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Intention to deceive, bald-faced lies, and deceptive implicature: Insights into *Lying at the semantics-pragmatics interface*

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Abstract: This paper gives a critical overview of Jörg Meibauer's (2014) monograph entitled *Lying at the Semantics-Pragmatics Interface* and addresses a selection of theoretical issues pertinent to lying and deception. Thus, following a brief summary of the volume's contents, more attention is paid to the speaker's intention to deceive as a potentially necessary condition for lying, which invites a question concerning the status of bald-faced lies. Further, this article focuses on deception performed by dint of implicature. Meibauer's (2014) postulates in reference to these issues are critically revisited, and the focal phenomena are examined from a broader perspective.

Keywords: bald-faced lie, deception, figure of speech, first maxim of Quality, Grice, implicature, lie, what is said

1 General overview

In his recent monograph, wittily entitled *Lying at the Semantics-Pragmatics Interface*, Jörg Meibauer (2014) brings together diversified academic traditions to tease out the mechanics of *lying*. He collates insights from the philosophy of language, semantics, and pragmatics (focusing on Speech Act Theory, as well as neo-Gricean and post-Gricean frameworks) in order to give a broad but, at the same time, detailed description of lying. The panoply of theories and proposals that feed into Meibauer's (2014) account and the number of references he makes in the course of the volume testify to his broad linguistic knowledge of the scholarship on not only lying and deception but also notions and approaches not immediately related to this topic. By transposing those concepts and conceptualizations onto lying, the author develops an internally heterogeneous analysis of the focal phenomenon. The succinct summary below cannot possibly do justice to the plethora of the postulates put forward in the monograph.

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The volume opens with an eclectic survey of a whole gamut of approaches to the phenomenon at hand, addressing lies in different discourse domains, the ethics and acquisition of lying, psychological and neurological findings on lies, and the cross-cultural universality of lying. Chapter 1 closes with an issue central to the remainder of the volume, namely the distinction between lying and *deception*, which amounts to a critical presentation of two taxonomies advocated by Chisholm and Feehan (1977) and Vincent and Castelfranchi (1981). In Chapter 2, taking as his departure point the pragmatics-semantics dichotomy, Meibauer (2014) elucidates the lexical semantics of the verb "lie," the interface approach to lying and sentence types, as well as relative clauses. The focus of Chapter 3 is the nebulous problem of *assertion*, which lies at the heart of most of the definitions of lying. In his discussion, Meibauer (2014) revisits an array of pragmatic approaches, including: Speech Act Theory (focusing among other things on the sincerity condition and perlocution, assertoric commitment, and truth conditions vs. *truthfulness*), Gricean pragmatics (notably the category of Quality[1]), as well as *common ground* and *presupposition*. Ultimately, Meibauer (2014) arrives at a definition of assertion, which facilitates his conceptualization of lying in the next chapter. To meet this objective, he dwells on a number of issues which may be deemed primary bones of contention among philosophers and linguists with interests in deception. These include the intention to deceive, the problem of bald-faced lies, and self-deception. Meibauer (2014) perceives the latter two as being distinct from lying, and thus as phenomena which do not undermine his definition. On the other hand, *falsely implicating* (which is proposed against the backdrop of the relevant literature on the types and characteristics of *conventional* and *conversational implicatures* in neo-Gricean terms) and *falsely presupposing* are presented as lies. Also, Meibauer (2014) regards *underdeterminacy*, as well as *vagueness* and *imprecision*, as being conducive to lying, since they depend on propositional enrichment. The chapter closes with a somewhat detached account of the interpersonal function of *prosocial lies*.

Chapter 5 examines a selection of notions related to, or independent of, lying. Meibauer (2014) discusses *aspect sensitivity* (based on the famous Clinton example), figures of speech (*irony*, *tautology*, *understatement* and *overstatement*) which are not lies but may coincide with them, as the author maintains, as well as *fiction* and *bullshitting*, which are distinct from lying. Chapters 6 and 7 present topics which seem to have garnered relatively little scholarly attention so far.

1 Incidentally, Meibauer (2014) tends to call it "the maxim of Quality," which is slightly misleading, given that Grice (1989a [1975]) proposed two maxims and one supermaxim of Quality, which Meibauer (2014) does recognise in the course of his volume.

Chapter 6 concerns lying and *quotation*, specifically: direct, indirect, and mixed quotations; scare quotes; fairness and transparency; as well as the German quotative *wollen*. Meibauer (2014) concludes that each type of quotation may give rise to a lie if its producer deliberately distorts the content (implicit or explicit) of the original utterance or the attitude thereto held by the quoted speaker. The last chapter lends support to the claim of the *relativity* of lies, exploring accuracy and disagreement, verum focus, the assertion of clarity and certainty, together with reliability, and selfless assertions, which are seen as not being amenable to lies.

Reflecting on the background literature on lying and deception in the course of his monograph, Meibauer (2014) pays attention to particular authors' specific claims and proposals, which he supports or criticizes, rather than giving a bird's-eye view of each of the phenomena at hand (e.g. bald-faced lies or bullshit). For this reason, the monograph may be considered to be targeted primarily at readers already acquainted with the topic, cognizant of the relevant body of research, and interested in details. This is not meant to suggest that the volume suffers from a dearth of bibliography. On the contrary, it has a very extensive list of references ranging from classical works to recent publications, from which the readers can benefit as well. As already signaled, the ample reference section is not restricted to the scholarship on lying and deception. Meibauer's (2014) familiarity with a wide spectrum of notions from various fields of research is unquestionable. Nonetheless, one cannot but feel that some of the issues tangential to lying could have been either eschewed entirely (being more of lengthy digressions with little bearing on the problem of lying per se) or, by contrast, treated with greater appreciation of the existing literature. Such is the case with presupposition, fiction, and irony, each of which boasts a very rich and heterogeneous research tradition, which appears to be underrepresented in the volume, most likely for reasons of space.

