



Cues to deception in context: Response latency/gaps in denials and blame shifting

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Over 40 years of work on lying in psychology and communication has investigated numerous 'cues to deception' – the subtle signals people show when they are lying. One of these cues to deception is 'response latency' or the gap that occurs between questions and the lying response. The current investigation uses the methodology of conversation analysis to re-consider the question of response latency in the context of lying. Drawing on data from two naturalistic sources, the television shows *COPS* and the *Jeremy Kyle Show*, this investigation analyses response latencies in order to show the regular organization of gaps between turns in both lies and non-lies. The current investigation demonstrates that in blame shifting turns which are lies, any gaps between turns result from a display of upcoming 'trouble', rather than being related to lying *per se*. The investigation highlights the need to analyse lies in the contexts in which they are told, taking prior and subsequent talk into account.

Detecting lies has been of interest to social psychologists ever since the founding studies on cues to deception by Ekman and Friesen (1969) and Reid and Arthur (1953). Inspired by Ekman and Friesen's (1969) hypothesis that lies can be detected by subtle signals that liars emit while lying, 40 years of work has identified a great many verbal and non-verbal 'cues to deception' (for meta-analytic reviews, see De-Paulo *et al.*, 2003; Sporer & Schwandt, 2006). However, it is only more recently that data obtained outside laboratories have been used to investigate the influence of context on these cues to deception (Mann, Vrij, & Bull, 2002; Vrij, Mann, Kristen, & Fisher, 2007), following Vrij's (2000, p. 33) call for more 'naturalistic' investigation into cues to deception. The current investigation takes up this call, using 'real life' examples of lying to investigate cues to deception in the immediate context in which the lie is told. After a brief overview of vocal cues to deception and their interaction with context, five cases of lying will be presented for analysis in order to examine possible cues to deception in the contexts of denial and blame shifting.

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Vocal cues to deception

Researchers investigating vocal cues to deception have demonstrated how ‘response latency’,¹ pitch, repetitions, speech errors, speech rate, and frequency of pausing, can all change during lies (Vrij, 2000, p. 33). Some studies have found increases in cues to deception during lying (e.g., Sporer & Schwandt, 2006, p. 437; Zuckerman, DePaulo, & Rosenthal, 1981, p. 437); other studies have found decreases in the presence of particular cues during lying (Sporer & Schwandt, 2006, p. 438); although in some research there has been no significant relationship between deception and the presence of the cue (De-Paulo *et al.*, 2003). Overall, the results show a lack of consistent findings regarding the relationship between response latency and deception (Vrij, 2000, p. 33). A number of studies have found that variations in cues to deception will depend on the occurrence of lies in certain contexts (Anolli & Ciceri, 1997, p. 268; De-Paulo *et al.*, 2003; Sporer & Schwandt, 2006, p. 431; Vrij & Heaven, 1999, p. 210). Indeed, the contextual variation of cues to deception has become a focus for cues to deception research. In an attempt to understand the variation of cues to deception based on the context in which lies are told, studies have demonstrated variations based on the placement of lies in the course of an interview (Burgoon & Qin, 2006) or the type of questioning that the liar is subject to (Vrij, Mann, Kristen, & Fisher, 2007). These studies have demonstrated that, for at least some vocal cues to deception, their presence varies according to the context in which the lie is told.

Context-based variation has also been demonstrated in studies of ‘response latency’, in other words the gaps that occur before answering questions with deceptive utterances (De-Paulo *et al.*, 2003, p. 113). These studies have found response latency that occurs between the question and the lie to be longer than the response latency that occurs in truthful statements (Anolli & Ciceri, 1997, p. 168; Walczyk *et al.*, 2005, p. 163). However, Anolli and Ciceri (1997, p. 268) only found response latency in an experimental condition where the confederate observer did not challenge, or probe, the liar. Similarly, Sporer and Schwandt (2006, p. 443) and Walczyk *et al.* (2005, p. 163) both found that response latency is only present in situations where liars are not given an opportunity to prepare a lie. Walczyk *et al.* (2005, p. 163) found that when subjects were given no chance to prepare a lie, their responses to ‘yes/no’ questions showed an increase in response latency of up to 0.5 s. These studies demonstrate the influence that context can have upon the length, and even presence, of a gap between a question and a lie.

Being sensitive to context is not new to social psychology. Proponents of self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, & Wetherall, 1987) have repeatedly demonstrated the importance of taking the social context into account in constructing social psychological theory. SCT theorists have often been critical of other approaches in social psychology for failing to take context into account when analysing phenomena such as stereotyping (Haslam & Turner, 1992, 1995), perceptions of prototypicality (Haslam, Oakes, McGarty, Turner, & Onorato, 1995) or influence (Platow, Mills, & Morrison, 2000), to name but a few.

¹ In studies of cues to deception, there does not seem to be any clear and consistent approach to labelling periods of non-talk. Terms include ‘pauses’, ‘response latency’, ‘gaps’, and other periods of ‘non-talk’ (Sporer & Schwandt, 2006). The term ‘response latency’ is often used to describe the ‘lateness’ of a response (De-Paulo *et al.*, 2003, p. 113; Sporer & Schwandt, 2006, p. 424), although Walczyk *et al.* (2005) limit the term to only representing the silence that occurs immediately after questions by another speaker. Due to the confusion in the literature, the terminology adopted in this investigation follows CA in identifying periods of non-talk as gaps or pauses depending on where the non-talk occurs (see Discussion later in the paper).

