

Falsehood in Speech and Some Means of Its Expression

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This study serves to attain a better understanding of deception types and the nature of verbal manipulation. Psychology and psycholinguistics are among those scientific spheres which touch upon the concept of “lie” in speech, thus revealing some methods of its detection.

Psycholinguistic approaches to language are quite varied, from those that are concerned with the more concrete operations of the physiological systems involved in producing and perceiving language signals to the more abstract cognitive systems, including memory. Today psycholinguistics explores the relationship between the human mind and language. It treats the language user as an individual rather than a representative of a society; an individual whose linguistic performance is determined by the strengths and limitations of the mental apparatus. In fact, the notion “language” that is a product of the human mind gives rise to two interconnected goals:

1. to establish an understanding of the processes which underlie the system we call language,
2. to examine language as a product of the human mind and thus as evidence of the way in which human beings organize their thoughts and impose patterns upon their experiences (Garman 1990:15).

Lying, the main point of discussion in this study, is a widespread phenomenon which everyone does to some extent. The capacity to lie is noted early and nearly universally in human development. A lie is a type of deception in the form of an untruthful statement, especially with the intention to deceive others, often with the hope to maintain a secret or reputation, protect someone’s feelings or to avoid a punishment. To lie is to state something that one knows to be false or that one doesn’t honestly believe to be true with the intention that a person will take it for the truth. A liar is a person who is lying, who has previously lied, or who tends by nature to lie repeatedly.

The philosophers Saint Augustine, as well as St. Thomas Aquinas and Immanuel Kant, condemned all lying. However, Thomas Aquinas also had an argument for lying. According to all three, there are no circumstances in which one may lie. One must be murdered, suffer torture, or endure any other hardship, rather than lie even if the only way to protect oneself is to lie. Each of these philosophers gave several arguments against lying, all compatible with each other. Among the more important arguments are:

Lying is a perversion of the natural faculty of speech, the natural end of which is to communicate the thoughts of the speaker.

When one lies, one undermines trust in society.

Lying is typically used to refer to deceptions in oral and written communication. Other forms of deception, such as disguises or forgeries are generally not considered lies, though the underlying intent may be the same. However, a true statement can be considered a lie if the person making that statement is doing so to deceive. In this situation, it

is the intent of being untruthful rather than the truthfulness of the statement itself that is considered.

According to Michael Garman (1990) there can be distinguished several types of lies:

- Big lie: a lie so colossal that no one would believe that someone could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously.
- Bluffing: an act of deception that occurs during the game (a gambler deceives other player).
- Bold-faced lie: a bold-faced lie is one which is told when it is obvious to all concerned that it is a lie. (For example, a child who has chocolate all around his mouth and denies that he has eaten any chocolate has told a bold-faced lie).
- Contextual lie: one can state part of the truth out of context, knowing that without complete information, it gives a false impression.
- Emergency lie: an emergency lie is a strategic lie told when the truth may not be told because, for example, harm to a third party would result.
- Exaggeration: an exaggeration occurs when the most fundamental aspects of a statement are true, but only to a certain degree. It is also seen as “stretching the truth” or making something appear more powerful, meaningful, or real than it actually is.
- Fabrication: a fabrication is a lie told when someone submits a statement as truth without knowing for certain whether or not it actually is true. Although the statement may be possible, it is not based on a fact. Rather, it is something made up or misrepresentation of the truth (a person giving a direction to a tourist when the person does not actually know it).
- Misleading: a misleading statement is one where there is no outright lie, but still retains the purpose of getting someone to believe in an untruth.
- Noble lie: a noble lie is one which would normally cause discord if it were uncovered, but which offers some benefit to the liar and assists in an orderly society, therefore potentially beneficial to others. It is often told to maintain law, order and safety.
- Perjury: perjury is the act of lying or making verifiable false statements on a material matter under oath or affirmation in a court of law, or in any various sworn statements in writing. Perjury is a crime, because the witness has sworn to tell the truth and for the credibility of the court to remain intact, witness testimony must be relied on as truthful.
- Puffery: it is an exaggerated claim typically found in advertising and publicity announcements, such as “the highest quality at the lowest price”.
- White lie: it is an acceptable lie that helps others. Such lies are required in many cultures where saving face is important, and not telling lies to protect others is considered a bad and selfish thing. These lies are also more acceptable from those who are less likely to know the rules for not lying, most notably young children. A white lie would cause only relatively minor discord if it were uncovered, and typically offers some benefit to the hearer. White lies are often used to avoid offense, such as complimenting something one finds unattractive. In this case, the lie is told to avoid the harmful realistic implications of the truth. As a concept, it can not be clearly separated from other lies.