On a more positive side, Meibauer (2014) brings to focus an array of issues hitherto practically absent from the literature on lying and deception, whereby, he gives new insights into the nature of lies. This is one the main merits of the monograph. Apart from that, Meibauer (2014) submits a few hypotheses to the ongoing debate on the problem of lying vis-à-vis (other forms of) deception. His paramount contribution in this respect is an extension of the definition of lying to cover false implicatures and presuppositions, as well as sentence types other than declaratives. On the whole, the volume abounds in novel postulates and observations, which will, beyond a shadow of a doubt, inspire many future discussions. Any researcher interested in the notions of lying and deception is bound to find some food for thought in Meibauer's (2014) work.

In what follows, I will pursue three of the strands of research that I, personally, find intriguing.

2 Intention to deceive as a condition for lying

Following in Falkenberg's (1982) footsteps, Meibauer defines asserting and lying in the following way:

"S asserted at t that p iff
(a) S uttered at t the declarative sentence σ meaning p,
(b) by uttering the declarative sentence σ, S presented p as true,
(c) by uttering the declarative sentence σ, S M-intended that an addressee H to whom S uttered p actively believes that p." (Meibauer 2014: 99)

"S lied at t, if and only if
(a) S asserted at t that p,
(b) S actively believed at t that not p" (Meibauer 2014: 103)

Referring to Carson's (2010) definition of lying which does not require that the speaker intend to deceive the hearer, Meibauer (2014: 104) states that "deception should not be written into definitions of lying." Carson's (2006, 2010) and Meibauer's (2014) reasons for this step are markedly different, though, contrary to what the latter's argumentation seems to suggest. While Carston (2006, 2010) defines lying as not necessarily involving the intention to deceive in order to account for what is known as *bald-faced lies*, Meibauer (2014) proposes a definition that does not center on deception, but deception does underpin his conceptualization of lying, though. He argues that deception is not a sine qua non for lying, insofar as it follows directly from the liar's untruthfulness, juxtaposed with the requirement of being truthful[2] (as specified by Grice (1989a [1975]), i.e. following the first maxim of Quality), which is key to the definition of assertion quoted above (and most other definitions as well). A liar

2 Truthfulness concerns what the speaker believes to be true (e.g. Dynel 2011a; Falkenberg 1982; Vincent Marrelli 2003, 2004; Williams 2002). Meibauer (2014) does acknowledge that while truth concerns objective verifiable aspect of reality, truthfulness aims at the subjective aspect, namely the speaker's belief about what is true. However, in the course of his book, he seems to disregard the difference between the labels as if he equated the two notions.

"asserts p" but "does not believe p,"[3] which "counts as deceptive behavior" (Meibauer 2014: 104). Therefore, the speaker's intention to deceive is present here as well, but it does not need to surface in the very definition of lying, since it follows from the definition of assertion. It can be concluded that despite its different, admittedly much less explicit formulation, this definition of lying does not diverge from the classical view based on the notion of assertion and the speaker's intent to deceive (Mahon 2008a, cf. e.g. Chisholm and Feehan 1977; Bok 1978; Kupfer 1982; Adler 1997; Williams 2002), similar to the following one: "an assertion, the content of which the speaker believes to be false, which is made with the intention to deceive the hearer with regard to that content" (Williams 2002: 96).

Incidentally, lying is frequently discussed with reference to another type of intention to deceive, related not to the content, but to the speaker's intention to deceive in terms of his/her belief about the assertion that he/she is making (Chisholm and Feehan 1977; Davidson 1985; Mahon 2008a, 2008b; Newey 1997; Williams 2002). The untruthfulness condition for lying is premised on the assumption that lying involves "an indication he is expressing his own opinion" (Chisholm and Feehan 1977: 149). Several authors (Chisholm and Feehan 1977; Faulkner 2007; Frankfurt 1988, 2002; Simpson 1992; cf. Mahon 2008a) thus advocate that it is necessary for the speaker to have the intention that that the hearer believe that the speaker believes the assertion he/she is making to be true. There are no reasons to assume that Meibauer (2014) is averse to this view, although his definition does not appear to give any direct clues in this respect.

3 Bald-faced lies

In his discussion of the intention to deceive, Meibauer (2014) brings to focus the problem of bald-faced lies, which are frequently viewed as lies that do not involve the speaker's intention to deceive (Carson 2006, 2010; Fallis 2009, 2010, 2012; Sorensen 2007,[4] 2010; Stokke 2013a, 2013b). In a nutshell, a bald-faced lie revolves around a common belief shared by the speaker and the hearer(s)[5] that the speaker

3 This should perhaps be understood and paraphrased as "believe not p" in accordance with the definition of lying championed by Meibauer (2014).

4 It was Sorensen (2007) that introduced this label.

5 Most examples of bald-faced lies reverberating across the literature involve many hearers, typically not just one, all privy to the information that will prevent them from being deceived. Also, the authors tend to conceive of potential hearers oblivious to the crucial information.

is making a statement which they believe to be false (or which is just plain false). However, as Fallis (2009, 2010) rightly notes, it may suffice for the speaker to believe that is it common belief that a statement is false.

By way of illustration, in the canonical witness example, the scared witness who makes a false statement for fear of the defendant's vengeance does not intend to deceive anyone (and "hopes" that nobody will believe the testimony), while "the deception is merely an unintended 'side effect'" (Carson 2010: 20). Referring to this example, Meibauer (2011, 2014: 105) claims that the jury and the defendant "are deceived because the witness asserts that s/he has a certain belief which s/he actually has not." Hence, he suggests that the deception is performed, irrespective of the speaker's intention. At the same time, Meibauer (2011, 2014) defends a view that bald-faced lies can be captured by the notion of conversational implicature along these lines: "S asserts p but wants me to think that I do not believe p" (2014: 105) promoted by the maxim of Relevance.[6] Regrettably, Meibauer does not expand on this idea in terms of how the maxim of Relation invites the implicature and what exactly its nature is. Nor does he elaborate on how this implicature is related to the act of deceiving the jury. Importantly, he seems to mistake the "side effect," i.e. successful deception, mentioned by Carston (2010: 20) for the emerging implicature, which should be available to the hearers present in the court of law, who will, and are meant to, recognize the speaker's mendacity. This is evidenced by the following quotation: "Hinting at the possible fact that the witness does not hold that belief in fact and that s/he only pretends to have that belief, is, according to my linguistic approach, not a 'side effect,' and may best be analyzed as a conversational implicature" (Meibauer 2014: 105, cf. Meibauer 2011: 283[7]). Indeed, the overtness of the speaker's untruthfulness gives rise to a conversational implicature, the speaker's paramount communicative goal, but this should be divorced from the problem of accidental deception, the "side effect" that Carson (2010) has in mind. Incidentally, Meibauer (2014: 105) digresses in his discussion to the problem of false implicatures, which he regards as lies (cf. Section 4 below). Seeking the relevance of this digression, one might wrongly surmise that Meibauer sees bald-faced lies as lies, but he explicates that this is not the case, viz. "I still argue that bald-faced lies are no lies" (2014: 109). It may be concluded, therefore, that the implicatures

6 The maxim is called "Relation," not "Relevance" (see also Meibauer 2014: 127).

7 This convolution of ideas explains my earlier misunderstanding (Dynel 2011a) of the same claim in Meibauer (2011). Based on this quotation, where he compares his implicature to Carson's "side effect," i.e. unintended deception, I wrongly gathered that Meibauer (2011) is in favor of unintended deception.

originating in what is known as bald-faced lies are not false implicatures and do not bear any affinity to deception per se.

One of the many underlying problems in the dispute over whether bald-faced lies are lies in a technical sense is that Carson's (2006, 2010: 20–21) oft-quoted witness example, which Meibauer (2014) discusses, tends to be oversimplified. In the situation presented above, as Carson (2006, 2010) himself notes, intentional deception may still be involved if it should concern the speaker's belief that what he is testifying is true, whilst not concerning the content of the belief (cf. Section 2). Carson (2006, 2010) views this case as being a lie involving intentional deception. Therefore, it will not count as a lie which is liable to mislead beyond the speaker's intention. Thus, Carson fine-tunes the context in the example: "Suppose that I know that the crime and my presence at the scene of the crime were recorded on a video camera so that there is almost no chance that the jury will believe that I believe what I am saying" (2006, 2010: 20). In this case, there can be no intention to deceive on the witness's part, inasmuch as he is well aware that hard evidence is available and his denial will be regarded as being mendacious by the jury (and other people involved), who are familiar with the objective truth. It is actually doubtful that anybody cognizant of the facts should be deceived. However, even if someone not in the know should be taken in by the witness's testimony, the speaker can hardly be accused of having lied deliberately. Given all the available assumptions, what the speaker tacitly wishes to communicate to the hearers is that he is afraid to tell the truth consistent with the recording. At the same time, he may be signaling to the defendant that he is doing his utmost to cast doubt on the past event and that he is thereby succumbing to the blackmail. Both these meanings may indeed be considered conversational implicatures which are motivated by the flouting, i.e. overt nonfulfillment, of Grice's (1989a [1975]) first maxim of Quality (Dynel 2011a). This interpretation can also be implemented in the other two canonical examples (the cynical Dean example[8] and the fraudulent uncle example), which involve what Carson (2006, 2010) calls *going on record* while *warranting* something the speaker "knows to be false."

In the section devoted specifically to bald-faced lies, Meibauer (2014) refers to another standard case, namely Sorensen's (2007) example of Taklef's saying to a Norwegian reporter that everything Hussein "did in the past was good and everything he will do in the future is good," which he knows as a result of his "belief in the party and his leadership (...) Everybody knows Taklef is lying and everybody knows everyone knows it" (Sorensen 2007: 251). In his analysis of

8 This example also poses interpretative problems (cf. Fallis 2015).

Sorensen's (2007) example and its elaboration, Meibauer (2014: 108) states that Taklef's "utterances are not bald-faced lies but assertions since his propositions may be presented with narrow plausibility and are not, as Sorensen (2007) rightly observes, self-defeating.[9]" In the light of this quotation, Meibauer's (2014) perspective on the status of bald-faced lies is not unequivocal. Nonetheless, his whole discussion indicates clearly that he is not supportive of the postulates by Sorensen (2007: 255), who attests that bald-faced lies are assertions which show narrow plausibility ("someone who only had access to the assertion might believe it") but not wide plausibility ("credibility relative to one's total evidence"). Ultimately, Meibauer (2014: 108) postulates that bald-faced lies are not lies, for the speaker's utterances are "manifestly insincere" and that this "[m]anifest insincerity is conversational implicature." In the Taklef case, the implicature arising from the overt insincerity may be that he is under pressure to assert that Hussein is a good leader, whom he actually opposes, as Meibauer (2014) rightly suggests.

Meibauer (2014) refers to another example form Sorensen (2007: 253), quoted also by Carson (2010: 34–35), namely: a journalist, Seierstad, sneaks into a civilian hospital ward crowded with wounded soldiers, and a doctor says, "There are no soldiers here" and "I see no uniforms." Meibauer (2014: 108) writes: "I consent to Carson (2010: 35) who argues that 'the doctor still warrants the truth of what he says since he invites Seierstad to trust and rely on the truth of what he says and guarantees the truth of what he says," but, contradictorily, he also proposes that the speaker "infringes the maxim of Quality, thus inviting the pragmatic inference that he is not entitled to admit the over-crowdedness of the hospital." In Carson's (2006, 2010) view, the speaker warrants the truth of this statement by producing it in a context where he "promises or guarantees, either explicitly or implicitly, that what one says is true" (Carson 2006: 294). As Fallis (2009) rightly observes, this definition is nearly synonymous with making an assertion, a notion to which Carson (2006) himself is averse, but which he tacitly acknowledges as being similar to his own tenet (Fallis 2012). In any case, if the speaker does infringe, i.e. overtly violate, the first maxim of Quality, of which Meibauer (2014) is supportive, he/she cannot be warranting the truth, but he wants the utterance to be taken as overtly untruthful. Further, Meibauer (2014) mentions in passing that telling bald-faced lies, the speaker is opting out from the Cooperative Principle. This is hardly tenable, insofar as opting out, the way Grice (1989a [1975]: 30) conceives it, means saying nothing at all and signaling one's withdrawal to the speaker. Importantly, Grice (1989a [1975],

9 Technically, Sorensen (2007: 255–256) states only that the constitutive norm for assertion, i.e. to assert only what one knows, cannot be cancelled, along the lines "I do not believe I am being framed but I tell you I am being framed."

1989b [1978]) puts forward the Cooperative Principle as the principle of rationality, which is inoperative only when interlocutors are irrational. Meibauer's (2014) statement on opting out is also incompatible with the postulate that bald-faced lies promote conversational implicatures, based on the flouting of the first maxim of Quality, which is possible only when the Cooperative Principle holds.

Support is here given to Meibauer's (2014: 109) claim that bald-faced lies are not lies, for it is "mutually known to the participants that what the speaker says is false," or rather is what the speaker believes to be false. Meibauer's (2014) arguments and counterarguments need buttressing, though. Bald-faced lies are not, technically speaking, lies because the speaker does not intend the utterance to be taken as (truthful) "what is said: and does not intend to deceive the hearer (Dynel 2011a; Faulkner 2013; Mahon 2008a; Meibauer 2011). Moreover, bald-faced lies cannot be considered lies on the grounds of their *overt untruthfulness*, i.e. untruthfulness available to the hearer, rather than *covert untruthfulness*, which is the essence of lying (cf. Vincent Marrelli 2003, 2004; Dynel 2011a, 2013). Additionally, it is proposed here that bald-faced lies may be regarded as enjoying a status similar to the Quality-based figures listed by Grice (1989a [1975]: 34), namely: *metaphor*, *irony*, *hyperbole*, and *meiosis*, all of which are conducive to conversational implicatures. These figures do not convey *what is said*,[10] i.e. speaker intended meaning coinciding with the literal meaning. Instead, the implicatures originate from "making as if to say" (Grice 1989a [1975]: 30, 31, 34, 1989b [1978]: 40, 53) and are contingent on the speaker's overt untruthfulness.

The first objection that might be raised against this approach is that the figures listed above do not constitute assertions, whereas bald-faced lies are viewed as assertions (Fallis 2010; Sorensen 2007; Stokke 2013a, 2014). In Sorensen's words: "Takhlef is not merely pretending to assert that Saddam's leadership is perfect. He wants to be on the record. He defends the proposition by words and deeds" (2007: 252). Premised on an assumption that lying "is just asserting what one does not believe" (Sorensen 2007: 256), Sorensen argues that bald-faced lies are assertions, contrary to metaphors which show "clear falsity" or humorous utterances, thanks to which the speaker can be seen to be "kidding." Technically, metaphor and other figures do manifest overt untruthfulness (and objective falsity), but Sorensen does not appear to offer any consistent evidence why bald-faced lies should be different in this respect and why they should reside in assertions, as a result. Overt untruthfulness underlying metaphors is typically more blatant, relying on widely available assumptions, unlike in non-absurd jocular utterances (which may or may not

10 Verisimilar irony is a salient exception to this general rule (see Dynel 2013 and references therein).

be assertions) and bald-faced lies. However, technically, the status and function of the speaker's intended overt untruthfulness in metaphors and bald-faced faced lies are the same.

Fallis (2009, 2010) endorses a definition of assertion devoid of the component of the speaker's intention to have the hearer believe what he/she is uttering in order for it to encompass bald-faced lies. He thus follows Peirce's classical approach: "to assert a proposition is to make oneself responsible for its truth" (Peirce 1934: 384, cf. Brandom 1983). This attempt to salvage the view that bald-faced lies are indeed embedded in assertions may not be entirely successful. The speaker's tacit commitment to (the guarantee of) the truth, and hence the speaker's truthfulness, that Fallis (2010) champions is at odds with the fundamental feature of bald-faced lies. They exhibit no truthfulness, let alone truth, for which the speaker can be held responsible, of which the speaker and hearer(s) are aware. Bald-faced lies are couched in overt untruthfulness, as are the figures of speech which arise from the flouting of Grice's (1989a [1975]) first maxim of Quality. Interestingly, Fallis (2009) does invoke Grice's maxims in his account of assertion, predicated on the speaker's belief that the maxims, most significantly, the first maxim of Quality, are in operation when a statement is made. Both bald-faced lies, and the figures in question, flout/overtly violate the first maxim of Quality. Since the figurative utterances are not seen as assertions, nor can bald-faced lies be.

Referring to Carson's cynical Dean example,[11] Stokke (2013a) claims that bald-faced lies are assertions (e.g. "I did not plagiarize") and that they become part of *common ground*, even if the relevant *common knowledge* should be otherwise (e.g. the student did plagiarize). Stokke (2013a: 54) thus concludes that the liar "wants to make sure that the common ground comes to include the false information that she did not plagiarize. The student wants herself and the Dean to mutually accept that she did not plagiarize." Stokke (2013a: 48) takes as his departure point a weak definition of common ground, according to which it

11 "Suppose that a college Dean is cowed whenever he fears that someone *might* threaten a law suit and has a firm, but unofficial, policy of never upholding a professor's charge that a student cheated on an exam unless the student confesses in writing to having cheated. The Dean is very cynical about this and believes that students are guilty *whenever* they are charged. A student is caught in the act of cheating on an exam by copying from a crib sheet (...)The student is privy to information about the Dean's *de facto* policy and, when called before the Dean, he (the student) affirms that he did not cheat on the exam." (Carson 2010: 21) This example is, overall, problematic, inasmuch as while the speaker is untruthful, the hearer cannot be certain that this is the case (unless provided with palpable evidence), which is typical of the other bald-faced lies reverberating across the literature. However, the hearer takes the speaker's mendacity as his departure point, as a matter of principle.

"is to be defined in terms of an attitude weaker than belief. The main reason is that common-ground information that is known (or believed) to be false is no obstacle to conversational smoothness." From Stalnaker's (1984, 2002: 716) perspective, "To accept a proposition is to treat it as true for some reason. One ignores, at least temporarily, and perhaps in a limited context, the possibility that it is false." In Stokke's interpretation, acceptance is a "propositional attitude weaker than belief. That is, that a subject S accepts that p does not entail that p is true, nor that S believes that p" (2013a: 49). Originally, however, Stalnaker (2002) posits that acceptance may depend on a belief, but it may rely on other forms of propositional attitudes as well. In any case, on the strength of Stalnaker's (2002: 716) observation that communication may rely on "presuppositions that are recognized to be false," Stokke (2013a) suggests that the speaker intends some false information to be accepted but not believed.

