Psychological Thought
psyct.swu.bg | 2193-7281
South-West University "Neofit Rilski"

Research Article

An Analysis of Tactics Implemented While Lying

Christian L. Hart*[a], Renée Beach[b], James D. Griffith[c], and Drew A. Curtis[d]

[a] Department of Psychology, Texas Woman's University, USA.
[b] Department of Psychology, University of Alabama, USA.
[c] Department of Psychology, Shippensburg University, USA.
[d] Department of Psychology and Counseling, University of Texas at Tyler, USA.

Abstract

While lying and other strategic forms of deception are commonplace in social interactions, dishonesty is difficult to detect. Researchers have attempted to increase deception detection accuracy by exploring how behavior changes when people lie. This body of research has revealed few consistent behavioral changes that occur when people lie. Several studies have also examined people's beliefs about deceptive behavior, with much of that research showing that people hold many incorrect beliefs about how liars behave. Thus, the known behavioral cues of lying are limited, and most people hold false beliefs about valid indicators of lying. This study aimed to add clarity by asking liars themselves to report the behavioral tactics and techniques they use when lying. In an exploratory descriptive analysis, 228 participants described the verbal and non-verbal behavioral tactics they use to tell convincing lies. Their responses were categorized by independent raters who found that most reported strategies fell into a small number of categories. A second group of 198 participants then reported the frequency with which they used each of those tactics. The results provide insights into the self-reported tactics people use to tell lies.

Keywords: lying; lie tactics; non-verbal; verbal.

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Psychological Thought, 2025, Vol. 18(2), 537-559, https://doi.org/10.37708/psyct.v18i2.1134
Received: 2025-04-25. Accepted: 2025-10-07. Published (VoR): 2025-11-03.
Handling Editor: Natasha Angelova, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.
*Corresponding author at: Texas Woman's University, USA. E-mail: chart2@twu.edu

An Analysis of Tactics Implemented While Lying

Lying is the act of generating intentionally misleading communication meant to create untrue beliefs (Hart & Curtis, 2023; Vrij, 2008). Lying and other forms of deception are commonplace in social interactions, taking multiple forms and occurring for a variety of reasons (Hart & Curtis, 2023; Levine, 2019; Vrij, 2008). Vrij (2008) organized the reasons for lying into five categories: to create a positive impression, obtain an advantage, avoid punishment, for the benefit of another person, and for the sake of social relationships. Vrij also proposed that there are different types of lies: outright lies or completely false statements, overstatements and exaggerations, and subtle lies that involve concealing information by either avoiding the question or neglecting to share relevant details (Vrij, 2008).

People tell all manner of lies in the course of their everyday lives (Hart et al., 2019). In their analysis of day-to-day lies, DePaulo et al. (1996) found that approximately 65% of lies told are outright lies. On average, people lied to 34% of the people they interacted with, and, on average, most people lied once or twice daily (DePaulo et al., 1996). Lying also seems to be fairly universal, with 99% of people reporting some lying over three months (Serota et al., 2022).

However, lying is positively skewed in the population, with most people reporting little or no lying and a subset of people accounting for a high number of lies (Serota & Levine, 2015; Serota et al., 2010).

Given that lying seems to be fairly commonplace, learning to detect deception with more accuracy might be advantageous for people in settings such as law enforcement and the legal field, but also for all people in ordinary social interactions. Previous studies indicated that people are typically only slightly more accurate than chance levels at detecting deception. In their study on lie detection accuracy, Levine et al. (1999) reported that their participants accurately detected around 50% of lies and truths (chance levels), although there was a strong veracity effect where truths were detected much more accurately than lies. Similarly, Vrij (2008) and Kraut (1980) found accuracy rates around 56%. Bond and DePaulo (2006) conducted a meta-analysis on the detection of deception that summarized the results of 253 samples. Their results indicated that the overall accuracy rate was only 54%, although Levine and Serota (2025) demonstrated that even that modest level of lie detection accuracy was dramatically inflated by methodological factors. It seems clear that accurately detecting lies is not a natural ability for most people.

