Lying and falsely implicating

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Abstract

This paper analyses falsely implicating from the point of view of Gricean theory of implicature, focusing on the Story of the Mate and the Captain which is a classical example of lying while saying the truth. It is argued that the case of falsely implicating should be included within a general definition of lying. Whether Particularised Conversational Implicatures (PCI), as in the Story of the Mate and the Captain, and Generalised Conversational Implicatures (GCI) behave differently with regard to falsely implicating is discussed with reference to Levinson’s theory of presumptive meaning [Levinson, Stephen C., 2000. Presumptive Meanings. The Theory of Generalised Conversational Implicature. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass]. It turns out that, in contrast to PCIs, the case where the assertion is false and the implicature is true is not possible with GCIs. In addition, tautology and irony are analysed, and some repercussions on the speech act notion of lying are pointed out.

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1. Introduction

Although lying is essentially a verbal act, it has not got much attention by linguists. Since Augustine, the analysis of lying has been primarily a matter of philosophical dispute. Things changed, when pragmatics, understood as the linguistic study of context-dependent meaning, entered the linguistic scene. While the philosophical debate largely concentrated on the notion of truthfulness and falseness, or on the ethical aspects of lying, pragmaticists typically discussed the speech act of lying (including the notion of insincerity) and its
relation to asserting (Falkenberg, 1982). My aim is not to contribute to this latter discussion; nor will I deal with other areas of linguistic study, such as the conversational analysis of lying (Galasiński, 2000), or the acquisition of lying in children’s pragmatic development (Vasek, 1986; Peterson, 1991). What I will focus on, is the relation between the speech act of lying and falsely implicating.

It was Frege (1892) who noticed that the distinction between a thought (‘Gedanke’) that is a proper part of the intension (‘Sinn’) of a sentence, and a thought that merely accompanies the intension, might be important, when it comes to judging whether a certain assertion is a lie. More recently, Vincent and Castelfranchi (1981), in a framework that analyses linguistic behaviour in terms of agent assumptions, intentions and goals, make a distinction between several types of deceptive action: pretending or faking, acting, lying, indirect lying, insinuation, reticence, half-truths, precondition or presupposition faking, deliberate ambiguity, pretending to lie, and pretending to act, or joke. They point out that some of these types are instances of “lying while saying the truth” (see also Castelfranchi and Poggi, 1994).

The notion of ‘indirect lying’, obviously coined in analogy to the notion of ‘indirect speech act’ (Searle, 1975), is also mentioned (and rejected, as we will see later) in Falkenberg’s (1982) seminal work. It comes as no surprise that cases of indirect lying have also been analysed as cases of (falsely) implicating. Thus, Chisholm and Feehan (1977: 155) argue that a certain utterance suggests (“it ‘implicates’ or ‘contextually implies’”) something that is deceptive. More recently, in a paper that focuses on ethical questions, Adler (1997) speaks of ‘falsely implicating’, this being a deceptive act in opposition to lying.

It is this issue of falsely implicating that I want to take up in more detail. What I try to do is to make this notion precise within the framework of Gricean implicature theory. The organisation of the paper is as follows. In the next section of the paper, the speech acts of asserting and lying are defined. In Section 3, a definition of conversational implicature is given, and the distinction between Generalised Conversational Implicature (GCI) and Particularised Conversational Implicature (PCI), as developed in Levinson (2000), is introduced. Drawing on a special case of PCI, as given in the Story of the Mate and the Captain, which exemplifies a classical case of lying while saying the truth (Posner, 1980), an extended definition of lying is proposed that comprises falsely implicating. Furthermore, it is argued that the analysis proposed helps to clarify the distinction between deception and lie. In Section 4, it is discussed within the framework of Levinson (2000) whether GCIs behave differently from PCIs. In addition, cases like tautology and irony, which are of interest for the question of falsely implicating but are neglected by Levinson, are dealt with. Finally, in Section 5, some repercussions on the notion of lie considered as a speech act are discussed.

2. The speech act of lying

It is a well known fact that lies display no special devices that indicate illocutionary force. If they did, we would face the case of illocutionary suicide. Thus, it is not acceptable
to say "I hereby lie that the captain is drunk or The captain is drunk. That is a lie. Lies do not constitute a separate type of speech act like promises or questions; they are always assertions.\footnote{While lying does not constitute a separate illocutionary point, it is nevertheless a social act. And because lies are, prototypically, assertions, I assume that the latter, contrary to what Pagin (2004) claims, are social acts, too. Why assertions, according to Pagin, do not communicate their social effects, remains unclear to me.} In order to find out what a lie is, we first have to define the term ‘assertion’. Let us assume that an assertion is always made by a speaker A at time t, and that it has a certain propositional content p. Improving on a proposal of Falkenberg (1982: 91), we may then define an assertion as in (1):

\begin{equation}
\text{Assertion}
\end{equation}

\begin{align*}
\text{A asserted at t that p} \\
\text{iff} \\
\quad (a) \text{A uttered at t the declarative sentence } \sigma \text{ meaning p,} \\
\quad (b) \text{by uttering the declarative sentence } \sigma, \text{ A presented p as true,} \\
\quad (c) \text{by uttering the declarative sentence } \sigma, \text{ A M-intended that an addressee B to whom A uttered p actively believes that p.}
\end{align*}

This definition draws upon the framework of Grice (1989c), but it also comprises insights of speech act theory (cf. Searle, 1969), notably the Essential Condition stating that the maker of an assertion commits himself to the truth of the proposition expressed. Attempts at defining the assertion as in (1) are of course theory-dependent, as can be seen from numerous other proposals, e.g., the attitudinal approach of Bach and Harnish (1979: 42), or Alston (2000: 120), who focuses on the utterer taking responsibility. In particular, (1) is not intended to account for notorious problems in the grammar-pragmatics-interface such as indirect, non-literal or underdetermined assertions, and it does not contain a perlocutionary condition.\footnote{Perlocutions, standardly defined as systematic effects of a speech act, are a somewhat problematic category (see Marcu, 2000, for a review). An anonymous reviewer raised two objections against the definition of assertion given in (1). The first objection, related to condition (a), has to do with the declarative sentence containing indexicals. In this case, so the argument goes, the sentence could not be used to assert p. In my view, however, this poses no problem, because deictical variables within p will be contextually filled, and hence are no obstacle for assertion. The second objection, related to condition (c), draws on the possibility of asserting something ‘without intending the audience to actively believe it’. A case in point would be that the speaker knows in advance that the audience will disagree. According to my analysis, however, every assertion is connected with condition (c), for the simple reason that, in contrast to statements, assertions essentially are a means to persuade the audience that p (Grewendorf, 1982). Thus, even if the audience is supposed to not believe p, it is nevertheless useful to assert p from the point of view of the speaker. Note in addition that one should make a distinction between conditions of success, conditions of satisfaction, and conditions of acceptance (see Rolf, 1997 for an overview). If an assertion is not accepted by the audience, this will be captured by conditions of acceptance. In (1), we concentrate on conditions of success only. Therefore, no change of conditions must be made on the basis of the reviewer’s objections.}
position and a falling intonation contour (cf. Altmann, 1993). A M(eaning)-intention is an intention that is necessary for the speaker’s attempt to produce a certain belief in the addressee by his very utterance. With definition (1) in mind, we may define the term ‘lie’, following again Falkenberg’s approach, as in (2) (cf. Falkenberg, 1982: 75):

\[
\text{(2) Lie } \\
A \text{ lied at } t, \\
\text{iff (a) A asserted at } t \text{ that } p, \\
\text{(b) A actively believed at } t \text{ that not } p.
\]

Falkenberg (1982: 56) assumes that, if someone is not lying, he is truthful. By and large this seems right, with the following two exceptions. First, A believes neither that p nor that not p, but asserts that p. Second, A fails to believe p, but asserts p. In the following discussion, I will concentrate on those cases where the simple opposition between lying and being truthful holds.

