



Jolanta Antas:

*O kłamstwie i kłamaniu (On lie and lying)*

Universitas, Kraków, 2008, 348 pp. (in Polish)

It is Poland's first monographic work devoted to lie and lying. The author looks into the lie from the point of view of logic, semantics, language strategy, culture-related aspects, and signs and indications of lying from the point of view of verbal and non-verbal communication.

Until recently, one could believe that from the point of view of forensic sciences, only the indications of lying are material. While discussing them, the author makes use, however, of only a share of available literature. These are the generally known publications by Paul Ekman, David Lykken, and David Raskin. Works that are important, yet not the only ones. From the point of view of the traditional detection of deception, especially important is Chapter 7: *Znaki i oznaki kłamania. Z punktu widzenia komunikacji niewerbalnej (Signs and indications of lying. From the point of view of non-verbal communication)*.

The author believes polygraph examination to be unreliable, and following D. Lykken claims that "the successes of polygraph are achieved in fact only because experts convince the examined about the reliability of the device, and chiefly in this way achieve the intended results. For the examined believe in the efficiency of polygraph so much as to show all the symptoms of emotional agitation, which are actually characteristic for deception, yet which to the same extent may result from their panic fear that they will not be believed."

Further, the author claims that “the polygraph, which has been proven beyond doubt, is therefore in no way ‘a detector of deceit’, which means that it does not measure or prove directly the act of lying. What it does register directly are symptoms of emotional tension caused by the activity of the autonomous nervous system: physiological changes generated by this very emotional tension, which need not be specifically connected to lying.” (pp. 279–280).

All these are true and not true at the same time. If the author had reached at least to the generally-available manuals of forensic sciences, she would know that polygraph examination is a method of discovering emotional marks, which in turn, is a peculiar form of marks of memory that undergo a specific “processing” during the preparation to polygraph examination.

This “processing” means preparation of tests with questions formulated in such a way that the person examined may answer shortly “yes – no” or only “no”, and on preparing the examined person to answering such questions. Therefore, polygraphic examination in its classical understanding is not based on assessment whether any longer utterance by the examined in the form of a sentence in a logical sense is true or consciously false. In any form, polygraphic examination – be it the control questions techniques or the Guilty Knowledge Test technique – is a form of detection of deception. In the first case, deception means a knowingly false answer to a critical question, while in the latter – withholding the fact of possessing knowledge that the examined person is asked about.

The author lacks knowledge on the diagnostic value of polygraph examination as perceived this way, and her judgments in this field are ungrounded. Numerous experiments prove this value to be not lower than the diagnostic value of other methods of identification routinely applied in criminal investigation.

The remaining considerations of the author, the results of tests she refers to, and considerations of other authors are, on the other hand, of great interests for the new trends in lie detection research and practices.

The contemporary attempts at remote lie detection without the knowledge of the examined person must be based on indicators other than those used by the traditional polygraphic examination. Moreover, the utterances of the examined person are not stimulated by special lists of questions (tests), as is the case in a traditional detection of deception. Remote detection of lies requires the ascertainment and standardization of verbal and non-verbal symptoms accompanying longer utterances in the form of sentences (and not only short “yes – no” or “no” answers). The author presents four psychological states, described by M. Zuckerman and R. Driver, which the psychological theories of verbal deception associate with the act of lying:

**1) control** (trying to disguise what they really think, lying persons must control their behavior to a greater extent than persons telling the truth; which results in their being less spontaneous);

**2) general agitation** (the autonomic character of deceitful behaviors is related to the state of consciousness, described as “guilty knowledge”. It results in physiological agitation, as the lying persons remain in a permanent conflict between what they have in mind or memory and what they actually say. The indicators of this agitation, which accompany guilty knowledge, quoted by Antas after other authors (Scott, Wells, Wood, Morgan: *Pupillary response and sexual interest reexamined*, Journal of Clinical Psychology, 1967, 23, pp. 433–438, and: Simpson and Hale: *Pupillary changes during a decision making task*, Perceptual and Motor Skills, 1969, 29, pp. 495–498) include: pupil dilation, eye blinking, change of the basic voice frequency, linguistic errors, and language retardations. They can also be accompanied by pantomimic gestures;

**3) emotional states** (it is assumed that the action of lying is related to negative affections including a sense of guilt, involvement in the process of deceit, anxiety or fear of the lie being detected. They may be reflected in facial expressions, tone of the voice, and movements of the body;

**4) complexity of the cognitive processing** (as a conversation strategy, lying is a far more difficult mental process than telling the truth – true information). The lying person must build a non-existent image, and later communicate it, making sure that the message is coherent and non-contradictory, while the person telling the truth describes only a real image, which can be done spontaneously and without any stress. As Kahneman and Beatty (D. Kahneman: *Attention and effort*, Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973; J. Beatty: *Task-evoked pupillary responses, processing load, and the structure of processing resources*, Psychological Bulletin, 1982, 91, pp. 276–292) noticed, pupils contract in the phase of constructing lies, and expand in the phase of telling the lie.

Non-verbal reactions are accompanied by numerous verbal ones. Characteristic for the semantic structure of a deceptive utterance is the high frequency of phrases that reinforce/strengthen credibility, greater care for semantic and logical cohesion, lower concreteness, and increased brevity of the utterance (see: p. 302).

It seems that the symptoms listed above should be referred to the type of personality of the speaker whose truthfulness we want to assess. The minimum factors to be taken into account include extroversion/introversion of the speaker, and the level of the speaker’s emotional stability/lability. Probably general eloquence, being the derivative of a number of factors (extro-

version, IQ, the knowledge actually held, and language proficiency), would not be immaterial. Without these, the ascertainment of the verbal symptoms listed above tells nothing.

Nowhere in the book does the author refer to the dynamic changes in the brain that accompany lying, which can be ascertained through fMRI, and which have been subject of intensive research for over a decade, especially in the United States. This is certainly with a detriment to this precious and commendable book, as it deprives it of the attribute of completeness.

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