

Debbie Cole

## 2 Looking for Rapport in the Metacommunicative Features of an Ethnographic Interview

### 1 Introduction

In his book, *Learning How to Ask*, Briggs (1986) argues that we should study the interview ethnographically to understand issues of power between interviewer and interviewee. Such an ethnography involves four phases: Phase 1. Learn how to ask; Phase 2. Design an appropriate methodology; Phase 3. Be reflexive in the interviewing process; and Phase 4. Analyze the interview. Within the fourth phase, Briggs proposes an analytical process that looks beyond the referential content of utterances. He proposes a two-step procedure: first, map the structure of the interview as a whole before looking at the utterances in particular, and second, abstract away from the referential content of the utterances to look at metacommunicative features. We can find these features by focusing on contextualization, both within the interview event itself and across events and texts that precede and follow the interview. Another way to observe metacommunicative features is to focus on the non-referential elements of the interview event.

Briggs' proposal has had an important influence on interview research that has followed the publication of his book. A recent special issue of *Language in Society* on interviews (De Finna & Perrino 2011) and an *Annual Review of Anthropology* article on interviewing (Koven 2014) provide good overviews of how many of Briggs' suggestions from 1986 have been put into practice. In particular, scholars reflecting on interviews as a method for collecting language data have taken his advice to focus on the relationship between power, roles, and footing. We've also followed Briggs' suggestion to include ethnographic details of interview events in our writing, in some cases describing events and interactions that occurred before and after the recording of an interview.

However, some of Briggs' explicit suggestions for how to analyze interview data remain largely absent from our scholarly practices. Even though we sometimes write about the preparation we do before and texts we produce after an interview, details of how the interview event led to particular text productions that followed are largely absent. We also don't tend to produce detailed maps of the structure of an interview we are analyzing. Almost completely missing from our anal-

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yses is a focus on the non-referential, metacommunicative aspects of our interviews. Though we sometimes write that we *should* be focusing on metacommunication, published analyses of what is happening in the interview, in terms of footing for example, largely focus on words and their syntactic structures along with their linked meanings and on how these referential language fragments are used to accomplish changes in role, voice, or alignment. Rarely do we discuss prosody, body language, and gaze or the way the site for the interview event is set up.<sup>1</sup>

Within the broader field of communication studies, however, research focusing on the metacommunicative features of interviews and other face-to-face interactions provides some useful pointers for how we might focus on metacommunication in the ethnographic study of rapport. For example, interview partners that match the pitch and amplitude of their voices communicate “social similitude” and “cohesiveness” (Gregory et al. 1993). Interlocutors who are sensitive to rhythmic patterning can convey enthusiasm and the feeling of achieving intimate contact in an interaction (Cowley 1994). Rhythmic patterning can also be used to perform *phonetic empathy* or the feeling that the speaking partners are “speak[ing] with one voice” (Abercrombie 1967, cited in Cowley 1994). In classroom contexts, teachers and students who match their utterance pitches, intonation contours, and rhythms communicate alignment and affiliation within the familiar initiation–response–feedback (IRF) exchange (Hellerman 2003: 90).

Researchers contributing to a recent special issue of *Language & Communication* devoted to the theory of Communication Accommodation Competence also provide some useful pointers. They found that adaptation, accommodation, and the ability to adopt the interlocutor’s perspective are “essential to...developing rapport, and satisfaction” (Pitts & Harwood 2015: 92). They also note that rapport and sensitivity to cultural and linguistic differences between speakers are linked in highly skilled communicators, and that rapport is “built up utterance by utterance throughout an interaction and often requires a significant amount of verbal reassurance and repetition” (Pitts & Harwood 2015: 93). Tellingly, throughout the studies in these special issues, there is a constant echo of Briggs and other linguistic anthropologists like Silverstein (1981) and Hill (2006) who have argued that anthropologists tend to ignore the importance of the non-verbal channel in organizing social interactions. This point is made again strongly and clearly in a recent *Annual Review* piece on interviewing in which Koven warns against “erasing the more interactional, context-dependent features of interview talk” (Koven 2014: 501).

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<sup>1</sup> Zane Goebel’s diagrams of the way focus-group participants are seated to view and discuss television programs conducted in Japan are a clear exception (Goebel 2015: 179).