Let us now illustrate the different instances of being or not being truthful with the example of a speaker A, called Mary, who utters ‘I’m suffering from a heart disease’ (cf. Falkenberg, 1982: 54–58, building on an example by E. Utitz). First, Mary believes at t that she is suffering from a heart disease and it is indeed the case that she is suffering from a heart disease. The propositional content p is true and the speaker is truthful (she did not lie). Second, Mary believes at t that she is suffering from a heart disease but, actually, she is not. Thus, she is mistaken. The propositional content p is false, but the speaker is truthful (she did not lie). Third, Mary does not believe at t that she is suffering from a heart disease, and she knows that, as a matter of fact, she is not suffering from a heart disease. It follows that she lies (she is not truthful). Fourth, Mary does not believe at t that she is suffering from a heart disease, but in fact, she is. She is mistaken, since the

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3 Interestingly enough, there is evidence that the formal device of verb position determines the suitability of a declarative sentence with regard to lying. Thus, there are German declarative sentences with the finite verb in first position (‘Verberstellung’, ‘V1’), roughly displaying the same meaning as their V2-equivalents with the exception of having an essentially narrative character (therefore being preferred structures, say, in jokes) and showing no structuring into topic and commentary (cf. Önnerfors, 1997), e.g., Steht da ein Mann vor der Tür (V1) versus Da steht ein Mann vor der Tür (V2), both meaning ‘A man stands at the door.’ Now it seems that because of the presentation of the propositional content as an event in the former case, and a fact in the latter, as Reis (2000: 224) has recently argued, V1-declaratives are not structures that can be adequately used for lying. Only V2-declaratives allow for a proper assertion of the propositional content, and, consequently, for lying.

4 Following Falkenberg (1982: 88), who draws on Grice (1989c) and Schiffer (1972), the M-intention may be defined as follows: “A uttered s with the M-intention to produce the belief that p iff A meant_{NN} p by uttering s”, where meaning_{NN} is the Gricean abbreviation for non-natural (i.e. verbal) meaning.

5 Brought to my attention by Jonathan E. Adler and Christian Plunze.

6 Note that the notion of truthfulness has recently come under attack. Wilson and Sperber (2002) argue that verbal communication is governed not by expectations of truthfulness but by expectations of relevance, because literal use is generally underspecified, and loose and figurative uses are widespread. According to them, however, it is reasonable to assume an analysis of lies, jokes and fictions along the lines of a Gricean framework. In fact, it is not easy to see how lies could be analysed without any appeal to the notion of truthfulness.
propositional content p is true. Moreover, she lies (she is not truthful) since she wants to deceive.

For a theory of lying it is very important that it can deal with this last case. With regard to the speaker’s intention to deceive, it does not matter what actually is the case, it only matters what the speaker believes to be the case. As a consequence, the definition (2) refers to (weak) ‘believing’ instead of (strong) ‘knowing’. The notion of ‘actively believing’ in definition (2) intends to exclude those cases where speaker A is merely accidentally or mistakenly in a certain state of belief (Falkenberg, 1982: 45–50). To give an example, consider the case of someone who asserts that he is a student while forgetting or not knowing that his registration was cancelled the day before.

Now having defined the terms ‘assertion’ and ‘lie’, we go on to the discussion of the relation between ‘lie’ and ‘implicature’.

3. Lying and falsely implicating

3.1. Defining implicature

According to the by now classical typology of implicatures as developed in Grice (1989a), the total signification of an utterance consists of ‘what is said’ and ‘what is implicated’, the latter consisting of conventional implicatures and conversational implicatures, and the conversational implicatures consisting of generalised and particularised implicatures, in turn.

We do not need to deal with conventional implicatures here, since they are bound to the literal meaning of expressions and therefore not cancellable. Hence, I will assume that conventional implicatures are the usual cases of lying or being truthful.

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7 Note that this assumption is still open to dispute. As far as I can see, the prevalent opinion is rendered in the following quote from Davidson (1984: 258): “It is sometimes said that telling a lie entails what is false; but this is wrong. Telling a lie requires not what you say be false but what you think is false. Since we usually believe true sentences and disbelieve false, most lies are falsehood; but in any particular case, this is an accident.” (For further discussion, see Falkenberg, 1982: ch. 2, 3). It seems that for young children, lying is indeed saying the false (cf. Peterson, 1991). Thus, a boy who truthfully responds I didn’t kick the ball into the window as a reaction to his father’s question Did you kick the ball into the window? (because he threw the ball into the window) was not judged to be lying.

8 Note that in many scholarly treatments of lying, there is a focus on the predicational act. Note, however, that the referential act may also be concerned. If the speaker deliberately uses inappropriate referring expressions the truth of the whole proposition is affected. Take the utterance The flight captain is sick as an example. Here, the referring expression should be suitable (e.g., in reality, it was the second officer), the referent should be assumed to exist (e.g., there was no flight captain at all), the referring expression should allow the unique determination of the referent (e.g., there were dozens of flight captains), and the referring expression should make the identification of the referent possible (e.g., the utterance is spoken to someone who has no idea what a flight captain is). The same holds for the use of indexical elements.

9 I admit that this might be considered open to criticism at least in view of Grice (1989a: 25–26), who denies with regard to his example He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave that “this sentence would be strictly speaking [his emphasis, J.M.] false should the consequence in question fail to hold”. Note however that the existence of conventional implicatures, at least in the Gricean sense, may be disputed (cf. Bach, 1999).
For the sake of the following discussion, let us define a conversational implicature as in (3):

(3) **Conversational implicature**

A conversationally implicated at t that q, iff

(a) A asserted at t that p,
(b) A presented q as true,
(c) q is calculable from the assertion of p,
(d) q is cancellable.

Contrary to what is stated in (3a), asserting is *not* a precondition for conversationally implicating because implicating is also possible with other types of speech acts; e.g., the so-called existential implicature (formerly existential presupposition), as in *Who comes?* \( \rightarrow \) ‘Someone comes’, may be realised through *wh*-questions (cf. Meibauer, 1991). However, since the standard examples in the literature are indeed assertions, the definition as in (3) may be justified for the sake of the argument. In addition, it may be disputed whether there is asserting involved in the case of figurative utterances. I am inclined to assume that this is indeed the case because assertion is a precondition for deriving a conversationally implicated figurative meaning (see Section 4.2).

Conditions (3c) and (3d) include the two most important criteria for conversational implicatures.\(^{11}\) Condition (3c) abbreviates ‘calculable with the help of the cooperative principle and the maxims’, and condition (3d) says that implicatures can be defeated by the addition of premises.

One has to bear in mind that the calculation of a conversational implicature is actually a hypothesis. In the following discussion, I will assume that the hypothesis with regard to the conversational implicature derived by the hearer is identical to the conversational implicature intended by the speaker.

Conversational implicatures, being no speech acts, do not have sincerity (or success) conditions. Whether they have truth conditions of their own, seems open to dispute; in a

\(^{10}\) Cf. the characterisation of the notion of conversational implicature in Grice (1989a: 30–31): “A man who, by (in, when) saying (or making as if to say) that *p* has implicated that *q*, may be said to have conversationally implicated that *q*, provided that (1) he is to be presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle; (2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, *q* is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say *p* (or doing so in *those* terms) consistent with this presumption; and (3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition in (2) is required.”