Similarly, discursive psychologists have traditionally been critical of social psychology's failure to recognize the role of context in constructing social psychological phenomena – despite disagreeing with SCT on other grounds. Discursive psychologists have argued that phenomena such as cognition (Potter, 1998; Potter & Puchta, 2007), memory (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Wooffit, 2005), and attitudes (Potter, 1998; Puchta & Potter, 2002; Wiggins & Potter, 2003) are locally occasioned products of the interactional context. Within discursive psychology, consideration of the context of utterances is central to any analytic claims that can be made about such utterances (Potter, 1998).

This paper similarly argues for the importance of social and interactional context in understanding the cue to deception of response latency. It follows De-Paulo *et al.* (2003, p. 103) who assert that the 'content' of information provided, and thereby the potential for any individual utterance to include a cue to deception, is better assessed within the interactional context in which that information is provided. When assessing cues to deception, the specific context of interest is the immediately preceding talk (or non-talk such as silences). The aim of the following investigation is to use the rigorous methodological framework of conversation analysis (CA) as analytic leverage to demonstrate the importance of context, particularly interactional context, when researching cues to deception in order to understand whether there is a relationship between response latency and deception.

Silence in the context of conversation analysis

CA arises from ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967; Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970), and is based on the premise that talk is orderly and organized (Sacks, 1984, 1992). Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) demonstrate orderliness through ideas fundamental to CA including, the 'turn construction unit' (TCU) as the basic unit of talk; the 'transition relevance place' (TRP) as the point in interaction where speaker change becomes interactionally 'relevant'; and a set of turn-taking rules. They acknowledge, however, that a TRP may not accurately describe *all* turn exchanges and so the term 'transition space' is also used to describe how turn exchange boundaries can be extended or compressed (Schegloff, 1996; Sidnell, 2010). An extended transition space can occur when there is silence between one turn and the next, technically called a gap;² a compressed transition space can occur by using rush throughs or overlap (Schegloff, 1996; Sidnell, 2010).

Context-sensitive research in the fields of ethnomethodology and CA have demonstrated how inter-turn gaps (i.e., response latencies) are used interactionally by participants in ordinary conversation in ways unrelated to 'cues to deception'. Pomerantz (1984), for example, shows how participants can delay a response, and thus increase the transition space, in order to preface an upcoming turn at talk as a disagreement, thus giving the turn a 'dispreferred' turn shape. She argues that participants in conversation can use the space prior to a response to indicate potential upcoming trouble³

² CA terminology distinguishes inter-turn silences (called gaps) from intra-turn silences (called pauses) (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974).

³ It should be noted that the terms 'trouble' and 'preference' have particular technical uses within CA that differ from lay meanings. The concept of 'trouble' in a turn denotes either problems of hearing or understanding associated with a turn (Schegloff, 2007) or that the turn may disagree or not align with the prior turn (Gardner *et al.*, 2009; Levinson, 1983). Similarly with regard to 'preference' Schegloff (2007) notes that it does not denote a description of what a particular individual might prefer in terms of response, instead it denotes what sort of SPP is 'projected' by the FPP. For example 'you're not going downtown are you?' 'prefers' a 'no' type answer (based on the negative form of the question) but the speaker might reasonably want (or prefer in the lay meaning) a disagreement in the form of 'well yes I am' or something similar (Schegloff, 2007, p. 62).

(Gardner, Fitzgerald, & Mushin, 2009; Pomerantz, 1984; Schegloff, 1988, 2007). Thus, any distance between a first turn that initiates an action – first pair part (FPP) – and the second turn that completes the action – second pair part (SPP) – can be heard, by participants, as indicating some sort of potential trouble (potential for disagreement, rejection, etc.) in the upcoming turn (Gardner *et al.*, 2009; Schegloff, 2007).

If gaps (or response latency) can be used to do interactional work where lies are not present, such as to indicate upcoming trouble in the turn following the gap, then research on the relationship between gaps and lying needs re-analysis. One type of interactional trouble that has been studied in relation to gaps and turn transition is denials and blame shifting in response to complaints (Dersley & Wootton, 2000). The orderly organization of gaps that Dersley and Wootton (2000) found in responses to complaints, using data which is unrelated to lying, provides a ready point of comparison with lies that might occur as denials or blame shifting. Based on Dersley and Wootton's (2000) research and the data following, looking specifically at denials and blame shifting, this investigation will compare gaps that occur adjacent to lies with gaps in data unrelated to lying in order to argue that you cannot simply assume that gaps are indicative of a lie.

The current investigation is based on the premise that talk is orderly and organized (Sacks, 1984, 1992) and that the order that participants construct is accessible and describable via direct observation (Garfinkel, 1967; Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970; Sacks, 1984, 1992). Using the methodology of CA, or talk-in-interaction, as a way of showing how participants create the 'structures of conversation' (Schegloff, 2007, p. xii), the aim of this investigation is to focus in detail on two interactional practices (denials and blame shifting) to tease apart the relationship between gaps and lying, comparing lies and non-lies to determine the function of gaps adjacent to lies.

The investigation into lies

The current investigation collected data from television shows in order to capture real, unscripted, situations of people lying. Television data were chosen due to the difficulty involved in obtaining 'live' naturalistic recordings of lies, especially considering possible ethical concerns. Data were collected from two television shows, *The Jeremy Kyle Show* and *COPS*, that offered regular and reliable examples of lies.