It is within this sketch of our methodological history that this chapter attempts to accomplish two goals. The first is to apply the analytical method proposed by Briggs (1986) to an interview that was experienced as rich in rapport to see whether applying it helps us to identify which metacommunicative elements contributed to that experience. The second is to lay some groundwork for future studies that could bring together converging theories and divergent methodologies for understanding rapport across a range of language-focused disciplines. As the application of Briggs' phases 1, 2, and 3 are prevalent in prior ethnographic studies of interviews, here we focus on phase 4 to document how contextualization and non-referentiality contributed to how the poet Zawawi Imron (my interviewee) and I built COMMON GROUND (Goebel, 2015, and this volume, Chapter 1) in an interview.

## 2 A Focus on Contextualization

Elsewhere, I have written about the poem “Keroncong Air Mata” (*Song of Tears*), about how Zawawi Imron performed the poem using multiple voices, and about how his performance embodied adequation in the enactment of a ‘diverse Indonesian’ identity (Cole 2004, 2010). I have also written about how I compared what Zawawi told me (in the same interview to be examined here) about his intended referents for the performed voices in his poem to how listeners to a recording of his performance interpreted those voices (Cole 2014). The latter piece demonstrated how, under certain conditions, common ground can be established across time and space even without the co-presence of the performer and the perceiver. Here, we follow Briggs' suggestion to focus on contextualization. We begin by zooming in on the context immediately surrounding the interview event to clarify when, where, and under what conditions the interview took place, because Briggs has suggested that this information may be directly relevant to how the interview unfolds, how it is experienced and remembered by the participants, and to how interviewers learn to listen. We then zoom out to document how events and texts that preceded the interview provided a context for the interview itself, enabling us to quickly establish common ground.

### 2.1 The Context Immediately Surrounding the Recording

Zawawi and I had arranged to meet in Surabaya on 9 May 2002, a date when we would both be visiting the city for other reasons. I was there for a Fulbright event,

and he had stayed an extra night beyond his original plans so that our paths would cross. In Surabaya, the Fulbright Foundation had put up all the Fulbright students currently in Indonesia (both those of us coming from the US and those of us going to the US) in the five-star Hotel Majapahit, a luxurious accommodation in a remodeled colonial building at which we students gaped and giggled in awe. Zawawi and I had met briefly only once before at a poetry festival in Solo. When we met in the hotel lobby, he greeted me like an old friend, and we went to the hotel café for lunch.

Knowing that my dissertation topic was public performances of Indonesian poetry, Zawawi engaged me immediately in a poetry discussion. He knew poets from all over the world, most of whom I had never heard of. He talked at length about Robert Frost, an American poet I was quite familiar with, citing lines and offering translations into Indonesian. After eating, we moved to my assigned suite to begin the formal interview. Although the private sitting room within the suite had couches and chairs, we chose to sit on a rug on the floor around a little coffee table. I had made two copies of a list of questions I wanted to ask, one for each of us. Up until that point, we had been talking in an easy, informal way with me taking the role of respectful youth talking to a respected elder. At the moment that the interview was supposed to begin, however, I found it difficult to switch into the appropriate mode. When I clumsily directed his attention to his copy of the questionnaire, Zawawi interrupted with, “You start by asking the questions first!”

Once the interview was over and Zawawi had autographed one of his books I had brought with me, we found we still had some time before his bus left for Madura. Zawawi suggested we go to the Gramedia bookstore nearby. Conscious that I would like to repay him for his time and information, I agreed thinking perhaps there would be something I could purchase for him there. We crossed the busy boulevard together on foot and navigated our way into the shopping plaza where the bookstore was located. Once inside, it became clear that Zawawi was looking for something in particular. Besides writing poetry, he also enjoyed painting and was fond of a particular Dutch artist whose work he wanted to study. He found a large, heavy coffee-table book of the artist’s work, which he presented to me to purchase. This was both a relief and a surprise: a relief because I would be able to repay his time and attention and thereby avoid accruing too large a social debt, and a surprise because of the directness of his request. I had grown accustomed to the more indirect hints often performed by my Javanese friends and colleagues back in Yogyakarta, my home base in Indonesia. With the purchase completed, we walked together to the bus stop where Zawawi boarded the bus. We waved goodbye to each other until the bus took him beyond my view.