\(^{11}\) As Jonathan Adler (p.c.) observed, these criteria are criteria for testing whether a certain meaning has the status of a conversational implicature; I think, however, that they may be used as defining criteria of a conversational implicature, too, because it is calculability and cancellability that distinguishes ‘what is said’ from ‘conversational implicature’. Further criteria discussed in the literature are nondetachability, nonconven- tionality, reinforceability and universality (cf. Rolf, 1994: 113–119, Levinson, 2000: 15).
recent review, Horn (2004: 25, Fn.1) leaves it open that this might be the case. However, though \( q \) is cancellable by definition, it must be the case that the speaker who is implicating \( q \) presents \( q \) as true. Hence condition (3b).\(^{12}\)

In (3), we did not make a distinction between a Generalised and a Particularised Conversational Implicature. This distinction is illustrated in (4), an example taken from Levinson (2000: 16–17):

\[
\text{(4) Generalised Conversational Implicature (GCI) vs. Particularised Conversational Implicature (PCI)}
\]

\textit{Context, 1}  
A: What time is it?  
B: Some of the guests are already leaving.  
PCI: ‘It must be late.’  
GCI: ‘Not all of the guests are already leaving.’

\textit{Context, 2}  
A: Where’s John?  
B: Some of the guests are already leaving.  
PCI: ‘Perhaps John has already left.’  
GCI: ‘Not all of the guests are already leaving.’

Because the scalar implicature triggered by \textit{some} arises in both contexts, it is relatively context-independent. Relative context-independence is the most prominent property of GCIs. In addition, GCIs are normally, or even consistently, associated with certain linguistic forms. In contrast to GCIs, PCIs are highly context-dependent, and they are not consistently associated with any linguistic form. It could very well be that these types of conversational implicature behave differently with regard to falsely implicating. In Section 3.2, I will first consider an example of a PCI, and later, in Section 4, discuss GCIs.\(^{13}\)

3.2. Extending the definition of lie

Let us now concentrate on the relation between a lie and an implicature. Their interrelation is nicely shown in the following Story of the Mate and the Captain in (5) (cf. Posner, 1980):

\(^{12}\) Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out to me the necessity of such a condition. Usually, it seems to be presupposed that the respective properties of the assertion extend to the associated implicature.

\(^{13}\) Following the proposals of Sperber and Wilson (1995) and subsequent work (notably Carston, 2002; but see also Bach, 1994; Levinson 2000: 170–198), we may draw a distinction between (conversational) implicature and explicature. Explicatures are kinds of meaning that arise, like implicatures, on the basis of inferences. Unlike implicatures, however, their job is to complete an otherwise underdetermined proposition. Hence it may be asked whether we must include explicatures into our notion of lying, or, whether it is possible to lie while using explicatures. Because these questions are not central for my purpose, I refrain here from trying to answer them.
The Story of the Mate and the Captain

A captain and his mate have a long-term quarrel. The mate drinks more rum than is good for him, and the captain is determined not to tolerate this behaviour any longer. When the mate is drunk again, the captain writes into the logbook: *Today, 11th October, the mate is drunk.* When the mate reads this entry during his next watch, he is first getting angry, then, after a short moment of reflection, he writes into the logbook: *Today, 14th October, the captain is not drunk.*

The point is that the logbook entry of the mate is true. It is indeed the case that the captain is not drunk. However, a reader will understand that this is an exception, because the captain is usually drunk most of the time. The calculation of the implicature starts from assuming a presumptive violation of the maxim of Relevance, for entries in logbooks must be relevant. In this story, we have a classical case of ‘lying while saying the truth’.

What is important for the following discussion is the assumption that implicatures are additional propositions arising from the situation of the utterance. As defined in (3), the special properties of these propositions are cancellability and calculability. If conversational implicatures are additional propositions, these propositions should be either true or false. Indeed, this is what Grice (1989a: 39) observes, as becomes clear from the quote in (6):

(6) “Since the truth of a conversational implicature is not required by the truth of what is said (what is said may be true – what is implicated may be false), the implicature is not carried by what is said, but only by the saying of what is said, or by ‘putting it that way’.”

Assuming that the content of the assertion as well as the content of the conversational implicature may be true or false, we must consider the four pairs in (7):

(7) (a) p is true and q is true
(b) p is true and q is false
(c) p is false and q is true
(d) p is false and q is false

The relevant propositions p and q may be paraphrased as in (8): 14

(8) p = ‘Today, 14th October, the captain is not drunk.’
q = ‘The captain is mostly drunk.’

I proceed from the assumption that by uttering p A intends that B derives q. Thus, the implicature is an integral part of the total signification of the utterance, as Grice put it. With regard to the following discussion of the Story of the Mate and the Captain, I restrict the notion of lie/truthfulness to the utterance of p, while restricting the notion of deception/  

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14 Note that q is not the only implicature that is possible here. The indeterminacy of the set of possible implicatures is acknowledged by Grice (1989a: 39).
non-deception to the implicature $q$.\textsuperscript{15} Note that this serves the ease of exposition only. In fact, I will argue that the notion of deception is superfluous when substituted by an extended definition of lie.

In the first case, $p$ is true and $q$ is true. The captain is not drunk on 14th October, and it is true that he is mostly drunk. In this case, the mate was not lying and he was not deceptive, at least in the sense that the implicature was not false. Note, however, that the mate misrepresents himself as being in a proper position to make the entry in the log, i.e., the coming about of the true implicature may be considered deceptive, too.

In the second case, $p$ is true and $q$ is false. The captain is not drunk on 14th October, and it is false that the captain is mostly drunk. The mate did not lie with regard to $p$, but he was deceptive with regard to $q$. As I will argue later, it seems possible to include this case into an extended definition of lying.

The third case, where $p$ is false and $q$ is true, is more complicated. The captain is indeed drunk on 14th October. On the one hand, the mate may be mistaken in this regard (if he had checked the captain’s cabin, he would have seen that the captain was completely drunk). If the mate was mistaken, he was truthful with regard to $p$. On the other hand, it may be the case that the mate is not truthful with regard to $p$. He definitely knows that the captain is drunk on 14th October, but he suppresses this knowledge in the hope that his implicature will be calculated more smoothly by the reader. Thus, he lied with regard to $p$ in order to convey the implicature which is true in his eyes.

The same distinction holds for the fourth case, where $p$ is false and $q$ is false. With regard to $p$, the mate may be mistaken (then he was truthful) or not (then he was lying). With regard to $q$, however, the mate is deceptive.

Let us now consider the relation between $p$ and $q$ in more detail. It is clear that the implicature $q$ is cancellable by definition. The notion of cancellability is twofold: A conversational implicature may be explicitly cancelled, i.e., “by the addition of a clause that states or implies that the speaker has opted out”, or it may be contextually cancelled, i.e. in a different context the implicature may not arise (Grice, 1989a, 1989b: 39).

The possibility of explicitly cancelling the implicature may be a motive for the speaker to prefer lying while saying the truth rather than simply lying, because the former gives him the chance of withdrawing in case of detection. However, in utterance situations where it is mutually agreed upon that a certain implicature has been conveyed, an attempt at cancelling the implicature is not convincing, to say the best. Look at (9):

\begin{equation}
\text{(9) Today, 14th October, the captain is not drunk. This is not to say that he is mostly drunk.}
\end{equation}

It is obvious that such a sequence gives rise to further questions: What other things are alluded to? Why didn’t the mate say the things he wanted to say in a straightforward manner? Because $q$ is intimately connected to $p$, and the calculation of $q$ evidently is intended by the speaker, the cancellation of $q$ is not plausible in many situations. To be sure, more colloquial cancelling clauses may work better in this respect, but this simply shows that there are degrees of cancellability that are dependent on the situation of utterance.

In order to capture the case of lying while saying the truth, it seems reasonable to propose the following extended definition of lying. Note that this definition makes no use of the notion of ‘deception’ (cf. Section 3.3).

(10) **Lie – extended definition**
A lied at t by uttering the declarative sentence \( \sigma \)
iff
(a) if the definition of the lie in (2) holds,
(b) or if A thereby conversationally implicated that q, but actively believed that not q.

