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MAGISTERARBEIT



TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT
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Linguistic Approaches to Irony - an Analysis of British Newspaper Comments

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geb. am 17.05.1979 in Schlema
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Chemnitz, den 11. Mai 2006

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Concern of this Paper

Irony may be a weapon in a satirical attack, or a smokescreen concealing a retreat, or a device for turning the world or oneself inside out; irony may be found in words and attitudes, in events and situations; or we may find nothing on earth and quite certainly nothing in heaven that is not ironic (Muecke 1980: 3).

Amongst various existing stylistic devices used in languages, irony might represent one of the most common and fascinating tools of expressing double meaning or pretense. Many attempts have been made to find proper definitions for what irony actually is, as Littman and Mey suggest: “Is it not somewhat ironic [itself] that, for all the effort that linguists, psychologists, authors, and the like have devoted to understanding and using irony, no one can define irony?” (Littmann & Mey 1991: 131).

At first sight irony seems to belong to the field of stylistics and thus to studies of literature. Yet, however popular a stylistic device in literature, a more familiar field where we find the application of irony is in ordinary verbal language use such as in the following statement: “In saying this the speaker was being ironic.” Apart from everyday language use and literature, irony permeates every other form of present-day media - movies, advertising, newspapers - just to name a few. Furthermore the concept of irony comprises more than language. Take the following account into consideration: an ironic movie, an

ironic situation, irony of fate etc. Irony does not always have to be derisive or witty, it can be mild, subtle or affectionate as well as nasty, ferocious, acrimonious or bitter (c.f. Lapp 1992: 12). Mücke offers this overview of the complete possibilities for irony:

[...] tragic irony, comic irony, irony of manner, irony of situation, philosophical irony, practical irony, dramatic irony, verbal irony, ingénu irony, double irony, rhetorical irony, self-irony, Socratic Irony, Romantic Irony, cosmic irony, sentimental irony, irony of fate, irony of chance, irony of character, etc. - [...] some have been named from the effect, others from the medium, others again from the technique, or the function, or the object, or the practitioner, or the tone, or the attitude. Clearly there could be several mutually and independent (and separately inadequate) classifications of the 'kinds' of irony, each based upon a different point of view; but merely to go on inventing and using as occasion requires such a scatter of terms as I have listed will ensure that one never sees any ordered relationship between the kinds and consequently never gets a clear picture of the whole range or compass of irony (Muecke 1980: 4).

With respect to the diversity of the phenomenon the question arises: How can irony be defined linguistically? To begin to answer this question I want to refer to E. Lapp's distinction of irony. A first relative is mockery which differs from irony in the speaker's attitude who wants to hurt a person directly. In contrast, the ironic speaker uses a kind of pretense and turns the mockery into the opposite. A second language relative is the lie, which in contrast to irony intends to deceive and wants to remain unrecognized (c.f. Lapp 1992: 12f.). Furthermore irony has to be distinguished from its specifications - sarcasm and cynicism - and also from its literary manifestations such as satire, caricature or parody. In the course of this paper some of these terms will be discussed to differentiate them from irony.

The analysis of irony from a linguistic point of view poses another question: Is not irony rather a matter of verbal language use than of lexical-semantic aspects? Indeed oral utterances can be underlined and made ironic with the tools of prosody and emphasis. Such utterances are mainly accompanied and emphasized by certain pronunciation and intonation. However, such phonetic aspects will only play a subordinated role here because we only have them in spoken language and not in written text forms.

There are no ironic words, expressions or propositions *per se* because their meaning and thus ironic ambiguity would be taken out of its context. Nevertheless, words, expressions

or propositions *can be used ironically* in a certain setting. This ironic use of words (e.g. through means of style shift, polysemy, metaphor, hyperbole, exaggeration, etc.), the syntactic structure of single sentences or the construction of whole texts with a certain ironic connotation could be of interest for a linguistic approach to irony.

The existing research dealing with language aspects of irony is very complex and mainly considers tools for ironic utterances in everyday speech acts. Several attempts were made to reduce the issue to simple irony-indicating signals, but such endeavors either failed or were upgraded in the course of time. The result of these approaches are various different theories of which a few presume to be applicable for every existing ironically perceived utterance and ironic concerns respectively.

Literature offers several essential concepts that deal with linguistic aspects of irony. These concepts concern a few semantic signals for irony (e.g. Willer and Groeben 1980, Clyne 1974), but more complex aspects were elaborated in the field of pragmatics (e.g. Grice 1975/79, Sperber and Wilson 1981, Lapp 1997). Most literature deals with and discusses theories from the seventies up to the eighties. It seems, there is hardly any new approach to the topic younger than ten years old.

A major part of the literature for this thesis elaborates irony in the English language. Katharina Barbe's outlining book "Irony in Context" has emerged as especially useful for this paper. However, the amount of German scholars can not be neglected. I am conscious of the problem of applicability of research results of German linguists, but there are a few important linguistic works on irony in German, such as "Linguistik der Ironie" by Edgar Lapp. His book provided the first bibliographical starting point for the present approach. As a matter of course he analyzes irony of the German language and substantiates his results with examples in his language. Nevertheless, he also had to refer to English native irony pioneers such as Grice or Sperber and Wilson. It is still uncertain how far German irony features and adequate examples can be transferred to the English language. There might be syntactical and semantic ironic signals as well as pragmatics, which can not generally be applied from German to the English language.

However, these difficulties will emerge in the course of this paper and instead of naming inadequate English examples, a few German quotations also serve to substantiate what was tried to explain theoretically before.¹

Friedrich Schlegel mentioned the possibility of highly ironical texts without a single ironical remark (c.f. Löffler 1975: 121). Thus I want to emphasize at the beginning, that it will not be possible to grasp all possible forms of linguistic irony. I will rather try to detect the most common and obvious ones and later on hope to find appropriate applications for them.

1.2 Chapter Outline

Since most existing theories provide examples from everyday language use to explain irony, a different experiment will be put into practice here. Focal point of the applied part of this paper is to find out the applicability of theoretical approaches for short texts, such as newspaper comments. Thus in general the thesis comprises two components; a theoretical (chapter one to five) and an applied part (chapters six and seven).

Initially I want to provide an overview of the various attempts to define irony. Out of these most different characterizations an essential question arises: How can we classify irony? In the course of the paper I will mainly confine myself to the analysis of ironical statements, nevertheless, ironic situations are characterized and discussed rudimentary as well. Two further subchapters are devoted to goals of ironical speaking and cognitive requirements for irony perception. A final background section discusses the relationship between irony and sarcasm.

Chapter three summarizes four essential pragmatic attempts to explain irony. Traditional research has examined irony from an exclusively rhetorical-semantic point of view. Scholars started to analyze irony pragmatically in the sixties up to the present days. Their approaches will serve to get a deeper understanding of what verbal irony is. Grice's attempt to explain irony within a system of conversational implicature (in 3.1) provided a pragmatic view on irony for the first time. A few years later Sperber and Wilson modified Grice's approach and developed their system of irony as "echoic mentioning". Their

¹K. Barbe dedicated an extra-chapter to the translation of ironical statements. Compare with Barbe (1995: 145 ff.).

achievements are summarized and discussed critically in subchapter 3.2. A refined version of Sperber and Wilson's approach was given by Kreuz and Glucksberg in 1989. Their theory of irony as echoic reminder will be subject of 3.3. Finally, an essentially different pragmatic model is given in 3.4. Lapp (1992) tried to explain irony pragmatically in contrast to lying.

Chapter four outlines irony theories that were elaborated in the field of semantics. I will examine several early semantic approaches in subchapter 4.1 (Clyne 1974 and Löffler 1975) and lead over to more complex and elaborate semantic aspects in 4.2 (Willer and Groeben 1980). The sections 4.3 and 4.4 discuss two special forms of transferring an ironical attitude - the ironical use of expressions for their semantic content (Beals 1995) and the coherence between irony and metaphor (Barbe 1995).

Since I intend to apply theoretical aspects for irony in newspaper comments, chapter five gives some fundamental information about British newspapers. Hence broadsheet structure, style and language will be summarized briefly. Extra sections are provided for the language and style of headlines and leads, as well as news and opinion writing explicitly. Stylistic constraints, the demand of objectivity and aspects concerning the content of various categories will unveil which kinds of newspaper writing are adequate for an implication of irony at all.

Material for irony analysis are two exemplary newspaper articles (comments) with an ironic undertone ("tongue-in-cheek") from the *Times* and the *Guardian*. To avoid a purely subjective examination of the issue, a small survey (with 25 English and German native speakers) will provide an informative basis for the perception of irony in written text forms. Thereby the initial question is: Which ironic text passages are recognized at all by English native speakers and which by English learners? The applied survey methodology is explained in subchapter 6.1 with respect to test persons, the selected newspaper comments and the structure of the questionnaire.

Section 6.2 poses a first connection between theory and application. Both newspaper comments are examined in terms of irony implying text passages. Thereby irony signals will be identified with the help of the theoretical achievements of the first half of this paper.

In section 6.3 the data of the survey is evaluated. The evaluation is implemented with respect to the following survey criteria: validity of data, similarities and differences be-

tween the questionnaires of German and British respondents, individual irony definitions and the possible influence of demographic aspects on irony perception.

In chapter 7 results of the paper's theoretical as well as the applied part are summarized and discussed critically. For the complexity of the issue, this paper will probably raise more questions than it solves. Therefore I will provide a few incentives for further research at the very end of this paper.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Background

2.1 Irony - The Search for an Adequate Definition

“Only that which has no history can be defined”, once Nietzsche said and the following brief history will highlight his word’s essence (c.f. Muecke 1970: 7). The term irony has its roots in the Greek analogue *eironeia*. In contrast to our contemporary understanding of irony, the term was rather used as abusive pretense. Thus also a person who quoted his property to the tax office lower than it actually was, could be named an ironist. In those (Aristotelian) times ironical speaking was still tinged with a negative attitude. However, in the course of time ironical speaking was highly graded up - it was preserved by rhetoricians in Latin ancient and medieval times, discovered as narrative attitude in epic poetry in renaissance and the eighteenth century, was praised in romanticism and still enhances vastly, perhaps more than ever, modern writing (c.f. Weinrich 1966: 62).

For an up to date definition a very general explanation will be taken in account first. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary gives the following two definitions for irony:

- 1.) the amusing or strange aspect of a situation that is very different from what you expect;
- 2.) the use of words that say the opposite of what you really mean, often as a joke and with a tone of voice that shows this: *'England is famous for its food', she said with heavy irony* (Oxford 2000: 687).

Here we already see an important aspect of irony - the differentiation between ironic statements and ironic situations or events respectively. Ironic situations will be outlined in section 2.2.1 and are therefore ignored here.

The traditional definition to consider ironical speaking as saying the opposite of what is actually meant might grasp many ironical utterances but by far not all. The following example has to be taken into consideration. A mother asks her daughter, "Would you very much mind if I asked you, please, to perhaps consider cleaning up your room sometime this month?" (example from Kreuz and Glucksberg 1989: 376). Here the speaker clearly means what she says. Nevertheless the over-polite style of the statement transfers an ironical touch. Another example of non-opposite irony is given in this incident: A review of a French thriller called "Torture" read, "I have to say that what tortured me most in watching this film was boredom." (example from Barbe 1995: 17.) Here the writer is also telling the truth, but he is nevertheless ironic. The ironic marker is the hyperbolic use of *tortured*. Such examples expose the deficiency of traditional definitions.

After having examined various attempts for definitions as well as criticism of definitions, I will try to follow the idea of Katharina Barbe: In her book "Irony in Context" (1995) she tried to avoid a *definition* of irony, and replaced the term by *characterization* or *description*. Her justification not to define irony is the following:

Ideally, I would like to have a definition that fits all instances and is always applicable without amendments, without having to call new and perhaps non-conforming instances a violation. Language change, however, entails a change in the understanding of linguistic concepts, including the concept of irony, and thus renders many definitions dated (Barbe 1995: 9).

Based on language change and the intangible diversity of instances of verbal irony it seems indeed presumptuous to stick to a generalization. Therefore I will rather try to collect the most important evident linguistic explanations for irony without presuming that the various ideas do not intermingle. A first characterization follows in the next two subchapters.

2.2 Classifying Irony

Littmann and Mey (1991) have explicitly categorized irony in two basic forms, in *ironical situations* and *ironical statements*. Most literature that deals with linguistic aspects of irony is concerned with verbal irony. There we mainly have the following two situations: either a dialogic conversation or just the statement of a person who reacts ironically on something he sees, feels, etc. Both belong to the category of ironical statements, because it is the statement that can be considered as ironical and not the whole situation in context. However often discussed ironical statements are in literature, ironical situations also have to be analyzed in rudiments here, because both - ironical statements and situations - can be applied or described in written text forms later on in this paper. Hence it seems suitable to use Littmann and Mey's system of categorization here.

2.2.1 Ironical Situations

Their preliminary idea was the development of a computational model for distinguishing irony from non-irony. Their effort is particularly remarkable because it relates understanding of ironic statements to the problem of identifying ironic situations. A computational approach to linguistic issues also tries to figure out rules and similarities (if not whole rasters) which could later be applied in programming languages. These attempts resemble the topic of the present paper extremely and could provide hints for the existence of signals for irony.

During their research they only concentrated on ironical situations and excluded all forms of ironical statements. To mark off their task they restricted their experiments on three typical incidents for ironical situations (Littmann & Mey 1991: 137f.):

- **Intentional goal/ plan irony:** “arises when an actor executes a reasonable plan to achieve a goal, but suffers when the plan succeeds” (ibid: 137). The irony requires a certain relationship between goal, plan and the actor’s knowledge about the likely success of the plan.¹ A reasonable plan failed and the negative consequences are worse than the consequences that would have been suffered had another plan been fulfilled.
- **Serendipitous goal/ plan irony:** In contrast to the previous situation, here the actor has given up the goal of overcoming his problem. Thus his performance is accidental and it leads to a change of the situation. The future looks bright again, but unfortunately the new situation is followed by negative consequences that turn everything into a new disaster or a previous bad situation. Littmann and Mey draw parallels between *Serendipitous goal/ plan irony* and the widely known *good-news/ bad-news stories*.
- **Competence irony:** There are a few features that seem to be common for all situations of competence irony: One of the actors must have some competence that is culturally valued and represents the main focus of the situation. The actor fails in attempting to use that competence and suffers unpleasant consequences as a result of the lack of success. The more intense the failure or the loss, the more ironic is the situation. A common exemplary story is the fire fighter who smokes in bed, a fire breaks out and he dies.²

Littman and Mey’s classification of three common instances reflects an important feature of ironical situation, which is their restriction to actions and fate respectively. Ironical situations might imply dialogues or other forms of verbal communication, but irony itself is rather generated as a consequence of circumstances than verbal statements.

¹See situational examples and comments on the terms *agent, plan, goal, act, effect and situation* in Littmann (1991: 136ff.).

²In the course of the experiment the attributes *agent, plan, goal, act, effect and situation* were inserted as components for a possible programming language. After Littmann and Mey had defined basic features of three typical situations and the appendant vocabulary, they applied rules to the computer programm based on simple human habits, e.g. *Do not do any more work than necessary!* or *Always be sure that you will have access to needed resources!* to capture simple irony as e.g. in the saying *Carrying coal to Newcastle*. The conflict between the rules and the actual situation could hint at ironical aspects. For more information see Littmann and Mey (1991: 131ff.)

D. C. Mücke (1980) names four basic requirements that have to be fulfilled for an ironic situation. The first three are 'formal' qualities - the duality, the opposition of its terms, and the element of *alazony*³, which is the necessary complement to irony. The fourth requirement is an observer with a sense of irony (c.f. Muecke 1980: 99 f.). Next to the four requirements, Mücke also elaborated a system of categorizing ironical situations. He distinguishes five different ironic situations (c.f. Muecke 1980: 100ff.):

1. **Irony of Simple Incongruity:** This first form is also known as “minimal irony” (ibid.: 100) because there is incongruity in all ironic situations.
2. **Irony of Events:** There is an ironic incongruity between the expectation and the event.
3. **Dramatic Irony:** In contrast to the previous form, dramatic irony is immediately ironic and does not depend on any subsequent reading of the results.
4. **Irony of Self-Betrayal:** Someone exposes his own ignorance, weaknesses, errors or follies accidentally by what he says or does, not by what happens to him.
5. **Irony of Dilemma:** Here the victim is a sufferer of a dilemma or some other impossible situation or impossible position in several different ways.

Earlier D. C. Mücke (1973) had distinguished between ironical statements and situations according to intention. While the irony of the ironist (i.e. the ironical statement) is intentionally ironical, the irony of an ironic situation or event is unintentional and results from the development of events (c.f. Muecke 1973: 35). According to this claim the various ironical utterances in the following chapters can be considered as conscious ironic propositions.

2.2.2 Ironical Statements

A characterization of ironic statements or verbal irony was given by R. J. Kreuz and S. Glucksberg (1989): “*Verbal irony*, [...] need not refer explicitly to an ironic event or

³*alazony*: “Greek for braggartism but in works on irony is shorthand for any form of self-assurance or naivety” (Mücke 1970: 4); “arrogance that lacks disastrous consequences, because its victim is sufficiently powerful politically only to make a pest of himself; counteracted by irony” (Griffith 2006).

state. Instead, in verbal irony a speaker expresses an attitude towards some object, event, or person by saying something that is not literally true” (Kreuz & Glucksberg 1989: 374). With this definition they also stated a difference between irony of situations and verbal irony.

Just as ironical situations, also the classification of statements that imply a speaker’s ironical attitude was implemented in the most different manners. To provide a complete detailed overview over all various classes developed by linguists would be beyond the scope of this paper. Thus I want to pick a few essential modes’ systems which could be of interest when it comes to the analysis of newspaper comments in the second part of this paper.

A first classification of ironical statements is taken from K. Barbe (1995). She names three possibilities: (i) the surface meaning differs from an underlying meaning-difference; (ii) the surface meaning and the underlying meaning appear to be the same; and (iii) sarcasm, even though it can be realized by means of (i) and (ii). In addition, K. Barbe further divides according to *nonce* or *common irony*. *Nonce* is the original, creative irony that is “exemplified by those instances of irony that have not habitually been used for ironic purposes and subsequently lost their original status” (Barbe 1995: 18). In contrast, *common irony* is lexicalized in phrases as “Go on, you must be kidding!”. They always seem to trigger an ironic interpretation, independent of situation or context. In the following summary the single possibilities will be substantiated with language examples:

(i) Interpretation of ironic instances: Difference - Nonce irony:

- An instance of criticism coupled with a complaint: Brenda, even though she hates Detroit, needs to spend the summer there, whereupon she comments: “I have always wanted to spend the summer in Detroit.”⁴ Brenda criticizes both her fate and the person that made her go to Detroit. Another example for an ironic situation with underlying criticism of fate is the following: In times of great personal trouble, Susan remarks: “Isn’t life easy?”

⁴All examples here are taken from Barbe (1995: 18ff.).

- An ironic statement can serve to show superiority or to tease, as in an instance as such: Harold knows that Billy is definitely not going to make it, nevertheless, he tells him: “Go on, Billy, you are nearly there!”
- An ironic utterance is stated to show reprimand and power: Mother to son, who is not wearing his sweater, even though repeatedly asked to do so: “I see, you are wearing your sweater.”
- An ironic utterance implies praise and criticism at the same time: Herman constantly worries about his grades, even though he always gets As. Again he aced a test, whereupon Lisa remarks: “I see you got your usual low score.” With her statement she criticizes Herman for being needlessly worried about his grade and for making everybody with a lower score feel bad.

(i) Interpretation of ironic instances: Difference - Common irony:

The following examples show the existence of certain phrases that always seem to trigger an ironic interpretation. Such phrases are also considered as ironic in dictionaries.

- Joe has been a close friend of Jim, nevertheless, Joe betrayed some secrets to a business rival. Jim comments to other friends: “Joe is a *fine friend*.”
- In the past, Harry has given many dull parties but recently he decided to stop giving parties altogether. This elicited the following comment: “Has Harry stopped giving those *wild, fun* parties?”
- Assuming that a story-teller lies or, at least, lays it on too thick, Anne says to her friends: “That’s a *likely* story.”
- The addressee cannot do anything right: “You’re a real winner!”

Language experience shows that collocations with *fine friend* are in the most cases understood as indicating irony. Furthermore participants who do not share any knowledge about Joe will assume that Jim implies the opposite of what he says. The same refers to the other three examples. In the fourth instance the little word *real* is actually superfluous and thus serves as an intensifier for an ironical intent (c.f. Barbe 1995: 22ff.).

Another example is the common “You’re a real stud!” (example from Beals 1995: 160). K. Beals also mentions common irony, but names it “conventional verbal irony” (Beals 1995: 159). She refers to Kaufer (1981) who expressed another essential feature of common irony. According to him, common irony does not require any contextual knowledge to be recognized as being ironic (c.f. Kaufer 1981: 159).

(ii) Interpretation of ironic instances: Literalness

The following three examples (selected from Barbe 1995: 24ff.) prove that the phenomenon of irony contains more than just saying the opposite of what is actually meant. There is no divergence between surface and underlying meaning, but nevertheless the statements are to be taken ironically. Such instances use different tools to make this clear:⁵

- Joan is driving. Trying to make a left turn, she does not signal and gets into a potentially dangerous situation. Sally, on the passenger seat, comments: “I love people who signal.” ⇒ Sally is exaggerating while she uses the word *love*. It is clear, that she does not love *all* people who signal. Thus Sally uses a hyperbole with the purpose to criticize Joan.
- Ruth: “How was your blind date?” Sandra: “He had nice shoes.” ⇒ What functions here as ironical signifier on the level of sentence meaning is omission. Actually Sandra does not answer on the question of her friend, but picks one (uninteresting) feature of her blind date instead. Thus Sandra implies that she did not have a good time.
- Looking outside the window during a real downpour, Richard remarks: “It seems to be raining.” ⇒ Here the obvious is stated and intensified by the use of *seem*. Hence an implicature is expressed, maybe he refers to a false previous weather forecast. Again we do not have a clear opposition, otherwise Richard would have said: “It *does not* seem to be raining”, what would not make any sense (c.f. Barbe 1995: 24ff.).

In all examples a device other than clear opposition is used to express an ironical intent. The summarizing of ironic instances where the utterance can be taken literally or is at

⁵There is no distinction between *nonce* and *common* irony here.

least not the opposite of the implied meaning covers another range of instances. Further on K. Barbe names a third category (iii), which is sarcasm (c.f. Barbe 1995: 26f.). I do not want to touch on this topic here, because an extra chapter (2.5) is provided for sarcasm in this paper.

Another classification system adopted here from K. Barbe is visualized in figure 2.1. It deals with irony in terms of three important aspects: meaning (as explained before), speaker purpose and victims.⁶ Most of the aspects in the figure were documented in examples named above, others will probably appear in later chapters.

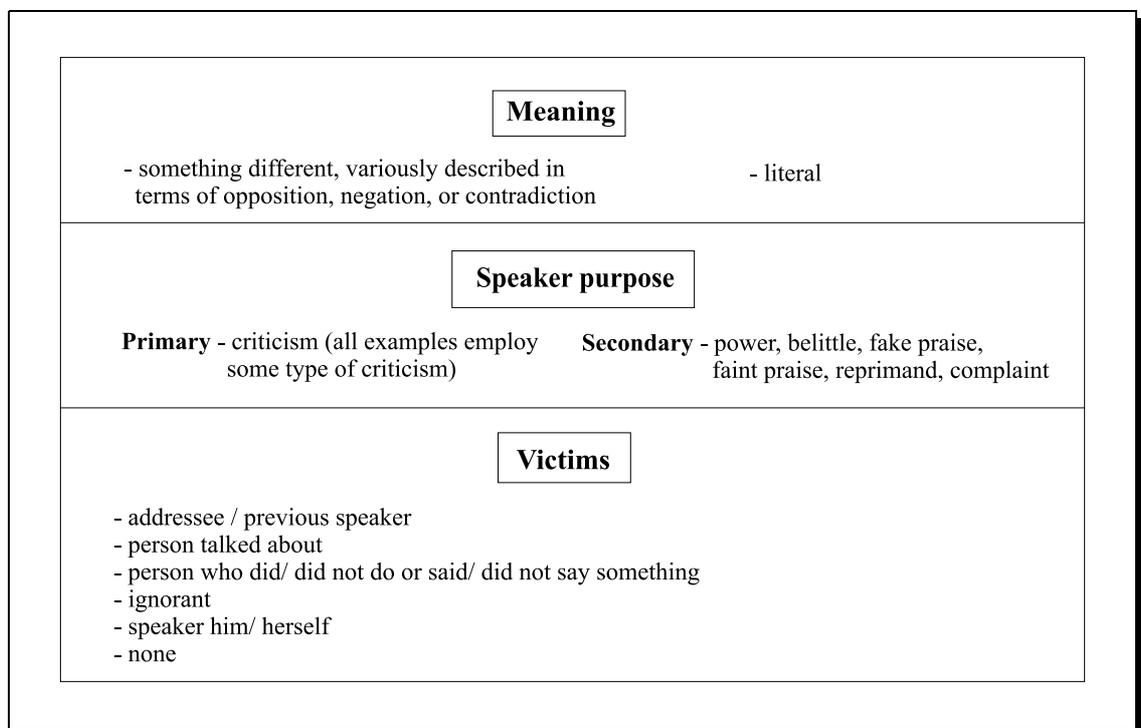


Figure 2.1: Classifying irony according to Barbe (1995)

⁶Compare with figure in Barbe (1995: 30).