COPS (www.cops.com) is a documentary style 'reality' television show where a television camera crew records United States police as they do police work (Kidwell, 2006, 2009). Interactions on *COPS* between police and citizens are unscripted recordings of real-life situations (Kidwell, 2009, p. 24). However, the interactions presented on *COPS* are heavily edited (Kidwell, 2009, p.24) so care and attention was paid to ensure that transcribed excerpts represented uncut stretches of talk. In cases of uncertainty, the computer program Audacity was used to determine whether there was an edited break between utterances by listening for sudden changes or dysfluencies in ambient background noises (such as, cars, animals, other people) in what might otherwise seem to be contiguous conversation.

The interactions selected from *COPS* followed the 'problem presentation' format that Kidwell (2009) describes for police-citizen interactions on the show *COPS*. In these interactions, police are attempting to discern 'what happened' and citizens are reporting their understandings of an incident that they were witness or party to (Kidwell, 2009, p. 28). Therefore, data from *COPS* consisted of the uncut portions of these problem presentation interactions between police and citizens.

The Jeremy Kyle Show (www.jeremykyleshow.co.uk) is a television talk-show from the UK aired on the ITV network. Participants on the show are members of the public who appear with a specific concern about a partner or member of their family, or in response to such a concern. The show presents two or more parties involved in a dispute and as such the typical format of the show is arranged to 'prove' who is telling the truth. The show's host, Jeremy Kyle, facilitates discussion between the two parties drawing on information from previous off-air interviews⁴ with the participants to construct a range of questions for each party.

The potential for 'bias', due to the presence of camera crews affecting how 'natural' the data collection is, is always a concern. However, as Speer (2002) has argued, because social interactions are constructed by the participants involved, any 'bias' is simply the wholly natural and evident influence of context, as it is produced by participants, on those interactions. Additionally as Lynch (2002, p. 519) argues, ' "naturalness" is not something that resides in certain types of data, and our data collection practices are not intrinsically natural or contrived'. Therefore, this study is investigating natural social interaction that occurs on camera. The potential for 'bias', due to the presence a television camera or being on television stage, is part of the interactive production of the context by participants, and represents an object of study, not an influence on results.

Method: Example cases of lying

This investigation draws on data from outside laboratory settings and does not have the luxury of experimental manipulations to determine whether a particular participant's utterance is a lie or not. Thus, without clear assurance of the ground truth of each case, strict criteria were used to develop the data collection. Criteria were based on how participants in the interactions orient to the talk. Lies were treated as having occurred if there was: (1) agreement by the lie-teller that a lie had occurred; (2) explicit labelling of talk as lies by other participants; and (3) 'revision' of a prior action by a lie-teller, thereby changing the course of action, in a now 'lie relevant' sequential context. Importantly, it should be noted that the 'lies' under analysis here are 'worked up' (Potter, 2004) by participants through labelling, admitting to, or otherwise orienting to, a particular utterance as a lie. Thus, this investigation is not analysing any internal motivationally based phenomenon, but an entirely social phenomenon that is visible in the talk of participants in the interactions.

Two examples of how the data collection was developed are given in the following section in order to demonstrate how the participants themselves constructed each lie in the course of the interaction.⁵

Case 1 'Tell the TRUTH!'

Case 1 involves James, Nina, and Jeremy on *the Jeremy Kyle Show*. Jeremy, the show's host, is arbitrating a discussion between Nina and James who are currently in a

⁴ Previous research has noted an influence of 'preparation time' on lies (Walczyk et al., 2005, p. 163), however consideration of this factor is beyond the scope of this study.

⁵ These two cases are drawn from a larger collection presented in detail in Reynolds (2009). These cases have been selected as exemplars of each case in point, however no cases in the full collection presented in Reynolds (2009) conflict with the organization of pausing in lies as presented in the final analysis. Reynolds (2009) presents 11 cases of lying, of which five are used in the current investigation.

relationship. Nina has brought James onto the show to accuse James of 'cheating on her' with other women and men and to 'get the truth' regarding the alleged infidelity. In the following interaction, the results of a polygraph test,⁶ in which James was questioned about his sexual relationships and behaviour, are being revealed.⁷

Example 1: Case 1 'Tell the TRUTH'

6. Jeremy: while you ↓we:re <with nina.>
 7. (1.0)
 8. Jeremy: did you passionately kiss
 9. (0.2)
 10. ANYone ↑else.=
 11. James: (L) →=>°no°<=
 ((lines 12-29 omitted))
 30. Jeremy: he a:nswered no.
 31. (2.4)
 32. you were ↑lying again mate,
 33. °weren't you.°=
 34. James (L) → [=>no.<
 35. Audience: [ooh ((claps1.6))
 36. James: (L) → nah.
 37. (0.5)
 38. James: (L) → I wa:zn't.
 39. (0.5)
 40. Jeremy: ↓sure.
 41. James: (L) →>↑nah. I wazn't.<
 42. (0.3)
 43. Jeremy: >then we said. whilst you were with nina.<

In line 11, James denies 'kissing' anyone while in a relationship with Nina. In lines 34, 36, 38, and 41, James denies lying on the polygraph test. Therefore, James is denying that he cheated on Nina and denying that he lied on the polygraph test. As demonstrated in the following example 2, these denials were all lies (marked with L in example 1).

