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Motivation and Consequences of Lying.
A Qualitative Analysis of Everyday Lying

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Abstract: This article presents findings of qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with a group of "frequent liars" and another of "rare liars" who provided their subjective perspectives on the phenomenon of lying. Participants in this study previously had maintained a diary of their social interactions and lies over the course of one week, which allowed to assign them to one of the two groups: frequent or rare liars. Thematic analysis of the material followed by elements of theory formulation resulted in an extended lying typology that includes not only the target of the lie (the liar vs. other) but also the motivation (protection vs. bringing benefits). We offer an analysis of what prevents from telling the truth, i.e. penalties, relationship losses, distress of the lied-to, and anticipated lack of criticism for telling the truth. We also focus on understanding moderators of consequences of lying (significance of the area of life, the type of lie and capacity to understand the liar) that can be useful in future studies.

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1. Introduction

Lying is a phenomenon that can provide a spark to everyday discussions and appeal to the interests of researchers across a range of fields such as theology, philosophy, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Lying, from the perspective of the presented work, fascinates as a social phenomenon, particularly as a prominent element of everyday interpersonal relationships. As social animals, we are immersed from the moment of our birth in a world of complex relationships with other people that are vital to our very existence (ARONSON, 1999; BAUMEISTER & LEARY, 1995). In the majority of these relationships we both offer and expect authentic, truthful interactions, which results from processes of moral development immersed in our social and cultural surroundings (KOHLBERG & HERSH, 1977). However, this is not always possible, and at times we resort to lying and we are lied to by others (DePAULO, 2004). [1]

1.1 Theoretical background

The definition of the concept of "lying" itself gives rise to controversy; it can be narrow, exclusive or broad (COLEMAN & KAY, 1981; MASIP, GARRIDO & HERRERO, 2004). From our perspective, the two immanent aspects of lying are its intentionality and awareness of the falseness of the communicated information on the part of the individual communicating the message. Thus, we will identify something as a lie when the individual communicating a message intentionally misleads the recipient, without informing him/her of this intention (BULLER & BURGOON, 1996; EKMAN, 1991). Lying can take place in face-to-face communication, as well as by e-mail, text message, in messages sent on social networking portals and via chat applications. Among the most frequent types of lies reported in the relevant literature are egoistic lies and other-oriented lies; this is the predominant typology of lies (e.g. DePAULO, KIRKENDOL, KASHY, WYER & EPSTEIN, 1996). Egoistic lies are understood to be those designed to benefit the liar. Other-oriented lies are primarily intended to benefit other people, and are more socially acceptable than egoistic lies (LINDSKOLD & WATERS, 1983). Of significance is that lies that are in the best interests of a patient (e.g. to diminish stress) are considered the most acceptable of all acts of lying (JAMES, WOOD-MITCHELL, WATERWORTH, MACKENZIE & CUNNINGHAM, 2006). Lying in some instances may even be considered therapeutic when it is aimed at eliminating harm (TUCKETT, 2012). Nevertheless, egoistic lies appear more often than other-oriented ones in everyday life (DePAULO et al., 1996). [2]

Lying is a phenomenon with many dimensions. Researchers focus on the contexts in which lying, and deciding whether someone is lying, take place (e.g. BAKER, 2008; MACKINEM & HIGGINS, 2007). Lies can be considered from the perspective of the liar and the lied-to, as well as of the relationships that link them. Research shows that people lie in various ways depending on their perception of the closeness, importance and level of intimacy of relationships (DePAULO & KASHY, 1998). Fewer inconsequential lies occur in close and important relationships compared to fleeting ones or those with acquaintances. However, the former category of relationships exhibits a greater number of lies

judged as serious by the liars and the lied-to (DePAULO & BELL, 1996; DePAULO & KASHY, 1998; DePAULO, ANSFIELD, KIRKENDOL & BODEN, 2004). The effect of lying on the perception of the quality, closeness and durability of the relationship linking the liar and the lied-to is distinct, and generally involves a greater negative impact on close relationships. [3]

A review of investigations on the subject of lying leads to the conclusion that the total absence of lies is rather rare (DePAULO et al., 1996; GEORGE & ROBB, 2009). Participants in many studies have been required to document their interactions—including lies—for a period of one week. They lied on average from one to two times per day (DePAULO et al., 1996). It should also be pointed out that some people lie more often than others. In studies by DePAULO et al. (1996), participants admitted to telling from 0 to 46 lies in the space of one week. It is thus evident that there is significant variance in the frequency of lying among research participants. This type of observation that some lie more than others, led to investigations concerning liars' personalities (KASHY & DePAULO, 1996). [4]

There are also some circumstances which contribute to the diversity of dishonest behavior. For example, people are more prone to deceive when they are ego-depleted (MEAD, BAUMEISTER, GINO, SCHWEITZER & ARIELY, 2009). Research results indicate that both social norms (CIALDINI, RENO & KALLGREN, 1991) and values (e.g. WOJCISZKE, 1986), particularly when activated, influence an individual's moral behavior. [5]