A last classification that will be summarized here, is D. C. Mücke's (1980). In contrast to many other pioneers of irony research, he referred to irony as a frequent figure in literature and not only in speech acts. He distinguishes irony into four basic modes, which will be summarized in the following (c.f. Muecke 1980: 64ff.). It has to be emphasized here, that these four modes do not differentiate between ironical situations and statements, but rather represent an alternative way of categorization that was explicitly developed for the discussion of irony in literature and could thus serve our purpose of recognizing written irony:

1. **Impersonal irony:** Distinguishing feature is the absence of the ironist as person, i.e. we have only his words. Thus impersonal irony is mainly expressed dispassionately, D. C. Mücke calls it "ironical gravity" (ibid.: 64), which is part of the speaker's pretence, while he himself is disinterested or objective or impersonal respectively. Impersonal irony employs various principle techniques with dominant aspects, of which only a few will be named here: Praising in order to blame, blaming in order to praise, pretended agreement with the victim, pretended advice or encouragement to the victim, a rhetorical question, pretended doubt (where nothing is doubtful), pretended error or ignorance, innuendo and insinuations, irony by analogy⁷, internal contradictions and overstatement.⁸
2. **Self-disparaging Irony:** This mode is also called "irony of manners". Character and personality of the ironist become important. Thus the pretended person functions as "guide to the ironist's real opinion" (Muecke 1980: 87).
3. **Ingénu Irony:** In contrast to the previous mode, a 'real' and not a pretended innocent or ignoramus is presented here. Mücke refers exemplarily to Andersen's fable *The Emperor's New Clothes*. "The effectiveness of this kind of irony comes from its economy of means: mere common sense or even simple innocence or ignorance may suffice to see through the woven complexities of hypocrisy and rationalization or pierce the protective tissues of convention [...]" (Muecke 1980: 91).

⁷What is said, actually refers to something or someone different, e.g. Russian satirists are unable to attack abuses in their country directly, thus they situate these abuses in America or Albania, c.f. Muecke (1980: 70).

⁸D.C. Mücke distinguishes 20 different techniques and uses a still more precise subclassification which will be omitted here for reasons of brevity.

4. **Dramatic Irony:** An ironist presents ironic situations or events to our sense of irony. The speaker himself does not appear in any role (c.f. Muecke 1980: 92). Possible ironical situations were discussed already in the previous chapter 2.2.1.

The various irony classifications of scholars reflect the different perspectives from which irony can be examined. On the one hand there is the contrast between *common* and *nonce irony* (completed with *sarcasm*) and the consideration of the three important aspects *meaning*, *speaker purpose* and *victims*. On the other we have Mücke's overall classification implying semantic and pragmatic aspects of verbal irony, and the possibility of ironical situations. The various perspectives visible in this first attempt to classify irony require for a closer examination of semantic and pragmatic aspects in the course of this paper that will be put into practice in the chapters 3 and 4.

2.3 Why do we Use Irony?

Since we do not use irony unconsciously - not in speech acts and less in written text forms - certain communicative targets of using irony have to be taken into account. A categorization of three major goals was developed by Littmann and Mey in 1991:

- **Humor goals:** The “clash of values” (Littmann & Mey 1991: 148) that occurs in many ironic situations often has two sides, a humorous and a tragic one. Even when injustice or injury are the focal points of the ironical situation, the protagonist, who often is the subject of irony himself, talks about the situation in a humorous way afterwards.
- **Social hedging goals:** Irony is used as a tool to get to know an unknown person and his or her values. When a listener responds to an ironic statement of the speaker (agreement or disagreement), both conversational partners “may establish either a concurrence or a discrepancy of values” (ibid.: 149).
- **Instructional goals:** Ironic statements with an instructional goal soften the actual intent of the speaker to criticize or to assign. A “gentle ironic comment to inform a child of the rule and to indicate the consequences of future violations” (ibid.: 149) could represent a proper example for an instructional goal of an ironic statement.

The single goals can not always be considered as being independent from each other (c.f. *ibid.*: 149). The authors do not explicitly refer to ironical statements here, but involve ironical situations in the category humor goals.

An examination of irony goals with explicit focus on ironical speaking was conducted by Barbe (1995). She highlights irony's most significant purpose which is polite criticism. Apart from this main goal several further intentions can give reason for speakers' use of irony devices: "amused surprise, detachment, recognition, sorrow, or pleasure at entertaining a notion" (Barbe 1995: 79), as well as teasing or the show of power or solidarity (c.f. Barbe 1995: 79f.).

Further goals are mentioned by Gibbs (1994). Irony is used to be witty, to put someone at ease or to save face. Gibbs considers irony's important function "to maintain social relationships between family members, friends and co-workers" (Gibbs 1994: 372). As sarcasm is closely related with irony, as will be examined more detailed in section 2.5, one of the purposes to use sarcasm is mentioned here. Take the following dialogues into consideration: a) "Is she still mad at me?" - "Do birds fly?" and b) "I have a national reputation." - "And I'm the Queen of England." In both instances the respondent expresses alienation and mockery respectively, while in a) the respondent mocks the act of interrogation the respondent in b) mocks a claim (c.f. Gibbs 1994: 372ff.).

Apart from these probably most significant purposes, it is certain that many more targets are pursued with the use of irony. These various goals strongly depend on one striking influential factor which is the relation between the conversational partners. While an ironical statement can be perceived as a joke for a friend, it can have an insulting effect for a stranger. However, the few purposes mentioned here only represent a small proportion of the total amount of irony goals.

2.4 Cognitive Requirements for Irony Perception

Another important field that can not be neglected when it comes to irony are the cognitive requirements for irony perception. I want to refer to Wolfgang Berg (1976) who categorized irony as one of five forms of "unreal speaking" (Berg 1976: 11)⁹ He considers the

⁹The other four forms are metaphor, metonymy, litotes und rhetorical question.

interpretation of an unreal used sentence as a deductive coherence that implies linguistic competence, social expectations and knowledge about certain facts (c.f. Berg 1976: 11).

A deductive coherence was also outlined by Wayne C. Booth (1975) who constituted the interpretation of ironical literature in four steps (c.f. Booth 1975: 10ff.):

1. The reader rejects the literal meaning of a statement, normally because it implicates a general unacceptable proposition.
2. The reader develops an alternative interpretation that is non-combinable with or contradictory to the literal meaning.
3. The reader assumes the author's knowledge and principles and relates them to the literal meaning. He comes to the conclusion that the relation is absurd or unacceptable.
4. The reader determines an alternative meaning that corresponds to the (unexpressed) notion of the author.

Booth's characterization of irony understanding as a gradual cognitive process implies that people go through some process of analyzing the literal meaning of a proposition (or text) and either decide to accept its literal content or seek for an alternative interpretation. Does this imply that we are really consciously aware of a speaker's ironical intend? R. W. Gibbs (1991) dealt with psychological aspects of irony understanding and remarked that this is not the case. According to him "[...] people appear to understand the figurative meanings of ironic statements [...] even though they are not always consciously aware of the presence of irony" (Gibbs 1991: 526).

2.5 Irony and Sarcasm

It is commonly assumed that sarcasm and irony are identical to a certain degree. However similar they seem to be at first sight, there are a few remarkable features that help to differentiate between both terms. A first gap is visible when we examine their historical meaning and development. Irony's origin was briefly discussed in section 2.1. The English word *sarcasm* has its roots in the Greek word *sarkazein* with the meaning "to speak

bitterly as to tear flesh like dogs” (Lee 1995: 3). Thus both terms, irony and sarcasm, had a negative connotation in history. We saw in section 2.1, that irony lost this negative connotation in the course of time. In contrast, the concept of sarcasm never achieved any positive regard and has retained its negativity (c.f. Lee 1995: 3).

The Oxford Dictionary gives the following definition: “[Sarcasm is] a way of using words that are the opposite of what you mean in order to be unpleasant to somebody or to make fun of them” (Oxford 2000: 1133). This definition also hints at a negative attitude of a sarcastic speaker. The criticizing or insulting aspect of sarcasm might be the most significant difference between both concepts and was mentioned in various forms. As visible in the following characterizations, sarcasm often includes irony:

- “[...] [W]e can consider sarcasm a potentially face-threatening and attacking criticism which forces an ironic interpretation” (Barbe 1995: 29).
- “[Sarcasm] is a way of using language with the intent of hurting a listener” (Littmann & Mey 1991: 147).
- “[...] [S]arcastic irony involves the use of counterfactual statements to express disapproval [...]” (Kreuz & Glucksberg 1989: 374).
- Sarcasm does not necessarily need to involve irony, nevertheless D. C. Mücke described sarcasm as “the crudest form of irony” (Muecke 1980: 54).
- “[...] [I]n using sarcastic irony, people utter what is blatantly false in order to convey a negative and truthful comment on some topic” (Kreuz & Glucksberg 1989: 374).

Besides sarcasm’s exclusive negative purpose, a few further differences were mentioned in comparison to irony. Littmann and Mey refer to sarcasm’s confinement to speech acts. There is nothing like a sarcastic situation, but only sarcastic statements (c.f. Littmann & Mey 1991: 147). Barbe considers irony’s precondition of shared experience or background knowledge. This demand is not given in instances of sarcastic speaking. The potential of sarcastic utterances is obvious to all participants in a situation, no matter if they share experience or knowledge (c.f. Barbe 1995: 28). Furthermore Haiman (1998)

names a third remarkable difference which is speaker intention. While people may be unintentionally ironic, sarcasm always requires intention (c.f. Haiman 1998: 20).

The current research results show that there are sarcastic instances implying irony and vice versa. In the course of this paper I do not presume to be able to clearly distinguish between both concepts. I have pointed out their most striking dissimilarities and will dissociate from a clear differentiation in the following.

Chapter 3

A pragmatic approach to irony

The previous chapter outlined fundamental ideas of the properties of irony. The focal point of the current chapter is to approximate irony in depth via pragmatic attempts of explanation. The extent of this paper only allows to concentrate on a few basic pragmatic approaches to irony. Hence I have decided to summarize four important concepts - the concepts of Grice (1975/79), Sperber and Wilson (1981), Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989) and Lapp (1992). These four approaches appear in their chronological order in the next subchapters to highlight the research progress that was achieved within a period of only two decades.

3.1 Irony as *Substitutive Conversational Implicature*

H. P. Grice's focal point was the attempt to find an explanation for the possibility of meaning more or something different than what was actually said (c.f. Lapp 1992: 61ff.). The literal meaning of an utterance is not necessarily associated with what was actually meant by a speaker in a certain situation. Such discrepancies between the speaker's meaning and the sentence meaning are for example given in the cases of irony, metaphor or insinuations. In doing so Grice took aspects into consideration that had been disregarded by other linguists until then: first his theory refers to the relation between language and non-linguistic context, i.e. the relevance of the situation of utterance. A second merit was the consideration of cooperativeness of language and non-language acts. Hence his con-

cept has the prior purpose to explain phenomena where the literal meaning of words is overlaid by a context specific pragmatic meaning (c.f. Lapp 1992: 61ff.).

The theory on conversational implicature presupposes a number of principles and guidelines that underlie the way people use language. These principles are based on rationality of communicative acts. Communication is the pursuit of a common intention and the achievement of a common target. Additionally both conversational partners seek to cooperate. These efforts are determined by the so called *cooperative principle*: make your contribution appropriate to stage, purpose, and direction of conversation (c.f. Lapp 1992: 64ff.). This general principle is determined by four conversational maxims with the following subcategories:

- **Maxims of Quantity:** Be as informative as essential! Don't be more informative than necessary!
- **Maxims of Quality:** Try to make your contribution one that is true! Don't say anything without sufficient evidence!
- **Maxims of Relevance:** Only say relevant facts!
- **Maxims of Modality:** Avoid ambiguity! Avoid polysemy! Avoid amplification! Avoid disorder! (c.p. Grice 1980: 113ff.)

To follow these four basic maxims represents the speaker's efficiency and cooperation in communication. Their relevance can be highlighted with the help of an example: Person A: "Where is Peter?" Person B: "There is a steaming pot of coffee." Literarily taken B's statement is not an answer to the question of person A. At first sight B's answer violates the maxim of relevance as well as the maxim of quantity. Assuming Person B is nevertheless cooperative, Person A can reckon what was actually meant by Person B. Person A will then try to find a logic coherence between the absence of Peter and the steaming coffee pot and will immediately conclude that Peter has only left the room for a few minutes and will be back soon. Utterances, if somehow possible, are basically understood cooperatively, also in cases where maxims are violated drastically. This kind of inference is called *conversational implicature* by H. P. Grice.¹

¹Grice also points to implicatures that are not conversational. Amongst these he distinguishes between

According to Grice the concept of *conversational implicature* can also be used for the interpretation of ironical utterances. He categorizes irony, metaphor, litotes and hyperbole into the first group, the violation of the maxims of quality (c.f. Lapp 1992: 70 ff.). We will see in chapter 4.2 that not only the violation of this one maxim can evoke an ironical effect, but all of them. However, maybe exactly the violation of this maxim involves the most obvious case for irony.

Grice's contribution on irony was important for subsequent approaches, however, his theory was also criticized for being inadequate for several reasons. To name a critical example Barbe's stance (1995) is given here. According to her his theory only describes irony as a result of a violation of one of the conversational maxims. Therefore it also "cannot account for ironic instances where sentence and speaker meaning conflate" (c.f. Barbe 1995: 39). However, as already mentioned before, almost every later approach to irony refers more or less to Grice's theory of *conversational implicature*. The modifications of his pioneering model will be subject of the next subchapters.

3.2 Irony as *Echoic Mentioning*

To create an appropriate transition from Grice's *substitutive conversational implicature* to Sperber and Wilson's approach, here their criticism of Grice's concept functions to lead to a fundamental new way of getting access to the irony issue.

Grice's first weak point is his claim to consider the violation of the maxim of quality as a necessary and sufficient condition for irony. The obvious falsity of a statement leads to the hearer's logical consequence to search for the contradictory implication of what was actually said. In contrast to this statement Sperber and Wilson hint at "the existence of ironical questions, ironical understatements, and ironical references to the inappropriateness or irrelevance of an utterance rather than to the fact that it is false" (Sperber & Wilson 1981: 309). A few years later (1978) Grice himself pointed out that "falsehood or irrelevance is not a sufficient condition for irony" (Sperber & Wilson 1981: 309).

four different cases. For reasons of brevity, only two of these examples will be mentioned: 1. She was poor but honest. 2. My wife is either in the kitchen or in the bathroom. For a detailed explanation c.f. Lapp (1992: 66-69).

For Sperber and Wilson's second main point of criticism take the following two propositions into consideration. (a) is the ironical proposition and b) the non-ironical counterpart)

a) "What lovely weather!" (during a downpour)

b) "What awful weather!"

In a) Grice's maxim of quality is clearly violated, but the question arises, why do we use a) instead of b)? The difference between both utterances is one of attitude. Whereas a) expresses an attitude to the content of an utterance, b) expresses an attitude to the weather. The only way to understand the obvious falsity of statement a) is to assume the speaker's expression of belief about the utterance. This distinction between two different types of utterances was entirely missed by Grice's approach (c.f. Sperber & Wilson 1981: 302f.).

Sperber and Wilson's fundamentally new concept is based on the theory, that irony does not *use* the literal meaning of a statement but *mentions* it. "USE of an expression involves reference to what the expression refers to; MENTION of an expression involves reference to the expression itself" (Sperber & Wilson 1981: 303). Irony is to be considered as the *echoic mention* of a proposition designed to evoke the speaker's attitude to the proposition mentioned (c.f. Van der Auwera & Rombouts 1982: 17). The most important precondition for mentioning is shared background knowledge of the speaker and the addressee(s). With the expression of this attitude the speaker shows that he rejects the mentioned assertion or a certain phrase and regards it as ludicrous, inadequate or irrelevant. Again example a) is to be taken into consideration: "What lovely weather!". Here it would be too simple to refer to traditional attempts to explain irony and just to assume the opposite of what was said. This would be too trivial and uninformative. The speaker rather wants to express that it was ridiculous to assume the weather would be nice. Thus he insinuates that he considers the assertion is wrong or inappropriate. The focal point Sperber and Wilson have elaborated is that a speaker prefers the ironic expression (and does not say: "What a horrible weather!") because he wants to transmit his attitude towards the assertion at the same time. Hence the success of an ironic statement requires two conditions of the speaker's attitudes: a) his attitude towards the object of the statement and b) his attitude towards the proposition. In return, a) the addressee has to realize that the proposition was *mentioned* and not *used* and, b) he has to realize the speaker's

attitude towards the mentioned proposition (c.f. Lapp 1992: 76)².

The mentioned phrase, the scope of irony, appears in the form of a direct quotation. A common visualizing habit is the use of the inverted comma gesture while speaking ironically (c.f. Barbe 1995: 45).

In respect of the mentioned example and the subsequent explanation, Sperber's and Wilson's theory of echoic mentioning gives a plausible explanation. However, it is questionable that this theory can be applied for every ironical case. A first questionable case would be the ironic use of polysemous words. In which way are they used in a mentioned form? Sperber's and Wilson's theory is based on a very abstract concept of echoing. Thus they intended to avoid the allegation to reduce irony to a simple form of imitation (c.f. Lapp 1992: 77). The echo can emerge in various forms - as an immediate echo, a delayed echo, as a reaction on a previous utterances or on thoughts and opinions. In the same way an echo does not have to have a real source or origin. In the case that the echoic character of the ironic statement is not obvious, an echo is nevertheless suggested (c.f. Sperber & Wilson 1981: 310).

After dealing with the mention theory to some extent, it seems that its complexity is unusable for certain instances. Apart from a few supporters³, the concept also encountered contradictions and lead to controversial discussions. In this chapter only two critics will be named rudimentary - Edgar Lapp (1992) and Van der Auwera/ Rombouts (1982).⁴ Another critical work on the *mention theory* was published 1989 by R. J. Kreuz and S. Glucksberg. Since their theory of verbal irony as *Echoic Reminder* is strongly based on the *mention theory*, their concept will be discussed in the next chapter.

Lapp's basic criticism of the *mention theory* is Sperber's and Wilson's claim that their concept could be generalized and applied for every ironical utterance. A first weak point is the concept's "overconstruction" for ironical cases that make it too difficult for the addressee to determine origin and object of the echoic mentioning. The following example could be taken into consideration: "Das ist ja eine Affenhitze hier!" (uttered when it is

²Sperber and Wilson themselves call this relation of dependence "double recognition". See also Sperber and Wilson (1981: 308).

³Lapp mentions Carsten (1981), De Wolff (1985), Hymes (1986/87) and Hutcheon/ Butler (1981); see also Lapp (1992: 78).

⁴Three further critics of the mention theory are Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1981), Clark and Gerrig (1984) and Basire (1986); see also Lapp (1992: 78).

actually cold). Without extra knowledge about the context it is not clear to which object or utterance etc. the echo could refer. Lapp suggests here to account for the irony with traditional attempts of explanation and consider the simple negation of the proposition. Further on he claims that not every echoic mentioning of an utterance has to be meant in an ironic way. He uses the following example for a quotation of a conversational opponent: “Aber sie meinen ja: Wir schaffen das im Handumdrehen!”. Here the speaker’s intention is far from irony, but rather resembles mockery that is reflected in an imitation of ridiculous attitudes (c.f. Lapp 1992: 79f.).

J. Van der Auwera and J. Rombouts (1982) offered another critical paper on Sperber’s and Wilson’s mention theory. Basically they also reject the claim that all irony is echoic mention to the exclusion of use. This argument is confirmed by disproving one of Sperber and Wilson’s examples. The following conversation was taken into consideration: Person A: “Sir, you are drunk. I do not want to speak to you anymore.” Person B: “Yes, Madam, I am drunk, for I drank a pint of porter yesterday.” For Sperber and Wilson Person B’s “I am drunk” is a clear case of echoic mention. In contrast, Van der Auwera and Rombouts think that echoing does not exclude use. For Sperber and Wilson the “logic equivalence” of Person B’s answer is “Yes, Madam, “*I am drunk*”, for I drank [...]”. According to the critics this is far-fetched, because it is much easier to consider “I am drunk” as “an assertion and a normal case of language use. The assertion has an echoic quality simply because it repeats an idea that got expressed before” (Van der Auwera & Rombouts 1982: 24).

As many critics had done before, Wilson and Sperber (1992) themselves noted the restrictiveness of the mentioned proposition in form of a direct quotation. They expanded mentioning by considering verbal irony as “[...] a variety of indirect quotation” (Wilson & Sperber 1992: 45). They suggest to “analyze indirect speech reports, echoic utterances and irony not as literal interpretations (i.e. mentions) of an attributed thought or utterance, but simply as interpretations, literal or non-literal, of an attributed thought or utterance” (Wilson & Sperber 1992: 45).

3.3 Irony as *Echoic Reminder*

As R. J. Kreuz and S. Glucksberg refined the echoic mention function of verbal irony, their criticism of Sperber and Wilson has to be mentioned first. The limitations of the mention theory can be shown with the help of an example where a statement is clearly used and not mentioned. More than this, the exact literal meaning of the sentence is intended and nevertheless the statement can be classified as being ironic. The following example is rather sarcastic, but the politeness clearly shows ironical features: A mother asks her daughter: “Would you very much mind if I asked you, please, to perhaps consider cleaning up your room sometime this month?” (example from Kreuz 1989: 383). Here the extraordinary politeness contradicts the informal relationship between speaker and addressee and thus expresses the implied message of the mother. Although asking a question, the mother makes a request. Here the reminder theory takes effect. The question reminds of the speaker’s stance towards the listener’s behavior (c.f. Kreuz & Glucksberg 1989: 383).

Sperber and Wilson’s echo referred to an “implicit norm or expectation or an explicit antecedent event” (c.f. Kreuz & Glucksberg 1989: 375), i.e. the source of the echo. When the source is identified, the speaker’s attitude toward that source is also recognized, usually as disapproval. The communicative function of such echoic utterances is to remind a listener of norms or expectations that are known to both speaker and addressee. By saying the opposite of what is true the speaker wants to remind the listener of two messages: of a shared expectation or cultural norm, and of the discrepancy between what is and what should be. Hence the speaker expresses his disapproval. This process was referred to *echoic interpretation* by Sperber and Wilson and is replaced by a theory of *echoic reminding* by R. J. Kreuz and S. Glucksberg. When we take the previous example into consideration, the new theory can also be applied for statements that are used and not mentioned and for statements whose literal meaning is the intended meaning. The source is presumably one or several previous request(s) of the mother which was not carried out, plus her criticism on her daughter’s lazy behavior (c.f. Kreuz & Glucksberg 1989: 375).

Furthermore reminding is split up into implicit and explicit reminding. Implicit reminding refers to cases without immediately relevant previous remarks or events. Then implicit positive norms or expectations become relevant. An explicit reminding appears in

form of a relevant antecedent remark or event, e.g. an incorrect weather forecast. In both cases irony serves to express an attitude towards the source, normally a disapproval (c.f. Kreuz & Glucksberg 1989: 375).

3.4 Irony as *Simulation of Insincerity*

On the basis of the assumption that ironical speaking is to be insincere, but at the same time to signal to be insincere, an important aspect of signaling has to be taken into consideration. Indicating insincerity too obviously would spoil the effect that is specific for irony: the tightrope walk between recognizing or missing the ironical intent of the speaker. Grice expressed this notion in the following words: “To be ironical is, among other things, to pretend (as the etymology suggests), and while one wants the pretense to be recognized as such, to announce it as pretense would spoil the effect” (Grice 1978: 125). With reference to this effect, E. Lapp modified the former revealing of insincerity into a conception of irony as *simulation of insincerity*. The term *simulation* appears here in the sense of *performing, pretending* or *affecting* (c.f. Lapp 1992: 141 ff.).

On the surface, irony is no different from lying or feigning. Thus, how can ironic utterances in the previously defined sense be distinguished linguistically from lies or deception? Since E. Lapp names concrete conceptual differences between both terms, they can be juxtaposed for the sake of comparison as in figure 3.1 (c.f. Lapp 1992: 142 ff.).

IRONY	LIE
<i>Simulation of insincerity</i>	<i>Simulation of sincerity</i>
open simulation of insincerity on the level of language acts	disguised simulation of sincerity on the level of propositional intent
the ironical speaker simulates a language act, he pretends to believe something	the liar simulates a propositional intent, he pretends to claim something

Figure 3.1: Irony and lying

The addressee more or less doubts whether he is confronted with ironical concerns or a lie. Thus irony requires a certain effort of interpretation. Since Lapp's concept is very abstract, it has to be emphasized here that his model is a purely theoretical reconstruction and not a speaker's technique that is consciously planned or intended in real situations. Additionally E. Lapp also distinguishes irony from lying with respect to speech act theory. The fundamental difference between both forms is performed on the level of language acts: while the liar pretends to believe something, the ironic speaker pretends to claim something and thus has accomplished a language act not seriously. The ironic speaker simulates an illocutionary act while the liar feigns a propositional attitude that is linked with the speech act (c.f. Lapp 1992: 154ff.).

To conclude, E. Lapp has refined previous theories so far. Instead of assuming that the ironic speaker intends to show openly that he is insincere, here the notion is represented that the speaker only simulates to be insincere. In contrast to the lie which is a simulation of sincerity, irony can be considered as simulation of insincerity. E. Lapp makes another important remark with reference to a possible application of the theories for written ironic text forms. The author claims his concept of simulation also identifies literary irony or variations of parody that are based on a changeable imitation of an original (by means of change in style or exaggerated diction of the original text) with satirical or polemical intentions. We will see in the applied part if this assertion turns out to be true.

3.5 A Brief Conclusion

After having summarized four essential pragmatic theories on irony, all approaches seem to complement each other rather than account for the entire amount of ironic instances individually. None of these theories can inform fully about irony, whereas their combination seems to cover a notable amount of instances and variations that exist. A linguistic attempt to comprehend all possible versions for irony is according to its complexity maybe not possible at all. However, as mentioned in the introduction, it is not the concern of this paper to cover *all* aspects of irony, but rather the most essential theories to get a basic idea of different approaches.

In the previous subchapters we find approaches to irony in terms of three different aspects basically:

1. irony as a violation of the conversational principle (Grice),
2. focus at two preconditions for the success of irony: a) the addressee's ability to recognize the implicit or explicit source of the echo, and b) shared background knowledge (Sperber and Wilson/ Kreuz and Glucksberg),
3. a speech-act theoretical approach to irony as simulation of insincerity in contrast to lying as simulation of sincerity (Lapp).

It is still uncertain how far these approaches will serve the purpose of irony recognition in written text forms in the applied part of this paper. The subsequent chapter about semantics could probably emerge as being more useful for the analysis of newspaper comments. However, a pragmatic examination of irony to some extent can not be neglected since it serves to provide a general understanding of how irony can be considered in terms of linguistics.

Since the previously mentioned attempts to explain irony pragmatically approximate the issue from very different angles, it does not seem useful here to compare them. However, to provide a surveying conclusion of irony pragmatics, the chronological order of the four approaches in image 3.2 serves as a substitute for a comparison. Kreuz und Glucksberg's theory of irony as echoic reminder represents a modified version of irony as echoic mentioning. This coherence is visualized in their juxtaposition on the same level.

