Credibility Assessment

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Overview

• Science of credibility assessment
• How people prepare to appear credible
• Challenges of credibility assessment in ‘real time’
Science of Credibility Assessment

Vast scientific and popular literature
Numerous theories
Tens of thousands of research papers & books
Many supposed experts
A lot of myths and misunderstandings

Most liars are detected post hoc
Hindsight bias
Limited advice for ‘real-time’ credibility detection
What Does Psychological Science Tell Us?

• Lie detection is **extremely difficult** sometimes impossible
  - Accuracy (even for experts) is typically at chance level**
• People *always* overestimate their ability to detect lies
  - They base their estimates on experience of detecting deceit in those close to them
  - Chance hits
• Biases affect our performance
• There are no reliable giveaway signs...
  - No one single verbal and/or non-verbal behaviour exists that is uniquely associated with lying
What Does Psychological Science Tell Us?

- Lie detection is improved when **objective indicators are sought AND**:
  - **Known information** is used tactically during an interrogation
  - Receiver has the opportunity to **LISTEN** to the sender
  - Stakes for the sender are **HIGH**
  - Sender’s message is **SPONTANEOUS** rather than planned – Unexpected questions
  - Questions with some **TEMPORAL ELEMENT** are included in an interview
  - Receiver is familiar with some **TRUTHFUL** (control) behaviour.
Truth Default Theory

Context

Consistency & Coherence

Diagnostic Utility

Questions

Decision
Context

• **Content in context** (Blair et al et al., 2010: Dando & Tranter, 2016)
  • Listen
  • Silent questioner
  • Consider the context
  • Knowing about the context (familiarity/expertise)
  • Situational awareness
Diagnostic Utility

• Diagnostically useful **information** can be used to arrive at a correct inference re. credibility

• Has to be sought NOT offered

• Unmanaged demeanor/behavior has no diagnostic utility – subjective and individual
Consistency & Coherence

- 2 types of consistency information used for credibility assessment
  - **Consistency** = Fact checking: comparing what is said to what is known (Dando et al., 2011; 2015; Reimer et al., 2014)
  - **Coherence** = Logical consistency of the communication

- Correspondence typically more diagnostic than coherence BUT...
  - **Think context!**
Questions

• ‘Make’ people lie

• Question effects
  • What is known OR what can be known

• Expert questioning
  • Tactical/Strategic use of known facts (Dando et al., 2011; 2015: Levine, 2014)
  • Elicitation of diagnostically useful information (Levine et al., 2014; Ormerod & Dando 2016)
  • Unexpected
Preparing to Appear Credible

• Practice
• Lie Script
Challenges of Real Time Assessment

• Lies are not transparent

• Context: Portals Vs Interrogation Vs Conversation

• Reliance on cues with no diagnostic utility
  • Pseudodiagnosticity – Selection of worthless information (Koehler, 2014; Dando & Ormerod, 2017)
  • Decision bias – prove what we believe to be correct (Dando & Ormerod, 2017)

• Lie/truth bias: most people are truthful
  • Professionals improve if trained to rely on verbal content credibility cues (Hauch, et al., 2017)
Questions
References**


