

## Everyone Has to Lie in Tzeltal

Penelope Brown

*Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics,  
Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

### **“Lies” and “Truth” in Social Interaction**

The subject of “lying”—not telling the “truth”—is one that tends to raise moral hackles whenever it is discussed. Lying is “bad,” children are punished for it, it has even been claimed that children couldn’t actually learn language if we do too much of it.<sup>1</sup> And yet lies are all around us, even, sometimes, emanating from ourselves.

Since in ordinary parlance there are many notions of lying, we need a working definition, which I take from Barnes’ (1994) sociological study of lying (following Bok, 1978): “a lie, for our purposes, is a statement intended to deceive a dupe about the state of the world, including the intentions and attitudes of the liar”<sup>2</sup> (p. 11). A lie thus conceived must be stated, not just implied; not all “terminological inexactitudes” (in Churchill’s phrase) are lies. We must also keep distinct the uttering of nontrue propo-

---

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, the philosophical theory of language expounded by David Lewis (1969, 1975), wherein the ability to learn and to use a language is based on conventions of truthfulness and trust in the language. In Lewis’ theory, language as used by liars, jokers, and tall-tale tellers does not undermine the essential conventions of language, which are based on truth and trust; lies are exceptions, violations of the conventions of language (Lewis, 1975).

<sup>2</sup>Barnes (1994) went on to specify what “intending to deceive” entails: “. . . for our purposes I take it to mean intending to cause a dupe to adopt an understanding of the state of the world and/or of the mind of the liar that the liar believes to be false” (p. 11).

sitions (ones that deliberately mislead about states of affairs and events in the world) and the consequences or sanctions for doing this.<sup>3</sup>

There are (at least) two relevant perspectives on lying in the linguistic and social interactional literature. The first, coming from linguistics and linguistic anthropology, was first articulated in an article by Coleman and Kay (1981) who considered the English word *lie* as a social construct, one whose meaning requires a prototype semantics analysis rather than a definition in terms of a checklist of semantic features. Lying, they argued, is a matter of degree, of more or less. Clear central cases fulfill the following conditions: (a) the speaker believes the statement is false; (b) the speaker intends to deceive the hearer by making the statement; and (c) the statement is in fact false. Sweetser (1987) extended the Coleman and Kay analysis in terms of "cultural models" (Quinn & Holland, 1987; Strauss & Quinn, 1997), pointing out that, in order to understand the word *lie*, "[i]t is necessary to examine folk understandings of knowledge, evidence, and proof; our cultural model of language (or at least of lying) cannot be analyzed independently of beliefs about information" (p. 44). She showed that if you spell out these cultural beliefs, you can have a simpler definition of lying than that of Coleman and Kay: Lies are simply false statements, assuming the statement occurs in a prototypical (informational) speech setting.<sup>4</sup> The complexity comes in the cultural models that surround the use and exchange of information.

A quite different perspective on lying comes from the conversation analytic tradition. In his classic paper, "Everyone Has to Lie," Harvey Sacks (1975) identified a general context (in our society) in which it is socially necessary to lie. Briefly, his argument goes as follows: In response to the greeting "How are you" from someone who is not the right person to receive the information that would explain the true answer (which may, after all, be "lousy," entailing further sequential diagnosis—"why? what's wrong?"), people are routinely forced to lie. In other words, everyone in that kind of situation (a situation that everyone might encounter) is forced

---

<sup>3</sup>The definition, as Barnes (1994) pointed out, ignores whether the attempted deceit actually succeeds or fails to deceive; it also allows that a statement may be incorrectly perceived to be a lie even if the speaker had no deceptive intention. Barnes also mentioned different motivations for lying (bad lies, motivated by self-interest, vs. "white lies" motivated by other-concern), which we will not draw upon here.

<sup>4</sup>Sweetser (1987) noted that this simple definition accords with spontaneous layperson definitions of *lie*; it also accords with a phenomenon observed by Piaget (1965), that children commonly pass through a stage in which the word *lie* is used to denote any false statement. Tzeltal children, as we see later, use their term for "lie" (*lot*) in the same way, to include unintended false statements.

to lie in anticipation that, unless you lie, you'll get into undesirable sequential binds. This is one kind of necessary social lie.

Intentional deception is the core of both these perspectives on lying, as well as of broader perspectives on deception that include misrepresentations other than lying—for example, Goffman (1975) provided a typology of “fabrications,” which he characterized as “the intentional effort of one or more individuals to manage activity so that a party of one or more others will be induced to have a false belief about what is going on”<sup>5</sup> (p. 83). Restricting ourselves here to verbal misrepresentations, lying relates also to the thoroughly well established fact that very often people do not say exactly what they think. So lying relates to verbal indirectness in general, and to culturally based practices of indirectness.<sup>6</sup> These are a core part of what children learning language have to learn. The important question for our purposes here is this: *How do children learn the meaning of lie, in their society, and the culturally appropriate ways of lying?* This is actually a remarkably underresearched question (Barnes, 1994).

### Plan for This Chapter

What I want to discuss here is a somewhat different “take” on Sacks’ (1975) classic argument that “everyone has to lie,” one that is adapted to a quite different cultural milieu. The people under consideration are Tzeltal-speaking Mayan corn farmers who live in the rural community of Tenejapa in southern Mexico. In this Mayan society, children are socialized from babyhood to “lie” in culturally appropriate ways; this practice I relate to the sociocultural context of a small, face-to-face society where privacy, the manipulation of information, and social control through gossip are major concerns. The themes of this chapter are thus lying threats to children as a form of control, children’s acquisition of this practice, and its effect on their understanding and use of indirectness in language. I also briefly address more general questions, for example, that of the nature of “truth” in the context of nonverifiability in a nonliterate, small-scale society like Tenejapa.

---

<sup>5</sup>Relying on intentions for our definition raises a thorny question: How can we possibly know what others’ intentions are? My answer, for present purposes, is this: We can often *presume* what others’ intentions are, based on what they say and on what they say about what they say (e.g., “I meant to deceive here,” “I meant to be sincere here”). Tzeltal speakers themselves make these sorts of assumptions.

<sup>6</sup>Of course, if the indirectness is culturally recognized in context as conveying particular implicatures and therefore everyone knows what the intended indirect message is, as in the Malagasy cases reported by Keenan (1976), lying is not at issue, because meeting others’ communicational needs is not deceptive in contexts where you are clearly not expected to.

In this Tzeltal society, there is an apparent contradiction in the handling of small children. Babies are much wanted and loved, but they are considered to be very fragile, vulnerable, easily scared or shocked into losing their souls, and therefore at all costs to be protected and hidden from outsiders and other dangers. They are almost always being carried slung in a shawl on the caregiver's back. They are distracted whenever they are (or might be) upset; a baby's face is carefully turned away from feared things and covered when in public as protection from the evil eye. Crying puts small children at risk, so they are indulged, indeed given virtually everything they want prior to about age 2;6.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, the chief form of control (aside from physically removing a child from an undesirable activity) is to threaten. Some threats in Example 1 give the flavor of those routinely addressed to children between the ages of about 1;6 and 4;0:

(1) (naturally occurring examples, English glosses only)

*"That woman will 'tzak' you."* [grab you and take you away forever]

*"The dog/bug/wasp will bite you."*

*"Don't go out on the trail, there are rabid dogs!"*

*"I'll take you to the clinic for an injection."*

*"I'll give you a bath."*

*"You want your hair washed?"*

*"I'll pour water on you if you don't pipe down."*

*"I'll give you medicine to drink."*

Often, the threatened hazard is unspecified: "You'll 'get it' later," "Just you wait. . . ."

These overt scare threats are rarely actually carried out, and in fact they are often uttered in conjunction with contradictory bribes that are also not realized. This practice, I argue, leads Tzeltal children by the age of 2;6 to 3;0 to understand that speech does not necessarily convey true propositions, and thereby to a sensitivity to the underlying motivations for utterances distinct from their literal meaning. I relate this to four other aspects of communicative practices and social life in this community: (a) "irony" as a conventionalized mode of indirectness where utterances convey the opposite of what they literally mean, and children's adoption of this practice by the age of about 3, (b) *cultural models of "truth" and "lying"* captured in Tzeltal vocabulary, (c) the rich vocabulary of *evidentials* for denying or hedging self-knowledge about the truth of an utterance, and (d) *the social context*, including both childrearing practices in this society and adult practices of social lying and information protection.

<sup>7</sup>Further details about Tzeltal childrearing practices can be found in Brown (1996, 1998).

## "LIES" TO TZELTAL CHILDREN

## Lies to Children as Social Control

Let's look at some real examples of these threat lies in their sequential context, which makes clear their rhetorical force.<sup>8</sup> Lying threats to small children begin even before the child is talking at all, as in Example 2, and until the age of about 3;6 they are a routine, everyday occurrence:

(2) [bra27/1/96, p3] Mother to baby Antun (1;4):

Mo: *ya xbaonix.*

"I'm going." [trying to scare him into following her]

[instead he goes off after the turkeys]

Mo: *jilan!*

"Remain behind!"

[He ignores her.]

Mo: *yu' ya xjilat. ya me xban i' i.*

"Because you are staying behind. I'm going."

*ya me xbanix. la'. ya xban in ch'i. jilan.*

"I'm going. Come on. I'm going then. Stay behind."  
[THREATS]

Aunt: *kerem xa' mil me tuluk'e.  
ban me ix a. ban. ban.*

"Boy, you'll kill the turkeys. Go now. Go. Go."