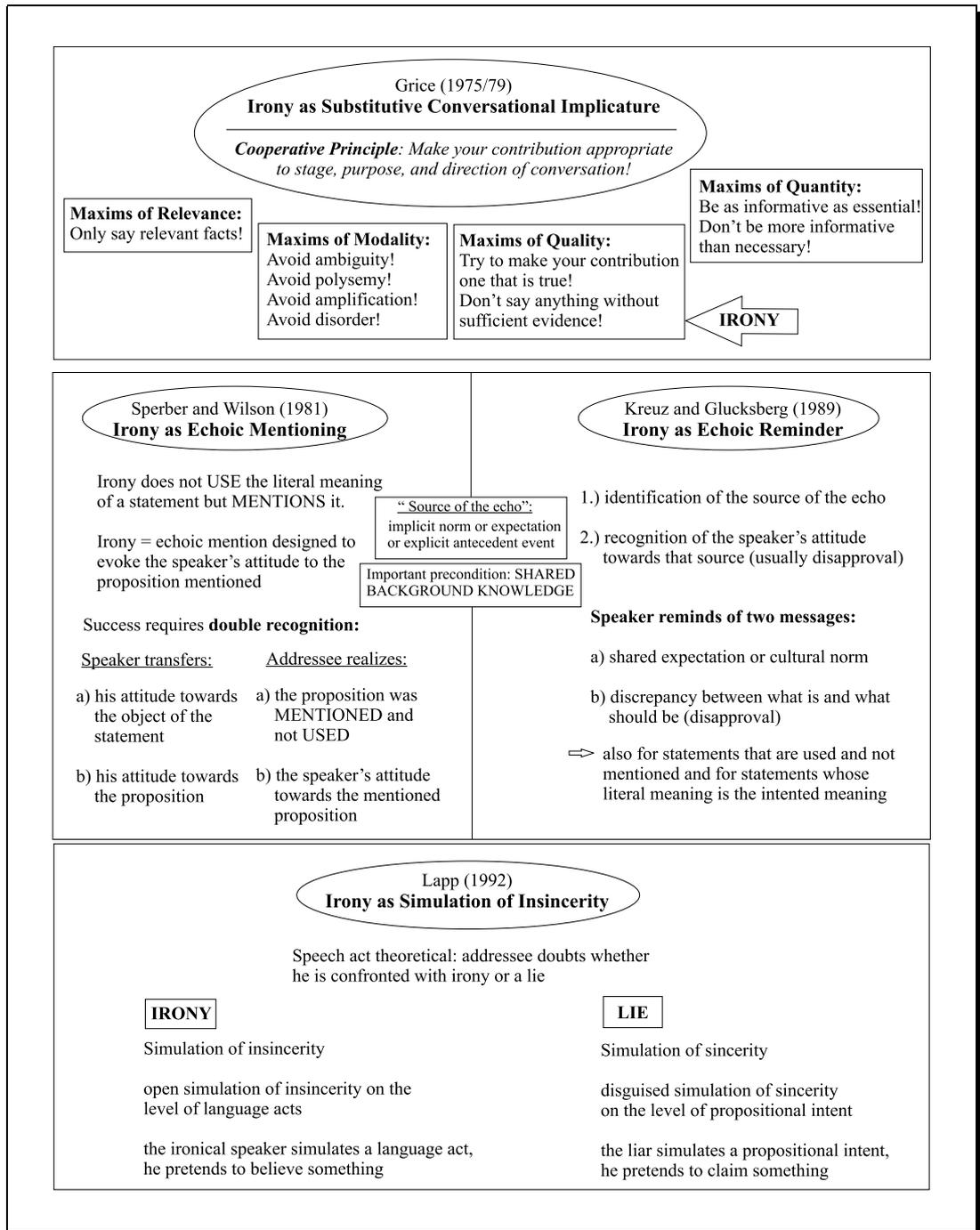


Figure 3.2: Pragmatical approaches to irony

Chapter 4

A Semantic Approach to Irony

Take the following characterization of irony by Weinrich (1966) into consideration: “to feign, but also to show that you feign”¹. Weinrich’s claim, that statements require signals to demonstrate an ironical intent, implies that otherwise the addressee would not be able to understand the ambiguity of the speaker, i.e. he would either think the speaker is lying or feel affronted by the assertion. There are various forms to signal irony: to wink or to clear one’s throat, an empathetic voice, a special intonation, an accumulation of immoderate expressions, risky metaphors, very long sentences, word repetitions and italics or quotation marks in written text forms (c.f. Weinrich 1966: 64). The use of those markers makes it a lot easier for the addressee to understand that the conditions for sincerity (i.e. the literal meaning) are not fulfilled and the statement is to be taken ironically. I do not presume here to claim that signals are constitutive, I rather intend to point out their existence. Hence the next chapters deal with semantic irony markers with the exclusion of sentence intonation, emphasis and prosody.

4.1 Early Approaches

In Löffler (1975), one of the earlier works about linguistic irony, basic semantic features of mainly verbal irony were given. In general, an ironic statement consists of two fragments: the ironical proposition and a linguistic or non-linguistic sign which reverses the

¹“Man verstellt sich, gewiss, aber man zeigt auch, dass man sich verstellt.” in Weinrich (1966: 63).

informational status of the assertion. The ironical proposition can have different shapes. It can consist of one word (e.g. *friend, mate, sweetheart*), a phrase (*Schöne Bescherung!*) a clause (*Just go on like this!*), several clauses or a longer text (c.f. Löffler 1975: 124ff.).

Katharine P. Beals (1995) also tries to answer the key question: How much of an utterance is ironic? She introduces the terms *locus* and *scope* of irony, whereas the *locus* is defined as the smallest expression which can be cited as ironic. In contrast the *scope* is the largest expression which can be cited as such (c.f. Beals 1995: 9 ff.). Consider for example the following clause:² Hyde Park is a **really happening** part of Chicago. Whereas **really happening** is the *locus* of irony, the whole sentence can be regarded as the *scope* of irony. There are cases when *scope* and *locus* are the same, i.e. they coincide.

To come back to Löffler's basic semantic features, there are grammatical categories which seem to be ideal for ironical statements because they are very easy to transform into their contrary, for example homonyms, equivocal names and idioms - when used in a modified way they can be ironical proposition and signal at the same time (c.f. Löffler 1975: 125). The reversal of a statement into the opposite of the actually intended message is performed in various ways:

- the negation of a sentence, e.g. "Go on like this!" for "Don't go on like this!",
- the negation of a word, e.g. "I really do care!" for "I don't care!",
- the use of the "contrary opposite"³ as e.g. *high* instead of *low*, *cold* instead of *warm* or *friend* instead of *villain*,
- the use of the contrary opposite concerning the illocutionary act, e.g. a command instead of a prohibition, an assertion instead of a question, a praise instead of a blame or mockery instead of recognition (c.f. Löffler 1975: 125).

Another early approach to linguistic aspects of ironical utterances was elaborated by M. Clyne in the year 1974. Initially Clyne points out that irony is not recognizable without any further extra-linguistic information as e.g. knowledge about the context of reality.

²The example is taken from Beals (1995: 10ff.).

³The contrary opposite is "the gradual displacement of single semantic features", cf. Loeffler (1975: 125).

Thus his intention is to specify linguistic means within a linguistic model which could identify an ironic use of language or function to generate the addressee's possible ironic attitude. These means are not restricted to irony, but they *can* function as markers (c.f. Clyne 1974: 343).

Language irony markers can either expose incoherence (e.g. exaggeration) or opposition. Thus every aspect of language can serve as marker for the phenomenon irony. Here Clyne introduces four sociolinguistic variables which determine a lexical, syntactical and phonetic selection partially: subject area, conversational partner, role relation and type of interaction. Every incongruence between these variables and the choice of a code can have a potential ironic effect (c.f. Clyne 1974: 346).

A first irony marker mentioned in Clyne is to find in dialect literature, e.g. the exaggerated use of lexemes of a certain dialect, often long compounds and lexemes of a higher sociolect, but also the use of archaisms or nominal constructions (c.f. Clyne 1974: 347ff.). According to Clyne the most obvious irony markers are lexical signals, their context and combination:

- **a reversal of subject and accusative object:** e.g. in Brecht's poem "Die Lösung":⁴ "im Lichte des Aufstandes des 17. Juni 1953 wurde vorgeschlagen, daß, wenn die Regierung mit dem Volk nicht zufrieden sei, sie es ja auflösen könne." Here Clyne refers to Chomsky's model of aspects which comprises rules of subclassification and uses syntactical features, e.g. [+alive][-human] applied with the German word 'fressen' and [+alive] [+human] with German 'der Lehrer'. These features contradict in 'der Lehrer frißt' (c.f. Clyne 1974: 351).
- **the use of polysemy**, which Clyne considers as fundamental for the formation of word plays. An example is the following nursery rhyme:

Mary had a little lamb,
 She also had a bear
 I've often seen her little lamb,
 But I never saw her bear.⁵

⁴In the following I will use some of Clyne's German examples (1974: 350ff.), because I could not think of English adequates. Nevertheless I assume there are English examples of the same type.

⁵The example is taken from Clyne (1974: 350).

The ambiguity is hidden in the polysemy of *her* (ihr, sie) and *bear* (Bär, gebären) and is supposed to mock Victorian taboos of morality (c.f. Clyne 1974: 350).

- **the use of certain syntactical constructions as tool for irony** (e.g. “A fine friend you are!”) leads to incongruity and exaggeration, e.g. the introduction of footnotes - length of sentences, co-subordination, participle constructions and Latin words in the footnote are contrary to the trivial topic, simple and short sentences and lexemes of the text.
- **the use of rhetorical questions** points out the difference between syntax and discourse coherence: “I see you here for the tenth time. Do you come here often?” The construction implies a question and the context a predicative semantic interpretation (c.f. Clyne 1974: 351).⁶

The advice that hints at the ironical intent can be situated at every place of the statement. Clyne again uses a nursery rhyme to show an example:

Little birdie, flying high
Dropped/ Sent a message from the sky,
As I wiped it from my eye,
I thanked the Lord that cows don't fly.⁷

In the first version the ironic message becomes clear in the second line through the association of *dropping* with *dung*. In the second version with *Sent* the irony is unveiled later (c.f. Clyne 1974: 355).

Löffler and Clyne's examinations both represent very simple possibilities for a recognition of irony as such and thus form a proper basis for my research. They might be the most obvious and most common forms and are to a certain amount mainly to be found in oral speech acts. Thus it has to be emphasized here that there are much more complex sentences that are less easy to detect as ironical in a linguistic way. The following chapters will be concerned with numerous more complex semantic ironical aspects.

⁶The use of rhetorical questions to emphasize an ironical attitude was also mentioned by Lapp (1992: 31).

⁷The example is taken from Clyne (1974: 355).

4.2 The Concept of Irony Signals as Disruptive Factors in Speech Acts

In the following subchapter I want to discuss the work of Bernhard Willer and Norbert Groeben who developed the following concept for a linguistic understanding of irony. They considered irony signals as disruptive factors for a direct-literal understanding. These disruptive factors prevent a literal interpretation of the utterance. From these factors they derived a system of categories for irony signals.

Weinrich claimed that these signals were constitutive and form a special code (1966: 64). However, their necessity is regarded critically by different linguists. Although naming various signals, Willer and Groeben reject the assertion of their indispensability, because a detailed examination of ironic situation does not necessarily require signals when the ironic proposition is for example mentioned in a sufficient non-ambiguous context (c.f. Willer & Groeben 1980: 291). Mücke (1972) also mentions ironic propositions that do not demand irony signals. In those cases the incongruity between text and referee or situation respectively is so obvious that it already constitutes a sufficient “alarm signal” (in Willer & Groeben 1980: 292). He makes a further remark about signaling ironic utterance:

[...] an ironist who winks or nudges or who fills his page with quotation marks, underlinings, and exclamation marks, or whose voice expresses an indignation not revealed in his lexical and syntactic choices, will not be thought especially subtle. [...] a rather more elegant [method] is to present the missing context of reality alongside the incongruous language in which it is spoken of [...] [or] to introduce contradictory propositions or propositions with contrary implications. [...] An ironist can also deliberately commit logical errors or can simply show the obviously absurd conclusion that must inevitably follow from the supposedly reasonable premise (c.f. Muecke 1973: 40).

In the following system of categorization irony signals are determined as devices of intensification of the hearer’s hypothesis of an “intended violation of sincerity”.⁸ I want to mention here, that Willer and Groeben do not exclusively deal with semantic aspects of irony signaling, but rather tried to grasp as many options as possible. Furthermore their

⁸This concept goes back to Grice (1975), in Willer and Groeben (1980: 294).

system implies and modifies Grice's pragmatic approach to irony that was discussed in chapter 3.2. Willer and Groeben's compilation is based on six different approaches:

1. The Phonologic Graphemic Approach: is the deviation from language standards, where rules are violated or new rules are invented. Willer/ Groeben distinguish between two kinds of deviations, rule-breaking and rule-intensifying.⁹

For rule-breaking deviations phonemes are omitted, relocated, replaced or added. This system also includes neologisms. The following two instances serve as examples of a) a phoneme is omitted and b) a phoneme is added.¹⁰

a) During a discussion a father says to his son who studies psychology: "Als **Psychloge** müsstest du das doch wissen!"

b) "Muttern, nur nicht blinken! Könnte ja jemand merken, was Du vorhast!"

For rule-intensifying deviations various instruments can be used, e.g. word plays through the use of equal sound structures, a series of sound sequences with different meanings or alliterations, as exemplified in the following example: All members in a seminar are speaking at the same time, the lecturer says: "Halt, halt, halt, please all at once!"

2. Morphologic-Syntactical Approach:

a) Parts of a sentence are relocated. The approach could also be named "inversion of phrases". (Example: "A fine friend you are!" in contrast to a rather non-ironic "You are a fine friend!")

b) Parts of a sentence are replaced, either partially or completely. (Example: "Mr. Important" → here an adjective is used as a noun)

c) Parts of a sentence are omitted. (Example: "German students! No more words!")

d) Parts of a sentence are added. There are clusters of elements of the same shape, very long and complex sentences or complicated infixes which are perceived as unnaturally by the addressee. (Example: Dozent im Seminar: "To quote from one book is plagiarism, to quote from two books is science!")

⁹Willer and Groeben mention a third form, which is called *metagraphs*. Since this form is very rarely and in my opinion only specific in the German language, it is omitted here. C.f. Willer and Groeben (1980: 296).

¹⁰All examples in this chapter are taken from Willer and Groeben (1980: 295ff.).

3. Intentional Approach: To discuss the intentional approach Willer and Groeben refer to concepts of structural semantics here, especially to Heger's (1976) (c.f. Willer & Groeben 1980: 299f.). The deviation is based on an incompatibility of intentional determining parts of semantic structures of complex units, or on a violation of conditions for conjunctions and relations of compatibility of semantic units (c.f. Willer & Groeben 1980: 299f.). They distinguish between three kinds of semantic relations¹¹ which will be named and exemplarily documented in the following:¹²

a) The symbol-functional semantic relation: relation between sign and object, e.g. an oxymoron or a semantic zeugma (Examples: "Treiben sie Sport?" - "Ja, ich ringe mit Problemen."; Der Mensch hat noch einen Vorzug vor der Maschine, er ist in der Lage sich selbst zu verkaufen.)

b) The symptom-functional semantic relation: relation between sign and speaker, e.g. a member of the lower class uses remarkable features of the sociolect of a higher class.

c) The signal-functional semantic relation: relation between sign and addressee, i.e. contrasts of stylistic features of linguistic signs, e.g. a change in style as in the following instance: "Was er an Komplexität der Diktion hinzufügte, war am Inhalt wieder *abzukupsen*."¹³

4. The Speech-Act Approach

The addressee doubts the literal meaning of the speaker's assertion because of his general knowledge. A precondition for the addressee's disbelief are situational or mental intentions, preferences, valuations, contents of belief or emotional attitudes. The context makes the ironic intention clear and the situation does not require any signals.

We distinguish between a) deviations as a consequence of general knowledge and b) contradictions as a consequence of general values and norms. The former can be subdivided in contradictions based on general knowledge about possible issues (e.g. absurd statements or extreme exaggerations) and contradictions based on possible relations of issues

¹¹The three types refer to the "Model of functions of signs". See also Bühler (1934).

¹²There is a fourth form that is regarded as a hybrid of the three former semantic relations. The mismatch is based on an incompatibility of illocutive type and propositional content. Example: Person 1 hat 50 M verloren und sagt zu sich selbst: "Gratuliere! Keine schlechte Leistung. So etwas sollte ich öfters machen!". C.f. Willer and Groeben (1980: 304f.).

¹³The use of style or register switches as irony indicators was also mentioned by Sperber and Wilson. They named the following example: "That's done it - you've broken the vase. I hope you're satisfied, *my lady*." Compare with Sperber and Wilson (1981: 312).

(e.g. absurd causal relations, senseless reasons or absurd consequences). Inherent in b) are prescriptive aspects, i.e. all possible values, norms and aims which contradict with the literal meaning of the proposition.

5. The Approach with Reference to Social Field and Situational Conventions

The conventions of this approach are based on the relations of speech acts and situation(s) and of speech acts among each other. Aspects of importance are for example speaking time, speaker alternation and which speech acts are respectable in which social field. Willer and Groeben distinguish between two cases:

1. The deviation is determined by inadequacy of the speech act and the situation of interaction, concerning e.g. social occasion, role relations of the contact persons or the focus of interaction.
2. The second case is a deviation from normal sequel conditions of speech acts, either in the context of a monologue or a dialogue. This can for example happen by means of association as in the following example: A group of students try to find an adequate time to meet for Easter breakfast. Person 1 suggests to meet at 8.30 am. Person 2 replies: "Great idea, why not at 8 am, for Easter is the celebration of resurrection." Another instrument could be a conscious misinterpretation of a preceding statement or to take indirect speech acts literally.

6. The Approach of Conversational Maxims

This approach implies conscious violation of conversational maxims of modality, relevance and quantity:¹⁴

- **Violation of maxims of modality:** "Make it short!" and "Avoid ambiguity!" These maxims are violated by different instruments as e.g. repeated paraphrasing of the same content (e.g. Person 1 embraces Person 2 and says: "You know how much disgusting, insufferable and unbearable you are!") or an emphasis on evidence or validity of the proposition with the help of particles such as *really*, *truly* or *indeed*.
- **Violation of maxims of relevance:** to name irrelevant details.

¹⁴The approach refers to Grice's conversational maxims and was discussed in detail in 3.1.

- **Violation of maxims of quantity:** An answer is replied by too much or too less information, especially inaccurate and suboptimal answers are topical, when more accurate ones are possible (e.g. a civil servant in the registration office asks the citizen who wants to have a passport issued: “Born?” Answer: “Yes.”)

The importance of the conversational maxims with regard to linguistics of irony was already mentioned in Grice’s interpretation of irony as *substitutive conversational implicature* in chapter 3.1. Paradoxically Willer and Groeben missed out the maxim of quality, that was considered as the essential maxim by Grice, when it comes to irony. However, the previous ironic instances indicate the importance of all four violations when it comes to an ironic attitude of the speaker.

4.3 Ironical Use of Expressions for their Semantic Contents

K. P. Beals’ dissertation “A linguistic analysis of verbal irony” is different from the various other works due to the fact that the author does not aim to provide one concrete explanation for linguistics of irony like Grice or Sperber and Wilson. She rather provides an overview of the wide possibilities for irony. Her achievements are based on the following characterization for verbal irony: “The use of a verbal expression to pretend that something is true in order to highlight it as ludicrously false” (Beals 1995: 288). With respect to this definition, she developed a summary of different ways in which expressions can be used ironically. This chapter will concentrate on expressions used ironically for their semantic contents. Beals identifies them as “irony’s most obvious and canonical instances” (Beals 1995: 289). The ironic feature is the semantic content of these utterances that can be recognized as ludicrously false (c.f. Beals 1995: 289ff.). One of Beals’s examples will help to substantiate this concept. In context of a march by middle class suburban kids one of them says: “It is perfectly natural that we should have a protest march when the marchers have no complaints”¹⁵. The conflict lies in it being taken for granted to perform a contradictory or actually senseless act. To signal an ironic attitude, Beals hints at reinforcing expressions, such as *it is perfectly natural* (in the previous example)

¹⁵The examples in this chapter are also taken from Beals (1995: 290ff.).

or *it is clear* in a second example of interest: The context is U.S. Steel's expenditure of one third of one percent of profits on cleaning up pollution. Someone says: "It is clear that they are spending every penny that they can afford and are trying their best." In addition to reinforcing expressions, also tag question can serve as markers for an ironical attitude, typically after a declarative sentence as in the following example: "The women's catalogues are the best. I love how natural-looking the models are. Just plain folk, aren't they? They could be the girl next door, right?" Furthermore two more special cases are given. In some utterances a logical inference from the semantic contents hints at irony rather than the semantic contents *per se*. The following example can be taken into consideration: (The speaker never had any intention to kill Frank.) "I decided not to kill Frank." In contrast to this example another is given to document a case where the same context is given but now the obvious irony is the literal meaning of the statement: "I decided to kill Frank" (c.f. Beals 1995: 289ff.).¹⁶ The examples show that expressions used ironically for their semantic contents could be of special interest when it comes to the analysis of written irony because they are for sure not limited to spoken irony.

4.4 Irony and Metaphors

Aristotle considers metaphors to be the "transference of a name to another thing" (in Barbe 1995: 84). So what does it have in common with irony? A proper understanding of both language devices requires a reading between the lines. The Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary provides the following definition for *metaphor*: "a word or phrase used in an imaginative way to describe somebody or something else, in order to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful" (Oxford 2000: 803).

The compulsive precondition for intended understanding of speaker and addressee is to share knowledge. Both phenomena might look similar on first sight, but whereas metaphors belong into the range of figures of speech, irony is rather an attitude. While metaphors are functionally descriptive, irony rather serves to criticize, to evaluate or to express an attitude towards a situation (c.f. Barbe 1995: 85 ff.).

¹⁶Furthermore various individual cases are given in Beals, but they do not follow clear rules or models and are therefore omitted here.

There are ironical instances that make use of metaphors in various ways, for example when metaphors are overused, incongruent metaphors are juxtaposed or contextually “unfitting” metaphors are employed. Furthermore K. Barbe uses an example of the ironical use of a metaphor *per se*: A male student addresses a female student: “I once had a girlfriend who had a child. I tell you she was a real beast. She was an Aquarius just like you.” (in Barbe 1995: 86). The metaphorical use of *beast* serves to denote beast-like qualities in the former girlfriend. With referring to their common zodiac sign the speaker finds a common trait of his former girlfriend and his addressee and thus also associates her with the beast-like character of his ex-girlfriend. Instead of criticizing her directly, the student prefers to wrap his criticism in an ironical inclusion of a metaphor with the effect of the criticism’s mitigation (c.f. Barbe 1995: 86 ff.). A second example of interest is mentioned in K. Beals (1995: 168): [Uttered as an evaluation of Gerald Ford’s debating performance] “Jerry really knocked them over with his logic last night.” Here the ironic metaphor *knock over* highlights the ludicrous falsity of the utterance, i.e. Gerald Ford’s performance was actually everything else but felicitous. The examples above show that varieties of figurative language can also serve as a tool for irony (c.f. Beals 1995: 166).¹⁷

4.5 A Brief Conclusion

A comparison of the five semantic approaches to irony in the last chapters indicates the following statement that resembles the conclusion of chapter 3: the issue emerges as a large accumulation of attempts to describe linguistic methods of identifying irony. On the whole they might cover a notable amount of instances and variations that exist. Probably a linguistic attempt to comprehend all possible versions for irony is according to its complexity not possible at all. However, as mentioned in the introduction, it is not the concern of this paper to cover *all* aspects of variety, but rather the most essential theories from the perspective of their probable application in the second part of this assignment.

In the following figure 4.1 a summarizing overview of semantic approaches to irony is given. Since Willer and Groeben’s approach involves the most different possibilities of identifying ironical aspects (six plus several subcategories), their concept is placed in the

¹⁷According to K. Beals, however, another remarkable distinction of ironical and metaphorical speech is that the reverse is not possible. See also Beals (1995: 166).

center of the diagram. According to the time line earlier approaches (Löffler and Clyne) appear above Willer and Groeben, more recent concepts below. The juxtaposition of the individual techniques reveals that their connection is not only a relation of completion, but also of overlapping each other. Black arrows in the diagram serve to emphasize overlaps of the single approaches.

Barbe's system of classifying ironical statements into three classes "difference/ opposition", "literalness" and "sarcasm" is placed above the semantic theories in dotted lines. Her system is not included in the present chapter because it provides a basic classification rather than clear semantic aspects. The three categories of the system can only provide a very coarse division, however, they are not clearly distinguishable from the semantic aspects pictured below. The opposite is the case, all semantic aspects belong to one of Barbe's classes. Thus for example Beals' *literal ironical use of expressions for their semantic content* are easily connectable with Barbe's *literalness*, and Löffler's entire approach of 1975 describes Barbe's subcategory *difference/ opposition*.

The diagram highlights the incompleteness of the single approaches of current literature about linguistic irony. Nevertheless, although the present account might only involve essential semantic aspects, I expect to detect some of them in the text examples of the second half of this paper.