The rates of accurate lie detection may be influenced by the availability of different channels of communication such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body movement (Hartwig & Bond, 2014; Vrij, 2008), though the utility of information from those channels may be quite low (Levine, 2019). Frank and Ekman (1997) noted that observers who were best at distinguishing a range of emotions via facial expressions shown at rapid speeds were also the best lie detectors. Hartwig and Bond (2014) found that using multiple channels of information yielded a lie detection accuracy of 70%. These findings and others suggest that perhaps certain combinations of behavioral cues may be informative when assessing dishonesty.

In search of relevant cues for accurately detecting deception, researchers have studied the verbal and non-verbal behaviors of people instructed to engage in deception. These approaches have focused on changes in eye contact, facial expressions, fidgeting, body movement, response length, vocal pitch, and other behavioral measures (see Levine, 2019 and Vrij, 2008 for reviews). While findings in those studies have been variable, there is some evidence that people may exhibit a decrease in some body movements such as fidgeting and postural shifting

when deceiving (Granhag & Stromwall, 2002; Sporer & Schwandt, 2007; Vrij, 2008; Vrij & Semin, 1996). There is also some evidence that people display increased levels of eye contact during deception compared to when telling the truth (Granhag & Stromwall 2002; Mann et al., 2012; Vrij et al., 2001). Beyond increased eye contact and decreased fidgeting, other behavioral cues that a person is lying seem to be quite inconsistent. Additionally, as noted by Levine (2019), as empirical analyses of any behavioral cue of deception accumulate, the magnitude of the cues' association with lying tends to fade. That is, scientific reports of behavioral cues of lying are often fleeting anomalies rather than replicable observations.

There is also some evidence that elements of speech may change when people are responding dishonestly. For instance, liars tend to exhibit a longer latency to respond when lying than when telling the truth (Vrij et al., 2001). Other evidence indicates that the acoustic characteristics of speech may change when people lie. For instance, one meta-analysis found that when people lied, the pitch of their voices increased and there was a non-significant increase in the rate of speech (Sporer & Schwandt, 2006). Previous research has also indicated that there are changes in the amount of detail, descriptions of feelings, and logical inconsistencies in the language of people who are lying (Vrij, 2008). Additionally, studies have found that deceptive statements contain fewer words than truthful statements and that those statements contain fewer filler utterances such as "um" (Arciuli et al., 2010; Granhag & Stromwall, 2002). Again, however, those verbal changes are unreliable across studies (Levine, 2019).

While there is some evidence that verbal and non-verbal behavior changes when people lie, those changes are not reflected in folk psychological beliefs about the behavior of liars. People hold many erroneous beliefs about liars' behaviors such as the belief that people fidget more and make less eye contact when lying (Akehurst et al., 1996; Curtis & Hart, 2015; Hart et al., 2010; Hart et al., 2006; Mann et al., 2004). Charles Bond and the Global Deception Research Team (2006) conducted research across 58 cultures and found that many of the inaccurate beliefs about liars were pan-cultural. Furthermore, there is evidence that false beliefs about the behavior of liars are held by police officers and others whose professions call on them to regularly attempt to detect liars (Bogaard et al., 2016; Mann et al., 2004; Vrij & Semin, 1996). Thus, while there is some evidence that liars may reveal behavioral cues of their deception, most people are ignorant about what those cues are.

One tactic for understanding how liars behave is to simply ask people how they attempt to shape their behavior when they are lying. Buller and Burgoon (1994) made a case for lying to be conceptualized as a form of strategic communication where lying involves a degree of *information management*. The liar must concoct a false version of events that is believable. However, lying can also be viewed as a form of *impression management* in which liars manage their behavior and their speech to create an honest impression (DePaulo, 1992; Goffman, 1959; Hartwig et al., 2010; Levine, 2019). Thus, understanding impression management strategies might shed light on how people's behaviors change when they are dishonest. Research exploring how liars lie from the liar's perspective is scarce (Tabata & Vrij, 2023; Verigin et al., 2019). This dearth of self-report research on liars may be partly due to validity concerns of such self-report data; people often have poor awareness of their behaviors (Ross & Ward, 1996). However, the formulation and implementation of behavioral patterns associated with lying certainly fall within the realm of controlled rather than automatic processes, so lying may be open to a large degree of conscious control and awareness (Wason & Evans, 1975).