[Here both aunt and mother know that she has no intention of leaving him behind.]

(3) [childtalk Mik 003, 5/12/95] Mik (2;0) and his brother Alux (4;7) are in the road, Alux has climbed onto a truck selling cooking gas that is parked in front of their house:

Alux [to Mik]: *toj ya xmoat.*

"Climb straight on up."

Fa: [to both]: *ma xa'toy!*

"Don't climb up!

*koanix a tey a.*

Come down from there.

*ya me xtal nujkul.*

'Leather' will come."

[i.e., you'll get whipped if you don't get down]

[THREAT]

<sup>8</sup>All examples are drawn from my database of videotaped natural interaction in five Tzeltal families, collected every 4 to 6 weeks over 3½ years in the hamlet of Majosik', Tenejapa. The Tzeltal transcription is roughly phonemic; letters correspond approximately to their English equivalents except that x = sh, j = h, and ' indicates glottalization.

There are also many caregiver lies that are not exactly threats, but are still false statements or warnings meant to control the child's behavior:

(4) [cho26/9/94, p.14]: Xaw's mother to her (Xaw is 2;3):

- |            |   |  |
|------------|---|--|
| Xaw:       | <i>binti.</i>   | "What?" [reaching for Mo's breast, wanting to nurse]   |
| Xmi:       | <i>ay me yichil.<br/>och me tal yichil stukel ay<br/>yichil ye' i.</i>  | "There's chili (on it).<br>It's got chili on it." [FALSE WARNING]  |
| Xaw:       | <i>ijj.</i> [whining]   |  |
| Xmi:       | <i>ay yichel. ban tajinan.<br/><br/>ban tzakla me a'wixta'be, ma<br/>stak' nuk'el.<br/>ay yichil.<br/>ban tzakla mene, tzaka tal<br/>mene.<br/>ya jtzaklatik.</i> | "It's got chili on it. Go play.<br>Go take your toy, this [breast] can't be sucked.<br>It has chili on it.<br>Go take that (toy), bring that here.<br>We'll take it (to play with)." |
| // [later] |   |  |
| Xmi:       | <i>pasa me tz'i a'karoe.<br/>ya me spojbet ya'tik me<br/>antune.</i>  | "Play with your car.<br>Antun [neighbor child] will steal it away from you soon." [FALSE WARNING]  |

Threat lies may be uttered with cajoling prosody and endearments, undercutting the scariness of the threat:

(5) [ant22ma6, p8]: Mother to daughter X'anton (3;4) who has walked away from playing with her brother, having quarreled with him:

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| Mo: | <i>tajinan. la'i kala me'.</i>                            | "Play. Come, my little mother.   |
|     | <i>kala anton. ma me x'ilinat i.</i>                      | My little X'anton. Don't be angry.   |
|     | <i>ya me xtal sti'at bi sti'at (ya'tik)<br/>kala me'.</i> | The thing that bites you will come and bite you (soon), my little mother." |

But sometimes adults (and especially other child caregivers) intentionally try to scare little children, in an almost casual disregard for the fragility of their souls; or they may first threaten and then promptly reassure them, as in Example 6:

(6) [3chdia196.txt, cho29 jan96] Xaw is 3;7, Mat (her brother) is 6;0:

Mat: *ay la mach'a xmakliwan ek' i.* "There's someone hiding in wait too."

[reference to toy wooden man; Xaw is afraid of it, thinking it's a skeleton of the sort that are said to hide in wait along the trails and jump out onto your back]

Mo: *eske ma xa' tejk'anbe ta spat.* "Don't stand it (wooden man) up on her back."

Xaw: *iiii* [crying]

Mo: *ya 'xi'. ju'uk, ma'ba ya sti'at.* "You are afraid of it. No, it won't bite you.

*pere xa' tejk'an xan yan* But stand it up again,  
*smakbex te ta ajk'ole.* it will lie in wait for you up there.

*ju'uk, ma xa'xi.' yu' ya sti'at.* No, don't be afraid of it. As if it would bite you."

[THREAT + REASSURANCE]  
[wingeing]

Xaw: *ejrn*

// [a bit later]

Mo: *la yich'ix k'ejel. tajinan me i.* "It's been put away. Play.

*ya me xtal jukluk ta' pat ya'tik* It might come squat on your  
*i me ma xtajinate.* back in a moment if you don't play.

*pasa me i' wixtabe, pasa me i.* Do your toys, do them. It is  
*bajtix.* gone.

*yu' ay te a bi ya' k'abui. bajtix.* As if there were something you are watching. [i.e., there isn't]. It has gone.

*pasaik me i.* Do them (toys). Put them  
*ak'aik ala bitik te a' ta'* onto your table."

*mesaike.*

[THREAT + REASSURANCE]

When (as often happens) such threats are not at first reacted to by the child, they are often sequentially piled up one after another into a scenario of projected bad events constructed either by one caregiver (as in Example 7) or collaboratively by several participants (as in Example 8, where two adults and the child's brother gang up to pressure her to cooperate):

(7) [cho24/3/96] Xaw is 3;9:

Mo: *ba laj lika tal.*

"Go get it (a toy).

*ja' ya katintestiki mach'a ma  
sk'an x'a'yani.*

We'll bathe the one who  
doesn't want to talk."  
[THREAT]

[Xaw bursts into tears]

Soon afterwards:

Mo: *ya xtal jtomas ya'tik me  
x'ok'ate.*

"Tomas [the injection-giver]  
will come soon if you cry."  
[THREAT]

A moment later:

Mo: *xa'mailik wulwunel ya'tik . . .*

"Just wait for howling soon  
. . ." [i.e., you'll be really  
howling if you don't stop  
that whimpering]  
[THREAT]

(8) [cho28se4.txt, p.18] Xaw is 2;3, her brother Mat is 4;8. Xxx is an unidentified adult:

Xaw: *chikeee.*

"Candy"

Mo: *ma'yuk.*

"There is none."

Xaw: *eje'.*

"Eh."

Mo: *ya xbatik ta eskwela ya'tik.*

"We'll go to the school (to  
buy some) later." [FAKE  
OFFER]

Xaw: *jnn.*

"Hm."

Mo: *sume ba i. tajinan me i.  
ya me xbatik ta eskwela.*

"Hurry up. Play."

"We'll go to the school."

// [a moment later]

Mo: *ba pasaik i, ma me xbat te' a  
me ta xilaetike.*

"Go do it (play with toys),  
don't go over there to the  
chairs.

*la' me, ya me sjulat ya'tik ya  
me xjulawan.*

Come, the shot-giver will in-  
ject you soon." [THREAT]

Mat: *julawan.*

"The shot-giver."

Mo: *la' me i. la' tajinan i antz. la'  
me.*

"Come. Come play here  
'woman' [Xaw]. Come."

Xaw: *jn'.*

"Hm."

Mo: *ma xbat te' a mene. ay la me  
tza' te' a.*

"Don't go over there.  
There's shit over there."

Mat: *ya ka'y chuxnel, ya ba ka'y  
chuxnel.*

"I'm going for a pee."



- Mo: *julaik tal i antzi.* "Bring the 'woman' [Xaw] back with you."
- [Mat goes outside; Xxx is outside and speaks to Xaw who is still outside]
- Xxx: *ban me antz.* "Go 'woman'."
- Mo: *julaik tal julaik tal.* "Bring her in here, bring her in here."
- Xxx: *ban me antz. ban me. ban me. ban me antz.* "Go 'woman'. Go. Go. Go, 'woman'."
- Mat: *la' me antz.* "Come on, 'woman'."
- Xaw: *ja.* [arriving] "Huh."
- Mat: *la' me tajinotik xan.* "Come, let's play again."
- // Later, after repeated urgings again for Xaw to come in:
- Mat: *ya me yak' julel me jmatike. ile' stzako'j ile' ch'i.* "Mama will inject (you). Look, she's taken up (the injection-hypodermic), look." [THREAT]
- Mo: *ban me i. ya me julat ya'tik. ban i. ban. ba tajinan i. k'ux me.* "Go. I'll inject you soon. Go. Go. Go play. It will hurt." [THREAT]
- Mat: *la' me i antz.* "Come, 'woman'."
- Mo: *ban. tu tu tut i' karoik ine.* "Go. Toot-toot-toot (goes) the (toy) car there."
- Mat: *la' me antz.* "Come, 'woman'."
- Mo: *ban la me i'. ya julbe yakan ya'tik.* "Go, it was said. I'll inject her foot soon." [THREAT]

These threats are not jokes; they are not marked in any way as non-serious or playful, and the intention is to control the child's behavior by making her believe that unless she cooperates the projected eventuality will indeed come about. In this respect, they contrast with the oft-reported language socialization practice of teasing small children (see, e.g., Miller, 1986; Schieffelin, 1986). However, in none of the previously cited Tzeltal examples were the threats actually carried out or the things warned about actually realized. Furthermore, these jointly produced sequentially piled-up threats are often inconsistent, projecting a scenario that could not actually all come to pass. As Example 8 illustrates, threats are often combined with fake promises, or bribes, of the sort: "You'll get such and such (a treat) if you do what I want"; these are also piled up sequentially into often inconsistent messages, as in Example 9:

(9) [cho29jan96 p23]: Xaw is 3;7, Mat is 6;0.