Sometimes, being truthful isn't always the best. There are times when one wants to avoid the full truth, or even tell a lie, in order to protect someone's feelings, or prevent a conflict. So, one of the most relevant issues in studying lies is the concept of "Lie-to-children". A lie-to-children is a lie, often a platitude which may use euphemisms which are told to make an adult subject acceptable to children. Parents lie for many reasons; lying to keep a child from crying when s/he heads out for dinner, or to protect him/her from scary issues, such as lying a child about a murder in the news. Common example is the *Santa Claus*. Parents tell their child fairy stories, about *Santa Claus* who is "real", and later on it turns out that the child has been lied to. But actually nobody wants to lie to their kids, but also nobody wants to bring them up without believing in those things that make a child's life happy: joy, love, hope and magic are what capture a child's imagination. But one day the child will reach the stage of mental maturity where s/he will detect the lie that the parent has told for the first time. Before that s/he took for granted the fact that the parent was incapable of lying. The thing is that kids need to learn how the world works. Still, lying wouldn't exist if there was no purpose for it. Lies can and often do accomplish good ends that the truth wouldn't. A classical example is lying to an axe-murderer to prevent further harm.

We cannot prevent children from telling a lie, as they come across it even in fiction. Such as "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen" which covers the story about an 18th century baron who tells outrageous, unbelievable stories which he claims are all true. Or "Carlo Pinocchio" who was a wooden puppet often led into trouble by his propensity to lie. His nose grew with every lie; hence long noses have become caricatures of liars.

On the contrary, it is alleged that some belief systems may find lying to be justified, that is "the product of deception and lies for a good purpose". Let's consider lying in the Bible. Various passages of the Bible (Old Testament) feature exchanges that are conditionally critical of lying, but in some passages lying seems conditionally promoted.

How to detect a lie? Lie detection is the practice of determining whether someone is **lying** or not. It commonly involves the **polygraph**. Many scientists reviewed lie detector research and came to the conclusion that there is no scientific evidence supporting that lie detectors actually work.

A classic psycholinguistic problem is parole, or its modern formulation – "performance". The latter is being viewed as a dialectic of opposite cognitive modes, namely of gesture imagery and language. It is quite natural that so much significance is attached to the study of body language, for our bodily movements and facial expressions constitute an integral part of speech; in fact, they often act as a vehicle for emotion, whether we want it or not. Hence we may state that non-verbal gestures are just as important as spoken words. Why? It is the body language that has the power to give away a person's true intentions.

Thus, for instance, watching facial expressions in order to determine whether a person is lying might just save from being a victim of fraud, or it could help figure out when somebody's being genuine. The experienced psychologists have yielded certain

results, for instance the micro expressions (facial expressions) of a person who is lying will exhibit emotion of stress characterized by the eyebrows being drawn upwards towards the middle of the forehead. A micro expression is a momentary involuntary facial expression that people unconsciously display when they are hiding an emotion. They are quick and intense expressions of concealed emotion. A micro expression is caused by involuntary movements in facial muscles. Most people cannot control these involuntary muscles which are affected by their emotions (**anger, disgust, fear, sadness, happiness, surprise and contempt**). Hence, people often try to cover the lie by making certain gestures, covering their mouth, touching their nose, rubbing the eyes and avoiding making any kind of eye contact, some people unconsciously pull their collar, become nervous when they tell a lie. Timing is off between emotion gestures, expressions and words. For example: Someone says, *I love it!* when receiving a gift, and then smiles after making that statement, rather than at the same time the statement is made.