## 2.2 Contextualizing the Interview Within Prior Events and Texts

Zooming out from the discursive and physical contexts immediately surrounding the interview event, we now follow Briggs' advice to look at how the interview text is connected to prior texts and events leading up to the moment of the interview. The topical focus of the interview was Zawawi's 13-minute performance of the poem, "Keroncong Air Mata" (*Song of Tears*), which I recorded him reading at a benefit event for woman's health in Yogyakarta in September of 2001. Zawawi's composition process for the poem was ongoing, as I learned in the interview, and several versions of it had been performed by the time I heard it. At the time of our interview, there was no published text of the poem. During the months of late 2001, I listened to the recording repeatedly and transcribed it. This transcription provided the visual reference from which we worked during the interview.

In April 2002, I met Zawawi at the International Poetry Festival in Solo. At that event, we had been sitting on the floor of a large lecture hall within earshot of each other. Zawawi had engaged neighbouring members of the audience in joking conversation, and at the encouragement of a friend who had travelled to Solo with me, I introduced myself and asked if he would grant me an interview at a future date. We exchanged contact information, and a follow-up phone call from my house in Jogja to his house in Sumanep, Madura confirmed our meeting time and place at the Hotel Majapahit on 9 May. These prior texts and events are listed in (1) in chronological order.

(1) *The interview within the contexts of prior texts and events:*

1. Multiple versions of the poem are composed and performed
2. Poem is performed and recorded in Jogjakarta
3. Recording is transcribed
4. Zawawi and Debbie meet at the International Poetry Festival in Solo
5. Debbie and Zawawi make an interview appointment by phone
6. Questionnaire is created
7. Zawawi and Debbie have lunch in the Hotel Mahapahit
8. Interview is conducted and recorded, questionnaire is filled in, and observations are written down

The events leading up to the interview, as well as the immediately adjacent contexts surrounding the start and end of the interview, gave Zawawi and me the opportunity to interact using different modes of communication and to perform various "figures of personhood" (Agha 2011). By the time we took on the roles of interviewer and interviewee, we had built up a repertoire of shared references that

came in part from my close listening to his poem and in part from an awareness of our common experiences at previous poetry events and at the lunch we had just shared.

### 2.3 Contextualizing the (Un)Familiar in Establishing Common Ground

Perhaps the prior contexts leading up to this interview, as well as the context of the interview itself, are quite different from those leading up to the prototypical academic or research interview. We get the idea from reading studies based on interview data that they often occur in an institutional setting where one of the interview partners arrives at the work place of the other (the *opposite* of ‘common ground’ in one of our lay senses of the word), and in which only one person has the possibility to wonder at the discovery of a new environment or to be uncomfortable in an unfamiliar space. In such settings, we may imagine that the interview interaction is bounded by the opening and the closing of the door to the room in which the interview takes place, rather than starting with lunch in a hotel café and ending with a shopping trip to bookstore. Should such personal prior and post events have actually occurred (and in some cases they undoubtedly do), they are absent from our presentations of our method, in part because such interactions would imply differing levels of familiarity with our interviewees and familiarity is not supposed to play a role in our data collection. Given pressures on qualitative research to resemble as closely as possible the criteria of objectivity, reliability, and replicability of quantitative approaches, we attempt to select “neutral” interview sites and make much of our attempts to keep the line of questioning and interactional structure the same across interviews. I recognize such attempts as well from my own experiences being the interviewee for academic research projects and from reading student thesis work.

In the interview with Zawawi, however, both contextual familiarity and contextual unfamiliarity contributed to the richness of our shared experience. We were both unfamiliar with the space we were in: Neither of us lived in Surabaya, it was the first time for both of us to be in that hotel, and we had only exchanged a few sentences prior to meeting for the interview. But we also shared a deep familiarity with the text of the poem we were there to discuss. (It is possible that given the repeated times I listened to it to transcribe it that, other than Zawawi, I had heard that poem more than anyone else on the planet.) We were both aware of this, and we chose to make use of this awareness to establish referential common ground both in orienting to the topic of the interview and in orienting to the space

we were in. As we will see in the next section, however, much of the work we did to establish common ground was done using non-referential means.