Example 2: Case 1 'Tell the TRUTH'

144. Jeremy: WHAT'S THE TRU::TH.
 145. Audience: (([Applause 10 seconds]))
 146. Jeremy [JUST DO IT. WHAT IS THE ↑TRUTH.]
 147. James: (A)→oright. okay. <yes.> I did sleep with someone else.
 148. when we we:re together.

⁶ The polygraph tests conducted off-camera on the participants within these cases drawn from the Jeremy Kyle Show are not treated as evidence that a person has lied for the purposes of this investigation. Polygraph testing is well-known for its fallible nature (Vrij, 2000, p. 205). Also CA's method is not compatible with the analyst-centred approach of detecting lies via judgments about changes in the body that polygraphs are designed to detect.

⁷ Lies are marked on each transcript with (L) and the evidence used as criteria for inclusion in the collection of lies is marked as (A).

((untranscribed interaction, 2 minutes))

149. Jeremy: so the lie: detector was right.
 150. (0.5)
 151. James: (A) → yes it was.=
 152. Jeremy: =that's fine.
 153. James: yep.

In example 2, at lines 147-148, James admits to 'sleeping with someone else' while he was in a relationship with Nina (marked as A on the transcript). At this point, James revises his action (criteria 3) from line 11 in which he denies 'kissing anybody', to a final version in line 147, where he admits he did 'sleep with someone else' while he was in a relationship with Nina. James again admits that he lied in line 151 (criteria 1) when he agrees with Jeremy's formulation 'so the lie detector was right'. In Case 1, therefore, James both labels his own lies (criteria 1) and revises his prior statement (criteria 3). The above analysis demonstrates how criteria (1) and (3) were applied to generate a data set of lies.

Case 2 'Why didn't you pull over'

In Case 2, taken from *COPS*, Jack has been pulled over after a brief chase down a Chicago highway. At the time of the video, Jack is being questioned by a police officer while other police officers search his car for crack-cocaine.

Example 3: Case 2 'Why didn't you pull over'

2. Cop: so how come you didn't pull over?
 3. (1.0)
 4. Jack: (L) → °cos° there wasn't a ↑spo:t.
 ((lines 5-27 omitted))
 28. Cop1: so: (0.4) did you (0.2) not pull o:ver, cos you just bought dope,
 29. and didn't wanna get caught?
 30. Jack: (A) →ri:ght.
 ((lines 31-43 omitted))
 44. Cop4: °given us a lotta° LIE:S man, jus for a couple ba:gs.
 45. Cop5: ↓couple ↓b[ags.]
 46. Cop4: [lotta]- lotta lie:s for that. right?
 47. (4.0)

At line 4, when questioned as to why he didn't immediately pull over once the chase had commenced, Jack replies that it was because there 'wasn't a ↑spo:t'. However, a bit later (lines 28-29), the police officer presents a counter explanation as to why Jack failed to pull over by asking 'did you (0.2) not pull o:ver, cos you just bought dope, and didn't wanna get caught?' By agreeing to this version of the 'reason' (line 30), Jack revises his explanation of line 4 (criteria 3). Additionally, in lines 44-46, Jack's change of explanation between lines 4 and 30 is treated as a lie by another police officer listening in to the conversation (criteria 2). Although at no point does Jack respond to the accusation that he is lying, the fact that he lied is clear from the fact that he revised his explanation by agreeing to a revised 'reason'

he failed to pull over, and that this revision was treated as a lie by the other participants. The above analysis demonstrates how criteria (2) and (3) were applied to generate a data set of lies.

These two cases demonstrate the application of the criteria used to establish the data set for this investigation. The same method for inclusion was used for all cases in the current analysis although for reasons of space not all the cases are presented here.⁸

Gaps in talk

In CA, periods of non-talk that occur between turns at a transition relevant place are called 'gaps' (Schegloff, 2007, p. 72). This terminology is distinct from the term 'response latency' which is used in cues to deception research to label the same phenomena. In fact, there is no reference to turns and turn-taking in discussions of response latency in cues to deception research (see De-Paulo *et al.*, 2003, p. 114). In the following discussion, Schegloff's (2007) terminology will be used to refer to periods of non-talk at a TRP, in other words 'gaps'.

Researching the organization of turn transition in complaints, Dersley and Wootton (2000) demonstrate that two features of turn transition, gaps and reduced transition space, work in an organised way in turns which are denials that occur in response to complaints. They describe two types of denials, 'not at fault' denials and 'I didn't do it' denials. The first type of denial, 'not at fault' denials (presented in example 4), has an increased period of non-talk or gap between the FPP and SPP. The second type of denial, 'I didn't do it' denials (presented in examples 5 and 6), has reduced transition space between the FPP and the SPP (Dersley & Wootton, 2000, p. 387). The following section will discuss the organization of denials in data where lying is not present, beginning with 'not at fault' denials before turning to 'I didn't do it' denials. Once we have the picture of what non-lie denials look like we can turn to our data (cases 1-5) and look at denials which occur as lies.

Gaps between turns in 'not at fault' blame shifting responses

Dersley and Wootton (2000, p. 387) argue that the delay in turn transition, resulting in a gap between turns, in 'not at fault' denials shows that denying participants are displaying a 'concessionary stance' towards the accusation. They demonstrate that 'not at fault' turns accept that the denying participant has done the complainable action, but is not to blame for doing it. An example of a gap between turns associated with a concessionary stance is presented below in example 4 from Dersley and Wootton (2000).