We don’t have to restrict the definition in (10) to those cases, where explicit cancelling seems dubious, because contextual cancelling works anyway, and is indeed necessary for the definition of conversational implicature. 16

Falkenberg (1982: 137) tentatively proposed the following definition of ‘indirect lying’:
“A lied indirectly, iff (a) A asserted that p and thereby implicated that q, (b) A believed that not q.” [my translation, J.M.] Falkenberg rejected this definition because he conceived it as being inconsistent with the logical principles of double negation, bivalency, and the excluded third. Maybe he had cases of irony in mind, where q equals \(-p\). As I show in Section 4.2, this should not be considered as a severe problem, as long as the distinction between assertion and implicature is upheld. What matters more is that the parallel with indirect speech acts is not fully convincing, because the proposition q is not a primary illocutionary act. Furthermore, Falkenberg’s definition does not account for the fact that the assertion of p may be a lie, too.

What (10) does is to try to capture the intimate connection between the assertion and the false implicature. Thus, false implicatures are not only bound to assertions, they are also “directly intended”. Adler (1997: 446) stresses this point, when he states that “in falsely implicating, rather than lying, the outcome is still directly intended, not merely a foreseen consequence.”

With the help of (10), we may summarise our analysis of the Story of the Mate and the Captain in (11). Note that the distinction between mistake/no mistake would apply to the cases (11a) and (11b), too, but this would not change the status as a lie or truthful utterance.

(11) **‘Lie’ in the Story of the Mate and the Captain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>q</th>
<th>lie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>true</td>
<td>true</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>true</td>
<td>false</td>
<td>yes(_q)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>false; 1. mistake</td>
<td>true</td>
<td>1. no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. no mistake</td>
<td>true</td>
<td>2. yes(_p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d)</td>
<td>false; 1. mistake</td>
<td>false</td>
<td>1. yes(_q)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. no mistake</td>
<td>false</td>
<td>2. yes(_p,q)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 This is in line with Hirschberg’s (1985: 27) proposal, “to separate the cancelability test for conversational implicature from the use of cancelation in discourse.”
Two further comments shall suffice here: First, note that the mate may be mistaken with regard to q, too. The mate wants to deceive the reader by intending him to derive q. The mate does not believe that q is true, but, as a matter of fact, it is true (as turned out during a later trial). Now, with regard to our extended definition, we would say that the mate was lying. Thus, there is a striking parallel between genuine lies (remember the case of the woman who mistakenly believes that she is not suffering from heart disease) and lying while falsely implicating.

Second, note that there is an interesting difference in the strength of the lie. In (11b), we have the case of “falsely implicating while saying the truth”. In (11d — no mistake) we have the case of “falsely implicating while saying the falseness”. It may be argued here that the behaviour of the mate in the second case is shrewder. After all, he asserted that the captain was not drunk (contrary to his better knowledge that he was drunk indeed, that corresponds to his false implicature); if it turns out later that the captain was drunk, the speaker could say that he acted for the captain’s good; thus, he calculates, it is better not to tell the truth in order to convey the false implicature smoothly. Hence, a detailed analysis of the relation between p and q may uncover the relative strength (corresponding to the effort of the speaker) in lying.17

3.3. Lying and deceiving

In most approaches, lying is but a subtype of deceiving, the latter being defined for example as “move or action (…) which has a goal of getting the hearer to make a false assumption” (Vincent and Castelfranchi, 1981: 753). The typology of deception proposed by Chisholm and Feehan (1977) includes eight types of deception, and Vincent and Castelfranchi (1981) assume twelve types. It follows that not every act of deceiving is an instance of lying. What is, then, the main difference between lying and deceiving?

First, in contrast to lying, deceiving may be non-verbal. Recall the famous example (originally given by Immanuel Kant) of someone who packs his luggage in order to let observers draw the conclusion that he is leaving. Nothing has been said, but it is nevertheless a case of intended deception (Chisholm and Feehan, 1977: 149).

Second, if verbal, deceiving is not bound to assertions. Thus, if someone asks Where has Peter gone? in order to get the hearer to assume that Peter was there (while knowing that this was not the case), then this is a case of deception, not of lying.

Chisholm and Feehan (1977: 155) discuss the following example. A hearer wants to get a speaker to go on a certain errand. The speaker utters My leg isn’t bothering me too much today, conveying thereby the implicatures ‘My leg does bother me to a certain extent, and it has done so to a greater extent in the past’. In fact, the speaker knows that his leg does not bother him at all, and that it never has. By this implicature, he wants the hearer to refrain from his wish. Because this implicature is not included in their definition of ‘assert’, Chisholm and Feehan excluded this case from the domain of lie.

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17 This may correspond to the effort of calculation on the part of the hearer. The more effortful the hearer is, the more he is likely to identify with the truth of the derived implicature. Cf. Adler (1997: 442) who states: “Not only has he [the victim, J.M.] been misled, but the embarrassment of horror of it is that he has been duped into collaborating on his own harm.”
In my view, however, it follows from the two differences between deception and lie listed above that false implicatures should not be treated as deceptions. To be sure, false implicatures are deceptive, but lies are deceptive, too. An advantage of the extended definition of lie in (10) is that it makes no use of the very broad and general notion ‘deception’. The use of the notions ‘assertion’, ‘lie’, and ‘conversational implicature’ is sufficient. Thus, in the case where the assertion p is false and the implicature q is false, we do not have to say that there is a lie, and, in addition, a deception. It is a lie, because it is false on the basis of the assertion and the implicature. A further advantage of our extended definition of lie in (10) is that it comprises the intimate connection between the assertion and its implicature. The crucial point is that a false implicature only comes about through a verbal act of assertion to which it is bound. In contrast, a characterisation of false implicature as deception misses this connection and remains purely terminological. What really matters is the way of bringing about the lie, namely by false assertion and/or by false implicature. I take it that it is adequate to treat false implicatures as lies, as long as their status as implicature is acknowledged and the distinction between assertion and implicature is not blurred.

Thus, the proposal outlined captures the connection between assertions/lies and false implicatures without using the vague notion of deception, and it modifies the traditional concept of lying in that it comprises false implicatures. 

4. Falsely implicating and the distinction between GCIs and PCIs

In the Story of the Mate and the Captain we have the case of a Particularised Conversational Implicature (PCI) connected with the maxim of Relevance. Let us now ask whether Generalised Conversational Implicatures (GCIs) and Particularised Conversational Implicatures (PCIs) behave differently. We start by discussing some cases Levinson’s theory of GCIs deals with, and then proceed with some cases Levinson either classifies as PCIs or leaves out altogether.

4.1. Levinson’s theory of generalised conversational implicature

Levinson develops his revision of Grice’s maxims from three heuristics that follow from the need to overcome the “fundamental bottleneck in the efficiency of human communication, occasioned no doubt by absolute physiological constraints on the articulators” (Levinson, 2000: 28). These heuristics are the following:

(12) **Levinson’s heuristics**
   (a) Heuristic 1: What isn’t said, isn’t.
   (b) Heuristic 2: What is simply described, is stereotypically exemplified.

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18 Thus, my approach reflects the insight in much of the literature that our concept of lying can and should be extended, such that falsely implicating is part of our concept of lying. It is in this sense that the approach outlined in this paper is indeed a substantial, and not merely a terminological contribution to the theory of lying (as an anonymous reviewer ventured).
(c) Heuristic 3: What’s said in an abnormal way, isn’t normal; or Marked Message indicates marked situation.

Heuristic 1 corresponds to Levinson’s Q-Principle (see Quantity 1 in Grice’s framework), Heuristic 2 to Levinson’s I-principle (Grice’s Quantity 2), and Heuristic 3 to Levinson’s M-principle (Grice’s Modality 1 and 3). These three principles are said to derive Generalised Conversational Implicatures. For these correspondences, and a typical example, see the following table.

