Chapter 7: _TYPES OF IRONY RESULTING FROM THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES DISCUSSED IN PREVIOUS CHAPTERS: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS_

<<The irony of irony is that we can often recognize ironic situations and language even though we have a terrible time trying to define irony.>>

R. Gibbs & J. O'Brien, *Psychological Aspects of Irony Understanding*

7.1 Introduction and aims

My general aim all throughout this investigation has been to clarify and, therefore, understand in a more profound way the phenomenon of verbal irony within the field of linguistic pragmatics. I have presented in previous chapters different approaches to verbal irony that allow the researcher to look at it from different perspectives and to consider different elements which are part of it. The intention in this new chapter is twofold. On the one hand, I will try to make a recapitulation of all the types of verbal irony that have been discussed or touched on in some way or another throughout this piece of work, providing, in some cases, new types that arose as a consequence of scrutinising the points of view discussed. On the other hand, I will also provide numerical data of these types as they occur in each of the corpora used for this investigation. This quantitative analysis will be hypotheses-oriented, i.e., it will be carried out with the aim of testing hypotheses nº 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Hypothesis 5 will be quantitatively tested in

chapter 8, in relation to the strategies in the taxonomy proposed. Hypothesis 10 will not be quantitatively tested here, for, as was explained in chapter 5, there seem to be many variables involved which cannot be controlled in this piece of research. Hypothesis 11 has already been tested in chapter 6.

The types of irony discussed in this chapter have served as preliminary data for the later elaboration of the taxonomy of pragmatic strategies proposed in chapter 8, in which each of these types is reflected in one or some of the strategies used by speakers and users of ironic discourse.

I now turn to both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the above mentioned types.

7.2 General types of verbal irony found in the corpora regarding the different approaches discussed in previous chapters

7.2.1 Types of verbal irony within a classical framework: Testing Research Hypothesis nº 1
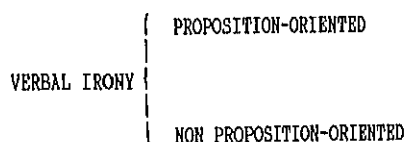
As was specified in chapter 2, classical/traditional approaches to the study of irony have always been proposition-oriented, i.e., they put forward the hypothesis that all cases of verbal irony convey the opposite of the literal proposition. It was also shown in chapter 2, by means of the evidence of some of the examples in the corpora used for this research, that this correspondence of "opposite proposition/verbal irony" was not always valid; in many cases a speaker can be ironic and not mean the opposite. Thus, there seems to be no one-to-one

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correspondence between verbal irony and "meaning the opposite proposition to the literal one". The set of correspondences seems to be much more complex, as I have shown and will try to show with even more detail in this and the next two chapters.

In agreement with the data analysed in the corpora, when looking at verbal irony from the classical/traditional perspective, two main kinds of verbal irony readily strike the researcher as prominent. These two types are illustrated in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Types of verbal irony found in the corpora in relation to traditional approaches

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                          {   PROPOSITION-ORIENTED
                          |
         VERBAL IRONY      {
                          |
                          {   NON PROPOSITION-ORIENTED
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To avoid repetition, I shall not present or analyse any examples of these two kinds here. Several examples have already been discussed in 2.4, where it was shown that, although many instances of verbal irony fulfil the traditional expectations, many other instances do not, which led me to the initial characterisation of the phenomenon by means of the dychotomy *proposition-oriented/non proposition-oriented.*

7.2.1.1 Quantitative analysis of the proposition-oriented/non proposition-oriented categories in the corpora studied

The numerical and statistical confirmation of this

fact, which also entails the acceptance of Research Hypothesis nº1 (see Introduction), can be appreciated in tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6.

Tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, & 7.5: Number and percentage of occurrence of instances of the proposition-oriented (PO) and non proposition-oriented (Non-PO) variables in the corpora studied.

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC (7.1)

	PO	Non-PO
Nº of occurrences (out of 86)	*16*	*70*
Percentage (%)	*18.60*	*81.40*

b) GG (7.2)

	PO	Non-PO
Nº of occurrences (out of 84)	*16*	*68*
(%)	*19.05*	*80.95*

c) YM (7.3)

	PO	Non-PO
Nº of occurrences (out of 55)	*16*	*39*
(%)	*29.09*	*70.91*

B) *Written Corpora*

a) *BR*   (7.4)

	PO	Non-PO
Nº of occurrences (out of 46)	16	30
(%)	34.78	65.22

b) *NA*   (7.5)

	PO	Non-PO
Nº of occurrences (out of 80)	20	60
(%)	25	75

Table 7.6: Total number and percentage of occurrence of the PO and non-PO variables in relation to the total number of instances of verbal irony analysed

	PO	Non-PO
Nº of occurrences (out of 351)	84	267
(%)	23.93	76.07

7.2.1.1.1 Discussion of the results

The results of this analysis of frequencies tells us that in, all the corpora studied, the number of instances of verbal irony in which the speaker/writer did not mean the opposite proposition was greater than the number of such instances in which s/he meant it. The percentage of occurrences for cases of verbal irony in which the speaker/writer did not mean the opposite of his/her literal proposition is, in all

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cases, much higher than that of its "opposite proposition" counterpart: 81.40% for the LLC, 80.95% for *The Golden Girls* television series, 70.91% for the *Yes Minister* television series, 65.22% for B. Russell's argumentative prose and 75% for the newspaper articles. These results confirm the argument put forward in Hypothesis nº 1, i.e. that not all cases of verbal irony are intended to mean the opposite of the literal proposition, leaving the ways of expression of verbal irony open to a richer variety of possibilities among which "opposite proposition" is only one of them. Table 7.6 shows the average percentage for all the corpora considered together, which tells that in 76.07% of the cases in which the speaker chose verbal irony as a strategy, he did not choose the "opposite proposition" alternative.

The statistical Median Test was applied to these data, and the results (see appendix 4, hypothesis 1) confirmed the hypothesis that the frequency of occurrence of the non proposition-oriented cases of verbal irony is greater (in all the samples) than that of the proposition-oriented ones. Likewise, the statistical chi-squared test was applied to check whether the relative frequency of the proposition-oriented and non proposition-oriented instances of irony is the same for all the corpora, and the results showed that the null hypothesis can be accepted, i.e., the relative frequency is the same; there is no difference as to the relative frequencies in the different corpora. Figures 7a and 7b illustrate the data and results discussed herein.

Fig. 7a. Frequencies of occurrence of the proposition-oriented & non proposition-oriented variables
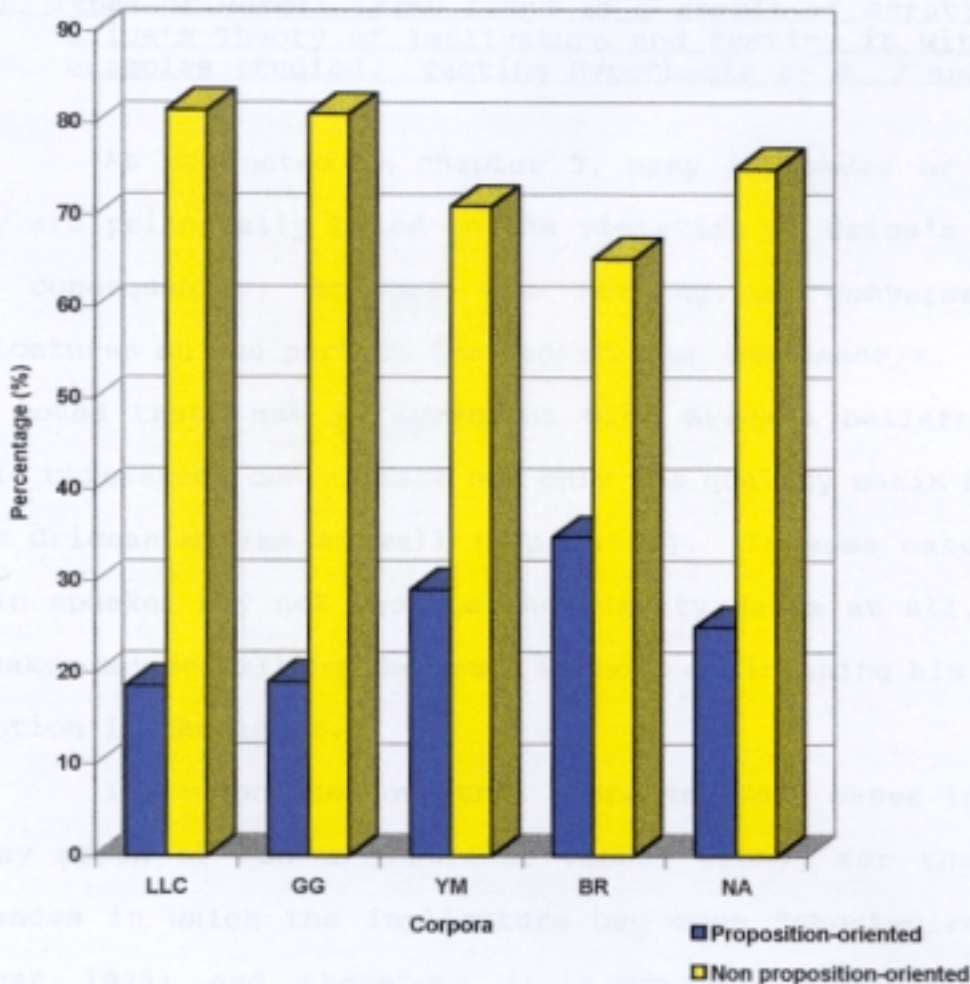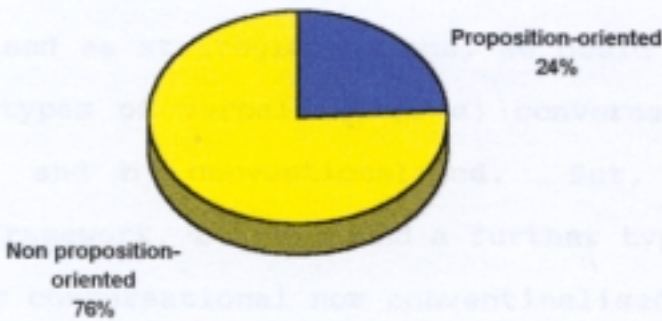

Fig. 7b. Total percentage of the proposition-oriented & non proposition-oriented variables

7.2.2 Types of verbal irony found as a result of scrutinizing Grice's Theory of Implicature and testing it with the examples studied. Testing Hypothesis nº 2, 7 and 9

As was noted in chapter 3, many instances of verbal irony are principally based on the violation of Grice's maxims and, consequently, trigger the working of conversational implicatures on the part of the hearer/s or addressee/s. It was also noted that, not in agreement with Grice's beliefs, many ironic utterances can violate not only the quality maxim but the other Gricean maxims as well (Hyp. nº 7). In some cases, the ironic speaker may not violate the Quality Maxim at all, i.e., a speaker may be telling the truth without diminishing his ironic intention in the least.

I also pointed out that there are some cases in which we may speak of *conventionalised* verbal irony, for these are instances in which the implicature has been "short-circuited" (Morgan, 1978), and, therefore, it is now never cancellable (see 3.3.1). At this step, it was found out that there are not only some words or expressions that have been conventionalised as ironic, but also some *pragmatic strategies* which are not associated to any words in particular but that have been conventionalised as strategies. Thus, we could hitherto speak of two main types of verbal irony: a) conversational or non-conventional, and b) conventionalised. But, interestingly, within this framework, I have found a further type, which seems to be neither conversational nor conventinalised. My argument here is that there is a type of verbal irony that is implicature-

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free but that cannot be said to be conventionalised. The irony in these cases is derived from the normal conventional implicatures of the words used, but these words or expressions are not conventionally used as ironic every time they are used. In other words, the ironic meaning is worked out via *conventional* implicatures but not through a conventionalised or "short-circuited" ironic expression or strategy. An example of this third type of veral irony would be Socrates' famous statement: "I only know I know nothing" or Martin's (1992) example: "Our friends are always there when they need us". In both cases, the speakers are telling the truth, and they do not seem to be violating any of the other three maxims. Then we can speak neither of conversational nor of conventionalised verbal irony. There is, however, an implied contradiction which simply derives fom the conventional meanings of the words used and shows the witticism of the speaker or the writer. In the first case there is an implicit contradiction based on the meaning of the verb "to know", for if one knows nothing, it sounds contradictory to say that one knows something, even that one knows nothing. This also sounds like a tongue twister, but it is another way of confirming the richness of witty possibilities a speaker can attain through verbal irony. In the second case, as was explained in 5.2.1, there is an implied contradiction between the pronouns that are expected to be used in the subordinate clause ("we" and "them") and those which are actually used ("they" and "us"). These examples would therefore conform a third type of verbal irony that I shall call "Implicature-free" (by which I mean "free of

conversational implicatures", but not of conventional ones). All the foregoing is summarised and illustrated in figure 7.2.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                            {  Violating Quality Maxim             │
│              {  1- Conversational {  Violating Quantity Maxim      │
│              {                    {  Violating Manner Maxim        │
│              {                    {  Violating Relevance Maxim     │
│  VERBAL IRONY {                   {                                │
│              {  2- Conventionalised  (short-circuited implicature) │
│              {                                                     │
│              {  3- Implicature-free                                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 7.2: Types of verbal irony found in relation to Grice's Theory of Implicature

Many examples of type 1 have already been provided, especially in chapter 5, but, as a reminder, I will discuss here one more example taken from the *Yes Minister* corpus. In the following exchange between Humphrey and Hacker (the Minister of Administrative Affairs), Hacker's reply is sarcastic and violates the Quality Maxim, for it can easily be inferred that Hacker believes and knows that both of them have secrets from each other. Hacker has now a secret plan, which he has devised as a means of taking revenge on Humphrey's continuous concealing attitude:

[1] Humphrey: Now Minister, you'll forgive me about saying this,
              but I'm beginning to suspect you're concealing
              something from me.

       Hacker: Oh surely you and I have no secrets from each other,
              have we, Humphrey?

                    (YM, 1994 Video Episode: *The Writing on the Wall*)

Hacker is not telling the truth, for they both know that the opposite proposition is true: they both keep secrets from each

other, and Hacker wants Humphrey to see that he is no fool by using the prototypical strategy for verbal irony: "Use an utterance whose proposition is opposite to the one meant or intended". Obviously, Hacker is violating the Quality Maxim here.

As an example for type 2, let us analyse this dialogue, where Rose is very upset because the grief counselling centre of which she is a member has been closed:

[2]

Rose: I'm fine. Don't worry about me. It's all those other people.

Blanche: Was it some kind of accident? No, don't tell me. If I get upset I'll eat.

Dorothy: What happened, Rose?

Rose: They closed the centre.

Blanche: Not your grief counselling centre?

Dorothy: No, Blanche. The Kennedy Space Centre. She wanted to be the first Lutheran on the moon.

(GG, 1991: 18)

The last adjacency pair between Blanche and Dorothy displays a typical example of one of the conventionalised ironic strategies discussed in 3.3.1 and 8.4.1 (A30): "Reply to a stupid question with an even more stupid answer". It is evident that Dorothy's response is not true, and it would be ridiculous to think so. In this way she is showing how ridiculous Blanche's question was. Nobody would ever take this answer in its propositional value in this context, which means that there is no possible cancellation of the implicature worked out, namely, that Blanche's question

was stupid and unnecessary.

To illustrate type 3 (implicature-free verbal irony), I would like to refer to two examples. The first one displays an instance of implicature-free verbal irony in the words of Humphrey (in the television series *Yes Minister*). After Humphrey made a proposal in which it was evident that he wanted to cheat the English people, the following dialogue takes place:

[3]

Hacker: But that's phoney. It's cheating, it's dishonest, it's just cheating with figures; putting a wool over people's eyes.

Humphrey: A government press release, in fact.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: *The Economy Drive*)

Humphrey is telling the truth when he says that, in fact, a government press release is about cheating people, and there is no further implicature to be worked out. But there is an implied contradiction here between what a government press release really is and what it should be, and this is what triggers the ironic interpretation. There is no violation of any of the Maxims, for Humphrey is saying what he considers to be true, he is being relevant, he is giving neither more nor less information than required and he is being neither obscure nor ambiguous. The conventional meaning of the phrase "in fact" is crucial for the interpretation of this utterance as ironic, for it depicts a situation that bears an inherent contradiction: a government press release should tell the people the truth about the policy and decisions taken by the government, but Humphrey's utterance conventionally implies the opposite.

[4] The second example to illustrate implicature-free irony has been taken from Russell's argumentative prose, in one of his well-known criticisms of some aspects of society. The criticism here is directed to the love-hate paradox existing -according to his view- in all human beings:

[4]
> <<We love those who hate our enemies, and if we had no enemies there would be very few people whom we should love.>>

(BR, 1958: 23)

The reader of this statement does not have to work out any implicatures. Russell is here expressing his ideas and beliefs sincerely, but it is simply the conventional meanings of the words used that cause the ironic interpretation. Russell is playing here with opposite meanings that express a paradox, and this, in turn, offers him the possibility of criticising a trait of human nature that he looks down on . It seems contradictory to love someone who hates some other person simply because that person he hates is our enemy, and it also seems a contradictory idea to love no one simply because we have no enemies. The logical and non-contradictory idea would be to think that we would love more people if we had no enemies. Russell has made a very clever choice of words and, in so doing, he has been successful at handling this implicature-free type of irony. Although, as we can see, this type exists, it does not seem to be the most frequent, as will be shown in the quantitative analysis that follows.

7.2.2.1 Quantitative analysis of the conversational, conventionalised and implicature-free categories

The number and percentage of occurrences of each of the types discussed in 7.2.2 is shown in tables 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11.

Tables 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, and 7.11: Number of occurrences and percentage of the conversational, conventionalised and implicature-free types of verbal irony found in the corpora

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC (7.7)

	Conversat.	*Convent.*	*Implic.-free*
nº of occ. *(out of 86)*	*64*	*0*	*22*
%	*74.4*	*0*	*25.6*

b) GG (7.8)

	Conversat.	*Convent.*	*Implic.-free*
nº of occ. *(out of 84)*	*65*	*13*	*6*
%	*77.38*	*15.48*	*7.14*

c) YM (7.9)

	Conversat.	*Convent.*	*Implic.-free*
nº of occ. *(out of 55)*	*40*	*1*	*14*
%	*72.73*	*1.81*	*25.46*

B) Written Corpora

a) BR (7.10)

	Conversat.	Convent.	Implic.-free
nº of occ. (out of 46)	37	2	7
%	80.43	4.35	15.22

b) NA (7.11)

	Conversat.	Convent.	Implic.-free
nº of occ. (out of 80)	67	0	13
%	83.75	0	16.25

Table 7.12: Percentage of occurrence of the Conversational, Conventionalised and Implicature-free variables with respect to the total number of ironic instances in the corpora analysed

	Conversat.	Convent.	Implic.-free
nº of occ. (out of 351)	272	16	62
%	77.78	4.56	17.66

7.2.2.1.1 Discussion of the results

The data in the previous tables show a marked tendency for ironic utterances to trigger conversational implicatures:

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74.4% in LLC, 77.38% in *GG*, 72.73% in YM, 80.43% in BR and 83.75% in NA, are the percentages for the **conversational** type of verbal irony. However, the figures also tell us that in a considerable number of cases the irony used was **implicature-free**, and, in other cases, the type of verbal irony used was expressed by means of a conventionalised ironic expression or strategy. Both in tables 7.6 and 7.10 it can be seen that no examples of **conventionalised** verbal irony were found, but several (25.6% and 16.25% respectively) were found of **implicature-free** irony. Thus, in all the corpora analysed, there is evidence that conversational irony is not the only possibility available: sometimes the ironic speaker does not need to resort to conversational implicatures, be it because s/he is using an expression or strategy that is now generally accepted as ironic (and, consequently, the implicature has been short-circuited) or be it because the irony derives from the conventional meanings of the words used. All this argumentation, which is based on the observed data and results, seems to lead the researcher to accept the argument put forward in hypothesis nº 2, i.e, that verbal irony can be conveyed not only through conversational implicature but also through conventional implicature.

The statistical Kruskall-Wallis test was applied here to see if there were any significant differences in the frequency of occurrence of these three types of verbal irony, and the results show that, in effect, the differences among the three types as regards frequency of occurrence are important and significant (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 2). In addition, the

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chi-squared test was carried out, in order to state whether the relative frequencies of occurrence of the three categories is the same for all the corpora. The results do not support the null hypothesis, i.e., the relative frequency of these three categories is not the same for all the corpora, which suggests that the use of one or the other category might depend on the type of discourse used (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 2)

The results discussed herein are illustrated in figures 7c and 7d.

Fig. 7c. Frequencies of occurrence of the conversational, conventionalised & implicature-free variables

Percentage (%)

Corpora: LLC, GG, YM, BR, NA

- □ Conversational
- ■ Conventionalised
- ▨ Implicature-free
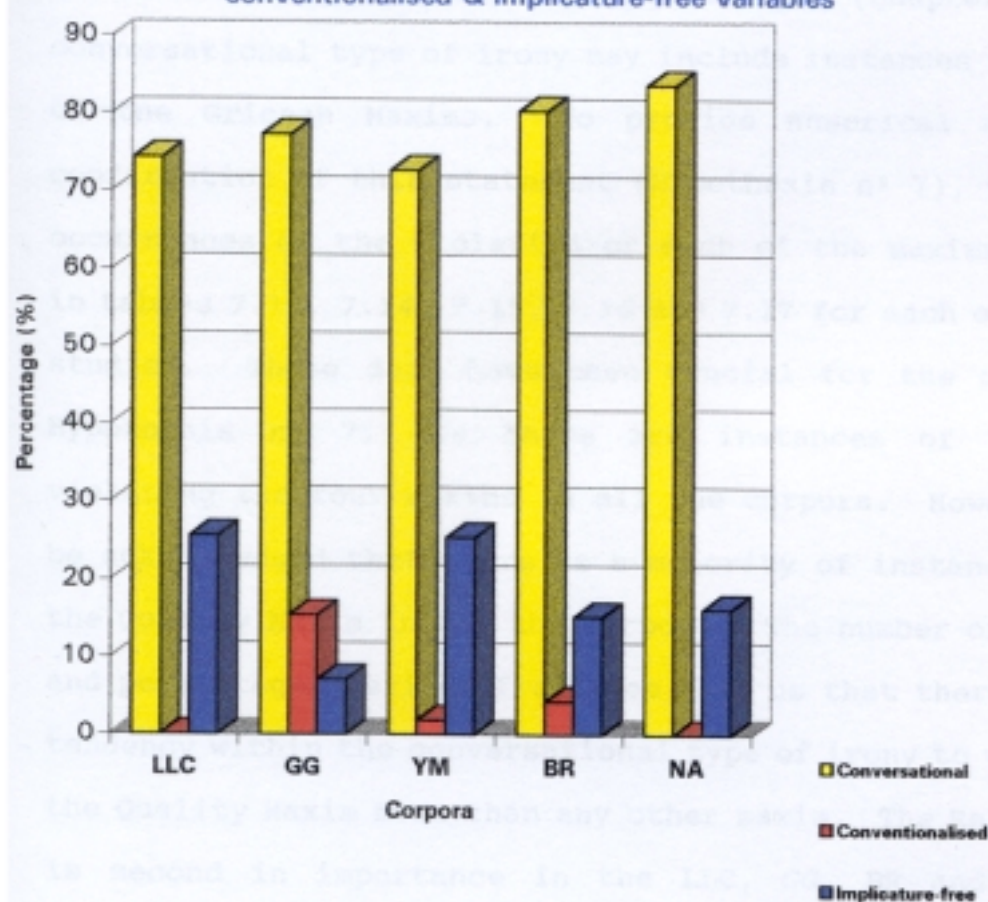
Fig. 7d. Total occurrence of the conversational, conventionalised & implicature-free variables

Implicature-free
17,66%

Conventionalised
4,56%

Conversational
77,78%
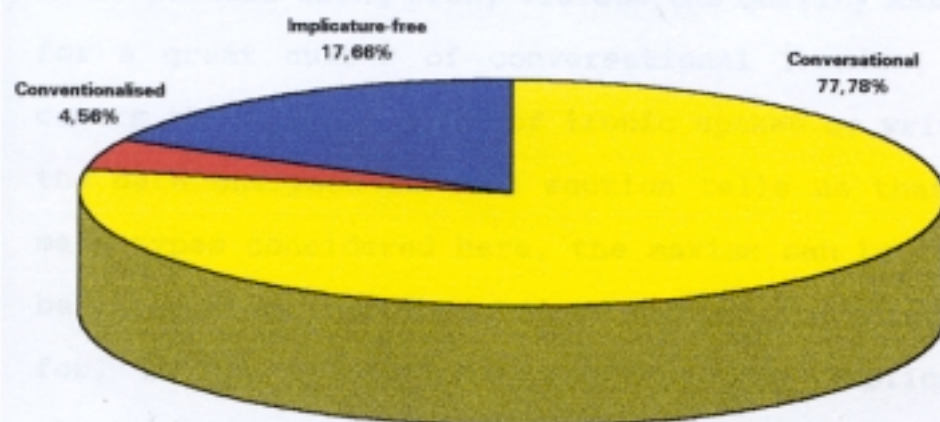
It has already been pointed out (chapter 5) that the conversational type of irony may include instances violating any of the Gricean Maxims. To provide numerical data for the confirmation of this statement (Hypothesis nº 7), the number of occurrences of the violation of each of the maxims is provided in tables 7.13, 7.14, 7.15, 7.16 and 7.17 for each of the corpora studied. These data have been crucial for the acceptance of Hypothesis nº 7, for there are instances of verbal irony violating the four maxims in all the corpora. However, it must be acknowledged that there is a majority of instances violating the Quality Maxim in all the corpora. The number of occurrences and percentages derived from them tell us that there is a marked tendency within the conversational type of irony to violate/flout the Quality Maxim more than any other maxim. The Relevance Maxim is second in importance in the LLC, *GG*, BR and NA corpora, whereas it is the Manner Maxim that is in second place in the YM corpus. Therefore, Grice's (and Brown & Levinson's) argument that speakers using irony violate the Quality Maxim is confirmed for a great number of conversational ironies, but in no way covers the whole picture of ironic spoken or written discourse: the data analysed in this section tells us that, of the three main types considered here, the maxims can be strictly said to be violated in only one of them, namely, the conversational type, for, in the conventionalised type, the implicature has been short-circuited (as explained in 7.22 and 3.3.1 above), and, in the implicature-free type, the speaker does not have to work out any conversational implicatures. Even more, within the

conversational type, the instances violating the Quality Maxim represent one of four possibilities. These are conditions which give evidence of the fact that the violation of the Quality Maxim within verbal irony is only one alternative the user of the language may take, which, though fairly frequent, does not reject other possibilities such as the violation of the other maxims or even the non-violation of any of them. These numerical data are also valuable for the acceptance of Research Hypothesis nº 9, which states that the other off record strategies can co-occur with "be ironic", for all of them are derived from the violation of one of the maxims.

Tables 7.13, 7.14, 7.15, 7.16 & 7.17: Occurrence of the violation of the Gricean Maxims within the Conversational type of verbal irony in the corpora studied

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC (7.13)

Violation of →	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
nº of occ. (out of 64)	23	13	7	21
%	35.94	20.31	10.94	32.81

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b) <u>*GG*</u> *(7.14)*

Violation of ⊣	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
nº of occ. (out of 65)	20	8	4	23
%	46.15	12.37	6.15	35.39

c) <u>*YM*</u> *(7.15)*

Violation of ⊣	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
nº of occ. (out of 40)	24	5	7	4
%	60	12.5	17.5	10

B)Written corpora

a) <u>*BR*</u>   *(7.16)*

Violation of ⊣	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
nº of occ. (out of 37)	19	1	7	10
%	51.35	2.70	18.92	27.03

b) *NA* *(7.17)*

Violation of →	Quality Maxim	Quantity Maxim	Manner Maxim	Relevance Maxim
nº of occ. (out of 67)	32	8	12	15
%	47.76	11.94	17.91	22.39

7.2.3 Types of verbal irony found in the corpus within the framework of speech act theory. Testing Hypothesis nº 3

It was discussed and shown in chapter 3 that irony can manifest itself not only at the propositional level but also at the illocutionary level of the speech act. We have already seen how the irony of an utterance may result from an opposition of speech acts, i.e., a speaker/writer may choose the strategy of using a different or contrary speech act to the one intended and thus give an ironic effect to his/her utterance. In chapter 3, I presented Haverkate's (1990) classification of irony based on Searle's classification of speech acts, and I showed, by means of an example in the corpus, that one more category could be added to Haverkate's, namely, that of declarative irony (see 3.4.1.1). We could, thus, with this framework of thought in mind, divide all the examples in the corpus in these five categories: a) Assertive ; b) Directive; c) Commissive; d) Expressive and e) Declarative irony. In most cases this categorisation would only tell us what kind of speech act the speaker/writer is using to carry his ironic meaning, but it would

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not always tell us about the basis and origin of the
contradiction implied in the ironic utterance. There will be
cases in which the irony is based precisely on a contradiction
of speech acts, i.e., when the act intended is different from the
one apparently performed, and, therefore, it will be reasonable
to say that the kind of verbal irony used is *speech-act based or
oriented*. But there will be other cases in which the implied
contradiction leading to the ironic interpretation will not be
so much based on the speech act used as on some other kind of
contradiction which will be found at other levels, such as that
of the proposition, the presuppositions behind some words or
expressions, etc.. Therefore, and in spite of the fact that all
ironic utterances may be said to be performing a given speech
act, I shall classify all the examples in my corpora as either
a) *speech-act oriented* or b) *non-speech act oriented*. The former
embraces those instances of verbal irony in which the irony is
based precisely on an opposition of speech acts, i.e., when the
speech act made manifest in the language used is not the intended
one. The latter refers to those cases of verbal irony whose
foundation is not a contradiction in the speech act used. In
this category we may place as examples some prototypical cases
where the irony is mainly based on the meaning of the proposition
and not on that of the speech act, or some others in which the
irony is based mainly on the conventional meanings of some words
used. Thus, considering Speech Act Theory, we could have two
main kinds of verbal irony, which are illustrated in figure 7.3

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Figure 7.3: Types of irony found in relation to Speech Act Theory

	SPEECH ACT-ORIENTED	
VERBAL IRONY		
	NON SPEECH ACT-ORIENTED	

In order to illustrate the difference between these two types, I shall now provide some examples from the corpora analysed.

a) Speech-act oriented verbal irony:

A prototypical case of speech act-oriented verbal irony would be present in the pragmatic strategy of asking rhetorical questions, in which case, the speaker seems to be asking a question although he is not. This question generally has the effect of a derogatory statement, as can be observed in the following conversation between Blanche and Dorothy:

[1]

Blanche: What's the baby doing here?

