

Title and abstracts of keynote lectures

Monday 9 January: Producing Lies

1. Jeffrey Hancock
2. Jörg Meibauer – “Topics in the linguistics of lying”

Although lying is an action that is fundamental for human communication, there are not many analyses that deal with lying from a linguistic point of view, linguistics comprising both grammar and pragmatics. This talk points out prosodic, syntactic, and lexical aspects of lying before it goes into the semantics and pragmatics of lying. On the one hand, lying has to do with truth and falsehood; since these are semantic notions, there is a semantic side of lying. On the other hand, lying has to do with the speech act of assertion, and this is a genuine pragmatic notion. Obviously, semantic and pragmatic properties of lying have to go into a reasonable definition of lying. Assuming a broadly neo-Gricean background, four topics in the linguistics of lying are discussed, integrating findings from recent experimental studies. First, from a “deceptionist” perspective, it is argued that lying is an act of verbal deception, deception being defined as deliberately leading someone into a false belief. In contrast, “non-deceptionists” hold that lying does not necessarily include deception since there are so-called “bald-faced lies” in which the intention to deceive is absent. Second, it is also assumed here that it is possible to lie while using untruthful (deceptive) implicatures. In contrast, some scholars hold that this would be a case of “merely misleading”. Third, it has been claimed that objective truth/ falsehood (as opposed to subjective untruthfulness) is the decisive property of lying. Other scholars do not endorse this claim and stick to the traditional notion of an intention to deceive on the part of the liar. Fourth, that the notion of truth is a relative one can be shown with respect to the scalarity or the imprecision of lying, as well as with respect to the case of bullshitting in which the loose concern for the truth plays a fundamental role. In sum, the talk shows that there is a linguistic framework being useful in the analysis of lying. Yet the details depend largely on findings in the philosophy of language and experimental psychology, thus inviting an integrative approach to lying.

Tuesday 10 January: Detecting Lies

3. Nicholas Asher
4. Bruno Verschuere – “Lying takes time”

People lie....sometimes. Most people mostly tell the truth. While truth telling is the default in human communication, deception typically requires extra mental effort. I will present self-report, behavioral, and neural evidence suggesting that lying typically comes with a cognitive cost. In fact, this mental cost is so large and so robust, that it allows for cognition-based lie detection tools applicable at the individual level.

Wednesday 11 January: Differences in Deception

5. Chiaki Sakama – “Logical Definitions of Lying and Other Dishonest Attitudes”

In this talk we review definitions of lying that appear in the literature of philosophy.

We then formulate lying using a logic for belief, intention and communication.

We also formulate different categories of dishonesty and compare their formal properties.

6. Victoria Talwar – “When we first practice to deceive: Children’s lie-telling behaviour and its relation to their cognitive development”

This talk will give an overview of my research program examining children’s developing lie-telling abilities and the factors that can influence their truthfulness. In particular, I will present research on how children’s lie-telling abilities emerge in the preschool years and their ability to successfully deceive increases with age in relation to their cognitive development. I will discuss children’s lie-telling for both antisocial and prosocial motivations. Data on different methods of promoting children’s truthful reports will also be presented.

Thursday 12 January: Costs and Benefits of Lying

7. Marta Dynel – “Deceptive withholding information: A pragma-philosophical account”

This presentation aims to tease out the workings of deception performed by means of withholding information, a topic hitherto largely neglected in the linguistic and philosophical literature on deception. Firstly, the central conditions for deceptive withholding information will be specified against the background literature. Secondly, the different notions related to the focal phenomenon, such as “lies of omission” and “half-truths”, will be critically addressed with a view to elucidating the main forms of withholding information. Thirdly, it will be argued that all withholding information can be regarded as being based on the violation of Grice’s first maxim of Quantity conducive to deceptive (hearer-inferred) what is said, not implicatures, as some authors claim. Finally, a number of specific examples of linguistic realisations of withholding information will be examined. It will also be shown that some of the examples of withholding information are actually cases of different types of deception.

8. Robert van Rooij – “Propaganda with generics”

Game theory seems to be the natural theory to study persuasion and propaganda. However, the idealisations made in this theory predict that persuasion is hardly ever possible. Instead, persuasion and propaganda are possible only because of our cognitive limitations and biases (cf. Tversky and Kahneman). The representativity-bias, in particular, is responsible for the successful use of generic sentences in propaganda. A formal model of this bias will be presented, and its (mis)use for generic sentences about social groups will be discussed.

Friday 13 January: Prevention of Lying

9. Anton Nijholt – “Computational Deception and Noncooperation”

There are many situations in which we don't mean what we say, where we are not really cooperative and where we have goals and preferences that we don't make explicit in order to achieve them. In

this talk we survey the many situations where deception and noncooperation are natural and sometimes necessary and we look at attempts to deal with such situations with the help of information and communication technologies.

10. Don Fallis – “What Lies in the Future?”

Philosophers (including such luminaries as Plato, Augustine, and Kant) have long grappled with what makes lying wrong and whether it's always wrong. But what are the important questions for the philosophy of lying now? In this talk, I will make two suggestions. First, given recent developments in politics and technology, we should expand our focus beyond lying to other intentionally misleading activities, such as disinforming, bullshitting, and keeping people in the dark. Second, we should put more emphasis on the epistemology (and not just the morality) of lying and deception.