(13) **GCI deriving principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heuristics</th>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Grice’s maxims</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heuristics 1</td>
<td>Q-Principle</td>
<td>Quantity, 1</td>
<td>Q-Implicature: (a) Some colleagues were drunk. ➞ ‘Not all of them were drunk.’ (scalar implicature) (b) The doctor believes that the patient will not recover. ➞ ‘The doctor may or may not know that the patient will not recover.’ (clausal implicature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heuristics 2</td>
<td>I-Principle</td>
<td>Quantity, 2</td>
<td>I-Implicature: Anna turned the switch and the motor started. ➞ ‘Anna turned the switch and then/therefore the motor started.’ (conjunction buttressing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heuristics 3</td>
<td>M-Principle</td>
<td>Modality, 1 and 3</td>
<td>M-Implicature: Bill caused the car to stop. ➞ ‘He did this indirectly, not in the normal way, e.g., by use of the emergency brake.’ (periphrasis)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where inconsistent implicatures arise, they are “systematically resolved by an ordered set of priorities”, among them Q > M > I (Levinson, 2000: 39).

The Q-Principle is defined as follows (Levinson, 2000: 76):

(14) **Q-principle**

*Speaker’s maxim:* Do not provide a statement that is informationally weaker than your knowledge of the world allows, unless providing an informationally stronger statement would contravene the I-principle. Specifically, select the informationally strongest paradigmatic alternate that is consistent with the facts.

*Recipient’s corollary:* Take it that the speaker made the strongest statement consistent with what he knows, and therefore that:
(a) if the speaker asserts $A(W)$, where $A$ is a sentence frame and $W$ an informationally weaker expression than $S$, and the contrastive expressions $\langle S, W \rangle$ form a Horn scale (in the prototype case such that $A(S)$ entails $A(W)$, then one can infer that the speaker knows that the stronger statement $A(S)$ (with $S$ substituted for $W$) would be false [...]  

(b) if the speaker asserted $A(W)$ and $A(W)$ fails to entail an embedded sentence $Q$, which a stronger statement $A(S)$ would entail, and $\langle S, W \rangle$ form a contrast set, then one can infer that the speaker does not know whether $Q$ obtains or not (i.e., $\sim K(Q)$ or equally, $\{P(Q), P(\sim Q)\}$ read as ‘it is epistemically possible that $Q$ and epistemically possible that not-$Q$’)

The I-Principle mentioned in the Speaker’s maxim requires that a speaker should not be more informative than necessary (see below). Wherever it is possible, the speaker should build on stereotypical assumptions. In the Recipient’s corollary two cases are distinguished, namely scalar implicature involving Horn scales and clausal implicature involving contrast sets.¹⁹

Let us start with scalar implicatures. Given a scale $\langle q, p \rangle$ with $p$ as an informationally weak and $q$ as an informationally strong element, the assertion of $p$ implicates the negation of $q$. In these cases, the speaker is supposed to be as informative as possible, thus observing the Q-Principle (or the first maxim of Quantity). Therefore, he could not say more than he actually did and this means that the stronger statement does not hold. A classical example is the utterance $p =$ Some colleagues were drunk implicating $q =$ ‘Not all of them were drunk.’ If the speaker believes that all colleagues were drunk, then he could said to be lying. This is in line with definition (10).

Such cases have correctly been described as ‘half-truths’ (Vincent and Castelfranchi, 1981: 762), or as cases where one says the truth but not the whole truth (Falkenberg, 1982: 137). The speaker pretends to observe the first maxim of Quantity and expects the hearer to derive the relevant implicature; in fact, however, he suppresses information and consequently violates the maxim. The revelation of only part of the truth follows from the fact that, in a prototypical scale, the stronger item entails the weaker item, e.g., if all colleagues were drunk, then some were drunk.

Let us now check how scalar implicatures behave in the four situations sketched above. For ease of exposition, the case where $p$ is mistakenly asserted as false is omitted. We take the scale $\langle \text{all, some} \rangle$ as an example, with $p =$ Some colleagues were drunk, and $q =$ ‘Not all of them were drunk’.

(a) $p$ is true and $q$ is true: The speaker asserts that some colleagues were drunk. He thereby conversationally implicates that not all of them were drunk. Both propositions are true, therefore no lie is involved.

(b) $p$ is true and $q$ is false: The speaker asserts that some colleagues were drunk. This assertion is true. At the same time, he conversationally implicates that not all of them were drunk. As a matter of fact, they all were drunk, and the speaker knows that this was the case. Thus, he reveals only part of the truth, and therefore he is lying.

¹⁹ The term ‘Horn scale’ refers to scales as defined in Horn (1984), cf. also Hirschberg (1985), Matsumoto (1995), and, for an up-to-date survey, Horn (2004).
(c) \( p \) is false and \( q \) is true: The speaker asserts that some colleagues were drunk. In fact, all colleagues were not drunk (they were sober), and the speaker knows that. So there is a lie in relation to the false assertion \( p \). By his very utterance, he conversationally implicates that not all of the colleagues were drunk. However, if this is true, this yields a contradiction, because it is logically not possible to assume (on the basis of the true implicature \( q \)) that not all of the colleagues were drunk, and (on the basis of the false assertion \( p \)) that all colleagues were not drunk (sober). Therefore, the case of \( p \) being false and \( q \) being true is ruled out.

(d) \( p \) is false and \( q \) is false: The speaker asserts that some colleagues were drunk. In fact, all colleagues were not drunk (they were sober), and the speaker knows that. Therefore, his utterance is a lie. By his very utterance, he conversationally implicates that not all of the colleagues were drunk. This implicature is false, too, for it is true that all of the colleagues were not drunk (sober). Consequently, this case counts as a lie.

Now we focus on clausal implicatures. Let \{know, believe\} be a contrast set. Then \( p = \) *The doctor believes that the patient will not recover* implicates \( q = \) ‘The doctor may or may not know that the patient will not recover.’ (Levinson, 2000: 110). Again, we check the four diagnostic situations.

(a) \( p \) is true and \( q \) is true: If both \( p \) and \( q \) are true, there is no lie involved.

(b) \( p \) is true and \( q \) is false: It is true that the doctor believes that the patient will not recover, but it is false that the doctor may or may not know that the patient will not recover. In fact, the speaker knows that the doctor knows that the patient will not recover, i.e. there is no epistemic uncertainty involved. Therefore, the speaker is lying.

(c) \( p \) is false and \( q \) is true: It is false that the doctor believes that the patient will not recover. In fact, the doctor does not believe that the patient will not recover. Then the implicature that the doctor may or may not know that the patient will not recover cannot be true, i.e. there is no epistemic uncertainty involved. Thus, this case is ruled out.

(d) \( p \) is false and \( q \) is false: It is false that the doctor believes that the patient will not recover. Moreover, it is false that the doctor may or may not know that the patient will not recover. Under both conditions it is true that he knows that the patient will not recover. Therefore, the speaker is lying.

Now consider the I-principle (Levinson, 2000: 114–115):

(15) **I-Principle**

*Speaker’s maxim:* the maxim of Minimization. “Say as little as necessary”; that is, produce the minimal linguistic information sufficient to achieve your communicational ends (bearing \( Q \) in mind).

*Recipient’s corollary:* the Enrichment Rule. Amplify the informational content of the speaker’s utterance, by finding the most *specific* interpretation, up to what you judge to be
the speaker’s m-intended point, unless the speaker has broken the maxim of Minimization by using a marked or prolix expression.

Specifically:

(a) Assume the richest temporal, causal and referential connections between described situations or events, consistent with what is taken for granted.
(b) Assume that stereotypical relations obtain between referents or events, unless this is inconsistent with (a).
(c) Avoid interpretations that multiply entities referred to (assume referential parsimony); specifically, prefer coreferential readings of reduced NPs (pronouns and zeros).
(d) Assume the existence or actuality of what a sentence is about (if that is consistent with what is taken for granted).

This principle is said to cover a whole range of implicatures, e.g., conditional perfection, conjunction buttressing (asymmetric coordination), bridging, inference to stereotype, negative strengthening, preferred local coreference, the mirror maxim, nominal compounds, specialisation of spatial terms, and possessive interpretations.