Dorothy: It's Lucy and Ted's baby. Ted had a little accident water-skiing. Lucy's taking him to the hospital.

Blanche: Now we cannot have a baby in this house. My sister's coming.

Dorothy: Does she eat them?

(GG, 1991:39)

This is an example of commissive irony expressed through a rhetorical question, by means of which Dorothy is expressing her disapproval of Blanche's opposition to their taking care of the baby. She is asking a question when she does not expect an

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answer and when what she intends is to state her disapproval of Blanche's idea. There is, thus, a clear opposition of speech acts (commissive vs. assertive), and it can be said that the irony is based precisely on this opposition.

Another illustrative example of speech act-oriented irony is the example that led me to conclude that declarative irony can also be possible, leading me, therefore, to accept the part in Hypothesis nº 3 that touches on this issue (see 3.4.1.1). I refer to the following instance from the *Yes Minister* corpus, reproduced as follows:

[2]

<<The phone rang. I grabbed it. It was Frank Weisel, my political adviser, saying that he was on his way over. I told Annie, who wasn't pleased.
"Why doesn't he just move in?" She asked bitterly.
Sometimes I just don't understand her. I patiently explained to her that, as my political adviser, I depend on Frank more than anyone.
"Then why don't you marry him?" she asked. "I now pronounce you man and political adviser. Whom politics has joined let no wife put asunder.>>
(YM, 1989:12)

As was stated in 3.4.1.1, there is a contradiction implied here between the performative act of marriage and the real intended assertive act of showing her discontent and discomfort with her husband's behaviour.

b) Non speech act-oriented verbal irony:

As an example of non speech act-oriented verbal irony I consider it appropriate to present the following excerpt from an article published in *The Sunday Telegraph*, in which its author, Sean Langan, shows his skepticism about a device currently making its début in America called "Quick Court". Quick Court looks like

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a cash point machine, but, instead of giving the user dollars, it gives him/her a divorce. The whole article has an ironic tone that shows the author's sarcastic laughter at this fast-and-easy way of getting a divorce:

[1]

> <<If you are certain your marriage can't be saved, you press a box marked Yes. A mistake at this point could be crucial and mean staying married for a whole 20 minutes more. But supposing you don't change your mind or make a mistake, the machine will then grant you a divorce and then offer you some kindly advice: "Divorce can be emotionally difficult for all members of the family. Conciliation services, legal advice and other help is available.>>
> (NA, March 15, 1994)

The irony found in these lines (or, better, between them,) does not seem to be based on an opposition of speech acts. It lies better in the choice of some words, like "crucial", by means of which the author pretends to give importance to a fact that would be not so crucial (after 20 years of marriage, for example, who would care about waiting for 20 more minutes?). The use of inverted commas to quote the "kind" advice of the machine shows the strategy of echoic verbal irony which has been thought of as more appropriate by the writer in this case than that of opposition of speech acts. By echoing the advice given by the machine, the author makes the incongruity and absurdity of these machines self-evident, and also shows the situational irony and the contradiction existing in a machine that can give you an instant divorce but that nevertheless tells you that "divorce can be emotionally difficult for all your family, etc.".

I shall now procede to classify all the examples in my

corpora as belonging to one of these two categories (speech act-oriented/non speech act-oriented).

7.2.3.1   Quantitative Analysis of the Speech Act-oriented and Non Speech Act-oriented categories in the corpora studied

Tables 7.18, 7.19, 7.20, 7.21 and 7.22 show the distribution of these two types of verbal irony in the five different corpora analysed.

Tables 7.18, 7.19, 7.20, 7.21 and 7.22: Frequency and percentage of occurrence of the speech act-oriented and non speech act-oriented variables within the examples of verbal irony in the corpora analysed

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC   (7.18)

	Speech Act-oriented	*Non s.act-oriented*
number of occ. (out of 86)	*22*	*64*
%	*25.58*	*74.42*

b) GG   (7.19)

	Speech act-oriented	*Non s.act-oriented*
number of occ. (out of 84)	*27*	*57*
%	*32.14*	*67.86*

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c) <u>YM</u>   (7.20)

	Speech act-oriented	Non s.act-oriented
number of occ. (out of 55)	19·	36
%	34.55	65.45

B) Written Corpora

a) <u>BR</u>   (7.21)

	Speech act-oriented	Non s.act-oriented
number of occ. (out of 46)	3	43
%	6.52	93.48

b) <u>NA</u>   (7.22)

	Speech act-oriented	Non s.act-oriented
number of occ. (out of 80)	12	68
%	15	85

Table 7.23: Percentage of occurrence of the Speech act-oriented and Non speech act-oriented variables with respect to the total number of examples of ironic discourse in the corpora

	Speech act-oriented	Non s.act-oriented
number of occ. (out of 351)	83	268
%	23.65	76.35

7.2.3.1.1 Discussion of the results

The five corpora used in this research displayed instances of speech act-oriented irony, although there is a higher percentage of occurrence of this kind of verbal irony in the spoken corpora than in the written one (25.58%, 32.14% and 34.55% versus 6.50% and 15%). This is possibly due to the more interactive character of spoken as opposed to written language. In written language the writers seem to feel more inclined to propositional-oriented irony, to echoic irony (marked very frequently by means of inverted commas) or to play with the conventional meanings of words. The results of the statistical chi-squared test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis nª 3) show that the difference observed between the spoken and the written corpora is a significant one.

In all the corpora, the number of non speech act-oriented examples is greater than the number of speech act-oriented ones, this possibly being proof of the fact that, similar to proposition-oriented irony, this is only one more possible strategy used by English speakers to convey irony. The percentage showing the proportion of speech act-oriented instances of verbal irony with respect to the total number of instancies studied is 23.65% (table 7.16), which seems to be a fair number if we consider that there are many other strategies by means of which a speaker/writer may express verbal irony (as will be shown and discussed in chapter 8). Figures 7e and 7f illustrate these results in a graphical way.

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Fig. 7e. Frequencies of occurrence of the speech act-oriented & non speech act-oriented variables
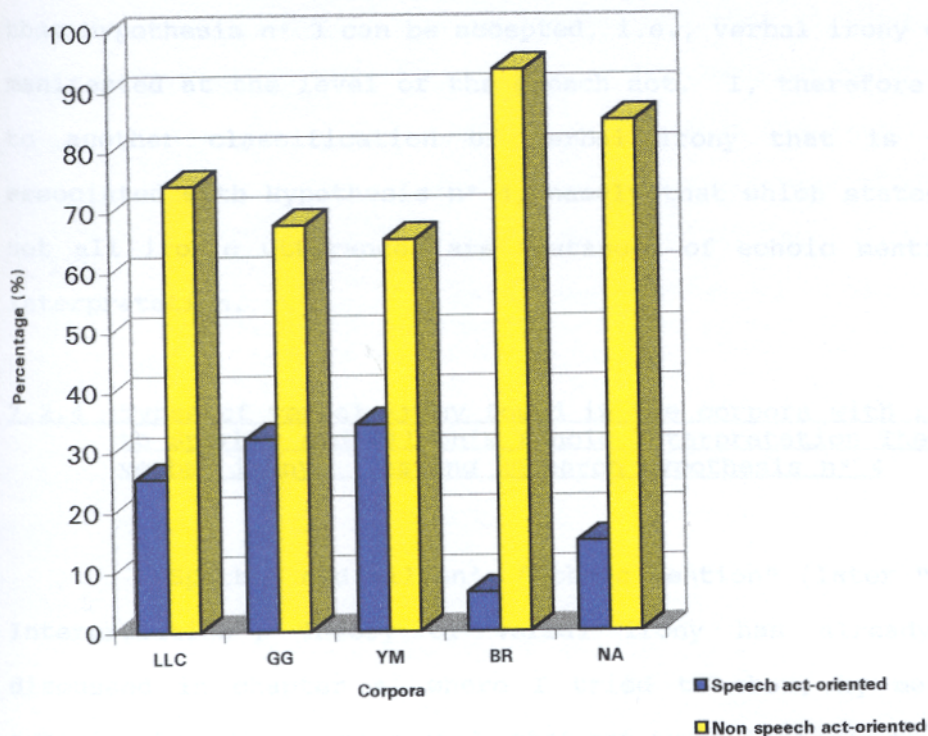
Fig. 7f. Total frequencies of occurrence of the speech act-oriented & non speech act-oriented variables

Speech act-oriented
23,65%

Non speech act-oriented
76,35%
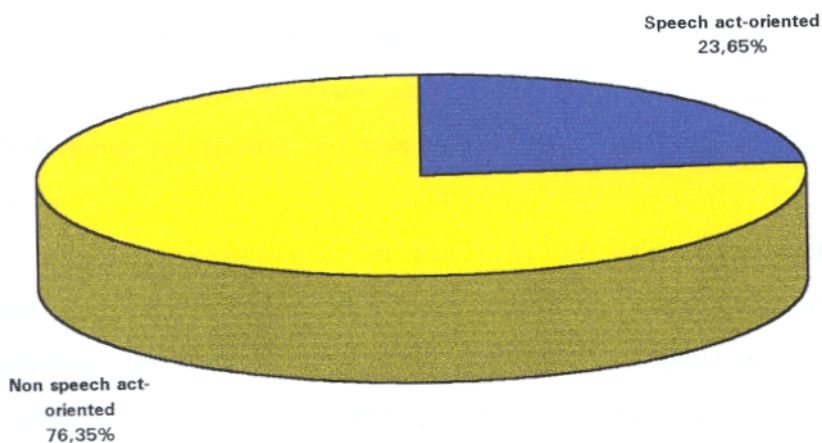
After these results, it seems reasonable to conclude that Hypothesis n° 3 can be accepted, i.e., verbal irony can be manifested at the level of the speech act. I, therefore, turn to another classification of verbal irony that is to be associated with Hypothesis n° 4, namely that which states that not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention or interpretation.

7.2.4 Types of verbal irony found in the corpora with respect to Sperber and Wilson's Echoic Interpretation Theory of verbal irony. Testing Research Hypothesis n° 4

Sperber and Wilson's "Echoic Mention" (later "Echoic Interpretation") Theory of verbal irony has already been discussed in chapter 4, where I tried to show, by means of examples from the corpora used, that not every instance of verbal irony could be so easily labelled as echoic. In the same chapter, I expressed my disagreement with Sperber and Wilson and tried to justify it by showing that some instances of irony cannot be labelled as "echoic". Therefore, when considering Sperber and Wilson's view of irony, two main types of irony readily seem to appear in the spotlight: a) *Echoic*, and b) *Non-echoic*.

As I explained in 4.3.1.1, if one follows Sperber & Wilson's view to the letter, it could be said that all ironic utterances are echoic, for they may echo (according to them) the "thought of people in general", but, since this explanation seems to be too vague, and, in some cases, it does not seem to explain

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the cause of the irony or the strategy used by the speaker, I considered it more appropriate to try to delimit the concept of "echo" by defining it. Therefore, I thought it would be descriptive and explanatory to label some examples in the corpus as *Echoic* when there were some words, opinions or thoughts that were repeated and generally mocked that could be clearly recognised or traced both backwards or forwards in the discourse. As there were many cases in which this recognition could not be done (because, in fact, the speaker's intention was not apparently to echo any person's thought or idea), I classified these cases as *non-echoic*. As far as I have been able to observe in my research, to echo other people's utterances or ideas is but one more strategy that speakers use to convey irony (albeit, in effect, a very frequent one). To limit verbal irony to the echoing of other people's thoughts or ideas would be, in my opinion, and in view of the evidence found in the corpora, to restrict the scope of possibilities of so rich a phenomenon as verbal irony. Many instances would be left aside and, therefore, many pragmatic shades of meaning which are worth analysing would fade away with them. Thus, regarding Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Theory of irony, we could speak of two categories found in the corpora analysed, namely, *Echoic* and *Non-echoic*, which are illustrated in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4: Types of verbal irony found in relation to Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Theory

VERBAL IRONY	ECHOIC
	NON-ECHOIC

Although several examples of both echoic and non-echoic verbal irony were provided and discussed in 4.3.1.1.1 and 4.3.1.1.2, I shall illustrate these two variables here by means of two more examples. The first one has been taken from an article published in *The Spectator*, a British newspaper. Its author, Alasdair Palmer, uses an ironic tone in the whole article to manifest his skepticism about graphology and graphologists. He mocks the decision taken by some companies in France to analyse their prospective employees' handwriting before giving them a post. The concluding paragraph of his article is as follows:

[1]

<<Reliable or not, graphology is growing. Further integration with Europe will mean that more British companies will copy their European counterparts and start using graphology as an integral part of the selection process. But those of you with terrible handwriting should not despair. You can always enlist in a course of graphotherapy to rectify undesirable letter formation and improve your character at the same time.>>

(NA, January 1, 1994)

After reading the whole article, it is clear to the reader that the concluding piece of advice that the author gives is loaded

with irony and is reminiscent of the kind of advice the people he is mocking might give us. He is, thus, echoing these people's thoughts and ideas in order to show his contempt for them and also to tell his readers that, in fact, what he suggests to them is precisely not to follow his apparent advice. Consequently, this is also a case of speech act-oriented verbal irony, where the act of giving advice is not intended.

[2]

In the following conversation between Humphrey and Hacker (from the *Yes, Minister* corpus), Hacker is revenging himself on Humphrey by not giving him a straight answer to his question (since this is what Humphrey has also done to him). Here we encounter both echoic and non-echoic irony:

Humphrey: Minister, I must ask you for a straight answer. Tomorrow? Monday? Tuesday?

Hacker: In due course, Humphrey. At the appropriate juncture, in the fullness of time, when the moment is right. When the necessary procedures have been completed; nothing precipitate, of course.

Humphrey: Minister, this is getting urgent.

Hacker: Oh! what a lot of new words we are learning!

(*YM*, 1994 Video Episode: *The Writing on the Wall*)

Hacker's first answer (In due course...) is unequivocally echoic of Humphrey's many previous answers to Hacker's questions, when Humphrey was always ambiguous and never gave a clear, straight answer. But his last reply to Humphrey's request of urgency does not seem to be echoic, though it is, in fact, ironic and

sarcastic: when Hacker exclaims "What a lot of new words we are learning!", he is mocking at Humphrey because he never seemed to feel urgency when Hacker asked him questions before, and, therefore, that is why he says that the word urgent is "new" and he is learning it now. But this idea or thought (that the word "urgent" is new for Humphrey) cannot be traced back to any previous comment or suggested thought of Humphrey's. It cannot be said to be echoing any of Humphrey's utterances or ideas. Hacker makes use of overgeneralization and ambiguity (by saying "we") and uses the word "new" sarcastically, and these seem to be the main strategies on which the irony is based.

7.2.4.1 Quantitative Analysis of the Echoic and Non-echoic variables

The results of the account of both echoic and non-echoic instances of verbal irony are presented here for each of the corpora used (in the same mode as with the variables previously treated in this chapter) in tables 7.24, 7.25, 7.26, 7.27, 7.28 and 7.29.

Tables 7.24, 7.25, 7.26 7.27 and 7.28 : Frequency and percentage of occurrence of the Echoic and Non-echoic variables in the different corpora studied.

A) Spoken corpora:

a) LLC   (7.24)

	Echoic	*Non-echoic*
number of occ. *(out of 86)*	*15*	*71*
%	*17.44*	*82.56*

b) GG   (7.25)

	Echoic	*Non-echoic*
number of occ. *(out of 84)*	*16*	*68*
%	*19.05*	*80.95*

c) YM   (7.26)

	Echoic	*Non-echoic*
number of occ. *(out of 55)*	*19*	*36*
%	*58.70*	*41.30*

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B) Written Corpora

a) <u>BR</u>   (7.27)

	Echoic	Non-echoic
number of occ. *(out of 46)*	27	19
%	58.70	41.30

b) <u>NA</u>   (7.28)

	Echoic	Non-echoic
number of occ. *(out of 80)*	46	34
%	57.5	42.5

Table 7.29: Total number of occurrences and percentages of the Echoic and Non-echoic types of verbal irony with respect to the total number of examples analysed

	Echoic	Non-echoic
number of occ. *(out of 351)*	123	228
%	35.04	64.96

<u>7.2.4.1.1 Discussion of the results</u>

The percentage corresponding to instances of Non-echoic irony is greater than that corresponding to echoic irony in the spoken corpora (82.56%, 80.95% and 65.45% versus 17.44%, 19.05% and 34.55%). However, echoic verbal irony is more frequently

used than non-echoic irony in the written corpora (58.70% and 57.5% for echoic irony against 41.30% and 42.5% for non-echoic irony). This fact is confirmed by the results of the statistical chi-squared test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 4), which shows that the differences of occurrence of these variables between the written and the spoken corpora are significant.

In any case, there seems to be enough numerical data to accept the statement in Research Hypothesis nº4, namely, that not all examples of verbal irony are echoic. Indeed, the total number of occurrences in all the corpora used (table 7.29) of non-echoic irony is higher (228) than the total number of occurrences of echoic verbal irony (123). Figures 7g and 7h illustrate the data graphically.

Fig. 7g. Frequencies of occurrence of the echoic & non -echoic variables
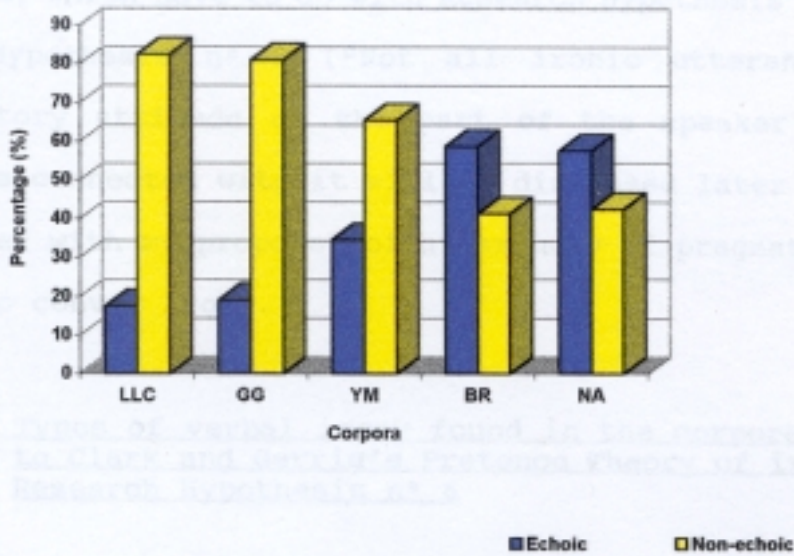
Fig. 7h. Total percentage of the echoic & non-echoic variables
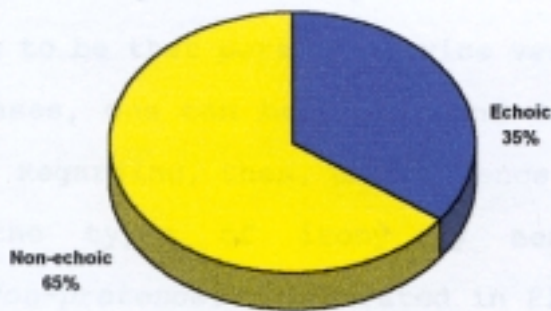
Many of the instances of echoic verbal irony proved to also be instances of pretence, although it cannot be said that there is a one-to-one correspondence between echo and pretence: some of the echoic examples proved to be no instances of pretence and vice versa. I now turn to the results obtained in this respect, which have to do with Research Hypothesis nº 6. I shall skip Hypothesis nº 5 ("Not all ironic utterances convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker) because the results connected with it will be discussed later in chapter 8, together with my proposal of a taxonomy of pragmatic strategies used to convey irony.

7.2.5 Types of verbal irony found in the corpora with respect to Clark and Gerrig's Pretence Theory of irony. Testing Research Hypothesis nº 6

In 4.4.1. I anticipated my belief that verbal irony is not always pretence, and analysed some examples that led me to such a belief. These examples showed us that sometimes a speaker/writer may be echoing someone's words or ideas without pretending to be that person, or vice versa, or, even more, that in some cases, one can be ironic and do without both echo and pretence. Regarding, then, the Pretence Theory of irony, we can express the types of irony by means of the dichotomy *Pretence/Non-pretence*, illustrated in Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.5: Types of verbal irony found in relation to Clark and Gerrig's Pretence Theory of irony

VERBAL IRONY	PRETENCE
	NON-PRETENCE
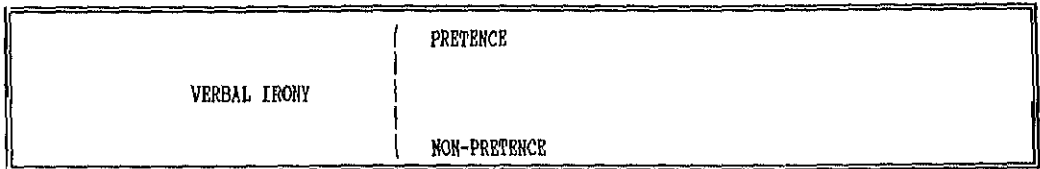
The results displaying the number of occurrences of these two types are exhibited and discussed in the next two sections.

7.2.5.1 Quantitative Analysis of the Pretence and Non-pretence variables

Tables 7.30, 7.31, 7.32, 7.33 and 7.34: Occurrence and percentage of the Pretence and Non-pretence variables in the corpora studied

A) *Spoken corpora*

a) *LLC* (7.30)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 86)	12	74
%	17.86	82.14

b) *GG* (7.31)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 84)	15	69
%	17.86	82.14

c) YM   (7.32)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 55)	22	33
%	40	60

B) Written Corpora

a) BR   (7.33)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 46)	14	32
%	30.43	69.57

b) NA   (7.34)

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 80)	24	56
%	30	70

Table 7.35: Total number of occurrence and percentage of the Pretence and Non-pretence variables in the corpora studied

	Pretence	Non-pretence
number of occ. (out of 351)	87	264
%	24.79	75.21

7.2.5.1.1   Discussion of the results

In all the corpora studied the percentage of occurrence of the non-pretence variable is higher than that of the pretence one (86.05%, 82.14%, 60%, 69.57% and 70% versus 13.95%, 17.86%, 40%, 30.43% and 30%. These data show us that both variables are possible for both spoken and written discourse, but they also indicate that, if we considered the Pretence Theory of irony as the only valid theory, we would leave many cases of verbal irony aside and unattended, consequently losing many of its rich possibilities of manifestation. Considering the information given in table 7.35, 75.21% of the cases of verbal irony would be left aside. The results of the statistical test of the chi-square (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 6) show that the distribution of frequencies is not the same for all the corpora, i.e., the differences of frequency of occurrence among the different corpora are significant, which may imply that the variables pretence/non pretence vary according to the type of discourse used.

The data discussed here are graphically represented in Figures 7i and 7j.

Table 6.1. Percentage of occurrence of the different tones within the ironic utterances in the corpus.

TONES	Fall-rise	Fall	Rise	Rise-fall	Level	Total
Percentage	36,0	48,8	8,2	7,0	0,0	100
Occurrence	31	42	7	6	0	86
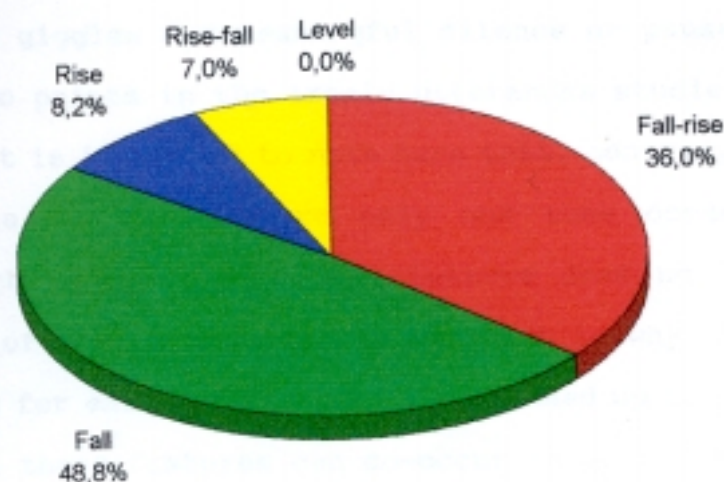
Fig. 6a. Pie chart

Fig. 6b. Bar chart

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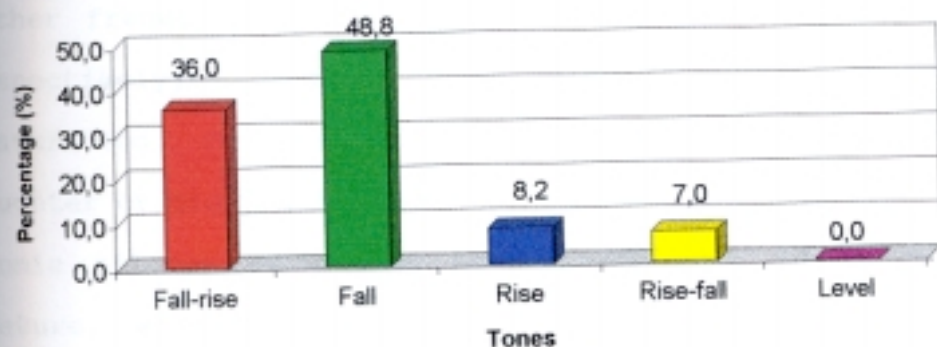
7.2.6 Types of verbal irony found with respect to Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory

The main irony types viewed from the Theory of Politeness perspective have already been illustrated in chapter 5 (Figure 5.1), in which I make reference to three main kinds of verbal irony: Negative, Positive and Neutral. Negative and Positive verbal irony may address both the positive and negative face of the hearer or of a third party, whereas Neutral irony seems to be apparently non-face threatening. Since the classification I shall propose as basic for the subsequent development of the different ironic strategies used by speakers/writers is, in general terms, based on these three types, I shall not give any numerical data here, for it would coincide with those given in 8.5.1. These data will provide evidence for Research Hypothesis nº 8, stating that a speaker may convey irony through positive and negative politeness (both on record strategies according to Brown and Levinson) as has already been shown by means of the analysis of some examples in 5.3.1 and 5.3.2.

The quantitative analysis in relation to Research Hypothesis nº 9 (about the co-occurrence of other off record strategies with irony) is not made here, for it is implicit in the one made in 7.2.2, where the confirmation of the possible violation of any of the Gricean Maxims by an ironic speaker is made. Besides, all these off record strategies are included in the taxonomy of strategies presented in chapter 8, where a quantitative analysis of all the strategies will be carried out,

so it would be redundant to do it here.

Numerical data about the conventionalised and implicature-free types of verbal irony have already been given. These data coincide with that of *on record irony* (for there is no triggering of conversational implicatures in these kinds). The number and percentage of occurrence of these two types would then coincide with that of on record irony, and it, therefore, tells us about its possibility of existence, in disagreement with the arguments put forward by Brown & Levinson (1987).

~~7.2.6.1 Quantitative analysis of the on record and off record variables in the corpora studied~~

I will now present the data corresponding to two types of irony that could additionally be derived (apart from the ones displayed in Figure 5.1) from Politeness Theory, illustrated in Figure 7.6.

Figure 7.6: Types of irony found with respect to Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                    ON RECORD                             │
│                                                          │
│  VERBAL IRONY                                            │
│                                                          │
│                    OFF RECORD                            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Within the on record type, I will include all the cases of conventionalised and implicature-free verbal irony found in

the different corpora (for they do not demand the formation of conversational implicatures), and, under the off record label, I shall include all the examples in which it is clear that the speaker/writer is violating one or more of the Maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle, therefore making the hearer/reader work out inferences of the type of conversational implicatures (in agreement with Brown & Levinson's definition of off recordness - see 5.2-).

I must note here that, as was stated and illustrated in chapter 5, (see 5.3.1 and 5.3.2) both on record and off record strategies may co-occur, and this has proved to be true for many of the examples in the corpora studied. However, I will classify as "off record" all the examples which demand the working out of implicatures on the part of the hearer, no matter if they are also mixed with on record strategies. The ones labelled "on record" will be only the "pure" ones, which do not demand the working out of implicatures.

I now turn to the numerical data obtained for these two variables.

Tables 7.36, 7.37, 7.38, 7.39 and 7.40: Occurrence and percentage of the on record and off record variables in the corpora studied

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC   (7.36)

	On record	Off record
number of occ. *(out of 86)*	22	64
%	25.58	74.42

b) GG   (7.37)

	On record	Off record
number of occ. *(out of 84)*	19	65
%	22.62	77.38

c) YM (7.38)

	On record	Off record
number of occ. *(out of 55)*	15	40
%	27.27	72.73

B) Written corpora

a) BR *(7.39)*

	On record	*Off record*
number of occ. *(out of 46)*	*9*	*37*
%	*19.57*	*80.43*

b) NA *(7.40)*

	On record	*Off record*
number of occ. *(out of 80)*	*13*	*67*
%	*16.25*	*83.75*

Table 7.41: Percentage of occurrence of the on record and off record variables with respect to the total number of ironic examples in the corpora analysed

	On record	*Off record*
number of occ. *(out of 351)*	*78*	*273*
%	*22.22*	*77.78*

7.2.6.1.1 Discussion of the results

The figures in the above tables show that there can be no doubt as to the off recordness of a great number of instances of ironic spoken and written discourse. The great majority of the examples of irony studied in the corpora (77.78% in total) were labelled as off record, considering the fact that they

demanded the working out of implicatures on the part of the hearer/reader. However, there are also a number of examples that fitted well within the on record label, which, with respect to the total number of ironic examples, represent 25.58% in LLC, 22.62% in GG, 27.27% in YM, 19.57% in BR and 16.25% in NA. As can be seen, the occurrence of "purely on record" verbal irony is fairly even in all the corpora here studied and this occurrence adds to the acceptance of Research Hypothesis n° 8. It appears to be the case that on record irony is likely to occur more frequently in spoken than in written discourse. Nevertheless, this difference shown in the tables does not seem to be significant, considering the results of the statistical chi-squared test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis $n^{\circ}8$), which show that the frequencies of occurrence of these two variables is the same for both the written and the spoken corpora.

The data discussed here are graphically represented in figures 7k and 7l.