Example 4 (Dersley & Wootton, 2000, p. 382, (2) [IAD:JM:1B:4:2])

- 57 Joel: .hh look (0.2) I- I- might- a' broke a window y'
58 did-n' 'ave t'cuff me up in the head

⁸ Each case used in this investigation is presented in full in Reynolds (2009).

- 59 (2.0)
 60 Joel: why::
 61 (0.4)
 62 Joel: I w's a litt- le chi::ld I d'n know w'- I w's doin'
 63 maybe I w's (0.7) vacuumin' 'n (0.4) (from) 'oops I
 64 did-n mean t' do that-
 65 → (0.9)
 66 Mum: look (.) whenev' I hit you- >i' w's becau'< y'lie y' know.
 67 (0.9)

In example 4, from Dersley and Wootton (2000, p. 382), Joel is accusing his Mum of hitting him as a child. Dersley and Wootton argue that the gap at line 65 shows that the upcoming turn at line 66 will accept that the complained of action actually did occur. They argue that Mum's turn at line 66 acknowledges that there were occasions when she hit Joel, but that the 'reason' she hit him was because Joel 'lied' and thus, she is not to blame for hitting him. Dersley and Wootton argue that in example 4 Joel's mum is using the gap at line 65 to display a concessionary stance towards Joel's complaint of line 57-58.

Although Dersley and Wootton (2000) call these response to complaint denials 'not at fault' denials, they show how the mum's turn is not in fact a 'denial' but instead works to 'shift blame' through the use of a concessionary stance as demonstrated by the gap between turns. Thus, the current investigation adopts Dersley and Wootton's (2000) argument regarding the use of gaps to show a concessionary stance, but will remain cautious in the description of the 'not at fault' denials, instead labelling them as 'blame shifting turns'.

Other interactional studies have focused on denials in response to accusations arguing that a gap prior to a denial response is tantamount to admission to the accusation (Atkinson & Drew, 1979, pp. 112-113; Garcia, 1991, p. 828). In common with Dersley and Wootton's (2000) findings, Garcia (1991, p. 821) argues that a gap after an accusation projects agreement that the accused of thing occurred (see also Levinson, 1983). In these denials, in common with blame shifting turns, gaps occur after a 'complainable'. Schegloff (2005, p. 451) discusses the phenomenon of complainability, the orientation to someone or something as worthy of complaint, an orientation which may occur with or without an actual complaint being articulated. He notes that participants orient to these complainables in anticipation of a possible complaint, with participants prefiguring questions, accusations, noticings, and numerous other sequential actions to show their orientation to a complainable. This investigation into lying will also show that gaps which occur after complainables project upcoming trouble in the following turn.

Reduced transition space in non-lie 'I didn't do it' denials

The other form of denial that Dersley and Wootton (2000) describe is the 'I didn't do it' denial which typically takes a 'non-delay' turn shape. They describe how participants deliver 'I didn't do it' denials with a 'non-delay' transition space, either a reduced transition space or transition space according to the normal speech rhythm of the talk. Examples of this 'non-delay' turn shape are presented below.

Example 5 (Dersley & Wootton, 2000, p. 385, (5) [IAD:CM:1B:3:1])

6. Colin: you wer- j's (0.2) y' know sort- of (.) blanking her
7. out I dun undertan' [(you)
8. Mum: → [I'M NOT BLANKIN' 'ER OUT I'M
9. BUSY

Example 6 (Garcia, 1991, p. 820)

1. Stan: I want to talk to you ()=
2. Karen: =I DID:N'T (.3) HAVE ANYTHING,=
3. Stan: =YOU HAD (RIGHT) TO DO WITH IT!
4. Stan: [(YOU ARE ALWAYS)]
5. Karen: [YOU KNOW THAT IS]
6. BULL I DIDN'T
7. Stan: [YOU ALLOWED IT]
8. Karen: → [(see it)]=I DIDN'T EVEN
9. DO THAT CRAP I DIDN'T SEE THAT

In examples 5 and 6, in line 8 of each, respectively, both participants are denying that they 'did' the complained of action. In example 5, the denial is delivered in overlap with the final portion of the complaint of lines 6–7. In example 6, Karen speeds up her denial in line 8 'latching' it (Schegloff, 1982) to her prior TCU (not hearable), in order to begin just as Stan finishes line 7. According to Dersley and Wootton (2000) participants who do 'I didn't do it' denials use reduced transition space by either overlapping with the complaint, or by 'latching' to the prior turn with reduced transition space. They argue that the reduced transition space is used by participants in denials of complaints to show that they 'not guilty' of doing the complained of action. Dersley and Wootton (2000) argue that a lack of delay in turn transition between complaints and denials, either via reduced transition space or via normal 'on beat' (Schegloff, 2007, p. 67) turn transition, shows that the denying participant is 'not guilty' of the complained of action.

Both of these types of action, blame shifting turns ('not at fault' turns in Dersley and Wootton's (2000) terminology) and 'I didn't do it' denials use the transition space to manipulate the display of a concessionary stance. Blame shifting turns show concessionary stance with a gap between turns and 'I didn't do it' denials reduce or remove the possibility of concession by reducing transition space. Having demonstrated the operation of gaps and reduced transition space in *non-lie* blame shifting and denials, we are now in a position to compare non-lies with lies. This comparison allows a detailed investigation of response latency. Two different scenarios, namely (1) blame shifting turns with gaps between FPPs and lies and (2) 'I didn't do it' denials delivered with reduced or normal 'on beat' turn transition are presented next in order to analyse response latency in the collection of lies.

