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*Reply to Stępnik: Methodological Mess, Misunderstandings and Improper Interpretation*

The article is a reply to Andrzej Stępnik's defense of his definition of lying, first proposed in Stępnik 2013 and subsequently criticized by Tomasz Puczyłowski (2014). We begin by claiming that the adequacy conditions imposed by Stępnik (2013) on definitions of lying are unjustified, because they are based on a conflation of lexical definitions of everyday expressions with precisising, or perhaps stipulative, definitions of scientific terms. Only lexical definitions, whose purpose is to capture a word's existing usage in a given speech community, are straightforwardly evaluated in terms of accuracy. By contrast, stipulative definitions are evaluated only in terms of theoretical and practical usefulness, with precisising definitions falling somewhere in between. If Stępnik is proposing a lexical definition then he should first identify the relevant speech community and then base his proposal on relevant linguistic evidence. He does neither of these things. What is more, his definition is clearly at odds with the available linguistic evidence. If he is offering either a precisising or a purely stipulative definition then he should provide theoretical motivation for it. But, as we point out, he does not do that either. We then focus on Stępnik's (2017) two counterarguments to Puczyłowski's (2014) objections. We show that the first counterargument misses its mark, because it is based on a misunderstanding concerning the meaning of the term "speech act". The second counterargument fails, because it relies on an unwarranted and uncharitable construal of Puczyłowski's argument. We conclude that the definition proposed by Stępnik is both inaccurate and unmotivated.

Key words:

definitions of lie and lying, lexical versus precisising and stipulative definitions