Moreover, lying is a phasic communication phenomenon. It can be understood as a process that takes place over a period of time—the time in an interaction prior to a lie's appearance can be analyzed, as can the lie itself and the time after it is communicated (DePAULO et al., 1996). The pre-lie phase is connected with motivation to lie, while the post-lie phase with the consequences of the presence of the lie in the social relationship, which are often seen as negative. Indeed, in research conducted on trust and the effects of deception, SCHWEITZER, HERSHEY and BRADLOW (2006) obtained results indicating negative consequences of deception on interpersonal trust. Moreover, lying is a subject of daily life that evokes particular attitudes, facilitates moral judgments and appeals to peoples' values. Thus lying is also a prominent moral issue that compels people to take a stance. [6]

1.2 Problem statement and the aim of the study

From our point of view, the aspects of the subject of lying which interest both researchers and laypeople are: its multidimensionality, i.e. lying on a large and small scale with greater and lesser consequences for the liar's benefit and for the benefit of others; the diversity of perspectives that can be adopted, i.e., lying from the liar's perspective and from that of the lied-to can appear completely different; lastly, the value of a moral code depending on people's upbringing, culture and individuality, e.g. acceptance of lies depends on culture (cf. INGLEHART, BASAÑEZ & MORENO, 1998). Works on deception and lying focus on its various aspects such as lying detection (e.g. VRIJ, GRANHAG & PORTER, 2010), cues

to deception (DePAULO et al., 2003), the language of deception (e.g. GALASINSKI, 2000) and the cultural aspect of deception (e.g. TRIANDIS et al., 2001) to name a few. [7]

Reviewing the pertinent literature in social psychology and anthropology, we came across almost exclusively quantitative studies. Qualitative studies on people's personal experience (motivation, thoughts, attitudes, judgments) of lying in social situations, as well as their common-sense theories about lying, seem to be a neglected area in contemporary scholarship. We therefore decided to invoke the emic perspective (see e.g. MERRIAM, 2009; OLIVE, 2014) when studying the phenomenon of lying. [8]

Taking into account the empirical and theoretical contributions to the subject of lying mentioned above, we decided to embark on a thorough exploration of the phasic nature of everyday lying (motivation to lie and to resort to lying and consequences of lying in social relationships), and as a consequence of the types of everyday lies. We seek to understand lying as a daily life activity and to clarify its' meaning as an ordinary everyday concept, taking the internal perspective of participants (see e.g. DAVIDSEN, 2013; DAY, 2012; MERRIAM, 2009; OLIVE, 2014). In other words, we are interested in participants' personal experience (their motivation, thoughts, attitudes, judgments) of lying in social situations as well as their common-sense theories about lying. By asking participants about their views we restore personal agency in lying activity without suggesting a correct moral stance. While remaining aware of the benefits and drawbacks of qualitative research (DAVIDSEN, 2013; DAY, 2012; GIBBS, 2008; SILVERMAN, 2013), we felt that it would be of great benefit to conduct such research on lying, to provide research participants with the chance to make their voices heard, and to give them free reign to discuss their views and reflections on the subject of lying in their lives. [9]

The majority of research projects on the subject of lying have been performed using quantitative methods (e.g. DePAULO, 2004; DePAULO & BELL, 1996; DePAULO & KASHY, 1998; DePAULO et al., 1996; GEORGE & ROBB, 2009; KASHY & DePAULO, 1996; MEALY, STEPHEN & URRUTIA, 2007), in which participants were in a certain sense required to adjust to the categories proposed by the researchers rather than freely reveal their views. We maintain that in the dominant light of the quantitative research on the topic, the qualitative analysis of personal experiences—aside from its descriptive and explanatory value—will act as an intermediary step leading to improved quantitative research on the subject in the future. [10]

Therefore, the qualitative analysis we present here was performed in order to improve understanding of the phasic nature of everyday lying. In Section 2, we describe what was our research design and sampling. We give information on the context of the study and the data collection. We also focus on thematic analysis as it was applied by us in this study. We start from themes identified in the interviews and seek to develop proposals for theoretical (re-) formulations. Section 3 describes our findings on the motivation for lying, refraining from lying

and lying consequences. We focus on both what pushes people to lie and what stops them from doing so. The motivational aspect of lying forms an important part of the typology of lies that we offer. We also center on the consequences of lying and their potential moderators. We then focus in Section 4 on both theoretical and methodological issues related to the research that was conducted. We try to present some new insights that may contribute to both qualitative and quantitative future research in the field. [11]

2. Method

2.1 General research design

The study presented here is part of larger research project titled "Anthropology of Lying in Everyday Life," where a mixed method approach with a variation of a convergent and sequential design was applied (see CRESWELL, 2013). In the project, the complex phenomenon of everyday lying was studied from many perspectives with the use of: 1. focus groups (qualitative data and analysis, see BARBOUR & KITZINGER, 1999), 2. diary methods (quantitative measurement of multivariate social phenomenon, see BOLGER, DAVIS & RAFAELI, 2003), and 3. semi-structured interviews with an in-depth orientation that supplied the qualitative textual data for the thematic analysis presented in this work (see e.g. STEMPLEWSKA-ŻAKOWICZ, 2005). Specifically, the part of the study reported herein deals with a thematic analysis of interviews exploring thoughts and attitudes towards lying in interpersonal relationships. The interviews were informed both by focus group outcomes (general topics and questions in the interview were derived from the leading topics that emerged in focus groups) and results of diary method studies. [12]

