



Research Paper

Development of Lying in Children: Cues and Secrets: A Psycho-Cognitive Assessment

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ABSTRACT : Telling lies can be part of normative development system for children. However, little is understood about the complicated interplay of social and cognitive elements associated with this developmental behavior. Evidence so far shows that from age of 42 months onward, children become more capable of telling lies in various social situations. However, there may be constrained experimental proof concerning whether very young children will deceive spontaneously. This review paper, explains about the development stages of lying while further explain the psycho cognitive factors involved in lying.

KEYWORDS: Lying, Children, Development, Behavior, Psychological, Cognitive

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I. INTRODUCTION

Deceptive behavior has been explored for centuries. Deceitfulness was initially outlined by Thomas Aquinas, a Roman Catholic priest and Theologian in 1225. According to assessment made by him, a lie is any communication of misleading or false information, despite the conveyor of the knowledge knowing the information is untrue. Later, a contemporary philosopher, Sissela Bokand, enlarged this information and explained that deception or lying is feasible if the deceiver believes a message to be untrue. ^[1] These interpretations made by several philosophers set the stage for defining of the deceptive behavior and the analysis that has allowed the researchers to higher perceive the act of lying. Studies and various researches have divided types of lying into two main categories: Minor lies, which have the lowest impact on the person and that occur in everyday life, and serious lies, which are thought of to be a big violation of the trust and occur less often. Research has additionally quantified the act of deceiving, over the timeframe of one week, a person is dishonest to common fraction of all the individuals with whom they need social interactions. Overall, an individual averages two lies per day.

A poll conducted by the American Psychological press in 1991 revealed that 90% of the Americans interviewed self-confessed that they were deceitful. Lying has conjointly become a social talent within which the content has been divided into three groups:

1. Self-centered lies: Told to safeguard oneself
2. Other oriented lies: Told to protect the other person
3. Altruistic lies; Told to protect the third party

As the analysis of lying behavior has evolved so has the tactic of detection of lying. Lie is a fake assertion made deliberately and knowingly with the aid of using the liar, and without previous warning to its recipient. ^[2] Moreover, a lie is social in nature, always involving at least two individuals. Lies can range in their quality: they may be outright statement statements that are completely opposite to the truth, exaggerations which are an overstatement of proper facts, or statements which are subtle that are meant to deceive the recipient and can also additionally leave out a few truthful details.

Nonetheless of the character of the lie, the act of lying can be stimulated with the aid of using man, woman, or other orientated reasons. One can also lie for individual, or self-targeted reasons such as to keep away from punishment or embarrassment, humiliation or to impress or benefit from a person. Lies can also be produced for other social reasons such as to be polite, to avoid anxiety within a social interaction, or for reasons to get

social gain.^[3]

Moreover, previous works and studies have confirmed that from an evolutionary perspective, owning the ability to lie and mislead others is biologically advantageous and necessary for ideal survival.^[4] That is, the capacity to mislead others permits for selective advantage, and is an integral ability in developing social interactions and relationships.^[5] Prior studies have also indicated that lying by children are related to number of negative outcomes like associate augmented risk of developing externalizing and delinquent temperament issues.^[6] For example- persistent lying-in childhood is associated with troubled behavior downsides and problematic behaviors such as theft, delinquency and fighting.

Similarly, adolescents who oftentimes mislead their parents often have problems with aggression, delinquency, and self-control.^[7] Much less is understood about the potential relationship between lying and internalizing problems, however there is some proof to counsel that additional frequent lying to parents is expounded to augmented depressive mood, feelings of alienation, and reduced trust towards parents and peers. Overall, existing analysis demonstrates a relationship between lying and externalizing and internalizing behavior issues, which is stressing on the importance of research relating to the factors that will contribute to increased telling of lie.

II. DETAILS

2.1. Development of lying in Children

According to Dr. Paul Ekman, the deception expert, “lie can be defined as an act where an individual intentionally chooses to deceive another individual without disclosing their intentions beforehand. Lies are of different types: they can be outright sentences which are completely opposing to the truth, exaggerations- an, overemphasis of true facts, or subtle statements intended to deceive the recipient and may omit some truthful facts.^[8] Children’s lies evolve as they get older. Children begin making primary falsehoods, or assertions that are factually incorrect, around the age of two. Children begin to understand how to tell secondary lies around the age of four or five. These are statements that are factually false but are told with the knowledge that the intended audience is unaware of the truth.^[9] Lastly, the capability to tell tertiary lies begins to emerge around the age of seven or eight. Children may lie and maintain their deception through questions and remarks that come after them, an ability called as semantic leakage control. Children’s lies take on different forms as they become older, but their motives are generally the same as adults.^[10]

