. I hope the brief discussion can bring more attention to resistance in discourse studies. I would suggest future studies to extend the quantitative part of the analysis to resistance and include a count of the resistance strategies discussed in Newbury and Johnson (2006). This, alongside the count of question types asked by the police officer, would make the quantitative part more symmetrical. Another limitation is that the gender and race of participants and other metalinguistic elements such as facial expression and body language are not taken into consideration in the analysis, in which participants might utilize these factors to assert and resist power control. Besides, the analysis of questions only gives an overview of the distribution of question types and functions in the interviews. I would suggest having a detailed breakdown by topic for a more comprehensive quantitative analysis in future research. As Haworth (2006) highlights, it would be dangerous to focus on the immediate context of police interviews without considering their role in the entire judicial process. Future studies could also examine how police interviews are utilized as evidence in Jennifer Pan's trial to better understand their function in the judicial system. Despite the limited scope, I hope that the present study has contributed some insights into the discourse studies of police interviews in Canada, provided a better understanding of the differences between the interviews of witnesses and suspects and shed light on the resistance strategies employed by interviewees.

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Appendix 1 – Interview 1 Transcript

Link to Transcript of Interview 1

Appendix 2 – Interview 2 Transcript

Link to Transcript of Interview 2

Appendix 3 – Interview 3 Transcript

Link to Transcript of Interview 3

Appendix 4 – Transcription conventions

P	police interviewer
J	Jennifer Pan
[]	overlapping talk
=	latching
(.)	small pause
(-)	longer pause
(inaudible)	unintelligible fragment
.hh	audible in-breath
hh	audible out-breath
(laughs)	laugh