Fig. 7k. Frequencies of occurrence of the on record & off record variables
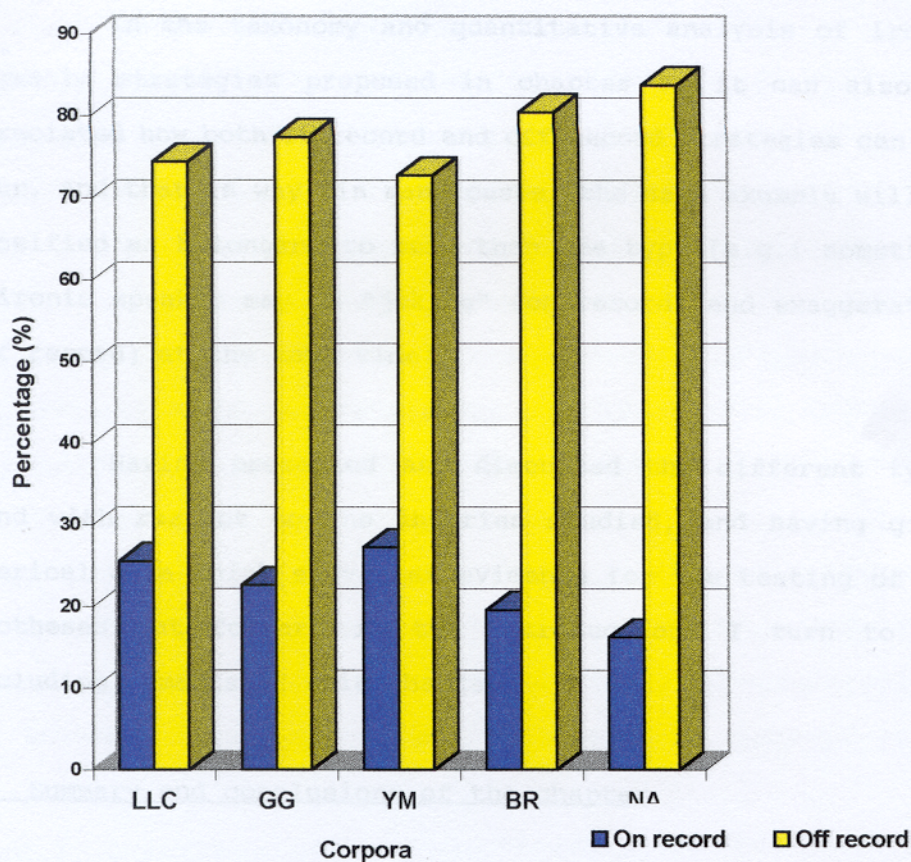
Fig. 7l. Total percentage of the on record & off record variables
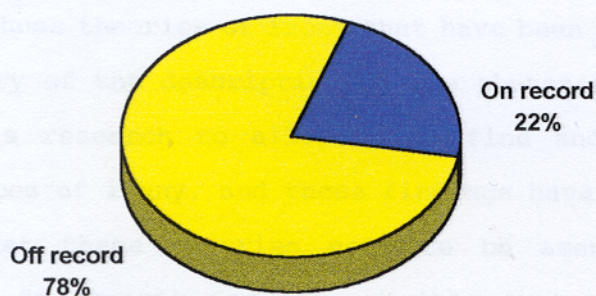
In the taxonomy and quantitative analysis of ironic pragmatic strategies proposed in chapter 8, it can also be appreciated how both on record and off record strategies can co-occur, and that is why, in many cases, the same example will be classified as belonging to more than one type (e.g.: sometimes an ironic speaker may be "joking" (on record) and exaggerating (off record) at the same time).

Having presented and discussed the different types found with respect to the theories studied, and having given numerical data which served as evidence for the testing of the hypotheses put forward in the Introduction, I turn to the concluding remarks of this chapter.

7.3 Summary and conclusions of the chapter

The data and statistical analysis presented in this chapter has helped clarify those aspects treated as variables in the majority of the hypotheses put forward in the introductory chapter of this thesis (Hyp. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, & 9). The scrutiny of those theories of irony that have been most prominent in the history of the description of the phenomenon has thrown light on this research to allow me to find and characterize different types of irony, and these findings have led me to the awareness that these theories need to be amended if their objective is to account for all possible instances of verbal irony.

Specifically, the analysis made in this chapter has rendered the following conclusions:

- If the researcher looks at verbal irony from the point of view of Traditional theories, s/he will have to acknowledge that there is more to irony than "meaning the opposite of the literal proposition", and, therefore at least two main types have to be accounted for: *proposition-oriented* irony and *non proposition-oriented* irony. The data collected from the corpora used for this research (as well as the results of the statistical tests) confirmed the existence of the latter type of irony: in all the corpora investigated the frequency of occurrence of the non proposition-oriented type was greater than that of the proposition-oriented type. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that Research Hypothesis nº 1 can be accepted.

- If we look at verbal irony from the standpoint of Grice's Theory of Implicature, we shall have to conclude, on the basis of the evidence of the corpus examples, that there is more to irony than the violation of the Gricean Maxims. In many instances this violation is observed, but, in many others, there is no such violation. A speaker may be ironic without violating any of the Gricean Maxims, be it because the implicature has been short-circuited (and, therefore, the irony has been conventionalised) or simply because there is no triggering of conversational implicatures. The conventional implicatures of the words or expressions being used are the key to the irony. Thus, from this perspective, there seem to be three main types

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of verbal irony, namely, *Conversational, Conventionalised* and *Implicature-free*. The quantitative data presented for these three types showed that, even though the conversational type of irony is the one having the highest percetages of occurrence, the other two types ought not to be disregarded, for they represent a considerable number of the cases studied (approximately one fourth of the total number). Likewise, these data and the statistical analysis carried out on their basis, provide evidence for the acceptance of Hypotheses nº 2 ("Verbal irony can be conveyed not only through conversational, but also through conventional implicature"), nº 7 ("An ironic writer/speaker can not only violate the Quantity Maxim but also the other three Gricean Maxims"), and nº 9 ("A speaker/writer can make different off record strategies co-occur in order to convey an ironic meaning").

- If verbal irony is viewed from the standpoint of speech-act theory, the observer will clearly see that, in many instances the implicit contradiction or opposition characteristic of irony is not precisely at the propositional level, but at the speech-act level. Therefore, one has to conclude that there is a speech act-oriented type of verbal irony. Many times, the ironic speaker does not mean the opposite of his/her proposition, he intends to show a contradiction or clash between the act apparently performed and the one intended. But not all instances of irony show this type of clash, which shows that there is also a non-speech act-oriented type of verbal irony. The numerical

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data worked out for these two types tell us that there is a majority of instances of non-speech act-oriented verbal irony in the five corpora analysed, but the percentage of occurrence of the speech act-oriented type is higher for the spoken corpora than for the written one (as was confirmed by the statistical $x2$ test). In any case, the existence of the speech act-oriented type has proved to be real in 23.65% of the total cases, which seems to be sufficient evidence for the acceptance of one part of Research Hypothesis nº 3 ("Irony manifests itself not only at the propositional level but also at the illocutionary level of the speech act..."); and within this type, the finding of an example of performative irony (see 7.2.3.a) seems to confirm the second part of this hypothesis ("...and it can even be manifested through declarative (performative) speech acts").

- If we think of verbal irony in terms of Sperber and Wilson's Echoic theory, the evidence of the data will tell us that, even though many instances of verbal irony are clearly echoic, many others are not. The data collected and presented in this respect in this chapter have shown that the total number of non-echoic examples in the corpora was greater than the number of echoic ones (228 versus 123), which seems to be sufficient evidence for the acceptance of Research Hypothesis nº 4 ("Not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention"). The statistical chi-squared test showed that the frequencies of occurrence of these two variables varies for the written and the spoken corpora; the proportion of non-echoic instances of irony is

greater in the spoken corpora than in the written corpora.

- As regards the consideration of the Pretence Theory of irony, as with the Echoic Theory, some of the cases studied proved to be instances of pretence but others did not. Non-pretence verbal irony proved to be more frequent than pretence irony, both in the spoken and the written corpora (as the results of the statistical chi-squared test also confirmed), which implies that looking at irony only through the prism of this theory would leave many instances unattended (as it is also the case with the other theories). These data are also taken as evidence for the acceptance of Hypothesis nº 6 ("Not all ironic utterances are instances of pretence").

- Finally, and with respect to Brown & Levinson's Politeness theory, it was found that even though these authors place irony as an off record strategy, in some instances the ironic utterance analysed proved to be on record, therefore leaving the door open to the consideration of both an off record and an on record type of verbal irony. The data obtained displays a much higher percentage of occurrence of off record irony than of on record irony for all the corpora studied (as confirmed by the statistical chi-squared test), but the 22.22% of instances of on record irony found appear to be sufficient evidence for the acceptance of Research Hypothesis nº 8 ("The ironic speaker/writer can make use not only of off record strategies but also of on record ones to make his/her point").

In conclusion, the data obtained in the study carried out in this chapter seem to support the argument put forward in this thesis with respect to the non-explanatory power of the available theories: although each of them points to a certain characteristic of verbal irony, none of them seems to account for all the possible occurrences of the intricate phenomenon of verbal irony. This is probably due to the "slippery" character of irony, about which all the authors studying the phenomenon seem to be in agreement. That is why it is so difficult to define. The authors that have ventured a definition have done so at the expense of being criticised by those who find the frequent exceptions to the rule. Others do not dare define it and speak of a "characterisation", such as K. Barbe (1995), who writes:

> <<With care, I try to avoid the term *definition*. Partly perhaps because of Muecke's (1969:14) wonderful statement: "since... Erich Heller, in his I̶r̶o̶n̶i̶e̶ German, has already quite adequately not defined irony, there would be little point in not defining it all over again". For the time being, let me call it a characterization or description.>> (1995: 9)

The analysis of the phenomenon in the light of the different theories, however, has helped me in the attempt to define or, better, characterise verbal irony, and this is what I shall try to do in the next two chapters. Each of these theories are mirrored in one or more of the pragmatic strategies described in Chapter 8, but the taxonomy proposed there (as well as the discourse functions discussed in chapter 9) gives additional information as to the cause, motivations, intentions

and techniques of the speakers/writers who use ironic discourse. The pragmatic concepts of *strategy* and *function* seem to be more explanatory and to lend themselves to the coverage of all instances of the phenomenon. I now turn to this issue.

Chapter 8: PROPOSAL OF A TAXONOMY OF
PRAGMATIC STRATEGIES USED BY
ENGLISH SPEAKERS/WRITERS IN
IRONIC DISCOURSE: QUALITATIVE
AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

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<<An ironic statement of friendship or
love, however feeble the irony will be
stronger than a simple "I love you" -
unless it is reversed because the irony
has been missed, or weakened because it
is seen as a hint of *blame disguised as
disguised blame*. "You don't thrill me
when you hold me, no, not much"- even
this drab stroke, from a recent popular
song, implies an intellectual sharing:
we not only love each other, we
understand each other. It thus runs the
risks, and may reap the rewards,
implicit in all stable ironies.>>

Wayne Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined verbal irony as a
phenomenon that can manifest itself through different types,
depending on the standpoint taken by the careful observer. The
discovery and analysis of these types was necessary for the
acceptance of most of the hypotheses put forward in the
introductory chapter. All these hypotheses were derived from a
Main Hypothesis, which claims that "irony is a complex phenomenon
which cannot be explained in its totality by means of the
existing theories" and that "the pragmatic concept of strategy,
as well as the concept of discourse function, can help in its
explanation and characterisation". In this chapter I shall try
to show how the concept of pragmatic strategy can help in its
explanation and characterisation. I shall concentrate on the

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explanation of the phenomenon of verbal irony by means of the description and analysis of the pragmatic strategies used by ironic speakers/writers, making, in this way, a proposal for a further approach to verbal irony. My approach in no way attempts to boast of being a new theory of verbal irony. It simply describes the phenomenon from a pragmatic point of view, focusing on the various and different strategies a speaker may make use of to produce ironic discourse. In a sense, it can be asserted that this is an eclectic approach, because, albeit within the pragmatic perspective, it takes into account all the most prominent approaches and theories of verbal irony that have been put forward by different authors through the history of linguistic discussion. The implicit message of my proposal is, thus, that the features of irony emphasized by these authors are all, indeed, possible features of irony that signal a possible strategy that may be chosen by an ironist, but that there are other features (implicit in other possible strategies) that also characterize irony, as the evidence of the instances of ironic discourse found in the corpus seems to confirm.

Before discussing the taxonomy of strategies, I present an attempt to define the two key concepts of my proposal in this chapter: a) Strategy and b) Verbal irony. As regards the latter concept, perhaps it would be better to speak of a characterization, since, as was shown in chapter 2, and as is a matter of shared and common knowledge among all authors studying the problem, one of the ironies of irony is the fact that, albeit easily recognizable, it is a slippery concept, and, therefore,

it escapes tight definitions. My definition/characterisation tries to be in agreement with the general approach taken in this piece of research, as well as with the results coming out of it. My aim is to describe pragmatic meanings in the best possible way and this I will try to do by following Leech's remark: "Meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to a speaker or user of the language" (1983: 6). This study, thus, has a pragmatic basis, for, at the time of classifying the different strategies, reference was made to elements such as addressers or addressees, the context of the ironic utterances, or other pragmatic variables which have already been specified in the previous chapters in general, and in Chapter 3 in particular, such as speech acts, power, distance, etc. A quantitative analysis of these strategies is also presented in order to give a general idea of the observed frequencies of occurrence of the different strategies in the corpora used. The data here will be presented separately for each of the corpora, for they represent different types of discourse, and (as in the previous chapter) it was considered a fact that the variable of genre may influence the quantitative results, i.e., the type of discourse used may influence the type of verbal irony used and the frequency with which each strategy is used. This is also the reason why the spoken corpora are distinguished from the written corpora. Other variables that might influence are "unprepared" versus "prepared" or "previously planned" discourse. The examples in the LLC display instances of unprepared or unplanned irony as they occur in normal conversation, whereas the ones in the other corpora

were more or less planned beforehand by the television series writers (in *Yes, Minister* and *The Golden Girls*) or by Bertrand Russell and the writers of the newspaper articles.

It is my belief that this analysis of the ironic strategies used by English speakers presents a more detailed and comprehensive approach than the ones I have studied and discussed in previous chapters. This analysis shows that verbal irony may be both echoic and non-echoic; that sometimes the ironic speaker may mean the opposite of his/her proposition, but that, on some other occasions, he may not; that in some opportunities s/he may be aggressive, but, in others, he may not; and so forth. It tries to embrace as many modes of occurrence of the phenomenon as possible, although I am conscious of the fact that the group of pragmatic irony strategies is an open group and that it allows for much creativity on the part of the speaker, in such a way that it would be impossible to describe all the possibilities. As was noted in Chapter 2, irony is a versatile phenomenon indeed.

This is a corpus-based analysis and, therefore, the strategies specified in the taxonomy were found in the corpora. However, I have included in the taxonomy a few more strategies that -albeit not represented in the corpus examples- are considered as manifestations of verbal irony by certain authors and that fit in the definition of verbal irony adopted in this research. Bruce Fraser (1995: personal communication) encouraged me to do so on the grounds that a linguist cannot discard good examples of the phenomenon s/he is studying simply because it

does not appear in the corpus being handled. In any case, these are only a few strategies which, far from hindering the achievement of the objectives of this study, have contributed to shed light on its findings.

As was specified in the Introduction, the total number of instances of verbal irony analysed in the corpora is 351, of which 86 were found in the LLC, 84 in *GG,* 55 in *YM,* 46 in BR, and 80 in NA.

I shall now proceed to define and characterise the two above-mentioned key concepts: *strategy* and *verbal irony.*

8.2 Definitions/characterizations proposed

a) Strategy

In a previous paper (Alba Juez, 1995b), I pointed to the fact that there are authors such as Brown & Levinson (1987) who have used the concept of strategy widely but who nevertheless have not defined such a concept. I, therefore, thought that a definition was necessary and I ventured to provide my own definition, which I reproduce herein:

> <<An attempt on the part of the speaker to reach (by means of various linguistic procedures) a given communicative aim.>>   (1995b: 22)

Once we know what a pragmatic strategy is, we have the basis for the definition of verbal irony which I think to be the most appropriate for the purposes of this study.

b) Verbal irony:

> A super-strategy embracing many subsidiary pragmatic strategies used by speakers or writers to express meanings which are based on one or more of a group of underlying semantic oppositions such as: spiritual/material, true/false, positive/negative, love/hate, self/others, etc.. These oppositions may be made manifest at different levels such as those of the proposition, the speech act or even the phonological level. It generally involves an attitude on the part of the speaker that shows derision in most cases but that can also build rapport among the interlocutors and/or be used to praise or express positive feelings, or it can also show neutrality on the part of the speaker with respect to his attitude towards himself, the hearer or a third party.

This characterisation takes into account three aspects which, after so much reflexion and research on the phenomenon of verbal irony, I have found to be crucial:

1) *The underlying semantic oppositions:* This aspect is one that I have found to be permanent in all the instances of verbal irony studied, and one that forms part of the essence of the concept. As has been noted in previous chapters, the classical approaches pointed to the contradictory nature of irony, but they restricted it to the level of the proposition, and this seems to be the source of the limitations of their definitions. As I shall try to show in the examples provided to illustrate each of the strategies, in every case, the speaker/writer is resorting to one or more of the following underlying semantic oppositions: *true/false, spiritual/material, positive/negative, real situation/desired, contrived or perceived situation, facts/imagination, love/hate, richness/poverty, self/others, meaning1/meaning2, agreement/disagreement, belief/disbelief,*

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expected/unexpected, sanity/madness, youth/old age, good/bad, ignorance/wisdom, speech act1/speech act2, success/failure, prominence/non-prominence, infinity/finiteness, power/impotence, passion/reason, religion/ atheism.

2) *The oppositions manifest themselves at different linguistic levels:* this is an issue that has been discussed and illustrated with examples taken from the corpora in previous chapters. We have been able to differentiate an opposition at the level of the proposition from one at the level of the speech act or one at the presupposition level. This awareness of the fact that the underlying semantic oppositions can be present at different levels has been, I believe, crucial for understanding that a speaker may be telling the truth and nevertheless be ironic, for the opposition in these cases is not to be found at the level of the proposition, but at any other level.

3) *The attitude on the part of the speaker towards the hearer may be positive, negative or neutral:* As was noted in previous chapters, a speaker may choose the strategy of verbal irony not only to express derision towards the hearer or a third party but also to express praise or good intentions or feelings. In addition, in some particular cases, the speaker may show neither a positive nor a negative attitude towards a given person or situation, and those are the cases which I have labelled as Neutral. It has also been observed that, even in the cases of Negative irony used against the hearer, a positive attitude may be implicit towards a third party, or vice versa, when the aggressiveness is directed to a third party, a positive attitude

may be implicitly directed to the hearer. These three types of verbal irony will be considered as the three main options a speaker has before choosing the particular ironic sub-strategy that will allow him/her to reach his/her communicative aim. I now turn to them.

8.3 Three main types of verbal irony

The argument put forward for this classification supports the view that before making any formal choices regarding the language to be used, the speaker/writer of verbal irony has first an intention and/or an attitude that he wants to communicate (and this is in close connection with the function intended -see chapter 9-). The attitudes or intentions may be of three main kinds, namely, Positive, Negative and Neutral and will manifest themselves in actual language through the realization of a given set of strategies which are based on a given set of semantic oppositions. Therefore, from the point of view of the intentions and/or attitudes of the speaker, we may classify verbal irony in the following manner:

a) *Positive irony:* used when the intention of the speaker is to praise or express a positive attitude or feeling towards himself, the hearer or a third party.

b) *Negative irony:* used when the intention of the speaker is to criticize or express some kind of negative attitude or feeling towards himself, the hearer, a third party or a situation.

c) *Neutral irony:* used to express neither a negative nor a

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positive attitude towards any participant. The intention here may be simply to amuse the hearer or a third party in either a positive or a negative way.

The choices explained above are illustrated in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1: Main types of verbal irony from the standpoint of the speaker's attitudes and intentions

```
                                |  towards the hearer
                  / POSITIVE    |  towards a third party
                /               |  towards him/herself
              /
            /                   |  towards the hearer
VERBAL  / _ _ _ _   NEGATIVE    |  towards a third party
IRONY   \                       |  towards him/herself
          \
            \                   |  (No special attitude towards any participant,
              \  NEUTRAL        |   but having the intention of amusing by
                                |   showing witticism)
```
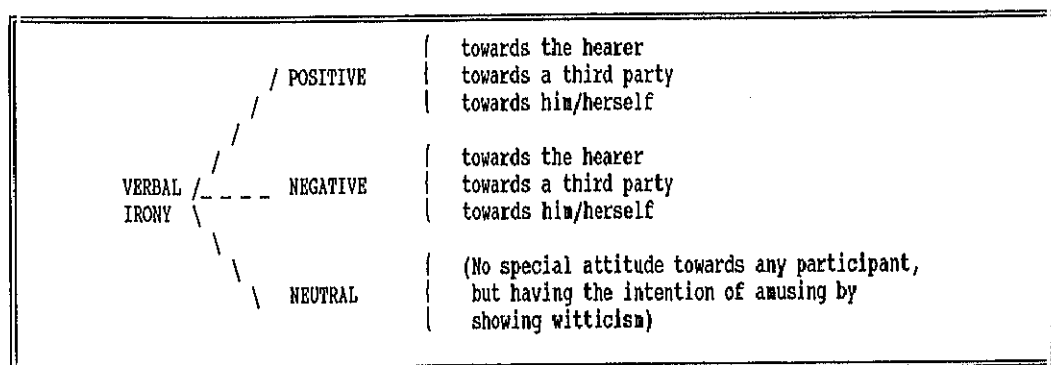
As noted in the introduction to this chapter, I got to this classification after analysing hundreds of examples in the corpora and also some other examples which were not in the corpora but that I could not ignore or reject because they were given and analysed by scholars who have also studied the phenomenon of verbal irony in a serious manner.

I shall now proceed to present the taxonomy of strategies deriving from these three main types, which constitute, in my view, the second choice the speaker has to make once s/he chooses one of the three main types of irony. I must point to the fact that many of the strategies may be used for either of the three main types of verbal irony and, even more,

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that many times both Negative and Positive irony may be chosen by the speaker to work together (as was anticipated in 5.3 with respect to Politeness Theory).

.

8.4 A proposal of a taxonomy of sub-strategies of the superordinate pragmatic strategy "Use verbal irony"

Assuming that "Use verbal irony" is a pragmatic strategy any speaker can choose to attain certain communicative aims, and that within that strategy s/he may decide to use Positive, Negative or Neutral irony, I shall derive all the sub-strategies found in this investigation from these three types. First, I shall describe all the strategies found to express Negative Irony, given the fact that this kind of irony has proved to be the most frequent (as will be confirmed by the quantitative analysis in 8.6).

8.4.1 Negative verbal irony: Be aggressive towards yourself, the hearer, a third party or a situation

The strategies included here are those in which it was found that the speaker was attacking (strongly or mildly) either him/herself, the hearer, a person other than the hearer or a given situation. (All the negative ironic strategies will be labelled with the letter "A").

A 1: Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance

This type has been discussed widely all through this

work. It includes the prototypical cases of irony, of which many examples were given in 2.4.1. The basic underlying opposition for this type is that of true/false or also literal/intended meaning. Other oppositions may also be implicit, depending on each particular case.

As has already been noted, this is a strategy also valid for Positive irony. An example in which it is evident that the speaker is being aggressive is the following remark by Hacker after Humphrey complains about the Minister's attitude of not being entirely straightforward:

Hacker: Oh! the expert on straightforwardness!

(*YM,* 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall")

Hacker is here taking revenge on Humphrey's continuous ambiguity by not giving him a straightforward answer this time; so, when Humphrey complains about Hacker's lack of straightforwardness, he refers to Humphrey in an exclamatory way as "the expert on straghtforwardness", when what he in fact means is that Humphrey is no expert on straightforwardness at all, accusing him in this way of never being honest and direct with him.

A 2: Use a proposition which is contrary to general belief, but not contrary to what you mean

This strategy represents one of the intricate paths that irony may take. In the following text, written by Bertrand Russell, he includes communism as one of the great religions of

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the world, and he means what he says, a fact that tells us that he finds many things in common between communism and the great religions of the world. However, the reader is expected to know that communism is not a religion but a political régime (and that, even more, this régime was against religion) and this is what causes the ironic effect, which in turn tells the reader that he is criticising communism and putting it in the same category as the great religions that are -in his opinion- untrue and harmful:

> <<There has been a rumour in recent years to the effect that I have become less opposed to religious orthodoxy than I formerly was. This rumour is totally without foundation. I think all the great religions of the world -Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Communism- both untrue and harmful>>
>
> *(BR, 1958: 53)*

Russell is here being ironically aggressive towards communism, by saying that it turned out to be completely the opposite of what it was meant to be. This aggressiveness may be said to be aimed at a third party if the reader does not belong to the communist party, and at the reader if the reader happens to be a communist. The underlying opposition of this piece of verbal irony seems to be that existing between the real situation (communism is like a religion) and the desired one (communism was intended to be opposed to religion).

A 3 Use a proposition you consider to be true, but which is opposite to the one considered to be true by the hearer

This is another variant of the strategies which focus on the proposition, but it cannot be said that the speaker means

the opposite of his literal proposition. One of the examples
that led me to consider this variant is the following:

```
 B     21 5I ^mean it would be !so                                /
 a     20 5+[m]+                                                   /
(B     11 5n\ice to get a 'good de'gree#                           /
 B     11 5cos I've ^w\orked so 'hard#                             /
 a     20 5[m] you will . what [@] paper do you feel most [k@]/
 a     20 5confident on -                                          /
 C     11 5^Lit !Cr\it I th/ink# - -                               /
 a     20 5[m] why - -                                             /
 B     11 5[?@] it's ^my sort of !th\inking# - -                   /
 B     11 5I ^th\/ink# .                                           /
 B     11 5you ^kn/ow#
```

                                                    (LLC, 7.1)

When B says "I think, you know" she is contrasting her statement
to the hearer's possible preconceptions about her capacity to
think. She means what she says, but there is irony based
precisely on this underlying contrast of belief/disbelief: what
she believes of herself contrasted to what she thinks her
interlocutor believes. the falling-rising tone on "think" and
the rising tone on "you know" also contribute to the insinuating
tone of the statement (see 6.2). The speaker here is being
mildly aggressive towards the hearer, by challenging what she
considers to be his beliefs about her.

**A 4: Show in your utterance that you have interpreted your
interlocutor's statement as having an opposite meaning**

        Consider the following exchange between Hacker and John
(a member of Parliament):

Hacker: How many people know about the winner of the Napoleon
        Prize?

John: Oh! It's top secret!

Hacker: You mean... everyone.

> *(YM,* 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall"

By interpreting John's statement as meaning quite the opposite, Hacker is being ironic and skeptical about the secrecy of every issue that is labelled "top secret" among the members of parliament. He is telling John that he does not believe they are capable of keeping a secret. Again, it cannot be said that Hacker is using a proposition contrary to the one meant, but it can be said that there exists an underlying opposition which is that of belief versus disbelief (in the secrecy of the secrets of parliament, in this case). In this way, Hacker also shows mild aggressiveness towards John and the system in general, criticising them in an indirect manner.

A 5: Use formal language and affected or "non-core" vocabulary when it is not apparently required by the situation or context

In Chapter 2 (2.4.2, e.g. 1), the fact that Russell was mocking a sector of society by using formal language and affected vocabulary was pointed out. The same fact was again focused on in chapter 5, when discussing the possibilities of use of all the formalities of Negative Politeness to express ironic meanings (see 5.3). I refer the reader to those examples to avoid repetition here. The general underlying contrast for these cases may be the expected/unexpected one, for the speaker is using formal language when it is not expected, and this is what makes

the hearer work out the necessary implicatures for the understanding of the irony. There may, however, be other underlying oppositions relative to each particular case. The use of indirect conventionalised expressions (showing overpoliteness) in some examples quoted in previous chapters, like Leech's (1983) "Do you have to spill ash on the carpet?", Searle's (1975) "Ought you to eat so much spaghetti?" or Haverkate's (1988) "Could you do me the favour of shutting up?" is included in this type. The same holds for the use of "non-core" words discussed in 6.5 in relation to written verbal irony.

A 6: Use words or expressions that have a somewhat different (though not opposite) meaning from the one conveyed

Example 3 in 2.4.2 (Chapter 2) is an instance of the occurrence of this strategy. When the two academics are criticizing the Head of Department and they refer to him as being "idiosyncratic", they are trying to avoid a stronger word (which, to judge from the context, could be "crazy" or "lunatic"), of which "idiosyncratic" does not appear to be the opposite. "Idiosyncratic" is only a different and suggestive word, that leaves the door open to the hearer's own interpretation. The speaker is showing aggressiveness towards a third party (the Head of the Department), but he is building rapport with the hearer, who apparently shares his thoughts and, therefore, becomes his "accomplice". The underlying opposition seems to be that of agreement/disagreement (with the Head of Department's ideas). Remember they are discussing the Head of Department's ideas about

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teaching literature).

A 7: Use puns: Make the hearer retrieve two mental frames

In 5.5.4 (e.g. 4), I made reference to a conversation between Blanche, Rose and Sophia (in *The Golden Girls*) in which Sophia tells Blanche that the name of an egg dish named after her in Tuscaloose is "over easy". I noted there that the speaker (Sophia) is taking advantage of her power over the hearers to criticize by "giving association clues" to mean that Blanche is "easy" with men. These association clues are given by the two meanings of the word "easy" that the hearer has to retrieve. Sophia is making use of a pun on the word "easy" to criticise Blanche and be aggressive towards her. The underlying opposition here is precisely that existing between the two possible meanings (meaning1/meaning2).

A 8: Use suffixes that indicate a certain degree of derision

It seems to be the case that, in English, the suffix *-ish* may be used sometimes as an indication of a certain derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker, as is shown in this conversation:

```
A    11 3^but I !c\ertainly#                                    /
A    11 3[@ @] you ^kn/ow#                                      /
A    11 3one has ^rather mixed f\eelings#                       /
A    11 3I in [@] - an ^\odd 'sort of w/ay#                     /
A    11 3^s\/ome of them#                                       /
A    11 3[?@] the "^\/actors I 'thought#                        /
A    11 3were a ^bit sort of "!\amateurish#                     /
b    20 3oh yes                                                 /
A    11 3and I [d] "^can't say I liked :Andrew R\/ay very       /
A    11 3much#                                                  /
```

(LLC, 7.1)

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A is being mildly ironic in his judgement of the actors in the play they are discussing. He is trying to minimise his criticism, and, to that effect, he uses the suffix "-ish" in the word "amateur" and also uses the hedge "a bit sort of". A does all this instead of saying that he did not like the actors. This is a case of what Leech (1983) called "use of irony to avoid being impolite", the underlying opposition being good/bad (good vs. bad acting in this case).

A 9: Change the name of somebody (nickname) or something deliberately

We have seen in 3.3 that some nicknames in some cultures may become conventionalised ironies, as is the case of tall men nicknamed "Shortie" in Western America or blind men called "men with a thousand eyes" in India. But I have also found several examples of this strategy that are conversational, i.e., cases in which the speaker changes the name of a person or thing to be ironic in that particular situation. The irony is not valid in other contexts, and, therefore, it demands the working out of implicatures on the part of the speaker/reader. In this example from the GG corpus, we find Sophia changing the name of a game ironically, which shows her negative/aggressive attitude towards the French:

Blanche: Hi Sophia. Boy, I tell you, there is nothing more invigorating than spending a little time on a boat.