Let us discuss the case of conjunction buttressing, a case that has been analysed as observation of the fourth submaxim of Modality *Be orderly!* in Grice’s framework (Posner, 1980; Carston, 2002). Consider the utterance p = *Anna turned the switch and the motor started*, giving rise to the implicature q = ‘*Anna turned the switch and then/therefore the motor started.*’ Again, we distinguish the following cases:

(a) *p is true and q is true*: It is true that Anna turned the switch and the motor started, and that the starting of the motor followed or was caused by the turning of the switch. Here, no lie is involved.
(b) *p is true and q is false*: The motor started not because of Anna’s turning the switch, or the motor started simultaneously with Anna’s turning the switch, and the speaker knows that. In this case we have a lie.
(c) *p is false and q is true*: If it is false that Anna turned the switch and the motor started (it is sufficient if one of the both conjuncts of p is false), then it cannot be true that the motor started because of Anna’s turning the switch, or after she did so. This is so, because temporal or causal ordering requires that the relevant events exist in the first place. Hence, the case of p being false and q being true cannot occur.
(d) *p is false and q is false*: It is false that Anna turned the switch and the motor started. So we have a lie. Moreover, the implicature that Anna’s turning the switch is the cause of the starting of the motor or followed it, is false, too, because the relevant events do not exist. So this case is a lie.

A further case of interest may be characterised as ‘insinuation’ (Vincent and Castelfranchi, 1981). If A boasts *My father works for the FBI* and B replies *And my father works for the United Nations*, B wants to suggest that his father is a diplomat, though in reality, he works for the cleaning service. This is in line with the I-principle: If it is possible to build on stereotypical assumptions, the speaker should do so (Levinson, 2000: 112–122).
Now we turn to the M-Principle (Levinson, 2000: 136–137):

(16) **M-Principle**

*Speaker’s maxim:* Indicate an abnormal, non-stereotypical situation by using marked expressions that contrast with those you would use to describe the corresponding normal, stereotypical situation.

*Recipient’s corollary:* What is said in an abnormal way indicates an abnormal situation, or marked messages indicate marked situations.

Specifically:

Where $S$ has said “$p$” containing marked expression $M$, and there is an unmarked alternate expression $U$ with the same denotation $D$ which the speaker might have employed in the same sentence-frame instead, then where $U$ would have I-implicated the stereotypical or more specific subset $d$ of $D$, the marked expression $M$ will implicate the complement of the denotation $d$, namely $\bar{d}$ of $D$.

Note that only the first (*Avoid obscurity of expression*) and the third (*Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)*) submaxim of the Gricean maxims of Manner survive in Levinson’s M-Principle. Levinson views the second submaxim *Avoid ambiguity* in connection with generality narrowing, and this phenomenon is subsumed under the Q-principle (Levinson, 2000: 135). The fourth submaxim *Be orderly* is not needed anymore, because the notorious cases of conjunction buttressing fall under the I-principle in Levinson’s framework. Moreover, Levinson (2000: 135) notes the general cognitive status of this general semiotic principle of linearisation, and he questions its status as a maxim. The M-principle is supposed to cover a range of cases, among them lexical doublets and rival word formations, nominal compounds, litotes, certain genitive and zero morph constructions, periphrasis, repetition and reduplication. As far as I can see, many of these cases may be explained in terms of the Q- or I-principle; in other cases, it is not clear at all that we have “the same denotation” required in the Recipient’s corollary of the M-principle, thus throwing into doubt whether a separate M-principle is needed at all (Meibauer, 1997).20

With these reservations in mind, let us take the case of periphrasis and apply our diagnostics. Let us assume that $p = \text{Bill caused the car to stop}$, and $q = \text{`He did this indirectly, not in the normal way, e.g., by use of the emergency brake.'}$

(a) *$p$ is true and $q$ is true:* No lie is involved.

(b) *$p$ is true and $q$ is false:* It is the case that Bill caused the car to stop, but he did it in the normal way. Therefore, we have a lie.

(c) *$p$ is false and $q$ is true:* Bill did not stop the car at all, and the speaker knows that. Then it cannot be the case that he did not stop the car in a normal way. Thus, this case must be excluded.

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20 Similarly, Blutner (2004: 514) views the M-principle as an “epiphenomenon” that results from the interaction of Q and R (in the terminology of Horn 1984). Vincent and Castelfranchi (1981: 764) discuss the case of ‘obfuscation’, i.e., the use of technical jargon with the aim of confusing or impressing the hearer, relating it to the maxim of Manner *Be perspicuous!* Arguably, however, the speaker is not as informative as he could be with regard to the hearer’s background knowledge, and thus guilty of violating the first maxim of Quantity.
d) \( p \) is false and \( q \) is false: Bill did not stop the car, and the speaker knows that. Moreover, it is not the case that he stopped the car in an abnormal way, simply because he did not stop the car at all. Therefore, we have a lie.

In (17), our findings are summarised. In the first table, you find a survey of types of GCIs and cases. In the second table, the results for case (c) “\( p \) is false and \( q \) is true” are shown.

(17)  **Lying in standard cases of GCI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(a) ( p ) true, ( q ) true</th>
<th>(b) ( p ) true, ( q ) false</th>
<th>(c) ( p ) false, ( q ) true</th>
<th>(d) ( p ) false, ( q ) false</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q-impl. (scalar)</td>
<td>No lie</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Not possible</td>
<td>Lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-impl. (clausal)</td>
<td>No lie</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Not possible</td>
<td>Lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-impl.</td>
<td>No lie</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Not possible</td>
<td>Lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-impl.</td>
<td>No lie</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Not possible</td>
<td>Lie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case (c): \( p \) is false and \( q \) is true [SIT = situation, ASS = assertion \( p \), IMPL = GCI \( q \)]

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**SIT**

All colleagues were not drunk (=sober).

[scalar] **ASS** Some colleagues were drunk.  **IMPL** ‘Not all colleagues were drunk.’

If all colleagues were not drunk (=sober), then it cannot be true that some colleagues were drunk. Thus \( p \) is false.

If all colleagues were not drunk (=sober), then it cannot be true that not all colleagues were drunk (=sober). Thus \( q \) cannot be true.

**SIT**

The doctor does not believe that the patient will not recover.

[clausal] **ASS** *The doctor believes that the patient will not recover.*  **IMPL** ‘The doctor may or may not know that the patient will not recover.’

If the doctor does not believe that the patient will not recover, then it cannot be true that the doctor believes that the patient will not recover. Thus \( p \) is false.

If the doctor does not believe that the patient will not recover, then it cannot be true that the doctor may or may not know that the patient will not recover. (He is not in the state of epistemic uncertainty.) Thus \( q \) cannot be true.

**SIT**

It is false that Anna turned the switch and the motor started.

**ASS** *Anna turned the switch and the motor started.*  **IMPL** ‘Anna turned the switch and then/therefore the motor started.’
In sum, then, it seems that the third condition, namely “p false, q true”, is ruled out, at least for the cases considered here. Thus we have found a fundamental difference to the case of PCI exemplified by the Story of the Mate and the Captain, where we found that it may very well be the case that \( p = \text{Today, 14th October, the Captain is not drunk} \) is false, while \( q = \text{The captain is mostly drunk} \) is true (cf. (11)). Obviously, the difference has to do with the fact that in GCIs, we have an inherent relationship between \( p \) and \( q \) mediated through pairs of lexemes that figure in the derivation of the implicature, whereas in the case of PCI the relationship between \( p \) and \( q \) is contextually induced.

Whether false GCIs or false PCIs are “closer” to a lie, is not easy to judge. On the one hand, one may argue that false GCIs are “closer” to a prototypical lie than false PCIs (as Sweetser, 1987: 60 did), a judgment that I share with regard to cases like this. When a mother asks her child *How many cookies did you take?* and the child answers *One*, thereby implicating *Not more than one*, this will count as a lie, when untrue. On the other hand, it may be argued that PCIs are harder to cancel and more difficult to calculate than GCIs, so that lying with GCIs is not as salient as lying with PCIs.