The limited amount of research that has been carried out on self-reported deception tactics suggests that tactics do play an important role in people's attempts to deceive (Tabata & Vrij, 2023; Wanasika & Adler, 2011). Stromwall et al. (2006) found that 90% of liars reported using a specific tactic to appear more honest. Granhag and Stromwall (2002) found that when looking at basic tactics used by liars, the most common non-verbal approach was attempted control of gestures and an attempted display of a calm demeanor. In addition, their participants reported tactics aimed at speaking in a general sense and avoiding details in their statements (Granhang & Stromwall, 2002). Verigin et al. (2019) found that effective liars reported relying heavily on verbal tactics. Among those tactics were embedding their lies within truthful details, making false claims that were simple and clear, and ensuring that their lies were plausible. Another study found that prisoners view strategic planning as important for telling effective lies (Granhag et al., 2004). Other studies have reported that suppression of nervous reactions and trying to have a natural appearance are common tactics used to appear truthful (Vrij et al., 2010).

Several other studies have directly examined the tactics used by liars in contrived laboratory situations (Colwell et al., 2006; Hartwig et al., 2010; Hines et al., 2010; Vrij et al., 2010). In those studies, the researchers had participants commit a small mock crime. The perpetrators of the crimes were then instructed to lie while being interrogated about the crime. Afterward, the

participants provided details about the techniques they used to appear more convincing and believable. Participants reported that they attempted to manage impressions and manage information. Some of their specific tactics included telling a consistent narrative that did not contradict itself, controlling the amount of details and information, making eye contact, telling a plausible story, being thorough, and maintaining a calm demeanor. While the results of those examinations of liars' techniques are informative, in each case the context was a laboratory investigation of strategies used when being interrogated about a mock crime. The studies did not examine tactics used to tell convincing lies in everyday, real-world contexts. Given that lying appears to be a particularly common occurrence in the everyday lives of most people (DePaulo et al., 1996; Hart et al., 2019; Serota et al., 2010), further exploring the strategies used to tell those lies may offer a deeper understanding of the routine lies that most people encounter.

As people navigate the social and cognitive complexities of presenting everyday lies believably, there are likely some tactical techniques that they use. The purpose of the present study was to extend the body of literature examining the tactics that liars implement to appear honest and believable. This study aimed to have people reflect on the techniques they use when lying in real-life situations and then determine the relative frequency with which each of those tactics is used. Study 1 was an exploratory and descriptive analysis of people's open-ended, self-reported tactics used to tell believable lies.

Study 1. Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 228 college students (99 men and 129 women). Their average age was 21.07 years (*SD* = 5.67). Participants were recruited from undergraduate psychology courses at a small university and compensated with extra credit in their courses.

Materials and Procedures

Participants individually completed self-report surveys in group sessions of approximately 30 participants per group. Participants were prompted in an open-ended manner to individually and anonymously write about the verbal and/or behavioral techniques they typically use to make themselves seem believable when they are lying to others. They were then given 15 minutes to respond to the writing prompt. Participants were specifically requested to provide behavioral and

verbal tactics because, in a pilot study in which participants were only generally asked about their lie techniques, many participants offered very vague responses such as “tried not to get caught” and “didn’t let them know I was lying.” It was concluded that specific guidance was necessary to point participants into the realm of behavioral and verbal tactics in which we were interested.