Sophia: Oh yeah? Not when I sailed to America. Picture it. There were -a tired, poor, huddled mass eating marinara

sauce out of a can. It was hell. And the entertainment.
Some guy from Palermo forgot his accordion so he sat
around singing "O Solo Mio" while squeezing a monkey.

(Blanche laughs)
Blanche: Sophia.

Sophia: Sophia what? It was the worst time of my life. If it
weren't for "pin-the-tail-on-the-French", we would've
gone stir-crazy.

(GG, 1991: 86)

In order to understand this piece of verbal irony, one needs to
have certain knowledge of the world about a game called "pin-the-
tail-on-the-donkey" and about the Italian not liking the French
very much. Sophia is Italian and so were her companions on the
boat to America, who apparently changed the name of the game on
purpose, to express their contempt for the French in an ironic,
indirect way. The equation French = donkeys rapidly comes to
the mind of the hearer. The underlying opposition can be said
to be real situation/contrived situation (the real name of the
game versus that made up by the people on the boat). Another
illustrative example to consider here is the occasion when Daniel
(a member of Parliament in the *Yes, Minister* series) nicknames
Hacker as "Lord Hacker of Kamikaze" (in the episode called "The
Writing on the Wall") when his intention is to criticise him for
his ridiculous self-sacrificing policy, which, according to
Daniel, will lead him to his political suicide (and, from there,
the nickname). There is again an opposition between the real
name and the one made up, in this case, by Daniel.

A 10: Use contradictory speech acts

In this category, we find instances such as the use of

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"sarcastic please" (see 3.4); or Haverkate's (1990) example "Could you do me the favour of shutting up?", which give the appearance of a request when they are in fact commands. Several examples of different contradictory speech acts were found in the corpora, from Humphrey's frequent answer "Yes, Minister" (which gave the name to the series, and appears to show acceptance and submission on the part of Humphrey when, in fact, it means rejection and rebellion -substrategy c below-), to the use of questions when what is meant is in fact a negation (strategy b below). An example of the latter strategy is the question made by the Minister's wife: "Has anyone got brains", discussed in 2.4.2, e.g. 4, by means of which she is being aggressive towards her husband and all the new politicians in the government, implying that they have no brains. The underlying contradiction for these cases would be speech act1/speech act2 (question versus negation in this example).

This type of verbal irony could then be subdivided into several substrategies, such as:
a) Make a request when an order is meant;
b) make a question when a negation is meant;
c) accept something when a rejection is meant;
d) congratulate someone when a reproach is meant;
e) thank someone when a reproach is meant;
f) use a declarative speech act to ridicule someone;
g) use a commissive when in fact the intention is to intimidate the addressee;
h) praise someone when a criticism is meant.

This list could be enlarged, but I have included those substrategies that I found in the corpora, which I believe to be sufficient for the sake of illustrating contradictory speech acts.

An example of substrategy f is that which served for the acceptance of one part of Hypothesis 3 (namely, that verbal irony can be expressed by using a declarative speech act) and was analysed in 3.4.1.1. An apparent commissive like "Do you want me to throw you out of the window?" is an example of g. Strategy h is used many times together with proposition-oriented verbal irony, in prototypical examples like "you're a fine friend" or "she's clever", when the opposite proposition is intended). One possibility within this sub-type is to praise someone for self-criticism, i.e., to approve of someone when this someone is showing self-contempt, as in this example form the LLC:

```
B     11 2+-+ and I ^have !large _numbers of !sl\ides#          /
a     20 2*I see* +good+                                        /
(B    11 2- in^cluding slides of my w\edding# -                /
B     11 2^which I :t\ook#                                      /
B     11 2because I re^fused to be !\in them#                   /
a     20 2(laughs) wise .                                       /
B     11 2^v\ery _wise# .                                       /
B     11 2^I th/ought# -                                        /
B     11 2^why !r\uin the _thing# -
```
<div style="text-align:right">(LLC, S.2.1)</div>

In this conversation, a tells B that she was wise for refusing to be in her own wedding slides. B shows self-contempt because she thinks that to appear in the slides would "ruin the thing". Then a is praising B for her self-criticism by using an adjective with an apparent positive connotation to achieve a negative,

criticising meaning. He is telling her that he agrees with her in that she would ruin the thing. The underlying opposition seems to be, thus, positive/negative.

I will only provide one more example, illustrating substrategy d. Here, the Minister's political adviser (Frank Weisel) is very angry with Humphrey (the Minister's secretary) for having imposed his ideas on Hacker, who has just been interviewed on television and has said exactly what Humprey wanted him to say:

(Humphrey and Weisel are watching the interview on television.)

Humphrey: (claps) Very dignified, very suitable

Weisel: Yes, Sir Humphrey. I congratulate you. Jim is now
     perfectly house-trained. He says and does exactly what
     you tell him.

> *(YM,* 1994 Video Episode: "Big Brother")

Weisel is not at all happy with Humphrey's attitude and therefore his intention is evidently not to congratulate but to be reproachful and to express his discontent. In this way he shows his aggressiveness towards Humphrey and indirectly towards Hacker, for not having acted up to his own convictions (consequently becoming Humphrey's muppet).

A 11: Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea

As has already been discussed (in 4.2 and 4.3) and confirmed by means of the quantitative analysis in 7.2.4, there are a considerable number of instances of verbal irony that can be labelled as echoic, given the fact that the speaker is

repeating some previous utterance or idea of the hearer or a third party in order to mock, ridicule or criticize. It was also pointed out and confirmed with the numerical data that not all cases of verbal irony had an echoic nature, and that is why I have included it within a list of possible strategies but not as the only possibility. Within this strategy, there seem to be two main kinds: a) Echo someone's previous utterance and b) Echo someone's thought or ideas.

An example of a) would be example 1 in 4.3.1.1.1, where Humphrey repeats Hacker's exact words ("quite a night") with an ironic, criticising and complaining intention (because he had to work all night). There is here an underlying Positive/Negative opposition, i.e., the positive connotation given to the phrase "quite a night" by Hacker and the negative one given to it by Humphrey.

Example 3 in 4.3.1.1.1 is an instance of b). Dorothy is using here echoic verbal irony without repeating Blanche's exact words; she applies Blanche's idea to another situation with the intention of ridiculing such an idea. The underlying opposition here seems to be that of Agreement/Disagreement (Dorothy does not agree with Blanche, in spite of the fact that she is apparently in agreement with her ideas when echoing them).

A.12: Pretend, Simulate

This is another of the strategies that have already been discussed in this work. In 4.4 and 7.2.5, evidence was

given of ironic utterances which show the speaker is pretending to be the person ridiculed or simulating some kind of situation. As with echoic irony, evidence was also found of the existence of non-pretence irony, which led me to include this possibility as only one more of the possible strategies speakers have at their disposal to express verbal irony.

Several examples of "pretence verbal irony" have been discussed in 4.4.1 and in 4.3 (where echoic and pretence verbal irony co-occured).

Besides pretending to be another person, the speaker using pretence verbal irony may be simulating an act or action he does not intend to accomplish seriously. For instance, in example 2 in 7.2.4, Hacker is pretending to be surprised, but it cannot exactly be said that he is pretending to be Humphrey (the person mocked at), because he uses the pronoun "we" and includes himself in the situation. Thus, two main subdivisions could be made within this category: a) Pretend to be another person, and b) Simulate a given act or situation. Needless to say, both sub-categories may and do co-occur in many cases, but it seems necessary to differentiate between the two since there are instances of pretence irony in which one of them clearly has predominance over the other. The famous utterance "I only know I know nothing" attributed to Socrates, is an example of simulation of a state or situation more than of pretending to be some other person. Socrates was pretending to be ignorant, but it does not appear to be the case that he was simulating identity. The underlying semantic opposition in this case is

that between ignorance and wisdom.

A 13: Use rhetorical questions

This strategy has also been previously discussed and illustrated, in particular in 5.4, when verbal irony is analysed in the light of the Theory of Politeness and with respect to the other strategies (other than "Be ironic") labelled by Brown and Levinson as off record. This strategy goes hand in hand with "Use contradictory speech acts", for the underlying opposition in this type is Speech act1/Speech act2 (realized by Question/Negation, Question/Reproach, Request/Criticism, etc.).

A 14: Give unexpected answers

The opposition underlying this type of ironic strategy is that of Expected/Unexpected. By giving an answer which was not expected as a logical or possible answer to a given question, a speaker may show aggressiveness towards the hearer, as is the case with Sophia's answer to Dorothy's question after finishing her comedy routine:

(Dorothy and Sophia are in the living-room. Sophia has stopwatch and is timing Dorothy's act)

Dorothy: Thank you, and good night.
　　　　(Sophia stops watch)
　　　　Well, Ma?

Sophia: Five minutes and ten seconds.

Dorothy: Oh, that's a little long. What should I cut?

Sophia: After hearing that act, your throat.

(GG, 1991: 140)

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Dorothy is misrepresenting the interpretation of Dorothy's question, and, instead of giving her advice as to what to cut from her act, she advises her to cut her throat, implying in this way that her act had been awful. Verbal irony is found very frequently in adjacency pairs of the type Question/Answer, in some cases to the point of having been conventionalised (as noted in 3.3.1 above and A 29 below).

A 15: Joke, be humorous

I have already discussed the relationship between verbal irony and humour (4.7). Joking may occur both with Negative and Positive Irony. In the case of Negative Irony, the joke may not be taken so humorously by the victim of the speaker's aggressiveness, but it may provoke the laughter of an audience (in the case that there is one) or of a third party. A humorous example of verbal Negative Irony is found in this excerpt from an article published in the British newspaper *The Spectator*, in which its author (Alasdair Palmer) is using humour and joking to express his disbelief of graphology and graphologists and his disagreement with the new fashion followed by some companies of taking on new employees only after they pass the graphology test:

> <<Ethics aside, if I wanted a job with Warburg, what would a graphologist tell them about me? Margaret White produced an extensive report, a lot of which I can only call astonishingly perceptive and accurate [...]. My writing shows me to be an "extremely intelligent man who can cleverly associate ideas". (Absolutely right.) I have an "inquisitive and questioning mind" (How true!). I am "an enthusiastic and tenacious man who always does a thorough and

complete job". (Employers please note.) Other claims
were less accurate. "I probably enjoy sailing and
climbing" (I don't.) And "I do not suffer fools
gladly". (I do -I have to. I meet so many in my
job).>>

(NA, January 1, 1994)

The authour of this article is making fun of the predictions and
visions of the graphologist after analysing his handwriting by
joking with the "accuracy" of so much flattering. By saying that
she was so perceptive and accurate when speaking about his
numerous virtues, he is joking and trying to show his readers
that any person of whom so many good things are said after the
analysis of his/her handwriting will surely agree with such an
analysis. Palmer uses humour to criticize graphologists, and,
even though a graphologist reading his article may not find it
funny, he knows for sure that there are a great number of other
readers whom he will entertain and make laugh. The underlying
contrast in this case is that of True/False and/or
Belief/Disbelief (although Palmer asserts he believes in what the
graphologist has told him by means of expressions like "How
true!", he nevertheless does not believe in the accuracy of her
report).

A 16: Avoid the lower points of a criticism

This strategy is used to mitigate. As B. Fraser puts
it, mitigation "makes a criticism more palatable" (1980: 342).
Sometimes it is carried out by simply using an adjective or
expression whose meaning is more neutral or less aggressive than
the one intended, as was noted in 5.2.2 when quoting Brown &

Levinson's example "He's all right" used to mean "He's awful".
In the corpora studied, I have found three main manners by which
a speaker can mitigate his criticism and be ironic:

a) Use a more neutral expression (as in the example above)

b) Use Hedges

c) Be ambiguous

Reference to the use of hedges has already been made in previous
chapters in relation to some of the examples analysed.   In
example 3, in 2.4.2, when the two academics refer to the Head of
Department as being "a bit idiosyncratic", they are using a more
neutral and less strong adjective than the one intended (which
could be "lunatic"), they are using a hedge ("a little bit") to
mitigate the criticism, and they are being ambiguous at the same
time, because they are not using accurate words to express
exactly what they mean.   The opposition behind the irony is
Positive/Negative (more positive concepts than the one intended,
which is negative, are expressed).

A 17: Give hints and/or association clues

          This has proved to be a rather frequent strategy used
by the speakers/writers in the corpora analysed.   It was
previouly mentioned in 5.4, when referring to the other off
record strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson in Politeness
Theory.   The example given there ([1]) is one taken from the BR
corpus, in which Russell very elegantly -by means of some hints-
leads the reader to make associations between Professors of
Philosophy and dictators on the one hand, and lunacy, on the

other. The implied or underlying opposition of this example is Sanity/Madness (he tries to show that some people who are apparently sane are in fact mad and vice versa).

A 18: Use metaphors

This strategy has also been discussed in a previous chapter, in relation to Politeness Theory. Example [7] in 5.4, in which one of the academics ironically refers to the Board of the Faculty as "a sort of Supreme Soviet", displays an instance of ironic metaphor, where the intention of the speaker is to criticise academic structure and its bureaucracy. There is here an underlying opposition between the real and the desired situation (i.e., the bureaucratic structure versus an ideal, non-bureaucratic one).

A 19: Use euphemisms for taboo topics

Euphemisms can be also metaphorical, as Brown & Levinson (1987: 216) note, and this is the case of example [1] in 5.2.3, where Dorothy used the euphemism (and metaphor) "pillow talk" to avoid saying "sexual intercourse". Here, Dorothy is being aggressive towards Blanche by insinuating that her dates usually end in bed with the man in question. The underlying contrast or opposition is Meaning1/Meaning2 (the literal meaning of "pillow talk" versus its metaphorical, euphemistic meaning).

A 20: Displace the hearer

An example of this strategy was given in 5.4 (e.g 10),

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also in relation to Politeness Theory. Another illustrative example of this strategy is Sophia's last remark in the following interchange:

Dorothy: I can't believe it. Blanche has gone without for two weeks. I mean, that's like Raymond Burr saying "No gravy".

Rose: What do you think's the matter with her?

Sophia: May be when she had that out-of-body experience she didn't get back in all the way.

(the other girls give Sophia a contemptuous look, so Sophia "addresses the wall" and says:)

Try to discuss science with kids.

(GG, 1991: 188)

When the other girls look at Sophia in such a way as to tell her that what she is saying is ridiculous, she resorts to irony by displacing them (because she does not address them in her reply) and also by giving association clues: to speak with them about out-of-body experiences is like discussing science with kids. She responds with aggressiveness to their aggressive look and bases her irony on the underlying opposition Wisdom/Ignorance (she tries to contrast her knowledge with their ignorance about spiritual matters).

A 21: Say what something or somebody is not (instead of saying what it is)

There are cases in which to refer to a person, thing or situation in a direct, assertive way may strongly offend the hearer; therefore, the speaker may choose the indirect, ironic strategy of saying what that person, thing or situation is not, and leave it up to the hearer to understand what the speaker

thinks of the question or what it really is. Consider Sophia's remark in this dyad:

Blanche: Oh, but Dorothy, you don't get it. My accountant reminded me that I've been audited before and I've never had to pay a penny in back taxes. I have a way with auditors. the last time I was audited I got money back from the government.

Sophia: Blanche, it's not a refund when the auditor leaves two twenties on your nightstand.

(GG, 1991: 140)

Saying what a refund is not is an indirect form of aggressiveness which is milder than directly telling Blanche that the money left on her nightstand was a payment for her sexual favours (which is the implicated criticism in this case). The implied opposition may be that of True/False (the true meaning of "refund" versus Blanche's "misinterpretation" of the term).

A 22: Be incomplete, use ellipsis

This is another strategy already discussed in relation to Politeness Theory. The phrase "With friends like this..." used in an incomplete way (without the subsequent question "Who needs enemies?" was given as an example. This strategy is also connected to pauses and strategic silence, elements that have also been touched on in this piece of work (6.3.4) as instances of prosodic features signalling the presence of verbal irony.

A 23: Use tautologies

Though not found as a strategy in the corpora, it was

noted in 5.4 that this seems to be a possible strategy, considering the example heard from two academics (see discussion of off record strategy nᵒ 6) where the tautology used is also an instance of echoic irony employed as a form of "revenge" on the addressee.

A 24: Say less than required or expected, understate

This strategy was implicitly touched on when discussing those cases of verbal irony which violate the Maxim of Quantity. In a similar way to that of strategy A 19, the speaker may here leave the implicature "hanging in the air", as is also the case with rhetorical questions. Example 2 in 5.2.2, in which Humphrey tells Bernard that he can also keep a secret after having asked him if he could keep one, is very representative and shows an instance of verbal irony based on the opposition Expected/Unexpected (Bernard expected Humphrey to tell him a secret, but Humphrey did not do it). Here Humphrey expresses mild aggressiveness by implicating that he does not trust Bernard.

A 25: Overstate, exaggerate

Exaggeration appears to be a rather common and frequent feature in ironic discourse. Within Negative Irony, it is not rare to find speakers exaggerating the aspects they are criticising in order to give more emphasis, and, in many instances, more fun and humour to their remarks. Some authors have included this feature in their definition of irony as an

essential part of it (as King & Crerar (1969), quoted in 2.3.1).
I have referred in particular to this strategy in 5.2.2 and 5.4,
example nº 5, in which, after Blanche's comment that her
boyfriend is five years younger than she is, Dorothy exaggerates
and uses the rhetorical questions "In what, Blanche? Dog years?"
to mean that Blanche was lying and that she wouldn't be cheated
by her. Dorothy is showing her aggressiveness once more, in this
case by using the opposition Belief/Disbelief or True/False (she
wants to show that she does not believe in the truth of Blanche's
statement).

In those cases in which the speaker chooses to resort
to pretence to express verbal irony, it is not rare to find
exaggeration at the same time; imitation of someone's flaws is
accompanied by an exaggeration of such flaws more often than not.
This exaggeration may form part of the meanings of the words
used, or it may be implicit in the prosody of the discourse
utilised: heavy stress, high pitch, etc. (see chapter 6).

Another example of ironic written discourse where
exaggeration plays an important part is found in this excerpt
from the British newspaper *The Sunday Telegraph*, where its
author, Sean Langan, is criticizing the new American telephone
service called "Psyche-line", by which the user is given
psychological advice costing him/her 3.99 dollars per minute, as
well as other similar services on computers or video (the whole
article has an ironic tone):

> <<One innovation in technological psychiatry at least
> offers face-to-face contact, albeit on video. A Boston
> psychiatrist films couples during their marriage

guidance sessions and, afterwards, they can take the video home and relive the experience. In the U.S., of course, everyone wants to be in a movie, even if it is about their own imminent divorce.
It could only happen in America and, at the prices they're charging, only with the help of your American Express card.>>

(NA, January 1, 1994)

The author is exaggerating by using expressions such as "of course" before exaggerating again by saying that "everyone wants to be in a movie in the U.S., even if it is about their own imminent divorce". He is criticising what he considers to be an American generalised flaw, namely, superficiality or frivolity, by presenting at the same time the opposition Spiritual/Material (it is ironic that one should have to spend so much money to solve a psychological, spiritual problem).

A 26: Append an unexpected afterthought or aftercomment to your or your interlocutor's utterance

The inclusion of an unexpected, contrasting aftercomment appended to a given contribution or utterance seems to be a relatively frequent strategy used when the speaker or writer wants to express ironic meanings. As an illustration, consider Sophia's remark when the girls are listening to Dorothy's comments on how good she used to be at telling jokes at school:

Dorothy: The kids really liked me. I mean, they laughed. I felt great.

Blanche: Oh, Dorothy, if there's something you're aching to do, then you simply have to do it. Do you remember when we went to amateur night at the Comedy Barrel? Honey, I

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know you've got to be as good as some of those people.
Dorothy: I couldn't. I'm... I'd be up there sweating bullets.
Sophia: And dodging some.

(GG, 1991: 135)

Sophia adds her comment as if it were a continuation of Dorothy's previous comment, taking the word "bullets" -which is used figuratively in the expression "sweating bullets"- in its literal meaning. In this way, Sophia makes an indirect, pungent criticism of Dorothy's skills as a joke teller. Sophia's remark makes the hearer retrieve two mental frames in relation to two different uses of the word "bullet", which seems to put the opposition Meaning1/Meaning 2 as the principal underlying one in this example.

A 27: Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution (associate positive meanings with negative ones or vice versa)

Speakers or writers sometimes handle their vocabulary in such a way that the hearer or reader encounters words or expressions which have a positive connotation associated in a strange and contrastive manner to other words or expressions having a negative connotation. This is what B. Russell does in the following excerpt:

> <<The Church in recent years has been softening its doctrines on eternal damnation, but it has done so entirely owing to attacks from the unorthodox. In the present day, the opposition of the church to birth control, if it could be successful, would mean that poverty and starvation must forever be the lot of mankind unless alleviation is brought by the hydrogen bomb.>>

(BR, 1958: 56)

When writing about romantic verbal irony, Enright (1988: 15) notes: "Affirm and deny in one sentence and, you too can be a romantic ironist". Using words having a positive semantic load mixed up with other words having a negative one is also a manifestation of this possibility. If we analyse this passage by Russell, we shall find that an adjective like "successful", which has a positive connotation, is associated with negative concepts like "poverty and starvation". It is striking and ironic that success will bring about unwanted situations such as poverty and starvation. Russell continues to use the same strategy immediately after, when he writes of "alleviation" (a noun with a positive semantic load) as being the consequence of "the hydrogen bomb" (a negatively-loaded nominal group). It seems contradictory to think that such a pernicious thing as a bomb may bring alleviation to mankind. Russell makes use of this strategy to show his aggressiveness towards and disagreement with the church as regards birth control. Handling positive and negative meanings together produces a clashing, striking and contrastive effect. Thus, we can speak here of the underlying opposition Success/Failure (what appears to be a success is a failure).

A 28: Make use of inverted commas, bold type, italisation or punctuation marks to signal certain key terms or expressions in written discourse

This strategy has already been discussed and illustrated in 6.5, example [1], where I quote Josh Young in an article criticising the church of Scientology, in which one of

the strategies he uses to show irony is the use of inverted commas on the word "enlightenment". These inverted commas also help the reader realize that he is echoing the church members' words and that he does not agree with them that their courses are precisely on "enlightenment". The opposition which is latent in this particular example is the Material/ Spiritual one (for, as was explained in 6.5, the creator of the church became a multimillionaire after giving these courses).

It appears to be the case that this strategy is a rather frequent one within written ironic discourse.

A 29: Make use of some prosodic features (such as stress, high pitch, intonation, laughter,pauses, etc) in spoken language.

A whole chapter has been devoted to the use of prosodic features as a means to signal verbal irony. Several substrategies may be derived here, which I have already discussed in chapter 6, namely:

1- Use a given tone (see 6.2)

2- Use heavy stress (see 6.3.1)

3- Increase the pitch level of some key words (see 6.3.2)

4- Laugh:
   a) Laugh after or before an ironic remark (see 6.3.3)
   b) Laugh sarcastically (see 6.3.3)

5- Locate silence or pauses strategically (see 6.3.4)

It was also noted in Chapter 6 that certain prosodic features such as nasalisation or breathy voice can also mark irony, but they have not been studied here because these features are not marked in the corpus used (LLC).

The general underlying dichotomy behind this strategy is Prominence/Non-prominence (prosodic features serve the purpose of giving prominence to certain terms or expressions that would otherwise be non-prominent).

A 30: Use conventionalised verbal irony

Within this strategy, there are two main substrategies (which were somehow distinguished in 3.3):

1) Use conventionalised ironic words or expressions

2) Use conventionalised ironic strategies

It was noted in 3.3 that there are some cases of verbal irony in which the implicature leading to the ironic interpretation has been "short-circuited" and therefore the irony now has a conventionalised status (for these implicatures are no longer cancellable). In the case of a), I made reference to expressions such as "A likely story" always meaning "an unlikely story", therefore showing aggressiveness and disbelief towards the person who told the story. As regards b), I have found some conventionalised strategies in the corpora which, at the micro-level of analysis, could be considered as two successive turns organized into so-called adjacency pairs (Schlegloff, 1987), which are generally of the type Question/Answer. The ones found in this research are the following:

a) Answer an obvious question with an even more obvious question, to convey that the first one was stupid or need not have been made.

b) Reply to a lie with an even bigger lie to show that you are not being cheated.

c) Reply to a stupid question with an even more stupid answer.

d) Ask a question and give a ridiculous answer before the hearer can answer himself, to show that s/he is doing or saying something ridiculous.

There is only one of the conventionalised substrategies found which does not manifest itself through an adjacency pair, namely,

e) Use the formula "If p, then q = not p" (when the main clause q carries an absurd proposition).

I now turn to each of these substrategies in particular.

a) The prototypical example of a) is the well-known question "Is the Pope catholic?" used as an answer to a very obvious question, as has already been noted in 3.3.1. Norrick (1992) notes that everyone has personal favourites in this class and provides the question (which is used as an answer) "Does a bear shit in the woods?" as another of the classics. The fact that everyone has his favourite in this type of ironic answer seems to confirm my argument that what has been conventionalised here is the strategy, and not always the words used. This strategy is graphically represented in Figure 8a.

Figure 8a: Conventionalised substrategy a): Answer an obvious question with an even more obvious question

SPEAKER 1	SPEAKER 2
Superfluous, obvious question ------------------------------------→	More superfluous and obvious question which mirrors the original one
	↓
	therefore implicating (now by a *short-circuited implicature*) that the first question was self-evident.
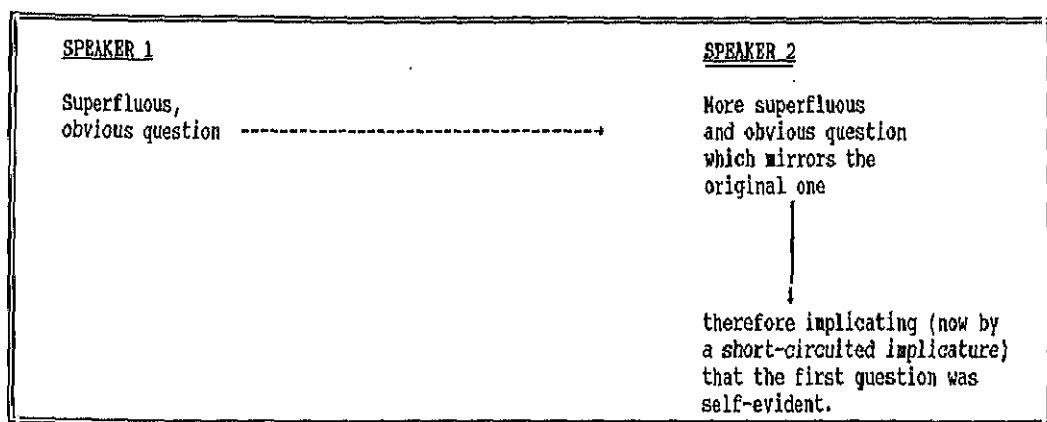
The opposition behind this strategy is one between the speech acts used (Speech act 1/Speech act 2), for this is also a case of speech act-oriented verbal irony, in which the speech act given by speaker 2 is neither the one intended nor the one expected as an answer by speaker 1.

b) This strategy has also been discussed in 3.3.1. A prototypical example is the statement "yes, and I'm Mary the Queen of Romania" as a reply to what the speaker considers to be his/her interlocutor's lie. Figure 8b illustrates this substrategy.

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Figure 8b: Conventionalised ironic substrategy b): Reply to a lie with an even bigger lie

```
SPEAKER 1                                          SPEAKER 2

   Lie -------------------------------------------→   Exaggerated,
                                                      ridiculous lie

                                                            │
                                                            │
                                                            │
                                                            │
                                                            ↓

                                                      therefore implicating
                                                      (short-circuited implicature)
                                                      that s/he has not been
                                                      cheated.
```
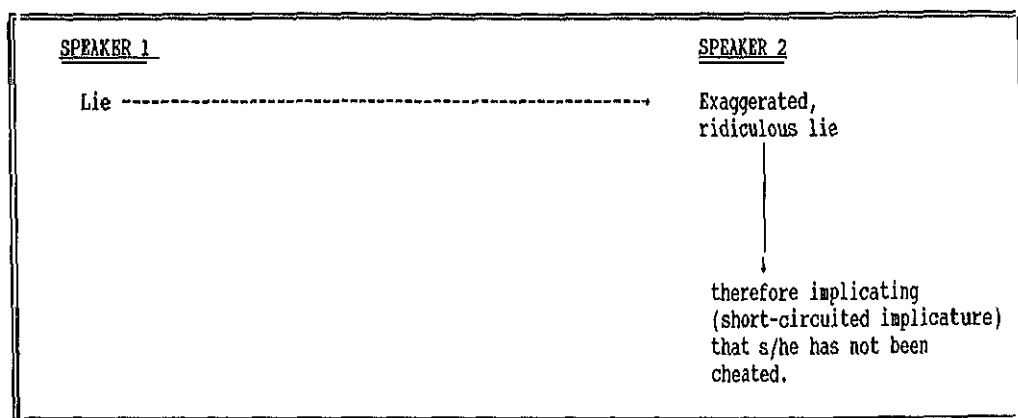
As the figure shows, speaker 2 is lying too, but his intention is not to cheat speaker 1; on the contrary, he lies in an exaggerated way, so that its untruthfulness becomes self-evident and serves the purposes of mirroring speaker 1's lie in order to tell him that he does not believe what speaker 1 is saying. The underlying oppositions here seem to be True/False and Belief/Disbelief.

c) Examples of this substrategy have already been given in 3.3.1 (e.g.s 3, 4 and 5). The mechanism of the strategy is illustrated in Figure 8c.