Stokke's (2013a) proposal seems palatable at first blush, but it modifies significantly Stalnaker's (2002) conceptualization of acceptance and, more importantly, misrepresents the communicative purpose of bald-faced lies. Stalnaker's examples of acceptance not anchored in beliefs rest on some inferential mistakes that speakers make, which hearers do not need to rectify given their communicative goals. For instance, asked about the age of his baby daughter, a man need not correct that he has a son but may accept the false presupposition and give the baby's age, for the "pretense will be rational if accepting the false presupposition is an efficient way to communicate something true" (Stalnaker 2002: 718). Importantly, this pretense is one-sided only and is covert from the (mistaken) hearer's perspective, motivated by the lack of relevance. This stands in marked contrast to bald-faced lies, where both the speaker and the hearer know that the utterance is not true, while the speaker necessarily communicates an implicature, capitalizing on this fact. Furthermore, even if bald-faced were treated as assertions to be accepted only temporarily, as if for the purposes of the argument, as Stokke (2013a) appears to suggest, they would still show the same features of mutually acknowledged pretense as do irony, metaphor, hyperbole and litotes. However, Stokke (2013a) states that the figures rely on pretended assertions (except for irony based on truthful statements, i.e. assertions), whereas bald-faced lies are assertions. Again, a question arises as to why both these phenomena cannot fall under the umbrella of pretended assertions. As already suggested, given the speaker's communicative goal, i.e. to convey an implicit message carried by an overtly untruthful statement, it may be argued that the speaker is not communicating any meaning at the level of literal expression, and he/she is thus only overtly pretending to assert or "making as if to say," to use Grice's parlance. Therefore, the speaker does not assert or communicate "what is said," the focal communication being the implicature promoted by overt untruthfulness manifest to the hearer.

The supporters of the view that bald-faced lies are lies in a technical sense may still criticize this approach, maintaining that bald-faced lies are not like the Quality-based figures of speech, since the speaker "goes on (the) record." Admittedly, what both Carston (2006, 2010) and Sorensen (2007) mean under this label is that the speaker can publically be held accountable for his/her utterance. Stokke (2013a), on the other hand, equates being on the record with the speaker's wanting false information to become the common ground. Based on this, the authors might also claim that bald-faced lies cannot be cancelled,[12] namely that the speaker cannot later deny having genuinely communicated the untruthful message. Nevertheless, should a bald-faced liar be later confronted and accused of mendacity, he/she may protest that they did not expect anybody could possibly take his/her utterance at face value and assume that it represented his/her true belief, even if made publically, in a formal context, under oath, etc. The bald-faced liar may then claim his/her utterance to have been misunderstood and his/her intentions and motivation not to have been appreciated.

As Sorensen's (2007) account purports to indicate, a hearer may misunderstand a bald-faced lie, not being privy to some crucial information, contrary to the speaker's belief about the common belief he/she shares with the hearer. Needless to say, a bald-faced lie may be unavailable to an unratified hearer (see Dynel 2011b, 2011c, and references therein), i.e. a hearer whom the speaker does not ratify or even envisage (e.g. when an utterance is later publicized). Incidentally, Sorensen's (2007) postulate of narrow plausibility as the rationale for conceptualizing a bald-faced lie as a lie is hardly convincing, because any covertly/overtly untruthful utterance is communicated to the particular hearer or hearers and the mere fact that another individual may potentially be deceived is not reason enough for regarding bald-faced lies as lies. To the actual hearer(s), the speaker's untruthfulness is overt, and is meant to be such, as in the case of the Quality-based figures of speech. Incidentally, it is also the hearers of ironic (and some metaphorical and hyperbolic) utterances that could take them as truthful assertions if they should lack the necessary knowledge to recognize the speaker's communicative intention and the implicit meaning conveyed. Hence, the same kind of misunderstanding might come into being, which is yet another point of similarity between bald-faced lying and the figures of speech.

Furthermore, a statement may be ventured that going on record will be significant only if the bald-faced liar should later need to answer to the oppressor or another individual with power and leverage, in which case he/she will

12 This is independent from cancellability as the property of implicatures (see Section 4), which is germane also to the implicatures rooted in bald-faced lies.

state that he/she was truthful or at least did want the hearers to take him/her as truthful, denying the prior implicature. Such a denial would be an act of deception, based on the speaker's covert untruthfulness. As a matter of fact, a similar type of deceptive backtracking on an implicature could be done by a speaker who produced an utterance couched in a figure of speech. Whether or not this backpedalling is regarded as being plausible by the hearer(s), it is equally theoretically possible in both figures of speech and bald-faced lies. To recapitulate, in the prototypical case of performing a bald-faced lie, the sanctioned hearers are meant to pay heed to the overt untruthfulness and to seek the underlying reason for it in the form of an implicature (a type of meaning which is inherently speaker-intended), as defined by Grice (1989a [1975], 1989b [1978]).

Interestingly, Fallis (2012) argues that bald-faced lies do subscribe to a neo-Gricean framework, but considers them as lies in the light of *Believe-Norm-in-effect-Lying*, according to which the speaker intends to violate the relevant norm of conversation, i.e. the first maxim of Quality, against communicating something false precisely by saying and communicating something false. Fallis's (2009, 2012) approach, however, is premised on a peculiar understanding of Grice's first maxim of Quality as a social norm, of which people take cognizance. This seems to be a major diversion from Grice's model of communication, which is focused on human rationality, and offers a philosophical descriptive account, rather than capturing what interactants consciously aim to achieve. While it is indeed the case that people are aware of the wrongness of saying what they believe false, this shows little relevance to Grice's (1989a [1975], 1989b [1978]) theory. This does not mean that the folk and philosophical understanding of the maxim to be truthful cannot be conflated as long as the original underlying premises are upheld.