### 3 A Focus on Non-Referentiality

We turn now to a focus on some of the non-referential elements audible on the recording of the interview, beginning with a comparison of the metacommunicative elements present at the end and at the beginning of the interview.

#### 3.1 Ending in Rapport After a Rocky Start

In the last few seconds of an almost hour-long recording, Zawawi signed a copy of one of his books, which I had brought with me. He asked me for the date “*tanggal berapa sekarang?*” (what’s the date today?), I told him it was the ninth (*tanggal sembilan*), and as he wrote, he said, “*nol sembilan mei*” (zero nine May). Listening to this excerpt 15 years later, I notice how it sounds like an intimate exchange: We were speaking softly without variation in pitch or amplitude and with audible space between our utterances. Although nothing very interesting is happening referentially (all we’re doing is agreeing on the date), the prosodic, metacommunicative ambiance at the close of the interview is gentle and intimate.

In contrast, the prosodic atmosphere at the beginning of the recording could be described as turbulent and uncertain. The recording starts with me confirming that the equipment is working, and following my clumsy direction of Zawawi’s attention to copies of the questions we each had in front of us, Zawawi steps in to explain how the interview should run.

##### (2) *The turbulent and uncertain beginning*

**Debbie**

*ayo* let’s go.

**Zawawi**

*ayo* let’s go.

**Debbie**

*dari ‘top’ dari atas di sini* from the ‘top’ from the beginning here.

**Zawawi**

*a, anda yang bertanya-lah dulu* y, you start by asking the questions first.

**Debbie**

*Ok...Oh!* Ok...Oh!

**Zawawi**

*Seperti kita, anda bertanya kenapa dibaca  
begini kenapa begitu, gitu loh kan?* It’s like we, you ask why is it read like this  
why like that, isn’t that right?

**Debbie**

Ok

Ok.

**Zawawi**

uh huh

uh huh

**Debbie**

*Jadi dari awal mau ditanyain kalau  
mengapa...*

So from the beginning I wanna ask you  
how, why...

The start of this interview continues to surprise and embarrass me, just as it did at the time: After I verified the functioning of the equipment, I failed to take on my appropriate role which left Zawawi unable to take on his. I sound uncertain as I fumble for the Indonesian word for “top”. When Zawawi interrupted me, he was insistent and loud, with a sharp rise in amplitude and pitch. I responded with a high pitched “Oh!”, like I was surprised to hear that I was supposed to ask the questions, to which Zawawi responds with a clear explanation of how I should go about interviewing him.

### 3.2 Building Rapport Within Shifting Roles and Alignments

Although the rocky start to this interview could have resulted in an uncomfortable struggle through the questions, the actual outcome was quite the opposite. Even as I uttered my first question about why it is important to read poetry aloud “in Indonesia”, Zawawi was already encouraging me “*ya, ya, ya*” (yes, yes, yes). He took a breath and repeated the phrase “*di Indonesia ini*” (here in Indonesia) from my question, then paused while he seemed to decide where to begin. When he began to answer, he was no longer sounding like he was scolding. He first answered my question by talking about Islam and how religious teachings are conveyed through song, taking an example from his home island Madura. After about a minute, he started singing, and he sang again about a minute later. In fact, he answered my first question twice, first with the information he wanted me to know about his identity as a Muslim Madurese, and then he began again, at almost three minutes into the interview, with a more direct focus on contemporary poetry and his choices within the national context.

He began both answers with the phrase “*di Indonesia ini*” (here in Indonesia), demonstrating both a willingness to answer my question and the liberty he felt in accomplishing his own rhetorical goals. Acoustically, the two instances of “*di Indonesia ini*” are quite different. The first utterance is louder and lower pitched, the second softer, higher pitched, and with palatalization on the /si/ sequence in the word “Indonesia”. He is serious, focused, and in the process of making a



decision in the first instance. In the second, he is delighted and happy: We can hear him smiling.<sup>2</sup>

From just the first three minutes of the recording, several factors seem to have played a role in our rapport building. One is the felt freedom of both participants to enact multiple identity categories (American, Javanese, linguist, Indonesian, Madurese, Muslim, poet, performer). A second is the felt freedom to perform multiple pairings of social roles (respectful youth/respected elder, clumsy child/scolding parent, knowledgeable teacher/curious student, interviewer/interviewee, social scientist/religious poet). It may be crucial that these different pairings required alignments with a range of different imagined communities or communities of practice that entailed multiple asymmetrical power alignments for each of us. A third factor appears to be the willingness of both participants to adjust their linguistic behavior to participate in accomplishing the other's goals for the interview, with one strategy for signalling this willingness being the repetition of the other's words or phrasing.

### 3.3 Performing Rapport While Recontextualizing Voices

My goal for the interview was to ask Zawawi to explain the functions and indexicalities of the various voices he used in his performance. Methodologically, I had set this up by creating a list of the words and phrases where I had heard shifts in genre, timbre, tone, and articulation in the chronological order in which he had performed them. We each had a copy of the list, and we worked through them together in order, moving on to the next item on the list when we were both satisfied with the explanation. Because of this goal, most of what we did during the interview was to contextualize Zawawi's poem within the interview event and within the broader picture of Indonesian oral-literacy practices. The three examples discussed here specifically demonstrate the metacommunicative aspects of the contextualization process that were simultaneously functioning to build rapport.

A recurring metacommunicative shift in this interview was out of speaking and into singing. The first occurred with the line "*di sini batu batu*" (here [there] are rocks). To direct his attention to that fragment of the poem, I sang the line as I recalled the melody from memory. He repeated it back to me, moving the pitch up slightly before continuing to perform the rest of the stanza that he had sung in the performance. As he neared the end of the stanza, he paused before the last

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<sup>2</sup> I have played these two recordings for roomfuls of students who understand no Indonesian and been delighted to see several of them smile in response to hearing the recording of Zawawi's second "*di Indonesia ini*".

line, apparently waiting for me to fill it in, but when I failed to do so, not remembering the words, he completed the stanza himself. If we compare the recording of us singing the line “*di sini batu batu*” in the interview with the recording of Zawawi performing it months earlier, we hear that my singing of the line matches the tempo and melody of the original, but that Zawawi’s also matches the pitch of the original, as he shifted it up into the same key he used during the performance.

In another stanza of the poem, Zawawi critiques poets using a stylized “*deklamasi*” style, which most contemporary poets had moved decidedly away from at the time of the interview. As I set up my question about that section, Zawawi already knew what was coming, and he started to laugh in anticipation of what he knew would be my imitation of his imitation of a no longer fashionable way of reading poetry. A comparison of the interview recording with the original performance reveals that my imitation matched the timing and prosodic contours of his original performance, which clearly delighted Zawawi (he laughs, and utters a “*ya!*” of recognition). We quickly became comfortable with this mode of moving through the questionnaire items and used it to identify and establish common ground for many of the voices I wanted Zawawi to explain.

These examples suggest two more factors that played a role in building rapport in this interview. The first is the explicit identification of and reference to a shared prior text. The second is the performance of prosodic mirroring or matching. Perhaps a feature of the question–response process that was occurring simultaneously as we moved through the voices is worth noting here. Throughout the process, Zawawi paused when he saw me writing something down, and he repeated and sometimes spelled words for me if he saw me hesitate as I filled in the spaces on my copy of the questions. That we could both see everything the other had in front of them may have been an important aspect of the felt rapport. On a couple of occasions when Zawawi was explaining something, he also initiated a common pedagogical routine in Indonesian classrooms where the teacher begins a statement and leaves an audible space after a sharply rising intonation to prompt the students to fill in the right answer aloud. These observations suggest that the use of slower speech and pausing to ensure the interlocutor’s understanding and the prosodic cueing of the interlocutor to demonstrate understanding also contributed metacommunicatively to building rapport.

### 3.4 The (Non-)Referentiality of Common Ground

This section has documented how Zawawi and I established common references and orientations using non-referential means. Within and across the turn-taking cycles that characterize the interview speech genre, we regularly imitated each other prosodically. We also established common reference to a prior text by per-

forming intonational patterns present in those prior texts and by licensing each other's imitations of them. This licensing, or acceptance, of the other's prosodic imitations extended not only to establishing shared reference to a prior text, but also to the ongoing negotiation and performance of various roles and alignments.