Data coding was conducted following a process similar to that of other researchers analyzing similar forms of data (Cambell et al. 2013; Griffith et al., 2012; Hill et al., 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first stage of the process was to unitize the participants’ responses (Campbell et al., 2013). For instance, if a participant wrote, “I tried not to blink too much and I maintained eye contact with them. I also tried to sound calm and not move around very much,” the responses were unitized as: 1. I tried not to blink too much; 2. I maintained eye contact with them; 3. I… tried to sound calm; 4. [I tried to] not move around very much. 685 unitized responses were identified.

Next, two researchers independently identified commonalities in the responses and created categories to which similar responses could belong. After individually developing sets of categories, the two researchers worked together to arrive at and refine a mutually agreed upon set of categories of deception tactics that arose from the participants’ unitized responses (Campbell et al., 2013; Griffith et al., 2012). The researchers generated eight categories of non-verbal behaviors, six categories of verbal tactics, an “other” category for strategies that did not neatly fit in a category (e.g., “I cough”), and a “no tactic” category for instances in which a unitized response was identified, but it did contain an apparent lie strategy (e.g., “I don’t really use strategies.”).

Next, two additional researchers were trained to use the coding system and independently coded the 685 unitized strategies. They achieved 91% inter-rater agreement. For disagreements, a third researcher who was not previously involved in the coding process arbitrated the decision.

Study 1. Results

The eight categories of non-verbal behaviors were as follows. The *make eye contact* category consisted of responses in which participants reported that they intentionally tried to maintain or increase the amount of eye contact they made with the person to whom they were lying (e.g., “I

look them dead in the eyes."). The *reduce fidgeting* category included responses indicating intentional control or reduction of fidgeting or maintaining normal body movement (e.g., "try to not fidget, play with my hands or ears, because for me that is a sign of lying"). The *act calm/confident/normal* category consisted of responses indicating a very general strategy of attempting to appear calm, confident, or normal when lying (e.g., "act as if nothing was wrong or different."). *Control facial/emotional expression* was a category representing specific attempts to manipulate one's facial expressions, especially expressions of emotion, to present a more believable countenance (e.g., "I just tried to keep a straight face"). *Act serious/sincere* was a category designating general efforts to appear more serious or sincere than one felt (e.g., "I just try to be as serious as possible"). The *act emotional* category included attempts to appear more emotional than one actually felt by feigning upset, crying, etc. (e.g., "Cry to make it seem more believable"). In the *avoid eye contact* category, people reported attempts to conceal one's eyes or otherwise avoid making eye contact (e.g., "I wouldn't look the person in the eye"). Responses in the *increase body movement* category were ones that indicated an attempt to use increased body movement to appear more believable (e.g., "Try to use hand gestures and body language to get the story across").

The six verbal strategies were as follows. The *tone/pitch* category included strategies aimed at altering the tone of voice or vocal pitch (e.g., "sound confident" and "used a serious tone"). The *control details/evidence* category consisted of strategies in which the respondent managed the amount or the nature of the details and evidence that they shared (e.g., "I tried not...over exaggerating my story" and "I also might try to give more details than necessary to try to make it seem realistic"). The *sound normal* category consisted of responses in which the participant reported trying to speak in a manner consistent with their normal speech (e.g., "I keep the same tone of voice"). The *speak clear/steady* included tactics aimed at producing a clear speaking pattern with no stammering or pauses (e.g., "keep my voice steady"). The *rate of speech* category consisted of efforts to adjust the pace of speech (e.g., "talk faster"). The *volume* category included strategies in which the person attempted to increase, decrease, or maintain their speaking volume (e.g., "talk in a voice that sounds quieter").

For the percentage of participants reporting each category of non-verbal and verbal tactics, see Table 1. We found that 90% of the participants reported at least one behavioral tactic, 76%

reported at least one verbal tactic, and 2% reported no tactic. The average number of tactics reported per participant was 2.73 (*SD* = 1.29, minimum = 0, maximum = 7).

Table 1.
Percentage of Participants Reporting Each Tactic.

Non-Verbal Tactic	
Make eye contact	36%
Control facial/emotional expression	33%
Act calm/confident/normal	30%
Reduce fidgeting	23%
Act serious/sincere	11%
Act emotional	11%
Avoid eye contact	8%
Increase body movement	6%
Verbal Tactic	
Tone/pitch	37%
Speak clear/steady	20%
Sound normal	19%
Control details/evidence	16%
Volume	10%
Rate of speech	9%
Other tactic	11%
No tactic	2%

Study 1. Discussion

In the first study, participants completed an open-ended response in which they reported the tactics they use to tell convincing lies. An analysis of their responses suggested that most people do have verbal and non-verbal tactics they employ to appear more believable when being dishonest. Furthermore, some tactics such as controlling their tone of voice, making eye

contact, and controlling facial expressions were more common than other tactics such as acting emotional or increasing movement. Though Study 1 provided some interesting insights into the lie tactics that people self-report when prompted, there are some obvious limitations. First, the tactics that participants listed were often non-exclusive and overlapping. For instance, if someone reported that they "act normal," that could entail making eye contact, controlling one's vocal pitch, etc. Another potential concern is that people do not fully consider their behavior when lying, and some of their tactics may not readily come to mind when they are asked about them. Free recall is a relatively demanding cognitive task compared to cued recall approaches such as recognition (Nobel & Shiffrin, 2001; van den Berghe, 1966). Those concerns were addressed in a second study.

Study 2. Method

In Study 2, an attempt was made to gain a better understanding of the tactics people use when lying by soliciting information from participants using a different method. Whereas in Study 1 the retrieval strategy was free recall, Study 2 capitalized on a recognition methodology. Specifically, Study 2 examined the degree to which lie tactics on a list would be endorsed by participants. When asking people to engage in open-ended, free-recall tasks, they must draw from the entire universe of possible options, a cognitively demanding task (van den Berghe, 1966). On the other hand, closed-ended recognition tasks allow participants to more readily recall information through cued retrieval. As noted by van den Berghe (1966), these two approaches can lead to dramatically different outcomes in reports from participants. Study 2 used the endorsement of a list of lie tactics to gain convergent evidence of the tactics that people use to tell believable lies. The hypothesis was that some lie tactics would be used significantly more often than others.

Participants

The participants were a convenience sample of 198 adults recruited from the general population by college students via direct recruiting through social media, email, and text. Their average age was 27.82 years (*SD* = 10.67). The participants reported their gender as 32.3% men, 64.6% women, and 3.0% indicating a gender other than men or women.

Materials and Procedures

Each participant completed an anonymous online survey at their convenience. After providing their informed consent and providing basic demographic information, participants were

prompted with: “We are interested in the strategies you use to tell believable or convincing lies. When you lie, how often do you use these strategies?” Only participants who indicated they could recall a time when they told a lie were allowed to continue the survey. They were then presented with the eight non-verbal and six verbal lie tactics generated in Study 1 (e.g., “try to maintain or increase eye contact”). They were also presented with these two items: “use other behavioral strategies not mentioned above” and “use other verbal strategies not mentioned above.” Each item was rated on a 1-7 scale where 1 = Not at all and 7 = Very often.

Study 2. Results

Supporting the hypothesis that some lie tactics would be used more often than others, the results of a repeated measures ANOVA suggested that there were significant differences in the use of the various lie tactics ($F(15, 2955) = 63.18$, $p < .001$; see Table 2). A cluster analysis was computed to determine if particular combinations of lie tactics tended to group together into typologies of lie tactics (Zakharov, 2016). First, a hierarchical cluster analysis was used with Ward’s method to determine the number of clusters in the data (Ward, 1963). That analysis suggested a robust two-cluster solution. A k-means cluster analysis was then computed. ANOVAs indicated that the two clusters differed significantly for each of the 14 lie tactics ($p < .001$). An analysis of the two clusters revealed that the primary difference was that cluster 2 ($n = 128$) had a stronger endorsement of every lie tactic than cluster 1 ($n = 70$). The magnitude of the differences ranged from 1.30 to 2.90 on a seven-point scale, with an average difference of 2.04 ($SD = 0.54$). These results suggest two groups of people who differ principally in how strongly they endorse the use of lie tactics.

Table 2.
Reported Use of Each Tactic.

Tactic	*M*	*SD*
Act calm/confident/normal	5.51	1.71
Sound normal	5.22	1.78
Act serious/sincere	5.05	1.75
Control details/evidence	5.02	1.72
Speak clear/steady	4.93	1.96
Reduce fidgeting	4.57	1.69
Make eye contact	4.52	1.84
Control facial/emotional expressions	4.46	2.01
Rate of speech	4.30	1.92
Tone/pitch	4.08	1.98
Volume	4.02	1.90
Other verbal strategies	3.41	1.95
Other non-verbal behavioral strategies	3.36	2.03
Act emotional	3.31	1.91
Avoid eye contact	2.99	1.86
Increase body movement	2.88	1.83

Study 2. Discussion

Study 2 measured how often people reported using the various lie tactics generated in Study 1. Not surprisingly, some of the tactics were reportedly used more often than others, but a cluster analysis did not indicate any cohesive patterns of lying techniques. The pattern of responding suggests that acting and sounding calm, confident, normal, and sincere is a common approach people use when lying, as is a selective use of details and evidence in one's statement. Some of the more peculiar tactics reported in Study 1 (e.g., avoiding eye contact or increasing body movement) were reportedly used much less often in Study 2. The results of Study 2 complemented Study 1 by providing evidence of the relative use of various lie tactics.

General Discussion and Conclusions

Across two studies, the verbal and non-verbal tactics that liars use to accomplish that feat were examined. The frequency of reported behaviors varied across the two studies, likely owing to their different response formats. Prior research has demonstrated that the type of response

format (open-ended vs. closed-ended) can dramatically influence participant reports (e.g., van den Berghe, 1966). These two studies may provide complementary information and insights into the nature of the tactics people use to tell believable lies.

Consistent with previous research examining liars' tactics (Colwell et al., 2006; Hartwig et al., 2010; Hines et al., 2010; Vrij et al., 2010), these studies found that most of the reported tactics could be logically grouped together into a handful of deliberate techniques. For the non-verbal behavioral tactics, intentionally looking normal and making eye contact were widely reported. These findings generally correspond with those of Colwell et al. who found that people made more eye contact, attempted to act normal, and attempted to act relaxed.

For the verbal tactics, controlling pitch or tone and attempting to sound normal were the most frequently reported tactics in Study 1, but in Study 2 we more clearly measured how often the tactics were used and found that sounding normal and controlling details were the most common approaches. Previous research found that people attempted to project normal behavior and controlled details when lying, but those researchers did not find the manipulation of pitch and tone as a common tactic (Colwell et al., 2006; Hartwig et al., 2010; Hines et al., 2010). While those previous studies also found that telling plausible and consistent stories was a common tactic, that did not emerge as a tactic in our study.

The differences in results found between these two studies and the previous studies may be due to methodological differences. In the present studies, people were asked about tactics they use when telling a lie in their actual lives, while previous studies examined lie tactics used during an interrogation following a mock criminal act (Colwell et al., 2006; Hartwig et al., 2010; Hines et al., 2010; Vrij et al., 2010). In each of those laboratory studies, the participants were induced to commit a mock crime. Afterward, they were interrogated about the crime, with the participants lying to avoid detection. Finally, the participants were asked to disclose the techniques they used to seem more believable during their lies. The discrepancies found between the present studies and those previous investigations could have emerged because lying to a stranger in an interrogation may call for a different set of techniques that one would use in everyday, real-life deception for most people. For instance, when lying in real life, people are most often lying to people with whom they are in familiar social relationships (DePaulo et al., 1996). Furthermore, the differences may owe to the inherent differences between humans in the

lab and those same humans in the real world (Chipanis, 1967). For instance, the unnatural context of lab studies or the low stakes of being caught lying in a lab study compared to the real world might naturally lead to differences in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It is also worth noting that in the real world, people choose to lie or not, whereas in the lab studies, these roles were assigned. Thus, the lab studies may have assigned people to unnatural conditions they wouldn't have naturally elected to be in.