Age 12-16 years: A children get older; they get better at lying and their lies get more complicated since they begin to understand other people’s thought. Below is the nature and prevalence of the mechanism of lying in Children:

a. **Pseudologia fantastica:** It is characterized by the delivering of appealing and compelling stories that occasionally deviate into the surreal in attempt to impress others. These stories could seem to be simply on the verge of quality and sometimes involve the children assuming vital and heroic roles.

b. **Means to noble end:** The most common type of lies are the ones which are justified to noble end. Such lies are called white lies, which are often told by adolescents to avoid hurting other people’s feelings.

c. **Likes and Dislikes:** Truthfulness in most children are greatly affected by likes and dislikes. The truth telling behavior within the polite situation are systematically related to their moral behavior and justifications of the prosocial lie-telling or truth telling stories.^[11]

d. **Selfishness:** School life is responsible for many of deliberate lies of this class. Such lies comfort children in difficult situations or over rough places in life as they become the convenient covers for weakness. For example: False excuses for being absent in school such as faking headache or lying about being unwell just to get out of the difficult test.

e. **Self-deception:** This type of deception is common among children and adults. It is the act of making oneself believe something that one knows is not true. The psychic advantage of this type of thinking appears clear; in some circumstances, there could also be little reason to lower one’s self-esteem by being honest with oneself. On the contrary, self- deceit could shut off the chance of learning from one’s mistakes or taking some necessary actions.^[12]

f. **Pathological lying:** Such children may lie for no clear reason, seemingly without any intention or prior planning. Female children, especially teenage girls are pitted with moody self-consciousness and affection and seem to have no natural character of their own but to always attract attention. Similarly, young boys prefer fooling around and playing tricks and lies, sometimes of cleverness.^[13]

g. **Palliative lying:** The act of explaining or showing something through body movements and face instead of talking such as to nod than to say “yes” or to simply point the wrong direction when asked by someone is less guilty than to speak wrongly. It is very common in children and for most part, these are easily gotten away with.^[14]

Moreover, in many studies, adults of various expertise (judges and expert forensic interviewers), have been proven to carry out at or below chance stage of their lie-detection judgement of children's statements. Even people with earlier interview experience including law enforcement officials or customs officers, have been proven to not necessarily be more accurate of their lie detection of children's statements than the lay public.

2.2 Cognitive factors involved in Children's lying behavior:

Children's ability to lie advances in the development of varied social-cognitive skills like theory of mind, working memory and inhibitory control which are also confirmed by a large body of work. Moreover, telling a lie requires inhibitory control skills in order to make a false statement whereas, additionally not revealing the truth and at the same time capabilities of working memory is required to keep in mind both, the truth as well as untruths of the situation.^[15] The act of lying also needs an understanding of false belief or misconception, a component of theory of mind involving the recognition that others can have intentions and belief totally different from one's own and those beliefs will be an inaccurate reflection of reality.^[16] Previous work has revealed that among normative population, children's understanding of misconception and theory of mind capabilities as whole and are not coagulated till they are of four or five years old, but as understanding develops, children's lying ability and frequency increases accordingly. It has also been seen that children with advanced cognitive skills for his or her age have an enhanced tendency to start lying at earlier ages.

Despite many studies advocating that telling a lie is very common behavior of a child's normative socio-cognitive development, there are some theories such as Hartshorne and May's Doctrine of Specificity (1930) which articulates that tendency of a child to lie or cheat is specific to the situation, instead of being a consistent trait that qualifies the universality of a children's lie telling behavior.^[17] Previous work has also argued that children's lie telling behavior is socially learned which may be prompted or inspired through cultural norms, observation of parent's very own lying conduct or the extent of strictness and authoritarian parenting to which children are uncovered to.

For instance; many studies have found that a child's exposure to a highly authoritarian and socially conforming parenting can eventually decrease their lying frequency namely through restricting the child's willingness to question the authority, reliability, and trustworthiness of a parental speech figure.

2.3 Psychological factors involved in Children's lying behaviour:

The child as a part of his or her basic suggestibility naturally always tell the truth which is every idea that he tends to say itself in words or act accordingly. So, when the child has seen or heard or even has experienced anything, he or she has its image in the mind for which he puts that image into words. This is believed to be true and is very important in any of the studies for understanding the real nature of truthfulness and its inverses. However, this natural inclination towards the truth is very fragile especially in childhood. The impulses and contingencies blow up and gets distorted into contradictions, exaggerations, fantasies, evasion, and all the different forms of falsehood or any of the misleading information. Several studies have indicated that there are three factors that impend the child's natural truthfulness which are imagination, fear, and desire. It has been seen that imagination creates images which do not link with reality and these images have the same indicative affect as if they are real which ultimately leads to naturally possessing vivid fantasy in some children.