Lies as denials: Transition space and 'cues to deception'

The first example of blame shifting in our lying data comes from Case 2 from the *COPS* television show in which Jack is being interviewed regarding his failure to 'pull over' while being chased by police cars down a major Chicago highway.

Example 7: Case 2 'Why didn't you pull over'

2. Cop: so how come you didn't pull over?
 3. (1.0)
 4. Jack: (L)→°cos° there wasn't a ↑spo:t.

After the police officer's question 'so how come you didn't pull over?' there is a 'hearable' gap of 1 second, orienting to some sort of upcoming trouble in the turn following the silence (Pomerantz, 1984; Schegloff, 1988, 2007). The police officer's turn at line 2 is delivered as a negative question, implying that Jack should have pulled over but failed to do so. Thus, in addition to 'asking a question', the police officer's question is also treating Jack's failure to pull over as a 'complainable' (Schegloff, 2005). Following the gap, Jack orients to the complainable action of 'not having pulled over' by providing an account for the complained of event with '°cos° there wasn't a ↑spo:t.'. Jack's account shifts the blame for the complainable to the 'lack of spots' while still accepting that the complainable event occurred. As shown in Dersley and Wootton's (2000) analysis, it can be argued that Jack is using a delay (in other words a gap between turns) to display upcoming trouble. The nature of the trouble becomes clear in his next turn when he accepts the complainable that he 'failed to pull over'. Jack's gap, therefore, is not working to show that he is lying (as he later admitted); rather, it is preparatory to showing that he accepts the complainable that he failed to 'pull over'.

Similarly, Case 4 from the show *COPS* shows another example of blame shifting within the environment of a lie. Kimberly has been pulled over and is being questioned about whether she 'has had anything to drink'. After denying that she has had anything to drink and showing the police officer that she 'has just had a tooth pulled', the police officer counters Kimberly's denials at line 23.

Example 8: Case 4 'Cottonmouth'

8. Cop: [ho]w much have you had to drink toni:gh[t].
 9. Kimberly:→ [°>nuthin.<
 10. (0.7)
 11. Kimberly:→ >°nuth'n.°<
 12. (0.9)
 13. Kimberly:→ NOthin.=↓No:thing. (0.3) >>when I say-<<
 14. ((Takes false tooth out of mouth and shows officers))
 15. Cop: what does that have to do wi:th. (0.2) [°>how much] you have.°<
 16. Kimberly: [I just ha:d]
 17. a too:th pu:lled?
 18. (0.6)
 19. Kimberly: a:n I->I'm not allowed to drink.<
 20. (0.5)
 21. Kimberly: >fer seventy two hours.<
 22. (0.9)
 23. Cop: okay.=>well I can sme:ll the alcohol coming off your breath.
 24. right now.<
 25. (0.8)
 26. Kimberly: (L)→it's ↑only mou:thwash.

Kimberly's response in line 26 is an 'excuse' in response to the complainable in the police officer's turn in lines 23–24 '>well I can sme:ll the alcohol coming off your breath right now.<'. By well-prefacing his turn, the police officer marks his own turn upcoming turn as non-straightforward (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009) doing a noticing of the 'smell of alcohol' to display that her previous answer 'nuthin' does not account for the smell of alcohol. Coming after the closed off sequence about pulled teeth, the police officer's turn at line 23 works to reorient the sequence back to the business of how much Kimberly has had to drink. Thus, the police officer's noticing of the smell of alcohol at line 23 undermines her prior denials in lines 9–13 by making the smell of alcohol a complainable in the immediate context of 'how much she has drunk'. Thus, similar to example 7, this utterance is not in itself a complaint but includes a complainable.⁹

It later becomes apparent that Kimberly's turn at line 26 is a lie (marked with L), but this is not immediately evident in the interaction. Her response at line 26 treats the police officer's turn at lines 23–24 as a complainable, that there is a smell of alcohol, shifting blame for the presence of the smell onto mouthwash, with 'it's ↑only mou:thwash.'. The 0.8s gap in line 25 is another example of delay indicating some sort of upcoming trouble, followed by Kimberly shifting the blame for the smell of alcohol onto the 'mouthwash'. With her turn at line 26 Kimberly has accepted that there is a smell of alcohol; therefore the gap at line 25 is attributable to Kimberly's upcoming concessionary stance towards the complaint, accepting that there is a 'smell of alcohol', while shifting any blame for the smell. Therefore, although Kimberley is lying when she says 'it's ↑only mou:thwash' the gap in line 24 is not due to any deception; rather, the gap is working to show an upcoming blame shifting turn.

In examples 7 and 8, a gap between turns is used by participants as an interactional resource as part of displaying a concessionary stance in blame shifting turns following a complainable. Thus, in the environment of these complainables a gap can project upcoming trouble, and the nature of the trouble becomes clear in the next turn when a concessionary stance is taken. The predictable nature of the gap in these blame shifting turns demonstrates the need to analyse lies within the context in which they occur. In these examples of lying, response latencies, or gaps between turns, are not a random 'by-product' of deception, they are interactional resources used by participants for specific purposes.

Non-delay in lies that are 'I didn't do it' denials

In contrast, lies that are delivered as 'I didn't do it' denials in the data collection are delivered by lie-tellers with reduced transition space as demonstrated in Dersley and Wootton's (2000) non-lie analysis. In each 'I didn't do it' denial in the data set of lies they are delivered with either overlap, latching, or in time with the rhythm of the prior turn. Examples of this non-delay are presented below.