Gestures don't match the verbal statement, such as frowning when saying *I love you*. But at the same time it should be stated that if someone exhibits one or more of these signs it doesn't mean that s/he is lying. The above behaviors should be compared to a person's normal behavior. The more you get to know someone, the better you will become at knowing whether they may be straying from the truth.

What has been said above makes it possible to claim that gestures constitute one of the non-verbal means of the expression of falsehood in speech. As it has already been mentioned verbal expression too can give clues to whether a person is lying or not, for example:

- a) Using/repeating your own exact words when answering a question (when asked, *Did you eat the last cookie?* the liar answers, *No, I did not eat the last cookie.*).
- b) Statement with a contraction is **more likely to be truthful** (*I didn't do it* instead of *I did not do it.*).
- c) Avoiding direct statements or answers.
- d) Speaking excessively in an effort to convince.
- e) Speaking in a monotonous tone.
- f) Leaving out pronouns.
- g) Using humor to avoid a subject.

Distancing language is **phrasing** used by people to "distance" themselves from a statement, either to avoid thinking about the subject or to distance themselves from its content. Distancing language is often a means of **self-deception**, but distancing language used orally may indicate that a person is **lying**.

Examples of distancing language:

- Distancing clinical language partly shields health workers from the impact of workplace experiences, e.g. *bled to death* substituted with *exsanguinated*.
- Military personnel may use a range of distancing terms for combatants either killing or getting killed. They may also employ distancing, dehumanizing terms for combatants on the opposing side. *Collateral damage* for the death of uninvolved civilians is an example.
- Everyday euphemistic references to death, dying, burial, corpses and to the people

and places which deal with death are also protective, distancing terms either formal or informal, e.g. *croaked, bought the farm, expired, passed on*.

- An indirect statement implying an answer, rather than a direct answer, may indicate lying. For example, replies such as *Would I do such a thing?* or even *I wouldn't do such a thing*, rather than *I didn't do it*. Referring to someone known well by the speaker as *that woman* instead of using a name or *her* is another example.
- It is also likely that liars will think that the use of speech hesitations and speech errors sound dubious. Therefore, they will try to avoid making such liars' voices and sound tenser than true tellers' voices. The result concerning **speech errors** (word/sentence repetition, sentence change, sentence incompleteness, slips of tongue and so on) and **speech hesitations** (use of speech fillers such as *ah, um, er*) show a conflicting pattern (Scovel 1998:45).

Friedrich Nietzsche suggested that those who refrain from lying may do so only because of the difficulty involved in maintaining the lie. This is consistent with his general philosophy that divides people according to strength and ability; thus, some people tell the truth only out of weakness.

Thus, deception among humans is not necessarily a bad thing, but is widely condemned when it hurts or has potential to harm people. Innocuous deception is practiced by virtually everyone daily as a routine aspect of living. Managing the expressions of the face, disguising its features, and enhancing its attributes are important aspects of deception whenever people meet face-to-face.

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Կեղծիքի դրսևորման ձևերը խոսքում

Մույն աշխատանքը ուսումնասիրում է խոսքում դրսևորվող կեղծիքի հոգելեզ-վաբանական առանձնահատկությունները: Անդրադառնալով կեղծիքի տարբեր սահմանումներին՝ ներկայացվում է դրա տարբեր տեսակներն ու նկարագրվում դրանց կիրառությունը խոսքային կոնկրետ իրադրություններում: Աշխատանքը քննության է առնում նաև խոսքում արտահայտվող կեղծիքի ոչ միայն լեզվական, այլև արտալեզվական միջոցները՝ դիտարկելով կեղծիքի բացահայտման հարցում շարժմունքների դերը: