

"I NEVER SAID THAT!":

MESSAGE DECEPTIVENESS AS A FUNCTION OF COMMUNICATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

COMMUNICOLOGY

MAY 2012

By

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Keywords: deception, communicative responsibility, information manipulation

ABSTRACT

Deception literature is replete with various approaches to understanding the ways in which deceptive messages vary. One commonality, however, is that various forms of deceptive messages are perceived as more or less deceptive. Little explanation has been put forth to explain this variance. Communicative Responsibility Theory, which suggests that the onus of message understanding may be more or less symmetrical between interactants, is invoked in an attempt to explain variations in perceptions of message deceptiveness. The present experiment induced various forms of deceptive messages and measured participant ($N = 167$) perceptions of deceptiveness as well as perceptions of interactants' communicative responsibility. Results indicated little to no relationship between the deceptive messages used in the study and communicative responsibility, but did reveal an overarching relationship between information manipulation and communicative responsibility. Potential inefficacy of the generated deceptive messages and implications of the findings are discussed.

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“I never said that!”:

Message deceptiveness as a function of communicative responsibility

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Of all the communicative behaviors in which one may engage, perhaps the most condemned is deception. To the general public many other forms of communication are met with apathy or objectivity--interpersonal communication, health communication, face negotiation, nonverbal communication, message processing and so forth. But deception, it seems, carries with it some moral baggage. Deception is condemned despite its prevalence in everyday life and its utility in the maintenance of social interactions (DePaulo & Bell, 1996; DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, & Epstein, 1996; Turner, Edgley, & Olmstead, 1975). Indeed, as much as lying has been referred to in the pejorative, it also functions as a kind of social lubricant (Vrij, 2008). The proverbial question of “does this dress make me look fat?”, for instance, can only be met with one prosocial response--even if it is a deceptive response. Nonetheless, individuals often assign blame and judgment when instances of deception are revealed.

There is much variability in the construction and reception of deceptive messages. How, then, do observers judge the degree of accountability that lies with a deceiver? To understand this question it is first necessary to address the construction of deceptive messages. Various scholars have come up with a number of different approaches to explain how deceptive messages are constructed (Buller & Burgoon, 1996; McCornack, 1992; Turner et al., 1975). Some of the most

prominent approaches will be discussed. In addition, it is necessary to invoke a framework with which to better understand the degree of responsibility that is attributed to each communicative party during a deceptive interaction. By understanding the way in which a deceptive message is constructed and assessing the responsibility of communicators it may be possible to determine who is more accountable for creating an erroneous belief.

Review of Deception Literature

Deception has been conceptualized differently by many researchers (Burgoon & Buller, 1994; Mitchell, 1986; Vrij, 2008; Zuckerman, DePaulo, & Rosenthal, 1981). However, perhaps the most common themes agreed upon by scholars when defining deception center on a couple of core principles (Miller & Stiff, 1993; Vrij, 2008; Zuckerman et al., 1981). First, that deception is enacted deliberately by the deceiver. If an individual is deceived by the inadvertent communication of another, scholars hesitate to call the interaction deceptive. Second, deception should intend to mislead another. This results in a target believing something to be true despite the deceiver believing it to be false. It is insufficient for a message to have either intentionality or the installment a false belief in another to be labeled deception, both are necessary. For example, an inadvertent misunderstanding may lead another to a false belief, but is not considered deceptive by scholars because a misunderstanding lacks deliberateness on behalf of the sender. Additionally, a false statement made in sarcasm is not deceptive because it does not lead a receiver to hold a belief other than that held by the speaker.

This framework for conceptualizing deception has given rise to understanding the various ways in which deception may occur. Scholars acknowledge that explicit falsification is not the only way by which individuals can engage in deception (Buller & Burgoon, 1996; McCornack, 1992; Metts, 1989; Turner et al, 1975). To account for the variety in deceptive messages scholars have historically taken one of two different approaches: identifying deceptive message types and identifying dimensions of deceptive messages.

Types of Deceptive Messages

The earliest approach to conceiving of the various forms of deceptive messages was the identification of a variety of categories, or types, of messages that may constitute deception. This has been the most common approach by many researchers (Aune, Metts, & Ebesu, 1990; Metts, 1989; Tolhuizen, 1990; Turner et al., 1975). There are a couple of prominent approaches to distinguish various categories of deceptive messages. One popular categorization of deceptive messages was put forth by Turner, Edgley and Olmstead (1975), described that deceptive messages consist of (a) lies, (b) exaggerations, (c) half-truths, (d) secrets, and (e) diversionary responses. First, lies are said to be those messages wherein the information conveyed by the sender is in direct contradiction with what he or she would have said if being honest. Second, exaggerations are either those messages that contain completely truthful information plus additional false information (Type I) or those messages that contain truthful information delivered with more superlatives (Type II). Third, half-truths are either those messages that contain less information than complete disclosure (Type I) or those messages that contain

truthful information, but described with subordinate modifiers (Type II). Fourth, secrets are instances in which the communicator would have revealed information if being honest, but instead remained silent. Finally, diversionary responses are those messages in which the content of what was communicated diverges in topicality from what would have been a completely truthful, disclosive message.

Another popular categorization of deceptive messages was put forth by Metts (1989), suggesting that deception consisted of (a) falsification, (b) distortion, and (c) omission. Falsified messages were described as those messages involving the conveyance of information that is in contradiction with true information. This type of deception is akin to what Turner, Edgley and Olmstead (1975) termed lies and exaggerations because they involve the conveyance of false information. Second, distorted messages were described as the manipulation of true information such that a receiver would not have access to all relevant information or would inevitably misinterpret the information that was conveyed. These bear some similarity to what Turner, Edgley and Olmstead (1975) termed diversionary responses. Finally, deception in the form of omission involves withholding sensitive information from the receiver. This is akin to what Turner, Edgley and Olmstead termed half-truths and secrets. In addition to these three types of deceptive messages, Metts (1989) also created a fourth category called escape to categorize those miscellaneous messages that were not honest, but could not be readily categorized into one of the other three message types.

Dimensions of Deceptive Messages

Apart from identifying the various types of deceptive messages, other scholars have attempted to conceptualize deceptive messages with a multidimensional framework. There are two prominent perspectives that identify these various dimensions of deceptive messages.

Information Manipulation Theory. The first perspective used to frame different forms of deception is Information Manipulation Theory (IMT). In IMT, McCornack (1992) articulated that there are four dimensions of deceptive messages: (a) Quality violations, (b) Quantity violations, (c) Relation violations, and (d) Manner violations. The framework of IMT is premised on Grice's (1989) conversational maxims. Grice (1989) suggested that during interaction individuals are guided by four maxims of conversation. First, the maxim of Quality describes the way in which people are inclined to convey that information which is factually true. Second, the maxim of Quantity refers to the tendency for individuals to communicate as much information as is necessary to convey meaning; no more and no less. Third, the maxim of Relation, refers to the tendency for individuals to maintain topicality and not venture into irrelevant subject matter. Finally, the maxim of Manner refers to the tendency for individuals to communicate clearly and unambiguously enough so as to be well understood. Although individuals may blatantly violate, or flout, maxims, Grice (1989) maintained that through conversational implicature individuals are able to achieve meaning despite the occasional surface violation of a maxim. Conversational implicature refers to the process of making inferences in order to make sense of another individual's

messages (Grice 1989). For example, the statement “that class makes me sick” flouts the maxim of Quality because it does not represent fact. The sender does not literally experience physical ailment because of a class. Despite a violation of a maxim, the receiver is still able to make sense of the statement by engaging in implicature.

McCornack (1992) argued that deceivers may take advantage of others’ tendency toward implicature by engaging in violations of conversational maxims that remain covert as opposed to overt. Consider the example statement above, “that class makes me sick.” IMT would not consider this violation of a conversational maxim to be deceptive because the violation is done overtly. The receiver is fully aware of a maxim violation and is therefore not led astray. If the receiver were not fully aware of a maxim violation and were to be led astray, the communication would only classify as deceptive if the sender had deceptive intent. For example, consider a student who feigns physical or psychological ailment in order to avoid going to a class. The statement “that class makes me sick” could be taken literally by a receiver and result in an erroneous conclusion. A covert violation of the maxim of Quality, therefore, involves communicating information that the sender believes to be false with the intent of engendering a false belief in the receiver. Other scholars refer to this as type of deception as falsification (Metts, 1989; Turner et al., 1975). A covert violation of the maxim of quantity involves omitting sensitive information, otherwise known as lying by omission (Buller & Burgoon, 1996; Van Swol, Malhotra, & Braun, 2011). A covert violation of the maxim of relevance involves leading the topic of a dialogue astray, sometimes referred to as misdirection (Buller & Burgoon,

1996). Finally, a covert violation of the maxim of manner involves obfuscating a message through semantics, this is sometimes called deception by equivocation (Bavelas, Black, Chovil, & Mullett, 1990).

IMT aims to explain the mechanisms by which deceivers construct deceptive messages. However, this perspective is not without controversy. Jacobs, Dawson and Brashers (1996) argued that IMT excludes important considerations on the part of the receiver. They pointed out that a necessary outcome for deceptive messages is to instill a false belief in the receiver and that a maxim violation alone is not sufficient to constitute deception. For instance, a violation of quantity may leave out vital information, but it does not necessarily instill a belief in the receiver that is different from the belief of the sender. In order for a false belief to be created in a receiver from a maxim violation other than one of quality, the receiver must necessarily engage in an inference that results in a false belief. This inference making, argued by Jacobs et al. (1996) is neglected by IMT.

In a rejoinder to Jacobs et al. (1996) McCornack, Levine, Morrison and Lapinski (1996) suggested that the approach taken by IMT is consistent with the Gricean paradigm. They argued that suggesting IMT excludes important considerations on the part of the receiver is to impose additional steps on Grice's (1989) original work on implicature. They further argued that the scope of IMT did not claim to account for perceptions of deception targets. Rather, IMT's purpose was to describe the ways in which deceivers themselves may craft messages that may later be construed as deceptive.

Interpersonal Deception Theory. Meanwhile, during the same time period the IMT debate waged on yet another frame of reference with which scholars may view various dimensions of deception was offered by Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT). In IDT, Burgoon, Buller, Guerrero, Afifi and Feldman (1996) articulated five dimensions of deception: (a) veridicality, (b) completeness, (c) directness, (d) clarity, and (e) personalization. Veridicality refers to the extent to which information conveyed is factual in two ways: plausible as perceived by the sender and plausible as perceived by the receiver (Burgoon et al., 1996). This dimension is similar to McCornack's (1992) conception of falsification in that its premise rests on Grice's (1989) maxim of Quality. Completeness takes two forms: information and conversational completeness, referring to the degree of sufficient information conveyed and fulfillment of conversational demands respectively. Its basic deceptive function is similar to that of a quantity violation in that it refers to the omission of information (Burgoon et al., 1996; McCornack 1992). Directness refers to content topicality and the degree to which content syntactically and semantically follows from previous messages. Employed as deception it is largely similar to what IMT terms a violation of relevance because it misdirects topicality (Burgoon et al., 1996; McCornack 1992). Clarity refers to the degree to which messages avoid obscurity and ambiguity so as to maximize target understanding. This dimension is not unlike a violation of manner as it may constitute equivocal deception (Bavelas, 1990; Burgoon et al., 1996; McCornack 1992). Personalization refers to "the extent to which information presented conveys the speaker's own thoughts, opinions, and feelings" (Burgoon et al., 1996, p. 55). Burgoon et al. (1996)

suggest that these five dimensions may be arranged in different combinations to form three types of deception: falsification, equivocation and concealment.

However, they acknowledge that this list is not exhaustive and other forms of deception may exist.

IMT and IDT differ from one another in important ways and they share fundamental commonalities. Both approaches differ with respect to their regard for deception as sender or receiver based. IMT is largely concerned with deceptive message construction on the part of the sender. It is concerned what communicative mechanisms are employed by a deceiver in order to construct a deceptive message. On the other hand, IDT takes a more receiver oriented approach to deception than IMT; a kind of dual sender/receiver approach. It is interested in the way that listeners hear and make sense out of messages once a sender has manipulated message content. The two approaches also share some fundamental commonalities. For instance, four of their respective dimensions are informed by the same Gricean maxims. Only IDT's dimension of personalization is not anchored by a Gricean maxim (Burgoon et al., 1996). Also, the three types of deception offered by IDT (falsification, equivocation and concealment) are similar to the violations of quality, manner and quantity (Burgoon et al., 1996; McCornack, 1992).

Given the multitude of ways in which messages may be deceptive, it begs the question whether different types of deception are more or less deceptive than others. Answering this question requires the ability to assess perceptions of deceptiveness.

Variation in Deceptiveness

Levine (2001) pointed out that the intuitive conceptualization of deceptiveness is dichotomous; intuitively a message is either deceptive or it is not deceptive rather than continuous in which a message may be more or less deceptive. However, one of the interesting findings of past research has been the variation in the way individuals rate different forms of deception as more or less honest. For example, tests of McCornack's (1992) IMT involved the construction of a scenario involving deceptive communication and were read by participants. Each scenario established a case that resulted in a message that was either honest, falsified information, omitted information, misdirected information or obfuscated information. Participants then rated each message on a continuous scale indicating how honest they perceived the statement to be. Results from these studies have revealed that deception by falsification was perceived as significantly less honest than deception by misdirection. Misdirection was, in turn, less honest than equivocation and equivocation was less honest than omission (McCornack, Levine, Solowczuk, Torres, & Campbel, 1992; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yeung, Levine, Nishiyama, 1999).

Empirical examination of IDT has also shown that falsification is perceived as less honest than equivocation and concealment (Burgoon et al., 1996). To test IDT the researchers had participant interviewers ask questions of participant interviewees. Interviewees would respond with either truthful, falsified, equivocated or concealed messages. These messages were later rated for honesty by both the senders (interviewees) and the receivers (interviewers). From the

perspective of the senders, there were differences in perceptions of veridicality in that falsification was perceived as less honest than equivocation and equivocation was perceived as less honest than concealment. From the perspectives of both senders and receivers falsified messages were seen as the least honest type of response.

Another example of the variation of perceived message deceptiveness comes from Rycyna, Champion, and Kelly (2009) in the examination of deception and impression formation. This study examined the effects of deception type on liking. Confederates lied about their weight to participants either by falsifying their message, by equivocating their message, or by keeping a secret (omitting information). The participants later reported on their liking of the confederate with whom they had interacted. The results of the investigation indicated that the forms of deception influenced how participants perceived the confederate. Falsification and secret keeping were off-putting to participants while equivocation engendered more liking.

Recently, Vans Swol, Malhotra, and Braun (2011) had either strangers or friends choose to allocate money evenly among themselves or deceive a partner in order to keep more money. These money allocators indicated how deceptive they believed they were under conditions of falsification, omission, and honesty. The allocators rated falsified lies as most deceptive, omission as less deceptive, and honesty as not deceptive. In summary, the literature provides compelling evidence that different kinds of deceptive messages are perceived as more or less honest from one another.

Because of the findings of these past perspectives, it is reasonable to expect that past variation of honesty ratings should be similarly related to information manipulation. While the ordering of falsification, misdirection, equivocation, and omission with respect to honesty ratings has been replicated across tests of IMT (McCornack et al., 1992; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yeung et al., 1999), they have largely relied on the same methodology, which should be expected to yield similar results. However, other deceptive research designs, including those of IDT, have yielded different results (Burgoon et al., 1996; Van Swol et al., 2011). Nonetheless, past literature clearly distinguishes falsification as the prototypical form of a deceptive message because of the way it is constructed. Thus, it is possible to advance the following hypotheses and pose the following research question.

H1: Information manipulation should be related to honesty ratings such that:

H1a: Baseline honesty will be rated more honest than falsification, misdirection, equivocation, and omission by observers.

H1b: Deception by falsification will be rated less honest than misdirection, equivocation, omission and baseline honesty by observers.

RQ1: How will observer ratings of honesty differ across conditions of misdirection, equivocation, and omission?

Explanations for Variation in Deceptiveness

The literature provides very little, however, in the way of explaining these discrepancies. Of the limited explanations available, perhaps the most notable explanation is the notion of directness. Bavelas et al. (1990) argued that a message

may be construed as equivocal to the extent that its content is made direct or indirect. There are two issues with this explanation. First, the explanatory power of directness and indirectness is limited in that it only applies to equivocation. Equivocal messages may be an important part of understanding deceptive communication as a whole, but the literature clearly paints a much more complex picture of deception that necessitates a much wider scope of analysis than simply examining equivocal messages. Second, the conceptual framework with which Bavelas et al. (1990) studied equivocation was such that they did not consider equivocal messages to be deceptive. This is problematic for deception researchers given that many approaches, both categorical and multidimensional, clearly recognize equivocation as a form of deception (Buller & Burgoon, 1996; McCornack et al., 1992; Metts, 1989; Turner et al. 1975). Because of these issues it is evident that in regard to explaining the differences in perceptions of deceptiveness the literature is left wanting.

One possibility for the discrepancy among perceived message deceptiveness may lie in how responsible a sender is perceived for constructing a deceptive message. To begin assessing the ways in which perceived responsibility for deceptive messages can vary, it is first necessary to have a framework with which to approach the perceived responsibility that rests on communicators in a given interaction.