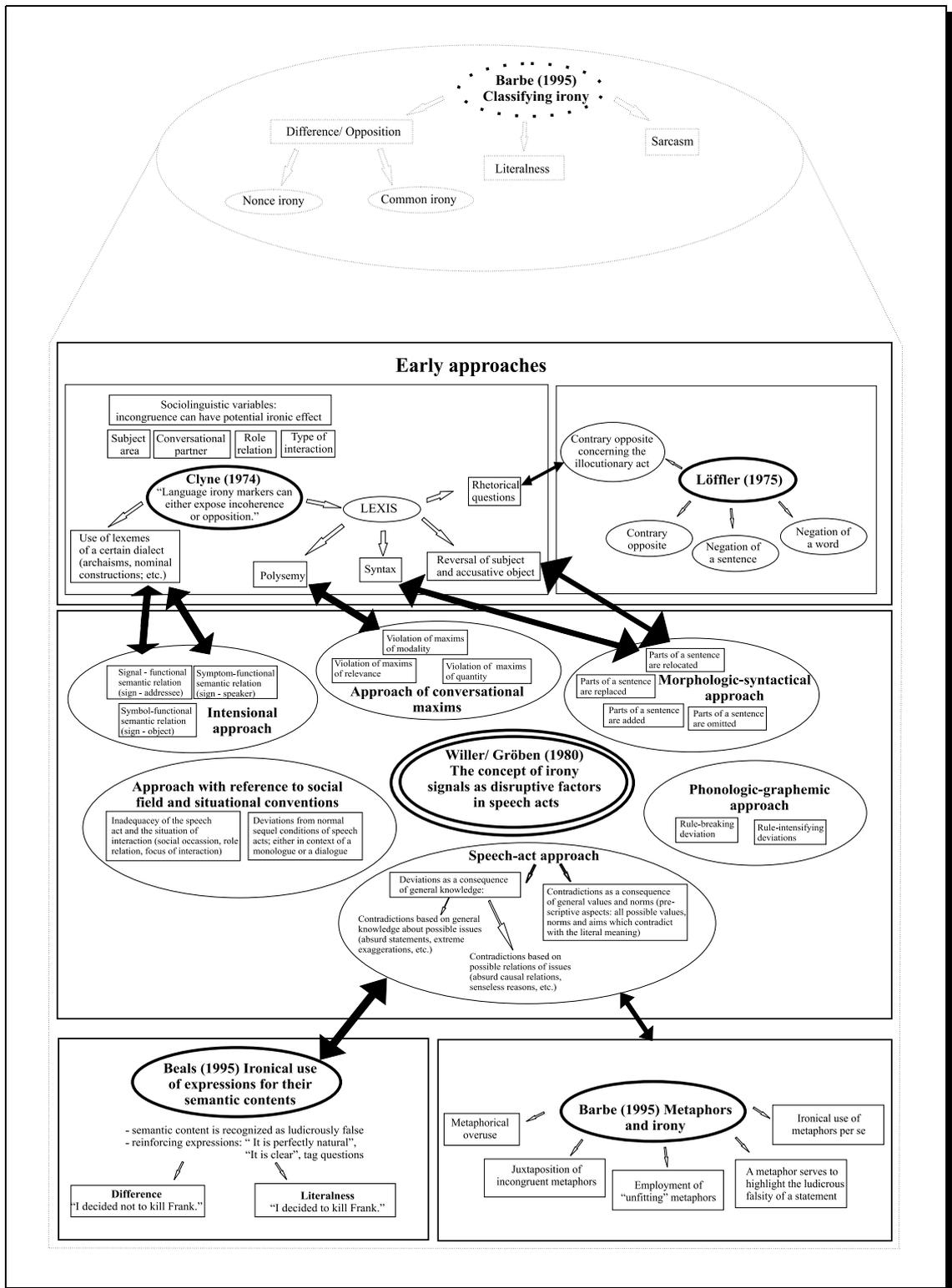


Figure 4.1: Semantic approaches to irony

Chapter 5

The Language of Newspapers

To be able to discuss irony in the specific context of newspapers, a few questions about newspaper characteristics have to be answered here. In literature about irony language examples were mainly taken from everyday conversations. This was accomplished in the most different versions up to the present and does not require any further exemplifying. The material for analysis in the next chapters are newspaper comments taken from the British broadsheet newspapers the *Times* and the *Guardian*. Structure, style and language in newspaper articles is not used by accident. Thus in this chapter I will focus on some journalistic and editorial fundamentals of British newspaper press to find appropriate categories for the use of irony. Thereby stylistical and semantic elements will be centered, apart from characteristics concerning the content of the various kinds of newspaper writing.

In Prestin (2000) a similar issue to the analysis at hand is discussed which is irony in print media. In her work another important aspect of ironical statements is emphasized, which is the relationship between author and reader. According to her, this relationship is strongly determined by the character of the medium itself and its principles. To discuss this relationship more in detail Prestin dedicates an entire chapter to tasks of mass media and the role of the communicators. With respect to the limited extent of this assignment the author-reader relationship is only to be mentioned marginally here.¹

¹For further information see also Prestin (2000: 121ff.).

5.1 Newspaper Structure

When we take the medium newspaper into consideration, it is clear that irony is not an appropriate device for every existing newspaper category, for example it might hardly occur in a serious (non-satirical) obituary or in a weather-forecast. Thus a few basic features of newspaper categories and their allocation in a paper are summarized in the following with the purpose to work out a proper text category for the implication of an ironical attitude.

Concentrating on British newspaper variety, first a distinction has to be made. We generally distinguish three kinds of daily newspapers describing their quality and reliability: the broadsheet newspapers (e.g. the *Telegraph*, the *Independent*, the *Times* and the *Guardian*), the middle range tabloids (e.g. the *Express* and the *Daily Mail*) and the tabloids (e.g. the *Sun*, the *Mirror* and the *Star*) (c.f. Reah 1998: 2).

Although the term *newspaper* suggests that its content mainly consists of the news of the day, decorated with possible analysis and comments on this news, newspapers contain a range of different items: next to news, analysis and comments, we find advertising, entertainment, TV listings and celebrity stories, just to name the most common (c.f. Reah 1998: 2). Although we might also find ironical features in tabloids, I will mainly discuss broadsheet papers.

Apart from the journalistic demands of its content, an newspaper's attractive design is one of the most important tasks for a publishing company. A daily newspaper is not a one-channel, but a three-channel medium: texts, pictures and graphic accounts² are equally used to impart knowledge. Hence form, content and function belong together (c.f. Harrower 1991: 20). The most different newspapers are distinguished by a variety of designs with the main purpose to attract as many readers as possible. Although the broadsheet papers might vary optically to a high degree, they are determined by a similar choice for the content of the individual pages. With reference to Vestergaard (2000), the editorial material of newspapers consists of two major categories: news and opinion. The presentation of the two materials is not accomplished by accident. Whereas news articles typically occur in the front pages of a newspaper, opinion articles are found on the inside pages. Next

²There can be irony in pictures as well as in graphics. However, they are neglected here, since they hardly play any role when it comes to irony linguistics.

to typographical distinctiveness - comments are often headlined “opinion” and bylined with the commentator’s name and sometimes accompanied with her or his photograph - both categories differ in terms of content and linguistic choices (c.f. Vestergaard 2000: 154f.). I will come back to linguistic aspects in section 5.2. A further subclassification of opinion and news writing can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The following basic newspaper categories³ were elaborated by Harrower (1991) and represent just one possibility of classifying newspaper texts (c.f. Harrower 1991: 5ff.)⁴:

- **Page One:** is the menu to guide the reader through the paper. It is a mix of traditional reporting and modern marketing. Possible elements are big headlines, photos, news briefs or summaries.
- **News stories:** are matter-of-fact reports about national and international current events, especially in politics and economy, but also about legal affairs, science or cultural happenings. The news pages are often subdivided into and labelled *Politics (national or international)*, *Law*, *Financial* and *Economics*.
- **Feature pages:** are a mix of the most different topics such as lifestyle stories, entertainment, food, fashion, health, travel, etc., along with columns, crosswords, puzzles, horoscopes, etc. In contrast to news articles the writer is here allowed to “pick up an item of news, and develop it via comment, opinion and speculation” (Reah 1998: 92).
- **Editorial and opinion pages:** explore current issues in depth. They imply editorial cartoons, opinion columns by the paper’s editors, local writers or by columnists, letters from readers and the masthead of the paper. In contrast to other pages, opinion pages are often rigidly formatted, but incorporate more aggressive, feature-style design techniques.
- **Sports sections:** Next to in-depth news coverage about all possible current sport events, sport pages can also imply statistics, columns, local news, news briefs and gossip.

³The term *categories* refers to Ljung (2000: 131ff.).

⁴Another classification was accomplished by Lüger (1983). He distinguishes five groups: informative texts (without any evaluation), persuasive texts (evaluate, give opinion), instructive texts (information and guidance), dyadic texts (interviews or agony columns) and contact creating texts (advertising function). See also in Jucker (1992: 43f.)

- **Special sections:** are often of a special format and make the following issues subject of discussion: special reports on news events, special enterprise packages on hot current topics or trends or special-interest packages that focus on a single theme (kids' page, restaurant guide, ...).

Although we find some regularities (home and regional news after the title page, followed by international news and feature articles; business and sport in a later section etc.), there are no significant regulations about order and number of the different categories. The categories mentioned above are clearly labelled News, Business, etc. However, it is often difficult to determine whether we deal with one of the main categories or with a variation (c.f. Ljung 2000: 133). Often main focus of editors of the individual broadsheets is to provide topical elements for many readers and not only a small readership. To meet the requirements of individual readers demands continual modification of the design of a newspaper. Table 5.1 provides an image of the allocation of pages in the *Times* and the *Guardian*.⁵ This allocation is certainly not up-to-date anymore, but shows the different emphasis on page topics and content of varying newspaper designs. While the publishers of the *Times* have decided to use standard broadsheet format for the entire paper, the daily *Guardian* stands out with its half-size inlay booklet named *g2* for opinion pages and feature articles.

In the chart we see the differences in the sectioning of the papers. While news pages capture about 30 per cent in the *Guardian*, 39 per cent are dedicated to news coverage in the *Times*. A more obvious distinction can be seen in the sports and opinion pages, the *Guardian* contains 25 per cent sports and 14 per cent opinion pages compared to the *Times* that provides only 12 per cent to sports and just 4 per cent of the whole paper for opinion articles. Feature and special pages are about the same number as news pages. In the *Times* they occupy the most space in the entire paper with 43 per cent. Hence, taking the contents of a modern newspaper into consideration, they are far from only reporting the news of the day. Not to mention adverts, which covered 31 per cent of the *Guardian* in 1996 for example (c.f. Reah 1998: 3). In the meantime advertising serves as main

⁵Categories such as *Letters and Emails* count as opinion pages here, while *Weather and Crosswords* and *Obituaries* rather belong to the feature articles. I first listed these pages individually to show their different order in the papers and then summed them up at the end of the chart. As feature and special pages are sometimes hard to tell apart they are summed up at the end. The format of the *g2* extra booklet of the *Guardian* is only half-size. However, I have neglected this fact in the summary part of the chart.



Figure 5.1: Page one design of the *Guardian* (10-10-2005) and the *Times* (21-02-2006)

source of revenue for newspaper publishing companies.

To go back to Harrower's categorization, there are three categories that generally allow an implication of a personal comment or opinion, namely feature and special articles and editorial and opinion pages. They lack the matter-of-fact style of news reports and thus have a relatively free structure and style. These facts seem to favor an implication of irony. According to table 5.1 these newspaper categories occupy 41 per cent in total of the *Guardian* and 47 per cent of the *Times*. It has to be emphasized that this argumentation in search for an appropriate place for irony in a newspaper only represents a tendency and can hardly be generalized. I am very conscious of the various mix forms of news coverage and their sometimes rather obscured stylistic boundaries.

We do not only find regularities in the newspapers while examining the allocation of the page contents. With the exception of various special forms of newspaper writing as horoscopes and jokes, the bigger part of newspaper stories show similar narrative structures (c.f. Bell 1991: 148ff.).⁶ Apart from this similarity, two further structural

⁶I do not claim here that the narrative structure of a news story is the same as the structure of a comment or a column in a broadsheet since they can differ in many features. Nevertheless, with reference to William

Guardian	Pages	Times	Pages
Page One	1	Page One	1
National and Internat. News	17	National and Internat. News	14
Comment and Debate	4	Letters to the editor	1
Letters and Emails	1	Comments	3
Obituaries	2	National and Internat. News	20
Weather and Crossword	1	Business News	19
Sports	14	Obituaries	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>40</i>	Court and Social	2
		Weather	1
		Sports	16
		<i>Total</i>	<i>80</i>
G2 (extra booklet)	Pages	Times2 (Inlay 1)	Pages
Front page	1	Front page	1
Columns	3	Feature article	15
Feature articles	12	Column	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>16</i>	Special pages	4
		Feature articles	11
		<i>Total</i>	<i>32</i>
		Public Agenda (Inlay 2)	
		Front page	1
		Feature article	16
		Special pages	8
		<i>Total</i>	<i>24</i>
Summary		Summary	
Front pages	2	Front pages	3
News pages	17	News pages	53
Feature/ Special pages	15	Feature/ Special pages	59
Editorial and Opinion pages	8	Editorial and Opinion pages	5
Sports	14	Sports	16
Total	56	Total	136

Table 5.1: Page number and order in the *Guardian* and the *Times*

features will be mentioned here, an eye-catching headline and the lead of a news story. They are both featured by means of style and language and will therefore be examined in more detail in the next section.

Labov (1972), there is a narrative structure that can be analyzed into six general elements. This structure resembles the structure of personal narratives and was thus applied for an analysis of news structures. For more information see Labov, William (1971) "The transformation of experience in narrative syntax." In: *Language in the Inner City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. p. 354-96.

5.2 Newspaper Style and Language

When we take newspaper language and style into consideration, a few main differences between spoken and written language have to be mentioned. While spoken texts have an aural or phonological level, written texts have a visual or graphological level. Both have a word or lexical level, and all texts have a structural and grammatical or syntactic level (c.f. Reah 1998: 55).

That means, newspapers have various tools to transfer messages or implications: lexis, grammar, syntax and not to forget the various means of typography and visualization articles, headlines, pictures, advertising and graphics, i.e. the layout of the newspaper.⁷ Besides these typographical patterns, newspaper writing itself stands out from other forms of narrative. Thus I want to go into a few stylistic and linguistic characteristics of newspaper writing in this section.

Jucker (1992) analyzed syntactic variation in British newspapers. To introduce his argument he dedicated an extra chapter to a few recent studies in media language with respect to linguistic distinctiveness of newspapers. In the following I will summarize some aspects of two scholars which I consider being of importance in this chapter. Their research is exclusively concerned with the category news report. They might be of less interest for the examinations in the following chapters. However, some essential features of news writing will help to form a proper image of general newspaper writing.

In 1969 Crystal and Davy introduced the contrast between “journalese” and “normal” English (c.f. Jucker 1992: 32). They based their argument on a comparison of two newspaper articles of the same subject published in the *Daily Express* and the *Times* respectively. Thereby the usage in their samples is contrasted to what they call “normal” usage. They examined a few remarkable features within the statement-type sentences. For example instead of “Dr. Mason said” verbs of speaking often appear before the subject in the form “said Dr. Mason”. Furthermore they highlighted a great number of adverbials in empathetic clause-initial position instead of “normal” post-verbal position, even in contexts which do not suggest a particular emphasis for the adverbial. In addition they counted many more complex pre- and postmodifications and much less commas than in “normal” English usage (c.f. Jucker 1992: 33).

⁷For more information about newspaper layout see Harrower (1991).

Carter (1988) analyzed patterns of vocabulary in British newspapers. He also exclusively dealt with news reporting (in the *Daily Mail*) and not with opinion writing. While examining newspaper vocabulary he concentrated on the use of so called *core* vocabulary.⁸ Carter claims that “newspaper reports should ideally report the facts in as *core* a vocabulary as possible” (in Jucker 1992: 34). The examination of an article on the front page of the *Daily Mail* unveiled a high number of non-core words, either markedly formal and informal, or negatively evaluative (e.g. *snub, row, buttonholing, posing, trendy*). This deviation is considered as an essential reason for partial press reporting. However, it is questionable, why and how far journalists really stick to core vocabulary. Furthermore he criticizes the use of “metaphoric devices and figures which contrast with and contravene expectations of a plain style” (in Jucker 1992: 35). For this claim he uses the same article. Thus the restrictiveness of data for his argument makes it difficult to be convinced by his stance.⁹

To become more precise, in the following two sections the language of news headlines and lead paragraphs are examined explicitly.

5.2.1 The Headline

“Headlines [...] are the strongest weapon in your design arsenal” (Harrower 1991: 14). This might especially work with the headlines of the tabloids because they are the most controversial and eye-catching. However, it is not only the semantic content, but especially a headline’s size that makes it so important.¹⁰ Apart from their outstanding size, newspaper headlines are featured by a special vocabulary, that is short, attention-getting and effective. Writers use various language devices to make their headlines powerful and memorable. They play with words’ relations to their meaning or use the subtlety of

⁸*Core* words, that are also known as *basic* words are less discourse- and register-specific, less collocationally restricted and carry less emotive meaning. They often have antonyms and are superordinates rather than hyponyms. Core words are often used to define non-core words. See also in Jucker (1992: 34).

⁹Other topics of Jucker’s recent studies in media language summarize issues concerning sports news and commentaries (Ghadessy 1988 and Wallace 1977), sports announcer talk (Ferguson 1983), determiner deletion (Rydén 1975 and Bell 1985) and a few further aspects of media language. See also Jucker (1992: 35ff.).

¹⁰A 72-pt. headline is usually reserved for blockbuster stories on Page One. Newspapers often use a traditional coding format for headlines that lists the column width, point size and number of lines (e.g. 3-30-1). See also Harrower (1991: 14f.).

ambiguity. Newspaper headlines have a special status in research since they have often been subject for linguistic examination. Therefore a few exemplary language tools in headlines will be named in the following (c.f. Reah 1998: 19ff.):

- homophones: e.g. “Dr. Spuhler will maintain *Swiss role*” ⇒ *Swiss role* is a homophone of the phrase *Swiss roll*;
- homonyms: e.g. “Women who smoke have *lighter* children” ⇒ *lighter* has two meanings here: an adjective meaning less heavy or a noun for a device lighting a cigarette;
- polysemes: e.g. “Butter battle *spreads*” ⇒ *butters* can be spread, *battles* can widen;
- metaphorical associations: e.g. “More Water Money *goes down the Drain*” ⇒ water literally goes down the drain, but *to go down the drain* is also a phrase that means wasted;
- intertextuality: e.g. “*Babe in Wood* found safe” ⇒ the writer makes reference to the well-known folk tale *The Babes in the Wood*; writers also play with popular songs or book titles;
- phonology: e.g. “Join the *Kew* for the Bloom with the *Phew*” ⇒ headline writers use the readers awareness of sound, here *Kew* and *Phew* are rhyming words and *Kew*, the place where the event took place is as well a homophone of *queue*;
- loaded words/ connotations: e.g. “Genius Rev *butchered* at Church” ⇒ the verb *butchered* carries strong emotional loading beyond its literal meaning, its dictionary meaning *to slaughter and cut up an animal* suggests both - extreme and cruel violence and the implication of the killer, that he saw the victim as having the same status as an animal.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, headlines do not only use a special vocabulary. They are also marked by brevity. Given the fact that space is limited, a writer has to decide which words are of importance and which can be omitted. Hence he has the

option to delete grammatical words such as determiners¹¹ and auxiliary verbs. D. Reah (1998) refers to a possible impact of word deletion, which is ambiguity, as e.g. in *Mine exploded* or *Labor Party Split Looms*. In both headlines the reader is not able to determine the word class (*mine* - noun or possessive pronoun, *split* and *looms* - both could be noun or verb) (c.f. Reah 1998: 19f.). Ambiguity might be conscious or by accident. The reader has the only chance to find out the real meaning when he starts reading the article. Thus omitting is a good device for arousing curiosity.

The examples above show that headlines are not just a summary of the story. They rather function as a stand-alone unit with the main task to attract the reader. Although they are normally placed above the story, the journalistic process does not begin, but rather ends with writing an appropriate headline (c.f. Bell 1991: 186ff.).

5.2.2 The Lead

Writers often begin their stories with a short, relatively stand-alone introductory part. This short part is called the *lead* and mainly has the following functions: to complement the headline, to focus the main text on central aspect, to summarize the main text, to give the reader reasons to go on reading and to range in a topic (c.f. Blum & Bucher 1998: 36). In figure 5.2 a few examples for headlines with lead paragraphs are given.¹²

The lead paragraph is often printed in bold letters, sometimes it is clearly displaced from the main text with the help of an extra line (c.f. Blum & Bucher 1998: 36). As we see in the four examples in the figure, the lead paragraph always reveals the journalist's *who*, *what* and *where*, whereas the *who* occurs directly at the beginning in many news stories. Time is sometimes expressed, many newspapers use a so called *dateline* at the beginning of the lead paragraph (c.f. Bell 1991: 177).

Striking feature in news leads is the special vocabulary. A. Bell (1991) considers the

¹¹Determiner deletion in British newspaper articles was examined in detail by Alan Bell (1991). While the three quality papers the *Times*, the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph* only delete a few determiners, the four tabloids delete most of them. This surprisingly corresponds to their readership profiles. While the *Times* has the highest-grade readership, followed by the *Telegraph* and the *Guardian* (upper-middle, middle-middle and lower-middle class), the other four draw about 80 per cent of their readership from the working classes. See also Bell (1991: 108ff.).

¹²The lead paragraphs are taken from April 1990 editions of *The Evening Post*, Wellington (New Zealand); c.f. Bell (1991: 177).



Figure 5.2: Newspaper headlines and lead paragraphs

“lead [as] the most distinctive feature of news discourse” (Bell 1991: 176) with evident argumentation. When we take the examples above into consideration, the major feature that stands out is negativity in the form of conflict. There is political violence, border conflicts and espionage scandals, often connected with concrete numbers and references to previous events. A. Bell introduces a “lexicon of newsworthiness” (Bell 1991: 177), that symbolizes the values mentioned before (*high alert, wounded soldiers, ambush, killed, to round up in sweeps*) (c.f. Bell 1991: 177).

The content of the lead paragraph should be especially comprehensible when it introduces a longer text. Thus a reader can decide, whether he is going to take the time and read a story at all. Feature articles are often longer than other stories and therefore especially require a lead paragraph in a proper position that is clearly featured typographically (c.f. Blum & Bucher 1998: 36).

5.2.3 News and Opinion Writing

To come back to the focal topic of irony again, news and opinion articles with respect to their possible implication of irony will be discussed in an extra section. Thereby mainly Prestin’s discussion will be taken into consideration.

The basic form of news coverage in daily newspapers is represented by news, either in short version, or, featured with further information, in the form of a report. Thereby we

speak about *hard news* which have to be distinguished from *soft news* that will be discussed later. Focal task of *hard news* is to provide information about the issue's *what*, *who*, *when* and *where*. Of special interest for the work at hand is the neutral language style of news. Neutrality is one of the main criteria to distinguish news from other journalistic categories. Neutrality requires to avoid subjective evaluations¹³ and ambiguous expressions in *hard news*. Both requirements are clear arguments against the use of verbal irony (c.f. Prestin 2000: 165ff.).¹⁴

The second form of news coverage is given with *soft news*.¹⁵ In Prestin *soft news* are categorized as a mixed form of news and opinion writing (c.f. *ibid.*: 168f.) As with *hard news*, also *soft news* have the primary task to provide information. However, the importance of the topic is highly determined by its entertainment value for the readership. Structure and language style strongly depend on this value and are therefore less rigidly predefined in comparison to *hard news*. Thereby rhetorical figures, emphasis on opposition concerning the content and further language devices function to create an informal, jocular mode of communication. Hence irony belongs into the range of these rhetorical figures, whereby either irony of fate is reported or verbal irony is used (c.f. Prestin 2000: 168ff.).

With the third group we finally arrive at opinion writing which is of special interest when it comes to the use of irony. Comments, columns, editorials - three keywords exist for the entire variety to express opinion in a newspaper.¹⁶ Occasionally all three text forms are subsumed under one term *comment*. At the same time the three varieties are featured by individual characteristics Prestin (c.f. 2000: 174).

The newspaper comment generally takes position to a current news. The comment examines the importance of the topic, interprets its meaning, makes the reader familiar

¹³The aspect of newspaper objectivity is discussed in detail in McNair (1996: 24-43).

¹⁴Although irony is theoretically forbidden in reports, these constraints are obeyed less rigidly in reality. Thereby on the one hand Prestin refers to the journalist's demand to make his or her article attractive to the readership. On the other hand she mentions reports that are based on facts that were presented in *soft news* before, which do not have such strict constraints of neutrality. See also Prestin (2000: 168).

¹⁵With reference to the journalistic categories given in section 5.1, *soft news* belong to the group of feature articles. Compare with Prestin (2000: 171).

¹⁶The German language offers a forth important form, which is called *Glosse*. In Jucker (1992) I found a proper translation for *Glosse - commentary* (p. 43). Another one I discovered in *dict.leo.org* was *Glosse (polemischer Kommentar) - ironical comment*. This translation implies important characterization of the German term *Glosse*.

with context and different notions etc. - generally speaking, the comment helps to get an image of an event. In doing so, the commentator also expresses his opinion about the issue and tries to convince the reader, sometimes with the device of using colloquial language (c.f. Austermann 1990: 109ff.). Thereby it has to be mentioned that information is of secondary interest here. I want to quote Lüger (1995), who formulated the following case of newspaper commenting: “Je nach Anlaß, Thema (und Temperament des Autors) wird ein Kommentar auch einmal aufs Argumentieren verzichten und einfach geradeaus begeistert loben oder verärgert schimpfen.”(Lueger 1995: 135)

The editorial also has commenting features. However, in contrast to the comment, editorials are aimed at directly influencing the reader. Editorials do not only represent the opinion of one writer, but of the entire editorial staff of a paper. The topic does not necessarily have to be one of the day’s events, but contemporary issues make it easier for the writer to be effective (c.f. Austermann 1990: 109f.).

Columns often occur only once a week. Sometimes one person (also a politician or expert) writes a column over a longer period, sometimes editorial staff members take turns. Columnists often receive letters from readers who comment on their opinion or suggest other topics for interpretation. They sometimes use pseudonyms to make themselves more familiar to the readership. In columns description and commenting on a certain subject intermingle in a provocative way, so the writer involves a very personal notion (c.f. Austermann 1990: 110f.).

Common feature of all three kinds of opinion writing is to express a personal stance about a certain issue. In accordance with ironical statements, opinion articles often have the main purposes of criticism. The author searches for a current topic or public person to criticize or to expose something or someone to ridicule. The unrestricted style and structure of opinion article’s provide an appropriate medium for the use of irony.

After having subsumed the most essential journalistic categories, the initial question “Which kinds of newspaper texts is appropriate for the use of irony?” has again to be taken into consideration. *The* adequate place for irony seems hardly to exist, when we compare different writing styles. Although the matter-of-fact style of a news report is hardly qualified for an implication of language irony, the actual events in the report could still describe an ironical situation (see also 2.2.1). However, as opinion, feature and special articles are stylistically more open than *hard news*, it seems reasonable to assume

that there are more ironic aspects to find on these pages than on news pages that contain impartial, factual news coverage. Although during my research for this paper I only focused on a small part of British broadsheet variety, ironical aspects were mainly found on opinion pages. In the following I will not refer to *opinion writing* anymore, but will use the term *comment* (involving editorials, columns and comments) for reasons of brevity.

5.2.4 The Newspaper Comment and Satire

The expression of a writer's opinion in newspapers can be accomplished in various ways. In the previous chapters stylistic analysis was explicated with respect to linguistics. However primary this linguistic examination is in terms of the issue of this paper, a few rather literary terms can not be neglected when we talk about irony in newspapers. Comments sometimes use the same devices as satirical papers. Therefore, the task to determine whether we deal with a satire or an ironic comment, or a comment that contains satirical features can be difficult. The borders between the different concepts might sometimes be obscured. In the following lines I want to mention a few relevant aspects of satire.

The Oxford Dictionary provides the following definition for *satire*: "a way of criticizing a person, an idea or an institution in which you use humor to show their faults or weaknesses; a piece of writing that uses this type of criticism" (Oxford 2000: 1134). We do not only find satirical features in newspaper comments, but in all literary genres. According to Knörrich (1991) satire's essential device is irony (c.f. Knörrich 1991: 322). I have already elaborated irony's universal existence in the first chapters of this paper. Therefore it is no surprise that both, irony and satire, are to be found in all literary forms. Satire uses devices that are similar to the means of irony:

Sie schwelgt in Verschweigung, Verstellung, Verkehrung, Verkleidung, Verdrehung, Verschiebung, Verschlüsselung des eigentlich Gemeinten, ohne doch jemals das Vertrauen darauf zu verlieren, dass ihr Leser die Ironiesignale zu deuten versteht (Knörrich 1991: 322).

Next to similar devices, both concepts seem to have similar purposes. The satirist intends to unmask grievances, to skew and to ridicule his subject. As we know from the theoretical part of this paper, irony also often serves as a soft tool for criticism.

However obvious, there is no agreement about irony's relation to satire. D. C. Mücke described the concept of irony as being "[...] obscured by the frequent and close conjunction with satire and with such phenomena as the comic, the grotesque, the humorous and the absurd" (Muecke 1980: 5). He rejects the essential relationship of satire with irony because he sees it only related in practice as a relationship of "means to end" and "although irony is frequently found overlapping with the absurd or the comic it may also be found overlapping with the tragic" (Muecke 1980: 5).

Frye (1957) offers another distinctive feature of both terms: "The chief distinction between irony and satire is that satire is militant irony: its moral norms are relatively clear, and it assumes standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured" (Frye 1957: 223).

I do not intend to prove or disprove anyone's argument here. However contradictory the different notions might be, there are unmistakable common patterns of satire and irony - firstly, both's possible purpose of criticizing and secondly, the similar devices they use for the criticism.

To summarize, the following statement about a proper newspaper category for irony can be made: The comment's informal and partial style and language seems much more appropriate for the use of irony than the restrictions around news reports. Both exemplary comments in the next chapter will prove the suitability of opinion articles for an implication of irony.

Chapter 6

Analysis of Selected Newspaper Comments

In the first chapters I have elaborated various linguistic aspects and models to examine the phenomenon of irony. The previous chapter dealt with a few journalistic features and fundamentals. In contrast to many scholars who mainly use examples of everyday spoken communication, I will try to contextualize both issues by analyzing newspaper articles with regard to the element of irony. Thereby I hope to find answers to the following questions:

1. Are there particular language signals for irony in the articles?
2. Which of these ironical aspects does a reader perceive as such in a short written text at all?
3. If we find these signals, are they comparable with the aspects elaborated in the theoretical part of this paper?
4. Are there obvious preferred devices used in newspaper comments to imply irony?

Many of the ironical aspects in the chapters before dealt with verbal irony. The focal point is now to see if these aspects still function when it comes to encoding written irony. The difficulty to discover these signals lies in the character of a written text *per*

se. Here we can rarely identify the simple conventional “saying the opposite of what is meant” situation, not to mention irony instances that only work in the context of a dialogue.¹ However, it is impossible to exclude any of the previously mentioned features, since they could also appear in a comment in the form of a quotation.

According to Weinrich, irony signals that have to function in a written text have to be translated from spoken language into another adequate medium of expression first. The choice of words has to be so obvious that a reader can not but read the text with a certain ironic intonation. Weinrich calls this process “encoding and decoding of irony signals” (Weinrich 1966: 66f.). The analysis at hand tries to detect various devices that were applied to encode irony in a newspaper comment. Such signals are to be decoded by the readers, whereby German survey respondents will have greater difficulties than English native speakers.

D. C. Mücke, who mainly explored the field of irony in literature, has touched on the topic of recognizing irony markers in written text forms:

[In written texts] irony is adequately indicated by a contrasting extra-linguistic context, there need be neither conscious linguistic signals nor unconscious linguistic symptoms. Where the irony is consciously signalled through the content or the expression of the ironical text, or through both content and expression, stylo-statistical investigation might well reveal unconscious symptomatic or symbolic accompaniments (Muecke 1973: 42).

Such a “stylo-statistical investigation” will be in the center of the next chapters. There are irony signals that contribute to the reader’s attitude not to take the text’s issue literally, but to read between the lines and search for an alternative message. My presumption is that a written text provides more subtle forms of irony than average verbal communication does.

6.1 Methodology

To analyze specific ironic passages in a text, a methodology has to be determined first. After having investigated all different kinds of signals for a recognition of irony in the

¹Example: At a dinner party, Will is serving lettuce. Hilda, who is allergic to lettuce, initiates the following exchange. Hilda: “Is that lettuce?” Will: “Last time I checked.” The example is taken from Barbe (1995: 37).

first chapters of this paper, here we have to choose a method that allows us to get a better understanding of newspaper readers' perception of ironic aspects. To get an objective view of irony perception, the issue will be discussed with the device of a small survey. The complexity of the topic actually requires an extensive survey with many respondents of different ages and educational background. However, the extent of this paper only allows to confine the number to 25 test persons. Therefore the present survey rather serves as a sample to find out tendencies of irony recognition.

6.1.1 Test Persons

An adequate distribution of a questionnaire about the perception of ironical aspects in newspapers involved a few difficulties. Prerequisite is an advanced understanding of the English language. The ability to read between the lines and a proper understanding of humor might represent the highest levels of the process of language learning. Essential precondition for the success of a survey is the competence of the respondents to answer the questions.

The first group of respondents was made up of ten British English native speakers. Coincidentally all of them have graduated recently or still study at a university. Their academic background is not to be disregarded. I assume, the results of the survey might have looked different, when the test persons had been made up of people of different educational backgrounds.

The second group of survey respondents was represented by fifteen German students at the Universities of Chemnitz and Dresden. The Germans either study English language and/or had spent some time abroad in an English speaking country. Before I handed out the questionnaires, I emphasized, they would have to analyze two quite sophisticated newspaper comments with focus at ironical aspects. With their approval to take part in the survey I expected to ensure an adequate level of English language skills. To guarantee that the Germans' English skills are qualified enough to cope with this task before filling in the questionnaire was not possible. However, I expected their different English skills would probably be represented in the way they responded to the tasks, and thus give information about coherence of English language knowledge and irony understanding.

6.1.2 The Selected Newspaper Comments

I am very conscious that the selection of only two newspaper comments is not very representative for the application of a topic as broad as irony understanding. However, it seemed reasonable to expect of the test persons to read and analyze no more than two texts. Furthermore I have chosen the two articles consciously with respect to their variety of ironical features with reference to the theory discussed before. I finally decided for two opinion articles taken from September issues of 2005 of the *Guardian* and the *Times*.

Less viable than his gran

Zoe Williams

If Prince Harry is so normal then we have to ask why he gets such abnormal treatment

It's Prince Harry's birth-month; he's 21, you know. One time, when he was younger, he drank quite a lot, and his father made some noises about putting him in rehab. Now we're talking about it, I can't remember whether or not he did go to rehab, but I remember thinking it was the most ludicrous thing I'd ever heard, putting someone in rehab over a couple of Smirnoffices; you might just as well put someone in Broadmoor for killing a squirrel.

He once went to a fancy-dress party disguised as a Nazi. He thought this was funny; a lot of people called it controversial. I found it impossible to determine why it would be either funny or controversial. (Really, unless it's the pelt of a creature you care about, who could care less what aristos wear to parties?) I know that he regrets wearing the outfit sincerely, according to some interview he gave to a TV company, which wasn't the BBC, whom he snubbed with his semi-

nal coming-of-age message. He likes motorbikes, and has been photographed by Mario Testino with some grime on his face, looking like a young Marlon Brando, except in the respect of having any charisma, or beauty, or sex appeal. He used the word "arse", apropos of his time at Sandhurst. And, er, that's it.

Contrary to popular wisdom, there is a much more serious image crisis in the younger generation of this family than there is in the older. However much the Queen or Prince Charles might be accused of being "out of date", starchy, slightly ridiculous, overflood of pets, they can get away with it, since they belong to a reticent generation. The young ones, however, are required to be accessible yet special. Having no special talents, their speciality must be something basically impossible – a classless version of aristocratic superiority; a faith-free version of divine right.

They have been hailed as the great white hope, this generation, free from the tang of the seamy love hexagons that beset their parents, bringing with them a new informality and a new approachability, but it's those very qualities that make them even less viable than their forebears. Make your minds up, chums – do you want to be just like one of us, mucking in with your Sandhurst minions and swearing with the best of them, or do you want to be a breed apart? And if you're not the second, on what possible grounds would we laud you as the first?

Politely aware of this tricky business, our media construct certain fictions around these people to keep them afloat. The first is that they are beautiful. Everyone from Zara Phillips through Princess Beatrice to Prince William has been credited with some physical loveliness, on the basis that beauty is a perfectly comprehensible, modern thing to be celebrated for. Of course, it's wholly bogus; none of them is ever going to put the squeeze on Kate Moss. The second fiction is that their lifestyles are rarefied and unusual for reasons beyond the fact that they spend a lot of money on them. Again, patently bogus. The third is that they occupy an indispensable place in the nation's culture; in fact it is this lie of indispensability that has screwed them, since if they had been allowed to fade quietly into the background, slowly replacing "engagements" with actual "jobs", and "apartments" with actual "flats", they would be well on the way to moneyed normality by now.

No such luck for young Harry, who has also exclusively revealed that he "likes to have a laugh". Our expectations of this family are not real, but that won't stop us making a fuss when they let us down; they couldn't fulfil them even if they were real. Nobody, come to that, is sure what these expectations are, but we'll know, next time a prince goes to a party dressed as a member of the Ba'ath party, what they aren't. It's a thorny, inconsistent business that seems to preclude almost all kinds of laugh. Would it not be easier just to pay tax?

zoe_williams@nthworld.com

Figure 6.1: Comment in Part A from the *Guardian* 20-09-05 p. 25

The article in part A of the questionnaire "Less viable than his gran" is taken from the *Guardian* edition of the 20th September 2005 (The *Guardian* 2005: 20). I have chosen

this comment because it deals with a famous newspaper topic in a special way - the reputation of the British royal family. Furthermore I appreciated the comment's entertaining value that makes it much more accessible for an interpretation of the test persons.



Figure 6.2: Comment in part B from the *Times* 24-09-05 p. 23

The article in part B of the questionnaire "Service Non Compris" is taken from the *Times* edition of the 24th September 2005 (The Times 2005: 23). It deals with the decline of tipping in restaurants since the introduction of chip-and-pin cards. The metaphors, word plays and the language variety (French, Yiddish) in the text offer incentives for an ambiguous interpretation. The headline of the comment "Service Non Compris" already provides material for equivocation. The actual translation from French "a tip is not included" contrasts with a misinterpreted translation "you have not understood the service". The subtlety of the headline's ambiguity reflects the issue of the comment - the guest's hopeless situation in not knowing how to add a tip in times of technical progress.

Both comments include quite complicated vocabulary. The commentators strongly violate Carter's (1988) demand that news articles should use as core a vocabulary as possible (see also chapter 5.2) by using rather non-core informal words such as *snub*, *arse*, *chums* and *tongue-tied* in contrast to very formal vocabulary such as *aristocratic superiority* or *maitre d'*. At the same time, both comments contain various stylistic devices, for example metaphors (*the great white hope*, *hovering*, *to clutch a control module*), oxymoron (*fresh, homemade supermarket soup*), colloquial language (*and*, *er*, *that's it*, *chums*, *to make a fuss*) and rhetorical questioning (*Would it not be easier just to pay tax?*), just to name

the most obvious devices. However, we do not deal with news, but with opinion articles here. Thus the use of distinct vocabulary and stylistic devices is not only accepted, but rather required. We will see in the analysis chapter how far these means contribute to an ironical attitude and if they are recognized by the readers.

6.1.3 The Questionnaire...

The basic task for the test persons was to read two chosen newspaper comments carefully. The reading requires a certain amount of time and attention, thus the difficulty of asking for ironical traits lies in the simplicity of formulating questions. Although we take irony for granted in everyday life, I am very aware of the fact that hardly anyone of the test persons has ever paid any closer attention to the topic. With reference to E. Babbie's words, "often you become so deeply involved in the topic under examination, that opinions and perspectives are clear to you but not to your respondents" (Babbie 1998: 148), I decided to confront the test persons with only simple tasks.

The exact questioning for irony signals represented a few difficulties. Since there were 10 English native speakers and 15 German native speakers with advanced English language skills, I decided not only to distinguish the evaluation of the results, but to confront the test persons of different nationalities with individual tasks.

6.1.3.1 ... of a Little Pre-test

I decided to pre-test² the questionnaire with support of three of my fellow students, because of mainly two reasons. Firstly, I feared that the tasks for the test persons would be difficult to understand, if not ambiguous. I handed out a questionnaire with the primary task to underline 10 ironic text passages in the *Guardian* comment "Less viable than his gran". In a second task I asked the respondents to rank their choice with respect to the obviousness of the chosen passages. They had to rank beginning with 1 (i.e. the text passage is highly ironic, irony is easy to recognize³ up to 10 (i.e. the text passage implies

²Sudman and Bradburn also use the expression *pilot-test*. See also in Sudman and Bradburn (1982: 283 ff.).

³Thereby the focal point was the *recognizability* of irony, since it is taken for granted that there are also highly ironic instances that are difficult to get. While filling in the questionnaire, the respondents comprehended the scale correctly. See also subchapter 6.3.1.

some irony, but it is hard to recognize), with each number only named once.

The first task of underlining text passages was mastered easily by the three test persons. However, the ranking was misunderstood by all of them in a way, that they did not distribute the numbers 1 - 10 correctly, but picked only a few numbers to describe how ironical they considered the text passages. Therefore I had to take another way of ranking into consideration.

A second reason for a pre-test was to give information on how long it takes to fill in the questionnaire. The cover sheet of the survey provided instructions for the test persons what to do and how long it might probably take to respond to the tasks. Therefore they tested out how long it took for someone who is dealing with an unknown newspaper comment for the first time and might probably need a second or third reading. They ended up with an average time of 20 minutes. So I supposed the analysis of the *Times* comment would not require such a long time, because it is shorter. Hence I determined 30 minutes as the total time required for responding to the tasks. I did not pre-test the questionnaire with English test-persons, because I considered the survey being much easier for a native speaker.

A pre-test also often serves to provide information on whether the questionnaire is ordered correctly (c.f. Sudman & Bradburn 1982: 285). In part A) and B) the respondents had to examine two texts carefully. Thus there was hardly a useful alternative to arrange tasks differently. In part C) I asked for an individual definition of irony. To ask the respondents for their notion of irony was consciously determined *after* A) and B), because they had had time before to make up their minds while examining the comments.

The final structure and content of the two different questionnaires are explained in the following two sections.

6.1.3.2 ... for the English Native Speakers

I expected the English native speakers to identify more, maybe different ironical aspects than the German native speakers. They are used to their newspapers' style of writing and share an equal sense of irony. Additionally, they are more familiar with controversial issues in their home country and hence have a different background knowledge than Germans. All these aspects have to be taken into consideration when results of the ques-

tionnaires are analyzed. Thus I decided to simply ask them to highlight as many irony signals as possible, first in part A) in the *Guardian* comment “Less viable than his gran”, then in part B) the *Times*’ “Service Non Compris”. Thereby I was conscious of the arbitrariness of choices and the different length of markings. However, to hint at text passages for interpretation or to name linguistic devices for indication of ironical aspects before, would have influenced the individual choices of the respondents to a certain degree. From the markings I expected to get clues about the following aspects:

- How many of the irony devices are recognized as such at all?
- Which of these tools are most obvious, which to only a few of the test persons?
- Is it possible to determine kinds of irony signals that can be considered as being easy to detect?
- Is it possible to relate the highlighted text passages with theoretical aspects elaborated in the first half of this paper?

After having highlighted individual markers in the two texts of interests, the test persons were asked to try to formulate a definition of irony. I decided for open-ended questioning⁴ here. To provide answers to chose from would have influenced their personal approach to a certain degree. Furthermore the tasks of the previous assignments, the reading and determining of ironical text passages, had already contributed to make up their minds. Thus I hope to get an image of reasons why they have decided for text passages in the task before. Maybe a clear distinction between spoken and written irony becomes visible. Additionally in section D) I asked for basic demographic information of the test persons to find out probable parallels between varying choices and individual backgrounds. I asked for gender, age, nationality and educational background.

6.1.3.3 ... for the German Native Speakers

The general form of the questionnaires for the German native speakers was basically similar to the survey for the English. In Part A they also had to work through the newspaper

⁴Open-ended questions: The respondent is asked to provide his or her own answer to the question. Closed-ended questions: The respondent is asked to select an answer from among a list provided by the researcher. See also in Babbie (1998: 148).

article taken out of the *Guardian* first. Additionally I provided a little vocabulary part below the articles for the German test persons. In doing so I picked a little sample of words that I either considered being difficult or unknown for German readers, or that required background knowledge for a proper understanding. For example I defined the term *Broadmoor* in the text as being *a mental hospital for criminals* since I assumed this name is not known to many Germans. The vocabulary served as a little support for a proper text understanding.⁵

In contrast to the English test persons, they were than asked to highlight not all possible, but at least 10 of the irony signals they could find. With having to find a minimum number of text passages they would have to look more carefully than without having a fixed number. After that they had to rate their choices according to the following scale:

- 1 - The text passage is highly ironic. The irony is easy to recognize.
- 2 - The text passage is ironic, but not as obviously as number 1.
- 3 - The text passage implies some irony, but it is hard to recognize.
I am not sure, if the passage really concerns irony or just a similar language phenomenon.

Figure 6.3: Scale of choice of the questionnaire

Thus I intended to get a picture of the following perceptive aspects:

- Which kind of irony is recognizable as such by a non-native speaker at all?
- Which of these tools are most obvious, which provide difficulties for a German reader?
- How do similarities and differences between both nationalities look like?

In Part B the same scale had to be applied for rating text passages highlighted in the newspaper comment taken out of the *Times*. Just as in the questionnaires for the English speakers the test persons had to define irony afterwards and than give some information about themselves. Additionally to gender, age, nationality and educational background I

⁵The translations were taken from the online-dictionaries dict.leo.org and dict.tu-chemnitz.de. The definitions were taken from en.wikipedia.org.

provided a gap to fill in how much time they had spent in an English speaking country (including holiday trips and semesters or work abroad). The total time the test persons had spent abroad might probably be an essential factor for the decisions they had made when they had to recognize the signals in the text.

The questionnaires for the English and the German respondents is to be found in the appendix of this paper.

6.2 Theory behind Ironic Text Passages

In this chapter I want to arrive at conclusions that connect approaches from the theoretical part with individual text passages of the two newspaper comments. The following array of text passages is a very detailed and purely subjective interpretation with respect to ironical implications and irony signals. It will serve as theoretical basis for the evaluation of the survey data. The focal point was to find text passages that first of all have a certain ironic implication and secondly are allegeable with one of the theoretical attempts to explain irony linguistically. Thereby I am wary of the validity of the chosen text passages and the corresponding interpretation. To completely avoid subjectivity when it comes to approaches to irony is hardly possible. However, I expect similar results from the questionnaires for interpretation.

The texts for the questionnaires were consciously chosen according to their distinctiveness of involving irony including a broad variety of obviously ironical text passages. This variety is hard to restrict to only a few text passages. Therefore the following array provides a very complex overview about possible passages.

Words in bold letters are considered as irony signals. Sometimes only one or a few words were irony signals, sometimes the entire sentence had a certain ironic undertone in the context of the issue. Since there is always an attitude and a subliminal metamessage behind the literal meaning, I tried to express the author's implication whenever possible. This non-ironical implication often provided another useful perspective to figure out theoretical aspects behind the ironical text passage.

In image 4.1 at the end of chapter 4 connections and overlaps of some individual approaches have been visualized. Hence a few of the subsequent text passages are not clearly classifiable (e.g. the similarity of Willer and Groeben's intentional approach with respect to signal-functional semantic relation and Clyne's use of lexemes of a certain dialect). In such cases both approaches are named.

6.2.1 *The Guardian*: “Less viable than his gran”

TEXT PASSAGE 1: Less **viable** than his **gran**:

Implication: The younger royal generation is less suitable than the older generation for a

representation of the family's image

⇒ The headline states a stylistic contrast between highbrow-word *viable* and slang *gran*. Thus the irony refers to Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach considering the signal-functional relation, and Clyne's use of lexemes of a certain dialect respectively.

TEXT PASSAGE 2: If Prince Harry is so **normal** then we have to ask why he gets such **abnormal** treatment:

Implication: However normal Prince Harry tries to be, his treatment is far from standard and norm.

⇒ The hyperbolic opposites *normal-abnormal* have an equal sound structure. *Abnormal* is much too strong, but it is part of the wordplay. Thus the irony refers to Willer/Groeben's phonologic-graphemic approach, *normal-abnormal* is a rule-intensifying deviation.

TEXT PASSAGE 3: It's Prince Harry's birth-month; he's 21, **you know**.

Implication: (...), but who cares?

⇒ (*..., you know?*) in the form of a question tag has an amusing undertone in the most cases, thus the irony refers to Barbe's common irony. The colloquial phrase (*..., you know?*) as stylistic contrast to the rest also exemplifies Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach

TEXT PASSAGE 4: **One time**, when he was younger, he drank **quite a lot**, and his father **made some noises** about putting him in rehab.

Implication: When Harry was younger, he did, what every teenager does, he got drunk a few times. Therefore, his father announced to put him in rehab, which is ridiculous.

⇒ *One time*, (...) is another case of Barbe's common irony. The style contrast of colloquial and average language in the entire sentence refers to Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach according to the signal-functional semantic relation.

TEXT PASSAGE 5: (...) but I remember thinking it was the most ludicrous thing I'd ever heard, **putting someone in rehab over a couple of Smirnoff Ices; you might just as well put someone in Broadmoor for killing a squirrel**.

Implication: (...) is unbelievable absurd.

⇒ The hyperbolic intensification of what was said before in the form of an absurd comparison underlines its ludicrousness. The reader doubts the literal meaning because of his general knowledge. He knows nobody will end up in jail for killing a little animal. The

reader's disbelief is based on contradictions of possible issues (absurd statement, extreme exaggeration). Thus the irony refers to Willer/ Groeben's speech-act approach and Beals' ironical use of expressions for their semantic content alternatively.

TEXT PASSAGE 6: **He thought this was funny; a lot of people found it controversial.**

⇒ The sentence's equal syntactical structure emphasizes Harry's dull behavior. The irony refers to Willer/ Groeben's phonologic-graphemic approach based on a rule-intensifying deviation in the form of an equal sound structure.

TEXT PASSAGE 7: Really, unless it's **the pelt of a creature** you care about, **who could care less what aristos wear to parties?**

Implication: Really, unless it's the outfit of someone you know, it is totally unimportant what the royals wear to parties.

⇒ The phrase *pelt of a creature* is a very strong metaphor with reference to Barbe's metaphorical overuse. The main clause appears in the shape of a rhetorical question, thus exemplifies Clyne's approach.

TEXT PASSAGE 8: I know that he regrets wearing the outfit **sincerely**, according to **some interview** he gave to a **TV company, which wasn't the BBC, whom he snubbed with his seminal coming-of-age message.**

Implication: He had refused to talk to the BBC, but claimed in an interview with a commercial TV-channel (which was SKY) to regret having worn the costume honestly.

⇒ In the context of the entire text the main clause implies that the authoress wants to express her attitude towards Harry's statement, which is his incredibility. This attitude is reinforced by the adverb *sincerely* (irony signal). The reader doubts the literal meaning of the sentence because of his knowledge of the writer's attitude (Willer/ Groeben's speech act approach). The subordinate clauses are overfull of transcriptions and indirectness. (...) *a TV company, which wasn't the BBC* states the negation of the opposite of what is actually implied. The content of the subordinate clauses are of secondary interest, if not superfluous. Thereby Willer/ Groeben's violation of the maxim of relevance could be involved. The *seminal coming-of-age message* involves exaggerated figurative language, with reference to Barbe's metaphorical overuse.

TEXT PASSAGE 9: **He likes motorbikes**, and has been photographed by Mario Testino with some grime on his face, **looking like a young Marlon Brando, except in the respect of having any charisma, or beauty, or sex appeal.**

Implication: He enjoys riding his motorbike. He was once photographed with some grime on his face and trying to take up a very masculine pose, but rather looked embarrassing.

⇒ Childlike *he likes motorbike (...)* states a contrast to the style of the rest of the sentence and exemplifies Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach concerning the signal-functional semantic relation. In the rest of the sentence Grice's maxim of quality is violated: a wrong simile is stated (he looks neither masculine nor like Marlon Brando), that is disapproved later. The subsequent correction emphasizes the situational ludicrousness of Harry's pseudo-masculine posing.

TEXT PASSAGE 10: **And, er, that's it.**

Implication: These were actually all irrelevant 'news' about him in the media.

⇒ The sentence's colloquial, rather spoken style contrasts the rest of the text (Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach with regard to the signal-functional semantic relation).