2.2 Participants and sampling

The interviewees were recruited from a group of participants who had previously kept a journal of interactions, including lies, in which they registered their social interactions over the course of one week. A description of the quantitative research can be found in CANTARERO (2013). Here we only wish to present background information describing the original sample from which the interview participants were chosen. Participants were drawn from Polish society constituting a group differentiated in terms of gender, age and education (the group consisted of 28 men and 55 women; the age range was from 18 to 64 years; M = 29.96, SD = 12.09; 3.7% of participants had primary education, 45.7% of participants had secondary education and 50.6% participants had either a Bachelor's or Master's degree). The average research participant told nearly one lie per day in the course of an average of almost four interactions per day. [13]

We applied a purposive comparative sampling aimed at maximizing differences between participants to gain contrastive and complementary perspectives on lying activity (extreme or deviant case sampling, see PATTON, 1990). That is, to be certain that we had taken proper account of the variations in participants' perspectives on the phenomena of lying, we conducted interviews (see Section

2.4) both with individuals who often resort to lying during communication and with those who do so rarely. The interviews were then analyzed using qualitative content analysis (MAYRING, 2000; MERRIAM, 2009) to find out more about participants' thoughts and attitudes toward lying (see Section 2.5). One group was composed of five individuals who declared the highest number of lies told in relation to the total number of interactions over the course of a week, so-called "frequent liars." A second group included five participants who had declared the lowest number of lies in relation to the total number of interactions during one week, so-called "rare liars." One participant chose to leave the study, which resulted in conducting interviews with four frequent liars and five rare liars. [14]

2.3 Contextualizing

First, after completing the diary study phase, research participants were familiar with the definition of lying adopted for the purposes of that portion of the investigation. We have followed the procedure of keeping a diary of interactions and lies as described in DePAULO et al. (1996) to be able to access the information on everyday lies. The diary study phase consisted of recording social interactions that lasted ten minutes or longer and all lies that participants had told regardless of the length of the interaction. They were asked to carry a small paper diary with them to keep record of the interactions and lies. Once a day participants completed an online record, where they wrote the information they had gathered during a day and answered few additional questions. We had asked them to maintain their typical activities during the week when the study was conducted (detailed description of this phase can be found in CANTARERO, 2013). After one week of recording their interactions, including the lies they told, the issue of lying was at the forefront of participants' minds, and we assumed that it would likely be easier for them to answer questions posed to them due to greater accessibility of experiences in this domain. Second, in the country where the presented research was conducted, lack of acceptance for lying is the dominant attitude. Intercultural research undertaken by INGLEHART et al. (1998) showed that 63% of respondents declared their disapproval of lies designed to benefit the liar (for comparison, only 25% of people from the Netherlands declare that this type of lie is never acceptable, while 70% of people from Bulgaria declared the same attitude). [15]

Taking into account both the situational and cultural context, during the process of gathering data we anticipated: 1. sensitivity to the topic with the possibility of a) greater self-reflection and openness but also b) a possible tendency to defensively avoid full commitment; 2. the presence of moral judgments in the interview; 3. the presence of impression management and social desirability tendency. Those circumstances are seen as natural components of interview situations when discussing intimate, personal and ethically engaging topics. [16]

2.4 Data collection

Our objective was to discover and understand the subjective perspectives of research participants and to have the possibility to compare and compile their views. We therefore decided to use a semi-structured interview, with a basic outline of the interview topics composed primarily of open questions with an in-depth orientation (see DAY, 2012; KVALE, 1996; SOROKO, 2009). The interviewer posed similar questions to all participants to increase comparability of responses. The investigator conducting the interviews remained unaware of the group membership of the participant being interviewed until the completion of the investigation so as to minimize the expectation effect on the part of the researcher. The interview consisted of three stages:

1. Introduction: At the beginning of the meeting, participants were informed of its purpose and of the desire to record the interview. Participants were given the opportunity to consent or refuse to have their interview recorded. All those interviewed consented to the recording and signed a consent form. Moreover, participants were given a chance to ask questions and express reservations before beginning the interview phase. Once the recording device was activated there was no information disclosed that could violate the anonymity of the study's participants.

2. Main part: Our intent was to gather answers to questions that involved such topics as motivation to lie and to resort to lying, and the consequences of lying: How do people perceive motivation to lie (Topic 1)? What could discourage you from such behavior (Topic 2)? What are the consequences of lying for social interactions (Topic 3)? In the main part, the interview followed a funnel structure, beginning with questions which were more general, less intimate and unthreatening for the participants, proceeding to more detailed questions which gave respondents the opportunity to refer to their own personal experiences (see e.g. STEMPLEWSKA-ŻAKOWICZ, 2005).