Mo: *ya la me xtal xan ta mal k'al  
ya'tik i jme'tike,  
xi me 'wa'y. cha'ch'oj la me  
xtajinex ya'tik.* " 'Mrs.' (i.e., P. Brown) will  
come again this afternoon,  
she says. You'll get to play  
twice today." [FAKE OFFER]

// a little later:

Mo: *suj me 'ba i. tajinan me i.  
ya me 'jun be(l) jwixtik ta jech.* "Hurry up. Play.  
You'll go visiting to your  
elder sister's house across  
the valley." [FAKE OFFER]

Mo: *ya me xbatik ya'tik.* "We'll go (to see elder sister)  
soon."

...

Mo: *tajinan i. lajin a'wo'tan ta  
tajimal i.* "Play. Finish up your play-  
ing.

*me bajt jme'tik ek, jbatik ek' a.* When 'Mrs.' goes, then we'll  
go too (to ElSi's house)."

Mat: [playing] *ile' tak'in antz.*

Xaw: *ya batik ta eskola.*

"Here's money, 'woman.'  
"We'll go to the school."  
[REQUEST]

Mo: *yak, ya juntik bel ta eskuela i  
jme'tike.*

"Yes. We'll go with 'Mrs.' to  
the school." [FAKE OFFER,  
incompatible with going to  
ElSi's house]

Xaw: *jo.*

"Hm."

Mat: *ile' ni antz. ila ay.*

"Here, 'woman' (offering her  
a toy). Here it is."

Mo: *naklanik i.*

"Sit down.

*a jtabe jbaik me' tak'inike,  
ya' jech pukbebaik i bi ya'  
manbe jbaike.*

When we find the money,  
we'll take turns buying  
things for each other."  
[FAKE OFFER]

// [children continue playing]

Mo: *ya me xbatik ta eskuela sok  
jme'tik.*

"We'll go to the school with  
'Mrs.' " [FAKE OFFER]

Mat: *pakale, pakale.*

[nonsense sounds to self, ig-  
noring Mo]

Mo: *ya juntik bel ek.*

"We'll go with her." [FAKE  
OFFER]

Mat: *pakali, pakali ji.* [to self]

Mo: *ya la me xta(l) jchon paleta  
ya'tik.*

*yu' ma'ba k'an paleta ya'tik i  
me ma x'a'tejate, ma pastik i  
'wixtabike.*

"The ice-lolly seller will  
come soon.

Because, if you don't work,  
you won't be wanting an ice-  
lolly later, if you don't do  
your toys." [FAKE OFFER +  
THREAT]

// [much later]

Mat: [to pb] *ya to la wan xtalat  
ya'tiki i?*

"Are you really going to  
come again later today?" [re  
Mo's first fake promise]

PB: *ju'uk. ja' to pajel.*

"No. Not till tomorrow."

Mat: *jnn.*

"Hm."

Even 6-year-old children are not always certain when a caregiver's threats or bribes are lies and when they are true, as revealed by Mat's querying me in Example 9. But in general children develop an early skepticism toward this form of social control. This is partly because a number of culturally significant scare themes are repeatedly invoked until they become almost cliches: the *pukuj* "devil," *xutax* ("boogie-man"), *tzak*-ing (being stolen away by a stranger), being bitten, getting father to beat you. Other threats are fixed expressions: *xa'maili ya'tik* ("just you wait"), *ya 'wich'* ("you'll 'get it'"). Many threats, however, are opportunistic: Whatever recently the child has feared (for threats) or wanted (for bribes) may be invoked.

### Are These Really "Lies"?

By our initial definition—statements intended to deceive a dupe about the state of the world, including the speaker's beliefs and intentions—these clearly are lies. They are also clearly not jokes, but uttered in a completely deadpan straightforward fashion and intended to be taken seriously. In this cultural context, these lies are nonsincere predictions, backed up by power: The caregiver *could* make them (at least some of them) be true, but experience soon teaches children that they usually are not backed up.<sup>9</sup> We may call them "control lies," fake scary predictions (threats) or offers (bribes) by a caregiver, intended to control the child's behavior. They diminish dramatically in frequency when the child becomes competent, between the ages of 3 and 4, when there is a seemingly magical shift in child

<sup>9</sup>Of course, if these threats were *never* carried out, these would not be lies; no one would expect them to convey true propositions. But being occasionally, albeit rarely, carried out, there is always a potential doubt.

behavior from ignoring such threats to complying with caretaker commands, without caregivers actually having had to carry out the threats or use explicit force. Given the rarity of enforcement this shift is remarkable; we return to its significance later.

It is important to note that, aside from the sanction of whipping with a belt (which is very rare<sup>10</sup>), Tzeltal caregivers have no power to enforce their will on children. This point has been made as well by Schieffelin (1986), discussing caregiving practices of the New Guinea Kaluli. But the Kaluli rely much more than Tzeltal caregivers on shaming.<sup>11</sup> Older Tzeltal children are also sometimes controlled with shaming, but it isn't always successful in modifying their behavior; they can brush it off, or ignore it, at least with caregivers who are not their parents.

Parental justification for the Tzeltal threat/bribe practice is usually phrased in terms of needing to protect the small child, control its behavior for its own good (e.g., danger) or for the parents' own well-being (e.g., quiet). In discussions of this, there is no sense expressed that this is a "bad" practice or that it sets a bad example. On the contrary, adults explicitly teach child caregivers to do it (see examples discussed later). As a result, children don't necessarily believe these threats, and they respond (in terms of compliance or not) to the emotional tone, not to the overt content of such caregiver utterances. There are at least three direct consequences of this practice for the children:

1. *Passive resistance*: Children often ignore threats and commands, sometimes even overtly say "No" to them, until age 4 or so, when there is a shift to remarkable compliance.
2. *Early skepticism*: By age 2;6 or earlier, Tzeltal children apparently know that many commands are not going to be enforced and that many threats are not going to be carried out. This knowledge amounts to awareness that there is often a difference between the state of the world and words used to describe or predict it.

---

<sup>10</sup>Despite the frequency of "getting leather" as a threat, I have seen a child hit with a "leather" belt only once in 30 years of participant observation in this community. I have twice seen the "belt" brought visibly out as an imminent threat. I have never witnessed a child being struck by the hand or any other form of physical punishment. Tzeltal parents say that without the threat of whipping, children would grow up undisciplined and spoiled.

<sup>11</sup>Kaluli threats to children are almost always third party, indirect. Schieffelin (1990) said:

When adults intervene with small children, they make extensive use of third-party threats to create authority where none actually exists: "Someone will say something to you!"; "Your father (not present) will say something!" The threat is that one will be publicly and verbally confronted with the challenge "Is it yours?!" Mothers never threaten small children with what they themselves might do; rather, they refer to a third party who is not present as the agent who will act. (p. 155)

This is in strong contrast with the Tzeltal case.

3. Long-term fear of certain things: These include especially strangers, injections, and the scare monsters (*pukuj* "devil," or *xutax* "scarecrow") that are said to jump onto one's back if one walks alone in the dark.

I argue in the next section that there may also be an *indirect* consequence of this practice—an early appreciation of conventionalized irony. But first let us consider how children develop in their response to scare threats and their perception of lies.

### Children's Developing Competence in Handling "Scare Threats" and Lies

Tzeltal children move from a stance of largely ignoring scare threats (and getting away with it), to recognizing and challenging falsehoods (at least some of the time) in what people say to them (see Examples 10 and 11), to producing lies themselves, both as self-protection and in efforts to control their younger siblings (Examples 12–14). This progression is monitored and aided by caregiving practices.

The ability to recognize the truth or falsity of statements is a prerequisite to recognizing intentionally deceptive ones. Recognizing that an utterance is false seems to be possible for children even by the age of about 2:

(10) [alv7/12/95] Mik is 2;0:

Mik: *ej* "eh." (playing with mother's breast)

Mo: *ma'yukix*. "There is none anymore." (milk in her breast)

Mik: *ay!* "There is!" (He examines her breast and shows her there is!)

But recognizing that a statement is intentionally deceptive is a more complex step. According to theory-of-mind theorists, it requires the child to have a conception that others' minds can hold different knowledge and beliefs than their own—a "theory of mind" that arguably develops between the ages of 4 and 6 (the exact timing is controversial).<sup>12</sup> By age 3;0 or 3;6, Tzeltal children react to parental control threats with a skepticism that often warrents explicit recognition:

<sup>12</sup>Very controversial, I might add. It seems likely that children's ability to handle certain indirect speech acts and implicatures between the ages of 2 and 3 indicates that at some level, they already operate with a theory of others' minds, and that experiments in the "theory of mind" paradigm are actually testing children for meta-awareness of others' minds (see, e.g., Barnes, 1994; Gopnik & Meltzoff, 1994).

## (11) Wising up to parental control strategies:

[cho8de5], Mat (5;10) and Mother are looking at the "pear film," commenting on it, and trying to get Xaw (3;5) to come and look:

- Mo: *jo'. ji k'ax ta tzakel.* "Hm. He went by, taking them (pears).  
*jii busk'eix me perae.* Eh, the pears fell over!  
*k'abu 'wil i antz. busk'eix.* Look, 'woman'. They fell over.  
*ile' t'uxaj sok me sbisikletae.* Look, he fell with his bicycle."
- Mat: *t'uxaj.* "He fell."  
 Mo: *antz.* "'Woman.'" [addressing Xaw]
- Xaw: *jo.* "Hm."  
 Mo: *k'abu 'wil. ile' ya stamix.* "Look. Look, he's picked them up."  
 Xaw: *ma'ba -* "He hasn't —"  
 Mo: *k'abu wil i. ma'ba kik'at bel ya'tik i ch'i.* "Look. I won't take you with me (when I go out) later." [THREAT]
- Xaw: *ya jtalon li' ta ya'tik ek' i.* I'll come here in a moment too.  
*ma me jun papatik ek mene ma.* I won't go with papa I guess."  
 [i.e., she's nonchalant about not going with them, when they go out later]
- Mo: *yu' wan ma' xi'i ya xyakub i jpapatik ch'i.* "As if you weren't afraid (that) papa is getting drunk." [i.e., you are afraid!] [WARNING]
- Mo: *lajuk a'wil ajk'ubee ya me xyakube'i.* "Remember you may have seen he was getting drunk last night."
- Xaw: *ja.* "Huh."  
 Mo: *ya me xyakub ya' wil ja' i me la smajat a'tukel.* "He's getting drunk you see, it was the case that he hit you." [IMPLICIT WARNING]
- Mat: *k'abu' wil a'tukel.* "Look at it [the pear film] yourself."

- Mo: *k'abu wil. ile' ya skomon tamikix.* "Look at it. Look, they are communally picking them [pears] up.  
Look."
- Mo: *ile'i.* "I'll come in a minute here."
- Xaw: *ya i talon li' ta ajk' ya'tik ek ini.* "Who will you come with?"
- Mo: *mach'a 'jun tal i?* "Just by myself I guess."
- Xaw: *jun nax i ma.* "You'll come you say by yourself?"
- Mo: *a'tukel la xtalat i bi.* "Yeah."
- Xaw: *joo'.* "You aren't afraid, eh?"
- Mo: *ma'ba xiwat i bi.* "No."
- Xaw: *jo'o.* "What if Osil [a joke bad-guy] 'grabs' you?" [JOKE THREAT]
- Mo: *ja tz'i me ay ba' stzakat osil.* "Huh."
- Xaw: *jo'.* "Golly, she is getting smart. You are in the process of getting smart." [RECOGNIZING THAT SHE DISTINGUISHES JOKE FROM SERIOUS THREAT]
- Mo: *aye' ch'i ya xpiubaj. yakalatix ta piubtael.* "Look. Eh, he went and got his hat given back to him [the guy in film]."
- Mo: *k'abu 'wil i. ji bajt yich' ak'el bel xpixol.* "I'll come in a moment, I guess." [she still doesn't come watch the film]
- Xaw: *ya jtalon li' ta ajk' ya'tik ek' i ma.*

**Producing Threat Lies.** There is explicit socialization in lying, especially in telling older children how to lie to younger ones to get them to do what you want:

(12) (kojl1apr4.txt, p.12); Petul (1;8), X'anton (4;3)

- Mo: [to x'anton] *ik'aix me tal a i alali.* "Bring the child back here." (re Petul, gone to the house just below)
- Mo: *ik'a me tal ii.* "Bring him back."

- X'an: *ji tz'ini* "Eh, then."  
 Mo: *aj ayane.* "Speak (to him)."  
 X'an: [calling] *kala papito.* "My little 'father'.  
 Mo: *bajtix me ta eskuela jmamatik* " 'Mama has gone to the  
*uta.* school', say." [TEACHING  
 LIE]  
 X'an: [calling] *bajt me ta eskuela* "Mama went to the school."  
*jmamatik.*
- [Petul returns]
- (13) [alv7jan6, p40]: Mik is 2;1, his sister Sil is 6;0. Mik is outside, Sil and her mother are indoors and want to get him inside.
- Sil: [calling] *la' me i kala miik!* "Come here, my little Mik!"  
 Mo: *wa'y lai. ba la albe bi xi ya'* "You hear?. Go tell him what  
*pase.* you are doing." [TELLING  
 SIL HOW TO GET MIK  
 TO COME INSIDE]  
 Sil?: *jay?* "What?"  
 Mo: *ay bi jpas uta.* " 'There's something I am  
 doing', say."  
 Sil: [calling out to mik] *bi la' pasi* "What're you doing, you are  
*ja'i jilat?* staying behind?"  
 Mik: [calling back] *ja?* "What?"  
 Sil: *ja'i ban ta nopun jo'tik.* "We are going to school."  
 Mo: [to sil] . . . *jobel uta.* " 'To San Cristóbal', tell  
 him."  
 Mik: *jo'.* "Hm."  
 Sil: *binti la?* "What did you say?"  
 Mik: *jo'. [=jo'bel]* "San (Cris)tobal."  
 Sil: *binti la? bajt ta yochib.* "What did you say? Gone to  
 Yochib."  
 Mik: *jo'.* "San (Cris)tobal."  
 Sil: *bat ta bat ta lum.* "Gone to town."  
 Mik: *jo'.* "San (Cris)tobal."  
 Sil: *bat ta eskwela.* "Gone to school."  
 Mo: *ta na uta.* "To a house, say."

[Sil gets the idea, and launches into her own inventive set of lies to entice Mik inside]:



- Sil: *la'i kala miik. ay lech lech la.*  
*lech lech la tal i . . .*  
*jii la la sti'on ek'i a'me'.*  
*la la sti'on ek ta jnuk'. la*  
*sti'ben ta jch'ujt.*  
*ta jch'ujt. ta kakan, ta kakan,*  
*ta kakan.*  
*ti'ot la ta yutil kakan, lok' la*  
*xch'ich'el.*
- Mo: . . . [whispers instructions to Sil]
- Sil: *ja:*
- Mo: *xchu'non uta mike, lo'lo' tal.*
- Sil: *eso ya xchu'non i ch'i. eso*  
*xchu'non.*  
*ya la xchu'non mama.*  
*je ya xchu'non eso. ya xchu'non*  
*mik!*  
*mika. xxt mik. eso i ch'i! ya*  
*xchu'non.*  
*ya xchu'non! mika. xchu'non.*  
*ya xchu'non. chu'non. chu'non.*  
*ya xchu'non. xchu'non.*
- [Mik comes in]
- Sil: [to Mo] *i talix.*  
 [to mik] *eso lek a xchu'non.*  
*eso ya jlajesbet a'chu'. sale. yak.*
- "Come, my little Mik. There is milk, they say.  
 Milk has come they say  
 Ihh, your mother bit me.  
 She bit me in the neck. She bit me in the belly.  
 In the belly. In the foot, in the foot, in the foot.  
 I've been bitten in the middle of the foot, its blood is coming out."
- "It's-"  
 " 'I'm nursing', say to Mik. Lie to him to get him to come."  
 "Thus, I am nursing [suckling mother's breast]! I'm nursing!  
 I'm suckling on Mama.  
 I'm nursing, thus. I'm nursing, Mik!  
 Mik. Shsht Mik. Thus then! I'm nursing.  
 I'm nursing! Mik. I'm nursing.  
 I'm nursing. I'm nursing.  
 I'm nursing.  
 I'm nursing. I'm nursing."
- "He's come in."  
 "Thus, I really suckled well.  
 Thus I've finished off your breast for you. Okay. Yes."

Sil's lies in Example 13 are adultlike in recognizing that credibility is not the only issue; emotional arousal is the desired outcome, so that the child will comply. These examples also illustrate the frequent Tzeltal practice of

telling children explicitly what to say, using the quotative verb *uta* "say it" in a manner reminiscent of Kaluli *alema* (Schieffelin, 1986).<sup>13</sup>

In this kind of social environment, then, and in this context where children are expected to care for their younger siblings almost as soon as they *have* a younger sibling, we find Tzeltal child caregivers by the age of 5 or so producing this threat/lie form of control to younger children (and very young children to pets!).

(14) [ant22ma6, p18] X'anton (3;4) to her cat.

X'anton: *xa' maili ya'tik xawin.* "Just you wait, cat."

(15) [alv19mar6] Elder sister Sil (6;2) and brother Alu (4;9) to Mik (2;3):

Sil: *ch'enan i. ya me' wich' julel* "Pipe down. You'll get in-  
*ya'tik me x'ok'at xane. me ya* jected soon if you keep  
*x'ok'at.* crying. If you cry."  
[THREAT]

[a bit later, Mik is still crying]

GrMo: *ch'enan i. tajinan i. ila'* "Pipe down. Play. Here's  
*wala ixtab te ine.* your little toy."

Sil: *ya' k'an julel. a yakuk i ch'i,* "You want to be injected.  
*ya ba kik' tal ach'ix,* Okay then, I'll go get the  
*me ya x'ok'at, ya 'wich' julel.* (shot-giver) girl,  
if you cry, you'll get in-  
jected.

*ja'chuk puro ok'el.* After all, there's nothing  
but crying.

*ay a'kotz ile' kotzi. ya mes-* Here's your little (toy)  
turkey.

*ya me sluchat ya'tik i kotzi.* It will soon butt into you,  
your turkey." [THREATS]

Alu: *ile' la ini --- aj ay laj jo'wil* "Look, here. They say  
*tz'i.* there's a rabid dog."  
[THREAT]

<sup>13</sup>However, there is a difference between the two cases: The Kaluli examples are largely of small children being told what to say in order to stick up for themselves and learn to get what they want from older people. These Tzeltal examples involve teaching older children to control younger ones.

Young children will also pitch into a series of control lies in a familial ganging up in order to control the youngest—a conspiracy of child caregivers:

(16) [8/12/95, p41]: Mat (5;10) scolds and threatens Xaw (3;5) after Mo and ElBr Dan (18) have:

Xaw:	<i>ile' me'.</i>	"Look, mother." [at the video machine]
Mo:	<i>ja' ma' pik.</i>	"Don't touch."
Xaw:	<i>jvn.</i>	"Hm."
Dan:	<i>ma' pik.</i>	"Don't touch."
Mat:	<i>ma xa' pik. ya stzakat bel jme'tik.</i>	"Don't touch. 'Mrs.' will 'grab' you." [THREAT after two adult warnings]

Since children of 4 or 5 are often given responsibility for looking after younger ones, and since they have to get results (their caregiver performance being evaluated entirely on whether or not the baby is kept quiet and happy), whatever works is what is required to keep the younger one under control and quiet, even if it is lies.

*But*, let's think again: Maybe none of this is really—by *Tzeltal-speaker criteria*—"lying." Maybe, as argued by Rosaldo (1982) for the Ilongot of the Philippines, people here are not really concerned with "truth" or "sincerity"; these don't enter into their evaluations of utterances. Duranti (1993) argued along similar lines for Samoa, claiming that, in many contexts, words are viewed not as emanating from individuals but rather from a positional identity (for example, from a noble title), and words are evaluated according to their consequences, not as individual commitments: "For Samoans, *meaning is seen as the product of an interaction (words included) and not necessarily as something that is contained in someone's mind*" (p. 41; italics in original). Therefore Samoans hold speakers responsible for the social consequences of their speaking acts, not for their intentions.<sup>14</sup>

Actually Duranti (1993) conceded that in many everyday contexts Samoans do in fact hold one another accountable for personal commitments made through speech. In the Tzeltal case, there is also good counterevidence to the argument that "sincerity" or "intentions" are irrelevant in the interactional contexts under consideration here. In everyday transactions, people do hold one another to commitments, being surprised or even outraged if others do not stick to what they have said they intend to do. Furthermore, interactional uses of the terms *lot* ("lie") and *melel* ("true") in as-

<sup>14</sup>Susan Blum (1998) made a similar point with respect to Chinese society.

assessments of one another's (and indeed, one's own) utterances,<sup>15</sup> suggest that people *are* generally assumed to have communicative intentions that may be sincere or not, and that may or may not portray events and states of affairs that correspond to reality.

One way of assessing whether these actually are lies for Tzeltal people themselves is to look at their cultural concepts of "lie" and "truth" and at how these are interactionally invoked. The two core concepts to be explicated are expressed in the noun *lot* ("lie, nontruth, mistake") and the adverb *melel* ("genuinely true, sincerely"). These are implicated in Tzeltal cultural models of truth and lying, and of other practices involving non-true utterances, including teasing and joking (expressed in the Tzeltal nouns *lo'lo'el* and *lo'il k'op*, "lies, or teasing and joking speech that is false"). People also assess the factuality of talk in terms of the verb *ya xlo'lo'wan* ("[s]he's telling lies, teasing, joking"). In contrast, the adverb *melel* ("truly") is used to emphasize the sincerity and factuality of one's utterance; it is used a great deal by speechmakers, and by adults in serious conversation, though not frequently by children. There is also prolific use of evidentials to hedge or emphasize the degree of one's own commitment to the truth of an utterance. Children learn to use a number of these remarkably early, suggesting an awareness of the interactional relevance of indicating degrees of commitment to the truth of an utterance.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the young child does not at first *know* if a parent is sincere in these threats. The very occasional actual carrying-out of a threat leaves room for doubt. Adults also recognize that children are self-willed, goal-driven little creatures who frequently lie themselves, in order to get what they want, and some of them pile up lies sequentially in a transparent sequence of falsehoods. (For example, they routinely lie to me that the baby got their lolly, balloon, etc., in order to get another one.) Adults are routinely skeptical of what their children tell them in these contexts. Children also readily accuse one another of lying; they use "lie" as a routine response to others' talk (*a'lot*, "your-lie") and even as a comment on their own (*jlot*, "my-lie"). In my data, their uses of *lot* ("lie") do not distinguish falsehoods that are intentional from those that are not, nor jokes from mistakes.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup>For example, one child (Lus, age 4) says of herself: *yaxalon ta pas lot* ("I'm in the process of lying") when she has been saying false things for a while.

<sup>16</sup>By about age 3;0 children use the quotative particle *laj*, which means, roughly, "I don't take responsibility for the truth of what I'm uttering, someone else said it." They, like adults, use *laj* especially when telling a story or reporting a dream. Other evidentials frequent in young children's speech by about 3;6 are *me* ("if, maybe"), *wan* ("maybe"), *ma* ("perhaps, I suppose" [implies speaker is inferring]). Tzeltal has some 20 of these evidential particles, most of which come in a nonsalient (second-position) syntactic slot (Brown & Levinson, 1987; see also J. B. Haviland, 1989, for evidentials in the closely related language Tzotzil).

<sup>17</sup>Western children of this age also fail to distinguish lies from mistakes, according to Piaget (1965). The meaning of *lie* in English has also been construed in the past as including "a mistake or error in relation" (in Dr. Johnson's dictionary, according to Barnes, 1994).

Instances of "lie" accusations are given in Examples 17-21:

(17) [lusa5p2', p.34] Lus 3;9 has told me earlier that there was a "scarecrow" (a kind of boogie-man) there.

Lus: *in ma'yuk li' ay xutax i. jlot.* "Look, there's no scarecrow here. My-lie." [LIE = NOT TRUE]

PB: *lot. ma'yuk chikan.* "Lie. There's nothing to be seen."

Lus: *jo'.* "Yeah."

(18) [bra17ap5, p.13]: Lus 3;9, in her sleeping house

PB: *bit'il ya xwayat?* "How do you sleep?"

Lus: *jich mocholon bel ini.* "Here lying down over here."

[shows me, on bed]

PB: *mochol.* "Lying down."

Lus: *jo'. la' ila'wil a.* "Yeah. Come see."

PB: *yakuk.* "Okay."

Lus: *jo'.* "Hm."

PB: *ju'uk to. ma to ba-* "No, it's not yet -"

Lus: *jo'.* "Hm"

PB: *ma to ba yorail.* "Not yet time (for sleeping)"

Lus: *jo'. jlot ek.* "Hm. My-lie too." [LIE = JOKE]

PB: *a'lot ek.* "Your-lie too."

(19) [lusa5p1', p. 12]: Lus is 3;9, Nik is 4;3.

Lus: *ay me yach'il k'ib jo'tik e'i.* "We have a new water-pot."

PB: *ay wan?* "You do?"

Lus: *jo'.* "Yeah."

PB: *lek bal?* "Is it good?"

Lus: *jo'.* "Yeah."

PB: *banti la' taj?* "Where did you get it?"

Nik: *ma mano tal tatik. mano tal tatik.* "Didn't Grandfather buy it? Grandfather bought it."

PB: *banti la sman tal?* "Where did he buy it?"

Lus: *mano tal tatik.* "Grandfather bought it."

Nik: *ta jo'bel. ta jo'bel.* "In San Cristóbal. In San Cristóbal."

PB: *ta jo'bel?* "In San Cristóbal?"

- Nik: *jo'*. "Yeah."  
 Lus: *(s)lot*. "His-lie." [LIE = ERROR]  
 PB: *slot*. "His-lie."  
 Lus: *man-kajpe la sman tal a*. "From a coffee-buyer here he bought it."

(20) [bral2ap5, p.24]: Lus (3;9)

- Lus: *ma me talatix a pajel me'tik*. "Don't come again tomorrow, 'Mrs.'"  
 PB: *jo' ma me talon. binti laj?* "I won't come. Why not?"  
 Lus: *jlot. yu' ya jlo'lo'at jichuk xanich. jejej.* "My lie. I'm teasing you just like an ant." [LIE = TEASE]  
 PB: *a jejej. ya 'lo'lo'on.* "Oh, you're teasing me."

The following is an example of a genuine intentional lie:

(21) [lusa5p2', p.17], Cal (7;7) and Lus (3;9).

- Cal: *me'tika*. "Mrs."  
 PB: *binti la?* "What?"  
 Cal: *ma'yuk ku'un te'y karo ya' wale*. "There isn't any car of mine like you said." [re: his own toy car]  
 PB: *ma'yukix?* "It doesn't exist anymore?"  
 Cal: *ju'uk*. "No."  
 PB: *banti bajt?* "Where did it go?"  
 Cal: *ma xkil*. "I don't know."  
 Lus: *e lot. lum ay ta nae*. "Eh, (your)-lie. It's there at (your) house." [LIE ACCUSATION]  
 PB: *jich kilo. te' ay ta sna*. "So I've seen it, there at his house."  
 Cal: *yu' wan ayi'i*. "Because perhaps it is there." [i.e., it isn't!]  
 PB: *yak. kilo woje cha'je*. [IRONY = DENIAL] "Yes, I saw it yesterday."

The Tzeltal folk model of "truth/lying" includes a presumption that everyone lies for self-interest, when wanting to influence others or deflect unwanted consequences of one's actions. There is no sense that these lies

are morally bad, and there are (as far as I've seen) no punishments of children for lying.<sup>18</sup> This moral neutrality toward lying suggests that no particular value is placed on truth and sincerity per se, in interaction, although the distinction between utterances that are true (*melel*) and non-true (*lot*) is clear. But it is also clear that, even in "information-exchange contexts," in many circumstances truth and sincerity are undesirable or inappropriate, indeed whenever motivations of politeness, or self-interest, or social manipulation, override what might be taken to be the natural urge to speak the truth in a context of information exchange.

### LYING AND IRONY

There is another way in which this Tzeltal practice ties in with particular cultural habits. Part of what "lying" does, in this cultural context, is raise the issue of a different version of "how the world is"; it puts that version interactionally on the table, to be taken as one of the counters in the interactional game of who decides what happens next. This is parallel (it seems to me) to Sperber and Wilson's (1981) treatment of irony (and ironical utterance types) as echoic mention. In Brown (1995), I characterized their position as follows:

All these sorts of "figures of speech" are seen as essentially "echoing" or more loosely evoking a proposition which is placed in the context to be laughed at, scorned, or whatever, in order for an attitude to be conveyed towards it. Ironic utterances are like things in quotes, so for example if someone says "Nice day, eh," in a context of a walk in the pouring rain and sleet, the false description evokes the image of the accurate description ("Rotten day, eh") as well as an image of who might have, or actually did, utter the hope/prediction/expectation that it would be a nice day, this person (or image) then being the imagined "victim" or target of the ironic utterance. (p. 156)

Therefore, tentatively, I want to relate Tzeltal lie/threats to another Tzeltal verbal practice: conventionalized irony. This form of manipulation of utterance of truth is conventionalized to a remarkable degree in this society. In formulating a Tzeltal ironic utterance, one states literally the opposite of what one intends to convey, preceded perhaps by hedging particles and accompanied by "skeptical" intonation, to emphatically convey the opposite. For example, one says the equivalent of "Perhaps maybe I really liked that event" to convey "Boy, I hated it." In Tzeltal adult speech,

<sup>18</sup>The same observation was reported for a Quechua society of Peru (Ackerman, 1990, as cited in Barnes, 1994).

there is pervasive use of conventionalized irony and other ironical forms to express attitudinal skepticism by putting forth different "voices," making propositions that are held up to affective comment or to ridicule. This is fundamentally a "positively polite" invitation to sharing of attitudes (Brown, 1995; Brown & Levinson, 1987).<sup>19</sup>

Tzeltal children learn very early to use this locution; they already are starting by age 3, and use conventionalized irony prolifically by 3;6-4;0.

(22) [24/1/96] X'an (3;3) showed me a cut on her finger, I looked at the wrong one and she said:

X'an: *yu' wan ja'.*

"Because perhaps (I suppose) it's that one." [→ It isn't]

and she showed me the right one.

(23) [mikjul7s, p8] Mik is 3;7, trying to work a toy:

Mik: *ee. ee. ma me pojbeni kala sil.*

"Eh, eh, don't steal it from me, my little Sil.

*ma jichuk ini me'tik.*

Isn't it like this, Me'tik?"  
[asking PB how to make the toy work]

Sil: *jo'o.*

"No."

Mik: *jo'o. jo. yu' ya kalat.*

"No. Huh. Because (I suppose) I'm telling you.  
[→ No!]

*ja' ya kali kala me'tiki.*

I'm telling my-little Me'tik."

(24) [lusapr5s, p.62] Can (5;2), Lus (3;9)

Can: *tutut!*

"Toot toot!" [pretending cups are a car]

Lus: *binti la sokat ini.*

"What are you doing with that?"

*yu' wan jich ta pasel mene.*

Because (I suppose) that's the way to do it."  
[→ it isn't!]

<sup>19</sup>See Clark and Gerrig (1984) and Isaacs and Clark (1990) for a somewhat different analysis of irony—and other forms of "nonserious" language use—as mutually recognized pretense. Their analysis works for Tzeltal irony, but not for what I am calling threat lies, because the pretense on the part of the threateners is not understood or shared by the intended recipient.



(25) 25/1/96 pet (3;5): [ironic response to my comment that the doll will die from the sun]

Pet: *yu' wan ay k'al.*

"Because perhaps there's sun." [→ Don't be silly, there isn't much sun!]

Lus by 3;9 uses irony so often it sometimes sounds like overuse of a conventionalized routine:

(26) lusapr5s, p8: (Lus is 3;9, Nik is 4;3)

Nik: *la me niton chitam e'i lum ay snaik ta jejche.*

"A pig knocked me over at their house acrossways."

Lus: *la nutz chitam e'i lum ta jejch.*

"A pig chased him over there acrossways."

PB: *banti? mach'a yu'un?*

"Where? Whose?"

Lus: *juju'—*

"Dunno"

Nik: *yu'un li'i.*

"Their's here." [pointing to nearest neighbors]

PB: *jo'.*

"Oh."

Lus: *yu'un lumine.*

"Their's over there." [pointing to a different house]

PB: *la sluchat.*

"It butted you?"

Lus: *jo'o.*

"No."

PB: *la' luch.*

"You butted it?"

Lus: *la luchot i antuni.*

"Antun got butted by it."

PB: *aj.*

"Ah"

Lus: *yu' jo'on ek.*

"Because (I suppose it was) me." [→ It wasn't!"]

[a moment later]:

Nik: *ja' me la nutzot e'i jich joy ek i lumine.*

"It is my companion from over there that got chased." [pointing towards a third house, that of cousin Antun]

PB: *jo'.*

"Oh."

Nik: *ma'ba jo'tik e'i.*

"It wasn't us."

PB: *ju'uk.*

"No."

Nik: *ma'ba ja' la nutzon jo'tik.*

"It didn't chase us."

PB: *ju'uk.*

"No."

Lus:	<i>k'an ok'on ek e 'i.</i>	"I wanted to/almost cried too."
PB:	<i>ya' xi'.</i>	"You were afraid of it?"
Lus:	<i>jo'oj.</i>	"No."
PB:	<i>bi yu'un?</i>	"Why?"
Lus:	<i>yu' wan ya jxi' (j)tukel i'i.</i>	"Because perhaps I myself was afraid of it." [→No!]
PB:	<i>ju'uk. bi yu'n ok'at?</i>	"No. Why then did you cry?"
Lus:	<i>yu' wan ya ok'on ek i'i.</i>	"Because perhaps I cried." [I didn't]
PB:	<i>ju'uk</i>	"No (you didn't)."
Lus:	<i>jo'. tantunon tukel e'i.</i>	"Yes. I (my)self howled."
PB:	<i>jo'.</i>	"Yes."
Lus:	<i>ok' tukel e'i antun.</i>	"Antun (him)self cried."

By age 4;0 the children have the irony construction down pat: *yu'* ("because") or *yu'wan* ("because perhaps") combined with a proposition conveys emphatically that the proposition is *not* the case. To be able to use this construction appropriately, children must be able to distinguish the truth and falsity of propositions, and to recognize others' utterances as sometimes not corresponding to the state of affairs in the world. Arguably, they must also be able to attribute false beliefs to others, those false beliefs that they reject with an ironic retort. Children by age 3½ or 4 use this irony construction to convey an affective attitude of scorn or skeptical disagreement with a prior utterance; it is not used simply to correct a mistake, for the record. It is therefore not simply equivalent to negation, which well before this age Tzeltal children have acquired.<sup>20</sup> Although many theory of mind theorists would consider children of 4 too young to have such a model of others' minds, it is worth considering the possibility that Tzeltal childrearing practices actually promote the early development of an awareness of others' minds. In any case, it seems to me to be at least plausible that the earliness with which Tzeltal children are able to do this kind of ironic, skeptical "backwards-talk" is related to the fact that from babyhood on they are routinely subjected to utterances that claim a certain state of affairs in the world (through threats, bribes) that in fact *does not* obtain, and *is not brought about* to happen. Tzeltal children of 3 or 4, though a long way from fully socialized adults, already have

<sup>20</sup>Tzeltal sentences are negated with the particles *ma* or *ma ba*; the grammatical contrast between positive and negative sentences appears by at least age 3 (e.g., *ma jk'an* ["I don't want it"] in contrast to *ya jk'an* ["I want it"]).

both the skeptical attitude, and the rhetorical flavor of indirectness—in the form of ironic skepticism—that is appropriate to this speech community. The cultural practice of lying threats to them has, I think, helped to inculcate it. In the process, they have been socialized through these uses of language to adopt the Tzeltal cultural ideas of “truth” and “lies.” They have, in short, already learned something important about rhetorical modes, culture as “ways of putting things,” ways of framing things.

### ADULT LIES AND VERBAL SOCIAL CONTROL

Let us consider briefly the role of lying in the adult social world of Tenejapa. As in many societies, explicit lying is expected in many contexts. One must lie about private affairs, money, comings and goings, and not having things that people are asking to borrow. A preference for nonconfrontation interactionally means that people prefer overt lies (including bald-faced lies that are so obvious they are not expected to be believed) to a direct refusal of someone’s request.<sup>21</sup> In addition to these contexts where there is no real deception, since everyone knows everyone lies, there are others where lying or nondirect dealing are chronically suspected: Two culturally recognized Tzeltal ones are (a) self-protective behavioral deceit (e.g., *mukin we’elil* [“secret eating”], a practice family members are often prone to suspect one another of), and (b) other-protective polite denial (e.g., as a visitor or guest you must routinely at least four or five times refuse food offers, before accepting; if you refuse you are not believed and the offer is reiterated until you accept; insistence on refusing is guaranteed to offend). There is a general cultural attitude of skepticism concerning news conveyed by outsiders, and extreme skepticism of others’ motives, mixed with occasional gullibility.<sup>22</sup>

There are also some social lies analogous to those identified by Sacks, with the same motivation: attending to constraints on who should have access to what information, and when, and avoiding the sequential consequences of certain kinds of utterances. In Tenejapa these constraints come into play in the social greeting *banti ya xbaat?* (“Where are you going?”), a routine query when passing anyone on the trails. Because this question (analogously to the greeting “How are you?” in English) is askable by anyone, the answerer must monitor her response in relation to whether the

<sup>21</sup>For example, if someone wants to borrow your radio and you want to refuse, it is much better to say something like “I’m afraid it doesn’t have any batteries” (whether or not this is true) than to refuse more directly.

<sup>22</sup>Gullibility tends to emerge in relation to modern contrivances to which exposure is very recent—for example, to television advertising.

asker has the right to know the true answer, and if not, has to offer a "lie" (the routine lies in response to "Where are you going?" being things like: "For a walk," "To work," or "Nowhere").<sup>23</sup>

It strikes me as no accident that this cultural practice of routine lying exists in a small-scale, face-to-face society characterized by forms of social control and decision making that are almost exclusively oral. These include: (a) *gossip as social control* (with the concomitant fear of privacy breaches, fear of having one's reputation besmirched),<sup>24</sup> (b) *belief in witchcraft* (personal knowledge about people is potentially dangerous, and must be kept hidden), (c) *communal decision making* by acclamation, in community meetings where everyone must come to a consensus decision about the common policy to which all will adhere, despite individual cases of private dissension,<sup>25</sup> and (d) *justice by compromise* (local court cases reach a compromise solution to conflicts after both sides have presented their case in often nontrue testimony (see, e.g., Brown, 1995; Collier, 1973). This practice meshes uncomfortably with the practice of written testimony characterizing national Mexican court cases. The stakes may be large (for example in land claims), with a significant motivation to lie, and participants are often unaware of the standards of truth officially applicable in the national courts. These are all contexts providing strong motivation to lie, or conceal one's true opinions and beliefs. But equally, in everyday life, it is often appropriate and expected to lie; indeed Albert's (1972) comments on information control in Burundi apply equally to Tenejapa:

In lesser matters than life and property and position, discretion still has its place. One may discuss with close friends and neighbors the problems created by a spouse who is a bit slow-witted, but not broadcast the fact far and wide. If one suspects that a neighbor is a witch, one refrains from mentioning it in his presence . . . There are, then, some truths not to be spoken aloud to anyone; some to a faithful spouse or a blood brother but nobody else; some to close relatives or neighbors. Only rarely is any statement so innocent that it is not necessary to consider the possibility that it will bring trouble. (p. 91)

Therefore, in many ordinary social circumstances, it is necessary to lie. Informal observation suggests that Tzeltal children learn to manage these social lies with fair competence by the age of 5 or so, when they are called

<sup>23</sup> This "Where are you going?" question is a routine greeting in many societies, and raises the same Sacksian problems (see, e.g., Duranti, 1997, for Samoa).

<sup>24</sup> See L. K. Haviland and J. B. Haviland (1983) for an analysis of gossip and privacy in the nearby Mayan community of Zinacantán.

<sup>25</sup> For example, in a recent meeting, it was decided that everyone in the community would adhere to the same political party. A number of individuals wanting to belong to a rival party publicly acceded to the common policy, despite privately expressed misgivings and resentment.

upon to perform them as they are sent around to different households on errands.

## CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that "everyone has to lie in Tzeltal," at least partly for Sacksian reasons, that is, by anticipation that, unless you lie, you may get into undesirable sequential binds. This is, indeed, one important source of conventional social lies—the kind of speech that is not expected by anyone to be true.<sup>26</sup> My point here is that conventional social lies are not only motivated in this way; in Tenejapa they are also motivated in contexts where rhetorical persuasion is called for. The Tzeltal control that have concerned us are not prompted by sequential concerns, nor by politeness or circumspectness about information distribution. They are uttered to children out of the blue, motivated by the child's (anticipated or actual) undesirable behavior, with the presumption that the child won't necessarily understand caregivers' inconsistent answers (whether threats or bribes) and won't hold caregivers accountable for the predicted events.

Is this Tzeltal practice simply a cultural idiosyncrasy, with no broader lessons? To conclude, we consider the Tzeltal phenomenon in relation to two general issues: (a) the notion and significance of "lying" cross-linguistically, and (b) the possible effects of such a practice of systematic lying on Tzeltal children's linguistic, cognitive, and social development, in the light of other research on children's lying and theory of mind.

### Lies in Cross-Linguistic Perspective

Let us return to the criteria posed by Coleman and Kay (1981) for prototypical *lie* in English, and use them to assess the Tzeltal notion of *lot*: (a) the speaker believes the statement is false, (b) the speaker intends to deceive the hearer by making the statement, and (c) the statement is in fact false. It seems that, in the Tzeltal cultural model, the strongest criterion is (c)—to be a *lot*, the statement must indeed be false. But the weakest of these is (a), because the speaker may in fact mistakenly think the statement is true, and later realize it was false, or he or she may be agnostic or indifferent as to whether the threatened prediction will be carried out. And, in the control

<sup>26</sup>A similar argument made by Susan D. Blum (personal communication) in her book *Deception and Truth in China*, in which she argues "that in this society, language is believed to accomplish many things, just like other sorts of social action, but that it is not principally a vehicle for expression of the 'true feelings of the self.' Hence much behavior that appears to be 'lying' is not taken that way at all."

threats context, (b)—the intention to deceive the target child—is clearly there, or at least the intention exists to produce the desired affect that may motivate the child to cooperate. But there may well be no intention to deceive other participants including older children wise to this strategy, who often contribute to the collaborative effort to deceive the youngest.

The Tzeltal case is not entirely incompatible with Sweetser's (1987) conclusion about the universality of a notion of lying and its link to cultural understandings of information exchange:

Very different cultures emerge from this discussion as possessing saliently similar understandings both of lying and of the general power and morality dimensions of informational exchange. This similarity presumably stems from universal aspects of human communication. Where cultures differ appears to be in *delimitation* of basic "informational exchange" settings and in *conventional use* of the relevant power parameters. Folk models of knowledge and informativeness (and the corresponding semantic domains) may universally involve strong shared elements. (p. 62)

But the negative moral associations of lying in English—the folk understanding that "deceit usually profits the deceiver, to the listener's detriment" (Sweetser, 1987, p. 55) and "lying as serious authority abuse" (Sweetser, 1987, p. 59)—are not always applicable in the Tzeltal community; hence the moral force against it is missing at least in the context of childrearing. Lies, then, are not everywhere considered to be bad, or anti-social. And non-anti-social lies are not everywhere just the "white lies" due to politeness, or to sensitivity to others' needs not to know the truth.

Thus, even across different cultural contexts that share a notion of "lie" as an intentionally nontrue statement, there may be different attitudes to individual responsibility for the truth of statements. The English notion of "lie" is, as argued by Sweetser (1987), tied to cultural views of information, to a culturally molded sense of "self," and of "individual," having one's own true opinions, intentions, and plans. It is also tied to a notion of "responsibility" which, for English speakers, as Hill and Irvine (1993) observed, relates to notions of "the continuity of a self with a relatively consistent scheme of interpretation of what it is reacting to . . . [and] continuity in the community of agents to which response is being made" (p. 1). This notion, as Hill and Irvine pointed out, is cross-culturally problematic, since "continuity of self" and "continuity in the community of agents" are cross-culturally variable notions; not everywhere is responsibility for the truth of an utterance assigned to the speaker. In assessing the Tzeltal case of lying threats to children, it is appropriate to follow Hill and Irvine's suggestion to shift away from assigning the locus of meaning to an individual caregiver toward a dialogic approach to meaning construction, since multiple participants often collaborate in the construction of control lies. But in

these Tzeltal caregiver lies, there is no dialogue with the recipient of the lies—rather, there is a conspiracy of caregivers (including siblings) to control small children. Their collusion means that allocation of responsibility for authorship of the false message is diffuse. Meanings are constructed in interactional processes; in this Tzeltal case these are exercises of persuasion backed up by power. Responsibility and evidence in this context are not relevant. The meaning of sequentially piled up false threats/promises is “Do X, or bad things will ensue!” Agency (control) is central; knowledge and information are manipulated in pursuit of particular goals.

I would go further, and claim that, without cultural consensus on what constitutes proof of what the external reality is (e.g., writing, or religious dogma), there are bound to be different moral attitudes to lying and truth telling. Most Tenejapans have no relationship to the written word, except (for some) the Bible. The semantics of *lot* (“lie”) and *melel* (“true”) do indeed imply a cultural notion of truth analogous to the English one (there is a reality “out there”; true statements are ones that correspond to that reality, false ones don’t). But in the absence of canons of provability, truth is slippery, often boiling down to what works, socially, including the practice of controlling small children by lying to them about the future consequences of their actions.<sup>27</sup>

### Lying, Irony, and the “Theory of Mind” Theory

First let us be clear that the practice described here is not a bizarre one; similar, routine practices of threatening, teasing, baiting, and lying to small children are found in many societies and subcultures.<sup>28</sup> Whereas the effect of such practices on children’s socialization, and on the development of social abilities, has been stressed (e.g., by Heath, 1983; Miller, 1986; Schiefelin, 1986), no one, to my knowledge, has yet considered what effect such practices may have on children’s developing cognitive abilities.

As Barnes (1994) pointed out, there has been relatively little research into how children develop an understanding of lies and an ability to convincingly lie.<sup>29</sup> Laboratory studies where contexts are constructed in which children will lie, in order to assess how adept they are at lying or at detecting lies at different ages, have shown that first and third graders cannot tell a convincing lie; they “leak” (DePaulo & Jordan, 1982). Nor are

<sup>27</sup>Concerning notions of “truth” in a related context of nonverifiability, see also Danziger (1998) on the Mopan Maya who implicitly believe stories; anything written down must be true.