TEXT PASSAGE 11: **Contrary to popular wisdom,(...)**

Implication: In contrast to what is known in public, but actually not of importance (...)

⇒ *Contrary to popular wisdom (...)* is in the most cases used to imply insincerity, thus Barbe's common irony is employed.

TEXT PASSAGE 12: However much the Queen or Prince Charles might be accused of being **“out of date”, starchy, slightly ridiculous, overfond of pets**, they can get away with it, since they belong to a reticent generation.

Implication: However much the Queen or Prince Charles might be represented in the media as being cute, being out of fashion in the way we are fond of our grandparents, people will go on loving them, because that is exactly how we are used to seeing them.

⇒ Barbe's metaphorical (hyperbolic) overuse is employed. The author is fed up with the royal's reputation of being cute.

TEXT PASSAGE 13: Having no special talents, their speciality must be **something basically impossible - a classless version of aristocratic superiority; a faith-free version of divine right.**

⇒ The sentence employs two examples of contradictions that were indicated as impossible before. The sentence exemplifies Willer/ Groeben's speech act approach, contradictions are based on possible relations of issues (absurd causal relations, senseless reasons, etc.). Thereby the author exposes and ridicules what the royal family really tries to put

into practice.

TEXT PASSAGE 14: They have been hailed as **the great white hope**, this generation, **free from the tang of the seamy love hexagons that beset their parents**, bringing with them a new informality and a new approachability, but it's **those very qualities** that make them even less viable than their forebears.

⇒ The sentence is introduced with metaphorical overuse (Barbe). The figurative style (highlighted in bold letters) is obviously hyperbolic. Thereby a few intertextual devices are employed. 1.) *The great white hope* is the title of a movie in the 1970s dealing with racism and hatred of the mid-century white America.⁶ Furthermore *white* has several connotations. It can be associated with an Arian racist scenario (reminding of Harry's costume) as well as with purity (of the younger royal generation). *White* exemplifies Clyne's ironical use of polysemy (and Willer/ Groeben's violation of the maxim of modality.) 2.) A second intertextual device are the *love hexagons* which on one hand is the title of a novel by William Sutcliffe⁷, and on the other plays with the popular expression "love triangle"⁸. Here the writer might refer to the restricted number of members of the British aristocratic gender. Thus they are more or less forced to "mate with each other".

A last irony signal in the sentence is the exaggerated *those very qualities*. The choice of words that are actually much too strong, compared to what the younger royals actually have to offer, violates Grice's maxim of quality.

TEXT PASSAGE 15: Make your minds up, **chums** - do you want to be just like one of us, **mucking in** with your *Sandhurst minions* and *swearing with* the best of them, or do you want to be a **breed apart**?

⇒ The writer uses stylistic contrasts by means of various different sociolects and dialects: *chums* - posh for *pals*, *mates*; *mucking in* and *swearing with* - colloquial words in con-

⁶"A black champion boxer and his white female companion struggle to survive while the white boxing establishment looks for ways to knock him down." For more information see <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0065797/>>.

⁷"The Love Hexagons" (2000) is about six young Londoners who have difficulty committing themselves to a relationship. For more information see <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WilliamSutcliffe>>.

⁸"A love triangle refers to a romantic relationship involving three people. [...] The term almost always implies that the arrangement is unsuitable to one or more of the people involved.[...] Love triangles are an extremely popular theme in entertainment, especially romantic fiction, including opera, romance novels, soap operas, romantic comedies, Japanese comics and popular music." For more information see <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lovetriangle>>.

trast to *Sandhurst minions* which is a rather old-fashioned expression (Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach referring to the signal-functional semantic relation and Clyne's use of lexemes of a certain dialect). *Sandhurst minions* also implies patronizing and puts the academy mates of the royals on a lower level as well as *breed apart* that makes them stand out from the crowd. The term has a connotation with animals and reminds of the expression "alpha male". The entire sentence appears in the form of a rhetorical question (Clyne). Thus the author underlines the requirement for a decision between a conservative or an average lifestyle of the royals.

TEXT PASSAGE 16: Politely aware of this **tricksy business**, (...)

⇒ The phrase *tricksy business* plays with the ordinary expression *tricky business* and arouses the reader's confusion (Willer/ Groeben's phonologic-graphemic approach: rule-intensifying deviation/ wordplay). Since the letter *s* was added to the word *tricky*, the text passage implies a rule-breaking deviation (Willer/ Groeben's phonologic-graphemic approach) at the same time.

TEXT PASSAGE 17: Everyone from Zara Phillips through Princess Beatrice to Prince William has been credited with some physical loveliness, **on the basis that beauty is a perfectly comprehensible, modern thing to be celebrated for.**

Implication: They are actually just attractive on an average level, but in our times beauty always sells.

⇒ The second part of the sentence implies pure sarcasm, that expresses the authoress' criticism of the media's superficiality. The theoretical background hidden in her choice of words is Beals' ironic use of expressions for their semantic content with the reinforcing expression *a perfectly comprehensible* (also implied in Willer/ Groeben's speech act approach - contradictions based on possible relations of issues/ senseless reasons).

TEXT PASSAGE 18: (...); none of them is ever going **to put the squeeze on** Kate Moss.

Implication:(...); none of them can really keep up with the current ideal of beauty.

⇒ *To put the squeeze on someone* is a very figurative metaphor with reference to Barbe.

TEXT PASSAGE 19: (...) slowly **replacing "engagements" with actual "jobs", and "apartments" with actual "flats"**, they would be well on the way to moneyed normality by now.

Implication: (...) replacing their Aristocratic life style and obligations with a rather average life style (...)

⇒ Essential facts in the sentence are replaced by figurative language. This metaphorical (over)use (Barbe) ridicules again their superior posh life style.

TEXT PASSAGE 20: No such luck for young Harry, who has also **exclusively revealed** that he **“likes to have a laugh”**.

Implication: (...) who stated in an interview, that he has such average insignificant needs as having fun.

⇒ The reader knows that there is no need to *exclusively* (irony signal) reveal something unspectacular. The reader doubts the literal meaning because of his general knowledge of preconditions *for unveiling something exclusively*. The contradiction appears as a consequence of general norms and values which contrasts the literal meaning (Willer/ Groeben’s speech act approach). The direct quotation reminds of Sperber and Wilson’s echoic mentioning theory. Here the echo refers to a previous statement and the author expresses her opinion about it.

TEXT PASSAGE 21: Nobody, come to that, is sure what these expectations are, but we’ll know, next time **a prince goes to a party dressed as a member of the Ba’ath party**, what they aren’t.

Implication: (...) he does something immoral or political incorrect again, (...)

⇒ The reader knows that the royals would not disguise themselves as a member of a radical Arab party, especially not after the hype concerning Harry’s last costume. The irony refers to Willer/ Groeben’s speech act approach, the reader doubts the literal meaning because of his general knowledge about possible issues (absurd statement).

TEXT PASSAGE 22: It’s a thorny, inconsistent business, that seems to **preclude almost all kinds of laugh**.

⇒ The reader knows the rumors about the royals are quite funny sometimes, because there is so much about them to make fun of. The reader doubts the literal meaning because of his general knowledge about the media’s efforts to make the nation laugh about the royal family. The contradiction is based on general knowledge about possible issues (Willer/ Groeben’s speech act approach). Also, the text passage in bold letters reminds of Harry’s statement in text passage 20 (Sperber and Wilson’s echoic mentioning theory).

TEXT PASSAGE 23: **Would it not be easier just to pay tax?**

Implication: It seems to be much easier to be an average non-royal.

⇒ The author's final statement appears in the form of a rhetorical question (Clyne). The irony lies in the fact that there is actually no choice for the younger royal generation because they have to cope with their special status and can hardly escape their social origin. To employ a rhetorical question as stylistic device in the final sentence summarizes the entire issue and also provides material for the reader to go on thinking about the status and life style of the royals and of himself.

An implemented profound examination of the *Guardian's* newspaper comment with respect to irony-implicit text passages seems to involve the majority of sentences of the entire text. Here I want to introduce the term *irony density* that defines the relation between the total number of words of the text and the words transferring irony. An exact determination of irony density highly depends on individual subjectivity. There are for sure alternative interpretations in the search of signals for irony with respect to word choice, style and implications of individual text passages. Therefore it is hardly possible to give an exact number. The density of the text passages recognized by the test persons is visualized in a later subchapter (6.3) instead.

In total there are 18 different irony devices applied in "Less viable than his gran". To draw a conclusion of ironical implications in the comment, the authoress favored to transfer an ironical attitude primarily based on three theoretical approaches:

- style shifts of various kinds (child-like, posh, colloquial vocabulary, etc.): Willer and Groeben's intentional approach concerning the signal-functional semantic relation (7 instances) and Clyne's use of lexemes of a certain dialect (3 instances) respectively,
- contradictions with respect to sentence content: Willer and Groeben's speech-act approach (6 instances in total),
- the use of metaphors: Barbe's irony and metaphor (5 instances in total).

Several further irony devices were applied in the text with a lower frequency (one to three times). A detailed survey of which approaches were used how often is given later. The evaluation of the questionnaires will provide information about the recognition of the previously mentioned text passages of the individual test persons.

6.2.2 *The Times*: “Service non compris”

TEXT PASSAGE 1: **They may guard restaurants against fraud, but they don’t bring smiles to the staff.**

⇒ Both subsets have the same syntactical structure. This equal sound structure introduces the ironical undertone of the entire text. An equal sound structure was mentioned in Willer/ Groeben’s phonologic-graphemic approach as a linguistic device of rule-intensifying deviation.

TEXT PASSAGE 2: The problem is not **an outbreak of surely service** or a sudden rise in prices - these are staples of **British cuisine** as constant as **duck a l’orange** and **fresh, homemade supermarket soup.**

⇒ The figurative language in *an outbreak of surly service* is too strong to be taken seriously by the reader (Barbe). There is nothing like British cuisine, therefore the commentator names a foreign meal and expensive ready meal as well from the supermarket as examples. Hence *British cuisine* and *fresh homemade supermarket soup* are both oxymorons, *duck a l’orange* is again from restaurant sociolect (Clyne’s use of certain lexemes and Willer/ Groeben’s intentional approach with reference to symptom-functional semantic relation). The entire subordinate clause is a contradiction based on general knowledge about possible relations of issues (Willer/ Groeben’s speech act approach).

TEXT PASSAGE 3: The fall in largesse comes from an ignorance of etiquette by the dinner, **technophobia** and a **British awkwardness by the hovering, tongue-tied staff.**

Implication: (...) the guest’s uncertainty of handling unknown technical instruments properly, and the typical clumsy and introverted manners of stereotypical British restaurant staff.

⇒ The hyperbolic use of the neologism *technophobia* is referable to Willer/ Groeben’s rule-braking deviation within their phonologic-graphemic approach. The *hovering, tongue-tied staff* is very metaphorical, the metaphors underline the writer’s ironical intent (Barbe).

TEXT PASSAGE 4: In the old days, after **cryptic scribbling in the sky** to your waiter across the room, the bill would arrive, **nestling in a folder and awaiting the inclusion of plastic.**

Implication: In the old days, guests simply called for the bill via raising hands. Then the

waiter came with the bill in a folder and simply took your credit card to the cash-box.

⇒ The text passages in bold letters involve exaggerated figurative language, thus again Barbe's metaphorical overuse is applied. This overuse is especially emphasized by a personification of the *bill* in *nestling in a folder and awaiting the inclusion of plastic*.

TEXT PASSAGE 5: Now, your server arrives **clutching a control module as though he is about to land a model plane on your plate**, and invites you to type in a code.

Implication: (...) with a very modern technical apparatus, presses a few buttons in a very important, pompous way and invites you to type in your code.

⇒ The text passages in bold letters also involve exaggerated figurative language (hyperbolic comparison), thus again Barbe's metaphorical overuse is applied.

TEXT PASSAGE 6: **Can you type that in also and hit the right triangle, or should that be a square? Will the machine empty your account? Can you write it on the paper spewing from the innards?**

Implication: What comes next is the guest's hopelessness not to know how to add a tip. He struggles between tipping in an extra amount or simply writing it on a paper. In any case he is afraid of doing something wrong.

⇒ The three sentences employ two devices for an ironic implication. In the first place Clyne's rhetorical questioning (emphasizing the guest's desperation), and secondly Willer/ Groeben's speech act approach: the addressee doubts the literal meaning because of his general knowledge (absurd statements). Also, *spewing from the innards* is again hyperbolic figurative language with reference to Barbe's metaphorical overuse.

TEXT PASSAGE 7: A practised **maitre'd** would "**ahem**" discreetly and indicate, **with the mere flick of a gold-topped pen**, the blank space on the bill.

Implication: A professional waiter would discreetly clear his throat and hint at the blank space on the bill.

⇒ The theoretical device for an ironic implication is Clyne's use of lexemes of a certain dialect in *maitre'd*, here again the restaurant sociolect (also Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach, with reference to the symptom-functional semantic relation - author uses special (restaurant) vocabulary). This is especially contrasted with the subsequent onomatopoeic "ahem". The *mere flick of a gold-topped pen* is again hyperbolic figurative language with reference to Barbe's metaphorical overuse.

TEXT PASSAGE 8: He might murmur something about "**service non compris**", **even if**

you thought it meant you hadn't understood the service.

Implication: He might murmur something in a different language not knowing himself how to call your attention to the new devices to add on a tip.

⇒ The theoretical device for an ironic implication is Clyne's use of lexemes of a certain dialect, here again higher restaurant sociolect (Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach, with reference to the symptom-functional semantic relation describes a similar irony signal). At the same time the phrase implies ambiguity, the proper translation "a tip is not included" in contrast to a mistaken interpretation "you did not understand the service". The irony signal involved here refers to Willer/ Groeben's violation of the maxim of modality (Avoid ambiguity!). In contrast to the headline of the article, the irony is not so subtly hidden here, because the writer provides some explanation for the ambiguity of "*service non compris*" afterwards.

TEXT PASSAGE 9: But **less polished underlings** should look to California for **chutzpah** hints.

Implication: Rather brisk and impolite waiters would react (on your doubts) with impertinence.

⇒ The text passage *less polished underlings* is hyperbolic figurative language with reference to Barbe's metaphorical overuse. It may also function to highlight the ironical intent. *Chutzpah* is Yiddish for *unbelievable gall, insolence, audacity*⁹. Although the writer refers to California afterwards, he uses a Yiddish phrase. This contrasting can be brought into connection with Clyne's use of lexemes of a certain dialect and Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach respectively (signal-functional semantic relation).

TEXT PASSAGE 10: "I hope you enjoyed the service." (...) "Can I change that note for you?" (...) "Shall I add on a tip?" (...) "We've programmed these new machines to take care of the service charge."

⇒ With respect to Willer and Groeben's speech act approach the four sentences constitute a contrast to what is known as discreet politeness in Britain. Such statements of the restaurant staff represent contradictions as a consequence of general values and norms and would in reality be understood as audacity.

TEXT PASSAGE 11: **That should do it.**

Implication: Even in the case we find this rude, we would at least know what to do.

⁹See also <<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=chutzpah>> for further information.

⇒ Willer/ Groeben's intentional approach (signal-functional semantic relation) is applied here. The commentator uses colloquial style to finish a non-colloquial text.

Due to its brevity, the comment of the *Times* makes use of less theoretical approaches on irony (12 in total) than the article taken from the *Guardian*. Which devices were used how often in which comment is listed in detail in table 6.1 in the following.

Of the 12 irony devices in total again three stand out:

- the use of metaphors: Barbe's irony and metaphor (8 instances in total);
- contradictions with respect to sentence content: Willer and Groeben's speech-act approach (6 instances in total);
- style shifts of various kinds (colloquial, foreign and restaurant vocabulary): Clyne's use of lexemes of a certain dialect (4 instances) and Willer and Groeben's intentional approach concerning the signal-functional semantic relation (2 instances) respectively.

Several further irony devices were applied in the text with a lower frequency (one to three times). The irony density is similar to the previous newspaper comment and will be visualized later.

6.2.3 A Brief Conclusion

In total, twenty different theoretical aspects were recognized in both articles. Since I will have to work with theory and application at the same time in the following, a system of abbreviations for the theories of interest was developed. Table 6.1 is a survey of the various theoretic aspects found in the texts plus corresponding abbreviations that will substitute the long version in the following for reasons of brevity. The last three columns indicate the frequencies of the theoretical backgrounds of the individual text passages in Text A's "Less viable than his gran" and Text B's "Service non compris", with the total number in the column at the very right.

Apart from Grice's violation of the maxim of quality and Sperber and Wilson's echoic mentioning theory, the elaborated interpretation rather involve semantic than pragmatic approaches to irony. There are three groups that stand out from the others, because they appear most frequently: Willer/ Groeben's intentional-approach (12 in total), Willer/ Groeben's speech-act approach (9 in total) and Barbe's ironical use of metaphors (13 in total).

As mentioned before, there might be some scope for alternative references to theory and completion of the chosen text passages. However, the evaluation of the survey will show how far individual interpretations differ from my examination.

Name	Theoretical approach			Abbreviation	Text A	Text B	Total
Willer and Groeben	Intentional approach	signal-functional semantic relation		W.Gr.-Int.-a	7	2	9
		symptom-functional semantic relation		W.Gr.-Int.-b.	0	3	3
	Phonologic-graphemic approach	rule-intensifying deviation	equal sound structure	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-a	1	1	2
			word play	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-b	2	0	2
		rule-breaking deviation	phoneme is added	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-break.-a	1	0	1
			neologism	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-break.-b	0	1	1
	Speech-act-approach	contradictions of possible (absurd statements, extreme exaggerations,...)		W.Gr.-Speech.-a.	3	3	3
		contradictions based on possible relations of issues (absurd causal relations, senseless reasons,...)		W.Gr.-Speech.-b	1	2	3
		contradictions as a consequence of general values and norms		W.Gr.-Speech.-c	2	1	3
	Approach of Conversational maxims	violation of maxim of relevance		W.Gr.- Maxim.-relev.	1	0	1
violation of maxim of modality			W.Gr.-Maxim.-mod.	1	1	2	
Michael Clyne	Use of lexemes of a certain dialect		Clyne-dialect	3	4	7	
	Rhetorical questioning		Clyne-question	3	3	6	
	Polysemy		Clyne-polysemy	1	0	1	
Katharina Barbe	Common irony		Barbe-common	3	0	3	
	Irony and metaphor	metaphorical overuse		Barbe-metaphor-a	3	7	10
		a metaphor serves to highlight the ludicrous falsity of a statement		Barbe-metaphor-b	2	1	3
Katharina Beals	Ironical use of expressions for their semantic content			Beals-content	2	0	2
Grice	Violation of the maxim of quality			Grice-quality	2	0	2
Sperber and Wilson	Echoic-mention. theory			Sp.W.- Echo	2	0	2

Table 6.1: Caption and frequencies of applied theoretical approaches

6.3 Evaluation of Survey Results

A full version of text passages plus corresponding theoretical approaches was given in the previous chapter. The evaluation of the questionnaires for the Germans and the British test persons confirmed the previously mentioned assumption - as expected, the highlighted passages of the questionnaires were not much different from the interpretation referring to the theoretical analysis in chapter 6.2. All previously mentioned text passages were also highlighted by at least one of the test persons. Tables 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 show the frequencies of respondents who underlined the text passages of interest in the newspaper articles. The data does not appear in the order of the single passages in the texts, but in the order of frequencies. That means, the irony signal, that was chosen by most of the respondents (22) is in the first line of the table and the text passage recognized only ones is found at the end of the table. Whenever a sentence contained more than only one ironical feature, the sentence was split up and partitioned in several lines for reasons of clarity. Thus the numbers before the text passages correspond with the numbers distributed in chapter 6.2, whereas the letters behind the numbers refer to one irony signal of several within one text passage. Irony signaling words in the individual text passages are emphasized in bold letters in the same way as it was accomplished in chapter 6.2. The theoretical background was listed in the column behind the text passages to maintain constant reference to the approaches discussed in the first half of this paper. The total number (English plus German students) of respondents who underlined a text passage is found in the last column.

In the subsequent tables 6.4 and 6.5 the results of the survey are visualized. The words in light grey represent the *irony density* of the text passages in both texts. They generally correspond with the analyzed text passages of section 6.2. The single irony-signaling words only function in the context of the sentence or the entire text, therefore they cannot simply be taken out of context. The numbers alongside the comments give information about how often they were recognized by the test persons. The first number is the total number, the numbers in brackets show the proportion of Germans (first) and English respondents (second).

Although the English did not have to underline a determined number of passages, a similar average amount of text passages was marked by both nationalities. In “Less viable

No.	Text passage	Theor. Background	Germ.	Engl.	Total
5	(...) the most ludicrous thing I'd ever heard, putting someone in rehab over a couple of Smirnoff lces; you might just as well put someone in Broadmoor for killing a squirrel.	W.Gr.-Speech.-a Beals-content	14	8	22
9b	(...) and has been photographed by Mario Testino with some grime on his face, looking like a young Marlon Brando, except in the respect of having any charisma, or beauty, or sex appeal.	Grice-quality	12	8	20
23	Would it not be easier just to pay tax?	Clyne-question	13	5	18
21	(...) , next time a prince goes to a party dressed as a member of the Ba'ath party , what they aren't.	W.Gr.-Speech.-a	10	7	17
20	No such luck for young Harry, who has also exclusively revealed that he "likes to have a laugh".	W.Gr.-Speech.-c Sp.W.-echo	8	8	16
13	Having no special talents, their speciality must be something basically impossible - a classless version of aristocratic superiority; a faith-free version of divine right.	W.Gr.-Speech.-b	10	3	13
7b	(...) who could care less what aristos wear to parties?	Clyne-question	8	4	12
8b	(...) according to some interview he gave to a TV company, which wasn't the BBC , (...)	W.Gr.-Maxim.-relev.	6	5	11
14a	They have been hailed as the great white hope , this generation, free from the tang of the seamy love hexagons that beset their parents , bringing with them a new informality and a new approachability, (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a Clyne-polysemy W.Gr.-Maxim.-mod.	6	5	11
19	(...) slowly replacing "engagements" with actual "jobs", and "apartments" with actual "flats" , they would be well on the way to moneyed normality by now.	Barbe-metaphor-b	4	6	10
3	It's Prince Harry's birth-month; he's 21, you know.	Barbe-common W.Gr.-Int.-a	3	6	9
10	And, er, that's it.	W.Gr.-Int.-a	6	3	9
16	Politely aware of this tricky business , (...)	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-b W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-break.-a	4	5	9

Table 6.2: Frequencies of recognized ironical text passages in Part A “Less viable than his gran”²

No.	Text passage	Theor. Background	Germ.	Engl.	Total
18	(...) none of them is ever going to put the squeeze on Kate Moss.	Barbe-metaphor-b	4	5	9
12	However much the Queen or Prince Charles might be accused of being "out of date", starchy, slightly ridiculous, overfond of pets , they can get away with it, since they belong to a reticent generation.	Barbe-metaphor-a	5	3	8
15a	Make your minds up, chums - (...)	W.Gr.-Int.-a Clyne-dialect	4	4	8
17	Everyone from Zara Phillips through Princess Beatrice to Prince William has been credited with some physical loveliness, on the basis that beauty is a perfectly comprehensible, modern thing to be celebrated for .	Beals-content	7	1	8
4	One time , when he was younger, he drank quite a lot , and his father made some noises about putting him in rehab.	Barbe-common W.Gr.-Int.-a	3	4	7
15b	(...) do you want to be just like one of us, mucking in with your Sandhurst minions and swearing with the best of them, or do you want to be a breed apart ?	W.Gr.-Int.-a Clyne-dialect Clyne-question	5	2	7
7a	Really, unless it's the pelt of a creature you care about, (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	5	1	6
8c	(...) whom he Snubbed with his seminal coming-of-age message .	Barbe-metaphor-a	3	3	6
11	Contrary to popular wisdom , (...)	Barbe-common	5	1	6
22	It's a thorny, inconsistent business that seems to preclude almost all kinds of laugh .	W.Gr.-Speech.-a Sp.W.-echo	3	3	6
1	Headline: Less Viable than his gran	W.Gr.-Int.-a Clyne-dialect	2	3	5
6	He thought this was funny; a lot of people found it controversial .	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-a	3	2	5
8a	I know that he regrets wearing the outfit sincerely , (...)	W.Gr.-Speech.-c	1	3	4
14b	(...) but it's those very qualities that make them even less viable than their forebears.	Grice-quality	3	1	4
2	Lead: If Prince Harry is so normal then we have to ask why he gets such abnormal treatment	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-b	1	1	2
9a	He likes motorbikes, (...)	W.Gr.-Int.-a	0	1	1

Table 6.3: Frequencies of recognized text passages in Part A “Less viable than his gran”1

No.	Text passage	Theor. Background	Germ.	Engl.	Total
2c	(...) as constant as duck a l'orange and fresh, homemade supermarket soup.	W.Gr.-Speech.-b Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-a	14	6	20
5	Now, your server arrives clutching a control module as though he is about to land a model plane on your plate , and invites you to type in a code.	Barbe-metaphor-a	14	6	20
2b	(...) these are staples of British cuisine (...)	W.Gr.-Speech.-b	14	5	19
6c	Can you write it on the paper spewing from the innards?	Clyne-question W.Gr.-Speech.-a Barbe-metaphor-a	9	7	16
8	He might murmur something about " service non compris ", even if you thought it meant you hadn't understood the service.	Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-b W.Gr.-Maxim.-mod.	10	3	13
10	"I hope you enjoyed the service." (...) "Can I change that note for you?" (...) "Shall I add on the tip?" (...) "We've programmed these new machines to take good care of the service charge."	W.Gr.-Speech.-c	9	4	13
6a	Can you type that in also and hit the right triangle, or should that be a square?	Clyne-question W.Gr.-Speech.-a	9	3	12
6b	Will the machine empty your account?	Clyne-question W.Gr.-Speech.-a	8	4	12
4a	In the old days, after cryptic scribbling in the sky to your waiter across the room, the bill would arrive, (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	7	4	11
2a	The problem is not an outbreak of surely service or a sudden rise in prices (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	8	2	10
3	The fall in largesse comes from an ignorance of etiquette by the dinner, technophobia and a British awkwardness by the hovering, tongue-tied staff.	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-break.-b Barbe-metaphor-b	9	0	9
11	That should do it.	W.Gr.-Int.-a	4	4	8
9a	But less polished underlings (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	7	0	7
7b	(...) and indicate, with the mere flick of a gold-topped pen , the blank space on the bill.	Barbe-metaphor-a	5	1	6
7a	A practised maitre'd would "ahem" discreetly (...)	Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-b	3	2	5
1	They may guard restaurants against fraud, but they don't bring smiles to the staff.	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-a	2	2	4
9b	(...) should look to California for chutzpah hints.	Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-a	4	0	4
4b	(...) nestling in a folder and awaiting the inclusion of plastic.	Barbe-metaphor-a	3	0	3

Table 6.4: Frequencies of recognized text passages in Part B "Service non compris"

Less viable than his gran

Zoe Williams

If Prince Harry is so normal then we have to ask why he gets such abnormal treatment

It's Prince Harry's birth-month; he's 21, you know. One time, when he was younger, he drank quite a lot, and his father made some noises about putting him in rehab. Now we're talking about it, I can't remember whether or not he did go to rehab, but I remember thinking it was the most ludicrous thing I'd ever heard, putting someone in rehab over a couple of Smirnoff's; you might just as well put someone in Broadmoor for killing a squirrel.

