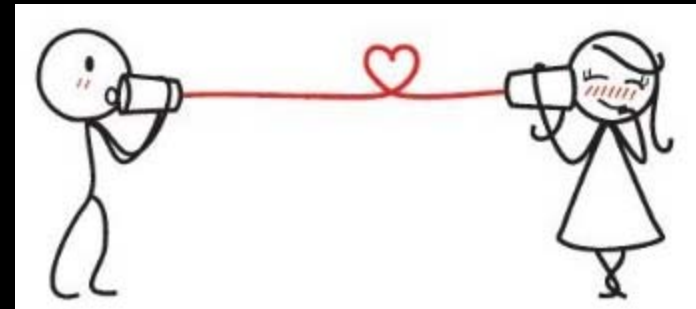


# Lying to the Ones We Love: Deception Strategies in Intimate Relationships

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# Agenda

- Literature Review
- Method
- Results
- Discussion

# Research Questions

- What communication strategies do people use when they are trying to appear truthful?
- What do people lie to their romantic partners about, and why?

# Literature Review

- Self-Presentation Theory (DePaulo, et al., 1992)
- Indicators and Strategies for Deception  
(Stromwall, 2011; Riggio, 1983; Burgoon, 1994; Porter, 1996 )

# Self-Presentation Theory

- Control (or so we hope) over how others perceive us (DePaulo 1992)
  - We can never fully control our nonverbal messages
  - Prediction of nonverbal behaviors should be possible

# Indicators for Deception

- Verbal indicators (Porter 1996; Burgoon 1994)
  - Liars give less details, have tense vocal cues, give briefer answers, and have unpleasant voices
- Nonverbal indicators (Riggio, 1983; Burgoon, 1994)
  - Unpleasant facial expression, head shaking, and more facial animation
  - Eye contact – contradiction between belief and reality

# Indicators for Deception

- Where does this leave us?
  - Some researchers are embracing the idea that deception cues differ depending on the situation the lie is told in

# Strategies for Deception

- Strategies (Stromwall, 2011)
  - Prisoners
    - Their strategies included both verbal and nonverbal aspects, but there was a lot of variation
      - Most frequently reported nonverbal strategies were eye contact and staying calm and relaxed
    - Many of the strategies that were reported contradict with each other
      - “Maintaining eye contact makes me more credible”
      - “I’d rather not have eye contact”





# Method

# Participants

- SONA recruitment system
  - N = 26
  - Age
    - Female: Mean = 19.11, SD = 0.86
    - Male: Mean = 23, SD = 11.78
  - 68% female
  - 32% male

# Procedures

- Semi-structured interview (Stromwall, 2011)
  - “Thinking about nonverbal communication, what do you think are effective strategies for getting away with a lie?”
  - “Think about a time that you lied to your partner. What did you lie about and why did you lie about it?”

# Data Analysis

- Content Analysis (Krippendorff, 1989)
  - A technique that allows us to pull out conceptual ideas and themes in questions that don't have binary/quantifiable answers
  - Advantages
    - Allows us to analyze data that is not quantitative
    - Interpretation of semantically complex statements
  - Disadvantages
    - Proving statistical significance is difficult
    - Objective coding

# Questions Analyzed

- What are the strategies...
- What was the most recent lie told to your romantic partner?



# **Results & Discussion**

# Strategies to Appear Honest

- The most common strategies reported by participants for appearing honest were
  - Making eye contact
    - “Keeping eye contact, cause most people say that when you are lying you look away or look down”
  - Not fidgeting
    - “Not doing too much with your hands”
  - Making sure to appear calm
    - “Not acting flustered or nervous”


# Content of Lie

- Content of lie told
  - Activities
    - “I lied about who I was hanging out with”
    - “I told her I was in class but really I wasn’t”
  - Feelings
    - “I told him it didn’t bother me when he smoked around me but it did”
- Reasons for Lying
  - Avoiding a conflict with partner (most common)
    - “I knew he’d get mad... even if it was just a normal conversation, he’d get mad.”
  - Some people even reported lying to *create* a conflict.
    - “I did it to get an uprising out of her, to say ‘Hey, I got you back.’”



# Conclusion & Future Directions

- There is a lot of variation in strategy as well as many contradicting views among participants
- The most common strategy for successful lying was to make eye contact.
  - This belief is consistent with prior research - though liars actually tend to make more eye contact! (Burgoon, 1994)

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- We found that people most commonly lied to their partners to avoid a conflict.
    - This differs from DePaulo's findings that when we lie to people we are close to, the lies tend to be other-oriented (DePaulo, 1998).
  - Analysis of the data collected is still ongoing.
    - Connections between content and strategy of lies
    - Strategy differences in partner vs. non-partner lying