As Fallis (2012: 570) does recognize, there is a difference between flouting (typical of irony, for instance) and (covert) violation of a maxim, but he concludes that "someone speaking sarcastically [ironically] *does* intend to violate [technically, flout] the norm against saying what he believes to be false. But even if he does, he definitely does not intend to violate the norm against communicating something false." Indeed, an ironic speaker does not intend to communicate something false, because he/she is merely flouting a maxim, making his/her untruthfulness overt to the hearer. Nonetheless, Fallis (2012) maintains that it is violation of the relevant norm that underlies bald-faced lies, since the speaker wishes to communicate something false. He does not acknowledge the fact that the nonfulfillment of the first maxim of Quality is made overt to the hearer, and only a truthful meaning is communicated via implicature. Although Fallis (2012) accepts that a bald-faced liar may wish to communicate some truthful meaning, he is adamant that the speaker "wants

what he actually says to be understood and accepted for purposes of the conversation" (2012: 572). It can be extrapolated from this that Fallis (2012) espouses an idea that untruthful "what is said" is communicated in bald-faced lies, which are then lies. If that were the case, the hearer would not recognize the speaker's untruthfulness, covert as it would need to be, or arrive at any implicature on this basis. Therefore, it is here argued that no "what is said" is communicated, as the speaker dissociates himself/herself from the overtly untruthful literal meaning only to convey an implicature. Thus, the hearer realizes that the speaker is not truthful, and the purpose of his/her utterance is to convey a distinct truthful meaning.

4 Lying or deceiving by implicature

According to the traditional view, lying should be deemed a salient type of deception (e.g. Adler 1997; Barnes 1994; Bok 1978; Chisholm and Feehan 1977; Ekman 1985; Fraser 1994; Kupfer 1982; Mahon 2008a, 2008b; Simpson 1992), inasmuch as the liar's underlying aim is to deceive. However, "deception" is frequently used as a label for any deception exclusive of lying (e.g. Adler 1997; Carson 2010; Mahon 2008a), which a few authors (Green 2001; Saul 2012; Stokke 2013b) call *(merely) misleading*. One of the reverberating topics in the linguistic and philosophical scholarship on lying and deception concerns differentiation between lies and other forms of deception, such as withholding information or bullshitting, each displaying its distinctive features. Lies are then isolated as a distinct category of deception although some authors do define them as not being predicated on deception, as reported above. Greater differentiation facilitates more detailed descriptions of each of the notions, while bringing together two phenomena and encompassing them under one label must be substantially motivated. What Meibauer (2014) does is consistently argue in favor of combining lies, as classically defined, with false implicatures in all forms and guises. Given his discussion, this does not appear to be a problem concerning merely the use of labels.

Meibauer's (2014) proposal that lies may pivot on implicatures[13] is a provocative one, but by no means novel. Meibauer (2014) explicitly acknowledges only Falkenberg (1982), but he tacitly follows also Vincent and Castelfranchi's (1981) distinction between *direct* and *indirect lying*. Vincent and Castelfranchi

13 Meibauer (2014) also makes similar claims about falsely presupposing and falsely conventionally implicating.

(1981) put forward the latter notion with reference to deceptive inferences stemming from assertions the speaker assents to, including deceptive reticence and half-truths. Meibauer's (2014: 127) parlance also suggests that he distinguishes "genuine lies" from "lying by falsely implicating," but the monograph does not show consistence in respect of this distinction.

Lying via implicatures, or what Meibauer (2014) calls "false implicatures", is not captured by the definition of lying provided earlier in the volume (cf. Section 2 above) given that implicatures are not assertions, which is why Meibauer admits that an "extended definition of lying" (2014: 125) is necessary:

Lie–extended definition (IMPL)
S lied at t by uttering the declarative sentence σ iff
(a) the definition of the lie holds,
(b) or S thereby conversationally implicated that q, but actively believed that not q.
(Meibauer 2014: 125)

This twofold definition clearly indicates that deceptive implicatures constitute a distinct species of lying, which cannot be merged under one provision. Also, Meibauer (2014: 126) seems to be partly supportive of Falkenberg's (1982: 137) attempt at a definition, which the latter ultimately rejects, "A lied indirectly, iff (a) A asserted that p and thereby implicated that q, (b) A believed that not q." One of the reservations Meibauer (2014: 126) has against it, though, is that it "does not account for the fact that the assertion of p may be a lie, too." Meibauer (2014: 127) brings to focus the intriguing case of "falsely implicating while saying the falseness," whereby two forms of deceiving (or, in Meibauer's view, lying) come into play. The speaker can hence produce a lie by asserting what he/she believes to be false and simultaneously communicate an implicature which he/she also believes to be false. Consequently, "or" in proviso b in the definition above should perhaps be substituted for "and/or."

Meibauer defines implicatures as "additional propositions arising from the situation of the utterance" (2014: 123). What this suggests is that an implicature is a proposition which comes into being on the strength of an utterance and its contextual factors. This corresponds to Grice's (1989a [1975]) *particularized conversational implicatures*. Meibauer (2014) also observes that these propositions may be true or false (but these labels should perhaps be substituted for "truthful" and "untruthful" due to their embedding in the speaker's beliefs), which he credits to Grice, based on the following excerpt: "Since the truth of a conversational implicatum 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'" (Grice 1989a [1975]: 39). Meibauer (2014) does not recognize that this quotation comes from a section in which Grice (1989a [1975]) compiles a set of features of implicature and that it seems to involve a contradiction. Essentially, the information in the parentheses may include a typo, and Grice appears to have the opposite in mind: what is said may be false – what is implicated may be true. Grice (1989a [1975]) thus explains the nature of implicatures which originate in the flouting of the first maxim of Quality, necessitating literal untruthfulness, but he does not purport to conceive of deceptive implicatures. It would be strange if he should have done so, since his model evinces moral undertones, with lying and deceiving being illegitimate activities (cf. Dynel 2011a; Meibauer 2005). However, the topic of deceiving by implicature has indeed been appreciated in the literature on deception (e.g. Adler 1997; Chisholm and Feehan 1977; Dynel 2011a; Fallis 2009; Meibauer 2005, 2011; Saul 2012; Siegler 1966; Stokke 2013a, 2013b, 2014) yet not in such a meticulous manner. Meibauer (2014) teases out the characteristics of false implicatures from various perspectives, and his discussion abounds in many interesting postulates.