He once went to a fancy-dress party disguised as a Nazi. He thought this was funny; a lot of people called it controversial. I found it impossible to determine why it would be either funny or controversial. (Really, unless it's the pet of a creature you care about, who could care less what artists wear to parties?) I know that he regrets wearing the outfit sincerely, according to some interview; he gave to a TV company, which wasn't the BBC, whom he snubbed with his semi-

nal coming-of-age message. He likes motorbikes, and has been photographed by Mario Testino with some grime on his face, looking like a young Madonna Brando, except in the respect of having any charisma, or beauty, or sex appeal. He used the word "arse", apropos of his time at Sandhurst. And, er, that's it.

Contrary to popular wisdom, there is a much more serious image crisis in the younger generation of this family than there is in the older. However much the Queen or Prince Charles might be accused of being out of date, starchy, slightly ridiculous, overfond of pets, they can get away with it, since they belong to a reticent generation. The young ones, however, are required to be accessible yet special. Having no special talents, their speciality must be something basically impossible -- a classless version of aristocratic superiority; a faith-free version of divine right.

They have been hailed as the great white hope, this generation, free from the taint of the seamy love besegues that beset their parents, bringing with them a new informality and a new approachability, but it's those very qualities that make them even less viable than their forebears. Make your minds up, chums - do you want to be just like one of us, mucking in with your Sandhurst minions and swearing with the best of them, or do you want to be a breed apart? And if you're not the second, on what possible grounds would we laud you as the first?

Politely aware of this tricky business, our media construct certain fictions around these people to keep them afloat. The first is that they are beautiful. Everyone from Zara Phillips through Princess Beatrice to Prince William has been credited with some physical loveliness, on the basis that beauty is a perfectly comprehensible, modern thing to be celebrated for. Of course, it's wholly bogus; none of them is ever going to put the squeeze on Kate Moss. The second fiction is that their lifestyles are rarefied and unusual for reasons beyond the fact that they spend a lot of money on them. Again, patently bogus. The third is that they occupy an indispensable place in the nation's culture; in fact it is this lie of indispensability that has screwed them, since if they had been allowed to fade quietly into the background, slowly replacing "engagements" with actual "jobs", and "departments" with actual "jobs", they would be well on the way to moneyed normality by now.

No such luck for young Harry, who has also exclusively revealed that he "likes to have a laugh". Our expectations of this family are not real, but that won't stop us making a fuss when they let us down; they couldn't fulfil them even if they were real. Nobody, come to that, is sure what these expectations are, but we'll know, next time a prince goes to a party dressed as a member of the Balfour party, what they aren't. It's a thorny, inconsistent business that seems to preclude almost all kinds of laugh. Would it not be easier just to pay tax?

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Figure 6.4: Underlined text passages in “Less viable than his gran”

than his gran” 10.53 text passages were highlighted by the Germans in contrast to average 10.40 text passages by the English. In “Service non compris” the Germans marked 9.30 text passages on average compared to only 5.30 by the English. The similar amount of both, English native speakers and English learners, is a primary precondition for a comparability of the survey data. In total 34 different valid words and/or text passages were underlined in both texts by the German and English students. These 34 include again 70 irony signals according to their theoretical aspects explained in 6.2. This high amount indicates the complexity and subjectivity of the issue. Therefore in the following

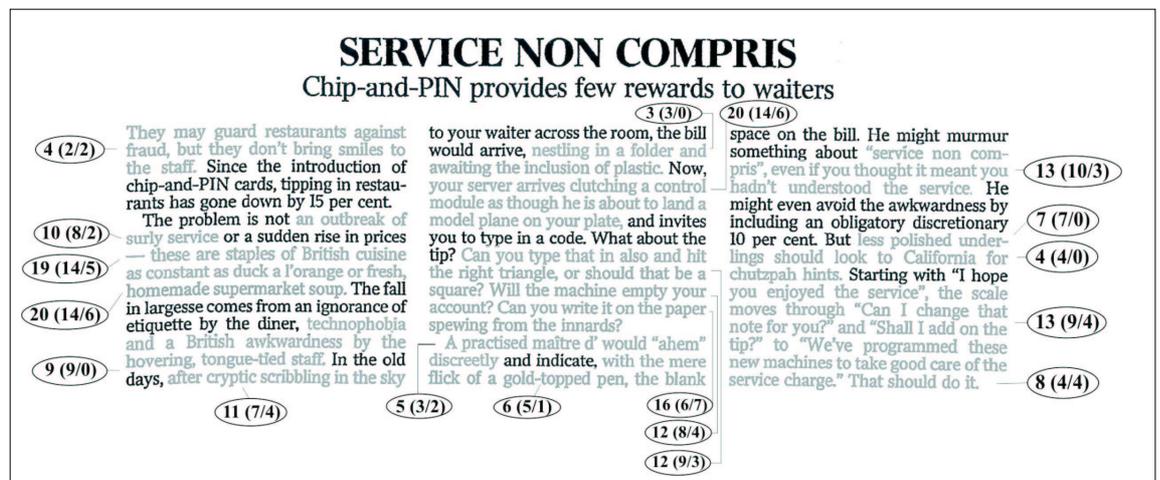


Figure 6.5: Underlined text passages in “Service non compris”

evaluation I will mainly concentrate on the most obvious results.

6.3.1 Evaluation of Survey Data: Invalidity

While evaluating the survey data, one striking difficulty emerged. In the questionnaires for the Germans I had stated a minimum amount of text passages to highlight (10 in Text A and 7 in Text B). Thereby the respondents were forced to read and think about the comments carefully, and not just finish after having detected two text passages. I am aware now, that according to this limit, a few invalid text passages were underlined. There were about 20 (equal and different) underlined text passages¹⁰ in “Less viable than his gran” that were, according to the analysis at hand, not recognizable as ironical. That means, on average every German highlighted one non-ironical text passage. I have omitted these text passages in the following. A full survey of the invalid text passages is given in the appendix. I have also listed the rankings (1-3) in the table. Hence the respondents rather tended to rank in these TPs as less ironical. Their choice also reflects the tendency of the readers not to be sure whether the TP is ironic or not. Most of them (13) refer to TPs in the third column of the comment. The author mentions three constructed fictions around the royal family that are explained in detail afterwards. These

¹⁰For reasons of brevity *text passage* will be replaced by the abbreviation *TP* in the following.

fictions were considered ironical several times. There might be some irony when the reader only understands the content of the single sentences without reference to their context. However, a perception of another or the opposite meaning of the literal sentence-meaning was here annulled in the context of the announcing sentence “(...) our media construct certain fictions around these people to keep them afloat”. With knowing that the author is going to deal with fictions, and not with what she considers true, an ironic attitude is not given here. As already mentioned before, one of the accounts for such a misinterpretation could be the determined number of TPs the Germans had to recognize. Furthermore the entire comment was itself a challenge for the German readers due to its sophisticated vocabulary and style. Therefore I assume that a foreign reader might sometimes lose the coherence of single passages and therefore disregard the content of a few previously mentioned facts. Probably due to the article’s brevity, no such non-ironic TPs were found in “Service non compris”. Furthermore the English did not have to fulfil this limit and therefore highlighted text passages more warily.

6.3.2 Evaluation of Survey Data: Similarities

Although the responses to the questionnaires were not highly consistently, several common text passages were highlighted by an essential proportion. Tables 6.5 and 6.6 exhibit the text passages that were recognized as being ironical by at least 40 per cent of the Germans and the English. The individual theoretical backgrounds in the third column appear more than only once in the samples and are highlighted in different colors. Theoretical approaches in black only appear once in the tables and will be ignored in the following. The numbers 1, 2 and 3 refer to the task for the German students to rank their individual choices according to the scale defined in section 6.1.3 (1-very ironic, 2-less ironic, 3-little ironic).

There are eight significantly ironical text passages in “Less viable than his gran” and 7 in “Service non compris”. These numbers restrict the evaluation of the survey results to a high degree and make an interpretation easier. The Germans had to underline a determined number of text passages, therefore their numbers might be higher in the most cases, especially in the second text.¹¹ While comparing the theoretical approaches behind

¹¹While the Germans had underlined 9.3 TPs on average, the English had only highlighted an average

No.	Text passage	Theor. Background	Engl. per cent	Germ. per cent	1	2	3
5	(...) the most ludicrous thing I'd ever heard, putting someone in rehab over a couple of Smirnoff lices; you might just as well put someone in Broadmoor for killing a squirrel.	W.Gr.-Speech.-a Beals-content	80	93	11	3	1
9b	(...) and has been photographed by Mario Testino with some grime on his face, looking like a young Marlon Brando, except in the respect of having any charisma, or beauty, or sex appeal.	Grice-quality	80	80	11		1
23	Would it not be easier just to pay tax?	Clyne-question	50	87	10	2	1
21	(...) , next time a prince goes to a party dressed as a member of the Ba'ath party , what they aren't.	W.Gr.-Speech.-a	70	67	5	2	3
20	No such luck for young Harry, who has also exclusively revealed that he "likes to have a laugh".	W.Gr.-Speech.-c Sp.W.-echo	80	53	5	2	1
7b	(...) who could care less what aristos wear to parties?	Clyne-question	40	53	1	5	2
8b	(...) according to some interview he gave to a TV company, which wasn't the BBC , (...)	W.Gr.-Maxim.-relev.	50	40	2	1	3
14a	They have been hailed as the great white hope , this generation, free from the tang of the seamy love hexagons that beset their parents , bringing with them a new informality and a new approachability, (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a Clyne-polysemy W.Gr.-Maxim.-mod.	50	40	1		5

Table 6.5: Most frequently underlined text passages in “Less viable than his gran”

the obvious text passages, a few tendencies become visible:

- A majority of the highlighted text passages refer to content and/or a contradiction based on general knowledge, or to a violation of a conversational maxim (W.Gr.-Speech. and Beals-content [in red], W.Gr.-Maxim. and Grice-quality [in blue]).
- A striking feature is the obvious majority of Willer/ Groeben’s speech act approach and Beals’ ironical use of expressions for their semantic content respectively [in

of 5.3 TPs in “Service non compris”.

No.	Text passage	Theor. Background	Engl. per cent	Germ. per cent	1	2	3
2c	(...) as constant as duck a l'orange and fresh, homemade supermarket soup .	W.Gr.-Speech.-b Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-a	60	93	12	2	
5	Now, your server arrives clutching a control module as though he is about to land a model plane on your plate , and invites you to type in a code.	Barbe-metaphor-a	60	93	8	1	5
2b	(...) these are staples of British cuisine (...)	W.Gr.-Speech.-b	50	93	10	2	1
6c	Can you write it on the paper spewing from the innards?	Clyne-question W.Gr.-Speech.-a Barbe-metaphor-a	70	60	4	4	1
10	"I hope you enjoyed the service." (...) "Can I change that note for you?" (...) "Shall I add on the tip?" (...) "We've programmed these new machines to take good care of the service charge."	W.Gr.-Speech.-c	40	60	2	5	2
6b	Will the machine empty your account?	Clyne-question W.Gr.-Speech.-a	40	53	5	2	1
4a	In the old days, after cryptic scribbling in the sky to your waiter across the room, the bill would arrive, (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	40	47	2	3	2

Table 6.6: Most frequently underlined text passages in "Service non compris"

red]. A majority of the test persons recognized eight of nine possible text passages (see also table 6.1) in both articles with reference to a contradiction based on general knowledge.

- The most highlighted ironical text passages hardly imply irony-markers considering style-shifts (W.Gr.-Int.) or phonologic-graphemic deviations (W.Gr.-Phon.), although there are 18 of such features in the comments (see also table 6.1).
- Also, only three metaphorical text passages were recognized in "Service non compris" and one in "Less viable than his gran" by a majority of respondents, although both texts make use of 13 metaphors in total to transfer irony. However, a closer look at these four chosen ironical metaphors reveals, that they are hyperbolic in

an extent that the reader can not interpret them differently from not taking them seriously.

- With declining numbers in the columns 4 and 5 the numbers for the rankings 1, 2 and 3 move continually from the left to the right. This movement corresponds clearly with the obviousness of the irony signals: in the case a text passage is obviously ironic and the irony is easy to catch, the respondent ranked the text passage into the group 1, etc.

The tendency towards the choice to perceive a statement as ironically as a consequence of a semantic contradiction, rather than to recognize stylistical or syntactical irony markers is not very surprising when it comes to the reading of newspaper comments (their language was discussed in section 5.2.4). Thus one of the main features of opinion articles is the common use of style shifts, such as colloquial language to address the reader or the person(s) of discussion (e.g. the younger royals in text A) (c.f. Austermann 1990: 109ff.). A reader of opinion articles is used to the commentator's special metaphorical and stylistically experimental writing style, and, therefore might be easier attracted by deviations of content than of style.

It has to be emphasized here again, that I am fully conscious of the fact that both comments do not simply contain various ironical text passages, that are independent from each other and the context. All irony signals taken together contribute to the creation of a piece of writing that is not to be taken literally by the reader.

6.3.3 Evaluation of Survey Data: Differences

Apart from several similarities, also remarkable differences between Germans and British survey respondents appeared. To discuss all differences here would be beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore I have determined a threshold to confine myself to the most striking gaps between the test persons of different nationalities. I will take text passages into consideration that were underlined by at least 20 per cent more Germans or British students.

6.3.3.1 Text Passages Highlighted by Significantly more German Readers

Table 6.7 shows the seven text passages that were highlighted in “Less viable than his gran” by at least 20 per cent more German than British students. The juxtaposition of the text passages does hardly allow any interpretation. Their ironical connotation refers to five different theoretical backgrounds, which have hardly anything in common.

No.	Text passage	Theor. Background	Germ. per cent	Engl. Per cent
23	Would it not be easier just to pay tax?	Clyne-question	87	50
13	Having no special talents, their speciality must be something basically impossible - a classless version of aristocratic superiority; a faith-free version of divine right.	W.Gr.-Speech.-b	67	30
17	Everyone from Zara Phillips through Princess Beatrice to Prince William has been credited with some physical loveliness, on the basis that beauty is a perfectly comprehensible, modern thing to be celebrated for.	Beals-content	47	10
7a	Really, unless it's the pelt of a creature you care about, (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	33	10
11	Contrary to popular wisdom, (...)	Barbe-common	33	10

Table 6.7: Text passages in “Less viable than his gran” that were underlined by significantly more Germans

Table 6.8 gives a different image. In “Service non compris” the differences between both nationalities were much more striking. Eleven out of 18 text passages in total were underlined by more Germans than British respondents. A basic reason for this deviation might be the difference between Germans and English respondents concerning the number of highlighted TPs on the average.¹² This deviation might be one of the reasons for the four TPs in the table referring to contradictions based on general knowledge expressed in Willer and Groeben’s speech act approach [in red]. Another cause variable is fatigue that appeared after the respondents had to read a longer text already before. A clear statement

¹²While the Germans had underlined 9.3 TPs on average, the English had only highlighted an average of 5.3 TPs in “Service non compris”.

can not be given here. However, without the determined minimum of 7, the Germans had certainly not underlined that many text passages.

No.	Text passage	Theor. Background	Germ. per cent	Engl. Per cent
2c	(...) as constant as <u>duck a l'orange</u> and fresh, homemade supermarket soup.	W.Gr.-Speech.-b Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-a	93	60
5	Now, your server arrives <u>clutching a control module as though he is about to land a model plane on your plate</u> , and invites you to type in a code.	Barbe-metaphor-a	93	60
2b	(...) these are staples <u>of British cuisine</u> (...)	W.Gr.-Speech.-b	93	50
8	He might <u>murmur something about "service non compris", even if you thought it meant you hadn't understood the service.</u>	Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-b W.Gr.-Maxim.-mod.	67	30
10	" <u>I hope you enjoyed the service.</u> " (...) "Can I change that note for you?" (...) "Shall I add on the tip?" (...) "We've programmed these new machines to take good care of the service charge."	W.Gr.-Speech.-c	60	40
6a	Can you type that in also and hit the right triangle, or should that be a square?	Clyne-question W.Gr.-Speech.-a	60	30
2a	The problem is not <u>an outbreak of surely service</u> or a sudden rise in prices (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	53	20
3	The fall in largesse comes from an ignorance of etiquette by the dinner, <u>technophobia</u> and <u>a British awkwardness by the hovering, tongue-tied staff.</u>	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-break.-b Barbe-metaphor-b	60	0
9a	But <u>less polished underlings</u> (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	47	0
7b	(...) and indicate, <u>with the mere flick of a gold-topped pen</u> , the blank space on the bill.	Barbe-metaphor-a	33	10
9b	(...) should look to California for <u>chutzpah hints.</u>	Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-a	27	0

Table 6.8: Text passages in "Service non compris" underlined by significantly more Germans

Furthermore five of the TPs in table 6.8 refer to Barbe's metaphorical devices [in orange]. The salience of metaphors might be stronger for a language learner than for a native speaker who is much more familiar with current metaphorical language. The same

counts for dialect words [in blue] and stylistically striking words [in light pink]. While a British native speaker is more or less used to expressions like *duck a l'orange* or *chutzh-pah*, because they are common components of his vocabulary, a language learner has hardly heard of such terms and examines them much more carefully.

6.3.3.2 Text Passages Highlighted by Significantly more British Readers

No.	Text passage	Theor. Background	Engl. Per cent	Germ. per cent
20	No such luck for young Harry, who has also exclusively revealed that he "likes to have a laugh" .	W.Gr.-Speech.-c Sp.W.-echo	80	53
19	(...) slowly replacing "engagements" with actual "jobs", and "apartments" with actual "flats" , they would be well on the way to moneyed normality by now.	Barbe-metaphor-b	60	27
3	It's Prince Harry's birth-month; he's 21, you know .	Barbe-common W.Gr.-Int.-a	60	20
16	Politely aware of this tricksy business , (...)	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-b W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-break.-a	50	27
18	(...) none of them is ever going to put the squeeze on Kate Moss.	Barbe-metaphor-b	50	27
4	One time , when he was younger, he drank quite a lot , and his father made some noises about putting him in rehab.	Barbe-common W.Gr.-Int.-a	40	20
8a	I know that he regrets wearing the outfit sincerely , (...)	W.Gr.-Speech.-c	30	7

Table 6.9: Text passages in “Less viable than his gran” underlined by significantly more British

Table 6.9 shows the seven text passages in “Less viable than his gran” that were highlighted by at least 20 per cent more English students than Germans. Two of only three instances of Barbe’s common irony in total are found here (in TP 3 and 4). It is logically that native speakers have a better perception for the tendency of a phrase to become an ironical phrase *per se*. To achieve a number of recognition of 20 per cent in the group

of the Germans was more than I had expected. The rule-breaking deviation in TP 16 is also easier to recognize by a native speaker since he is aware of the conventional term *a tricky business*. A similar reason might have caused the deviation of recognition of TP 18. Only the native speaker knows that the euphemism *to put the squeeze on someone* normally refers to a completely different context (reminds of drug dealers' practices) and understands the irony behind the metaphor.

I had expected another essential aspect to lead to a higher rate of recognition of British students in some instances - which is background knowledge. The British alone are familiar with the royals' life style and language and especially with the rumors about them. Knowledge about the royal's posh language could be a reason for the gap between the numbers in TP 19.

The British students did not underline any TPs in text B "Service non compris" significantly more often than Germans. Fatigue after the examination of text A is certainly the main reason for this result.

6.3.4 Evaluation of Individual Irony Definitions

In part C) of the questionnaires I had asked the respondents for their individual definitions of irony. Thereby I have deliberately located this task after the two newspaper comments. I presuppose the test persons have recognized the various different possibilities of signifying an ironical attitude in a written text besides the conventional saying the opposite of the literal meaning.

In table 6.10 a summary of the individual definitions is given, separated according to the respondents' nationality. 18 of the 25 test persons in total mention irony's most obvious aspect of implying the opposite of the literal meaning. However, while the Germans tend to refer to this conventional definition, the English provided more profound characterization of irony (as e.g. the aspect of subjectivity and writer-audience familiarity). Most of the English respondents are students of humanities, 7 of them students of literature. Their skilled perception of irony is certainly an essential reason for their extensive knowledge.

Next to a broader definition for irony, both groups also gave examples for reasons why speakers use irony. Thereby five essential purposes were named: to joke, to provoke, to express hidden criticism, to ridicule and to unveil absurdity. With the same similar

Irony is...	Germ.	Engl.	by means of:	Germ.	Engl.
...the implication of the opposite of the literal meaning	13	5	exaggeration	4	1
...the implication of additional meaning to the literal meaning	3		euphemism	1	
			word choice	1	
...subjective		3	tone	1	
...depending on background knowledge	2		style	1	
...an assumed relationship/ familiarity between writer and audience		2	voice	1	
... "a noisy silence"		1	ambiguity		1
			subtlety		4
			malice	1	
with the intention:					
to joke	6	7	indirectness	2	
to provoke	1				
to express hidden criticism	4		similar to:		
to ridicule	2	2	sarcasm	1	3
to unveil absurdity		2	cynicism	1	
			Respondent gave an example for an ironic situation	1	2

Table 6.10: Aspects of individual irony definitions

attention some of the respondents specified means of expressing irony (10 in total). With respect to the previous texts they have had to analyze, one device was totally missing, which is metaphor. Although most of the respondents had recognized at least some of the displaced or overused metaphors in the newspaper articles, none of them mentioned their significance in the individual definitions. Presumably other devices such as exaggeration, indirectness and ambiguity are more apparent signals for irony. Although the respondents generally focused on ironical speaking and writing respectively, three respondents gave an example of an ironical situation instead of or apart from characterizing ironical speaking.

The data given in part C) was clearly influenced by the tasks before. In all individual definitions the respondents mentioned at least three characteristics of irony which referred

more or less to the newspaper comments before. The variety of irony signals given in the texts, plus the effort to find these signals served perfectly as an incentive to enhance the respondent's perception of ironical aspects.

6.3.5 Evaluation of Demographic Aspects

In the last part of the questionnaire (part D) I had asked the respondents to fill in some information about their gender, age, nationality and educational background. In sections 6.3.2 and 6.3.3 significant similarities and differences between respondents of German and British nationality were outlined.

Aspects of gender did not show any remarkable tendency. The number of respondents comprised 14 male and 11 female students in total. A detailed overview of which text passages were highlighted by how many men and women is to be found in the appendix. The number of average underlined TPs did also not differ significantly. In text A "Less viable than his gran" male respondents highlighted 10.4 respondents on the average while female test persons underlined 10.9. A similar proportion was to find in text B "Service non compris". While male respondents highlighted an average of 7.6 text passages, female test persons marked 7.8 TPs on average. These equal numbers do not allow to give any evidence for a probable difference of irony perception between men and women.¹³

All survey respondents had an academic educational background and are between 21 and 28 years old. Both influencing factors do not allow to draw any conclusion. The survey data might have looked different when the test persons had been of different age groups and varying educational backgrounds.

The Germans had to fill in a fifth personal information which is the total time they had spent abroad in an English speaking country. The given time span differs from 2 weeks up to 2 years. Unexpectedly the time abroad did not reflect the student's ability to recognize ironical aspects in a sophisticated newspaper comment. I assume a simple explanation for this tendency: the status of English as a world wide language has the advantage to speak English and get access to the language everywhere - at home and abroad. Most

¹³The equal underlining of men and women was not expected before the evaluation of the survey, since there are certain differences in language perception of both genders. I do not want to go more into details of gender language differences here, because this would be beyond the scope of this paper. For further information see Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2003).

students do not explicitly spend some time in a country of English native speakers but every where else in Europe and the world. English is spoken (almost) everywhere and it often helps to bridge a communication gap in other languages. Apart from that, the ubiquity of English at home - in the media, at the university and in professional life - has furnished an average German student with reasonable English skills, also when it comes to the comprehension of humor, ambiguity and irony respectively.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Perspectives

7.1 Conclusion

The attempt to recognize irony signals in a newspaper comment with the help of theoretical linguistic aspects was with respect to the evaluation of the survey data a successful task. A comparability with theoretical aspects is especially given when we take semantic approaches into consideration. Willer and Groeben's concept of irony signals as disruptive factors in speech acts turned out to be especially useful due to its variety of approaches and their different point of views. In this paper pragmatical approaches rather served to get a general understanding of what irony is.

The examination of different newspaper categories with respect to stylistic constraints, the demand of objectivity and aspects concerning the content, identified opinion writing and feature articles (soft news) as being more open for the use of irony than hard news that have to be factual and impartial. A newspaper comment seems to be a very appropriate medium for an implementation of irony. The commentator's autonomy to (almost) enjoy stylistical freedom as well as arbitrariness concerning the content of his or her article, offers perfect conditions to involve all different ironical devices.

Apart from the various mentioned means of expressing ironic statements, both analyzed articles also involved ironical situations. To name only two examples, the British prince's performance in the Nazi-uniform (text A) and the guest's awkwardness not to know how to deal with a traditional custom like tipping in times of technical progress (text B) both

describe highly ironic situations.

