

Detecting Lies or Memorized Lines

Punctuation-speech. People who read for a living, like news anchors, or actors who must recite lines, pay attention to punctuation to make meaning clear. We're taught to speak punctuation a certain way at school: for a comma you pause for a certain length of time; for a period you pause for a certain length; but real speech has a much larger range of expressive devices. Natural speech is marked by much more tonal variation, and many more pauses for various reasons.

Regularity of speech (tone and duration). In real life, speech is irregular. Not only because you have to search around for the words to express yourself, but because saying certain words affect you in different ways. Some words are emotive - names of your friends and family, names of things sacred to you, words like "Holocaust". Other words induce, if not emotion, then at least a "thought-pause" especially if the person is trying to express an abstract concept. At the opposite end of the scale, you have the stereotypical flat, monotonous, regular voice of a newsreader...

Breath-rhythm. In real life, you breathe more naturally, and allow yourself to take breaths, sometimes at inconvenient places. When a person has memorized or rehearsed their story, they've frequently planned out where to take breaths, or, worse still, in their nervousness, they try to get everything out in a single breath. However, the unnaturalness will be noticeable.

Behavioral components. This is a harder thing to describe to someone who doesn't practice watching people regularly. However, if you ask someone to describe how their living room is set up, often you can see them mentally seeing it, if you know what I mean. When you're using your memory to talk about places and events, there are observable reactions as you relive the experience - even for something as mundane as a living room. If, on the other hand, you're speaking of something to which you're not emotionally connected, or that is rehearsed but was not actually experienced, then it's just words, words, words.

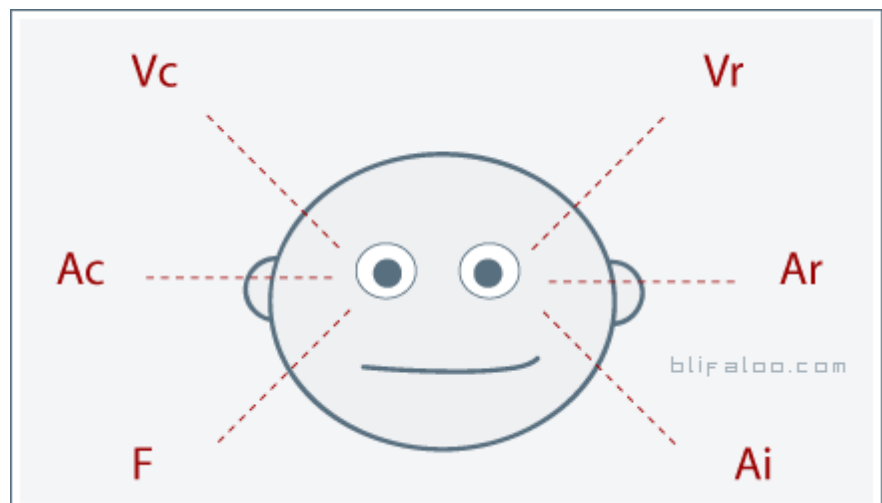
Directional memory. People who are speaking of things they actually experienced can start at any point in the story. They can tell you the story backwards if need be. A person who is reciting a memorized line or story has tremendous difficulty with this very simple thing because they memorized their lines in one direction only. If you ask them to tell you the story backwards, there will be a lot of pauses and hesitations.

Direction of eye angle. Though there is a certain amount of truth to the notion that one can determine whether a person is lying or reciting a memorized line from the direction of their eyes, the reality is that taken alone, the eyes are not as helpful as some television shows would have you think.

In their book "Frogs into Princes: Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP)", Richard Bandler and John Grinder showed the following results from their experiments:

Vc (up and to your left) stands for "Visually Constructed Images." Ask a person to imagine a fire-breathing dragon and they will likely look in that direction.

Vr (up and to your right) stands for Visually



Remembered Images.” They are remembering something they actually experienced and are using their memory to reconstruct that visual memory. However, looking straight ahead or having unfocused, unmoving eyes may also indicate the brain accessing visual images.

Ac (to your left) stands for “Auditory Constructed”. They are trying to create or imagine what a certain sound would be like that they have never actually heard.

Ar (to your right) is “Auditory Remembered”. They are, for instance, remembering the sound of their favorite singer, or the sound of the first time their baby cried.

F (down and to your left) stands for “Feeling”. This is a kinesthetic memory. This is the direction they generally look when they are recalling a smell, sensation or taste.

Ai (down and to your right) is the direction someone looks when they are holding an internal dialog, when they are “talking to themselves”.

So – for example. Let’s say that you ask the person what their spouse said about the matter and they look to the left. This probably indicates that they are making something up because they are showing a “construction” going on. Had they looked to the right (your right that is), it would have indicated a truly recalled or remembered image.

One of the things that must be taken into account however, is which hand the person uses. If they are right handed all the previous descriptions apply. The descriptions must all be flipped however, if the person is left handed. Thus, if the person in the previous example were left-handed, they are likely telling you the truth. Sometimes I’ll deliberately leave a chair slightly outside of the normal, comfortable distance for a conversation and see which hand they use to adjust the chair. At other times, I’ll give them a short form to fill out and note which hand they use to write.

As always a base line of normal behavior must be determined before concluding anything. I try to engage the person in small talk, asking them about non-consequential memories; small, non-threatening items that they are not likely to lie about. Often, I’ll ask them about facts that I’ve already verified by other means and use those readings as a base line.