Figure 8c: Conventionalised ironic substrategy c): Reply to a stupid question with an even more stupid answer

---

SPEAKER 1   SPEAKER 2

Stupid, absurd   Stupid, absurd
question   --→ answer

                                                            |
                                                            |
                                                            |
                                                            ↓
                                                            Therefore mocking at
                                                            speaker1's question,
                                                            implicating (by a now
                                                            short-circuited implicature)
                                                            that it was also stupid
                                                            and/or absurd.
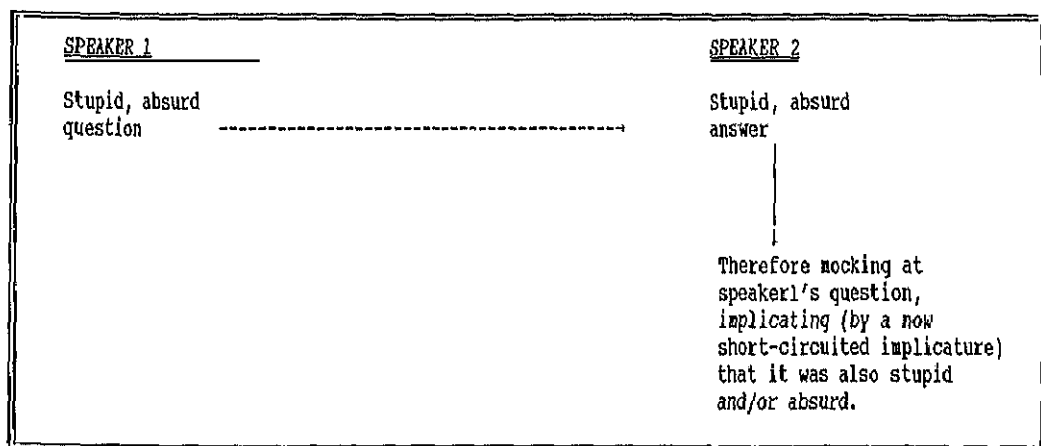
Obviously, speaker 2's intention here is not to answer speaker 1's question but to show his aggressiveness by telling speaker 1 that his question should not have been formulated, given its absurd character. The underlying opposition in this case is Expected/Unexpected (speaker 1 expects an answer other than the one given by speaker 2).

d) As regards d, I have observed that, on some occasions, speakers show a certain degree of aggressive irony by asking a question and giving an exaggerated, ridiculous answer (in the form of a question to show that their interlocutor is doing or saying something ridiculous. A prototypical case could be the questions: "Where are you going? To the North Pole?", when the speaker wants to criticise his interlocutor's exaggerated precautions as regards cold weather (for example if s/he is taking too many suitcases full of thick clothes and blankets on

a trip). An example from one of the corpora here studied is the following:

(Sophia enters from the kitchen with food. Sneaks toward hallway. Dorothy enters from hallway).

Dorothy: Ma, where are you going with all that food?

Sophia: I'm taking it to my room.

Dorothy: Who have you got in there, Shelley Winters?

(GG, 1991: 62)

By making reference to Shelley Winters (a fat actress that had a reputation for eating in an exaggerated way), Dorothy is implicating that her mother is doing something ridiculous. Exaggeration is a key strategy in this particular example. Dorothy exaggerates to show that her mother is exaggerating too. In a way (and as in the previous substrategies analysed here) she is *mirroring* what her mother is doing in order to mock her.

The underlying opposition in this example seems to be that existing between a real and a contrived situation, the real situation being that the mother is hungry and wants to take a lot of food to her room to have a quiet meal and Dorothy's imaginary situation depicting Shelley Winters locked in her mother's room. This strategy can be illustrated as shown in Figure 8d.

Figure 8d: Conventionalised substrategy d: Ask a question and give a ridiculous answer before the hearer can answer himself.

<u>SPEAKER 1</u>

Says of does
something
ridiculous (in
speaker 2's opinion)

- →

<u>SPEAKER 2</u>

Asks a question
immediately followed
by a ridiculous answer (in
the form of a question)

↓

Therefore mocking and
ridiculing speaker 1's
previous action or utterance.
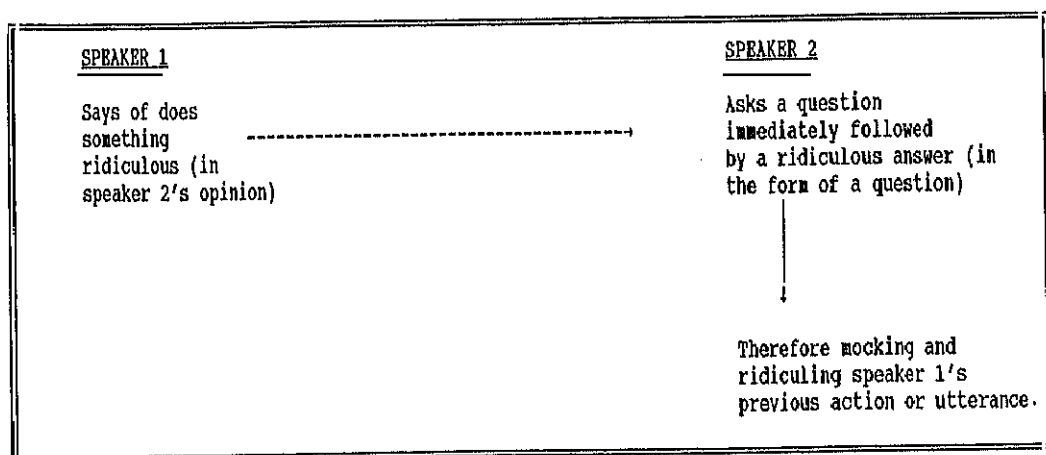
e) The formula "If p, then q = not p" was discussed in 3.3.1, where the example "If she is pretty, I'm the King of France" was used to illustrate the fact that what the speaker means in this case is that she is not pretty. It was also noted that there is a precondition for this formula to be valid, namely, that q (the main clause) carries an absurd proposition. An interesting use of this strategy is made by Bertrand Russell in this passage:

<<If you wish to persuade people that because Adam ate an apple, all who have never heard of this interesting occurrence will be roasted in an everlasting fire by a benevolent Deity, you must catch them young, make them stupid by means of drink or drugs, and carefully isolate them from all contact with books or companions capable of making them think.>>

(BR, 1958: 58)

The formula in this example is expressed in more than two propositions, but what Russell wants to signify can be reduced to the general "If p, then q = not p": he suggests an absurd and ridiculous way of making people believe in everlasting damnation

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(as a consequence of Adam's eating of the apple) as the only possible way of making somebody believe such a thing, therefore implicating that such a belief is also ridiculous and absurd. Apart from this conventionalised strategy used by Russell here, there are also other strategies present, such as the use of related positive and negative meanings, or the use of non-core words (such as "roasted").

The dichotomy of contradictions behind this sub-strategy is the True/False one, for the speaker wants to prove the falsity of p, by presenting a proposition q, which is even more difficult to believe; and these are both opposed to what the writer considers to be the truth.

Another, more typical example is found in Sophia's comment in the following conversation in which the girls are planning a strategy to raise some funds:

Dorothy: What's wrong Blanche?

Blanche: Oh, Dorothy, nobody gives a damn about this "Save the Wetlands" thing. I sat in that booth of ours at the mall for three hours, not one soul came by and asked for information. What we need is some kind of swamp gimmick -like "guess how many leeches are in the jar".

Dorothy: I don't think so, Blanche.

Blanche: All right then. All right. How about a celebrity auction?

Sophia: Hey, if you could but a celebrity at an auction, I'd be showering every morning with Trini Lopez.

(GG, 1991: 199)

Sophia misinterpreted the meaning of "a celebrity auction", thinking that it is an auction where one can buy celebrities, and therefore wanted to express how absurd this idea sounded to her

by putting forward a ridiculous proposition that would be thought as the consequence of the first one: "If it were true that one can buy celebrities at auctions (which is absurd), I would buy Trini Lopez there (which is also absurd)" . The absurdity and non-truthfulness of the second proposition invalidates the truth value of the first one.

A 31: Make use of implicature-free verbal irony (worked out of the conventional meanings of some terms or expressions used)

Within this strategy fall those cases of implicature-free irony discussed in 7.2.2, where it was noted that apart from having found a conversational and a conventionalised type of verbal irony, there was evidence in the corpora in favour of a third kind of verbal irony which was to be worked out from the conventional implicatures of some of the words or expressions used. As was explained in 7.2.2, sometimes there are inherent contradictions in the conventional implicatures of the expressions used, such as in the famous Socratic remark "I only know I know nothing", which expresses irony without it being necessary for the hearer to work out any implicatures, with the underlying opposition being Ignorance/Wisdom in this particular case. But this example does not belong in the category of aggressive irony; it is, in fact, an instance of neutral irony. Martin's example, quoted also in 7.2.2 ("Our friends are always there when they need us") as well as the corpus examples 3 and 4 in the same section, show an aggressive, criticising attitude on the part of the speaker. As can be seen, the same strategy

may be used for any of the three main types of verbal irony proposed in this chapter, i.e., sometimes the same strategy may serve the purposes of a criticising, negative speaker, those of a positive, praising speaker, or those of a neutral one.

No more discussion is considered necessary here, for this issue has been widely analysed and tested with corpus examples in 7.2.2.

I now turn to the substrategies of the second of the three main types of verbal irony, namely, Positive Irony.

8.4.2 Positive Verbal Irony: Show positive feelings (praise, admiration, etc.) towards yourself, the hearer, a third party or a situation

The possibility of the existence of a type of verbal irony which does not convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker has already been discussed in 4.3.1.2 and 5.3.1. Very few examples of Positive verbal irony were found in the corpora, all of which I shall analyse here under the appropriate substrategies. I shall also include some other examples to which I have already made reference in other chapters and/or which have been taken into account by other authors as instances of verbal irony conveying praise and/or addressing the positive face of the hearer or a third party (in Brown & Levinson's terms).

The substrategies within Positive Irony will be labelled with the letter B and a number.

B 1: Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance

As with Negative irony, this strategy includes prototypical cases like those given by Haverkate (1988), namely, "I don't like you at all", meaning "I like you very much" and "Oh, how small you have grown!", said to a child in admiration for how tall s/he is now as compared to the last time the speaker saw him/her. The underlying opposition here is the same as that of the same substrategy for Negative irony: True/False or Literal/Intended Meaning.

B 2: Say less than required, understate

Examples within this strategy belong to the conversational type of verbal irony, for they display a violation of the maxim of Quantity. In the case of Positive irony, the speaker avoids the higher points of a compliment, as the author of the following excerpt from an article published in *The Sunday Times* does:

> <<The young autograph-hunters were quick to approach the glamorous figure of Gigi Fernandez during the Brighton tournament last October. Not one, however, thought it worth asking for the signature of her companion. Perhaps somebody should have told them that the Wimbledon champion, Conchita Martinez, can play a bit too.>>

(NA, January 1, 1995)

It is ironic to say that a Wimbledon champion "can play a bit" of tennis. The writer here means that Conchita Martínez can play more than a bit; she can play very well in fact. The underlying opposition for this example could be one showing contradictory

quantities (Much/A bit) or one showing contradictory abilities (play Bad/Well or Skill/Non-skill).

B 3: Make use of conventionalised ironic terms or expressions

I have made reference in previous chapters to the expression "Break a leg" used by theatre actors as an expression of a wish for good luck before a colleague appears on the stage. I have also explained (3.3.1) that it has become conventionalised, for it could not be replaced by any other (like "break an arm", for example) and therefore the implicature has been short-circuited and is no longer cancellable. The speaker is using here an apparent expression of bad wishes to cause the opposite effect: wish a person good luck, the opposition behind it thus being Positive/Negative, or, in a more superficial level, Good luck/Bad luck (what seems to be a negative wish is in fact a positive wish of good luck).

B 4: Joke

"Joke" may also be a strategy within positive irony. A speaker may use this strategy with the intention of praising or expressing some positive evaluation of the hearer or a third party. The following chunk of dialogue has already been quoted in 5.3.2 as an example of verbal irony used in combination with positive politeness:

```
(B    11   ^pr\ogramming (com^p\uters#)# -                      /
 B    11   *((^th\at's what /I do#))*                           /
 A    11   *^y\es#                                              /
 A    11   do* ^you know 'Malcolm B\/owen#        .            /
 A    11   ^over at the comp\uter /unit#                        /
```

```
B    11   ^[\m]#                                    /
A    11   ^nice b/oy# -                             /
A    11   ^sure !he'd h/elp you#                    /
A    11   if you ^got st\uck#                       /
B    20   ( - - laughs) -
```

<div align="right">(LLC, S.1.6)</div>

A is joking, for he, in fact, intends to say that B will not need any help and that it will not be very likely that he gets stuck, considering that his job consists precisely in programming computers. Therefore A is trying to show a positive evaluation of B's abilities and skills in his job. The underlying opposition being thus the general Speech Act 1/Speech Act 2, and the more specific Compliment/Criticism. The same holds for Brown & Levinson's example: "How about lending me this old heap of junk?" (1987: 124) quoted in 5.3.1, where the "old heap of junk" is a brand new Cadillac, which makes the hearer infer that the speaker means quite the opposite.

B 5: Use contradictory speech acts

The example in B 2 is also an instance of this strategy, for, what seems to be a mild criticism is intended to be a compliment. The same holds for the examples in B 1 and B 2.

B 6: Insult the hearer (to show you consider him/her as a member of your peer group and/or to build solidarity)

This strategy appears to be more culture-dependent than any of the other ones, for not every speaker of English can use it and be successful. The speaker should belong to certain

micro-cultures that have agreed on the use of rudeness as a sign of membership and solidarity within the group. I have already discussed this form of Positive irony in 5.3.1. I refer to the "Ritual Insults" used by New York black adolescents described by Lavob (1972) or to the "flyting" of some joking relationships in some English dialects described by Booth (1974). I have not found any instances of this strategy in the corpora, for none of the speakers and writers in them belong to any of these groups; but, as I noted at the beginning of this chapter I thought that the fact of not being in the corpora was not an argument strong enough to warrant disregarding its existence. The underlying opposition of this strategy can be Positive/Negative, or, at a more superficial level, Rudeness/Politeness (what seems to be rude, negative language is in fact "polite" language expressing positive feelings).

B 7: Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea

Although I have not found examples of this strategy within Positive irony in the corpora analysed, I am including it also as a possibility within Positive irony due to the number of times I have experienced its use among English speakers. The example given in 5.3.1 about a student who thought she would fail the exam and whose friend (after knowing she had succeeded) told her "she was an awful student" is one of these "overheard" instances of echoic Positive irony I am referring to. Similar to this is the case in which a young adolescent is convinced that she is fat when she is, in fact, very thin, an attitude to which

her mother or any objective observer of her physical condition may ironically reply: "Oh yes, you are extremely fat", and, by saying this, the hearer/s will realize that the speaker is echoing the girl's words to mock her idea and to mean that she is not fat at all. In fact, as in the case of the exam, there is here an overlapping of both Negative and Positive irony, for the speaker is criticising the hearer's negative attitude towards herself, and, at the same time, is trying to tell her that she has a positive evaluation of the hearer.

B 8: Other possible strategies

Some other of the strategies described with respect to Negative irony can surely be used to express Positive irony too. For instance, the handling of prosodic features in spoken language and of inverted commas, bold type, punctuation marks, etc. in written language, are no doubt available alternatives. However, since Positive irony is a much less frequent phenomenon than Negative irony, it does not seem appropriate to speculate further on its possibilities, considering the fact that, for the time being (as far as the findings of this investigation are concerned), there is lack of evidence of its realization through the other strategies considered for Negative irony. Thus, I shall proceed to the description of the strategies found for the third main kind of verbal irony, namely, Neutral Verbal Irony.

8.4.3 Neutral Verbal Irony

Neutral irony has proved to be slightly more frequent than Positive irony in the corpora studied. Reference to this type of irony has already been made in 5.3.3. I shall now refer to the substrategies of this type found in the corpora examples. All the Neutral irony examples will be labelled with the letter C and a number.

C 1: Include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements in your contribution or utterance

The very essence of irony is seen in this strategy. Contradiction (at any level) is the permanent ingredient in the irony recipe. In spite of the fact that most of the examples from *The Golden Girls* belong to the Negative type, there is one instance in which its only identifying element is contradiction and absurdity, without showing any apparently positive or negative attitude on the part of Dorothy (the ironist in this case):

[1]

Dorothy: Rose, you're here. That's good. I am absolutely snowed under with this Wetlands thing. And as usual, I know I can count on you.

Rose: I'm sorry, Dorothy.

Dorothy: What? But, Rose, you always help out with these things. You're involved in all the charities. You sent a contribution to "Save the Rich".

(GG, 1991: 197)

The irony of Dorothy's last remark is inferred from the clashing concepts in it: it is contradictory to send contributions to rich

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people and even more contradictory and absurd that there exists a charity called "Save the Rich". This is a case in which the writers of the episode (Tracy Gamble and Richard Vaczy) introduce irony for the sake of humour, but it cannot be said that this irony shows any special attitude (negative or positive) on the part of the speaker (Dorothy).

Most of the examples of Neutral irony found in the corpora are instances of this strategy. In the following conversation from an episode of the *Yes Minister* series, we encounter two examples of this type of irony:

[1]

Bernard: But what's wrong with open government? I mean, why shouldn't the public know more about what's going on?

Arnold: Are you serious?

Bernard: Well, yes sir, it is the Minister's policy after all.

Arnold: Mind avoiding a contradiction in terms. You can be open <u>or</u> you can have government.

Bernard: But surely the citizens of a democracy have the right to know.

Humphrey: No, they have a right to be ignorant. Knowledge only means complicity and guilt. Ignorance has a certain dignity.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

There is irony in Arnold's remark on the imposibility of having government and being open at the same time ("you can be open or you can have government", where the "or" is exclusive). The episode is all about the "open government" policy of the Minister (Hacker) and it turns out to be that, according to Arnold's view, "open" and "government" are contradictory terms. Humphrey then

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extends the irony by associating positive and negative terms, namely "knowledge" with "complicity" and "guilt" and "ignorance" with "dignity".

C 2: Joke

The examples presented as neutral in 2.4 and 4.3.1.2, namely Pascal's *I made the letter longer than usual because I didn't have the time to make it shorter,* or Auden's *we are all here on Earth to help each other, but what the others are here for, God only knows,* are both examples of irony used with the intention of amusing the reader. In fact, the writer is showing his witticism by joking. These two examples also fit in the first strategy (C 1), for they include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements.

Another example of neutral irony in which the speaker is joking is found in Hacker's wife's remark in the following chunk of dialogue, where Hacker is very nervous because he knows he has entered the Ministry, but he has not had the call from the Prime Minister yet:

Wife: It sounds as if you're about to enter the Ministry.

Hacker: Yes, but which Ministry. That's the whole point.

Wife: It was a joke!

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

The wife uses the hedge "It sounds as if" in order to joke and make fun of her husband's state of anxiety, but, in fact, she knows for sure that he has entered the Ministry. The wife is only joking, she does not intend to criticise or to praise him.

Her attitude seems to be neutral. This is one of the cases of mild irony in which hedges like "it sounds", or "it seems" are used to point out evident situations.

C 3: Hedge

As has just been pointed out, the above example (in C2) is also an instance of this strategy. Hacker's wife uses the expression "it sounds as if.." as a hedge to her ironic remark. Hedges seem to be one of the favourite elements of ironists.

C 4: Exaggerate, overstate

The violation of the Quantity Maxim is also possible within Neutral irony. In the following conversation between Hacker and John (an ex-minister), John shows irony through exaggeration, but he apparently has no intention of criticising or showing contempt. He takes the civil service tricks as natural facts, without judging them, although it certainly could be noted here that the attitude of the authors of the episode is negative. Thus we should distinguish between the authors' and the character's intention, the former being negative, the latter being neutral.

Hacker: Look John. You were in office for years; you know all civil service tricks

John: Oh, not all of them boy, just a few hundred.

Hacker: How did you defeat them? How do you make them do something they don't want to do?

John: My dear fellow, if I knew that, I wouldn't be the opposition
                (YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Economy Drive")

John is exaggerating and joking when saying that the tricks he knows are not all of them and that they are "just a few hundred". His words imply that the tricks of the civil service are many more than a few hundred. However, as he himself is a member of the civil service, his intention is not to criticise, he is only making a witty comment. There is, however, Negative irony on the part of the writers of the episode. These authors are mocking the civil service by showing that, for civil servants, it is a natural thing to play tricks on the people.

C 5: Use rhetorical questions

C 6: Use contradictory speech acts

These two strategies are dealt with together here because the example of Neutral irony that will be analysed is an instance of their co-occurrence. In this conversation between two female academics, C makes a lot of comments on how, in London, one is often in a hurry and also wastes a lot of time and on the fact that the place itself does not encourage anyone to rest. That is why her question is understood as ironical, for she is asking when, in fact, she means the negation of the proposition: she does not want to know whether A rests in London; she thinks that she certainly can not do it.

```
A    11   but I ^think you 'find that 'what you :need in       /
A    11   'college is a :sense of "r\est# .                    /
A    11   ((cos)) ^that's the !one thing ((you 'hope to))      /
A    11   g\et ((in a 'picture r/eally#)) .                    /
A    11   there's ^\always 'something to 'do in L/ondon# .     /
C    11   do you ^rest in 'London at \/all# -
```

<div align="right">(LLC, S.1.8)</div>

C shows her disbelief by means of a question. The oppositions Belief/Disbelief and Speech Act 1 (question)/Speech Act2 (negation) are the basis of the ironical interpretation. The falling-rising intonation of the question may be also a clue to its ironic interpretation (see Chapter 6). C's remark, thus, shows a certain degree of irony but shows neither aggressiveness nor any kind of positive attitude towards the hearer or any other person. That is why I have classified this example as neutral.

C 7: Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution

This strategy has already been illustrated within Neutral irony in example nº 2 in C 1.

C 8: Use implicature-free verbal irony

The strategy of being ironic without violating any of the Gricean Maxims seems to be also possible within the Neutral kind of irony. An illustration of this possibility is found in Humphrey's statement in the following chunk of conversation:

[1]

Humphrey: You came up with all the questions I hoped nobody could ask.

Hacker: Well, opposition is about asking awkward questions.

Humphrey: And Government is about not answering them.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

When Humphrey says that "government is about not answering questions", he is being ironic without showing any kind of

positive or negative attitude towards the hearer or the audience (being neutral) and also by telling the truth without apparently violating any of the other Gricean Maxims. Even though Humphrey answered the questions, his idea is that the government should never give clear answers to questions, and this is what he in fact did, for his answers were ambiguous and obscure, which is in contradiction with the principles of an ideal government but, nevertheless, in agreement with his conception of what a government should be like. The underlying contradiction here is that of the real versus a desired situation. Humphrey always outdoes Hacker's wit with his witty, ironical comments.

C 9: Echo somebody's utterance, thought or idea

In the example of neutral irony discussed in C 8, Humphrey's remark is also an instance of echoic verbal irony. He is not echoing Hacker's thought or idea, but he is echoing the structure used by Hacker in his previous utterance ("X is about Y").

C 10: Use inverted commas, italics, etc. (in written irony)
C 11: Use non-core vocabulary

The following is an instance of verbal written irony in which its author, B. Russell, makes use of both italics and a non-core word ("chic") as strategies to unravel his ironical intentions. Russell is neither criticising nor praising anybody; there seems to be no face threatening of any participant, and, from there, my characterization of this example as neutral:

> <<I was told that the Chinese said they would bury me
> by the Western Lake and build a shrine to my memory.
> I have some slight regret that this did not happen,
> as I might have become a God, which would have been
> very *chic* for an atheist.>>
>
> (BR, 1958: 59)

Russell is using both verbal and situational irony in this passage. He in fact does not regret not having become a God (for as he explains, he was an atheist), and, at the same time, he plays with the imaginary and ironic situation of a shrine being built in memory of an atheist person like himself. The use of the non-core word "chic" , as well as its italization, are strategies used by Russell to make his ironic intentions more prominent. The underlying contrast of this ironic example is Religion/Atheism.

C 12: Other possible strategies

As with Positive verbal irony, the strategies found in the corpora for Neutral irony are less numerous than those found for Negative irony, due to the fact that these types of irony are much less frequent than the Negative kind (see 8.6). Therefore, I shall not speculate about other possible strategies, although it seems reasonable and logical to suppose that there may be other strategies within the neutral kind of irony that might occur in other examples not appearing in the corpora studied.

Having, thus, presented the taxonomy of strategies proposed as a result of this investigation, I now turn to the quantitative analysis of such strategies. Figures 8e, 8f and 8g summarize all the strategies discussed and explained in the proposal.

Figure 8e: Substrategies within Negative verbal irony (found in this study)

A1 Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance
A2 Use a proposition which is contrary to general belief, but not contrary to what you mean
A3 Use a proposition you consider as true but which is opposite to the one considered as true by the hearer
A4 Show in your utterance that you have interpreted your interlocutor's statement as having an opposite meaning
A5 Use formal language and affected vocabulary when it is not apparently required by the situation or context
A6 Use words or expressions that have a somewhat different (though not opposite) meaning to the one conveyed
A7 Use puns: Make the hearer retrieve two mental frames
A8 Use suffixes that indicate certain degree of derision
A9 Change the name of somebody (nickname) or something deliberately
A10 Use contradictory speech acts
A11 Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea
A12 Pretend, simulate
A13 Use rhetorical questions
A14 Give unexpected answers
A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY A15 Joke, be humorous
A16 Avoid the lower points of a criticism
A17 Give hints and/or association clues
A18 Use metaphors
A19 Use euphemisms
A20 Displace the hearer
A21 Say what something or somebody is not
A22 Be incomplete, use ellipsis
A23 Use tautologies
A24 Say less than required or expected, understate
A25 Overstate, exaggerate
A26 Append an unexpected afterthought or aftercomment to your utterance or to that of your interlocutor
A27 Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution
A28 Make use of inverted commas, bold type, italization, punctuation marks, etc. to signal certain key terms or expressions in written discourse
A29 Make use of some prosodic features such as stress, high pitch, intonation, laughter, pauses, etc. (in spoken language)
A30 Use conventionalized verbal irony
A31 Make use of implicature free verbal irony (coming out of conventional implicatures)

Figure 8f: Substrategies within Positive Verbal Irony (found in this study)

B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY

{
- B1 Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance
- B2 Say less than required. Understate
- B3 Make use of conventionalized ironic terms or expressions
- B4 Joke
- B5 Use contradictory speech acts
- B6 Insult the hearer
- B7 Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea
- B8 Other

Figure 8g: Substrategies within Neutral Verbal Irony (found in this study)

C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY

{
- C1 Include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements in your contribution or utterance
- C2 Joke
- C3 Hedge
- C4 Exaggerate, overstate
- C5 Use rhetorical questions
- C6 Use contradictory speech acts
- C7 Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution
- C8 Use implicature-free verbal irony
- C9 Echo someone's utterance, thought or idea
- C10 Use inverted commas, italics, etc. (in written irony)
- C11 Use non-core vocabulary
- C12 Other

8.5 Quantitative analysis of these strategies

In order to have a more accurate idea of the incidence of use of the strategies described in 8.4, an account of the frequency of occurrence of each substrategy was made.

It is important to note that each of the 351 instances of ironic discourse found in the corpora belong to only one of the three main types of verbal irony (namely Negative, Positive or Neutral[9]) but that, as far as the rest of substrategies is concerned, each example may belong to more than one category, i.e., a speaker may, for instance, use the strategies "joke", "exaggerate" and "increase the pitch level of a key word" all at the same time.

I now turn to the tables of frequencies found for the three main types of verbal irony.

8.5.1 Positive, Negative and Neutral irony: frequency of occurrence in the corpora studied

Following are tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5, which give information as to the number of cases found for each of the three main strategies proposed in each of the corpora studied. Table 8.6 displays the total numbers.

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[9] However, in one of the examples, a mixture of both positive and negative irony could be observed, as was noted in 5.3.1. In this case, the type of irony that prevailed was Negative irony, for the utterance was mainly intended as a criticism (in spite of the fact that there was also a positive attitude involved).

Tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5: Frequency and percentage of occurrence of the Positive, Negative and Neutral irony variables in each of the corpora studied

A) Spoken corpora

a) LLC   (8.1)

	POSITIVE	*NEGATIVE*	*NEUTRAL*
Nº of occ. *(out of 86)*	*1*	*84*	*1*
%	*1.16*	*97.68*	*1.16*

b) GG   (8.2)

	POSITIVE	*NEGATIVE*	*NEUTRAL*
Nº of occ. *(out of 84)*	*0*	*83*	*1*
%	*0*	*98.80*	*1.20*

c) YM   (8.3)

	POSITIVE	*NEGATIVE*	*NEUTRAL*
Nº of occ. *(out of 55)*	*0*	*50*	*5*
%	*0*	*90.91*	*9*

B) Written corpora

a) BR   (8.4)

	POSITIVE	*NEGATIVE*	*NEUTRAL*
Nº of occ. (out of 46)	*0*	*45*	*1*
%	*0*	*97.83*	*2.17*

b) NA   (8.5)

	POSITIVE	*NEGATIVE*	*NEUTRAL*
Nº of occ. (out of 80)	*1*	*77*	*2*
%	*1.25*	*96.25*	*2.5*

Table 8.6: Total number and percentage of occurrence of the Positive, Negative and Neutral irony strategies in all the corpora studied

	POSITIVE	*NEGATIVE*	*NEUTRAL*
Nº of occ. (out of 351)	*2*	*339*	*10*
%	*0.57*	*96.58*	*2.85*

Figures 8h and 8.i represent these data in a more graphical way.

Fig. 8h. Frequencies of occurrence of the Positive, Negative & Neutral variables
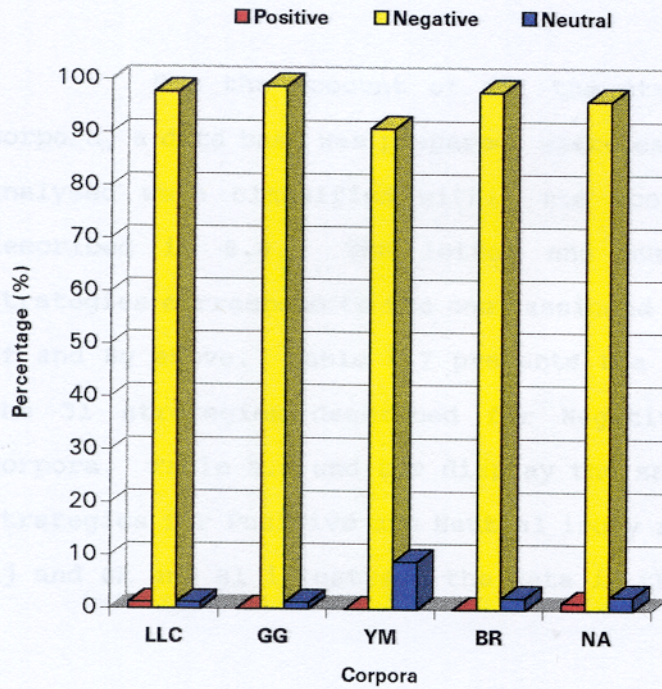
Fig. 8i. Total occurrence of the Positive, Negative & Neutral variables
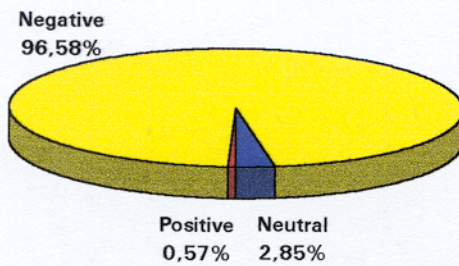
8.5.2 Substrategies of the three main types: account of their frequency of occurrence

For the account of all the strategies found in the corpora, a data base was prepared, where each of the 351 examples analysed were classified within the scope of the strategies described in 8.4. The letter and number of each of the strategies correspond to the ones assigned to them in Figures 8e, 8f and 8g above. Table 8.7 presents the occurrence of each of the 31 strategies described for Negative Irony in all the corpora. Table 8.8 and 8.9 display the same data regarding the strategies for Positive and Neutral irony respectively. Figures 8j and 8k and 8l illustrate the data in the tables.

