

HUNGARIANS AND INDONESIANS' INTERPRETATION OF BELIEVED-FALSE STATEMENT TURNING OUT TO BE TRUE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Folk understanding of lying is that to lie means to say something false. However, most scholars argue that lying should be defined in accordance with the speaker's false belief regarding the statement (Dyrel, 2018; Heffer, 2020; Meibauer, 2014). Coleman and Kay (1981) conducted a prototype semantic experiment with American English speakers and also found that the English word *lie* is characterized by false belief as the strongest element. Accordingly, one is still lying if she believes what she is saying is false, even if later her statement is found to be true. This may be referred as 'lying turning out to be true'. For Mopan Mayan people of Belize, this situation does not involve lying since the statement is in accordance with factuality, regardless the speaker's false belief (Danziger, 2010). This study aims at comparing the interpretations of 'lying turning out to be true' between two lingua-cultural groups. Therefore, the research question is: How do Hungarians and Indonesians interpret 'lying turning out to be true'?

For this study, experiments were conducted with 110 Hungarians and 102 Indonesians as respondents. They were asked to respond to two stories, namely match ticket and exam stories from Coleman and Kay's (1981) experiment. These stories were linguistically and culturally adapted to both groups. Respondents from each group were asked to judge (1) whether or not the characters in the stories lying, and (2) whether they were certain if others would agree with them. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide comments as an explanation of their choice. A 7-scoring scale was used from the combination of the two answers. Scores were assigned for each respondent's responses, which would be counted to find the central tendency and frequency.

The results suggest that the scores for the match ticket story are generally lower for both groups. Although the story was constructed to have only the element of belief, many Indonesians' comments are about the truthfulness of the character's statement which also aligns with the factual situation. Meanwhile, in the exam story, the element of intent is present in addition to the element of belief. The scores from the experiment with Indonesians are exhibited to be lower than the results from the Hungarian group. This suggests that the Hungarians are more certain to categorize that the character is lying. Also, respondents from Hungary are also able to recognize the presence of the element of (false) belief in the story. On the contrary, false belief is not even discussed in the comments of Indonesian respondents. Indonesians emphasize the intention of the character and the final situation after the intended-to-lie utterance has been made. Thus, a believed-false statement which later turns out to be true cannot be considered a lie since the factual situation is still in accordance with the statement (event if the statement is believed or known to be false before). Results from experiment with Indonesian respondents support the argument of Turri and Turri (2015) that a believed-false statement turning out to be true cannot be regarded as lying since the character fails in lying.

In conclusion, Indonesians are more assured to consider 'lying turning out to be true' as not lie. There seem to be some socio-cultural differences in the interpretation of *lie* since both groups acknowledge the role of false belief differently.

Stories

Ticket match story: Superfan has got tickets for the championship game and is very proud of them. He shows them to his boss, who says, 'Listen, Superfan, any day you don't come to work, you better have a better excuse than that.' Superfan says, 'I will.' On the day of the game, Superfan calls in and says, 'I can't come to work today, Boss, because I'm sick.' Ironically, Superfan doesn't get to go to the game because the slight stomachache he felt on arising turns out to be ptomaine poisoning. So Superfan was really sick when he said he was. Did Superfan lie?

Exam story: One morning Katerina has an arithmetic test she hasn't studied for, and so she doesn't want to go to school. She says to her mother, 'I'm sick.' Her mother takes her temperature, and it turns out to Katerina's surprise that she really is sick, later that day developing the measles. Did Katerina lie?

The comparison of scores from 110 Hungarian and 102 Indonesian respondents

Stories	Match Ticket		Exam	
	Hungarian	Indonesian	Hungarian	Indonesian
Total	380	166	625	166
Mean	3.45	1.63	5.68	1.63
Median	1	1	7	1
Mode	1	1	7	1
Lie	44	7	85	7
Can't say	3	0	7	0
Not lie	63	95	18	95

References

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