3. Concluding remarks: The participants had an opportunity to comment on the topics, the interview itself, and discuss anything else they wanted. This stage was a chance for the participant to express emotions that might have been evoked by participation in the interview. [17]

Interviews were conducted at a university venue and care was taken to ensure study participants' comfort by holding interviews in a secluded location without the participation of third parties. The interviewer did not judge or comment on the statements made by participants, demonstrating an open and accepting attitude. At the same time she was an active listener using techniques such as paraphrasing, clarifying and summarizing. Duration of interviews differed according to individual differences and preferences of study participants (e.g. talkativeness), however every participant was asked questions covering all the research topics. Interviews were then transcribed verbatim with respect to spelling and grammar rules (see e.g. LAPADAT, 2000; OLIVER, SEROVICH & MASON, 2005). Punctuation was added according to speech intonation. [18]

2.5 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis applied here is considered a subtype of a systematic qualitative content analysis. It is defined by BRAUN and CLARKE (2006) as a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. We assume that such an activity as lying in social relationships really exists (essentialist/realist approach), is experienced but also constructed by people (constructivist approach), who are then able to express their thoughts, feelings, attitudes and judgments while being interviewed (explicit phenomenon). It is thus possible to analyze the utterances on a semantic, explicit level, so the meaning of the surface content in participants' statements is discovered (DAVIDSEN, 2013; GIBBS, 2008; KVALE, 2008). In this variant of thematic analysis we focused on the declarations and opinions of participants, who were encouraged to reflect and to construct common-sense theories of lying. We were open to new meanings in the data, and we predominantly coded the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame (inductive analysis). At the same time, we immersed ourselves in theoretical and research literature on the subject, which helped us to explore some of the central topics. The study concentrated on the phasic nature of lying in social relationships, and the interview was designed to explore three topics—motivation to lie, refraining from lying, and consequences of lying. Those three topics were established before the analysis began. In consequence, we used both elements of inductive (data-driven, empirical) and deductive (theory-driven, theoretical) analysis (see e.g. MAYRING, 2000). We then decided to develop and present theoretical proposals clarifying some aspects of the phasic nature of everyday lying, where the identified themes were used as key variables. The themes were thus identified on the basis of the three topics under consideration. [19]

2.5.1 Procedure and steps of content analysis

The topics of interest in the research (motivation to lie, refraining from lying and consequences of lying) were explored primarily following the thematic analysis procedure proposed by BRAUN and CLARKE (2006) but adjusted to the current three-part material and followed by elements of theory formulation. [20]

The analysis was performed by two investigators following the same procedure. Moreover, the investigators endeavored to maintain a reflective attitude throughout the analysis, discussing the notes they had taken (cf. DAY, 2012). They worked independently at the beginning of the thematic analysis, but after finishing their individual work they discussed their ideas (codes and suggested themes) to reach consensus on the main themes and sub-themes. The analysis was repeated as many times as necessary to reach consensual validity (cf. CORSINI, 1999). The procedure for the analysis was as follows. [21]

First, the interview data was read multiple times in order to condense meanings and to identify patterns. We recorded our initial ideas. This was predominantly an inductive phase of analysis (see BENDASSOLLI, 2013; MAYRING, 2000). Second, codes, the most basic meaningful segments of the raw data, were

identified. During this phase of the analysis theory-driven categories were also applied (e.g. other-oriented lies, egoistic lies). At the same time, attempts were made to seek out new phenomena revealed in participants' statements in order to enrich those theoretical concepts (see e.g. DAVIDSEN, 2013; GIBBS, 2008). Third, the developed codes were sorted into themes within interview topics. Fourth, the themes were again checked against coded text to validate their completeness. It should be observed that analyses were initially performed independently on every topic of the interview, but later, when the investigators had arrived at a shared point of view, the decision was made to collate the themes into a different structure that better reflected the complexity of the investigated phenomenon. In other words, although the three-part topics remained the point of departure in content analysis, the themes discovered came from different parts of the interview—if a participant gave information about motivation to lie when asked about a consequence of lying, his/her contribution was not omitted but incorporated into the "motivation to lie" topic. Then, a thematic map with main themes, sub-themes and text excerpts was created to visualize the structure of the data and its interpretation. Fifth, themes and theme names were refined, and then discussed by the research team. [22]

After we represented the coded material with themes and sub-themes, we decided to use the findings for theoretical reflection aimed at clarifying and reformulating some aspects of the phasic nature of everyday lying. Thus, in the findings section the structure of themes and their possible supposed usage in theoretical models are presented. [23]

3. Findings

In the pre-lie phase we were interested in motivational aspects of lying: 1. what drives people to lie, and 2. what stops them from lying. In the post-lie phase the consequences of lying for people's social interactions were explored. [24]

3.1 Motivation for lying

While reflecting on the topic of motivation for lying, participants pondered the issue of the bases for reasons to lie. We coded many instances of reasons why people decide to lie, and we decided to sort them into two broader themes: beneficial and protective motivation. A beneficial lie is associated with the objective or benefit the liar wants to achieve, and is depicted best by the quote "we do it [lie] for ourselves, to gain something, either a little or a lot," Protective motivation is rather about guarding the liar from the unpleasant effects of revealing the truth, and as one of the participants' says: "sometimes you lie to protect yourself," so as "to hide certain things from our lives (…) our faults." What is more, the instances of both beneficial and protective motivation were always referred by interviewees to the self or another individual. We named this tendency the "target of the motivation to lie"—specifically, one lies for oneself or for the sake of the other person. The idea of the target of a lie as one of the bases for distinguishing types of lies is found in the literature (e.g. DePAULO et al., 1996;