⁹ It may also be evident to the reader that the police officer is orienting to the omnirelevant activity of police business in the sequence at line 23 as he 'gets back on topic' away from Kimberly's account of lines 16–21. Importantly the business of 'problem presentation' (Kidwell, 2006) in police settings involves a series of questions, accusations, and as we see here, noticings, that form the business of police–citizen interactions.

Example 9: Case 3 ‘I didn’t sleep with her’

27. Jeremy: you <DIDNT> ↑SLEE:P> with her,=
28. Ali: (L)→[=*nah I did not.*]
29. David: [>so why didn't you] dēny it when<ε:rr you (fucking) pulled
30. up katrina.=
31. Ali: (L)→=I did not.

Example 10: Case 1 'Tell the TRUTH'

6. Jeremy: while you ↓we:re <with nina.>
7. (1.0)
8. Jeremy: did you passionately kiss
9. (0.2)
10. ANYone ↑else.=
11. James: (L)→=>°no°<=
(lines 12-31 omitted)
32. you were ↑lying again mate,
33. °weren't you.°=
34. James: (L)→[=>no.<

Example 11: Case 4 ‘Cottonmouth’

8. Cop: [ho]w much have you had to drink toni:gh[t,
9. Kimberly: (L)→ [>nuthin.<

In each of the examples above, the lie-teller denies the FPP using a reduced transition space between turns or in overlap with the final part of the FPP. In each of these examples, the lie-teller denies some complainable action in the FPP. Each of the denials works to show that the lie-teller has not done the complainable action presented in the FPP. The lie-teller is selected as the next speaker in each of the cases by the word 'you' in the preceding FPP. The reduced transition space in these 'I didn't do it' denials ensures the lie-teller 'has the floor' (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) to deliver the denial. Importantly, the reduced transition space also works to show that the denying participant is 'seeking the floor'. By rushing in to talk when they are not in competition for the floor and when they have already been selected as the next speaker, the denying participants are showing that they warrant the 'rights' to their current turn at talk. Therefore, these denials are upgrading the lie-teller's claim to the current turn in order to ward off potential further complaints.

The reduced transition space in examples 9–11 works in the way that Dersley and Wootton (2000) describe for non-lying ‘I didn’t do it’ denials. In examples 9–11, lie-tellers deliver their ‘I didn’t do it’ denials with Dersely and Wootton’s (2000) normative ‘non-delay’ in turn-transition for denials. Thus, reduced transition space in examples 9–11 is not a feature of lies; it is a feature of denials.

While researchers of vocal cues to deception do not claim that reduced transition space is a feature of lying, they do claim that there is an association between response latency and lies (Walczyk *et al.*, 2005) and that the organization of reduced transition space is directly implicated in the organization of gaps between turns. Therefore, these

results highlight the need to take the interactional context into account when researching response latency as ‘vocal cues to deception’. If ‘I didn’t do it’ denials are delivered with reduced transition space, whether they are lies or not, ‘I didn’t do it’ denials that are also lies which occur in experimental data would likely be delivered by participants in the same way. Thus, the above analysis demonstrates the need to take into account the immediate context in which a lie is told, and the different action the lie is doing, when investigating cues to deception.

Using transition space as a resource to upgrade denials

The current data also show how participants use transition space as an interactional resource to upgrade denials that are subject to a challenge.

In example 12, from Case 5, Raphael has been handcuffed and led to a police car. The police officer has retrieved a gun found in the bushes and claims he saw Raphael throw the gun during the previous foot pursuit. The police officer has returned to the police car to question Raphael about the gun.

Example 12: Case 5 ‘I dropped mah keys’

58. Cop: what do you have this gun for.
 59. Raphael: (L) → that’s not mi:ne.
 60. Cop: Rapha↓el, I was right ↑behi:nd ya.> and watched ya <↑to:ss it.
 61. I went right over and picked it ↑up.=
 62. Raphael: (L) → = that’s not mi:ne.=>sir <.
 63. Cop: ok.=well

In line 60–61, the police officer challenges Raphael’s denial (line 59). In line 62, Raphael restates his denial with reduced transition space, ‘format tying’ (Goodwin, 2001) his second denial to the first denial in line 59 by repeating the same phrase ‘that’s not mi:ne.’. He also orients towards the institutionality of the interaction by adding the address term ‘>sir.<’.

Raphael’s rush-through in line 62 shapes his re-stated denial as ‘in need of the floor’. By ‘format tying’ his denial in line 62 to his denial in line 59 Raphael is working to show that his position remains the same despite the police officer’s account of ‘watching Raphael toss it’. Moving from a ‘normal’ transition space in line 59 to the reduced transition space of line 62 also works to increase the denial’s urgency, effectively upgrading the denial, while at the same time, restating his position.

Example 13, Case 3, from *The Jeremy Kyle Show*, occurs during an argument about ‘who slept with who’ between Ali and Jeremy. Jeremy is setting up the story and formulating ‘what happened’ in line 20–21.