Meibauer (2014) dwells on the problem of *generalized* and particularized conversational implicatures, accounting for their differences in the context of their deceptive/lying capacity. The bulk of the analysis of particularized and generalized implicatures is conducted in the light of Levinson's (2000) heuristics, as well as the classical Gricean framework. In this context, Meibauer (2014: 129) addresses, among other things, scalar implicatures, related to "the Q-Principle (or the first maxim of Quantity)." Meibauer suggests that "with GCIs, it is not possible to lie when p [the literal meaning] is false and q [the implicature] is true," whereas this will be possible in the case of particularized conversational implicatures. Nevertheless, this difference does not concern the nature of implicatures per se, inasmuch as the lie arises or is absent at the level of literal meaning, Grice's (1989a [1975]) what is said, while the implicature is truthful in both cases. Also, Meibauer (2014) observes that generalized conversational implicatures share greater affinity with prototypical lies, thanks to cases such as "One" said by a child in reply to the mother's question "How many cookies did you take?" Meibauer (2014) states that the child implicates "Not more than one," and if this is untrue, the utterance counts as a lie. However, it may be argued that the child's stating the exact number is tantamount to a standard lie, as the one-word reply is an elliptical assertion (Alston 2000), whereby the speaker asserts what he believes to be false. The elaboration "not more than" as a generalized conversational implicature will be otiose and may be a matter of logical entailment, rather than implicature. Also, Meibauer (2014) ventures to claim that particularized conversational

implicatures are more difficult to cancel and to calculate than generalized conversational implicatures. These are definitely interesting claims but they are in need of further verification.

Importantly, Meibauer (2014) posits that lying can be performed by dint of irony (see also Simpson 1992), tautology, as well as hyperbole and understatement. Indeed, these figures may invite implicatures coinciding with untruthful meanings, hence being deceptive. Meibauer (2014) would add that the same holds for deceptive metaphor, which, together with other forms of implicatures, Saul (2012) regards as *(merely) misleading*, but not lying. Meibauer (2014) criticizes Saul's (2012) approach to deceptive implicatures mainly on the grounds that "misleading may be accidental" and is "a by-product of misunderstanding" (2014: 136). Indeed, "misleading" tends to be used with reference to unintentional form of deception (e.g. Barnes 1994; Carson 2010; van Horne 1981), but Saul (2012) consistently applies this label to the communicative phenomena that others would call "mere deception", as signaled above. It is not the label as such that is crucial but the conceptualization. Saul (2012) argues that implicatures cannot count as lies, which is precisely what Meibauer (2014) states is the case, attempting to provide some rationale for this claim from various angles.

Meibauer (2014) views a selection of figures of speech used for deceptive purposes as lies, contrary to the prevalent assumption that irony (in tandem with other figures) does not reside in assertions (Chisholm and Feehan 1977; Stokke 2013a, 2014), while lies, as traditionally defined, constitute assertions (e.g. Adler 1997; Bok 1978; Chisholm and Feehan 1977; Fallis 2009, 2010; Kupfer 1982; Mahon 2008a, 2008b; Mannison 1969; Sorensen 2007; Stokke 2013a, 2013b; Williams 2002). Rejecting the "argument from authority" that lies should be restricted to assertions, Meibauer (2014: 136) avers that "untruthful implicatures are bound to assertions (...) In addition, since in a Gricean framework tropes are interpreted on the basis of maxims, this seems to prove the point that lying[14] while using false implicatures is a case of lying." This explanation may strike the readers as being elusive. First of all, being somehow bound to assertions does not suffice as the sine qua non for lying. Lies are assertions the speakers believe to be false. In addition, it is also other forms of deception potentially conducive to implicatures, such as deceptive withholding information, that may stem from assertions, and yet they are typically distinguished from lies. Thus, deceptive implicatures' reliance of some kind on assertions will not suffice as a basis for a conclusion that they show the same properties as lies. Moreover, untruthful implicatures might hinge on non-assertions as well, whether or not related to figures of speech. For instance, irony need not reside

14 The formulation of the conclusion "lying (...) is lying" may provoke misgivings.

in assertions but in questions or interjections (see Dynel 2013 and references therein), and even these could give rise to untruthful implicatures. Finally, it is difficult to tell why the fact that tropes (i.e. figures of speech) entail maxim floutings should explain the fact that false implicatures count as lies. Grice (1989a [1975]) proposes them as a set of maxims to capture the workings of logical conversation, and logical interaction generally, based on what is said (when the maxims are observed) and implicature (when the maxims are flouted, as in the case of figures). On the other hand, Grice (1989a [1975], 1989b [1978]) does not conceive of deceiving other than that performed by covert violation of maxims, which he excludes from his idealistic model of communication (cf. Dynel 2011a; Meibauer 2005).

Arguing in favor of deceptive implicatures' being lies, Meibauer (2014) indirectly contributes to the discussion on whether or not cancellability is an intrinsic property of implicatures (see e.g. Blome-Tillmann 2008; Jaszczolt 2009; Weiner 2006), a topic which he briefly addresses elsewhere in his book (Meibauer 2014: 119–120). Cancellability is a property crucial for deceptive implicatures, since the speaker enjoys the right to withdraw them should the deception be detected, unlike in the case of assertion-based lies, even though both are equally morally wrong (cf. Saul 2012). However, Meibauer (2014: 125) observes that the cancellation of false implicatures may not be convincing or plausible in many situations, insofar as "q [implicature] is intimately connected to p [statement] and the calculation of q is evidently intended by the speaker." This echoes Adler's (1997: 446) claim that "in falsely implicating, rather than lying, the outcome is still directly intended, not merely a foreseen consequence." Indeed, it may seem that some implicatures are not amenable to plausible cancellation, but the speaker may insist that his/her intentions have been otherwise.

Jaszczolt (2009) convincingly elucidates that strongly intended implicit meanings often surface as primary meanings, as intended by the model speaker and recovered by the model addressee (Jaszczolt 2005, 2009) and these may not lend themselves to unproblematic cancellation. However, this does not change their status as regular implicatures, which are juxtaposed with literal intended meanings. This is because even if implicatures cannot be cancelled explicitly by adding "but not p," they will be subject to the alternative test of contextual cancellability (Jaszczolt 2009). In other words, there will be an imaginable situation in which the implicature will not arise (Grice 1989a [1975]: 44; Meibauer 2014). Fulfilling one of these conditions, an implicit meaning will still count as an implicature, a layer of meaning distinct from what is said, its strength and lack of liability to explicit cancellability notwithstanding. The fact that some implicatures are not liable to explicit cancellation does not validate a

conclusion that, if untruthful, they should be classified as lies, which Meibauer (2014) seems to suggests.