ENNIS, VRIJ & CHANCE, 2008), but here it was derived from the natural tendency to distinguish self-oriented and other-oriented lying activity. [25]

The findings presented above form the basis for a new two-dimensional conceptualization of people's motivation for lying: 1. beneficial—protective lies, 2. self-oriented—other-oriented. A combination of those two dimensions suggest a more complex typology of motivations for lying which was identified in participants' statements—egoistic, self-defensive, pleasing and sheltering others (see other types of motivations for lying, e.g. EKMAN, 1991). Consequently, those types of motivations may be useful in forming a parallel typology of lies. We present dimensions and types with selected citations from the interviews in Table 1.

	Beneficial	Protective
Self-oriented	EGOISTIC material gains (e.g. money, a job) psychological and social (e.g. the admiration of others, respect, social prestige, position in the community, the favor of others, positive opinions, self-presentation—"showing oneself in a better light")	SELF-DEFENSIVE avoiding negative consequences, punishments for something one has done or has not done but should have hiding one's faults covering up particular incidents from one's own life hiding feelings, experiences—"not everything should be talked about" "defence of one's own attitude, thoughts, views (…) one's own personality, oneself" "avoiding responsibility" "to avoid unnecessary discussions, situations" "to avoid ruining a relationship"
Other-oriented	PLEASING to make someone happy, particularly when "we care about that person"	SHELTERING "to avoid making someone sad," as we feel that " … it would be best if that person [the lied-to] didn't know the whole truth" "avoiding hurting someone else" "we lie in order to save someone from being hurt" "the desire to protect someone from distress" to serve higher values, e.g. saving human life

Table 1: What pushes people towards lying? The typology of motivations to lie [26]

Moreover, other-oriented lies were primarily understood as avoiding causing distress rather than, for example, giving a compliment. Taking the methodical perspective in reflecting on the identified types of motivation to lie, it seems that

the differentiation between pleasing and sheltering motivations is less evident in the analyzed data than between the egoistic and self-defensive types. In the next part of the analysis the egoistic, self-defensive and sheltering types of lies come in very handy in the description, while at the same time pleasing lies seemed to be less useful as a descriptive category. [27]

3.2 Refraining from lying

While elaborating the topic of what stops people from lying, we identified four main themes connected to the negative consequences of lying. These were: penalties, relationship losses, the distress of the lied-to and anticipated lack of criticism for telling the truth (Figure 1). First, particular penalties that keep people from telling lies were highlighted by all the participants. Those penalties are both the derivatives of principles viewed as one's own conscience and/or moral principles (intra-psychological factors), as well as those viewed more as external to the individual, referred to as social norms, faith, religion or upbringing. Second, participants referenced the negative consequences for the relationship between the liar and the lied-to, which were specified as loss of trust that is very difficult to rebuild, destabilization of family relationships, and severing of ties between the liar and the lied-to. Third, participants focused on sensitivity to the possible distress of the lied-to, namely the awareness that someone can be hurt by lying. Fourth, participants noted a lack of criticism and of negative consequences for telling the truth as factors that can prevent someone from lying. One of the participants makes it quite clear: "if telling the truth came with no consequences or was received in good faith (…) then we would make far less use of lies." We can therefore see that both penalties for lying and a lack of penalties for truth-telling are factors ascribed as important in abstaining from lying. [28]

Interestingly, the themes of relationship losses and distress of the lied-to were only found in the rare liars group, while the lack of negative consequences for telling the truth was only mentioned by members of the frequent liars group. Perhaps it is the case that people who lie more frequently do so out of greater fear of the consequences that result from telling the truth than those who lie less often. By the same token, those who lie less regularly are less afraid of the consequences/penalties for telling the truth. They are perhaps more sensitive to other people's feelings and relationships with others are more valuable to them, which prevents them from lying. It may also be supposed that people who lie more often are "punished" differently for lying. They are more fearful of a "penalty" imposed from the outside, by others, than from "inside," by pangs of conscience. These preliminary observations may serve as an interesting starting point for future investigations. [29]