To follow Briggs' methodological recommendations, I have been focusing on the metacommunicative elements of the interview and have tried to avoid discussing its referential content. But a recurring theme in Zawawi's answers to my questions about *why* he used voices in his performances was that doing so facilitated a closeness with the audience. His whole point was that the prosodic indexicality of the voices he performed functioned to remove the distance between him as the poet as speaker and his audience as hearers. An analysis of the referential content of this interview reveals that he argued that the way he builds rapport when he reads poetry is by performing the prosodic characteristics of different Indonesian voices.<sup>3</sup> Going back through the recording to listen for how we enacted rapport metacommunicatively within the interview, however, I was surprised that I had not previously noticed the self-referentiality of how Zawawi conveyed his argument to me. The prosodic imitations and indexicalities of the text that we were discussing and which originally took place within the frame of a poetry performance were the same behaviors that we were enacting within the frame of the interview.

## 4 Reflecting on Using Briggs' Method: Lessons, Implications, and Limitations

Reflecting on texts and events that followed from this interview, I notice that Zawawi and I found ways to sustain contact and exchange well past the time when I returned to the US and despite the fact that Zawawi didn't use email or have a web presence. When I returned for another year of fieldwork in 2007, I snail mailed Zawawi a copy of one of Ofelia Zepeda's recordings of her poetry in O'dham and English (Zepeda 1997) because Zawawi had told me over lunch that he was fascinated by the sound of Native American place names. This favor had to be repaid, and as his daughter happened to be living in Jojga at the time, he sent her and her husband to my house to deliver the only painting of his she had in her possession: a wall-sized depiction of the *kaaba* in Mecca on a background of bright green, which we hung in our dining room for the duration of our stay. Later, my in-

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<sup>3</sup> Several of his statements about this became the cornerstones of arguments I have made in previous publications (Cole 2010; Cole 2014), though I didn't use the word "rapport" in those pieces.

teractions with Zawawi led me to focus on his poetry while working on an anthology of 20th-century Indonesian poetry, making sure one of my co-editors heard the recording of “Song of Tears” and that I was the one who translated his poems selected for inclusion in the English version of the anthology.

There were many other recordings of poetry performances and many other interviews in my dissertation data. But no other interview or connection to a poet that was established as part of my fieldwork on poetry in 2001 has remained the focus of my scholarly work like Zawawi’s has. Reanalyzing the interview following Briggs’ suggestions made me realize how important the rapport we built in the interview was in influencing my choice to continue to work on the poem. I wouldn’t have done it as joyfully, or maybe not at all, if the interview hadn’t played out the way it did.

(3) *The effects of rapport on events and texts beyond the interview event:*

1. Ofelia Zepeda’s poetry CD mailed to Zawawi in Madura in 2007
2. Zawawi’s daughter delivers a painting to our house in Jogja in 2008
3. Recording of “Song of Tears” played for co-editor Dorothea Rosa Herliany in 2010
4. Zawawi’s poems translated for inclusion in the *Lontar Anthology of Indonesian Poetry* in 2016–2017
5. Interview analyzed for paper presented at the Conceptualizing Rapport Symposium in 2016
6. Current chapter written

## 4.1 Lessons Learned

I now understand why the long call to turn our attention away from referentiality in our analyses continues to be a struggle. It is so easy to slip back into a focus on referential content. Even though I set out to purposefully listen for the metacommunicative elements of this interview, I had to stop after only the first couple of minutes because I found that I was continuing to write down the words and phrases that formed the subject of our discussion, even though I had done all of that before and was already working from an elaborate understanding of the referential content of our talk. I had to start over multiple times. Once I started to focus on what was going on metacommunicatively, however, it became clear that almost every moment of the recording contains non-referential information that is functioning to do much of what we are accomplishing linguistically.

Only after eventually being able to focus on the non-referential elements of the interview could I notice that I uttered the second phrase on the recording

“*Iya sudah*” (yes, it’s ready) in an Indonesian accent that was phonetically influenced by Javanese—with long, drawn-out vowels and breathy (or slack) voicing on my /d/, a distinguishing characteristic of Javanese-influenced Indonesian (Thurgood 2004). I also realized that the confusion I’d been embarrassed about at the beginning of the interview started with me accidentally switching into English “dari top” using the Indonesian word for “from” (dari) but the English word “top”, which I pronounced as an Indonesian word (/tap/ rather than /t<sup>h</sup>ɔp/. It was while I was correcting myself, perhaps unnecessarily, to use the Indonesian word *atas* that Zawawi stepped in. To map and analyze everything that went on metacommunicatively would take a great deal more space and time than is available here. I understand why we tend to avoid doing this.

