##### 1. Definition and meaning of irony from the stylistic point of view

Irony is an instinctively recognized Stylistic Device (SD), the nature of which is not fully studied. This device is also based on the simultaneous realization of two logical meanings – dictionary and contextual ones, but the two meaning stand in opposition to each other. That is, a word with a positive meaning is used to denote something negative and vice versa.

For example: must be delightful to find oneself in a foreign country without a penny in one's pocket.

##### Irony, as a widely used figure of speech, has received considerable attention from cognitive psychologists and linguists. The traditional study of verbal irony from rhetorical and aesthetical approaches has been shifted to current cognitive and pragmatic investigation. From the perspective of Figure-Ground theory, the context or the apparent meaning of irony corresponds to the Ground; the intended meaning of irony corresponds to marked Figure. The cognitive character of irony accords with cognitive principle which human realizes world from known entities to unknown entities, and also serves to the economic characteristic of cognition, it is a new way of human's cognitive innovation.

##### According to Efimov’s book from stylistic irony is classified as lexico-semantic Stylistic Devices and is the figure of substitution and in additional the figures of quality as a kind of figure of substitution.

This figure of quality is realized when the speaker intentionally hunks the principle of sincerity of speech. Ironically used words acquire meanings opposite to their primary language meanings: ironical good means bad, enough means not enough, pleased means displeased, etc. Though irony is a contextual stylistic device, there exist words and word-combinations which convey ironical meaning out of context: too clever by half, a young hopeful, head cook and bottle washer, to orate, to oratorize. In order to help the addressee decode irony the speaker often resorts to impropriate intonation and gestures.

Irony is generally used to convey:

* Negative meaning or emotion: Favoured country! – they let the paupers go to sleep!
* Irritation and dissatisfaction: What a noble illustration of the tender laws of this.
* Regret and disappointment: We were very lucky to find our pockets without penny in a foreign country.
* Displeasure: Thank you very much for trumping my ace!

Usually the word containing the irony is strongly marked by intonation by means of a logical stress. Irony should not be confused with humour, though they have very much in common. Humour always causes laughter. But a word used ironically may have some shades of meaning that can be sad and even bitter. For example, observe the ironical usage of the verb «like»:

I like the taxes, when they 're not too many;

I like a sea coal fire, when not too dear;

I like the weather, when it is not rainy;

That is I like two months of every year. (J.G. Byron)

According to Kuznetsova’s book from Stylistics some SDs are based upon the ways of joining lexical units in succession: words within a phrase, words and phrases within a sentence. The essence of such ways of joining words is the semantic correlation of words and phrases. There are three main types of this correlated junction of words:

1) correlation between semantically synonymous lexical units; they produce figures of identity;

2) correlation between semantically opposite lexical units; they produce figures of opposition;

3) correlation between semantically different lexical units; they produce figures of inequality.

Figures of opposition are characterised by the combination in context of two or more words or word-groups with opposite meanings. These meanings are either objectively opposition which interpreted as such by the speaker. Figures of opposition are: Irony, Antithesis and Oxymoron.

So, irony – speakers communicate implied propositions that are intentionally contradictory to the propositions contained in the words themselves.

**2. Classification of Irony and general distinctions between metaphor, metonymy and irony**

There are various types of irony. They have in common the adoption of a distance from the subject for satirical or critical effect. The most accepted is the following characteristic:

1. Verbal irony is when an author says one thing and means something else. An example of this is when someone says «Oh, that's beautiful», when what they mean (probably conveyed by their tone) is they find «that» quite ugly.

2. Dramatic irony is when an audience perceives something that a character in the literature does not know. For example, when a character says to another «I'll see you tomorrow!», when the audience (but not the character) knows that the character will die before morning.

3. Situational irony is a discrepancy between the expected result and actual results. Being «shot with one's own gun,» or «hoisted by one's own petard» are popular formulations of the basic idea of situational irony. Situational irony includes cosmic irony and historical irony.

Verbal irony is distinguished from situational irony and dramatic irony in that it is produced intentionally by speakers. For instance, if a man exclaims, «I’m not upset!» but reveals an upset emotional state through his voice while truly trying to claim he's not upset, it would not be verbal irony by virtue of its verbal manifestation (it would, however, be situational irony). But if the same speaker said the same words and intended to communicate that he was upset by claiming he was not, the utterance would be verbal irony. This distinction illustrates an important aspect of verbal irony – speakers communicate implied propositions that are intentionally contradictory to the propositions contained in the words themselves. There are, however, examples of verbal irony that do not rely on saying the opposite of what one means, and there are cases where all the traditional criteria of irony exist and the utterance is not ironic.