<sup>28</sup>For example, in her study of rural Greece, Friedl (1962) reported that parents deliberately lie to their children in order to teach them that they shouldn’t take others’ words “at face value.”

<sup>29</sup>In addition to Barnes’ (1994) review, see DePaulo and Jordan (1982), DePaulo, Stone, and Lassiter (1985), Ekman (1989), Feldman and Custrini (1988), and Vasek (1985).

preadolescents very good at detecting lies and deceit. These researchers have suggested that English children are led into lying by the "training ground" of games that require deception (a context that, however, is virtually nonexistent for Tzeltal preadolescent children). Piaget (1965) also held that children do not achieve an adultlike definition of lie in terms of intent to deceive until the age of 10–11. It is also generally thought that irony will be a late acquisition for children, relying as it does on an understanding of multiple levels of communicative intent (see Winner, 1988; Ninio & Snow, 1996).

While recognizing the limitations of comparing laboratory results with natural situations, I do think that Tzeltal children seem to be remarkably adept at producing lies, and at producing and understanding ironic utterances, at a much younger age than these studies would lead one to expect. This suggests the hypothesis—which would need to be tested by structured cognitive tasks—that, through participation in the Tzeltal "language games" of lying threats, of ironic skepticism, of contradicting others, Tzeltal children by the age of 4 or even earlier are led to the mental awareness that others can hold false beliefs and can try to persuade others to hold them. Less speculatively, I would argue that the training in threat lies plays a role in leading Tzeltal children into taking on responsibility early. This comes about because this is an activity where the participation structure of multiple caregivers of widely differing ages motivates the child to shift from receiver to giver of these threats, and thereby to responsibility via collaboration with other caregivers. It is, then, not just skepticism that is being socialized by this practice; a child has to learn what to do to make such threats not happen—namely, take on responsibility for cooperating with the social unit, and for ensuring that even younger children also cooperate.<sup>30</sup> This accounts, perhaps, for the remarkable shift in child behavior around age 4, from ignoring control threats to complying with caretaker commands, without caregivers actually having had to carry out threats or use explicit force. This then may be the real significance of the multiparty, intergenerational talk that occurs in this context: Through these participation structures the young Tzeltal child doling out threat lies to an even younger sibling begins to acquire full membership in her household group. The result is that Tzeltal children, at a very early age (by at least age 5, and some by age 4), efficiently take on serious responsibility for child care of their younger siblings.

To participate in the threat-lie activity as a threatener, children do not at first actually need a theory of mind, or of others' intentions; nor do they

---

<sup>30</sup>Other things are being socialized as well, including specific cultural beliefs about what is frightening (being "grabbed" or stolen away, outsider dogs, medicine and injections, baths, etc.) and what is desirable (sweets, trips to school or shops, visiting, etc.), beliefs that are laid out, and reinforced, in the content of threats and bribes.



need one to participate in accusations that others are "lying," since for them, at first, Tzeltal *lot* do not rely on intentions but simply on a mismatch between a proposition uttered and reality. But it seems plausible that all this lying has effects on language learning and socialization, in a way perhaps not anticipated by the philosophers. Children exposed to language routinely used nonfactually readily learn to use it that way themselves—they are sensitive to the manipulability of people through manipulating truth. This leads to early acquisition of the culturally appropriate use of irony to convey skepticism about the stated position of one's interlocutor (or to some other target of the ironic utterance). The caregiver practice of lying to small children brings them quickly to culturally stabilized and pragmatically effective indirect uses of language—like irony—where the meaning of an utterance relies systematically on inverting notions of truth.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This chapter is a revised version of talks presented at the CLIC conference at UCLA in May 1998 and at the American Anthropological Association meetings in November 1998. I am grateful to Susan Blum, Alessandro Duranti, Elinor Ochs, and Emanuel Schegloff for helpful critical comments.

## REFERENCES

- Ackerman, R. (1990). *Deception among the southcentral Quechua*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Albert, E. (1972). Cultural patterning of speech behavior in Burundi. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics* (pp. 72–105). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Barnes, J. A. (1994). *A pack of lies: Towards a sociology of lying*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Blum, S. D. (1998, December). *Sincere words, clever words: Deception and truth in China*. Paper delivered at the 99th annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia.
- Bok, S. (1978). *Lying: Moral choice in public and private life*. New York: Pantheon.
- Brown, P. (1995). Politeness strategies and the attribution of intention: The case of Tzeltal irony. In E. N. Goody (Ed.), *Social intelligence and interaction* (pp. 153–174). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P. (1996, July). *The conversational context for language acquisition: A Tzeltal (Mayan) case study*. Plenary lecture, 5th International Pragmatics Association conference, Mexico City, Mexico.
- Brown, P. (1998). Conversational structure and language acquisition: The role of repetition in Tzeltal adult and child speech. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 8(2), 197–221.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

- Clark, H. H., & Gerrig, R. J. (1984). On the pretense theory of irony. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 113, 121-126.
- Coleman, L., & Kay, P. (1981). Prototype semantics: The English word "lie." *Language*, 57(1), 26-44.
- Collier, J. F. (1973). *Law and social change in Zinacantan*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Danziger, E. (1998). *To play a speaking part: Falsehood, fantasy, and fiction among the Mopan Maya*. Unpublished manuscript.
- DePaulo, B. M., & Jordan, A. (1982). Age changes in deceiving and detecting deceit. In R. S. Feldman (Ed.), *Development of nonverbal behaviour in children* (pp. 151-180). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- DePaulo, B. M., Stone, J. I., & Lassiter, G. D. (1985). Deceiving and detecting deceit. In B. R. Schlenker (Ed.), *The self and social life* (pp. 323-370). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Duranti, A. (1993). Intentions, self and responsibility: An essay in Samoan ethno-pragmatics. In J. H. Hill & J. T. Irvine (Eds.), *Responsibility and evidence in oral discourse* (pp. 24-47). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Duranti, A. (1997). Universal and culture-specific properties of greetings. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 7(1), 63-97.
- Ekman, P. (1989). *Why kids lie*. New York: Scribner's.
- Feldman, R. S., & Custrini, R. J. (1988). Learning to lie and self-deceive. In J. S. Lockard & D. L. Paulhus (Eds.), *Self-deception: An adaptive mechanism?* (pp. 40-52). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Friedl, E. (1962). *Vasilika: A village in modern Greece*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Goffman, E. (1975). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.
- Gopnik, A., & Meltzoff, A. N. (1994). Minds, bodies, and persons: Young children's understanding of the self and others as reflected in imitation and theory of mind research. In S. T. Parker, R. W. Mitchell, & M. L. Boccia (Eds.), *Self-awareness in animals and humans* (pp. 166-186). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Haviland, J. B. (1989). "Sure, sure": Evidence and affect. *Text*, 9(1), 27-68.
- Haviland, L. K., & Haviland, J. B. (1983). Privacy in a Mexican village. In S. I. Benn & G. F. Gauss (Eds.), *Public and private in social life* (pp. 341-361). London: Croom Helm.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Hill, J. H., & Irvine, J. T. (1993). *Responsibility and evidence in oral discourse*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Isaacs, E. A., & Clark, H. H. (1990). Ostensible invitations. *Language in Society*, 19, 493-509.
- Keenan, E. (1976). The universality of conversational implicatures. *Language in Society*, 5, 67-80.
- Lewis, D. K. (1969). *Convention: A philosophical study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lewis, D. K. (1975). Languages and language. In K. Gunderson (Ed.), *Language, mind and knowledge* (pp. 3-35). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Miller, P. (1986). Teasing as language socialization and verbal play in a White working class community. In B. B. Schieffelin & E. Ochs (Eds.), *Language socialization across cultures* (pp. 199-212). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Ninio, A., & Snow, C. (Eds.). (1996). *Pragmatic development*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Ochs, E. (1988). *Culture and language development*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Piaget, J. (1965). *The moral judgment of the child*. New York: The Free Press.
- Quinn, N., & Holland, D. (1987). Culture and cognition. In D. Holland & N. Quinn (Eds.), *Cultural models in language and thought* (pp. 3-42). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosaldo, M. (1982). The things we do with words: Ilongot speech acts and speech act theory in philosophy. *Language in Society*, 11, 203-237.

- Sacks, H. (1975). Everyone has to lie. In M. Sanches & B. G. Blount (Eds.), *Sociocultural dimensions of language use* (pp. 57–80). New York: Academic Press.
- Schieffelin, B. B. (1986). Teasing and shaming in Kaluli children's interactions. In B. B. Schieffelin & E. Ochs (Eds.), *Language socialization across cultures* (pp. 165–181). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Schieffelin, B. B. (1990). *The give and take of everyday life: Language socialization of Kaluli children*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1981). Irony and the use-mention distinction. In P. Cole (Ed.), *Radical pragmatics* (pp. 295–318). New York: Academic Press.
- Strauss, C., & Quinn, N. (1997). *A cognitive theory of cultural meaning*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Sweetser, E. (1987). The definition of "lie": An examination of the folk models underlying a semantic prototype. In D. Holland & N. Quinn (Eds.), *Cultural models in language and thought* (pp. 43–66). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Vasek, M. E. (1985). Lying as a skill: The development of deception in children. In R. W. Mitchell & N. S. Thompson (Eds.), *Deception: Perspectives on human and nonhuman deceit* (pp. 271–292). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Winner, E. (1988). *The point of words: Children's understanding of metaphor and irony*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.