

## CHARACTERISTICS OF IRONY AS A PRODUCT OF SPEECH ACTIVITY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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### Annotation

Due to the fact that irony is one of the stylistic device which is used for ensuring effective intercultural communication. Teaching English language is easier to explain if a teacher gives various irony in mother tongue and depicted in L2. The article is devoted to characterize the irony giving some relevant example.

**Keywords:** Irony, ironic interpretation, reality, ground-breaking finding, implicature.

### Introduction

Irony is a multifaceted phenomenon. It is the subject of study of philosophers, literary critics, linguists. There is even the term "ironology" as a field of science that studies irony [Kaufer 1986: 315]. Classifying the types of irony, researchers distinguish Socratic irony, dramatic irony, situational irony (irony of fate), as well as verbal. Irony is traditionally regarded as a category of the comic. Literary criticism has long dealt with the problem of the comic and its types. According to researchers, the underestimation of irony as an artistic form of critical assimilation of reality originates "in the indefinite status of irony, primarily in the system of the aesthetic category of the comic" [Pokhodnya 1989:3-4]. References to irony as a category of the comic can be found in the works of Yu.B. Borev [1970], B. Dzamidoka [1974], S.I. Pokhodni [1989], V.Ya. Proppa [1997], O.Ya. Palkevich [2001], S. Attardo [2007], K.A. Vorobyeva [2008] and others. Irony is proposed to be considered as a philosophical and aesthetic category, as a cultural phenomenon [Pivoev, 2000], irony is considered from the point of view of an anthropocentric approach [Mukhina 2006], as well as a mental and linguistic cultural formation [Bryukhanova 2004]. Humor, of which irony is a part, is reflected in the way of life of the people, their culture and language. Many researchers define humor as a way of communication [Chubaryan 1994], [Tretyakova 2001] and as a type of influence on the interlocutor [Propp 1997], [Latyshev 2003].

Knowing and understanding the mechanisms of functioning of humor and irony is necessary to ensure effective intercultural communication.

The term "irony" today denotes a variety of phenomena that are united by the idea of a discrepancy between the expected and real state of affairs. Researchers point to the discrepancy between the objective properties of an object and its norm that exists in our minds as the main premise of the comic [Dzemidok 1974, Propp 1997]. Irony is also defined as the intentional transmission of insincerity towards an illocutionary act [Prokofiev 1988: 92]. A method for evoking humor, irony in literature is often like a private joke that creates a sense of complicity between author and reader. In effect, the author is saying to the reader, "I know you are smart enough to understand what is really going on here." Irony in literature is intended to provoke the reader into thinking harder and analyzing a situation. By comparing and contrasting reality with suppositions about reality, the reader is able to arrive at a better understanding of the author's intent. The rhetorical device of irony in literature is often far more effective than a direct statement. A classic example of the use of irony in literature can be found in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, an American novel set in a small Alabama town during the 1930s. While teaching a current events class, Miss Gates, the local school teacher, leads the class in a discussion about the rise of Nazism in Germany and the persecution of the Jewish people. Miss Gates told the class that only those who are prejudice persecute people, unlike those where they lived. Smug and comfortable in her support of the Jewish people, she is totally incapable of seeing the irony of her comments in light of her extreme prejudice toward black residents of the town. Irony is a multi-faceted literary device that a writer uses to point out the discrepancy between reality and how things appear or what was expected. When a writer uses irony in a work, there is incongruity in regards to the behavior of characters, the words that they say, or the events that take place. Irony can be difficult to understand because it is often defined incorrectly. Authors use irony to make their writing more interesting. Television and movie producers use irony to make their shows interesting and funny.

<sup>1</sup>

Modern researchers offer a significant number of new terms related to the concept of "irony" and denoting phenomena that are closely related to it. So, Yu.N. Varzonin speaks of an "ironic personality" [Varzonin 1994], O.Ya. Palkevich - about the "ironic mode", which is a way of linguistic articulation of reality [Palkevich 2001], K.V. Okhrimovich - about the ironic vision of life [Okhrimovich 2004]. In relation to the speaker to the addressee and / or object of irony, "positive", "negative" and "neutral" irony are distinguished [Alba-Juez 1994, 1998]. National humor, including irony, as well as other aspects of communication, have ethno-cultural specifics. It is associated

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<sup>1</sup> <https://education.seattlepi.com/>

with the national mentality, the vision of the world inherent in this people, and centuries-old traditions.