At least in exchanges like in (4), it seems that false PCIs are closer to a lie than false GCIs. As far as I can see, this has to do with the greater relevance of the PCI versus GCI with regard to A’s question. After all, A wants to know what the time is, and where John is, and not, whether some of the guests are already leaving. If this line of reasoning is on the right track, it follows that the just mentioned case where the scalar implicature is highly relevant for the questioner, is judged differently. Many GCIs seem to be derived automatically whereas the derivation of PCIs demands more effort of calculation. What matters is the amount of false information in relation to the questioner’s “purpose or direction of the talk exchange” in which he is engaged. The lying potential of an information rises in relation to its relevance in the utterance situation.

| SIT Bill did not stop the car. | IMPL ‘He did this indirectly, not in the normal way, e.g., by use of the emergency brake.’ |
|ASS *Bill caused the car to stop.* | If Bill did not stop the car, then it cannot be true that he did this indirectly, e.g., by use of the emergency brake. Thus \( q \) cannot be true. |
| If Bill did not stop the car, then it cannot be true that *Bill caused the car to stop.* Thus \( p \) is false. | If it is false that Anna turned the switch and the motor started, then it cannot be true that Anna turned the switch and then/the motor started. Thus \( q \) cannot be true. |
4.2. Lying with tautology and irony

As can be seen from (13), the maxim of Quality and the maxim of Relevance are not maxims that figure in the derivation of GCIs. The only comment on the maxim of Quality Levinson gives is that this maxim “plays only a background role” in the derivation of GCIs. Maybe he has the sincerity conditions for assertive acts in mind (Levinson, 2000: 74). Note that Grice (1989a: 34) needed the maxim of Quality to derive the implicatures in the cases of irony, metaphor and sarcasm. In contrast, Levinson argues that irony and sarcasm are cases of PCIs (Levinson, 2000a: 386, fn. 2), a claim that seems somewhat premature at least when considering cases of conventional irony and sarcasm. The maxim of Relevance is a maxim that, according to Levinson (2000: 74), derives only PCIs. However, this maxim seems to play a role when it comes to disambiguation and ellipsis unpacking (Levinson, 2000: 174, 183). Let us now focus on tautology and irony, and ask whether lying by uttering them is possible.

4.2.1. Tautology

Tautologies have been repeatedly discussed (see, among others, Levinson, 1983; Fraser, 1988; Wierzbicka, 1987; Ward and Hirschberg, 1990; Autenrieth, 1997; Davis, 1998), the basic observation being that a typical tautology of the form ‘N_i = N_i’, e.g., Business is business, is always true. Therefore, its utterance seems to be uninformative, and the speaker is suspected to violate the first maxim of Quantity saying that the speaker should make his contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of exchange). However, the speaker may be considered cooperative, if the hearer assumes that the speaker wants to implicate ‘There is nothing one can do about it’ (or the like). This implicature may be false from the point of view of the speaker, and, according to our extended definition, he is lying. The case of tautological utterances is particularly interesting, because of the fact that the speaker cannot lie while uttering p. When using a tautology, lying is only possible through falsely implicating.

Let us discuss whether uttering a tautology is asserting, whether it is possible to lie by using p, and whether it is possible to lie by using q.

First, note that Levinson (1983: 110) assumes that tautologies are assertable. This is in line with our definition of assertion given in (1): ‘N_i = N_i’ is a declarative sentence with the meaning p, p is represented as true by the speaker, and the speaker M-intended that an addressee actively believes that p. If someone denies that tautologies may be asserted, then that is because of the idea that something has to be clearly contingent to qualify as an assertion. However, I see no problem in assuming that tautologies are asserted by necessity, in order to convey the implicature that is bound to them.

Second, when uttering a tautology, it seems not to be possible to believe actively that p is false. Therefore, it is not possible to lie by a tautology proper, and we would have a violation of condition (2b) in our definition of lie. If the speaker utters War is war, and the hearer objects That is not true, then the hearer objects to the implicature (e.g., ‘There are no good wars and bad wars’, ‘There is nothing one can do about it’, etc.), not to the propositional content.

Third, falsely implicating while using tautologies is no problem. Just imagine a pacifist (spying out a group of rednecks) uttering War is war, thereby falsely implicating ‘There is
nothing one can do about it.’ In our approach, it is possible to express the idea that
tautologies may be lies: p is necessarily true, while q may be true or false.

While most approaches, if not sceptical about a Gricean approach to implicatures
altogether (Wierzbicka, 1987; Davis, 1998), assume that the maxims of Quantity and/or
Relation are involved, Autenrieth (1997) argues that, at least in standard examples like
Bachelors are bachelors, the sequence are bachelors is understood as a predication. In this
approach, the predicationally used bachelors gives rise to conceptual enrichments that
figure prominently in the derivation of the associated implicature by the maxim of
Relevance. Thus, an utterance like Bachelors are bachelors translates into something like
‘All bachelors possess the typical properties of bachelors that are mutual knowledge in the
speaker community.' If this is not a logical tautology, as Autenrieth argues, then it may be
asked, whether it is possible to lie by such an utterance (note that we focus on the assertion,
here). Consider the following exchange:

(18) B: Pete has not washed his socks for months.
A: Bachelors are bachelors. [+] ‘There is nothing one can do about it.’

Let it be part of the literal meaning of bachelor that bachelors are unmarried, and part
of the stereotype of bachelor that they are not neat. If A falsely believes that some
bachelors are married, then it is not possible to take his utterance as a lie; it is simply not
possible to have a corresponding M-intention. If, on the other hand, the speaker thinks
that bachelors are neat, I think that his utterance would not count as a lie either, because
A’s conviction is not shared with the speaker community. Therefore, I still think that it is
not possible to lie by tautologies proper. The point is that the primary job of tautologies
is to convey implicatures, not to assert propositions. And it is by false implicatures that
lying is possible.

4.2.2. Irony

Consider now the maxims of Quality. If a speaker A utters X is a fine friend, referring to
a person who has betrayed a secret of A’s to a business rival, then the first maxim of Quality
is flouted (Grice, 1989a: 34). Because it is obvious that A does not believe what he says, the
hearer reconstructs a related proposition, i.e., the opposite of p. The ironical implicature
qualifies for the status of an implicature, because it is calculable, context-dependent, and
cancellable. Note that this substitutional analysis is in contrast to the additive nature of
other types of implicature. However, this approach has been criticized for several reasons:
(i) The analysis cannot account for ironical questions, requests and understatements, (ii) it
cannot explain the distinction between irony and metaphor, because the latter is also
explained with regard to the first maxim of Quality, and (iii), it is not fine-grained enough,
because it does not follow from ‘He is not a fine friend’ that he is not a friend at all.

The Gricean approach to irony has been most prominently attacked by relevance
theorists (Sperber and Wilson, 1981; Wilson and Sperber, 1992; Sperber and Wilson,
1998). Following Sperber and Wilson, ironical utterances have four main properties: (i)
They are mentioned, not used, (ii) they are echoic in nature, (iii) the ironical interpretation
is an implicature that is derived through recognition of the echoic character of the utterance
(Sperber and Wilson, 1981: 309), (iv) the ironical speaker displays a dissociative attitude
towards the proposition uttered. Take the utterance *What lovely weather!* as an example. When uttered during a downpour, the speaker cannot mean the opposite, because this would be uninformative. Instead he wants to convey that it was absurd to assume that the weather would be nice. Thus, the ironical utterance is a case of echoic mention of a previously entertained proposition. Types of echo include sarcastic repetition, attributed thoughts, norms and standard expectations (Sperber and Wilson, 1998); thus, the echo theory of irony does not imply that there is always an original utterance that is exactly reproduced. The echo theory is constrained in that most utterances cannot be interpreted as echos, and echoic interpretations must contribute to the relevance of an utterance.