Ironic similes are a form of verbal irony where a speaker intends to communicate the opposite of what they mean. For instance, the following explicit similes begin with the deceptive formation of a statement that means A but that eventually conveys the meaning not A: as soft as concrete, as clear as mud, as pleasant as a root canal.

#### Dramatic irony has three stages – installation, exploitation, and resolution (often also called preparation, suspension, and resolution) – producing dramatic conflict in what one character relies or appears to rely upon, the contrary of which is known by observers (especially the audience; sometimes to other characters within the drama) to be true. In summary, it means that the reader/watcher/listener knows something that one or more of the characters in the piece is not aware of. In ‘Romeo and Juliet’, the other characters in the cast think Juliet is dead, but the audience knows she only took a sleeping potion. Tragic irony is a special category of dramatic irony. In tragic irony, the words and actions of the characters contradict the real situation, which the spectators fully realize.

Situational irony is a relatively modern use of the term, and describes a discrepancy between the expected result and actual results when enlivened by perverse appropriateness.

For example: When John Hinckley attempted to assassinate Ronald Reagan, all of his shots initially missed the President; however, a bullet ricocheted off the bullet-proof Presidential limousine and struck Reagan in the chest. Thus, a vehicle made to protect the President from gunfire was partially responsible for his being shot.

The expression «irony of fate» (cosmic irony) stems from the notion that the gods (or the Fates) are amusing themselves by toying with the minds of mortals with deliberate ironic intent. Closely connected with situational irony, it arises from sharp contrasts between reality and human ideals, or between human intentions and actual results. The resulting situation is poignantly contrary to what was expected or intended. More recently in English, the mere «coincidental or unexpected» has been called ironic, and this usage appears to be gaining ground. It is still considered a minor usage. Some examples of situations poignantly contrary to expectation.

In art: In O. Henry's story The Gift of the Magi, a young couple are too poor to buy each other Christmas gifts. The wife cuts off her treasured hair to sell it to a wig-maker for money to buy her husband a chain for his heirloom pocket watch. She's shocked when she learns he had pawned his watch to buy her a set of combs for her long, beautiful, prized hair.

When history is seen through modern eyes, there often appear sharp contrasts between the way historical figures see their world's future and what actually transpires. In a more tragic example of historical irony, what people now refer to as «The First World War» was originally called «The War to End All Wars» or «The Great War.» Historical irony is therefore a subset of cosmic irony.

Cosmic irony is disparity between human desires and the harsh realities of the outside world. By some definitions, situational irony and cosmic irony are not irony at all.

A speaker might take up an opponent's argument and then exaggerate it to reveal its weaknesses. This is Socratic irony. Irony is often classed as a form of humour, along with sarcasm and satire. These do not necessarily evoke laughter, but rather a wry shrug or assent to the idea that the received world picture has been disturbed. Irony must not be confused with sarcasm, which is direct: sarcasm means precisely what it says, but in a sharp, caustic manner.

The difference between metaphor and metonymy, on the one hand, and irony, on the other, can be defined as follows: in metaphor and metonymy, the transfer is based on affinity of the objects, in Irony, it is based on their opposition. Irony refers to a contrast or discrepancy between appearance and reality.

**Inference**

irony speech correlation metaphor

In a narrow sense, irony is the use of a word having a positive meaning to express a negative one. In a wider sense, Irony is an utterance which formally shows a positive or neutral attitude of the speaker to the object of conversation but in fact expresses a negative evaluation of it.

Irony is not restricted to any particular syntactical structure or lexical units. In context, there are usually some formal markers of irony pointing out to the meaning implied.

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The cognitive character of irony accords with cognitive principle which human realizes world from known entities to unknown entities, and also serves to the economic characteristic of cognition, it is a new way of human's cognitive innovation.

There are various types of irony. The most accepted is: verbal irony, situational irony, dramatic irony.

Irony must not be confused with sarcasm, which is direct: sarcasm means what it says and with metaphor and metonymy the transfer of which is based on affinity of the objects and in Irony, it is based on their opposition.

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