Table 8.7. Ocurrence of the 31 substrategies found within negative irony in the different corpora studied.

		A: NEGATIVE IRONY STRATEGIES																	
		A_1	A_2	A_3	A_4	A_5	A_6	A_7	A_8	A_9	A_{10}	A_{11}	A_{12}	A_{13}	A_{14}	A_{15}	A_{16}	A_{17}	A_{18}
L L C	N° of. occ. (out of 86)	16	1	0	0	1	4	2	1	1	22	15	12	2	0	3	29	7	8
	Percentage	18,60	1,16	0	0	1,16	4,65	2,33	1,16	1,16	25,58	17,44	13,45	2,33	0	3,49	33,72	8,14	9,30
G G G	N° of. occ. (out of 84)	16	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	27	16	15	11	1	1	5	15	0
	Percentage	19,05	0	1,19	0	0	2,33	2,33	0	1,19	32,14	19,05	17,86	13,0	1,19	1,19	5,95	17,86	0
Y M	N° of. occ. (out of 55)	16	0	0	1	4	2	1	0	2	19	19	22	3	2	1	9	2	1
	Percentage	29,09	0	0	1,82	7,27	3,64	1,82	0	3,64	34,55	34,55	40	5,45	3,64	1,82	16,36	3,64	1,82
B R	N° of. occ. (out of 46)	16	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	27	14	2	0	0	10	6	1
	Percentage	34,78	2,17	0	0	4,35	2,17	0	0	0	6,52	57,70	30,43	4,35	0	0	21,74	13,04	2,17
N A	N° of. occ. (out of 80)	20	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	12	46	24	5	0	1	8	8	2
	Percentage	25,00	0	0	0	3,75	0	1,25	0	1,25	15,00	57,50	30,00	6,25	0	1,25	10,00	10,00	2,50
T O T A L	N° of. occ. (out of 351)	84	2	1	1	10	9	6	1	5	83	123	87	23	3	6	61	38	12
	Percentage	23,93	0,57	0,28	0,28	2,85	2,56	1,71	0,28	1,42	23,65	35,04	24,79	6,55	0,85	1,71	17,38	10,82	3,42

Table 8.7. Ocurrence of the 31 substrategies found within negative irony in the different corpora studied.

| | | A: NEGATIVE IRONY STRATEGIES | | | | | | | | | | | | |
		A_{19}	A_{20}	A_{21}	A_{22}	A_{23}	A_{24}	A_{25}	A_{26}	A_{27}	A_{28}	A_{29}	A_{30}	A_{31}
L L C	N° of. occ. (out of 86)	1	0	1	0	0	7	5	7	6	0	A L R E A D Y A C C O U N T E D F O R I N C H A P T E R 6	0	22
	Percentage	1.16	0	1.16	0	0	8.14	5.81	8.14	6.98	0		0	25.60
G G	N° of. occ. (out of 84)	2	2	1	2	0	6	11	6	0	0		13	6
	Percentage	2.33	2.33	1.19	2.33	0	7.14	13.09	7.14	0	0		15.48	7.14
Y M	N° of. occ. (out of 55)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0		1	14
	Percentage	0	0	0	0	0	1.82	0	7.27	0	0		1.81	25.46
B R	N° of. occ. (out of 46)	0	0	1	0	0	6	1	0	4	1		2	7
	Percentage	0	0	2.17	0	0	13.04	2.17	0	8.70	2.17		4.5	15.22
N A	N° of. occ. (out of 80)	1	0	2	0	0	1	7	4	9	13		0	13
	Percentage	1.25	0	2.50	0	0	1.25	8.75	5.00	11.25	16.25		0	16.25
T O T A L	N° of. occ. (out of 351)	4	2	5	2	0	21	24	21	19	14		16	62
	Percentage	1.14	0.57	1.42	0.57	0	5.98	6.84	5.98	5.41	3.99		4.56	17.66

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Table 8.8: Occurrence of the Positive irony substrategies in the corpora analysed

		B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8
LLC	occ.	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
	%	0	1.16	0	1.16	1.16	0	0	0
GG	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YM	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BR	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NA	occ.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	1.25	0	0	0	0	0	0
TO TAL	occ.	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
	%	0	0.57	0	0.28	0.28	0	0	0

Table 8.9: Occurrence of the Neutral irony substrategies in the corpora studied

		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C 8	C 9	C 10	C11
LLC	occ	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	1.16	1.16	0	0	0	0	0
GG	occ.	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	%	1.19	0	0	0	0	0	1.19	0	0	0	0
YM	occ.	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	3	1	0	0
	%	1.82	1.82	3.64	1.82	0	0	3.64	5.45	1.82	0	0
BR	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
	%	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	2.5	2.5	0	2.5	2.5
NA	occ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	1.25	0	0	1.25
TOTAL	occ.	2	1	2	1	1	2	6	5	1	1	2
	%	0.57	0.28	0.57	0.28	0.28	0.57	1.71	1.42	0.28	0.28	0.57

Fig. 8j. Frequencies of occurrence of the Negative irony strategies

Negative irony strategies

Fig. 8k. Frequencies of occurrence of the Positive irony strategies
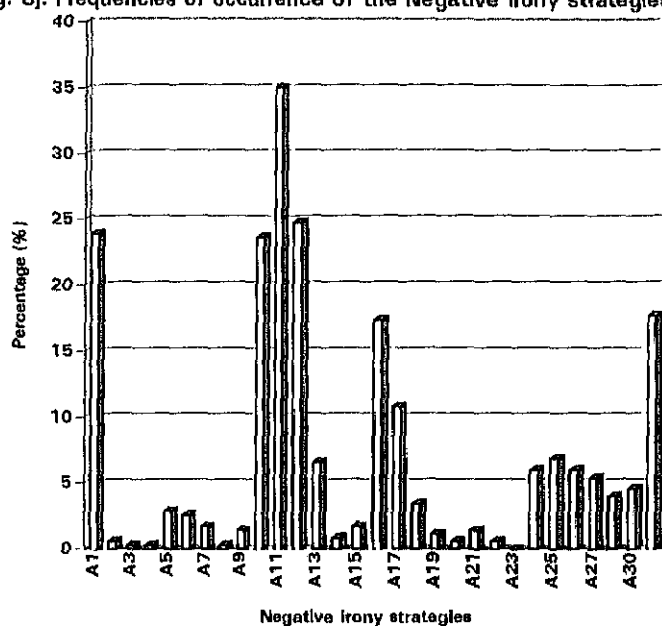
Positive irony strategies
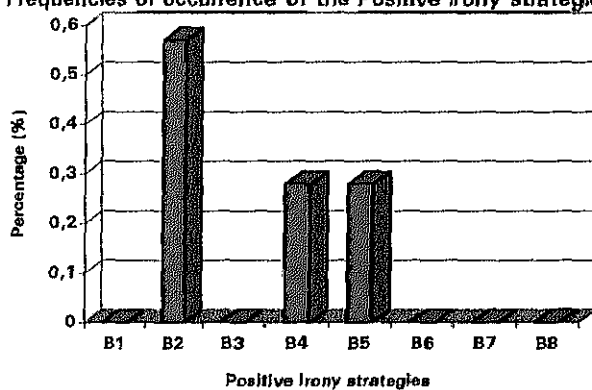
Fig. 8l. Frequencies of occurrence of the Neutral irony strategies

Neutral irony strategies

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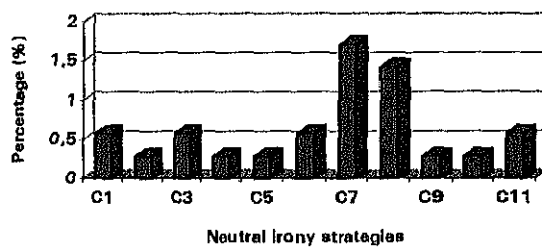
8.5.3 Discussion of the results (Testing Main Hypothesis and Research Hypotheses nº 5 and 12)

The numbers in tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6 leave no possible doubts as to what the most common and most frequently used type of irony is. Negative irony is by far "the winner" in this contest, with 96.58% of the total occurrences. Positive irony is almost non-existent in the corpora studied herein, with only two occurrences out of a total of 351 instances of ironic discourse (which constitutes only 0.57% of occurrences). There are no instances of Positive verbal irony in three of the corpora, namely, *GG*, *YM* and *BR*. Probably this is due to the type of relationship existing between the ironists and their victims (in the television programmes) and to the type of prose in the case of BR. In *GG*, Dorothy's intellectual superiority and Sophia's age superiority act as weapons that give them power and, therefore, allow them to use negative, aggressive irony against the other two girls rather than praising, positive irony. In addition, it has to be taken into account that this is a television programme, and Negative irony is more likely to elicit the audience's laughter than Positive irony. Something similar happens in YM, between Hacker and Humphrey and Hacker and his wife. In Russell's works, it is also logical to think that Negative irony will be more effective for his purposes, for his intention is always to criticise and denounce those aspects of society that are against his concept of correctness or appropriateness.

In spite of the facts mentioned above, the two

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occurrences of positive irony in the other two corpora show its possibility of realisation. Besides, I insist on the fact that some other examples provided by other authors (as those quoted in 8.4.2, 5.3.1 and 4.3.1.2 above) as well as others I recall from my personal experience, also give evidence of its existence as one more type of irony, contrary to what Sperber & Wilson, or Brown & Levinson state (as was discussed in 4.3.1.2 and 5.3.1), and in agreement with the characterization of verbal irony made in this piece of research.

As regards Neutral irony, the quantitative analysis shows that its frequency of occurrence is slightly higher than that of positive irony. Each of the five corpora used has at least one example of neutral irony, something that does not happen with Positive irony since this strategy does not appear in three of the corpora investigated. The total number of occurrences of Neutral irony, out of a total of 351, is 10, which constitutes only 2.85% with respect to the total percentage of occurrence. However, the low percentages found both for Positive and Neutral irony seem to be sufficient data to accept hypothesis n° 5, in which I stated that "not all ironic utterances convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker". As was noted in 4.3.1.2, other examples not found in my corpora but given by respectable authors studying verbal irony have also been decisive for the inclusion of these other two types in this study.

Thus, it has to be acknowledged that, in effect, the most common, frequent and well-known manifestation of verbal irony is its negative one, and probably this is the reason why

some authors have not even thought of the possibility of the existence of the other two types.

Regarding now the occurrence of the different substrategies within each of the three types (shown in tables 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9 and illustrated in Figures 8j, 8k and 8l), the following facts are noticeable:

- The strategies most frequently used by users of Negative verbal irony turned out to be the following, in order of importance:

 1- A11: Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea
 (35.04% of occurrences)

 2- A12: Pretend, simulate (24.79% of occ.)

 3- A1: Use the opposite proposition to the literal one
 of your utterance (23.13% of occ.)

 4- A10: Use contradictory speech acts (23.65% of occ.)

 5- A31: Make use of implicature-free verbal irony
 (17.66% of occ.)

 6- A16: Avoid the lower points of a criticism (17.38%
 of occ.)

The most prominent theories of verbal irony come to light once more in this quantitative analysis. Traditional theories, Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Theory, and Clark and Gerrig's Pretence Theory or irony are mirrored in the first three most frequent strategies. But even though echoing, pretending and using the proposition contrary to the one intended are frequent practices among ironic speakers, none of these practices covers the totality of occurrences of the phenomenon, not even half of it. Other practices or strategies also seem to be very frequent, namely, using contradictory speech acts, using the conventional implicatures of the words uttered and/or avoiding the lower

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points in a criticism by hedging, using neutralised expressions or being ambiguous. Once more, it can be seen that the existing theories point to some prominent feature of verbal irony, but not to all its various possibilities of realisation.

- The other strategies discussed in 8.4.1 show minor percentages of occurrence. Among the most frequent are A17 (Give hints and/or association clues; 10.82%), A13 (Use rhetorical questions; 6.55%), and A24 (Say less than required or expected; 5.98%). One of them, A28 (Make use of inverted commas, bold type, etc.) could obviously only be found in the written corpora, and, therefore, its total number of occurrences ought not to be measured with respect to the total number of examples studied, but to the total number of examples in the two written corpora, which is 126. The 14 occurrences found of this strategy, then, constitute 1.11% of the total, which is a considerable part, but which at the same time tells us that ironic writers have many other tools to make their point. Strategy A29 (Use prosodic features) could, on the contrary, only be measured for the spoken corpora (but see 6.5), but for the reasons already explained in 6.1, only one of the three spoken corpora studied, namely the LLC, was used for the survey of prosodic features, and since a whole chapter (Chapter 6) has been devoted to this issue, no further account of this strategy has been made here.

- Some of the strategies show a marked difference of occurrence from one corpus to the other, as is the case with A30 (Use conventionalised verbal irony) and A18 (Use metaphors). Strategy A30 seems to be one of the favourites in GG (15.16% of

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occurrences), whereas its frequency is very low in YM and in BR, and non-existent in LLC and NA. Strategy A18 is quite frequent (9.30%) in LLC, non-existent in GG, and very rarely found in the other three corpora. In the case of A30, and considering that *The Golden Girls* is an American series, it might be hypothesised that American people are more prone to use conventionalised irony than other cultures, in which case this would show the culture-dependency of irony. However, a more profound study with this hypothesis as the main one should be carried out, a study which is not within the objectives of this piece of work.

- As was explained at the beginning of this chapter, more than one strategy can be used by a speaker in the same ironic utterance, and, therefore, the possibilities of combination of all the strategies arise as an interesting point to look into. Considering that the number of substrategies for Negative irony is 31, the statistical possibilities of combination of these strategies are numerous. Of these, 144 combinations were found in the corpora. The data base elaborated for the quantitative analysis of the strategies (see Appendix 2a) permits the observation of such combinations (see Appendix 2b), of which the following appear as the most frequent (from most to least frequent):

```
1-  A1 + A11 + A12   (19 occurrences)
2-  A17              (16 occurrences)
3-  A1 + A11         (11 occurrences)
4-  A1  /  A16  /  A30   (10 occurrences)
5-  A10 + A13              (9 occurrences)
6-  A1 + A10 + A11 + A12  (8 occurrences)
7-  A25  /  A31           (7 occurrences)
8-  A10  /  A11           (6 occurrences)
9-  A11 + A12 / A11 + A28  /  A18   (5 occurrences)
```

Combination nº 1 presents the strategy of using the proposition which is opposite to the one intended, plus that of echoing someone's thought, utterance or idea, together with that of pretending or simulating. This proved to be the most frequent combination, with 19 occurrences (that is, 5.4% of the 351 instances of irony studied presented this combination).

In combination nº 2, the speakers/writers of ironic discourse made use of only one of the strategies, namely "Give hints or association clues". The fact that it appears alone very frequently may indicate that this is one of the most "self-sufficient" strategies to convey irony, since the speaker needs no help from other strategies to make his point. The percentage of occurrence of this combination is 4.56% (16 occurrences out of 351).

Combination 3 groups the use of an opposite proposition to the one conveyed together with echoic irony, with 11 occurrences (3.13% of the total occurrences presented this combination).

Number 4 groups three combinations which turned out to be equal in terms of frequency of occurrence (10 occurrences, i.e., 2.85% of the total). The three of them present only one strategy to do the job, namely "Use the opposite proposition to the one intended", "Avoid the lower points of a criticism" and "Use conventionalised verbal irony". As we already know, the first strategy represents the traditional approach to irony; thus, it seems to be well established as a strategy, and, therefore, it can be used without help from other strategies or

only together with the use of prosodic features in some cases (see Chapter 6). But the occurrence of the other two strategies by themselves is proof of the fact that irony can manifest itself by means of other strategies than the traditional proposition-oriented one.

The fifth combination presents the use of a contradictory speech act with rhetorical questions, which is a logical combination, since a rhetorical question is never intended as a real question. The number of occurrences for this combination is 9, which represents 2.56% of occurrences.

Combination nº 6 groups together the use of the proposition opposite to the one intended, the use of contradictory speech acts, echoic irony and pretence. This shows that, on many occasions, many of the most characterising features of verbal irony are used together. The number of occurrences of this combination in the corpora studied is 8, which represents 2.28% of the total.

Number 7 on the list groups two combinations having the same frequency of occurrence, namely, "Overstate, exaggerate" and "Make use of implicature-free verbal irony". Again, the occurrence of only one of the strategies was sufficient to convey the ironic intended meaning. The number of occurrences of these strategies represent 2% of the total instances of verbal irony analysed.

Number 8 again groups two combinations which happen to have the same frequency of occurrence (1.71%), and which happen to occur by themselves (with no other apparent strategy). I

refer to "Use contradictory speech acts" and "Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea".

Finally, the three combinations under number 9 are grouped together for having the same number of occurrences (5, i.e., 1.42% of total occurrences). They are the following: a) Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea" and "Pretend, simulate"; b) "Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea" and "Make use of inverted commas, italisation, etc....."; and c) "Use metaphors". The first two combinations reflect two of the most outstanding theories discussed above, but the same cannot be said of the last one (c), which shows (once more) that sometimes irony can be expressed by other types of strategies, without being it necessary to resort to any of the traditional or more "established" ones.

As may be observed, although these combinations proved to be the most frequent, their percentages of occurrence with respect to the total number of instances of irony studied are not very high. This is due to the fact that most of the combinations found only occurred once (and, in a few cases two, three or four times, as shown in Appendix 2b). However, this study of combinations has allowed us to observe certain tendencies of some strategies to combine with other strategies. For instance, the tendency shown by strategy nº 1 (proposition-oriented irony) to combine with strategy nº 11 (echoic irony) is noticeable. A12 (pretence) also seems to be a strategy with a high capacity for combination.

.A more detailed analysis of these combinations could

be done, but, for the purposes of this study, it seems sufficient to point to the most frequent combinations and most apparent tendencies in order to be able to appreciate that the strategies discussed and explained in this chapter do not exclude one another.

- As regards Positive irony, it will not be possible to give any definite and final conclusions with respect to the tendencies of speakers to use one strategy or another, given its low percentage of occurrence in the corpora studied herein. The strategy that repeats itself in two different corpora (LLC and the newspaper articles) is B2 (Say less than required, understate), which, as has been shown in different parts of this work, is a strategy very much associated with irony in general. The other two strategies found were B4 and B5 (namely, "Joke" and "Use contradictory speech acts"). It seems logical to find "Joke" as a substrategy very much associated with Positive irony, for, in most cases, a speaker who criticises with a praising intention or who expresses positive feelings by means of apparently negative language, is evidently joking. In one of the two cases found, "Understate", "Joke" and "Use contradictory speech acts" co-occur in the same utterance. The other example is only an instance of understatement; there is no joking or contradiction of speech acts.

- With respect to Neutral irony, the most frequent strategies found were, in first place, C7 ("Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution") and C8 ("Use implicature-free verbal irony") with 1.71% and 1.42% of

occurrences with respect to the total instances of irony analysed. Second in frequency of occurrence are strategies C1 ("Include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements in your contribution"), C3 ("Hedge"), C6 ("Use contradictory speech acts") and C11 ("Use non-core vocabulary"), each one representing 0.57% with respect to the total number of ironic instances analysed. As with Positive irony, the low percentage of occurrence with respect to the total does not allow the researcher to study the tendencies in the combinations of substrategies. In the examples found here, the combinations were C2 + C3 (1 occurrence), C1 + C7 + C8 (2 occurrences), C1 + C7 + C8 + C9 (one occurrence), C6 + C7 + C8 + C10 + C11 (1 occurrence), C7 + C11 (1 occurrence) and C7 + C8 (1 occurrence).

Again, in most instances, the speaker uses more than one strategy, which shows that verbal irony is complex and consists of several bits that form a whole.

In addition to this study of possible combinations, the statistical Chi-square test was carried out in order to find out whether there were significant differences in the frequencies of occurrence of the different strategies with respect to the five different corpora. The results of this test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 12) show that, in effect, the frequencies of occurrence of the different substrategies differ significantly in the case of Negative irony, which implies that the type of discourse influences the choice of one strategy or another. The statistical analysis was not carried out for Positive and Neutral irony, because the number of occurrences of each of the

substrategies in the different corpora is very small ($\leq$ 2), and consequently the results of the test would not be reliable.

8.6 Summary and conclusions of the chapter

In this chapter, I have attempted to characterise verbal irony as a pragmatic superstrategy that includes several substrategies which may be chosen by the user of the language according to his/her communicative needs. An attempt to define or characterise this phenomenon has also been made, keeping in mind that this is a real risk, considering the versatility and volatility of the phenomenon. As the intention behind the characterisation was to embrace all the instances of verbal irony studied, an important part of this characterisation has been the fact that irony is based on one or more of a group of semantic oppositions which may manifest themselves at different levels, for this has proved to be an invariable feature of irony in the samples of ironic discourse analysed. On the other hand, the substrategies subsequently discussed and quantified have indeed proved to be variable, for none of them can be said to occur in all cases. It seems that the user of the language chooses (consciously or unconciously) one or another, but that none of them is obligatory. What may be said to be unvariable with respect to the strategies is the fact that the speaker always uses one or some of them. Nevertheless, the quantitative analysis made in this chapter shows that some strategies are more

frequent than others, and, consequently, we may speak about certain tendencies of the users of English to choose some strategies more than others. It can also be said, after the statistical Chi-squared test (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 12), that these tendencies vary with the different types of discourse used, which would imply that some strategies are more appropriate than others for a given type of discourse or genre. Within Negative irony (by far the most frequent kind of irony), the most frequent substrategies coincide with the claims of the most outstanding theories: echoing, pretending and using the proposition opposite to the one intended are the three strategies at the top of the frequency list. However, none of these have proved to be a permanent feature of the overall scope of instances of ironic discourse.

The quantitative analysis of this chapter, as well as the statistical test carried out, have also confirmed the assertions made by some authors (like Haverkate (1988) or Leech (1983) on the less frequent character of Positive irony. The instances of this type have indeed been scarce. Neutral irony has proved to be slightly more frequent than positive irony, but still much less frequent than Negative irony.

The existence of these two less frequent types (Positive and Neutral) nevertheless leads the researcher to accept Hypothesis nº 5 (on the non-derogatory character of some cases of verbal irony), and, therefore, to reject Sperber & Wilson's argument that irony is *always* derogatory. The whole discussion and argumentation of this chapter also seems to

provide evidence for the acceptance of an important part of the Main Hypothesis, namely, "...its very essence lies in paradox and contradiction (which may be present at different levels); and the pragmatic concept of strategy,.... can help in its explanation and characterisation".

Thus, the main argument put forward in this chapter has been the possibility of characterising irony by means of the pragmatic strategies used by the speakers/writers of English. I also want to argue that verbal irony can be characterised in terms of the discourse functions it fulfils, and this is the main concern of the next chapter.

Chapter 9: *THE DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF VERBAL IRONY: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS*

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<<What speakers avoid doing
is as important as what they
do.>>

D. Bolinger, *The Life and
Death of Words*

<<We cannot use language
maturely until we are
spontaneously at home in
irony.>>

Kenneth Burke.

9.1 Introduction

Human language exists to fulfil certain communicative
and functional purposes. The context in which language is used
and the purposes to which it is put seem to play an important
part in shaping language. The effects of the uses to which
language is put may vary according to the different types of
language employed. It does not seem unreasonable to suppose,
therefore, that ironic language may have some particular,
specific functions of its own. My intention in this chapter is
to analyse once more the pieces of ironic discourse found in the
corpora so as to be able to identify these functions and their
nature. With this aim in mind, I shall first present a
discussion of some of the main scholarly attempts to classify
language functions in general. I shall try to establish the
connection between ironic language and these general schemes, but
I shall also try to show that these schemes are too abstract to

give an accurate description of the functions fulfilled by ironic
discourse. Therefore, a more specific classification and
explanation of the functions of irony is made, with reference to
the particular types of discourse in each of the corpora (since
it is a well-known fact that functions have much to do with the
genre in question). Thus, the main research question that
originated the piece of research in this chapter is the
following:

What are the functions of ironic discourse?
from which I derived the final hypothesis, which is based on my
intuitions after dealing with so many samples of ironic
discourse:

> <<Speakers/writers of English use verbal irony in order to
> fulfil the main functions of *Evaluation, Verbal attack*
> and/or *Amusement*. Other, more specific discourse functions
> may be fulfilled at the same time, such as *Topic Closure,*
> *Topic Conclusion, Reproach, Complaint,* etc..>>

Once more, the qualitative analysis is followed by its
quantitative counterpart. It was again considered important to
obtain reliable data as to the frequencies of occurrence of the
variables studied (which, in this case, are the different
functions fulfilled by ironic discourse) in order to estimate the
importance or incidence of each of the variables within the
phenomenon in question and to test the final hypothesis in this
piece of work.

I shall now focus on the above-mentioned attempts to
classify the functions of language.

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9.2 Approaches to the study of language functions

Levinson (1983) notes that one of the general motivations for the interest in pragmatics is the possibility that significant *functional* explanations can be offered for linguistic facts. One of the most well-known and traditional approaches to these "functions of speech" is Jakobson's (1960). Jakobson associates the functions of speech to the six basic components of the communicational event. Thus, he finds that language performs the following functions: 1) REFERENTIAL (focused on the referential content of the message), 2) EMOTIVE (focused on the speaker's state), 3) CONATIVE (having to do with the speaker's wishes that the addressee do or think such and such, and used in order to achieve some practical effect), 4) METALINGUISTIC (dealing with the code being used), 5) PHATIC (focused on the channel or on the establishment of bonds of personal union between people) and 6) POETIC (concerning the way in which the message is encoded or the artistic and creative use of language in general). As Lyons (1977) notes, all these functions are closely connected, and it is difficult to draw a sharp distinction between one and any of the others. Levinson qualifies this scheme as one "of dubious utility to the pragmaticist in search of functional principles", since "the categories are of vague application, they do not have direct empirical motivation and there are many other rival schemes built upon slightly different lines". He adds:

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<<Perhaps the only clear utility is to remind us that, contrary to the preoccupations of many philosophers and a great many semanticists, language is used to convey more than the propositional content of what is said.>>

(1983:42)

In effect, as has been shown through the analysis made in previous chapters and as I intend to continue showing in this last analytical chapter, language, and, in particular, ironic discourse, is used to convey meanings which go beyond the propositional content of what is said.

Halliday (1976, 1978) presents a more abstract scheme consisting of three main functions, namely, EXPERIENTIAL (concerning language as a vehicle to conceptualise and describe our experience), INTERPERSONAL (focusing on the relationships among participants and on the illocutionary acts used by them, i.e., "the speaker or writer doing something to the listener or reader by means of language" (1985: 53)), and TEXTUAL (concerning messages as organized units of information).

In their introductory chapter to *Discourse Analysis*, Brown & Yule point out that the attempts to provide labels for the functions of language "have resulted in vague, and often confusing, terminology" (1983: 1) and, therefore, they only describe two major functions of language : the TRANSACTIONAL function and the INTERACTIONAL function. The former serves in the expression of content and the latter in expressing social relations and personal attitudes. They point to the fact that it is unlikely that, on any occasion, an utterance "would be used to fulfil only one function to the total exclusion of the other" (1983:1), and that is why, further on in the chapter, they speak

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of "primarily transactional" or "primarily interactional" language. Thus, in terms of functions, it seems reasonable to speak of *tendencies* rather than of absolute categories that exist to the exclusion of all others.

The foregoing discussion shows that there is scant agreement on what kinds of functions are involved in human language and on which levels they operate. My focus on corpora of natural language forces me to think in terms of observable features of the concrete pieces of discourse studied and of their context. Therefore, I must say that, at every point of the analysis, I tried to make each case fit within any of the above mentioned categories (Jakobson's, Halliday's or Brown & Yule's), but, at the same time, I found out that, at a more concrete level of analysis, there were other -more specific- functions being fulfilled by the speakers or writers of ironic discourse. And even among these more concrete functions, there seemed to be different levels. Thus, for instance, an ironic utterance whose main general function is primarily interactional (in Brown & Yule's terms) may fulfil -at a lower level of abstraction- the function of *verbally attacking* the addressee, and, in turn -and at a lower level of abstraction- it may fulfil the function of *topic closure*. Mc Carthy & Carter (1994) work at what I am here calling "a more concrete level of analysis", and, therefore, some of their categories, such as *topic closure*, *evaluation* and *topic shift*, were useful and enlightening for my particular analysis. Norrick's (1993) study of the functions of conversational joking has also influenced my view of the functions of ironic discourse.

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Indeed, since there is a close connection between humour and irony (see chapter 4), it is not difficult to find also a connection between the functions of the former and those of the latter. However, in some cases, neither Norrick's nor Mc Carthy & Carter's categories seemed appropriate, and, consequently, I had to use new labels to describe the observed phenomena.

Since I am working with five different corpora, I shall first refer to the general functions of each of them, taking into account that they display samples of different genres or types of discourse. Furthermore, in one of them (the LLC), the genre is not uniform, and as was specified in chapter 1 and 6, there are samples of face-to-face conversation, telephone conversation, conversation at a law court, etc.. As Mc Carthy & Carter (1994) note, to study the parameter of function involves looking at the relationship between language and contexts of use. I now turn to this issue.

9.3 General abstract functions of the different corpora examined. Some considerations on the influence of genre upon the functions used

9.3.1 LONDON LUND CORPUS

As was specified in chapter 6, of the 64 sub-texts from the LLC that were scrutinized, 35 are *private telephone conversations,* 19 are *face-to-face conversations,* 5 are samples of *radio discussion, debate, interview or sports comment,* 4 are samples of *public prepared oration* (priests' sermons and mass) and 1 is a piece of *legal discourse.* All the texts were

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considered for the statistical analysis, but a few of them did not present instances of ironic discourse. I refer to the sports comments and the priests' sermons, where there was no apparent use of irony on the part of the speakers. This may perhaps say something about the nature of these two genres, although, in this study, I have not analysed sufficient sermons or sports comments as to make generalisations on the non-use of irony by priests or sports commentators.

Svartvik and Quirk labelled their corpus as a "Corpus of English Conversation", and, thus, only from the title one can infer that the general *interactional* function is the one that predominates in it. Both in the face-to-face and the telephone conversations, there is a marked tendency towards primarily interactional language. Even though, in the majority of cases, the speakers are academics, their intention seems to be the maintenance of social relationships and personal attitudes more than the expression of content. The same is valid for the instances of radio discussion, debate and interview. There are no instances of news reports, which would most probably show a tendency towards primarily transactional language.

Norrick notes that "the frequency and persistence of spontaneous joking in everyday talk suggests that conversation often tends more toward performance and entertainment than to the expeditious exchange of information" (1993: 131). As will be shown in the analysis of the examples, the function of irony in conversation has much to do with joking and amusement, as well as with verbal attack and evaluation, or with all these functions

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at the same time.