Several objections to this theory may be made (Lapp, 1992; Sperber and Wilson, 1998): (i) The notion of an echo is far too vague; it does not make sense to look for an echo in cases of conventional irony, e.g., uttering *Boy, is it hot!* when it is icy cold. (ii) Because not every echoic mention is ironical, echoic mention is not sufficient to explain ironical interpretation. (iii) It is not clear why the substitution of the opposite should not be a starting point in the search for the dissociative attitude of the speaker towards the proposition. (iv) Relevance theory cannot explain why hearers often fail to grasp the relevance of an ironical utterance.

Let us now ask whether it is possible to lie by ironical utterances. Whereas some researchers argue that it is impossible to lie by ironical utterances for the simple reason that ironical utterances are no assertions and are indicated by signals of irony (Chisholm and Feehan, 1977: 152), others argue that this is indeed possible (Simpson, 1992: 630). Of course, the basic problem is that in ironical utterances the implicature q may equal ‘not p’, as in *This was excellent* implicating ‘This was not excellent’, thus violating the logical principles of double negation, bivalency and the excluded third. This was the main reason Falkenberg (1982) refrained from the definition of ‘indirect lying’, as pointed out above.

Look at the following example, drawn from Falkenberg (1982: 126):

(19) A crashes into a wall in order to pretend that he had a traffic accident. An eyewitness B comes to the scene of accident and cries: “Jesus! Did you have a traffic accident?” A replies: “No. I crashed into the wall deliberately.” (Falkenberg, 1982: 126, based on Agatha Christie’s *Why didn’t they ask Evans?*)

The opposite of A’s utterance, ‘I didn’t do it deliberately’, certainly is a good candidate for the ironical implicature. In this case, the proposition p that A crashed into the wall deliberately, is true, while the implicature q that he didn’t do it deliberately, is false. An echoic analysis seems also plausible. What is echoed is the standard expectation that no one crashes into a wall deliberately. Thus, the speaker dissociates himself from the possibility that someone crashes into the wall deliberately. In this special context, however, he lied.

Note that the case of lying while being ironical forces us to analyse both p and q. Consider the ironical utterance *This was clever* implicating ‘This was not clever’. If the implicature is untruthful, because the speaker believes that it was clever, then we say that he was lying while being ironical. He did not want to utter directly and unironically *This was clever* in order to deceive the hearer. The same holds for the reverse situation when the
speaker utters *This was not clever* implicating ‘This was clever’. The extended definition of lying accounts for these cases.

### 4.2.3. Tautology, irony, and the GCI-PCI-distinction

The prevalent opinion is that tautology and irony have to do with conversational implicature. The main distinction between GCI and PCI is that the former is bound to certain lexical items and largely context-independent, whereas the latter is not bound to certain lexical items and context-dependent. While tautological and ironical utterances are not bound to particular lexical items, they nevertheless have a formal basis, since tautological utterances are regularly conveyed through a range of specific constructions, and ironical utterances seem to be signalled by an ironical tone. However, the relevant implicatures are highly context-dependent, which is probably the reason for their exclusion from the range of GCIs in Levinson’s framework. In sum, then, we can say that lying by tautological and ironical utterances is possible whatever their status with regard to the GCI-PCI-distinction is.

### 5. Sincerity and quality

In speech act theory, lying is usually analysed as an insincere assertion. Thus, lying has no separate illocutionary point. On closer inspection, however, one may see here a certain paradox that has been pointed out by Reboul (1994: 297):

(20) **The paradox of lies in speech act theory**

If a speaker produces an utterance which is a lie, it is necessary for the success of the lie that the illocutionary act of assertion should be successful. But if the perlocutionary act of lying is successful, then the illocutionary act of assertion is not successful.

One does not need to invoke the notion of a direct perlocution (i.e., a perlocution that does not necessarily arise, see Cohen, 1973) to state that lying is different from sincere asserting in that the sincerity condition is systematically undermined. Castelfranchi and Poggi (1994: 287) argue that “who is lying is also imitating one who really believes what she is saying: she is pretending she believes what she says”, thus performing a mimetic act. It could also be said that in the case of lying, sincerity is only simulated.

This should pose no problem for the analysis. As Bach and Harnish (1979: 58) have pointed out, even in the case of “obviously obvious insincerity”, e.g., S saying that he has not been drinking while “S and H mutually believe that S has alcohol on his breath and that an empty Ripple bottle is lying at S’s feet”, the Sincerity Conditions for assertions remain intact. As Tsohatzidis (1994: 222) observes, it is impossible to define assertions with reference to the actual possession of the relevant beliefs.

Therefore, the differences between sincere and insincere assertions are not sufficient to postulate a separate illocutionary act of lying. Nevertheless, as Castelfranchi and Poggi (1994: 289) point out, lying “is in fact an autonomous, self-motivated typical speech act, not one invented after the truthful speech act, or secondary with respect to it.”
From the point of view of implicature theory, it may be argued that lying is not a cooperative action at all, and thus not submitted to the operation of the cooperative principle. After all, the liar does not observe the maxim of Quality, and, consequently, he is opting out from the observation of the cooperative principle. Note that Grice (1989d: 370) gives two examples of what he calls “a simulation, rather than an instance, of even the most minimal conversational cooperation”, namely cross-examination and over-the-garden-wall chatter. Somewhat sarcastically, he argues with regard to the former case that “such exchanges honor the cooperative principle at least to the extent of aping its application”. I think, however, that cross-examination, over-the-garden-wall chatter as well as lying are instances of rational communicative action, and therefore submitted to the operation of the cooperative principle.

Speculating about the special character of the maxim of Quality, Grice (1989d: 371) goes on to state: “False information is not an inferior kind of information; it just is not information.” Following Grice, it could be argued that lying, and, a fortiori, falsely implicating is not informative. I disagree with Grice on this point and take it with Castelfranchi and Poggi (1994: 284) that “a lie can only be a speech act of information: a kind of speech act whereby S explicitly commits herself to what she wants the other to believe.” It is no accident that imperatives are not sentence types suited for conveying lies, because they do not inform about the speaker’s belief about p, but about his wish that the addressee should do p. Moreover, if information is measured “in proportion to the number of states of affairs that the message effectively rules out, given a domain of discourse” (Levinson, 2000: 31), then it is natural to view lies and false implicatures as essentially informative.

To conclude, the extended definition of lie seems to have the advantage to correspond to the everyday usage of to lie. As Sweetser (1987: 60) reports, some speakers are that sure that an implicature is present that they include it in a restatement. Have a look at the following dialogue (taken from Coleman and Kay, 1981; see also Tsohatzidis, 1990):

(21) Speaker: Mary, have you seen Valentino lately？
Mary: Valentino’s sick with mononucleosis all week.

If asked what Mary said, speakers reported on (21) with “Mary said No, Valentino had been sick”. Such a reaction indicates that for many speakers, the linguistic difference between assertion and implicature is irrelevant, as long as they assume that the speaker wants them to draw a certain conclusion.21

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21 A last example nicely demonstrates this point. Bertolt Brecht wrote the following lines in postwar years: “Die Ammiflieger fliegen/Silbrig im Himmelszelt/Kartoffelkäfer liegen/In deutschen Feld.” (“The American planes fly/Silvery in the firmament/Colorado beetles lie/In German fields.”) – Brecht certainly wanted to implicate that the American airplanes were the cause for the colorado beetles on (East-) German fields. Well, that was not true, or, as a German journalist recently commented on these lines (Drösser, 2002): “Alles gelogen.” – Note that these lines are a part of the poem Die Ammiflieger, written in 1950 in the context of Brecht’s anthologies Kinderlieder and Neue Kinderlieder, respectively. It does Brecht credit, however, that this poem was published for the first time (after his death in 1956) in Brecht (1993: 218); hence it is disputable whether his lines should count as a lie. I am grateful to Klaus-Detlef Müller (Tübingen) for drawing my attention to this source.
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References


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