The literature review for the present studies delineated the common misconceptions, incorrect beliefs, and erroneous folk psychology that people have about the behavior of liars. An interesting contradiction arises when one considers that many of the beliefs people have about the behavior of liars are the opposite of the behavioral tactics they reported using to tell believable lies in the current study. For instance, previous studies have consistently found that people believe liars make less eye contact and tend to fidget (Akehurst et al., 1996; Hart et al., 2010; Hart et al., 2006; Mann et al., 2004), yet in the present studies, some widely reported tactics were the opposite- to make more eye contact and to not fidget. It is unclear why people seem to believe that others behave one way when lying, while they themselves claim to behave in an opposite manner. Perhaps the root of that discrepancy is in the cognitive bias of illusory superiority, in which people believe themselves, without evidence, to possess certain skills or knowledge that the masses seem to lack (Buunk & Van Yperen, 1991; Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Or perhaps the disconnect is rooted in some level of naïve realism in which they believe that they alone see the world and human behavior clearly, while others, burdened by some form of intellectual defect, do not grasp the reality of how dishonesty can be concealed (Pronin et al., 2004). This *illusory honesty advantage* warrants further exploration.

Limitations of the Studies

While these studies yielded valuable findings, there are several shortcomings that may limit the conclusions one should draw from these findings. These studies were retrospective, in that they asked participants to recall tactics they used in past instances of lying. There is considerable evidence that self-reported retrospective data may be imperfect because people often have limited awareness of how they thought, felt, and behaved in the past, and they also have limited or flawed memory for those events (Banaji & Hardin, 1994, Ross & Ward, 1996). As noted previously, the questions we used were somewhat leading, in the sense that they guided responses into the behavioral realm. Given that the behavioral realm was the focus of our

investigation, it seems reasonable that any bias in the questioning was acceptable. Another limitation is that while the participants reported implementing certain behavioral tactics when lying, it is unclear if they actually did perform those behaviors they intended. For instance, Vrij et al. (2001) asked people how they believed they had behaved when lying, and they then compared those reports to actual video recordings of the liars' behavior. The researchers found that people had poor insight into how their behavior actually changed when they lied. This may be evidence that not all tactics liars conceive are implemented as intended.

These two studies add to a small and growing body of work on the tactics used when lying. The current studies add some unique value in that people reported about the techniques and tactics they use to tell significant lies in real-life contexts. A better understanding of those plans and tactics may aid in developing a broader awareness of how people do or do not behave differently when they lie. Future research could examine the specific situations in which particular lie tactics and strategies are used. For example, it could be that the lie tactics one uses depends on the level of familiarity one has with the target of the lie or the stakes of the lie. Future studies should also focus on broader forms of impression management. Most people are engaged in a perpetual pattern of impression management, shifting their behavior in ways to influence the impressions that others form. For instance, Hartwig et al. (2010) found that even honest people develop behavioral impression management tactics and strategies aimed at convincing people of their honesty. Instead of asking how people behave when they are lying, it might be useful to pose the larger question of how people change their behavior when trying to influence others' beliefs. Based on the current findings, addressing those questions from the perspective of the influencer could be a fruitful way of understanding these social processes.

Funding/Financial Support

The authors have no funding to report.

Other Support/Acknowledgement

The authors have no support to report.

Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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About the Authors

Christian L. Hart is a psychology professor at Texas Woman's University where he studies people who lie prolifically.

Renée Beach is a doctoral student in clinical psychology at University of Alabama.

James D. Griffith is a professor of psychology at Shippensburg University where he studies risk-taking behavior.

Drew A. Curtis is a professor of psychology at University of Texas at Tyler where he studies pathological lying.

Corresponding Author's Contact Address [TOP]

Texas Woman's University
Denton, TX, 76204
E-mail: chart2@twu.edu