Irony's important aspect of subjectivity is strongly reflected in the inhomogeneity of the survey data. However, a significant number of ironical text passages was recognized by an essential number of respondents. That shows that the factor of subjectivity is not given to the same degree in every instance. There are statements that violate norms of average language use in a way that the recipient (the reader) can not but interpret the statement ironically. Hence irony's success strongly depends on the obviousness of its signals.

The evaluation of two text examples in section 6.2 proves the possibility of explaining irony linguistically by means of approaches to irony of the current state of research. When we look back to the traditional definition of irony as an implication of the opposite meaning of the proposition, various further irony-transferring devices come into play. Written language is more formal and considerate and more accurately formulated than spoken language. Furthermore it lacks the aspect of spontaneity. The data at hand, the two little newspaper comments already involved twenty different irony-tools. To claim universal validity of aspects of irony in newspapers would of course require consideration of further newspapers. To again refer to irony's traditional definition, repeated analysis of the single text passages suggests the direct opposite meaning for only three of the 47 irony-implying text passages in total which are the following (all in text A):

- **9b:** "(...) looking like a young Marlon Brando, except in the respect of having any charisma, or beauty, or sex appeal." ⇒ The author *does not* see any similarity between Marlon Brando and the prince.
- **17:** "(...) on the basis that beauty is a perfectly comprehensible, modern thing to be celebrated for. " ⇒ The author *does not* see the matter of course to be celebrated only because of physical attractiveness.
- **8a:** "I know that he regrets wearing the outfit sincerely, (...) " ⇒ The author *is not* convinced by the prince's statement.

The majority of the text passages rather expressed exaggeration (text B TP 5), style shifts (text A TP 10), metaphorical overuse (text A TP 10) or additional subliminal messages (text A TP 14a) instead of an implication of the direct opposite meaning. A few of them involved phonologic-graphemic deviations, polysemy, rhetorical questions and common

irony. However, the numbers in table 6.1 give evidence for the majority of especially three irony markers:

1. an ironical attitude implied by stating facts whose literal meaning contradicts with the addressee's general knowledge (W.Gr.-Speech and Beals-content respectively): 9 ironical TPs involved contradictions, of which 8 were recognized by the most survey respondents,
2. the use of metaphor to express or underline an ironical attitude (Barbe): 13 ironical TPs involved metaphor, of which only 4 were recognized by most survey respondents,
3. the use of style-shifts to express or underline an ironical attitude (W.Gr.-Int. and Clyne-dialect respectively): about 12 ironical TPs involved style shifts, of which only one was perceived ironically by the most respondents (compare with table 6.6).

Compared to contradictions concerning the content of a statement, metaphors and style shifts were not that often identified as irony signals. The omnipresence of stylistic devices such as metaphors and style shifts in every-day language and especially in newspaper comments certainly complicates their recognition as irony indicating words. However, their contribution to furnish a text with an ironical undertone might be not as significant as the stating of facts whose literal meaning contradicts with general knowledge, but can not be neglected when it comes to an overall picture of the author's attitude.

While evaluating the irony devices in the two newspaper comments, a few tendencies were recognizable. However, that does not mean, that the mentioned aspects (especially contradictions, metaphors and style shifts) also have to function as irony transferring in different comments and contexts respectively. There are various more possibilities that could be applied for this purpose. The commentator's enjoys a stylistic freedom that enables him or her to be highly creative when it comes to an implication of his or her attitude.

Several influencing demographic criteria were examined in the previous chapter. Gender, age, educational background as well as the English language skills of the Germans did

not allow to draw any conclusions, due to the restricted extension of the survey data. Tendencies in the different irony-perception of English native speakers and English learners are listed in subchapter 6.3.3. Germans tended to underline more metaphorical expressions due to their unfamiliarity with English metaphors (e.g. text B TP 5 and 9a), while British were more often able to recognize common irony (text B TP 3 and 4), displaced metaphor (text B TP 18) and rule-breaking deviations (text B TP 16). To give substantial reasons for such tendencies would require the consideration of more than only two newspaper texts, and a survey with many more test persons.

On the whole, I did not expect to characterize a complex phenomenon such as irony sufficiently. Furthermore I did not assume to find full agreement among the respondents of the questionnaires and my subjective evaluation of the newspaper comments. Our different participant backgrounds concerning language perceptivity, education and nationality, determine the way irony is understood and interpreted. Instead I tried to develop a concept of verbal irony that allows to draw conclusions about irony in written text forms such as newspaper comments. Starting from this position, a connection of linguistical theory about irony with the genre of a newspaper comment was accomplished in the second part of this paper. Irony's most different specifications, be it for example disguised as common irony, in the form of a metaphor or a polysemous word, point out its enormous, omnipresent status in everyday verbal - spoken and written - language use.

7.2 Perspectives

The thesis at hand offers various starting points for future research. Thereby several different point of views have to be taken into consideration.

On the semantic level further devices apart from the few mentioned signals in chapter 4 could be involved to detect irony signals, for example more value could be set on syntactical constructions that imply an ironical attitude of the author.

Furthermore two important aspects of pragmatistical attempts to explain irony could be more considered in detail, namely aspects of context and common background knowledge. This is closely connected with the important relationship between producer and recipient of irony. This relationship was only mentioned to a small extend in this paper.

However, the author's intention (for example to convince the readership by his stance) and the reader's perceptibility are not to be neglected when it comes to different ideologies that are transferred by the various mass media.

Apart from semantics and pragmatics, the level of irony content represents another field of exploration. Which kinds of irony are preferred in newspaper comments concerning meaning, author purpose and victims of irony? Are there any restrictions although we are living in the age of press freedom? In addition, an analysis of an ironical implementation as it was accomplished in this paper could as well be transferred to different media, such as magazines or various TV-genres as for example documentaries.

Newspaper language itself has not been examined sufficiently in the past. The mass media newspapers, television and radio mostly influence public opinion and thus offer various further starting points for examination. Thereby a linguistic examination of subjective news coverage, a comparison of the language of various papers with different ideologies, and the entertaining value of daily newspapers could be subjects of linguistic and interdisciplinary research.

The extend of this paper only allowed to implement a small survey with 25 respondents. There are various survey elements that can be modified to be able to make more reliable and further significant statements. Such criteria are varying social and educational background conditions of the respondents, different age groups or the consideration of test persons of various geographical origin (from different areas in Great Britain or from different English speaking countries, etc.). Some characteristics of ironical speaking might be universal, however, a comparison of the use and importance of irony in different languages could represent another interesting field of examination.

I want to finish this assignment with a last personal statement. The fascination around the phenomenon of irony strongly interacts with our inability to explain it theoretically. If we would be able to completely reveal its secrets, irony would probably lose its magic.

Appendix A

Appendix

A.1 The Questionnaires

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Questionnaire MA Thesis:

"Linguistic Approaches to Irony – An Analysis of British Newspaper Comments"

Dear participant!

I am interested in how people perceive ironical aspects in written texts. As you are probably aware, people can accomplish this in a variety of ways. You can help me better understanding this process by filling in this questionnaire! In the following two pages you will have to read two articles from *The Times* and the *Guardian* and to respond to a few tasks.

It might take you about 30 minutes to work through the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Figure A.1: Instruction sheet for the survey respondents

Part A

A) Please read the following newspaper comment carefully! Try to concentrate on aspects of style and undertone!

Less viable than his gran

Zoe Williams

If Prince Harry is so normal then we have to ask why he gets such abnormal treatment

It's Prince Harry's birth-month; he's 21, you know. One time, when he was younger, he drank quite a lot, and his father made some noises about putting him in rehab. Now we're talking about it, I can't remember whether or not he did go to rehab, but I remember thinking it was the most ludicrous thing I'd ever heard, putting someone in rehab over a couple of Smirnoffices; you might just as well put someone in Broadmoor for killing a squirrel.

He once went to a fancy-dress party disguised as a Nazi. He thought this was funny; a lot of people called it controversial. I found it impossible to determine why it would be either funny or controversial. (Really, unless it's the pelt of a creature you care about, who could care less what aristos wear to parties?) I know that he regrets wearing the outfit sincerely, according to some interviews; he gave to a TV company, which wasn't the BBC, whom he snubbed with his semi-

nal coming-of-age message. He likes motorbikes, and has been photographed by Mario Testino with some grime on his face, looking like a young Marlon Brando, except in the respect of having any charisma, or beauty, or sex appeal. He used the word "arse", apropos of his time at Sandhurst. And, er, that's it.

Contrary to popular wisdom, there is a much more serious image crisis in the younger generation of this family than there is in the older. However much the Queen or Prince Charles might be accused of being "out of date", starchy, slightly ridiculous, overfond of pets, they can get away with it, since they belong to a reticent generation. The young ones, however, are required to be accessible yet special. Having no special talents, their speciality must be something basically impossible – a classless version of aristocratic superiority; a faith-free version of divine right.

They have been hailed as the great white hope, this generation, free from the tang of the seamy love hexagons that beset their parents, bringing with them a new informality and a new approachability, but it's those very qualities that make them even less viable than their forebears. Make your minds up, chums – do you want to be just like one of us, mucking in with your Sandhurst minions and swearing with the best of them, or do you want to be a breed apart? And if you're not the second, on what possible grounds would we laud you as the first?

Politely aware of this tricky business our media construct certain fictions around these people to keep them afloat. The first is that they are beautiful. Everyone from Zara Phillips through Princess Beatrice to Prince William has been credited with some physical loveliness, on the basis that beauty is a perfectly comprehensible, modern thing to be celebrated for. Of course, it's wholly bogus; none of them is ever going to put the squeeze on Kate Moss. The second fiction is that their lifestyles are rarefied and unusual for reasons beyond the fact that they spend a lot of money on them. Again, patently bogus. The third is that they occupy an indispensable place in the nation's culture; in fact it is this lie of indispensability that has screwed them since if they had been allowed to fade quietly into the background, slowly replacing "engagements" with actual "jobs", and "apartments" with actual "flats", they would be well on the way to moneyed normality by now.

No such luck for young Harry, who has also exclusively revealed that he "likes to have a laugh". Our expectations of this family are not real, but that won't stop us making a fuss when they let us down; they couldn't fulfil them even if they were real. Nobody, come to that, is sure what these expectations are, but we'll know, next time a prince goes to a party dressed as a member of the Ba'ath party, what they aren't. It's a thorny, inconsistent business that seems to preclude almost all kinds of laugh. Would it not be easier just to pay tax?

Vocabulary

viable - entwicklungs-/ lebensfähig
ludicrous - lächerlich
Broadmoor - mental hospital for criminals
to snub - anschnauzen
Sandhurst - Royal Military Academy

reticent - still, zurückhaltend
tang - scharfer Geruch
seamy - rissig, zwielichtig
to beset - befallen

mucking in - herumbüdeln
minion - Günstling
indispensable - unverzichtbar, unentbehrlich
Ba'ath Party - radical, secular, Arab party

- B) 1.) The comment contains various words, phrases and entire sentences that hint at an ironic attitude. Try to find at least 10 of the irony signals and underline them in the text.
- 2.) Now, please rate your selection according to the following system (you can write the numbers directly in the text):
- 1 - The text passage is highly ironic. The irony is easy to recognize.
 - 2 - The text passage is ironic, but not as obviously as number 1.
 - 3 - The text passage implies some irony, but it is hard to recognize.
- I am not sure, if the passage really concerns irony or just a similar language phenomenon.

Figure A.2: Part A of the questionnaire for the German respondents

Part B

- A) Please also read this comment carefully! Try again to concentrate on aspects of style and undertone!

SERVICE NON COMPRIS

Chip-and-PIN provides few rewards to waiters

They may guard restaurants against fraud, but they don't bring smiles to the staff. Since the introduction of chip-and-PIN cards, tipping in restaurants has gone down by 15 per cent.

The problem is not an outbreak of surly service or a sudden rise in prices — these are staples of British cuisine as constant as duck à l'orange or fresh, homemade supermarket soup. The fall in largesse comes from an ignorance of etiquette by the diner, technophobia and a British awkwardness by the hovering, tongue-tied staff. In the old days, after cryptic scribbling in the sky

to your waiter across the room, the bill would arrive, nestling in a folder and awaiting the inclusion of plastic. Now, your server arrives clutching a control module as though he is about to land a model plane on your plate, and invites you to type in a code. What about the tip? Can you type that in also and hit the right triangle, or should that be a square? Will the machine empty your account? Can you write it on the paper spewing from the innards?

A practised maitre d' would "ahem" discreetly and indicate, with the mere flick of a gold-topped pen, the blank

space on the bill. He might murmur something about "service non compris", even if you thought it meant you hadn't understood the service. He might even avoid the awkwardness by including an obligatory discretionary 10 per cent. But less polished underlings should look to California for chutzpah hints. Starting with "I hope you enjoyed the service", the scale moves through "Can I change that note for you?" and "Shall I add on the tip?" to "We've programmed these new machines to take good care of the service charge." That should do it.

Vocabulary

surly - mürrisch, missmutig
staples - Hauptzeugnisse
largesse - Freigiebigkeit
hovering - schwebend
tongue-tied - keinen Ton herausbringen

to nestle - sich kuscheln
clutching - fest umklammernd
to spew - spucken, speien
innards - Eingeweide
flick - schnalzen, schnappen

service non compris - (French) Trinkgeld nicht enthalten
polished underlings - geschliffene Untergebene
chutzpah - (Yiddish) "Qualität der Unverschämtheit"

- B) 1.) The comment contains various words, phrases and entire sentences that hint at an ironic attitude. Try to find at least 7 of the irony signals and underline them in the text.
- 2.) Now, please rate your selection according to the following system (you can write the numbers directly in the text):
- 1 - The text passage is highly ironic. The irony is easy to recognize.
 - 2 - The text passage is ironic, but not as obviously as number 1.
 - 3 - The text passage implies some irony, but it is hard to recognize.
- I am not sure, if the passage really concerns irony or just a similar language phenomenon.

- C) What do you think is irony?

- D) Finally give me some information about yourself!

a) gender: female / male

b) age: _____

c) nationality: _____

d) educational background: _____

e) How much time did you spend in an English speaking country?
(including holiday trips and semesters/ work abroad) _____

Figure A.3: Part B of the questionnaire for the German respondents

Part A

- A) Please read the following newspaper comment carefully! Try to concentrate on aspects of style and undertone!

Less viable than his gran

Zoe Williams

If Prince Harry is so normal then we have to ask why he gets such abnormal treatment

It's Prince Harry's birth-month; he's 21, you know. One time, when he was younger, he drank quite a lot, and his father made some noises about putting him in rehab. Now we're talking about it, I can't remember whether or not he did go to rehab, but I remember thinking it was the most ludicrous thing I'd ever heard, putting someone in rehab over a couple of Smirnoff Ices; you might just as well put someone in Broadmoor for killing a squirrel.

He once went to a fancy-dress party disguised as a Nazi. He thought this was funny; a lot of people called it controversial. I found it impossible to determine why it would be either funny or controversial. (Really, unless it's the pelt of a creature you care about, who could care less what aristos wear to parties?) I know that he regrets wearing the outfit sincerely, according to some interview; he gave to a TV company, which wasn't the BBC, whom he snubbed with his semi-

nal coming-of-age message. He likes motorbikes, and has been photographed by Mario Testino with some grime on his face, looking like a young Marlon Brando, except in the respect of having any charisma, or beauty, or sex appeal. He used the word "arse", apropos of his time at Sandhurst. And, er, that's it.

Contrary to popular wisdom, there is a much more serious image crisis in the younger generation of this family than there is in the older. However much the Queen or Prince Charles might be accused of being "out of date", starchy, slightly ridiculous, overfond of pets, they can get away with it, since they belong to a reticent generation. The young ones, however, are required to be accessible yet special. Having no special talents, their speciality must be something basically impossible — a classless version of aristocratic superiority; a faith-free version of divine right.

They have been hailed as the great white hope, this generation, free from the tang of the seamy love hexagons that beset their parents, bringing with them a new informality and a new approachability, but it's those very qualities that make them even less viable than their forebears. Make your minds up, chums — do you want to be just like one of us, mucking in with your Sandhurst minions and swearing with the best of them, or do you want to be a breed apart? And if you're not the second, on what possible grounds would we laud you as the first?

Politely aware of this tricky business our media construct certain fictions around these people to keep them afloat. The first is that they are beautiful. Everyone from Zara Phillips through Princess Beatrice to Prince William has been credited with some physical loveliness, on the basis that beauty is a perfectly comprehensible, modern thing to be celebrated for. Of course, it's wholly bogus; none of them is ever going to put the squeeze on Kate Moss. The second fiction is that their lifestyles are rarefied and unusual for reasons beyond the fact that they spend a lot of money on them. Again, patently bogus. The third is that they occupy an indispensable place in the nation's culture; in fact it is this lie of indispensability that has screwed them since if they had been allowed to fade quietly into the background, slowly replacing "engagements" with actual "jobs", and "apartments" with actual "flats", they would be well on the way to moneyed normality by now.

No such luck for young Harry, who has also exclusively revealed that he "likes to have a laugh". Our expectations of this family are not real, but that won't stop us making a fuss when they let us down; they couldn't fulfil them even if they were real. Nobody, come to that, is sure what these expectations are, but we'll know, next time a prince goes to a party dressed as a member of the Ba'ath party, what they aren't. It's a thorny, inconsistent business that seems to preclude almost all kinds of laugh. Would it not be easier just to pay tax?

- B) The comment contains various words, phrases and entire sentences that hint at an ironic attitude. Try to find as many irony signals as possible and underline them in the text!

Figure A.4: Part A of the questionnaire for the English respondents

Part B

- A) Please also read this comment carefully! Try again to concentrate on aspects of style and undertone!

SERVICE NON COMPRIS

Chip-and-PIN provides few rewards to waiters

They may guard restaurants against fraud, but they don't bring smiles to the staff. Since the introduction of chip-and-PIN cards, tipping in restaurants has gone down by 15 per cent.

The problem is not an outbreak of surly service or a sudden rise in prices — these are staples of British cuisine as constant as duck à l'orange or fresh, homemade supermarket soup. The fall in largesse comes from an ignorance of etiquette by the diner, technophobia and a British awkwardness by the hovering, tongue-tied staff. In the old days, after cryptic scribbling in the sky

to your waiter across the room, the bill would arrive, nestling in a folder and awaiting the inclusion of plastic. Now, your server arrives clutching a control module as though he is about to land a model plane on your plate, and invites you to type in a code. What about the tip? Can you type that in also and hit the right triangle, or should that be a square? Will the machine empty your account? Can you write it on the paper spewing from the innards?

A practised maitre d' would "ahem" discreetly and indicate, with the mere flick of a gold-topped pen, the blank

space on the bill. He might murmur something about "service non compris", even if you thought it meant you hadn't understood the service. He might even avoid the awkwardness by including an obligatory discretionary 10 per cent. But less polished underlings should look to California for chutzpah hints. Starting with "I hope you enjoyed the service", the scale moves through "Can I change that note for you?" and "Shall I add on the tip?" to "We've programmed these new machines to take good care of the service charge." That should do it.

- B) The comment contains various words, phrases and entire sentences that hint at an ironic attitude. Try to find as many irony signals as possible and underline them in the text!

- C) What do you think is irony?

- D) Finally give me some information about yourself!

- a) gender: female / male b) age: _____
 c) nationality: _____
 d) educational background: _____

Figure A.5: Part B of the questionnaire for the English respondents

A.2 Invalid Text Passages

Text passage	Germ	1	2	3
He used the word "arse", apropos of his time at Sandhurst.	2		2	
(...), since they belong to a reticent generation.	1			1
And if you're not the second, on what possible grounds would we laud you as the first?	2	2		
(...) our media construct certain fictions around these people to keep them afloat.	1			1
The first is that they are beautiful.	3	1	2	
The second fiction is that their lifestyles are rarefied and unusual for reasons beyond the fact that they spend a lot of money on them.	6	1	3	2
The third is that they occupy an indispensable place in the nation's culture; (...)	3	1	2	
(...), but that won't stop us making a fuss when they let us down; (...)	1			1
Total	19	5	9	5

Figure A.6: Invalid text passages

A.3 Gender Differences

	Text passage	Theor. Background	male	female
1	Headline: Less viable than his gran	W.Gr.-Int.-a Clyne-dialect	2	3
2	Lead: If Prince Harry is so normal then we have to ask why he gets such abnormal treatment	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-b	1	1
3	It's Prince Harry's birth-month; he's 21, you know .	Barbe-common W.Gr.-Int.-a	7	2
4	One time , when he was younger, he drank quite a lot , and his father made some noises about putting him in rehab.	Barbe-common W.Gr.-Int.-a	4	3
5	(...) putting someone in rehab over a couple of Smirnoff Ices; you might just as well put someone in Broadmoor for killing a squirrel.	W.Gr.-Speech.-a Beals-content	11	11
6	He thought this was funny; a lot of people found it controversial.	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-a	3	2
7	Really, unless it's the pelt of a creature you care about, (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	3	3
	(...) who could care less what aristos wear to parties?	Clyne-question	6	6
8	I know that he regrets wearing the outfit sincerely , (...)	W.Gr.-Speech.-c	2	2
	(...) according to some interview he gave to a TV company, which wasn't the BBC , (...)	W.Gr.-Maxim.-relev.	7	4
	(...) whom he snubbed with his seminal coming-of-age message.	Barbe-metaphor-a	3	3
9	He likes motorbikes, (...)	W.Gr.-Int.-a	1	0
	(...) and has been photographed by Mario Testino with some grime on his face, looking like a young Marlon Brando, except in the respect of having any charisma, or beauty, or sex appeal.	Grice-quality	10	10
10	And, er, that's it.	W.Gr.-Int.-a	5	4
11	Contrary to popular wisdom , (...)	Barbe-common	2	1
12	However much the Queen or Prince Charles might be accused of being "out of date", starchy, slightly ridiculous, overfond of pets , they can get away with it, since they belong to a reticent generation.	Barbe-metaphor-a	3	5

Figure A.7: Numbers of markings of male and female students in part A

	Text passage	Theor. Background	male	female
13	Having no special talents, their speciality must be something basically impossible - a classless version of aristocratic superiority; a faith-free version of divine right.	W.Gr.-Speech.-b	5	8
14	They have been hailed as the great white hope , this generation, free from the tang of the seamy love hexagons that beset their parents , bringing with them a new informality and a new approachability, (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a Clyne-polysemy W.Gr.-Maxim.-mod.	6	5
	(...) but it's those very qualities that make them even less viable than their forebears.	Grice-quality	3	1
15	Make your minds up, chums - (...)	W.Gr.-Int.-a Clyne-dialect	4	4
	(...) do you want to be just like one of us, mucking in with your Sandhurst minions and swearing with the best of them, or do you want to be a breed apart ?	W.Gr.-Int.-a Clyne-dialect Clyne-question	6	1
16	Politely aware of this tricky business , (...)	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-b W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-break.-a	5	4
17	(...) , on the basis that beauty is a perfectly comprehensible, modern thing to be celebrated for.	Beals-content	5	3
18	(...) none of them is ever going to put the squeeze on Kate Moss.	Barbe-metaphor-b	5	4
19	(...) slowly replacing "engagements" with actual "jobs", and "apartments" with actual "flats" , they would be well on the way to moneyed normality by now.	Barbe-metaphor-b	5	5
20	No such luck for young Harry, who has also exclusively revealed that he "likes to have a laugh" .	W.Gr.-Speech.-c Sp.W.-echo	8	8
21	(...), but we'll know, next time a prince goes to a party dressed as a member of the Ba'ath party , what they aren't.	W.Gr.-Speech.-a	12	5
22	It's a thorny, inconsistent business that seems to preclude almost all kinds of laugh.	W.Gr.-Speech.-a Sp.W.-echo	3	3
23	Would it not be easier just to pay tax?	Clyne-question	9	9
	Average		10,4	10,9

Figure A.8: Numbers of markings of male and female students in part A

	Text passage	Theor. Background	male	female
1	They may guard restaurants against fraud, but they don't bring smiles to the staff.	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-int.-a	3	1
2	The problem is not an outbreak of surely service or a sudden rise in prices (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	5	5
	(...) these are staples of British cuisine (...)	W.Gr.-Speech.-b	11	8
3	(...) as constant as duck a l'orange and fresh, homemade supermarket soup.	W.Gr.-Speech.-b Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-a	11	9
	The fall in largesse comes from an ignorance of etiquette by the dinner, technophobia and a British awkwardness by the hovering, tongue-tied staff.	W.Gr.-Phon.-rule-break.-b Barbe-metaphor-b	5	4
4	In the old days, after cryptic scribbling in the sky to your waiter across the room, the bill would arrive. (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	7	4
	(...) nestling in a folder and awaiting the inclusion of plastic.	Barbe-metaphor-a	2	1
5	Now, your server arrives clutching a control module as though he is about to land a model plane on your plate , and invites you to type in a code.	Barbe-metaphor-a	11	9
6	Can you type that in also and hit the right triangle, or should that be a square?	Clyne-question W.Gr.-Speech.-a	7	5
	Will the machine empty your account?	Clyne-question W.Gr.-Speech.-a	5	7
	Can you write it on the paper spewing from the innards?	Clyne-question W.Gr.-Speech.-a Barbe-metaphor-a	9	7
7	A practised maitre'd would "ahem" discreetly (...)	Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-b	4	1
	(...) and indicate, with the mere flick of a gold-topped pen , the blank space on the bill.	Barbe-metaphor-a	4	2
8	He might murmur something about " service non compris ", even if you thought it meant you hadn't understood the service.	Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-b W.Gr.-Maxim.-mod.	7	6
9	But less polished underlings (...)	Barbe-metaphor-a	2	5
	(...) should look to California for chutzpah hints.	Clyne-dialect W.Gr.-Int.-a	1	3
10	"I hope you enjoyed the service."	W.Gr.-Speech.-c	7	6
	"Can I change that note for you?"			
	"Shall I add on the tip?"			
	"We've programmed these new machines to take good care of the service charge."			
11	That should do it.	W.Gr.-Int.-a	5	3
	Average		7,6	7,8

Figure A.9: Numbers of markings of male and female students in part B

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Ich versichere, dass ich diese Magisterarbeit selbst verfasst und dafür ausschliesslich die angegebenen Texte und Quellen verwendet habe. Alle wörtlich übernommenen Aussagen sind als Zitate eindeutig gekennzeichnet. Die Herkunft der indirekt übernommenen Formulierungen ist angegeben.

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