Communicative Responsibility Theory

Grice's (1989) Cooperative Principle (CP) suggests that during a given interaction two communicative parties assume an underlying agreement to achieve

shared meaning through their interactions. As such, they are guided by conversational maxims, discussed earlier, and engage in conversational implicature. By continually engaging in a process of inference making, communicators are able to make sense of a message when one individual flouts a conversational maxim (Grice, 1989). To account for the mechanism by which individuals maintain their role in a communicative setting and adhere to the CP, Aune (1998) advanced a theory of communicative responsibility. According to Communicative Responsibility Theory (CRT) distribution of responsibility is contingent on the locus of meaning, or who has the most knowledge about the given topic (Aune, 1998). Typically, the individual with the most knowledge carries the most communicative responsibility. This burden of responsibility was articulated by Aune (1998) in terms of symmetry. In those instances wherein one individual possesses the most knowledge, there is a greater asymmetrical distribution of communicative responsibility. In this instance, the message source with the locus of meaning should communicate in a manner that is more explicit and requires less inference-making on the part of the receiver. Alternatively, when the locus of meaning does not rest exclusively on one party there is greater symmetry of responsibility across both parties. In this instance both parties will engage in relatively moderate levels of explicitness and inference-making with their communication. Aune suggests that at any given time during an interaction individuals have a sense for how much communicative responsibility rests on himself or herself and a sense for how much communicative responsibility rests on the other party. CRT predicts that when more communicative responsibility rests on a communicator that he or she will speak more explicitly and with greater

redundancy in order to facilitate understanding in the receiver (Aune, Levine, Park, Asada, & Banas, 2005).

In one test of this perspective 94 undergraduate participants were shown a map and instructed to give directions to a hypothetical other (Aune et al., 2005). The hypothetical other was said to be either from the same university as the participant or from a university in South Africa. This created scenarios in which the receiver of the message would either be similar (same university) or dissimilar (South African university). This, in turn, should change participant perceptions about his or her own communicative responsibility resulting in more or less explicit and redundant communication. In accordance with their predictions, participants who believed they were speaking to a similar other reported feeling less communicative responsibility and exhibited less explicit and less redundant communication. In contrast, participants who believed they were speaking to a dissimilar other reported higher levels of communicative responsibility and more explicit and redundant communication. In a second test Aune et al. (2005) found that attributions of responsibility may also be made by third parties observing an interaction. In that study 35 participants read scenarios involving two people in which an interaction was either interrogation-appropriate or interrogation-inappropriate. Interrogation-appropriate referred to those scenarios in which probing questions by one party were not seen as deviant, but as a natural function of the relationship shared by the interactants (e.g., anthropologist asking a man for specific details about his recent social outings for purposes of data collection). In contrast, interrogation-inappropriate referred to those scenarios in which probing

questions would be seen as deviant and unwarranted (e.g., girlfriend asking her boyfriend for specific details about his recent social outings for purposes of suspicion). Interrogation-appropriate scenarios resulted in higher attributions of communicative responsibility of one of the hypothetical interactants than in interrogation-inappropriate scenarios by third-party participants.

Hypotheses

Aune's (1998) CRT provides a framework with which it may be possible to understand the variance observed by past research demonstrating significant differences in the perceived deceptiveness of messages. This variance may be an artifact of attributions of communicative responsibility that third-party observers place on interactants. For example, in the case of falsification the deceiver is sending a message in such a way that is consistent with possessing high communicative responsibility because it involves little inference-making on behalf of the target (Aune, 1998). If the deception is successful in that case it is easy to attribute responsibility to the deceiver and not to the receiver.

With this in mind, some perspective may be provided with which to explain the differences in message deceptiveness evidenced in past research. Utilizing the CRT paradigm to approach the variation in deceptiveness, the manipulation of information should be related to perceptions of communicative responsibility in predictable ways. First, if a deceiver falsifies information and the falsification goes unnoticed, then that deceptive message requires very little inference-making on the part of the target. This is because the meaning of the message is made very explicit by the sender, resulting in little work on the part of the sender. The only inference

necessary on the part of the target is to infer that the speaker is abiding by the CP by maintaining truthfulness. Little to no implicature needs to be made to infer relevance, clarity, or completeness. If that deceptive message requires very little inference-making on the part of the target, then observers will attribute higher levels of communicative responsibility to the deceiver. This asymmetrical distribution of communicative responsibility is akin to interrogation-appropriate scenarios investigated by Aune et al. (2005). Therefore, if a deceiver falsifies information, then omniscient third-party observers who are privy to all facts and communicated messages will attribute higher levels of communicative responsibility to the deceiver. This is consistent with the findings of IMT wherein omniscient third-party observers gave the lowest honesty ratings to falsified deceptive messages (McCornack et al., 1992; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yeung et al., 1999).

Second, if a deceiver misdirects information such that the misdirection goes unnoticed and leads to an erroneous conclusion for the target, then that deceptive message requires some inference-making on the part of the target. Misdirection places greater communicative responsibility on the part of the target because the target must infer two things: infer that the deceiver is abiding by the CP by maintaining relevance and infer an erroneous conclusion. If a misdirected message requires some inference-making on the part of the target, then observers will attribute lower levels of communicative responsibility to the deceiver than under conditions of falsification. Therefore, if a deceiver misdirects information, then

observers will attribute lower levels of communicative responsibility to the deceiver than under conditions of falsification.

Third, if a deceiver equivocates information, then that deceptive message also requires some inference making on the part of the target. Equivocation places greater communicative responsibility on the part of the target because the target has to infer both that the deceiver is being cooperative and then must infer a conclusion based on the vague message delivered by the deceiver. There rests a larger burden on the target to make sense of and draw inference from what the deceiver communicates. If an equivocal deceptive message requires some inference-making on the part of the target, then third-party observers will attribute lower levels of communicative responsibility to the deceiver than under conditions of falsification. Therefore, if a deceiver equivocates information, then observers will attribute lower levels of communicative responsibility to the deceiver than under conditions of falsification.

Finally, if a deceiver omits information, then that deceptive message also requires some inference making on the part of the target. Omitted messages require inference making because a target must infer that the deceiver is abiding by the CP by being complete in his or her communication and then infer a deceptive conclusion. As such, there rests a larger burden on the target to make sense of and draw inference from what the deceiver communicates. Therefore, if a deceiver omits information, then observers will attribute lower levels of communicative responsibility to the deceiver than under conditions of falsification. It is unclear, however, whether observers' ratings of deceiver communicative responsibility will

be lower for omitted messages than for misdirected or equivocated messages because all of these messages involve greater symmetry of communicative responsibility wherein more inference-making is required on the part of the target. This research question will be addressed.

Additionally, it is unclear how observer ratings of communicative responsibility might vary between falsified or baseline honest messages. Baseline honesty, like falsified messages, should not require much work on the part of the receiver to make the additional inferences of topicality, clarity, and completeness. This will also be addressed as a research question.

With all of these things taken together, the following hypotheses and research questions may be derived.

H2: Deception by falsification will be associated with higher observer ratings of communicative responsibility on the deceiver than when deception is achieved by misdirection, equivocation, or omission.

RQ2: How will observer ratings of communicative responsibility vary across conditions of deception by misdirection, equivocation, and omission?

RQ3: Will observer ratings of communicative responsibility differ for conditions of falsification and baseline honesty?

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Recruitment

A convenience sample of 167 participants was recruited for this study from various undergraduate courses in the Department of Communicology. The average age of participants was 20.72 ($SD = 3.25$) with ages ranging from 18 to 38 years. The sample was comprised of 102 (61%) females and 64 (38%) males. One participant did not report sex. Participants identified themselves as predominantly Japanese ($f = 44, 26\%$), Chinese ($f = 26, 15\%$), Caucasian ($f = 23, 14\%$), Filipino ($f = 21, 13\%$), or mixed ($f = 20, 12\%$). They received class credit or extra credit in exchange for their participation, as determined by the policies of their respective courses. Participants were assured that all responses were anonymous, that participation was optional, and that they could opt out at any time. Participants were informed that there were minimal risks associated with this study that could befall them. This information was presented to participants in written format before participating online (see Appendix A).

Procedure and Design

Stimulus materials were presented and data collection was conducted online. Participants read a scenario and a message. Two scenarios were generated that involved two female interactants of similar social status and power distance. Each scenario depicted an interaction between two individuals that could reasonably lead to a potentially deceptive communication. The scenarios were designed such that both interactants appeared to have a vested interest in the given circumstance and

both parties were entitled to information held by one another. The deceptive messages involved deceiver benefit at the expense of the target. These conditions are similar to those used in scenarios constructed for previous tests of IMT (McCornack et al., 1992; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yeung et al., 1999) (see Appendix B). The subsequent responses read by participants contained a message that was either completely truthful (baseline honest condition), violated the maxim of Quality (deception by falsification), violated the maxim of Quantity (deception by omission), violated the maxim of Relation (deception by misdirection), or violated the maxim of Manner (deception by equivocation). Five messages were generated to correspond with each scenario (see Appendix C). Demographic information, including sex, age, and ethnic makeup, was collected from participants (see Appendix D)

Because there were two different scenarios and five different messages, there were 10 different versions of the survey (a 2 x 5 design). After reading their respective scenarios and messages, participants filled out a measure of deception motivation, communicative responsibility for the first interactant in the scenario, a measure of communicative responsibility for the second interactant in the scenario, a measure of guilt, a measure of perceived honesty of the response, and manipulation checks of violation type.