In literature, there are three types of irony – verbal, situational, and dramatic.

Verbal irony is when a person says one thing but means the opposite; to illustrate this, a character stepping out into a hurricane and saying, “What nice weather we're having!” Situational irony occurs when the actual result of a situation is totally different from what you'd expect the result to be

Situational irony is when the opposite of what is expected happens; a fire station burning down, or someone posting on Twitter that social media is a waste of time.

Dramatic irony is when the audience seems to know more about an event, a situation, or a conversation than the characters in the movie, on the show, or in the book do.<sup>2</sup>

A ground-breaking finding that emerged from Bouton's (1999) research on the L2 acquisition of irony was that ironic utterances were more difficult to comprehend for uninstructed learners of English than other types of non-literal utterances. Even after spending four to seven years in the United States, Bouton's learners continued having difficulty with accurately interpreting irony. This finding suggests that trouble with irony persists even at more advanced levels of proficiency. However, the instrument that Bouton administered in his study consisted of multiple-choice items presented to learners in written form. Thus, the instrument lacked audio and visual cues that might have assisted learners in making an ironic reading of the utterances in question. While ironic utterances in verbal interactions are not always accompanied by cues such as a special intonation or facial expression, the presence of audio and visual cues may help to signal an ironic interpretation (Yus Ramos, 1998). Consequently, a question that arises from Bouton's results is whether L2 learners' ability to accurately perceive irony would be increased by the presence of an audio and visual context. Yus Ramos (1998) argues that the more the features of the context of the utterance make the literal meaning incompatible, the easier and quicker it will be for the hearer to interpret the ironic meaning. Following Yus Ramos' proposal, we hypothesized that the provision of an audio and visual context would make the ironic meaning of an utterance easier to perceive for L2 learners.

In order to address these issues, the present study was designed to examine the effect of L2 proficiency and the presence of an audiovisual context on the interpretation of ironic utterances by L2 learners of Karakalpak at three different levels of proficiency. We discussed the definition of irony, presented above examples.

Despite the large body of literature on irony, only one previous study that we are aware of has specifically examined L2 learners' acquisition of irony. A review of the small number of studies on the L2 acquisition, perception, and use of both irony and humor indicates that L2 learners can and do understand and use ironic and humorous

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<sup>2</sup> <https://context.reverso.net>

language and that, furthermore, these productive and receptive abilities appear to improve over time with increased proficiency and experience with the target language (Bell, 2005, 2006; Bouton, 1999; Davies, 2003).

If we assume that irony functions similarly in different languages (as it seems to do at least in English and Karakalpak), then adult L2 learners do not need to acquire the ability to understand irony, they simply transfer that ability from their L1. The ability to recognize and use irony could be considered as part of a learner's "universal pragmatic knowledge" (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 164), along with other presumably universal concepts such as conversational implicature, speech acts, inference, and turn-taking (p. 165). On the other hand, it is clear that there is much linguistic and cultural knowledge that L2 learners must acquire in the target language in order to be able to interpret irony. First, learners must be able to understand the literal lexical meanings of the words; they must understand the syntactic relation between the words; they must be able to interpret an utterance in its discourse context; and finally, they must be able to see why the literal meaning of an utterance fails to be compatible with the context. In addition to these linguistic skills, for those types of irony that allude to culture-specific norms, expectations, and references, L2 learners must possess the relevant cultural knowledge in order to recognize the implied ironic meaning. With respect to humor, Bell (2005, p. 4) argues that, "while humor itself is a universal phenomenon, its instantiations within cultural groups can be very particular, involving culturally specific topics, forms and styles of language, and contextualization cues." Irony may be similar.

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