Example 13: Case 3 ‘I didn’t sleep with her’

20. Jeremy: >a one night stand.=or summin
 21. happened ↓with ↓katrina.<
 22. (1.1)
 23. Ali: ↓na:h. din’t happen like da:t.
 24. (0.3)

25. Jeremy: well what happen then?=>you slept with her. didn't you?<=
 26. Ali: (L)→=*↓nah↓nah↓nah↓nah↓[nah ↓ nah. *]
 27. Jeremy: [you <DIDN'T] ↑SLEEP> with her.=
 28. Ali: (L)→[=*nah I did not.*]

In example 13, Ali begins with a blame shifting turn in line 23 '↓na:h. din't happen like da:t.' conceding that 'something happened', accepting that the complainable in Jeremy's accusation in line 20 did occur. Ali's denial in line 23 is delivered following a gap of 1.1 sec, orienting to the normal occurrence of a gap in blame shifting turns following a complaint. Jeremy's question at line 25 confirms that something complainable happened, seeking clarification on what it was with 'well what happen then?' Ali then upgrades in line 26 to an 'I didn't do it' denial using reduced transition space to increase the strength of his denial. In addition to the reduced transition space, Ali's 'multiple saying' (Stivers, 2005) '=*↓nah↓nah↓nah↓nah↓[nah ↓ nah. *]' in line 26, proposes that Jeremy's course of action, alleging that Ali 'slept with Katrina', is not proper and should be stopped. Ali's denial in line 26 is in direct contrast to the blame shifting turn of line 23 where Ali implicitly accepts that the complainable event occurred (that 'something happened' with Katrina). The change in action to a 'stronger' 'I didn't do it' denial in line 26 removes the concessionary stance that Ali displayed towards the accusation 'that something happened' in line 23. Ali is thus using the reduced transition space as a resource to upgrade his turn from blame shifting to an 'I didn't do it' denial.

Having demonstrated that a gap after a complainable projects an upcoming concessionary stance towards the complainable, we can see then that participants in examples 12 and 13 reduce the next transition space as a way to show they are removing any projection of a concessionary stance and thereby increasing the urgency of their denial. The above analysis provides further evidence that gaps and reduced transition space in denials or blame shifting turns, which are delivered as lies, are not related to the fact that those turn are lies.

Conclusion

The organization of transition space in the environments of denials and blame shifting turns highlights a regularity of the organization of response latencies – a regularity which occurs regardless of the presence or absence of lies. Blame shifting turns which are lies are organized with gaps in the same way as non-lies are organized with gaps – to display an upcoming concessionary stance in response to a complainable. Thus, gaps between turns are not attributable to cues to deception in these blame shifting turns. Similarly, 'I didn't do it' denials, which are lies, are organized with reduced transition space identical to the way they are organized in non-lie environments. This shows that any claim that response latency is a cue to deception needs to be examined more closely within the context in which it occurs.

This investigation into lies also highlights how participants can use transition space as a resource to display a varying concessionary stance in response to a complaint or accusation. Participants can display a longer transition space to project that a concessionary stance is upcoming, or they can reduce the transition space to reduce the risk of an upcoming turn being treated as a concessionary stance in response to complaint. Thus, transition space is just part of the array of resources that participants use to construct interaction, and should not be overlooked by researchers of cues to deception.

This investigation shows the importance of using naturally occurring data, analysed in context, to conduct detailed sequential analysis. Using this approach, the current investigation has shown that the gaps in the denials and blame shifting turns in the data collection are not attributable to the occurrence of a lie. Thus, this investigation sheds light on the wildly differing results regarding gaps as a cue to deception noted by Vrij (2000). In a discussion of 'pauses' (in our terms gaps) as a cue to deception Vrij (2000) notes that studies of cues to deception differ regarding the status of pauses as a cue to deception, with some studies finding no evidence, and other studies finding strong evidence. The current investigation has demonstrated that any variation in results are likely due to a confounding variable, the sort of interactional environment in which the lie occurred, lending support to studies that found that pauses are not a cue to deception. Drawing on the wider context of talk, the detailed sequential analysis reveals how the normal mechanisms of talk need to be considered in any investigation of lying. It also demonstrates the analytical care and attention that is required when exploring 'vocal cues to deception', highlighting the importance of analysing lies in their immediate sequential context. This context sensitive analysis shows the value of applying CA with its precise and detailed analysis to provide concrete and specific findings regarding the operation of cues to deception within the immediate context of the talk.

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Appendix

Transcription

Transcription conventions are based on Gail Jefferson's notation (presented in Atkinson and Heritage (1984) and Jefferson (2004)). The principal notion is as follows:

[]	Square brackets mark the start and the end of overlapping speech.
↑↓	Vertical arrows precede marked pitch movement.
<u>Underlining</u>	Signals speaker's emphasis.
CAPITALS	Mark speech that is obviously louder than surrounding speech.
°I know it, °	Degree signs enclose obviously quieter speech.
(0.8)	Numbers in round brackets measure pauses longer than 0.2 seconds.
(.)	A pause of 0.2 seconds or less.
((text))	Additional comments from the transcriber.
:::	Colons show degrees of elongation of the prior sound; the more colons, the more elongation.
hhh.	Aspiration (out-breaths); proportionally as for colons.
.hhh	Inspiration (in-breaths).
Ye:ah,	Commas mark weak rising or 'continuing' intonation.
Ye:ah.	Full stops mark falling or 'completing' intonation.
?	Question marks signal questioning intonation, irrespective of grammar.
*	Creaky voice.
> <	Less than and greater than symbols enclose speech that is noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
=	Equals signs mark the latching of one element of talk to another

Full details on these symbols and their use is provided in Jefferson (2004).