For example; Children sometimes say about seeing the god or speaking to him. These are basically analysis developing the facts which are the fantasies developed or formed to fulfill the wishes or suggestions in addition with superstition and are not hallucinations.^[18] The more serious form of falsehoods is created by fear and desire. Children lie to parents after they make mistakes because they fear that they might get scolded or get punished for it. Because of which they utter more untrue statements just to protect oneself and sometimes the other person. This can be seen for almost every age group. Lies that are told to escape the penalties of wrong doings or avoid unpleasantness of any kind are called deliberate lies. Such lies indicate to the most dangerous of all the states, in which smartness has outturn morality and character is menaced by excess of intellectuality over principle. The child often lies deliberately in certain situations because of the fear of punishment and because of which most of the times, the child is unable to find the direction from which he or she can get out of the situation. Therefore parents, guardians should talk to children with utmost patience, so that in troubled times, a child can share his or her problems with the guardian who will aid him in providing a proper solution.^[19] It is very usual that children will betray one who mistrusts them when they would disrespect to tell anything but the truth to those who trust them. It is very ill-fated for the parents or teacher to be betrayed by the child, but it is thousand times worse that the lack of confidence on the side of the elder should break the lack of truthfulness and good faith in the children or younger kids.

2.4 Lie-detection in Children:

Display rule theory poses that management of nonverbal behavior should be learned. Children come back to grasp that internal affect does not invariably correspond to the external behavioral expression of emotion. This is often accomplished with the employment of display rules or heuristics that confirmed the appropriateness of communicative behaviors in numerous contexts. Young children are less doubtless to state display rules spontaneously and can have a weaker understanding of facial expressions that are most appropriate for given circumstances. If the understanding of display rules develops over. Show me the regulation related to nonverbal responses hence children may fail to manage their nonverbal behavior after they tell lies creating their deceit is it easier to detect. Suggest ability researchers have analyzed the detection of a child's deception this area of research involves providing children with false or distorted details and perceptive whether they incorporate these components into their accounts of an event.

Despite intensive coaching and knowledge with children, clinicians and researchers cannot dependably assess the children's accuracy and flow of following the suggestion studies have shown that social workers prosecutors undisciplined adults even have problem assessing the truthfulness of children's accounts however these findings are also because of the children belief that they instructed events really occurred.^[20] Thus, in a very strict sense these children were not lying as a result of their accounts were not purposely false. Children's ability to wittingly and intentionally concealed the reality has seldom been studied. Feldman Jenkins and Popoola (1979) reported that doer laypersons could not accurately classify teenagers and adults they were able to sight first grader's lie.

Moreover, they have additionally shown that older children are typically higher at concealing deception than younger children.^[21] Together these studies seem to support the display rule theory position that children's ability to manage their behavior and able to deceive or betray improve with age. However recent work suggests that young children are skillful at deception. Children around 5 or 6 years old whether the lie is anti-social or pro social in nature become important factors in a child's identification of a lie beyond the impact of qualities of the statement being assessed on lie- detection studies have been mixed on age related changes in lie detection ability. Furthermore, only few studies have examined individual and situational factors specific to the child lie detector on the far side age which will influence their life detection accuracy add express trusting a lie-teller.

III. CONCLUSION

The current study focuses on the development of children in different age groups. It also talks about the different types of lies that are told by the children of different age groups. Apart from that, it also sheds a light on the concept that is analogous with the ability to tell a lie, a child's ability to detect a lie is an important breakthrough development, and an indicator of their growing social and psycho-cognition.

Just as children become more skilled in constructing or forming lies which are complicated and then getting away with the age. Children's ability to detect deceitfulness in other children and adults congruently develops with age. Additionally, information regarding children's lie detecting capability can have important forensic implications such as competency to stand trial, credibility, and reliability, to be as possible witness in the trial.

Moreover, evidence clearly indicates that young children of the age of three or four years old cannot yet accurately differentiate between a truth and lie without the presence of clear verbal and non-verbal cues. They are vulnerable to several truth and truth biases, which can altogether disseminate the notion that young children are naive and less credible as court witnesses.

IV. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The current paper reviewed and highlighted age-related changes in development of lie across different age groups in children as well as adolescents. However, more future researches for different age groups starting from very young age should be conducted to better understand the development and types of lying.

Additionally, future researches should also examine and study the impact of ecological factors such as parents or guardians, frequency of lying, along with other aspects such as how well a child can deceive. Apart from these studies should be conducted to understand the emotional cues of lying-in children of various age groups, along with several other factors such as gender, race, IQ, educational and economic status etc. which will give better and clearer picture for detection of deception in children.

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