9.3.2 *The Golden Girls* and the *"Yes, Minister"* television episodes

I have grouped these two corpora under the same heading due to the fact that they are both television programmes which have similar aims, and, therefore, the language used in them is likely to fulfil similar functions. Both programmes are comedies, and consequently the irony put in the mouth of the characters is intended to entertain and to amuse the audience. Consequently, it again seems certain that the prevailing general and more abstract function is the *interactional* one.

But in these two corpora, unlike in the other three corpora used in this analysis, a distinction has to be made between: a) the functions of the programmes as wholes, which have to do with the script writers' intentions (here, the authors of the episodes use verbal irony in order to amuse the audience), and b) the functions fulfilled by these instances of irony within the specific situation created in the scene. This has to do with the plot of the episode and the relationship among the different characters. Thus, even when the use of irony may amuse the audience (primary function), a given character may use verbal irony to attack another character or to make a comment on the topic of conversation, for example. In this way, it can be appreciated that there is no single level for functional analysis. Discourse functions may vary for the same utterance, depending on the viewpoint adopted.

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9.3.3   Bertrand Russell's works

Even though Russell writes about various social and human problems, his intention is not only to inform us about these problems (transactional function) but also and mainly to denounce certain situations which he considers absurd or unfair to the human race as a whole. He, therefore, tries to influence his readers' opinion by verbally attacking those he considers to be the culprits (Jakobson's conative and phatic functions, respectively). Consequently, and in spite of the fact that there is no physical contact between him and his readers, his prose is intended to fulfil certain interactional or interpersonal functions, as I will try to show by means of the qualitative analysis of the examples of verbal irony found in his writing.

9.3.4   The newspaper articles

The articles which have been analysed are all articles published in British or American newspapers, and whose topics vary. But in spite of the variety of topics, it can be observed that, in all the articles, both the transactional and interactional functions of language are intertwined. The writers want to inform about a given state of affairs, but at the same time they want to poke fun at some victims, or they may want to denounce or verbally attack some people or situation which cannot be thought of as desirable (and this is the reason why they resort to verbal irony in a great number of cases).

These writers sometimes organise their text in such a way that verbal irony may sometimes signal the headline or the beginning, middle and end of a paragraph to obtain certain effects. This organisational function is close to Halliday's textual function.

As has been stated here in a somewhat general way, the discourse functions of ironic language may vary according to the genre or type of discourse where it is being used. Mc Carthy & Carter note that "the idea that there may be underlying recurrent features which are prototypically present in particular groups of texts is an important one ... at the present time" (1994: 24). This idea implies that there is a correlation between language use and specific situations and types of discourse. This I shall try to test by means of the analytical study made in this chapter.

9.4 Analysis of the functions fulfilled by the ironic discourse found in the corpora

At a more concrete level of analysis, when dealing with the 351 instances of irony in the corpora in terms of their discourse functions, it was noted that there were again some functions which could be considered as more general (though less general than those in Brown & Yule's categories (discussed in 9.3 above), for instance), and some others which were more specific. The more general ones are: 1) VERBAL ATTACK, 2) AMUSEMENT and 3) EVALUATION. The more specific ones are greater in number and are

the following:

1) TOPIC CLOSURE

2) TOPIC CONCLUSION

3) TOPIC SHIFT

4) TOPIC COMMENT

5) TOPIC INTRODUCTION

6) RAPPORT BUILDING (Creation of solidarity among the participants of discourse)

7) GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK

8) PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF

9) CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT

10) MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST

11) MANIFESTATION OF POWER

12) TEASING (Poking fun at one's interlocutor)

13) COMPLAINT

14) REPROACH

15) DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE

16) INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT OR INTELLIGENCE

17) MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY

Each of the more general functions may co-occur, and these may, in turn, co-occur with one or more of the specific ones.

I shall now proceed to present and analyse corpus examples of each of the functions in question.

9.4.1 General functions: VERBAL ATTACK, AMUSEMENT AND EVALUATION

9.4.1.1 VERBAL ATTACK

Almost all the examples of Negative irony have as their main function the verbal attack of the speaker's interlocutor or of a third party. When attacking a certain victim, speakers want, at the same time, to distance themselves from these victims or from certain behaviour patterns. This does not happen with Positive or Neutral irony. I shall discuss two examples in which the attacking function is very neatly performed by means of ironic language:

[1] In one of the newspaper articles analysed (published in *The Spectator*), the writer, W. Cash, complains about "the war against child abuse in the United States, which is fast becoming a neurosis". He states that people make crazy accusations no matter whether the accused has commited child abuse or has not, and he tells the reader how a couple were found guilty of abusing their grandchildren on the basis of their granddaughters' confusing testimony, which was later found to have come from a dream one of them had. He subsequently adds:

<<The fact that the child abuse "experts" view a child's testimony as truthful unless proved otherwise is responsible for much of the problem. "Many of the abuse experts in these cases have a preconceived idea of what might have happened and suggest it to the child who then reports it as if it were true", wrote Dr Black and Dr Cort in *The Psychological Bulletin*.>>

(NA, Nov.1, 1993)

As was noted in chapter 8, the use of inverted commas is one of the strategies used by ironists in written discourse, and this

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is precisely what W. Cash does here with the word *experts*. He attacks them verbally by taking advantage of the double meaning that the word *experts* may have in this context. They are supposed to be experts in the sense that they can detect and distinguish the cases of child abuse, but, since the author of the article thinks they are not fair people, he uses the inverted commas with two possible intentions: a) to question their expertise in detecting these cases and/or b) to suggest the other possible interpretation, namely, that they are experts because they themselves have committed child abuse. He might therefore be accusing them of the same crime they charge their victims with.

[2] Most of the examples of ironic discourse found in *The Golden Girls* corpus are instances of the function of verbal attack at the level of the interpersonal relations of the four girls (since, as was noted in 9.3.2, from the viewpoint of the intentions of the writers of the episodes, the main function seems to be that of amusement). In the following conversation between Dorothy and her ex-husband (Stan), Dorothy attacks Stan using her sharp sarcasm:

Stan: I can't go home.

Dorothy: Why not?

Stan: Katherine threw me out.

Dorothy: Your wife threw you out? I had no idea she was that bright.

Stan: Katherine accused me of infidelity.

Dorothy: Oh, damn it, Stan. This makes those infidelities during
    our marriage seem much less special.

(GG, 1991: 163)

By apparently praising Stan's present wife ("I had no idea she
was that bright"), Dorothy indirectly attacks Stan. The
inference is that, if his wife is bright for throwing him out,
he must be an undesirable person to live with. Dorothy continues
her attack when concluding that "his present infidelities make
those infidelities during their marriage seem much less special".
She is, at the same time, being reproachful. *Reproach* is one of
the more specific functions of verbal irony, which goes hand in
hand with the more general one of verbal attack. Dorothy's final
ironic remark also fulfils the function of *topic closure,* since
she gives a concluding remark, and then they change the topic of
conversation. This function will be analysed in detail in
9.4.2.1.

9.4.1.2 AMUSEMENT

It has been observed that, in a great number of cases,
the speaker or writer resorts to verbal irony in order to amuse
their interlocutor(s) or reader(s). In the following chunk of
a radio debate (from the LLC), the speakers are using verbal
irony to criticise the poet Robert Burns but also to amuse their
audience with their caustic comments:

[1]

```
h    11   ^well of course :Jack's qu/ite r\ight#              /
h    11   but he's ^he's only 'half-'way :th\ere#  .         /
```

```
h      11   but I ^mean . !the real real reason why [ro @]    /
h      11   Burns is :so . [@] :w\/orshipped#                 /
h      11   is ^because of course he was a :self-made m\/an#  /
h      11   who ^got th/ere# .                                /
h      11   ^from being a f\arm l/abourer#                    /
h      11   and was ac^knowledged as a !p\oet# .              /
h      11   ^in his own l/ifetime#                            /
h      11   and ^s\econdly#                                   /
h      11   and ^far :m\ore imp/ortant#                       /
h      11   he was a ter^rific :l\over#                       /
h      11   a^mongst these d/our#                             /
h      11   ^Presbyt/erian :Sc\ots#                           /
aud    20   (laughter)                                        /
(h     11   ^and he 'had an e"n\ormous n/umber#               /
h      11   of ^illegitimate !ch\ildren# -                    /
h      11   well it's ^two hundred years a:g\o n/ow#          /
h      11   and if ^you multiply up those those :illegitimate /
h      11   ch\ildren#                                        /
aud    20   (laughter)                                        /
(h     11   by the ^number of - by the :number of             /
(h     11   gener\/ations# .                                  /
h      11   that there ^are in :two hundred y/ears# -         /
h      11   ^you can :find there're :very very few Sc\otsmen# /
h      11   who ^aren't in f\/act#                            /
h      11   ^worshipping their :own :\ancestor#               /
aud    20   (laughter)                                        /
f      11   well ^that was all "v\ery pro_found#              /
f      11   ^w\asn't it#                                      /
aud    20   (laughter)                                        /
(f     11   ^Bill M\allalieu#                                 /
m      11   well I ^certainly won't follow Hen:riques on [@] . /
m      11   on th\at one#                                     /
m      11   if ^I start [@] . :naming - :British p\oets# .    /
m      11   or ^great . British prominent :p\eople#           /
m      11   ^who have got . illegitimate :ch\/ildren#         /
m      11   ^I shall get the :BBC into [@] . :l\ibel _action# /
aud    20   (laughter)                                        /
f      11   ^not if they're :dead two hundred y\/ears#        /
aud    20   (laughter)                                        /
m      11   "^that was :one of the :points that :worries :m\e /
m      11   you _see#                                         /
m      20   [@ @]                                             /
f      11   the ^copyright has exp\ired#                      /
aud    20   (laughter)                                        /
```

<div align="right">(*LLC*, S.5.1)</div>

When f takes his turn in the debate to say that h's comment on
Robert Burns's illegitimate children had been very profound, he
is being ironic in order to amuse the audience (for h's comment

was not at all profound), and, to judge from the audience's response (laughter) this function was happily fulfilled. The same happens when m states that one of the points that worries him is the fact that "the copyright has expired". They are making fun of Robert Burns but they seem to be highly concerned with attracting their audience's attention by trying to amuse them.

[2] In an article entitled "Anyone for Bazookas" (published in the British newspaper *The Spectator*), Alasdair Palmer describes how he tried to get a bazooka from a gun dealer in Britain. The entire article is written in a humorous tone, and he resorts to verbal irony at some points in order to amuse the reader:

> <<Curious to meet the suppliers of this formidable
> selection of military hardware, I wondered if I could
> buy a bazooka myself. The dealer was not enthusiastic.
> "You could try but I wouldn't advise it. The men who
> organize these sales are not very nice. They wouldn't
> think twice about running you down if they thought you
> were setting them up. And, quite honestly, they'd see
> you coming a mile off. Your problem is that you don't
> look like you need a bazooka". I was relieved to hear
> that but I wanted to know what someone who needs a
> bazooka looks like. The dealer refused to elaborate.
> "Not like you", was all he would say.
> You would be relieved to know that I am not now the
> proud owner of a bazooka. The price may be coming down
> but it still costs a couple of thousand pounds and *The
> Spectator* was not prepared to invest that money on a
> bazooka -although there are one or two people here who
> look like they could use one.>>
> (NA, January 15, 1994)

The final aftercomment is a humorous and, at the same time, attacking comment. Palmer uses the strategy of overgeneralisation to criticise some of his workmates. He does

not refer directly to them, nor does he directly insult or use epithets to describe them. He only says that they "look like they could use a bazooka" and leaves it up to the reader to infer what they are like. The choice made by Palmer to use irony here has a clearly amusing effect. If he had chosen to criticise his workmates in a direct manner, by way of rude words, perhaps the effect would not have been humorous or amusing.

Let us now direct our attention to the third of the general functions of verbal irony, namely, EVALUATION.

9.4.1.3 EVALUATION

The evaluative function of irony is one of its most relevant functions. Both Positive and Negative irony may be said to fulfil the general function of evaluation. If we are criticising or praising anybody or anything, we are implicitly evaluating such person or thing. In addition, a speaker may use irony to test or evaluate the hearer's knowledge or comprehension of his/her point, something s/he may want to do in order to see whether the hearer belongs to his/her group or whether the hearer agrees with him on a given topic.

The only type of irony which does not seem to fulfil the evaluative function is the Neutral one. In all the cases of neutral irony found in the corpora, the main function is only to amuse, without any apparent intention to evaluate. In fact, if the intention were to evaluate, it could no longer be classified as an instance of Neutral verbal irony.

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Thus, any of the examples of Negative or Positive irony in the corpora can be used as examples of how the evaluative function is fulfilled. Consider the following ironic remark by B. Russell:

[1]

<<So far as I can remember, there is not one word in the Gospels in praise of intelligence; and in this respect ministers of religion follow Gospel authority more closely than in some others.>> (1958: 82)

Here, Russell is again carrying out one of his biting criticisms of religion. He is indirectly saying that, in his opinion, the ministers of religion are not intelligent and, therefore, the evaluative function of his ironic comment is obvious.

[2] In the following conversation between Dorothy, Blanche, and Sophia, Blanche is telling the other two girls about her experience in the hospital:

Blanche: I was in that grey area between life and death. Uh-uh, the time has come for me to reevaluate my life. For me to take stock of myself. I just know that there's a part of me that nobody's ever seen.

Sophia: I find that hard to believe.

(GG, 1991: 183)

Sophia disrupts the normal turn-taking structure (for only Dorothy and Blanche had previously participated in the conversation) to make one of her usual caustic comments. By saying that she finds it hard to believe that "there's a part of Blanche that nobody's ever seen", she is making use of the pun

or "double entendre" strategy. Sophia rejects here the spiritual interpretation given by Blanche to her comment and resorts to the physical one, implying that, since she always goes to bed with the men she meets, it is impossible for her to have any part of her body that has not been seen by anybody. Thus, it can be stated that Sophia's ironic comment fulfils an evaluative function, and, at the same time, it fulfils the more specific function of "disrupting the prevailing turn-taking structure" (see 9.4.2.15 below).

I now turn to the discussion and exemplification of each of the more specific strategies mentioned in 9.4.

9.4.2 Specific discourse functions of verbal irony

9.4.2.1 TOPIC CLOSURE

Verbal irony is often used to close down the topic of a conversation or the topic of a written piece of discourse. On some occasions, the closure is made by means of an ironic remark that acts as a *coda*, summarizing all the events and evaluating the topic (and here, again, the evaluative function of most cases of verbal irony is clearly seen)[10]. In this case, we can also speak of the function of *topic conclusion*. *Topic conclusion* and *topic closure* may coincide or co-occur, but they are not the same thing, as I shall try to explain in 9.4.2.2.

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[10]The evaluative and concluding function of codas is discussed by Mc Carthy & Carter (1994: 111), though not for cases of ironic discourse.

The function of topic closure seems to be a rather frequent one for verbal irony (see quantitative analysis in 9.4.3.2). Consider the final part of a conversation between A and B (face-to-face-conversation). In their long conversation, they have been criticising and showing their discontent at the bureaucracy of the faculty. B closes the topic of conversation with a mildly ironic rhetorical question:

[1]

```
B    11 3((so)) ^th\at's how it _goes# -              /
B    11 3((^[\m]#)) - -                                /
B    11 3((you ^kn=ow#))                               /
B    11 3^this bloody university will be the :d\eath of me#  /
A    11 3( - - laughs) - - ^ph\ew# .                  /
B    11 3^y\eah# .                                    /
B    11 3^oh w/ell# -                                 /
B    11 3if you ((in"^herit a)) uni'versity from      /
B    11 3b\ureaucrats# .                              /
B    11 3^what do you exp\ect#                        /
A    20 3( - - laughs)                                /
B    11 3^y=es# .                                     /
B    11 3^oh w=ell#                                   /
B    11 3[@] ^thank you very m\uch#                   /
B    20 3*((1 to 2 sylls* 4 to 5 sylls))              /
A    11 3*((it's a ^pl\easure#))*                       /
```

                                                    (*LLC*, S.1.2)

The ironic rhetorical question closes the topic of conversation by implying there is not much to be expected from a university in the hands of bureaucrats. It also serves as a conclusion of the topic, showing no hope on the part of B, as well as a critical and evaluative attitude.

[2] Example 2 was presented in chapter 4 when analysing echoic irony. Hacker is tired of Humphrey's tricks, and, so, in this part of the episode, he takes revenge by repeating Humphrey's words: "My lips are sealed", which have been used many times by

him to conceal secrets from Hacker. Now Hacker has a secret and closes down the topic of conversation by using echoic irony:

Humphrey: Where did you get those proposals from?
Hacker: Humphrey, my lips are sealed.

> (end of scene)

>> (*YM*, 1994 Video Episode, "The Official Visit")

By answering Humphrey's question using one of Humphrey's favourite answers, Hacker is mocking at Humphrey and closing down the topic (the proposals), implying that giving him the information he wants is completely out of the question. The topic is finished, and Hacker will not allow more discussion about it.

[3] Another interesting example of verbal irony used to end up a topic of conversation is found in Sophia's words after listening to Rose's boring monologue:

Rose:I don't like hospitals either. They're full of germs. I always hold my breath in the elevators because there are sick people in the elevators and it's such a small space and once I had to go to the eighth floor of a hospital and the elevator stopped on every floor and I had to hold my breath all the time and I finally fainted and I hit my head and then I had to stay there because I had a concussion and I had to hold my breath all the way down in the elevator to the emergency room. Then I had to hold my breath in X-ray where they ask you to hold your breath anyway and...

> (Dorothy enters)
Dorothy: I have great news.

Sophia: Rose, you'll excuse me. We'll get back to your fascinating hospital story later.
> (GG,1991: 55)

Sophia introduces irony as a means to stop Rose's monologue and, consequently, to close the topic of conversation. This is an example of proposition-oriented irony, for it is obvious that Sophia means that Rose's story is not fascinating at all (this example has already been discussed in 2.4.1).

9.4.2.2 TOPIC CONCLUSION

The corpora examples show that sometimes speakers or writers use verbal irony to give a concluding remark about the topic of conversation, but this does not necessarily mean that the topic is being closed. As was noted in 9.4.2.1, the function of topic closure may go along with that of topic conclusion, but this is not always the case, and that is why I have found it necessary to distinguish between the two. Consider the following conversation:

[1]

Dorothy: Look, Ma, I don't know how to say this. So I'll just give it to you straight out. Ken is becoming a clown.

Sophia: (after a beat) Scusi?

Dorothy: Ma, he's tired of being a lawyer so he's joining the circus.

Sophia: What did you do to him?

Dorothy: I didn't do anything.

Sophia: Yeah, right. One day the man's a lawyer, the next he's a clown. Perfectly natural.

Dorothy: Ma, please, this is hard enough as it is.

Sophia: Oh, I'm sorry, sweetheart. I just tend to get a little upset when people *ruin my life!*

Rose: Sophia, I don't know what all the hullabaloo is about.
Dating a circus clown would be a dream come true for me...

(GG, 1991: 93)

Sophia gives her conclusion of what Dorothy is telling her by using an ironic remark. She says that it is "perfectly natural" for a man to be a lawyer one day and the next a clown, when what she obviously thinks is that it is not natural at all. She gives her conclusion on the topic, but the topic is not closed, for they all keep on talking about the same problem. Thus, topic conclusion here is distinct from topic closure.

In written discourse, topic conclusion and topic closure coincide more often than not, and these functions, in turn, coincide with the end or closing of a paragraph. Consider B. Russell's reflections on St. Thomas's position as regards astrology:

[2]

<<According to St. Thomas, astrology is to be rejected, for the usual reasons. In answer to the question "Is there such a thing as fate? Aquinas replies that we *might* give the name "fate" to the order impressed by Providence, but it is wiser not to do so, as "fate" is a pagan word. This leads to an argument that prayer is useful although Providence is unchangeable (I have failed to follow this argument), God sometimes works miracles, but no one else can. Magic, however is possible with the help of demons, this is not properly miraculous, and is not by the help of the stars.>>

(BR, 1958: 45)

The conclusion Russell gives on the interpretation of St. Thomas's argument is obviously ironic and intends to mock St. Thomas Aquinas's views on astrology. Russell explains that he has failed to follow St. Thomas's argument when, in fact, what he means is that he thinks such an argument is ridiculous and

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contradictory. He goes on using echoic irony as a concluding note to the topic and the paragraph, leaving it open to the readers to draw their own conclusions.

[3] The following is also an example in which the function of topic conclusion coincides with the closure of a paragraph, though not with the closure of the main topic. In this passage of an article published in *The Spectator*, M. Berkmann complains about the rudeness of record-shop assistants all over Britain. But he does it using an ironic tone all throughout the article. At one point, he comments:

> <<The tradition of the rude record-shop assistant is a long and proud one, and it seems unfortunate to abandon it because of some misplaced desire to make the customer happy. Having gone through the ordeal of buying the record of your choice, you leave the shop exultant at the enormity of your achievement, muttering "Triumph through adversity". These are not trivial pleasures to be thrown away lightly.
> Still, isolated pockets of rudeness....>>
>
> (NA, Jan. 1, 1994)

The sentence "These are not trivial pleasures to be thrown away lightly" continues with the irony of the whole passage and serves as a conclusion on the topic of the article, but it does not serve as topic closure, for the writer continues talking about it for one more paragraph, until the end of the article.

Another function that has to do with the topic of discourse is *Topic shift*. I now turn to it.

9.4.2.3 TOPIC SHIFT

Mc Carthy & Carter (1994: 139) write of the "shift of

the topic of conversation" as one of the possible functions of discourse. In the corpora subject to the present analysis, I have found very few instances of the fulfilment of this function.

In the following exchange, Daniel uses verbal irony to close one topic and continues with another ironic remark to apparently change the topic of conversation so as to tell Humphrey in an indirect way that he will have to look for a new job:

[1]

Humphrey: Abolish my department? Out of the question! Simply can't be done.

Daniel: Well, I'm sure you know best Humphrey. Oh, by the way, there's a job center in the Horse Fetty Road, nᵃ 19. Bus stops right outside.

(*YM,* 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall")

In a previous part of this conversation, Daniel had been trying to persuade Humphrey to change his mind and do what the Prime Minister expected him to do, but, since Humphrey tells him that is out of the question, Daniel closes the topic of conversation by means of the ironic utterance "Well, I'm sure you know best Humphrey". Needless to say, Daniel does not think Humphrey knows best; on the contrary, he thinks he will lose his job because of this, and that is why he changes the topic with another ironic comment which is related to the previous topic. He elegantly gives Humphrey the address of a job center, to insinuate that he will be dismissed from his job.

[2]   Topic shift is marked in one of the newspaper articles (published in *The Sunday Times*) by an ironic secondary title. The main headline of the article is *British love of animals goes too far*.   Its author starts the article complaining about the great power that The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has in Britain.   In an ironic tone, he criticises British society in general for being more fond of animals than of human beings. When he finishes this general introduction, he marks his shift from a general to a more specific topic with the following ironic title: *Sentenced for killing a rat*, after which he tells the true story of a woman who was sentenced for going on a trip and leaving her rat alone at home to die of hunger. The writer is mocking , and at the same time, criticising such an attitude.   The title is ironic in that it seems absurd to a sound mind to hear that anyone has been taken to court and sentenced for killing a rat, and has the power to denounce these people, who, in the author's view, have taken their love of animals to an extreme and dangerous position.

9.4.2.4 TOPIC COMMENT

On some occasions, a speaker/writer may use verbal irony to make a comment on the topic of the ongoing conversation or discourse. This comment is generally around the middle of the conversation, with no intention on the part of the speaker to close down, shift or introduce the topic.   Such is the case of Daniel's comment in the following dialogue:

[1]

Daniel:... The Home Office and the Civil Service Department have all proposed to abolish your Department of Administrative Affairs, and the P.M. is smiling on the plan.

Humphrey: Absurd!

Daniel: Clean, dramatic, very popular politically, no real inconvenience. Let's face it; all your functions could be subsumed by all the departments. Jim Hacker will thoroughly win through by the public spirit of self-sacrificing policy. The P.M. will probably be kicking him upstairs...

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall")

When Daniel says "clean, dramatic, very popular politically, no real inconvenience", he refers to Hacker's policy of self-sacrifice and open government, and, needless to say, he does not believe this policy is good and with no real inconvenience. Nor does he think that "Hacker will win through thoroughly by the public spirit of self-sacrificing". He is completely against this policy and expresses his disapproval by means of an ironic comment on it.

[2]   Consider the following passage in which B. Russell makes a comment which is a clear instance of echoic irony:

<<When Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning-rod, the clergy, both in England and America, with enthusiastic support of George III, condemned it as an impious attempt to defeat the will of God. For, as all right-thinking people were aware, lightning is sent by God to punish impiety or some other grave sin -the virtuous are never struck by lightning. Therefore, if God wants to strike anyone, Benjamin Franklin ought not to defeat His design; indeed to do so is helping criminals to escape.>>

(BR, 1958: 135)

In this passage Russell is echoing the thoughts and ideas of the

clergy to ridicule them and to show that his opinion is contrary to theirs. Needless to say, Russell does not think that "lightning is sent by God to punish impiety or some other grave sin", or that the people who believe that are "right-thinking" people. These ironic remarks function as a comment on the topic which, in turn, functions as a verbal attack on the clergy (Negative irony). The function of topic conclusion is also present here in the last ironic sentence, when Russell says that Franklin's invention could help criminals to escape. The absurdity of such a conclusion also serves the function of verbal attack, for it makes it obvious to the reader that Russell is once more engaged in making one of his caustic criticisms.

Let us now consider some examples of the *Topic Introduction* function of verbal irony.

9.4.2.5 TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Verbal irony can not only be used to close down, comment on, or give a conclusion on a topic. It can also be used to *introduce* a topic of discourse. It seems that this is a relatively frequent function for ironic discourse within journalistic writing: ironic headlines may serve as introducers of the main topic of the article in question. Mc Carthy & Carter note that "the newspaper headline, with its special grammar and lexis, signals the opening of a particular genre" (1994: 64). Indeed, in all the examples analysed herein, it can be said that

the headline not only introduces the topic but also the type of discourse that is going to be used: when the writer uses verbal irony as a strategy for the headline, he will most likely continue with the same ironic tone all throughout the article. Therefore, perhaps it could be stated that ironic discourse sometimes constitutes a genre in itself. However, as we shall see, ironic discourse is used to fulfill several functions, and these functions can subclassify ironic discourse into other genres such as "humorous discourse", "protest", "Complaint", "Gossip", etc.

Consider the following examples:

[1]   In an article published in *The Sunday Times*, whose title is "A real fake", Geordie Greig writes about the curious case of Mark Kostabi, "the rich New York artist who is famous for not painting his own paintings". Kostabi, Greig explains, has made a fortune without touching a paint brush. He has a team of assistants that paint all his pictures for him, and all he does is add his signature and then sells the pictures as original Kostabis for up to 50.000 dollars. The irony of the title lies precisely in the fact that his fake is real, for his pictures are valued as originals even though he does not paint them. The author of the article wants, therefore, to criticise Kostabi for doing so. Furthermore, Greig tells his readers that Kostabi accused one of his assistants of selling "fake Kostabis", which presents a further ironic situation. The title of the article, then, is an ironic piece of discourse that fulfils the function of introducing the topic of information and discussion. (NA, Nov.

15, 1993).

[2]   The title of an article published in the American *Time* (NA,
Jan. 15, 1994) is "All you need is hate". This title reminds the
reader of the famous song by The Beatles called "All you need is
love". The article is about the groups of Nazis and Neo-Nazis
who represent the lunatic fringe of the American talk show
spectrum. The author of the article, R. Zoglin, uses irony to
criticise and attack these people and their arguments. The title
ironically points to the fact that Nazis are full of hatred, and
this is not precisely what one would expect from "civilised"
people in "civilised" countries. The criticism is also made
against the television channels, which broadcast these "hate
shows" with Nazis as their stars, and against the fact that these
channels are not censored except for obscenity.

Verbal irony can also be used to introduce a topic of
conversation, as the following telephone conversation between
Hacker and Humphrey illustrates:

[3]   (Hacker is phoning Humphrey at two o' clock in the morning.
He is doing this out of revenge to show Humphrey that he has read
the papers Humphrey did not want him to read)

(telephone rings)

Humphrey: (in bed and quite asleep) Hello.

Hacker: Humphrey, sorry to ring you so late. Didn't I interrupt
        in the middle of dinner or anything today?

Humphrey: Oh, no. I finished dinner some while ago. What's the
        time?

Hacker: Two a.m.

Humphrey: Good Lord! What's the crisis?

Hacker: Oh, no, no crisis. I'm just going through my boxes and
        I knew you would still be hard at it...

Humphrey: Yes, er... yes, yes. Nose to the grindstone.

Hacker: Well, I've just come accross this data base paper...

Humphrey: Fine, you've er... read it? (surprised)

Hacker: I've got to tell you straight away I'm not happy with it.
        I knew you'd welcome an opportunity to work on Sunday.
        Right. Hope you don't mind my calling you.

Humphrey: Not at all master, always a pleasure to hear from you.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Big Brother")

Hacker uses an ironic tone all throughout the conversation, and
the audience can see how he rejoices in waking Humphrey up at 2
o' clock in the morning. He is not sincere, thus, when he says
that "he is sorry to ring so late", or when asking "Didn't I
interrupt in the middle of dinner or anything today?". Hacker
starts, continues and finishes the telephone conversation by
using verbal irony, and introduces the topic he wants to talk
about by means of another ironic remark, namely, "I was just
looking through my boxes, and I knew you would still be hard at
it...". Needless to say, Hacker knows perfectly well that
Humphrey was not hard at it but in the middle of a sound sleep.
He wants to show Humphrey that he is no fool and will not allow
him to cheat him. He has read the data Humphrey had concealed
from him and will now act against Humphrey's wishes.

There are other functions that can be fulfilled by
verbal irony in discourse that do not concern the topic of
conversation. I turn to them now.