Dependent Measures

Communicative responsibility of both interactants. For the purpose of this study measures of perceptions of communicative responsibility were adapted from the measures used by Aune et al. (2005) (see Appendix E). Two items assessed the degree to which participants ascribed communicative responsibility to each

party in the given scenarios. An example item is: "Imagine that Lucy believed Pam did her 5 pages, to what extent was Pam responsible for contributing to that understanding?" Measures included semantic differential items with seven-point response formats. One item assessed the communicative responsibility of the sender and one item assessed the communicative responsibility of the receiver. Higher ratings on the sender item represented greater responsibility on the sender while higher ratings on the receiver item represented greater responsibility on the receiver. Responses were anchored by *Not at all responsible/Completely responsible*. In general, participants thought that senders were partially responsible for creating understanding in all conditions. Likewise, participants thought that receivers were partially responsible for creating understanding in all conditions. Although receiver responsibility occasionally yielded scores above the midpoint of the scale, scores were generally low overall (see Table 1).

In addition, if communicative responsibility is associated with culpability for deception and deception is largely perceived as morally condemnable (Turner et al., 1975), then it follows that a deceiver ought to feel guilty about having deceived another. As such, a measure was designed to assess how guilty/culpable participants would feel as the sender having communicated the message if it were them. A guilt measure was created for this study and included two seven-point semantic differential items anchored by *Not guilty/Guilty* and *Not regretful/Regretful* with higher mean scores indicating greater guilt and lower scores indicating less guilt (see Appendix F). The two guilt items demonstrated a satisfactory reliability of .74. In general, participants reported highest guilt ratings

in the falsification condition ($M = 5.51, SD = 1.45$) and, curiously, baseline honest condition ($M = 5.84, SD = 1.68$) (see Table 1). A potential explanation for these guilt ratings are addressed in the discussion.

Honesty ratings. Participants rated the degree to which they perceived each message as honest by responding to four seven-point semantic differential items. Items, originally used by Mccornack et al. (1992b), were anchored by *Honest/Dishonest, Deceitful/Truthful, Deceptive/Not Deceptive, and Misleading/Not Misleading* (see Appendix G). Scores were calculated as sums of the items ranging from 4, representing the least honest, to 28, representing the most honest. The scale demonstrated a satisfactory reliability of .95.

Manipulation checks. To assess the extent to which the response conditions were viewed as deceptive, one item was designed to assess the likelihood that the sender created a false understanding in the receiver (e.g., “How likely is it that LUCY will believe PAM did her fair share of the work?”) and one item was designed to assess the degree to which the creation of a false understanding was volitional on the part of the sender (e.g., “To what extent did Pam INTEND for Lucy to believe that she did her fair share of the work?”). Both items employed seven-point response formats. The item assessing the likelihood of an erroneous understanding included response options that ranged from *Not at all likely* to *Completely likely*. The item assessing the sender’s intentionality to create an erroneous understanding included options that ranged from *Did not at all intend* to *Completely intended* (see Appendix H). The measures revealed that in the baseline honest response condition the likelihood for erroneous understanding was low ($M = 2.32, SD = 1.83$) as was the

perceived intentionality of the sender ($M = 2.93, SD = 2.28$). The falsification condition yielded moderated ratings of likelihood for erroneous understanding ($M = 4.11, SD = 1.69$) and moderately high ratings of sender intentionality ($M = 5.25, SD = 1.56$). The misdirection condition yielded a moderately low likelihood of erroneous understanding ($M = 3.62, SD = 1.55$) and moderate sender intentionality ($M = 4.41, SD = 1.94$). The equivocation condition yielded low likelihood of erroneous understanding ($M = 2.78, SD = 1.68$) and moderately low sender intentionality ($M = 3.28, SD = 1.43$). The omission condition yielded moderately low likelihood of erroneous understanding ($M = 3.48, SD = 1.45$) and moderate sender intentionality ($M = 4.44, SD = 1.48$).

To ensure that responses to the scenarios were perceived as genuinely honest, falsified, misdirected, equivocated, and omitted by participants, a series of manipulation checks were conducted. Manipulation checks assessed the degree to which messages were perceived to violate the conversational maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, or Manner. Items for each maxim violation included four seven-point semantic differential scales for each respective maxim violation (see Appendix I). Every scenario included measures for each maxim violation (e.g., *Distorted/Accurate, Concealing/Revealing, and Irrelevant/Relevant*). These manipulation checks have been used previously by (McCornack et al., 1992b; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yueng et al., 1999). In the current study the measures all demonstrated satisfactory reliabilities no lower than .88. The manipulation checks indicated that, on the whole, the response conditions roughly approximated the intended maxim violation. However, the checks also revealed that some conditions

violated multiple maxims or were weak representations of the intended maxim violation.

The baseline honest condition could be considered an accurate portrayal of honesty if all maxim scales yielded scores between 24 and 28. The scores should be expected to yield particularly high ratings because, in theory, fully disclosive messages ought to be perceived as consistent with conversational maxims. Mean scores of the maxim ratings indicated that the baseline honest condition was perceived as a sufficient representation of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner with no mean maxim score less than 22.79. While not all maxim scores were as strong as desired, they were clearly in the appropriate direction.

The falsification condition could be considered an accurate portrayal of a false message if it received a low mean rating of Quality, between 4 and 8, and high mean ratings of Quantity, Relation, and Manner between 16 and 28. Mean scores of the maxim ratings indicated that the falsification condition approached sufficiency with a mean Quality rating of 7, Relation and Manner ratings between 16 and 28, but a Quantity rating of 14.03 just below the limit.

The misdirection condition could be considered an effective manipulation if it received a low rating of Relation, between 4 and 8, and high ratings of Quality, Quantity, and Manner between 16 and 28. Mean scores indicated that the misdirection condition was not a sufficient manipulation of the maxim with the condition receiving a mean Relation score of 11.65, above the acceptable limit. Furthermore, measures of Quantity and Manner yielded mean sum scores of 10.92

and 10.26, respectively. This suggests the condition could just as easily have been perceived as omission or equivocation.

The equivocation condition could be considered an effective manipulation if it received a low rating of Manner, between 4 and 8, and high ratings of Quality, Quantity, and Relation between 16 and 28. Mean scores indicated that the equivocation condition was not a sufficient manipulation of the maxim with the condition receiving a mean Manner score of 10.71, above the acceptable limit. However, all other maxim ratings yielded higher scores than Manner indicating that the pattern was at least in the appropriate direction.

The omission condition could be considered an effective manipulation if it received a low rating of Quantity, between 4 and 8, and high ratings of Quality, Relation, and Manner between 16 and 28. Mean scores indicated that the omission condition was not a sufficient manipulation of the maxim with the condition receiving a mean Quantity score of 9.77, just above the acceptable limit. Additionally, the condition received a lower rating of Manner than Quantity suggesting that the condition could function as equivocation. However, scores of Quality and Relation were high enough to suggest that the condition was perceived in an appropriate direction. For a complete list of mean maxim ratings see Table 2.

Additional items were generated to assess participant perceptions of deceptive message motivation (see Appendix I). Two items assessed participant perceptions of which interactant stood to benefit from the deception and which interactant stood to lose from the deception (e.g., "Which person will likely benefit the most from the message delivered by Pam?"). Responses included nominal

categories referring to each respective interactant, to both interactants, or neither interactant. A large cross-section of the sample believed that the sender stood to benefit most from the interaction ($f = 56, 33\%$). Very few participants thought that the receiver stood to gain from the interaction ($f = 17, 10\%$). Fewer still participants believed that both the sender and receiver stood to benefit ($f = 13, 7\%$). Most participants believed that neither the sender nor the receiver stood to benefit from the interaction ($f = 80, 48\%$).

With regard to expense, a large portion of participants believed the interaction was at the expense of the sender ($f = 20, 30\%$). Most participants believed the interaction was at the expense of the receiver ($f = 76, 51\%$). A smaller portion of the sample believed the expense was to both the sender and receiver ($f = 43, 28\%$). Very few participants believed the interaction was at the expense of neither the sender nor the receiver ($f = 17, 10\%$).

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses were conducted to test for statistically significant differences between the two scenarios with respect to measures of baseline honesty, Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner. A series of t-tests revealed no significant difference between the two scenarios suggesting that data from the two scenarios could be collapsed for hypothesis testing, $t(161) = -.55, p = .59, \eta_p^2 = .00$ for honesty ratings; $t(163) = -.03, p = .77, \eta_p^2 = .00$ for Quality ratings; $t(160) = -.81, p = .42, \eta_p^2 = .00$ for Quantity ratings; $t(153) = .20, p = .85, \eta_p^2 = .00$ for Relation ratings; $t(158) = -.73, p = .47, \eta_p^2 = .00$ for Manner ratings.

H1a, 1b, and RQ1

To test hypotheses 1a, 1b, and research question one, a univariate analysis, including a post hoc analysis using a Tukey-B test, was conducted to examine the impact of the five response conditions on participant measures of honesty. The results suggested a strong impact of the response condition on participant ratings of honesty, $F(4, 162) = 56.70, p = .00, \eta_p^2 = .59$. Honesty ratings from the falsification and baseline honest conditions were significantly different from all other conditions. However, honesty ratings from the omission, equivocation, and misdirection conditions did not significantly differ from one another (see Table 3).

Hypothesis 1a stated that baseline honesty will be rated more honest than falsification, misdirection, equivocation, and omission by observers. The results confirmed this hypothesis, indicating that the baseline honest responses ($M = 24.21, SD = 5.99$) were perceived as significantly more honest than responses that falsified

information ($M = 6.14, SD = 3.66$), misdirected information ($M = 11.26, SD = 5.16$), equivocated information ($M = 11.00, SD = 4.57$), or omitted information ($M = 10.92, SD = 5.12$).

Hypothesis 1b stated that deception by falsification will be rated less honest than misdirection, equivocation, omission and baseline honesty by observers. The results also confirmed this hypothesis, indicating that the falsified responses ($M = 6.14, SD = 3.66$) were perceived as significantly less honest than responses that were baseline honest ($M = 24.21, SD = 5.99$), misdirected information ($M = 11.26, SD = 5.16$), equivocated information ($M = 11.00, SD = 4.57$), or omitted information ($M = 10.92, SD = 5.12$).

Research question one sought an answer to the question of how observer ratings of honesty might differ across conditions of misdirection, equivocation, or omission. The results indicated no statistically significant difference in honesty ratings between misdirection ($M = 11.26, SD = 5.16$), equivocation ($M = 11.00, SD = 4.57$), and omission ($M = 10.92, SD = 5.12$). Those three deceptive conditions were considered equally deceptive (see Table 3).

H2, RQ2, and RQ3

To test hypothesis two and research question two, a univariate analysis, including a post hoc analysis using a Tukey-B test, was conducted to examine the impact of the five response conditions on participant scores of sender responsibility, receiver communicative responsibility, and guilt. Despite the fact that the overall omnibus test for sender responsibility was significant, subordinate tests yielded no significance. On the whole, the results did not suggest any significant impact of the

response conditions on participant scores of sender communicative responsibility or receiver communicative responsibility, $F(4, 164) = 3.15, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .07$ for the sender; $F(4, 165) = 1.99, p = .10, \eta_p^2 = .05$ for the receiver. Response conditions did have an apparent impact on guilt ratings, $F(4, 165) = 5.83, p = .00, \eta_p^2 = .13$. A Tukey-B test of sender responsibility revealed a significant difference between the misdirection and omission conditions. No other conditions revealed a significant difference from one another. A Tukey-B test of receiver responsibility revealed no significant differences across any conditions. A Tukey-B test of guilt revealed a significant difference between only baseline honesty and misdirection (see Tables 4, 5, and 6).

Hypothesis two stated that deception by falsification will be associated with higher observer ratings of communicative responsibility on the deceiver than any other form of deception. The results were not consistent with this hypothesis. Sender responsibility in the falsification ($M = 5.67, SD = 1.57$) condition was not significantly different from conditions of misdirection ($M = 4.59, SD = 1.74$), equivocation ($M = 5.17, SD = 1.66$), and omission ($M = 5.67, SD = 1.07$) (see Table 4).

Research question two sought to answer the question of how observer ratings of communicative responsibility would vary across conditions of deception by misdirection, equivocation, and omission. The post hoc analysis indicated that ratings of sender responsibility differed significantly between conditions of misdirection ($M = 4.59, SD = 1.74$) and omission ($M = 5.67, SD = 1.07$). There were no other differences between misdirection, equivocation, or omission. For receiver

responsibility and guilt, results indicated no significant differences between any of the three conditions (see Tables 4, 5, and 6).

The third research question sought to answer the question of whether observer ratings of communicative responsibility would differ between conditions of falsification and baseline honesty. A post hoc analysis of sender responsibility revealed no significant difference between conditions of baseline honesty ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 2.20$) and falsification ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.59$). For receiver responsibility, a post hoc analysis also revealed no significant difference between conditions of baseline honesty ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.89$) and falsification ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.76$) (see Table 4 and Table 5). Guilt measures also did not significantly differ between the two conditions (see Table 6).

Supplemental Analysis

Because manipulation checks revealed that not all response conditions were precise violations of a single maxim, a supplemental analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between honesty/maxim ratings and measures of sender responsibility, receiver responsibility, and guilt. In this way it would be possible to tease out any potential relationships between maxim violations and communicative responsibility that might exist despite the imprecision of the response conditions.

A regression analysis was performed for honesty ratings and each maxim rating with sender responsibility, receiver responsibility, and guilt as predictor variables. The overall regression analysis of honesty ratings was significant, $F(3, 158) = 4.20$, $p = .01$, $R^2 = .07$, and revealed that sender responsibility ($\beta = -.20$, $p = .01$) and receiver responsibility ($\beta = .17$, $p = .03$) served as significant predictors of

honesty ratings with sender responsibility being negatively associated with honesty ratings and receiver responsibility being positively associated with honesty ratings (see Table 7). The analysis of the Quality yielded an overall significant regression, $F(3, 160) = 6.70, p = .00, R^2 = .11$, and revealed that, like honesty ratings, sender responsibility ($\beta = -.23, p = .00$) and receiver responsibility ($\beta = .22, p = .00$) served as significant predictor variables of Quality ratings with sender responsibility being negatively associated with honesty ratings and receiver responsibility being positively associated with Quality ratings (see Table 8). The analysis of the Quantity measure did not yield an overall significant regression, $F(3, 157) = 2.43, p = .07, R^2 = .04$, but did reveal that only receiver responsibility functioned as a significant predictor ($\beta = .19, p = .02$) (see Table 9). The analysis of the Relation measure did not yield an overall significant regression, $F(3, 151) = 1.82, p = .15, R^2 = .04$, but did reveal that only receiver responsibility functioned as a significant predictor ($\beta = .18, p = .03$) (see Table 10). The analysis of the Manner measure did not yield an overall significant regression, $F(3, 155) = 1.60, p = .19, R^2 = .03$, but did reveal that only guilt ratings functioned as a significant predictor ($\beta = .17, p = .04$) (see Table 11).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This investigation set out to explore the relationship between perceptions of honesty and communicative responsibility. Numerous previous studies have demonstrated that deception can be accomplished through multiple means, apart from simply falsifying information. Many approaches to deception, including typological and multidimensional approaches, have described the ways in which deception may result from omitting information, obfuscating information, and misdirecting information (Buller & Burgoon, 1996; McCornack, 1992; Metts, 1989; Turner et al, 1975). In addition, previous literature has found that not only does deception come in various forms, but that various forms of deception are perceived as more or less deceptive from one another (Burgoon et al., 1996; McCornack et al., 1992; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yeung et al., 1999). In present literature there is very little explanation for why such variation is observed. One possible explanation for this variance of perception is that different forms of deception invoke more or less communicative responsibility on senders and receivers. That is to say, some forms of deception require the receiver to participate in his or her own deception by making inferences. In this way, it is possible for a sender to deceive a target and to absolve him or herself of responsibility with an out, such as "I didn't say that!" Complicity in one's own deception may account for why third party observers can perceive certain forms of deception as more or less deceptive than others.

This study was both theory-driven and exploratory. Three explicit hypotheses were set forth and other issues were explored through three research

questions. The first two arguments set forth in this investigation posited that fully disclosive messages would be perceived as more honest than any form of information manipulation and that falsifying information would be perceived as the least honest form of information manipulation. The data obtained in the present study were consistent with both hypotheses. Fully disclosive, baseline honest messages were rated as highly honest and falsified messages were rated as very dishonest. Both of these ratings were significantly different from the other three response conditions. The third theory-driven argument posited that falsified messages would be tied to higher ratings of sender communicative responsibility than any other deceptive conditions. The data obtained in the present investigation were inconsistent with this hypothesis. Sender responsibility in the falsification condition was no different from sender responsibility in any other deceptive condition. A potential explanation for the discrepancy between the prediction and the data is the fact that the response conditions were ineffective violations of their given maxims. Response conditions often violated multiple maxims or did not sufficiently violate their intended maxims.

The first exploratory research question inquired how honesty ratings would differ across deception by misdirection, equivocation, and omission. No differences in honesty ratings were found across any of the three conditions. The second exploratory question inquired how perceptions of communicative responsibility would vary across deception by misdirection, equivocation, and omission. A small difference in perceptions of sender responsibility was found between conditions of misdirection and omission. However, results yielded no other differences between

response conditions for either sender or receiver communicative responsibility. The third research question inquired whether communicative responsibility would differ between conditions of honesty and falsification. The results yielded no difference between the two conditions with respect to both sender and receiver responsibility. It should be noted, however, that the supplementary regression analyses did reveal interesting relationships between information manipulation and communicative responsibility. Although the response conditions utilized in the current study may not have resulted in associations with communicative responsibility, the data present good reason to believe that associations between information manipulation and communicative responsibility exist.

Implications

Four primary takeaways were made distinct from this investigation. First, this study corroborates past literature suggesting that fully disclosive messages are perceived by third parties as being the most honest of any form of information manipulation. A large corpus of extant literature has demonstrated that fully disclosive messages are perceived by observers as being highly honest (Burgoon et al., 1996; McCornack et al., 1992; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Turner et al., 1975; Yeung et al., 1999). This study provides further evidence that minimal manipulation of information is strongly associated with perceptions of honesty.

Second, falsification is perceived by third parties as being the least honest of any form of information manipulation. This serves to distinctly typify what forms of messages people refer to as lies. Having effective anchor points to serve as distinctly false messages or distinctly honest messages will likely prove useful for future

deception research at large. That fully disclosive messages are rated as most honest and that falsified messages are rated least honest are consistent with previous studies that have invoked a multidimensional approach to deceptive message construction (Burgoon et al., 1996; McCornack et al., 1992; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yeung et al., 1999). This suggests that the directions taken by the current study are, at base, consistent with extant literature.

Third, there does not appear to be any real difference in honesty perceptions among messages manipulated by equivocation, misdirection, and omission. The three different forms of deception are perceived as equally deceptive. Although it is possible that this finding is an artifact of the responses used in the study, it may also be indicative of an underlying similarity across all three forms of messages. Conceptually, it makes sense that those three forms of deception may result in similar honesty ratings. In the case of baseline honesty and falsification, it is clear that the sender delivers a complete message that requires little to no inference making in behalf of the receiver. It follows, on the other hand, that equivocation, misdirection, and, in many cases, omission require inference making on the part of receiver. However, there is no theoretical explanation for why the amount of inference making in those three conditions should differ from one another. The fact that those three forms of deception require more inference making than honesty or falsification does not provide any means of examining the granularity that distinguish the three from each other. If the receiver's inference making remains similar across those three conditions then it follows that perceptions of communicative responsibility would not distinguish between them. Future

communication theory ought to attempt to further explicate the process of inference making involved in receiving ambiguous messages, off-topic messages, and incomplete messages.

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, there appears to be a legitimate relationship between perceptions of deception and communicative responsibility. The supplemental regression analysis yielded compelling evidence that there are associations between perceptions of honesty, Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner with sender responsibility, receiver responsibility, or guilt (a reasonable proxy of communicative responsibility). The results indicate that a sender's responsibility for understanding increases as honesty decreases. This is an interesting relationship that would seem to demonstrate that the less honest a person is, the more he or she is held to be at fault. This relationship was made especially salient when examining measures of Quality, which also demonstrated a distinct inverse relationship with sender responsibility. This suggests that the less true a message is, the more accountable the sender is held. These findings are precisely in line with the predictions that would be made by CRT. Furthermore, measures of Quantity and Relation were not significantly related to sender responsibility, but they were positively associated with receiver responsibility. This suggests that when deception occurs by omission or misdirection, the receiver is perceived to be participating in his or her own deception. This, too, is consistent with the predictions that would be made by CRT. Although measures of Manner were not significantly related to sender or receiver responsibility directly, Manner ratings were significantly related to guilt ratings. This suggests that there may be

more to be learned about the relationship between Manner and communicative responsibility than has been revealed in the present study.

It is important to note that despite the apparent relationship between message construction and communicative responsibility, hypothesis two regarding the relationship between falsification and sender responsibility was not directly confirmed. The reason that the present hypothesis regarding responsibility was not supported is because the hypothesis pertained strictly to the response conditions employed in the study. These response conditions, as demonstrated by the manipulation checks, were not necessarily effective at violating Gricean maxims in isolation. The maxim violations generated by the response conditions overlapped with one another leading to imprecise manipulations of falsification, misdirection, equivocation, and omission.

Limitations

The current study faced several limitations that threaten the generalizability of the findings and the internal validity of the experiment. There were four distinct limitations to the present study. First, the information manipulation used in the response conditions may have been insufficient. Manipulation checks indicated that the baseline honest and falsified conditions were accurate representations of honesty and falsification, but the misdirection, equivocation, and omission conditions contained some moderate spuriousness. For instance, the misdirection condition did not receive sufficiently low ratings of Relation to confidently be leveraged as a violation of Relation. Additionally, the misdirection condition had lower ratings of Quantity and Manner than it did of Relation (see Table 1). This

suggests that the response could well have been seen as deception by equivocation or omission as well as misdirection. The equivocation condition, apart from a low Manner rating, also contained a low rating of Quality. This suggests the condition may have been perceived as falsification. The omission condition, as intended, retained its lowest rating on Quantity, but also contained a very low rating of Manner, suggesting that the response may have been seen as equivocal. Taken as a whole, it is clear that each response condition should have more accurately targeted a single maxim violation without violating other maxims. However, it is possible that systematically violating one maxim, in isolation, per condition may be untenable. It may well be the case that maxim violations occur in concert with one another and are inextricably entangled in nature. The clean distinctions between conditions seen in previous replications of IMT may have been artifacts of the scenarios and responses used by McCornack et al. (1992), which have gone largely unchanged since their inception. Violation entanglement notwithstanding, it is clearly incumbent upon future investigations to construct scenarios that aim to violate maxims in isolation from one another. The procedure used by McCornack et al. (1992) provides a good example for constructing new maxim violation conditions from scratch.

Second, the present study could have benefitted from stronger measures of communicative responsibility. This study required the measurement of both sender communicative responsibility and receiver communicative responsibility. Only one item was used to assess each party's responsibility. The validity of the measures would clearly benefit from more robust scales. Apart from the implementation of

the measures in the present study, there are two reasons communicative responsibility have been difficult to measure in the past. Communicative responsibility has been difficult to assess in previous literature because there are no standardized methods of measuring the construct. Measures have generally been adapted for each independent study of the construct without drawing from a standardized instrument whose validity and reliability have been sufficiently demonstrated. Future research of communicative responsibility would benefit by having a more standardized method of assessing the construct. In addition, communicative responsibility may be a difficult construct for participants to self-report. A conceptual grasp of communicative responsibility requires the suspension of otherwise intuitive assumptions about communication, including a crude sender/receiver model. This issue would also benefit from a more codified, standardized measure of communicative responsibility. Future measures of communicative responsibility could benefit from the present study by standardizing measures of both sender and receiver. In this way the responsibility of each interactant could be measure with multiple items and compared against one another to determine both the symmetry/asymmetry of responsibility and to what extent responsibility lies with the sender/receiver. In the present study, one attempt to work around the problem of measuring communicative responsibility was implementing a measure of guilt as potential “proxy” measures of communicative responsibility. However, the guilt measure also had limitations.

Third, there were issues of validity with the guilt measure. As a result of the issues with the guilt measure, it was unable to reliably augment the measure of

communicative responsibility. The guilt measure consisted of a prompt that put the participant in the shoes of the sender (e.g., “If I were PAM and I gave that response I would feel...”). The purpose of the measure was to assess any guilt that would have been incurred by delivering the response of the sender. However, the phrasing of the prompt allows the participant to report the guilt they would have experienced as a result of deceiving the other interactant, as a result of not fulfilling his or her obligation as a classmate or roommate (as determined by the scenario), or some combination of the two. For the guilt measure to sufficiently complement the communicative responsibility measures, it would need to be more precise about the source of the guilt.

Finally, the generalizability of the findings may be limited by sex differences. The two scenarios presented to participants in this study only included female interactants in order to control for sex differences. It is possible that the results of this study, if replicated, could turn out differently if the interactants were both male or included a male and a female. However, given the strength of other controls in this experiment there is little theoretical reason to expect much variation, if any, as a result of having same-sex interactants. To the extent that future researchers find this limitation a problematic one, the limitation may be remedied in by more systematically examining the differences, or lack thereof, when participants are presented with scenarios that include various combinations of male and female interactants.

Directions for future research

Given the takeaways and lessons learned from the present study, there are a couple of distinct areas of future research that have presented themselves as the next logical steps.

The first task for future research is to sharpen maxim violation conditions in subsequent investigations of information manipulation and communicative responsibility. By violating maxims in isolation it will be possible to examine the relationship between deception and communicative responsibility with greater precision. There are two potential routes that subsequent research may take. One path is to follow the lineage of IMT research and to replicate McCornack et al.'s (1992) scenarios and manipulation conditions, but to generate new measures of communicative responsibility that are adapted for McCornack's conditions. The other potential path is to replicate the present study, but generate new response conditions from scratch. The baseline honest condition and falsification condition are sufficient for future replications, but the misdirection, equivocation, and omission conditions would benefit from replacement. The response generation procedure used by McCornack et al. (1992) would be a recommended method of replacing the conditions. The procedure would involve, first, putting forth the scenarios to respondents who then generate their own deceptive responses; second, extracting the responses that most accurately represent the appropriate maxim violations; and finally, having participants rate each response along measures of Relation, Manner, and Quantity. Those responses that best represent the appropriate maxim violation would be used.

Of the two presented courses of action, the latter is likely to be the most beneficial for a couple of reasons. The latter option is beneficial because it leverages two scenarios that were designed with communicative responsibility in mind. In each scenario the interactants are of the same sex to account for sex differences, they both share an equal responsibility in the given circumstance (writing the same number of pages or paying the same amount of rent), and both share an equal stake in the outcome of their responsibilities (failing a project or missing a rent payment). These conditions are ideal for investigating communicative responsibility. The scenarios that have been used in studies of IMT do not include the satisfactory controls. Additionally, the generation of new scenarios will allow future research to determine whether or not differences in honesty ratings among deceptive message conditions were a result of the scenarios. While IMT research has consistently shown differences in honesty ratings between conditions of falsification, misdirection, equivocation, and omission, they have all used the same scenarios (McCornack et al., 1992b; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yueng et al., 1999). Other research using a multidimensional approach to deception have not discovered those differences (Burgoon et al., 1996), including the present study. By using the same rigorous procedure as McCornack et al. (1992) to generate responses, but using different, more functionally relevant, scenarios it may be possible to more closely examine the differences between various forms of deception. This leads to the second major extension of the present study.

The second task for future research is to tease out any variation of honesty ratings between messages that are equivocated, misdirected, or omitted. It should

be the goal of future studies to probe for differences between deception conditions that are not falsification. Thus far the only research to have produced these differences have utilized the same scenarios (McCornack et al., 1992b; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yueng et al., 1999). The current data are consistent with IDT research demonstrating little to no difference between other forms of deceptive messages (Burgoon et al., 1996). Examining these nuances is also important because there is little explanation, empirical or *a priori*, why equivocation, misdirection, and omission should significantly differ from one another. Through the lens of CRT, it follows that honesty and falsification should require the least inference making, while equivocation, misdirection, and omission should all require more inference making, but even CRT provides little explanation for why those conditions should require more or less inference making from one another.

In summary, the present study has contributed to a growing corpus of deception literature by further supporting and clarifying the variance observed in honesty ratings across various forms of deceptive messages. Additionally, there is now compelling evidence to suggest that varying forms of deceptive message construction are related to communicative responsibility. In this way, targets of deception may at times be perceived to be culpable for their own deception while at other times senders held entirely accountable for deceiving. The current study also draws attention to important questions as yet unresolved in the literature. Namely, the study highlights the importance of examining the differences, if any, between deception by misdirection, equivocation, and omission. Further attention needs to be given to the inference making processes associated with hearing a misdirected,

obfuscated, or incomplete message. This may shed light on the ways in which deceptive messages actually vary and better allow researchers to investigate why such message differ with respect to honesty perceptions. It is likely that research will yield little to no reliable differences between misdirection, equivocation, and omission. There is little theoretical reason to believe that those forms of information manipulation should be perceived as significantly different from one another. Indeed, the only investigations to have produced such differences were derived from the same scenarios used by IMT research (McCornack et al., 1992; Lapinski & Levine, 2000; Yeung et al., 1999) whereas investigations that used different scenarios did not produce such clear distinctions (Burgoon et al., 1996). Nonetheless, the current study has provided sharper aim for future investigation and the issues of whether non-falsified forms of deception vary from one another and why they might vary remain open questions.

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TABLES

Table 1

Sender/Receiver Communicative Responsibility Ratings and Guilt Ratings for Response Conditions

	Condition														
	Baseline honest			Falsification			Misdirection			Equivocation			Omission		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Sender	4.75	2.20	28	5.67	1.59	36	4.59	1.74	39	5.17	1.66	36	5.67	1.07	26
responsibility															
Receiver	5.12	1.89	28	4.00	1.76	36	4.64	1.74	39	4.28	1.65	36	4.19	1.55	27
responsibility															
Guilt	5.84	1.68	28	5.51	1.45	36	4.24	1.41	39	4.86	1.73	36	5.13	1.08	27

Note. Measures used seven-point response formats.

Table 2

Honesty and Maxim Ratings for Response Conditions (Manipulation checks)

	Condition														
	Baseline honest			Falsification			Misdirection			Equivocation			Omission		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Quality	24.46	5.31	28	7	4.06	36	13.28	5.57	39	10	3.33	36	12.85	4.18	26
Quantity	22.79	4.73	28	14.03	7.15	36	10.92	5.83	38	11.65	4.73	34	9.77	3.51	26
Relation	23.64	5.58	28	18.12	6.99	33	11.65	5.70	37	14.06	4.49	32	14.76	4.15	25
Manner	23.50	4.91	26	20.39	8.04	36	10.26	5.71	38	10.71	5.59	34	9.08	3.91	26
Honesty	24.21	5.99	28	6.14	3.66	35	11.26	5.16	38	11.00	4.57	36	10.92	5.12	26

Table 3

Impact of Conditions on Honesty Ratings (Tukey-B test for H1a, H1b, and RQ1)

Condition	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Falsification	35	6.14 ^a
Omission	26	10.92 ^b
Equivocation	36	11.00 ^b
Misdirection	38	11.26 ^b
Baseline honest	28	24.21 ^c

Note. No significant difference among sums with identical letters.

Table 4

Impact of Conditions on Sender Responsibility (Tukey-B test for H2 and RQ3)

Condition	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Misdirection	39	4.59 ^a
Baseline honest	28	4.75 ^{a, b}
Equivocation	36	5.17 ^{a, b}
Falsification	36	5.67 ^{a, b}
Omission	26	5.77 ^b

Note. No significant difference among sums with identical letters.

Table 5

Impact of Conditions on Receiver Responsibility (Tukey-B test for RQ2 and RQ3)

Condition	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Falsification	36	4.00
Omission	27	4.19
Equivocation	36	4.28
Misdirection	39	4.64
Baseline honest	28	5.12

Table 6

Impact of Conditions on Guilt (Tukey-B test for RQ2 and RQ3)

Condition	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Misdirection	39	4.24 ^a
Equivocation	36	4.86 ^{a, b}
Omission	27	5.13 ^{a, b}
Falsification	36	5.51 ^b
Baseline honest	28	5.84 ^b

Note. No significant difference among sums with identical letters.

Table 7

Regression Analysis of Honesty Ratings

	Honesty				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI
Sender responsibility	-.87	.34	-.20	-.54*	[-1.54, -.19]
Receiver responsibility	.73	.34	.17	2.16*	[.06, 1.39]
Guilt	.22	.37	.05	.60	[-.51, .96]

Note. *Significant at the .05 level.

Table 8

Regression Analysis of Quality Ratings

	Quality				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>T</i>	95% CI
Sender responsibility	-.96	.32	-.23	-2.99*	[-1.59, -.33]
Receiver responsibility	.91	.31	.23	2.92*	[.29, 1.53]
Guilt	.19	.35	.04	.55	[-.50, .88]

Note. *Significant at the .01 level.

Table 9

Regression Analysis of Quantity Ratings

	Quantity				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI
Sender responsibility	.08	.32	.02	.24	[-.56, .72]
Receiver responsibility	.74	.32	.19	2.35*	[.12, 1.37]
Guilt	.48	.35	.12	1.36	[-.22, 1.18]

Note. *Significant at the .05 level.

Table 10

Regression Analysis of Relation Ratings

	Relation				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI
Sender responsibility	.07	.32	.02	.22	[-.56, .70]
Receiver responsibility	.69	.31	.18	2.21*	[.07, 1.31]
Guilt	.25	.36	.06	.71	[-.54, .96]

Note. *Significant at the .05 level.

Table 11

Regression Analysis of Manner Ratings

	Manner				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI
Sender responsibility	.09	.38	.02	.23	[-.66, .84]
Receiver responsibility	.02	.37	.00	.04	[-.72, .75]
Guilt	.86	.42	.17	.17*	[.04, 1.69]

Note. *Significant at the .05 level.

APPENDIX A

Consent to Participate in Research

Communication and Message Processing

My name is Christian Gilbert and I am conducting this research project to fulfill Master's degree requirements in the Department of Communicology; I am an advisee of Dr. Amy Hubbard. Participation in this study will involve responding to an anonymous online (Internet) survey. You are invited to participate in this project because you are at least 18 years old and enrolled as a student at UH Manoa.

Project Description – Activities and Time Commitment: Participants will read a scenario and dialogue between two hypothetical individuals discussing a class project or their rent and fill out a survey about their attitudes and perceptions of the reading. Survey questions are primarily multiple choice. Completion of the survey will take approximately 20 minutes. Around 200 people will take part in this project.

Benefits and Risks: There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this survey. The results of this project may contribute to a better understanding of communication and information manipulation in interaction. There is minimal risk to you as a result of your participation that would not otherwise be present in everyday life.

Confidentiality and Privacy: This survey is anonymous. You will not be asked to provide any personal information that could be used to identify you. Likewise, please do not include any personal information, such as your name, in your survey responses.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this project is voluntary. You can freely choose to participate or to not participate in this survey, and there will be no penalty or loss of

benefits for either decision. If you agree to participate, you can stop at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, you can contact the researcher by email at ckhg@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the UH Committee on Human Studies by phone at (808) 956-5007 or by email at uhirb@hawaii.edu.

To Access the Survey: Submittal of the survey will be considered as your consent to participate in this study.

You may print a copy of this page for your reference.

APPENDIX B

Scenarios

Procrastinating Pam

LUCY and PAM are working together on a large paper for their college communication class. They have divided the work evenly between themselves and agreed on a date to complete their work. Both LUCY and PAM will have to write five (5) pages each. After a few weeks of working separately, LUCY has finally completed her five pages. PAM, on the other hand, has procrastinated and has only written half (1/2) a page. PAM knows that the due date is almost upon them and that she has not done her share of the work. At lunch LUCY asks PAM “how are your five pages coming along?”

Pam says: [Message example]

Carefree Cassie

BARBARA and CASSIE are roommates. They have both agreed to pay half of the rent each. Payment is due at the end of every month. This month BARBARA has her half of the payment ready on time. However, CASSIE has been out shopping a lot over the past few weeks and is coming up short. She has some money, but knows that she will not be prepared to pay her share of the rent. It is two days until payment is due. Over lunch BARBARA asks CASSIE “will you have your half of the rent ready?”

Cassie says: [Message example]

APPENDIX C

Responses

Procrastinating Pam*Baseline (Disclosive)*

“I have to be honest with you—I haven’t done much at all. In fact, I’ve only completed half a page. I know I haven’t done my share and I’m really sorry.”

Quality Violation

“Glad you asked; I’m done. I’ve completed all five of my pages.”

Quantity Violation

“I’ve been writing my pages.”

Relation Violation

“That reminds me— I’m so glad this project is almost over. I’m ready to party!”

Manner Violation

“Oh, boy. [*Sarcastically*]I really *loved* working on that paper...”

Carefree Cassie*Baseline (Disclosive)*

“I have to be honest with you—I don’t have enough money this month. In fact, I’ve indulged too much with my spending. I know I won’t have my share ready and I’m really sorry.”

Quality Violation

“Yes, I have enough to cover my share.”

Quantity Violation

“I’ve got money.”

Relation Violation

“Hey, that reminds me—I need to go to the bank.”

Manner Violation

“Yeah, that time again. [*Sarcastically*] Bet I’m gonna *love* paying rent this month...”

APPENDIX D

Demographic Information

1. Sex

Male

Female

Other

2. Age: _____

3. Ethnic makeup (select all that apply)

African

Caucasian

Chinese

Filipino

Hawaiian

Hispanic

Japanese

Korean

Middle Eastern

Native American

Okinawan

Samoaan

Tongan

Other: _____ (Please specify)

APPENDIX E

Measures of Communicative Responsibility

Original Measures From Aune et al. (2005)***Items Assessing Anna's Communicative Responsibility***

1. Given the context in which their conversation is taking place, the responsibility for making sure that Anna understands Mike is mostly Anna's.
2. In this context, Anna is more responsible than Mike for making certain she understands everything Mike is saying.
3. I would expect Anna to make an extra effort to understand everything Mike is saying.
4. It is appropriate, in this context, that Anna should work harder to make certain she understands Mike.

Items Assessing Mike's Communicative Responsibility

1. In this context, Mike has a much bigger responsibility for creating understanding between them than Anna does.
2. It is Mike's job here to make sure that Anna fully understands everything he says.
3. Given the context, Mike is more responsible than Anna for making certain Anna understands everything about what Mike did last night.

Measures Employed in the Current Study

Procrastinating Pam

Imagine that LUCY believed PAM did her 5 pages...

1. To what extent was PAM responsible for contributing to that understanding?

- 1 Not at all responsible
- 2 Hardly responsible
- 3 Partly responsible
- 4 Moderately responsible
- 5 Considerably responsible
- 6 Very much responsible
- 7 Completely responsible

2. To what extent was LUCY responsible for contributing to that understanding?

- 1 Not at all responsible
- 2 Hardly responsible
- 3 Partly responsible
- 4 Moderately responsible
- 5 Considerably responsible
- 6 Very much responsible
- 7 Completely responsible

Carefree Cassie

Imagine that BARBARA believed CASSIE had her fair share of the payment...

1. To what extent was CASSIE responsible for contributing to that understanding?

- 1 Not at all responsible
- 2 Hardly responsible
- 3 Partly responsible
- 4 Moderately responsible
- 5 Considerably responsible
- 6 Very much responsible
- 7 Completely responsible

2. To what extent was BARBARA responsible for contributing to that understanding?

- 1 Not at all responsible
- 2 Hardly responsible
- 3 Partly responsible
- 4 Moderately responsible
- 5 Considerably responsible
- 6 Very much responsible
- 7 Completely responsible

APPENDIX F

Guilt Measure

If I were PAM/CASSIE and I gave that response I would feel:

1. Not guilty 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Guilty

2. Not regretful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Regretful

APPENDIX G

Honesty Measure

The response that Pam/Cassie gave was...

Dishonest 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Honest

Deceitful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Truthful

Deceptive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not Deceptive

Misleading 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not Misleading

APPENDIX H

Manipulation Checks of Message Deceptiveness

Procrastinating Pam

1. How likely is it that LUCY will believe PAM did her fair share of the work?

Not at all likely (0% likely)

Hardly likely

Partly likely

Moderately likely (50% likely)

Considerably likely

Very likely

Completely likely (100% likely)

2. To what extent did Pam INTEND for Lucy to believe that she did her fair share of the work?

Did not at all intend

Hardly intended

Partly intended

Moderately intended

Considerably intended

Very much intended

Completely intended

Carefree Cassie

1. How likely is it that BARBARA will believe CASSIE has her fair share of the payment?

Not at all likely (0% likely)

Hardly likely

Partly likely

Moderately likely (50% likely)

Considerably likely

Very likely

Completely likely (100% likely)

2. To what extent did Cassie INTEND for Barbara to believe that she had her fair share of the payment?

Did not at all intend

Hardly intended

Partly intended

Moderately intended

Considerably intended

Very much intended

Completely intended

APPENDIX I

Manipulation Checks of Maxim Violations

Violation Type

The response that Pam/Cassie gave was...

Quality

Distorted 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Accurate

Altered 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Authentic

Fabricated 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Genuine

False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 True

Quantity

Uninformative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Informative

Incomplete 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Complete

Nondisclosive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disclosive

Concealing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Revealing

Relation

Irrelevant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Relevant

Inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Appropriate

Nonapplicable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Applicable

Impertinent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Pertinent

Manner

Ambiguous 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Clear

Indefinite 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definite

Vague 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Precise

Obscure 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Straightforward

APPENDIX J

Deception Motivation

Procrastinating Pam

Which person will likely benefit the most from the message delivered by Pam?

Pam

Lucy

Both Pam and Lucy

Neither Pam nor Lucy

The message delivered by Pam was mostly at the expense of whom?

Pam

Lucy

Both Pam and Lucy

Neither Pam nor Lucy

Carefree Cassie

Which person will likely benefit the most from the message delivered by Cassie?

Cassie

Barbara

Both Cassie and Barbara

Neither Cassie nor Barbara

The message delivered by Cassie was mostly at the expense of whom?

Cassie

Barbara

Both Cassie and Barbara

Neither Cassie nor Barbara