Generally, in examining the statements of participants we may observe that they explicitly name factors holding people back from lying, such as: one's conscience, moral system, religion and upbringing. In other words, some rules—both internally and externally imposed on the individual—are identified as regulators of lying activity. These rules can be manifested as the moral intuition (HAIDT, 2001) which allows most of us to assess at first glance social situations and the

behaviors of others in categories of good and bad. Research results explicitly suggest that both social norms (CIALDINI et al., 1991) and values (WOJCISZKE, 1986)—especially when activated—influence moral decisions.
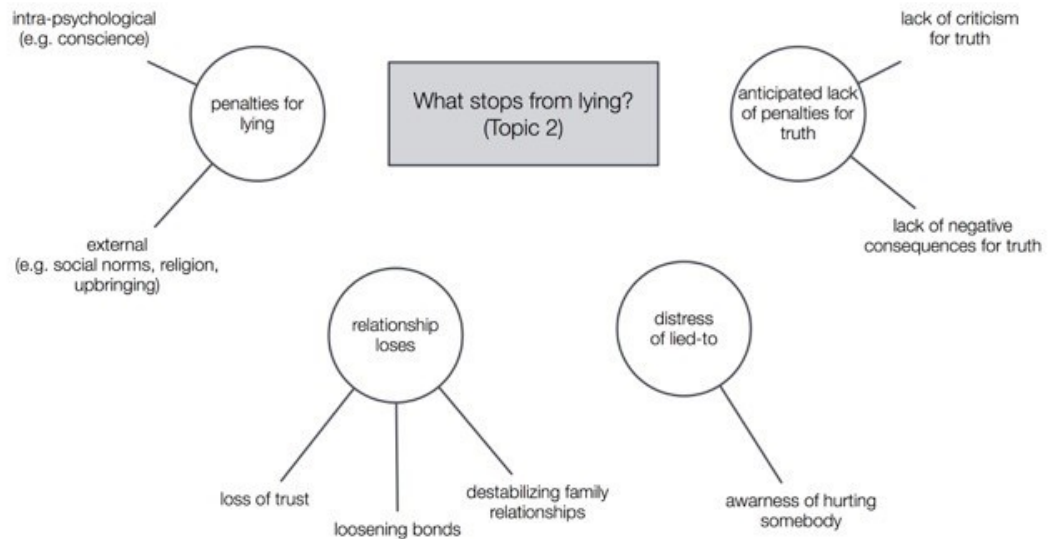

Figure 1: What stops people from lying? The presentation of the structure of the themes and sub-themes (lines in the graph) related to what refrains people from lying (Topic 2). [30]

3.3 Consequences of lying

The consequences of a lie were the next interview topic. Participants mostly pointed out the consequences that a discovered lie has for the liar, for the lied-to, and for the relationship that links them. [31]

We observed that descriptions of the reactions of targets of lies were very complex, and that participants paid uneven attention to particular issues in lying. Our codes allow us to distinguish several phases in reactions (Table 2). Not every phase was equally stressed by the participants, nor was each one mentioned in each interview, but we can observe and characterize the hypothetical process: 1. shock and disbelief, 2. an emotional reaction (negative emotions emerge such as anger, sadness, regret, antipathy, disappointment), 3. a cognitive-behavioral reaction. The last phase was at the center of participants' attention (very prevalent), and it can be described using the following sub-themes: a) distancing: consisting primarily in losing trust for a long period or permanently, "cooling" of relations with a given person, increased suspiciousness towards the liar, the emergence of aversion in the relationship between the liar and the lied-to; b) breakdown: potential for total withdrawal from the relationship and ending the relationship with the liar; c) thirst for revenge: desire to exact revenge: "you want to punish someone or end your relationship (…) or take revenge in some way;" d) verbal fight: e.g. quarrelling, harsh words; e) social ostracism of the liar; f) anger at oneself or/and a feeling of humiliation: "I'm mad at myself that (…) what was I thinking," "a sort of indignity from the liar, who doesn't feel I'm worth telling the

truth to;" g) crisis: a discovered lie can be a turning point in the relationship, leading either to "the destruction of the relationship" or to "working on the relationship" (e.g. "these are the negative consequences that can […] turn into something positive later on").

Theme	Sub-themes
Reaction of a lied-to person as a process	1. shock and disbelief
	2. emotional reaction (anger, sadness, regret, antipathy, disappointment)
	3. cognitive-behavioral reaction
	a. distancing
	b. breakdown
	c. thirst for revenge
	d. verbal fight
	e. social ostracism of the liar
	f. anger at oneself or/and a feeling of humiliation
	4. crisis
	5. positive reaction
	g. improving the relationship
	h. learning something
Factors that may change the consequences of lying	1. significance of the area of life
	2. type of lie
	3. possibility of understanding the situation

Table 2: Map of themes and sub-themes in the topic of consequences of lying (Topic 3) [32]

We would like to highlight that the potential for positive consequences of a lie in a relationship was also mentioned. Discovery of a lie can lead to attempts to improve the relationship (sub-theme "g," see Table 2)—but only in a situation where the detected lie does not involve values of importance to the participant, where it resulted from weakness rather than premeditation or the desire to hurt the lied-to on the part of the liar. A positive restructuring of the relationship seems to be possible only when the individuals concerned are capable of understanding what exactly happened, why the liar behaved in that way, e.g. "if the two are able to communicate with each other, collaborate and sort things out." Moreover, the discovery of a lie may teach the lied-to something (subtheme "h," see Table 2) about life and other people (e.g. "chalk it up to experience"). [33]

