

Towards a Multidimensional Empirically-based Model of Self-irony Production in Dialogue

Irony is based on the contrast of the literal and non-literal meaning of what is said. The frequency of ironic statements makes it occasionally invisible. Imagine, for instance, a student who is exclaiming "Wonderful!" when he got an "F". He did not intend to emphasize the wonderfulness of "F" score. The same applies to science. For many years irony has been extensively explored in the research and became ordinary topic. Due to the ubiquity of irony, 'self-irony', a phenomenon being quite similar but being distinct in basis has been almost overlooked. In fact, self-irony implies completely varying communicative context of the speaker and the object of irony referring to the same person. This person would be, commonly, evaluated positively as the one with a sense of humor and distance to his own self. Since the language use accounts for variability in being perceived by others, self-irony use is a self-presentation technique. Although, it is unknown what facilitates producing utterances that result in being laughter at. The current study will address this research question through determining factors accounting for variability in self-irony production.

In order to reflect spontaneous context of self-irony production, this phenomenon will be studied experimentally during cooperative task performing by two participants. As a result, more naturalistic sample of speech will be obtain from which, with reference to paralinguistic cues such as facial gestures, self-ironic utterances will be abstracted. The abstracted expressions will be then statistically analyzed along with individuals factors measured by the questionnaires, for instance self-esteem, perceived support or sense of humor.

The empirically-based model of self-irony production in spontaneous speech will explain why being laughter at is not defeating for some people. The results of the current project will be wide-disseminated, contributing to better understand mechanisms of self-presentation style preference. Moreover, it will lay the groundwork for future studies in following disciplines: applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, psychology or management. The outcomes might be practically implemented in psychotherapy, mediation or negotiation.