A Letter to the Editor Regarding the APA’s Terminology Reference for the Science of Psychophysiological Detection of Deception

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Dear Editor:

This critique in the form of a letter-to-the-editor is in response to the publication of the fourth edition of the Terminology Reference for the Science of Psychophysiological Detection of Deception, hereafter referred to as *Terminology Reference*, authored by Donald Krapohl, Mark Handler and Michael Lynch published by the American Polygraph Association in 2022.

The following inaccuracies and omissions were noted on the following pages of the Terminology Reference.
Page 35. Confession criterion

A list of published studies and articles concerning the use of confessions as ground truth omitted some studies that support the use confessions.

Corrective Comment

The following studies supporting the use of confessions as ground truth omitted from the Terminology Reference are listed below:


Page 46. Directed Lie

The following published articles should be included in the list of publications pertaining to the Directed Lie control question.

“Validation of Potential Response Elements in the Directed-Lie Control Question.”


“An analysis of the Psychodynamics of the Directed Lie Control Question in the Control Question Technique.”


Page 54. Exclusive (exclusionary) comparison question

A list of published studies concerning the description and effectiveness of the exclusive comparison question omitted studies and critiques that challenged the results of some of the listed studies.
Corrective Comment

The following published critiques challenging the results of some of the studies listed in the Terminology Reference are listed below:


Page 58. Fear of Error

The last sentence states “Empirical support for the inside track is not yet available. See Matte (1996); Nelson & Cushman 2011”

Corrective Comment

Empirical support for the inside track is provided in the following published field studies. Furthermore, the “Nelson & Cushman 2011” citation could not be found in the References section of the Terminology Reference or in the References section of the Meta-Analytic Survey of Criterion Accuracy of Validated Polygraph Techniques (2011).


The following is a correct and accurate description of the Fear of Error:

FEAR OF ERROR: A theory developed by James A. Matte after extensive field experiments to resolve false positives which revealed that an innocent examinee may
show a significant response to relevant test questions as a result of his fear that an error will be made on his test regarding the target issue.

The Fear of Error question contains a suffix “regarding the target issue” and is treated as a control (comparison) question that is compared with its neighboring relevant question within the same Track, namely the Hope of Error question “regarding the target issue.” The Fear and Hope of Error questions are contained in a Track labeled “Inside Track” within the Quadri-Track Zone Comparison Technique. The innocent examinee’s Fear of Error was recognized by Dr. Paul Ekman (1985) who coined the concept as the “Othello Error.” The National Research Council of the National Academies of Science’s 2003 report (P. 74, 127), cited the innocent examinee’s fear of error as a potential for false positives.

Page 67. Hope of Error

As reads in 2022 version of Terminology Reference:

Concept introduced by James Matte, and a central component of his Quadri-Track Technique. Because guilty examinees usually stand to lose something of importance if their deceptions are uncovered by the polygraph, Matte argues that they are hopeful that there will be an error in the outcome. A challenge to Matte’s hypothesis is that truthful subjects are also deceptive during testing – to probable lie comparison questions – and they too might be hopeful for an error to occur. During testing Matte includes a direct question regarding the examinee’s hope of an error and scores the question as a relevant question. See: Matte (1996); Matte & Reuss (1989); Nelson & Cushman, (2011).

Corrective Comment

The above boldfaced sentence is incorrect and misleading inasmuch as it omits the fact that a suffix “regarding the target issue (relevant issue) follows both the Fear of Error and the Hope of Error questions. See Matte 1978, 1980, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007, 2011; Mangan et al 2008; Shurany et al, 2009. Furthermore, the above Nelson Cushman 2011 citation could not be found in the references section of the Terminology Reference or in the Meta-Analytic Survey of Criterion Accuracy of Validated Polygraph techniques (2011).
Page 69. Inclusive (inclusionary, non-exclusionary) comparison question


Corrective Comment

The Terminology Reference omitted the following published critiques of the Amsel 1999 and the Horvath-Palmatier 2008 studies which are listed below:


Page 70. Inside-issue comparison question

States “Empirical support is mixed between advocate and independent research. See: Matte (1996); Mangan, Armitage & Adams (2008); Nelson & Cushman (2011; Shurany, Stein & Brand (2009).”

Corrective Comment

Matte 1996 is a textbook, not a study. Should have listed Matte & Reuss 1989, a field study published in Polygraph. Journal of APA. The studies by Matte & Reuss 1989; Mangan et al 2008; and the Shurany et al 2009 all provide empirical support for the Inside-Issue Comparison question. The remaining study of Nelson & Cushman 2011 purportedly a study with an opposing view cited by the Terminology Reference could not be found in the References section of the Terminology Reference or in the References section of the Meta-Analytic Survey of Criterion Accuracy of Validated Polygraph Techniques. It could also not be found in the four APA journals published in 2011.

Page 71. Inside-issue relevant question

States “Empirical support is mixed between advocate and independent research. See: Matte (1996); Mangan, Armitage & Adams (2008); Nelson & Cushman (2011; Shurany, Stein & Brand (2009).”
Corrective Comment

Same as Inside-issue comparison question.

Page 71. Inside-track


Corrective Comment

Same as Inside-issue relevant question.

Page 87. Non-exclusive (inclusive or inclusionary) comparison question


Corrective Comment

The Terminology Reference omitted the following published critiques of the Amsel 1999 and the Horvath-Palmatier 2008 studies which are listed below:


Page 90. Othello Error


Corrective Comment

Page 102. Quadri-Track Zone Comparison Technique

States “Independent research has to date failed to support the construct of the inside track (see Nelson & Cushman. 2011).” “For a full explanation, see Matte (1996).”

**Corrective Comment**

Empirical support for the Quadri-Track Zone Comparison Technique is provided in the following published field studies. Furthermore the “Nelson & Cushman 2011” citation purportedly a study with an opposing view could not be found in the References section of the Terminology Reference or in the References section of the Meta-Analytic Survey of Criterion Accuracy of Validated Polygraph Techniques (2011). It could also not be found in the four APA journals published in 2011.


Page 126. time bar

States “Research has not supported this hypothesis, however. See: Amsel (1999); Podlesny & Raskin (1978); Horvath (1988); Horvath & Palmatier (2008).”

**Corrective Comment**

The Terminology Reference omitted the following published critiques of the Amsel 1999 and the Horvath-Palmatier 2008 studies which are listed below:


Page 134. Zone Comparison Technique (ZCT)


**Corrective Comment**

Should include the Quadri-Track ZCT.

**References**

The following references should be added to the references section of the Terminology Reference 2022.