Secondary analysis led to categorization of the sub-themes of cognitive-behavioral reaction (a-f) and emotional reaction of an exclusively negative character as negative consequences of lying. The sub-theme "crisis" cannot be viewed exclusively as a negative consequence because it has the potential to contribute to growth and development, so we considered it a separate category of

consequences. The potential for improving the relationship and an opportunity to learn from experience were acknowledged as positive consequences of lying. The decision to generalize themes into such broad categories of consequences (negative, crisis, potentially positive) was driven by the usability of those categories in the subsequent theoretical proposition. [34]

The next group of themes dealt with factors that may change the consequences of lying. Participants drew attention to the fact that the reaction of the lied-to upon discovery of the lie depends on the type of the lie and its significance. As one of the participants stated "what kind of lie it is, and whether it affects an important area of life." When a lie does not impact an important sphere of life it can be treated with a certain indulgence, and it evokes a greater suspicion towards the person telling the lie (e.g. "if someone lies about the little things, they can also lie to me about the big things;" "if someone lies in one situation, we can't be sure that they haven't lied in other situations involving other things"). [35]

Based on the emerging themes we decided to develop a theoretical proposal clarifying the process of the response of the lied-to when a lie is discovered. The estimation of 1. the significance of a lie in a particular situation, 2. the type of a lie and 3. the potential of understanding of a situation might be seen as important moderators of the reaction to a lie in everyday communication. Similarly to McCORNACK and LEVINE (1990), we focused on the role that the significance of a lie has on the reaction to lying. They showed that the perceived importance of lying was related to the increase in emotional intensity of the reaction of a discovered lie. Turning to the type of lie, an egoistic lie has the potential to provoke a negative reaction in both the emotional and cognitive-behavioral spheres, while the forms of protective lies (self-defensive and sheltering) are rather connected to the plausibility of a positive reaction or a crisis (with both the potential to heal and to destroy a relationship). Moreover, a factor that may contribute to the possible positive effect of lie on a relationship is the capacity to understand what happened and why a lie was told. This seems to suggest that open communication about lies can take part in changing the long-term consequences generated by them. These moderators and their possible impact on the consequences of lying are presented in Figure 2. Although this model needs to be tested empirically (both qualitatively quantitatively), a member of the research team who was not engaged in theme identification tested the credibility of the findings by examining whether the model fits to the verbal data.
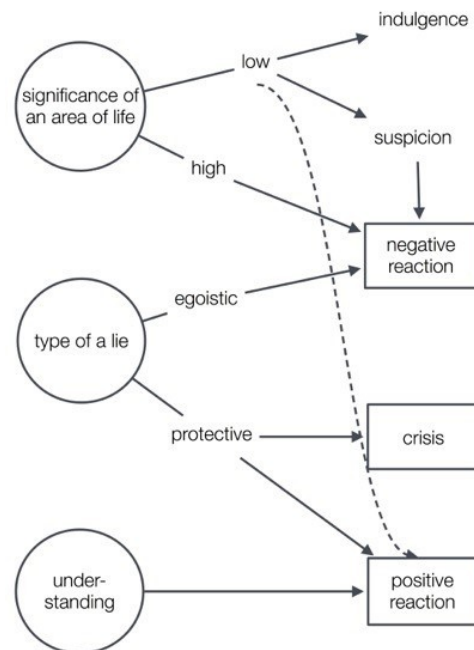
Figure 2: A theoretical proposal clarifying the process of a response of the lied-to with themes and sub-themes that may serve as moderators of the reaction to lying [36]

4. General Discussion

4.1 Theoretical issues

Qualitative analysis of interviews about lying has led to some theoretical developments. We have proposed an extension of the typology of lies presented in the existing literature, particularly by addressing the motivational dimension in distinguishing types of lies. [37]

Defensive, sheltering and egoistic types of motivations to lie were identified as the most distinct (there are quite clear criteria that allow for distinctions between them) and vivid (the types mentioned were very prevalent in the text corpus) categories. They also appeared in thematic analyses of other portions of the verbal material. What is more, we found that they serve regulatory functions modifying the reaction to a lie (consequences). [38]

The protective aspect of lying proved to be an important one for study participants, which is interesting considering the general opinion that people lie mainly for personal benefit. This claim is in line with the protective motivation for lying that can be identified from the findings of COLE (2001). He proved that one of the motivations to lie in a relationship is to avoid punishment. It turns out that the perceptions of research participants also demonstrate that a factor inducing us to tell lies is the desire to avoid losses, particularly those of an immaterial, psychological nature; both on the part of the liar, such as the avoidance of

criticism, changes to one's own self-image or image in the eyes of others and the hiding of feelings, as well as on the part of the lied-to, such as the desire to avoid causing someone discomfort or sorrow. We feel that this observation is of particular importance, and is rarely emphasized in the scientific literature concerning lying. In our view focusing on such types of lies may be interesting in future research on lying and detection of lies. [39]