I can also understand why, as writers, we would want to avoid documenting the many details that *could* be seen from following Briggs’ advice to first fully map the interview structure, something I was unable to fully accomplish or partially represent here. We tend to write focused pieces that make an argument for theory or document an interesting phenomenon, and it’s not clear in the middle of mapping the structure how such work will ultimately contribute to our understanding of whatever it is we’ve set as our research question or theoretical focus. The fact that it also takes up lot of time and space could explain the absence, if not in practice then at least in publication, of evidence that Briggs’ method of interview analysis has been followed in the way he laid it out.

Doing this kind of analysis also offers clues as to why we don’t focus our analyses on non-referentiality. For one, we don’t explicitly collect the kinds of data that provide evidence of the way the interactions are experienced. Though we record audio and sometimes video, we do not necessarily take pictures of our surroundings or keep autographs or other material items exchanged as gifts, or if we do, we don’t think of them as data. I found Zawawi’s autograph and the poem he wrote out for me by hand on the hotel stationery in my ‘data files’ while writing this, but I never considered them as data before. That we ate together, I think, is another important factor in our ability to establish rapport. What a focus on non-referentiality makes clear, however, is that there is so much that could be mapped and so many metacommunicative elements in our recordings that could be tracked and analyzed if we approached our data and text-making practices in the ways Briggs suggests.

## 4.2 Implications and Limitations

What do these data and the application of Briggs’ method to them imply for understanding rapport in future fieldwork encounters? From a zoomed-out perspec-

tive, one thing we see is that rapport is not only built up within the event where we think of ourselves as collecting data. It occurs across the whole stretch of time we are in the field and can extend beyond it. This implies that we might attune ourselves to the possibility of rapport building in interactions that we may not consider to be part of our data collection methodology. From a zoomed in perspective, we see that rapport can be performed through imitations, or prosodic matching and repetitions based on shared access to prior texts. In our field sites, we can be on the lookout for opportunities to do this with others with whom we hope to build rapport, and when we hear or see others doing this, it might be a cue that our interlocutor is trying to build rapport with us.

It also appears that rapport can be established rather quickly. Despite the fact that we had only exchanged a few sentences before the day we met for this interview and despite me getting off on the wrong foot during the interview itself, within a couple of minutes, elements of rapport-building can be detected in the interaction. These data also serve as a reminder that our metacommunicative repertoires are large, and given that interviews typically shut down the opportunities for performing our widest range of roles and voices, we might consider how we could build in opportunities for this range to emerge in an interview setting.

The many limitations of this study also point to possible directions for future interdisciplinary research collaborations. We might work with communication studies scholars who do technical phonetic analyses to recover empirical evidence of affect (like smiling) to understand where and how non-referential phonetic information functions in an interview or in other interactions in which rapport is of interest (see work by Quené et al. 2012).<sup>4</sup> In such collaborations, we could share our theories of identity, contextualization, and voicing to name and categorize acoustic phenomena (as examples of iconization, adequation, fractal recursion, role alignment, etc.) to contribute to a big-picture understanding of how humans do rapport. Briggs' proposal may even point the way to analyses that we are not yet able to imagine doing: Given a different methodological focus on non-referentiality in communicative encounters, the types of possible analyses remain in uncharted territory. Perhaps the most striking thing I noticed listening to this interview from a metacommunicative perspective was while Zawawi was talking about the importance of music in human communication. He said that poetry has to be aligned with the rhythms of hearts. I'd heard him say that before on the recording, many times, but it was only by listening for non-reference that I no-

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<sup>4</sup> Laughter happened throughout the interview, as did smiling. Both are acoustically recoverable, but their contribution to rapport is left unaddressed here.

ticed that while he said it, he started clicking the pen he was holding to set up a steady rhythm against which he uttered his answer to my question.

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