To summarize, that deception may be performed by maxim flouting, and hence untruthful implicatures, is a widely acknowledged fact (e.g. Dynel 2011a; Fallis 2009; Saul 2012; Stokke 2013b, 2014). Whether this phenomenon can be regarded as lying is a distinct matter that is yet to be examined in more detail. It may be the case that implicatures should not be approached collectively owing to their diversity. Treating all implicatures as deception/misleading but not lying may be a sweeping generalization, and a question arises if at least some implicatures deserve to be classified as lies. A hypothesis may be put forward that implicatures anchored in figures of speech which revolve around the floutings of the first maxim of Quality (irony, metaphor, hyperbole and meiosis/litotes) may count as lies (cf. Jary 2014, who offers a relevance-theoretic perspective on deceptive metaphors being tantamount to lies). Typically, a distinction is drawn between these figures of speech and lies. In neo-Gricean terms, this dichotomy is guided by the nature of untruthfulness, namely whether it is overt (cf. the flouting of the first maxim of Quality) or covert (cf. the violation of the first maxim of Quality) respectively. A hypothesis formulated here is that the figures may serve lies, in spite of the fact that they are not assertions.

By contrast, Fallis (2009) endorses a view that assertions are predicated on the operation of Grice's first maxim of Quality, which is the sine qua non for lying. In other words, one can lie only by making an assertion when Grice's first maxim of Quality is in operation but is violated (Fallis 2009). On the other hand, the speaker cannot lie if the maxim is "turned off," "suspended" or "not obeyed" (Fallis 2009: 54). This, Fallis (2009) claims, concerns irony (which he refers to as "sarcasm"), and jocularity underpinning utterances in which the speaker is "not to be taken seriously" (Fallis 2009: 35). Fallis would perhaps add that the same concerns other figures of speech, such as metaphor. Fallis (2009) thus equates flouting a maxim with turning off a norm that interlocutors consciously follow (cf. the criticism of this approach in Section 3). However, according to Gricean thought, flouting is not synonymous with turning off a maxim (cf. Stokke 2013a). In Grice's philosophical account, the speaker may be seen as purposefully flouting a maxim, which invariably holds, in order to convey a conversational implicature, which is to be duly inferred by the hearer, who is also aware of the maxim's being in operation but being flouted. On the other hand, the "only joking" type of utterance need not invite implicatures, being a matter of opting out from the Cooperative Principle (cf. Grice 1989a [1975]: 30). In the light of these interpretative queries, Fallis's (2009) postulates on the lying

vs. irony dichotomy cannot be regarded as offering solid arguments against irony-based implicatures being lies.

On the other hand, in her neo-Gricean study, Saul (2012: 13) explicitly dissociates figurative language use from lying, which shows in one of the refined definitions of the latter she proposes: "Lying (7): A person lies iff (1) They say that P; (2) They believe P to be false; (3) They take themself to be in a warranting context; (4) They are not speaking metaphorically, hyperbolically, or ironically" (Saul 2012: 13). This is Saul's way of differentiating between metaphorical, as well as ironic, hyperbolic (or litotic) language use and lying. Incidentally, this distinction can simply be made with regard to the overtness or covertness respectively, of the speaker's untruthfulness. This also indicates that, in her view, lies cannot be performed by dint of non-literal language use, and thus implicatures. Later, Saul (2012: 12) insists that what she is "interested in here is lying *as opposed to misleading*, a notion for which what is actually said is crucial. Once we recall this, it no longer seems so problematic to rule out lying via metaphor, malapropism and linguistic error.[15]" Saul then makes an a priori assumption that lies must be assertions, rather than pondering the characteristics of deceptive metaphor that determine whether or not it can constitute lying.

As already stated, by producing irony, metaphor, hyperbole and meiosis/litotes, the speaker is overtly untruthful and does not believe what he/she "makes as if to say" (Grice 1989a [1975]). Therefore, in opposition to utterances which communicate both conversational implicature and the subordinate what is said, no what is said emerges from utterances couched in the Quality-based figures of speech and the only meaning that the speaker must be intentionally communicating arises in the form of implicature (cf. Dynel 2013). Consequently, the emerging implicatures will be primary meanings, as defined by Jaszczolt (2009) and, prototypically, the only communicated meanings.[16] This is why, albeit not assertions per se, such implicatures could perhaps count as lies. Additionally, while implicatures arising from the figures of speech based on the flouting of the first maxim of Quality will pass the Gricean cancellability test, as discussed above, in practice the explicit defeasibility of such implicatures is rarely feasible, for lack of an alternative interpretation. Incidentally, a

15 The two phenomena next to irony are essentially unintentional. Saul (2012) accounts also for unintended meanings in her framework, which is not compatible with Grice's original model of intentional communication, idealistic as it may be.

16 However, implicatures generated on the basis of the figures can serve as the basis for further implicatures arising in conversational contexts. Additionally, verisimilar irony does operate on the level of what is said besides promoting implicatures (cf. Dynel 2013).

noteworthy exception may be a metaphor with more than one possible interpretation. Alternatively, the meanings prioritized with the benefit of hindsight will hardly come across as being convincing in terms of speaker meaning, even though they are not impossible. In any case, should a deceiver wish to retract the deceptive implicature, his/her denial will hardly sound plausible, taking into account the salience of the original implicature and lack of what is said that could serve as an alternative meaning. Thanks to these characteristics, deceptive implicatures stemming from the Quality-based figures of speech bear strong similarity to mendacious assertions, and can be thought of as lies (cf. Jary 2014 for a different explanation).

5 Epilogue

The discussion above pertains to only three of the many theoretical problems Jörg Meibauer addresses in his monograph. This is just a small sample of the thorny issues on which linguists and philosophers with interests in lying and deception invariably deliberate. Whether the readers will agree with or question Meibauer's (2014) postulates, his volume will be relevant to many discussions on the nature of lying, contributing to our deeper understanding of this phenomenon from the perspective of semantics and pragmatics.

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Bionote

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