Moreover, we propose a list of potential moderators of lying consequences. Namely, the type of a lie, its significance and the capacity to understand the liar's rationale can serve as factors leading to different consequences when a lie is caught. The presence of an egoistic lie was associated with a negative reaction on the part of the target of the lie, which is consistent with the previously referenced studies by INGLEHART et al. (1998) indicating a general negative perception of lies told for the benefit of the liar. What is more, research has shown that lying (like betrayal and arrogance) is evaluated more negatively from the point of view of the victim (in this case the lied-to) than other aversive behaviors that occur in interpersonal relationships (KOWALSKI, WALKER, WILKINSON, QUEEN & SHARPE, 2003). However, if the lie was other-oriented (sheltering) or self-protective, the consequences were depicted as less harmful and moral judgement was not as harsh. Thus we confirmed that those categories were theoretically and empirically useful, and therefore they should not be omitted in future research. In our opinion, these theoretical considerations can contribute to future qualitative and quantitative research on the subject of lying. [40]

4.2 Methodological issues

Qualitative thematic analysis, especially in its inductive version, has many limitations and potentialities that often interpenetrate, which should be taken into consideration when processing and applying the findings of the study at hand. Although we emphasize the insider perspective, the balance between emic and etic perspectives (see e.g. OLIVE, 2014) in knowledge forming is a crucial issue in the practice of good science. The sample (both people who lie often and who resist lying), data gathering methods (a semi-structured interview composed primarily of open questions with an in-depth orientation), and analysis methods (both deductive and inductive thematic content analysis at the explicit level of utterance) are mutually compatible. We obtained diverse responses that helped us to understand lying as a daily life activity, which we collated thematically into meaningful units and then explained in the light of theoretical knowledge on the phenomenon of lying. However, we did not stop with the thematic map of each explored topic; rather, we tried to make use of the themes and indicate their possible (hypothetical) application in theoretical considerations. [41]

Below we detail what we feel are the most significant methodological issues. First, we decided to diversify the data (collecting different opinions from people whose lying activity differed in frequency) by obtaining text material from both a rare and a frequent liars group. This decision supplied us with rich material based on nine interviews, but we still do not know if we covered the phenomena fully, i.e. whether the saturation effect was achieved. We did, however, notice that

some descriptions and opinions recur in the sample. Nevertheless, every interview provided portrayals of unique experiences and opinions. At the same time, the limited number of interviews allowed us to analyze all of the texts thoroughly (every piece of text was coded) and to conduct an in-depth examination of lying as a daily life activity from the participants' point of view. [42]

Second, the theoretical proposals that we offer are hypothetical—they reflect both the data and relations between identified themes or sub-themes gathered in the current research project, and they should be further developed and tested (the issue of inductive reasoning in theory building in qualitative research, see BENDASSOLLI, 2013). Nevertheless, tables and graphs present maps of themes (and thus in this context psychological meanings) that emerge when people are encouraged to analyze the lying activity of their daily lives. This leads to the belief that 1. participants (therefore the sample) properly covered the topic of the interview, 2. the structure of themes adequately reflects the phenomenon of lying —content ("face") and construct validity are almost automatic (see BASKERVILLE, 1996). [43]

This is related to a third issue, namely, a type of sampling bias that was evident here. Participants had been subjected to reflections on the topic of lying in daily life prior to participation in the interview. As a result, the map of themes derives from reflective and familiarized with the subject persons. In some instances, however, the interview might have been influenced by a defensive attitude, which is possible in the case of such an ethically involved topic. We do not insist that the findings characterize the general population in any manner, but we strongly believe that they characterize the phenomenon of lying (theoretical generalizability, see e.g. BASKERVILLE, 1996). The findings are not complete but they fill in significant gaps in the existing literature on lying in interpersonal relations. At the same time, the sample bias is an advantage—it probably helped to collect research material that was deepened by reflection, which in turn influenced the validation of the findings (topic-oriented statements, familiarized topic). [44]

The research presented here also has social and cultural limitations (e.g. specificity of Polish society as an example of a culture with low permissiveness towards lying), as well as those resulting from the research situation and interaction with the investigator (DAY, 2012; KVALE, 2008; SILVERMAN, 2013). When collecting qualitative data, we endeavored to avoid forcing our own views of the research area on our subjects, while joining in the reflective process of the participants as broadly as possible (DAY, 2012; SILVERMAN, 2013). We were very concerned with observing ethical standards in our research due to the delicate nature of the subject matter, and we took great care to ensure the anonymity of research participants as well as a judgment-free environment during the study. [45]

Importantly, our findings have several possible future applications. We already know that altruistic and egoistic lies differ in the way they are related to self-regulation processes (CANTARERO & VAN TILBURG, 2014). It would be

interesting to verify whether the protective versus beneficial aspect of lies interferes with its relationship to self-regulation processes. Future studies may also focus on characterizing the cognitive and emotional aspects of using the four types of lies. These in turn can also be important in the area of lying detection. Moderators of reactions to lying can be further investigated by research on interpersonal relations, which may prove to be a very interesting quantitative approach to the consequences of lying. [46]

To sum up, the article presents an interesting insight on the motivations and consequences of lying. Although derived from an insider's perspective, this insight was elaborated through reference to current theories on lying. We offer an extension of the typology of lies that can provide grounds for further qualitative and quantitative research on the subject, and we highlight the richness of the psychological context of motivation to lie along with a processual view of the reaction to a discovery of a lie. [47]

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