9.4.2.6 RAPPORT BUILDING/ CREATION OF SOLIDARITY AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS OF DISCOURSE

At different points of this thesis, I have pointed out the potential capacity for building rapport or creating solidarity that a user of verbal irony may have. This function of irony is evident in the instances of Positive irony, where a negative criticism is made in order to convey its positive counterpart or show that both speaker and addresse/s belong to the same social group (as is the case with the ritual insults of black adolescents in New York, as described by Labov (1972)). But this function is, in fact, also fulfilled by many instances of Negative irony, when speakers try to produce animosity by covert aggression against a third person not present in the conversation, and, at the same time, they want to test for group membership. If the interlocutor/s support(s) the speaker in the criticism, then solidarity is created among them. They now know that they belong in the same group of people, who disapprove of the behaviour of those being criticised (the victims). Such is the case of the two academics in the following example, who are both against the bureaucratic structure of the Faculty, and therefore they use some ironic metaphors all through the conversation, which are meant to ridicule and criticise such structure. These metaphors establish associations and comparisons (another of the ironic strategies) between the bureaucratic structure of the government and that of the Faculty:

[1]

```
(A     11 3^but . [dhi] . !faculty of \arts# .          /
 A     11 3^has . [@:] a sort of - su!preme s\oviet# .   /
 A     21 3*.* . which is                                /
 B     11 3*^[/mhm]#*                                    /
(A     11 3called the "^b\oard of the _faculty#          /
 B     11 3^y\es#                                        /
 A     21 3^and                                          /
 B     11 3^you're on th\at#                             /
 A     11 3"^n/\o _no _no# .                             /
 A     11 3^D\ave is# .                                  /
 B     11 3"^D\ave is _on _that# .                       /
 B     11 3^\ah#                                         /
 A     13 3and ^that's [dhi] ^that's [dhi] *(( . ^wh\at do you/
 A     13 3[m] 'call it#))*                              /
 B     11 3*^that's the "g\auleiters#*                   /
 B     11 3^y\es#                                        /
 A     11 3^well "!that's [dhi dhi: dhi: @] . "!!s\yllabus /
 A     11 3_gauleiters#                                  /
 B     11 3^[\mhm]# -                                    /
 B     11 3and ^what are !y\ou _then#                    /
 A     11 3^I'm on the :academic :c\ouncil#             /
 B     11 3^\ah#                                         /
 B     11 3*((^v\ery nice po_sition#))*                  /
 A     11 3*((to ^wh=om#))*                              /
 A     11 3[dhi] ^board of the faculty re"!p\ort# - -   /
 B     11 3((^g=ood#))                                   /
 A     24 3[@:m] . ((^but)) . ^I'm on ^I'm ^I'm on [dhi:] /
 B     11 3((you ^ought to have)) a bloody great *!chart up /
 B     11 3th/ere#                                       /
 B     11 3you ^kn/ow#                                   /
 B     21 3you ((1 syll)) ^sort of - [@:]               /
 A     20 3*( - laughs)*                                 /
(B      11 3!vice-ch\ancellor#                           /
 B     11 3^pr\incipal#                                  /
 B     21 3*( - laughs)* . (("^two))                     /
 A     20 3*( - laughs)*                                 /
(B      11 3((of your . *!b\oxes#))*                     /
 A     11 3*it would be* it would be ^very /\easy . *in /
 A     11 3_fact#*                                       /
 A     21 3[@:m] - you ^get (starts writing on board) - [@:m -/
 A     21 3@:]                                           /
 B     20 3*( - - - laughs)*                             /
(A     11 3- - :c/ourt# - -                              //
 A     11 3*^s/enate#* -                                 /
 A     11 3[@:m] - - ^acad\emic c/ouncil#                /
 B     11 3*^s/enate#*                                   /
(A      11 3- [@:] ^extram\ural c/ouncil# *-*           /
 A     21 3col^l\egiate                                  /
 B     11 3*((^y/eah#))*                                 /
(A      11 3_council#                                    /
 A     21 3(stops writing) *-* ^now the :extram\ural    /
```

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```
B      11 3*^h\ah#*                                          /
(A     11 3c/ouncil#                                         /
A      11 3^\obviously# .                                    /
A      11 3*.* the col^1\egiate c/ouncil#                    /
B      11 3*^[\m]#*                                          /
(A     11 3^\obviously#                                      /
A      11 3^that's dealing with this sort of !structure of   //
A      11 3*":c\olleges#*                                    /
A      21 3[n] **and** and                                   //
B      11 3*((^[\m]#))*                                      /
B      11 3**^y\es#**                                        /
(A     11 3ap^pointment of *pro:f\essors* (and ^th\ings#}#   /
B      11 3*^y\es#*                                          /
(A     20 3. *((and))* the                                   /
B      11 3*the "^acad\emic* c/ouncil#                       /
```

<div align="right">(LLC, S.1.2)</div>

The metaphors "supreme soviet", "vice-chancellor principal", "court" and "senate" are used to produce a joking atmosphere that identifies the two participants as members of the same "party": both of them mock the bureaucracy of the Faculty and are against it.

The next example within this function is one in which it is clear that the writer wants to create solidarity. This is an example of Positive irony that has been discussed previously with respect to other variables distinct from function. I refer to an article published in *The Sunday Times* where its author, Ian Chadband, uses Positive irony in order to create solidarity in favour of Conchita Martínez, the famous Spanish tennis player:

[2]

> <<The young autograph hunters were quick to approach the glamorous figure of Gigi Fernández during the Brighton tournament last October. Not one, however, thought it worth asking for the signature of her companion. Perhaps somebody should have told them that the Wimbledon champion, Conchita Martínez, can play a bit too.>>

<div align="right">(NA, Jan. 1, 1995)</div>

Needless to say, the writer thinks that -being the Wimbledon

<div align="center">502</div>

champion- Conchita Martínez can play much more than "a bit" and he then uses Positive verbal irony to show solidarity towards this tennis player, to express his admiration for her, in spite of the fact that she was not recognised by people.

The building of rapport or solidarity among the participants of an interaction may create an atmosphere in which all the participants are encouraged to generate and use further ironic-humorous talk. I shall refer to this in the next section.

9.4.2.7 GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK (creating a particular form of talk for the ongoing interaction)

Example [1] in the previous section (9.4.2.6) is also an instance of this function. A starts criticising the bureaucratic structure of the Faculty by using a humorous metaphor, and this favours and generates the use of further ironic language on the part of both A and B.

Another similar instance can be seen in this face-to-face radio discussion, where h starts criticising a rock singer in an indirect way, and this paves the way for further ironic criticisms by other participants in the discussion:

[2]

```
h    11   the ^second f\eature# -                                /
h    11   which ^I think is depl\/orable#                        /
h    11   is the ^kind of :savage :way we :feel about this       /
h    11   :wretched m\an# -                                      /
h    11   his ^mother de:scribes him as a . :chap who's been    /
h    11   neur:otic ever since he was a :child of tw/o# .        /
h    11   he ^suddenly finds that he's :got this                /
h    11   extra:ordinary . :incapacity of being :able to        /
h    11   :sing in a :normal v\oice#                            /
h    11   ((but)) ^making this awful sort of :high fal:setto /
h    11   th\ing#                                               /
```

```
h    11   with ^full echo \on# -                                  /
h    11   which ^sends :teenagers cr/azy# -                       /
h    11   he ^suddenly f\inds#                                    /
h    11   in^stead of earning :five or six quid a w/eek#  .       /
h    11   in a ^f/actory#  .

                    . . . . . . .

h    11   and and the ^third deplorable thing ab/out it#          /
h    11   is my ^own !feelings about th\is# -                     /
h    11   there's ^something that makes us feel s\avage#          /
h    11   a^bout these rock and roll s\ingers#  .                 /
h    11   and ^I hate it :in mys/elf#

                    . . . . . . . .

h    11   I ^st\ill#  .                                           /
h    11   "^hate . the :s\ound he m/akes#  .                      /
h    11   when he ^sings down that thing with the :echo           /
h    11   turned /on#  .                                          /
h    11   ((and)) ^stereophonic and all the r/est# -              /
h    11   but ^what I hate [s] . :still m/ore#  .                 /
h    11   is I ^hate the feelings in mys\elf#  .                  /
h    11   and there's ^something very !f\unny about this          /
h    11   'rock and roll b/usiness# -                             /
h    11   and this ^teenage squealing ab/out it#  .               /
h    11   that ^raises these savage feelings in our ordinary /
h    11   . :decent br\easts#                                     /
f    11   (laughs) ^Ted L\eather#                                 /
tl   11   well I ^guess my :ordinary :decent :br\/east#           /
tl   11   is a ^little :different than R\obert's#                 /
?    11   I ^bet it \is#                                          /
aud  20   (laughter)                                              /
f    11   ^fair en/ough#                                          /
tl   11   ^n\o#                                                   /
tl   12   ^I I [@] - I [th] . I ^I won't have :rock and roll /
tl   12   att\acked#                                              /
tl   11   ^I think a :healthy . ex!uberant ex:pression of         /
tl   11   :energy and :noise for :young people's a                /
tl   11   :thoroughly good th\ing# -                              /
```

                                                    (*LLC*, S.5.1)

The first radio speaker (h) refers ironically to the singer's "extraordinary incapacity of being able to sing in a normal voice", which is a funny way of saying that he was a bad singer. This sets out the ironic-humorous atmosphere which generates further ironic comments on the part of Ted Leather (tl), who suggests that his "ordinary decent breast is *a little* (notice the

ironic hedge) different than Robert's" and who, further on in the conversation, defines rock and roll in an ironical manner by saying that it is "a healthy exuberant expression of energy and noise" (i.e., he defines it as "noise" or as anything but music). All this gives a humorous tone to the whole radio programme and provokes laughter from the audience. h chose irony as a strategy to talk about rock and roll singers, and this created a particular form of talk for the ongoing interaction. The other participant and the audience accepted the rules and followed h in his game.

Sometimes a speaker does not use irony and humour to criticise a third party, but to present a sense of humour about him/herself. This is the function discussed in the next section.

9.4.2.8   PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF

Norrick (1993) writes about this function of language as one that can be used for its positive payoffs:

> <<Self-mocking may show we do not take ourselves too seriously, it may fend off mocking by others, and even prompt positive face work by them>>   (1993: 80)

Needles to say, a common strategy for self-mocking is the use of verbal irony.   In the following dialogue between two male academics, B makes fun of himself by using the ironic strategy of asking a rhetorical question:

[1]

```
B    11 2^I I I I I !b\ought _one#                    /
B    11 2((sylls)) ^or was :g\iven one#               /
B    11 2I ^can't re:m\ember#                         /
```

```
B      11 2for a ^b\irthday _present# -                        /
B      11 2*-* ((3 sylls)) I ^h\ave one th/ough# -             /
B      11 2+-+ and I ^have !large _numbers of !sl\ides#        /
a      20 2*I see* +good+                                      /
(B      11 2- in^cluding slides of my w\edding# -              /
B      11 2^which I :t\ook#               .                    /
B      11 2because I re^fused to be !\in them#                  /
a      20 2(laughs) wise .                                     /
B      11 2^v\ery _wise# .                                     /
B      11 2^I th/ought# -                                      /
B      11 2^why !r\uin the _thing# -
```

                                              (*LLC*, S.2.1)

B presents a sense of humour about himself by implying that if
he had been in his wedding slides, he would have "ruined the
thing" (perhaps insinuating that he is too ugly to be in any
photograph), which is also a funny comment to make, since it is
very strange for a bridegroom not to appear in his wedding
photographs, no matter how ugly he may be.

As the quantitative analysis will show, this function
did not prove to be one of the most frequent in the corpora
studied.

9.4.2.9 CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT

It has been observed that one of the functions that an
ironic remark may fulfil is to clarify or illustrate a point the
speaker/writer wants to make. This is the case of the following
excerpt from an article published in *The Spectator*, in which
Alasdair Palmer uses irony to criticise the "Animal Liberation
Front":

[1]

>   <<On 16 September last year, two weeks after the IRA
>   announced a "permanent ceasefire", five bombs went off

in Harrogate and York. The bombs had been planted by
a splinter group of the Animal Liberation Front, the
Animal Rights Militia.
        A charity shop for the Imperial Cancer Research
Fund was one of the targets. The Fund's crime was that
in trying to look for a cure for cancer, some of its
scientists conducted experiments on animals. No one
was killed in the bombing, but that was more by
accident than by design.>>

                                        (NA, March 15, 1995)

The tone of the article shows clearly to the reader that the

writer of this article is completely against these animal bigots.

In the excerpt above, Palmer uses the word "crime" ironically,

for it is evident that he does not believe that to conduct

experiments on animals to look for a cure for cancer is a crime.

He uses irony to clarify the information given in the first

paragraph, to show his readers how ridiculous and absurd the

Animal Rights Militia's procedures are, since what should be

considered a crime is the bombing and not the search for a cure

for cancer.

[2]   In the following passage, Russell ironically illustrates

with examples the conditions necessary for the old morality to

be re-established:

<<If the old morality is to be re-established, certain
things are essential; some of them are already done,
but experience shows that these alone are not
effective. The first essential is that the education
of girls should be such as to make them stupid and
superstitious and ignorant; this requisite is already
fulfilled in schools over which the churches have any
control. The next requisite is a very severe
censorship upon all books giving information on sex
subjects; this condition also is coming to be fulfilled
in England and in America, since the censorship,
without change in the law, is being tightened up by the

increasing zeal of the police. These conditions,
however, since they exist already, are clearly
insufficient. The only thing that will suffice is to
remove from young women all opportunity of being alone
with men: girls must be forbidden to earn their living
by work outside the home, they must never be allowed
an outing unless accompanied by their mother or an
aunt; the regrettable practice of going to dances
without a chaperon must be sternly stamped out...
    These measures, if carried out vigorously for a
hundred years or more, may perhaps do something to stem
the rising tide of immorality.>>

(BR, 1958: 65-6)

In this passage Russell uses the strategy of *pretending* to be one

of the people in favour of "the old morality", but, needless to

say, his readers will readily understand that he is completely

against these people and their ideas. One of the clues to

understand this is precisely the clarification and illustration

of the point he is apparently making: when he writes that

"education of girls should be such as to make them stupid or

superstitious" or that "women should be forbidden to earn their

living by work outside the home", etc., he is giving examples of

some of the measures he thinks that the old moralists would take,

but he is, of course, being sarcastic by presenting extreme

examples which are obviously taken as ridiculous by the reader.

Therefore, it is clear that Russell is using sarcastic irony to

illustrate his point, with the ultimate aim of attacking the old

moralists in question.

9.4.2.10 MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST

On some occasions, a speaker or writer may resort to

irony in order to express his/her scepticism or disbelief of a person or situation. Indeed, it has been shown and discussed in chapter 8 how the underlying opposition of some ironies is precisely the *Belief/Disbelief* one[11]. An example of irony that fulfils this function can be observed in Dorothy's rhetorical question in the following dialogue (which was also analysed in chapter 5):

[1]

Blanche: I've decided I can handle this relationship. I'm going out with Dirk Saturday night.

Dorothy: Was it ever in doubt?

Blanche: Momentarily. This is strictly off the record, but Dirk is nearly five years younger than I am.

Dorothy: In what, Blanche, dog years?

(GG, 1991: 65)

Dorothy uses the ironic strategy of a rhetorical question to show that she does not believe that Dirk is only five years younger than Blanche. Dorothy wants Blanche to be more realistic and uses irony to tell her that she can not fool her and that she (Blanche) should not fool herself: a relationship with so young a man is not likely to last long or end happily.

[2]   Consider now Humphrey's last remark in the following exchange:

Bernard: What are we supposed to do about it?

Humphrey: Can you keep a secret?

---

[11]The typical strategy fulfilling this function is the conventionalized strategy "Reply to a lie with an even bigger lie to show that you are not being cheated", discussed in this study in 8.4 ~A30~ (chapter 8).

Bernard: Of course.

Humphrey: So can I.

(*YM,* 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

Humphrey uses verbal irony to show he does not trust Bernard. This example was previously analysed as one in which the underlying opposition is the *Expected/Unexpected* one: by giving an unexpected answer (i.e., by saying he can also keep a secret instead of telling Bernard the secret) Humphrey is indirectly telling Bernard that he does not trust him as a confidant to whom he can tell his secrets. Irony is a strategy that serves the function of showing disbelief or distrust in an "elegant" fashion: it is softer and more elegant to use this strategy than to tell a person directly that one does not believe what s/he is saying or that one does not trust him/her.

9.4.2.11 MANIFESTATION OF POWER

In chapter 5, I tried to analyse the intricate relationship between power and irony, and it was noted that, on many occasions, the people in power resort to irony because they feel entitled to do so, precisely on account of their power. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that there may be occasions on which a person uses irony to show his/her iterlocutor/s that s/he is a person that holds some kind of power. This seems to be the case in the following conversation, in which two male academics (professors a and B) are interviewing a female undergraduate as a pre-requisite to start her graduate

studies:

[1]

```
a    20 2[@] is there any connection between all these        /
a    20 2people were they writing in different centuries - ./
a    20 2people you have mentioned so far - -                 /
A    11 2[@:m] . ^w\ell# - -                                  /
A    11 2^M\arlowe was# -                                     /
A    12 2a ^little . [@:] a ^little /after 'Shakespeare# .   /
A    11 2I ^th/ink#                                           /
a    20 2you haven't got very much sense of perspective you /
a    20 2know and this is going to hold you up terribly in  /
a    20 2your English work things that we expect to be able /
a    20 2to take for granted .                               /
A    11 2*^[\/m]#*                                           /
a    20 2*when* we're talking about periods aren't going to /
a    20 2mean anything to you all of these people that we've/
a    20 2talked about wrote between fifteen fifty and        /
a    20 2sixteen fifty - it was the reign of Elizabeth - you/
a    20 2see and this this means something in the history of/
a    20 2English literature .                                /
A    11 2^[\/mhm]#                                           /
a    20 2now we can't set up lecture courses and talk about /
a    20 2simple history or indeed even the simple history of/
a    20 2English literature we will compare a a play written/
a    20 2in the Restoration Period [@m] with something that /
a    20 2happened in Elizabethan times and we assume that   /
a    20 2our students are knowing what we are talking about /
a    20 2you *see*                                           /
B    11 2*and* we ^\also ass/ume#                            /
B    11 2that they ^kn\ow that#                              /
B    11 2^M\arlowe#                                          /
B    11 2was ^writing be'fore !Sh\akespeare# -              /
B    11 2not *^\after#*                                      /
a    20 2*before* you see very impor**tant**               /
B    11 2**^y\es#**                                         /
A    11 2^w\ell# .                                           /
A    11 2I ^know it's a . !dr\awback#                        /
A    11 2^but in 'fact I !h\aven't 'been# -                  /
A    11 2^r\eading m/uch# .                                  /
A    11 2^or at!tending any !cl\/asses or 'anything         /
A    11 2'since# .                                          /
A    11 2^A-!l\evel#                                        //
A    11 2and I'm ^twenty-!tw\/o 'now#                        /
A    11 2but - - I'd ^have a "!few 'months be'fore          /
A    11 2Oc:t\/ober#                                         /
A    11 2and - - - ^w\ell#                                   /
A    11 2I'd be de^voting 'my full t/\ime to 'doing         /
A    11 2/English#                                           /
A    11 2in^stead of !to - . !doing a !j\ob#                /
A    20 2*((syll))*                                          /
B    11 2*you mean* ^after your :L\atin is 'finished#       /
```

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a    20 2after your Latin is finished .                        /
A    11 2^y\es# .                                              /
A    11 2well ^that's - ((the)) !whole of . Ju'ly 'August      /
A    11 2Sept/ember# -                                         /
A    11 2^one can at !least 'read a . :history of 'English     /
A    11 2:L\iterature#                                         /
B    11 2^[\m]#                                                /
a    20 2(laughs . ) *yes*                                     /
```

<div align="right">(LLC, S.3.1)</div>

At some points of this conversation, the professors use the ironic strategy of "being vague" or "overgeneralising" in order to show their academic power. When A says that the reign of Elizabeth means "something" in the history of English Literature (implying the student had no idea about it), or when he says that they "assume that their students are knowing what they (the teachers) are talking about" (implying she had given proof of not knowing what they were talking about), or when he finally concludes: "one can at least read a history of English literature" (implying she has not read such a history), he is trying to show the power he has over her, namely, the power of not accepting her as a graduate student.

9.4.2.12 TEASING/ POKING FUN AT ONE'S INTERLOCUTOR

We have already seen that "joking" is one of the strategies used by ironic speakers (see 8.4). In some of the cases in which the ironic speaker is joking, s/he may be doing it with the intention of teasing or poking fun at his/her interlocutor/s. This appears to be the case of Mick's ironic remark in this exchange:

[1]

Mick: How long have you been a Minister?

Hacker: A week and a half.

Mick: I think you may find a place in the Guinness for the
records.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

Before this conversation, the audience knows that the Prime
Minister is not very pleased with Hacker's new policy of open
government, and that is why Mick's remark is understood as
ironic: he is insinuating that the Prime Minister will fire
Hacker, and that is why he will find a place in the Guinness
records: he will be remembered as the Minister who governed for
the shortest period of time in history. Mick's utterance, thus,
fulfils the function of teasing Hacker. Mick wants to poke fun
at Hacker by making him think of the worst possible consequence
of his "open government" policy: his dismissal as a Minister of
Administrative Affairs.

Following is another instance of verbal irony
functioning as a means for teasing an interlocutor: Sophia makes
an ironic joke in order to tease her daughter Dorothy:

[2]

Dorothy: Hi, girls. Do these pearls look okay with this?

Blanche: Honey, pearls look fine with everything from the
fanciest dress to... that. You have another date with
Ken. Oh, Sophia, do you believe it?

Sophia: And I thought my head was spinning from the splash of
vino in my lemonade.

Rose: Sophia, you don't put wine in your lemonade.

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Sophia: No, you're right.   I don't.   It was a joke. Ha-Ha.

(GG, 1991: 87)

Sophia uses irony when she says that "she thought her head was spinning from the splash of vino in her lemonade" to tease Dorothy by showing disbelief in the fact that Dorothy had another date with Ken (a man who, according to the girls, is "gorgeous", as well as having money and class). Both "showing disbelief" and "teasing" are functions being fulfilled by Sophia's ironic utterance in this particular context.

Teasing is connected to humour, and, therefore, it is not surprising that it should be also connected to verbal irony.

9.4.2.13 COMPLAINT

Since irony is a weapon which is very frequently used to attack and criticise, it is also used on many occasions to complain about a given state of affairs. Sometimes we criticise because we want to complain and express our discontent with somebody or something. Examples of this function have been found more frequently in the corpus containing newspaper articles. Indeed, complaining appears to be an important function accomplished by journalistic discourse in general, be it by means of verbal irony or by any other means. Journalists are expected to denounce any undesirable event or state of affairs to make it public to the people and fight against it.

Consider the following excerpt, taken from an article

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published in the American *Time*, in which the writer, Jim Smolowe, uses irony to complain about the gangsters "who traffic in human contraband":

> <<The hiss of the snakehead is soft and seductive to the ear of the young Chinese who dream of a better life. *You can have anything you want in America*, the snakehead says. *Color televisions. Big cars. Dollars by the millions. It's all there, waiting to be claimed...*
> ... A thin man carrying a box of uncooked cakes drops them when he sees a policeman because he does not have a licence to sell cakes on the streets.
> Six months ago this man left his wife and child in the Fujian province where neighbors paid $20.000 to a gang to transport him to the U.S.. The idea was that he should make a fortune for them all. Instead, he is selling nine cakes for $2 and earns about $15 a day. He speaks no English. He is not even certain that he is in New York. He knows only this -he is in America. *Hiss.*>>
>
> <(NA, Jan 1, 1994)

The writer uses here the strategy of echoic irony: he echoes the supposed utterances used by the gangsters (whom he ironically calls "snakeheads") to cheat their victims: "You can have anything you want in America, etc." is repeated echoically in order to complain about the fact that these foreign people are fooled by the gangsters, since what they encounter once they get to America is very different from what they had been told they would encounter. The metaphor of the snake is another strategy used to fulfil the function of complaint and protest in an ironic manner.

Example [3] in 9.4.2.2, as well as examples [1] and [2] in 9.4.2.9, also fulfil the function of complaining about some particularly unfair or undesirable situation (as seen from the writer's point of view). A great number of the examples of

verbal irony found in B. Russell's works fulfil a complaining as well as a denouncing function. He denounces those people who, according to his views, threaten the well-being or the prosperity of our society.

~~9.4.2.14 REPROACH~~

Verbal irony is, at times, intended as a reproach. When someone, for instance, thanks another person sarcastically (when, in fact, the speaker is not grateful but annoyed at some misconduct of his/her interlocutor), s/he does it in order to reproach the interlocutor with such misconduct.

[1] Dorothy uses irony in the following dialogue to fulfil this function. She reproaches Blanche with selfishness:

Dorothy: I'm just over my head. I mean, what with the banquet, press releases, petitions to be signed. Ma, what am I going to do?

Blanche: I'll help.

Dorothy: Ah, Blanche, that's sweet. But, honey, aren't your hands tied with all the work that you're doing for... you?

Blanche: I know I'm not always the first one to volunteer, but...
(GG, 1991: 197)

Dorothy's words show a contrast of apparent kindness and understanding with real criticism. The question "But, honey, aren't your hands..." takes an unexpected turn at the end, when after the strategic pause Dorothy uses the pronoun "you", which

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changes the apparent tone of her utterance from an innocent question into a reproach. In this way, Dorothy accuses Blanche of being selfish and never wanting to help others.

[2]   The contribution made by Hacker's wife in the following dyad also has to be understood as an ironic utterance functioning as a reproach:

Hacker: You're very tense!

Hacker's wife: Oh, no! I'm not tense. I'm just a politician's
                wife. I'm not likely to have feelings. A happy,
                carefree politician's wife.

                (YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Open Government")

The whole episode presents Hacker's wife as very discontent and unhappy with the fact that her husband has been appointed Minister of Administrative Affairs. She always complains about not spending enough time together, and, consequently, she loses no opportunity to reproach him for all the inconveniences that his new job have brought to their family life.

9.4.2.15 DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE (so as to realign the participants to include someone, or transform the impending monologue into a more balanced conversation)

This function has been found in two of the corpora analysed, namely, the LLC and the GG corpora. This is a conversational function, and, consequently, it is not to be found in any written piece of discourse. Therefore, the newspaper

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articles and Russell's works are excluded from the analysis of this function. The disruption of the prevailing structure in a conversation may carry along with it the fulfilment of other functions such as the realignment of the participants of discourse (in order to include someone) or the transformation of an impending monologue into a more balanced conversation. The latter case is clearly materialized by Sophia in the dialogue analysed in 9.4.2.1 (e.g. [3]) as an example of topic closure. In it, Rose starts speaking about her experience in hospitals without letting any of the other girls participate, to a point where they get tired of her monologue, until Sophia replies: "Rose, you'll excuse me. We'll get back to your fascinating hospital story later". Sophia's contribution not only closes the topic of conversation but also disrupts the turn-taking structure, and this has the effect of balancing the conversation so that the other participants can take their turns.

Sophia is one of the two ironists of the Golden Girls (the other one is her daughter Dorothy), and she occasionally uses irony not only to interrupt her roommates' monologues, but also to introduce herself in the conversation, as can be observed in the following exchange:

[1]

(Dorothy, Blanche and Rose are talking about Blanche's sister, who has to have a kidney operation)

Blanche: She's going into renal failure. So a transplant is her best hope.

Dorothy: Oh, honey. I'm so sorry.

Rose: What happens if she doesn't get the kidney?

Blanche: She'll die.

Rose: You hold her life in your hands. What are you gonna do?

Blanche: I don't know.

Sophia: I'm glad you're not my sister.

                                                    (GG, 1991: 48)

Ever since the beginning of the scene Sophia had been present
without participating in the conversation. She finally makes
herself notorious with her pungent ironic comment "I'm glad
you're not my sister", and disrupts the previous turn-taking
structure to introduce herself in the conversation. Needless to
say, Sophia's comment is ironic in that she is telling Blanche
in an indirect way that she (Sophia) thinks Blanche is not
generous enough to donate one of her kidneys to save her sister's
life. The ultimate implicature of her utterance is that Sophia
would die if she were her sister, and that is why she is glad she
is not.

9.4.2.16 INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT OR INTELLIGENCE

One of the various functions of ironic discourse has
to do with the exhibition of cleverness or wit on the part of the
participants. Since verbal irony often constitutes a linguistic
game, there may be occasions on which a contest is set up among
the participants, the winner of which will be that participant
that makes the wittiest and cleverest ironic remark. This is
certainly the case of the ritual insults used by New York black
adolescents (which have been discussed at different points in

this study as examples of Positive irony) and of the so-called "customary joking relationships" (Norrick, 1993) that may be established among a given group of people. Although there are no examples of ritual insults or of the language used in customary joking relationships in the corpora studied herein, there are a few instances in which the irony used by the speaker can be interpreted as an attempt on his/her part to outdo his/her partner's wit. Such is the case of Hacker's remarks in the following two situations:

[1]

(When Hacker asked Humphrey for some information about the previous Minister in the scene previous to this one, Humphrey's answer was: "Minister, my lips are sealed.")

Humphrey: Where did you get those proposals from?

Hacker: Humphrey, my lips are sealed.

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "Big Brother")

[2]

(Humphrey has been hiding a great deal of information from Hacker. Now Hacker wants to outdo Humphrey's wit and gives all sorts of ironic and ambiguous answers to Humphrey's questions)

Humphrey: Minister, I must ask you for a straight answer. Tomorrow? Monday? Tuesday?

Hacker: In due course, Humphrey. At the appropriate juncture, in the fullness of time. When the moment is right. When the necessary procedures have been completed. Nothing precipitate, of course.

Humphrey: Minister, this is getting urgent.

Hacker: Oh! What a lot of new words we are learning!

Humphrey: Now Minister, you'll forgive me about saying this, but I'm beginning to suspect you're concealing something from me.

Hacker: Oh, surely you and I have no secrets from each other, have we, Humphrey?

(YM, 1994 Video Episode: "The Writing on the Wall")

In both [1] and [2], Hacker uses different ironic strategies in order to outdo Humphrey's previous display of wit. Hacker is now taking his revenge and uses the strategy of echoic irony to make Humphrey suffer with the same weapon he previously used against Hacker. Hacker now keeps a secret from Humphrey by answering him with the same words Humphrey had previously used to keep information away from Hacker ([1]). In [2], Hacker uses the same kind of ambiguous answers Humphrey has always given him ("In due course, etc....") as well as the strategy of overgeneralization ("What a lot of new words we are learning!"), to show Humphrey that he is no fool and that he is consequently more intelligent than him (Humphrey).

I noted at the beginning of this point (9.4.3.16) that this function is one of the functions frequently fulfilled by positive ironic discourse. I now turn to the last of the specific functions analysed herein, which also has to do with positive irony.

9.4.2.17 MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY

As has been noted previously in this work (chapter 8), very few cases of Positive verbal irony were found in the corpora studied, but, in the instances found (as well as in all cases of Positive irony) the function fulfilled by the ironic utterance

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is either to praise or to show some kind of positive feeling (like respect or admiration) towards the person, situation or thing in question.

When the writer of the article whose excerpt is presented in 9.4.2.6 (e.g. [2]) says that "Conchita Martínez can play a bit too", he is using Positive irony to express his admiration and respect for her. Or when A (a female academic) says to B (a male academic) that Malcolm could help him (B) if he got stuck (see 5.3.2, e.g. [3]), she is joking and trying to praise B, for B is a computer programmer, and what she means is that he (B) will not get stuck since he knows a lot about computers.

The above examples are the only two examples of positive irony found in the corpora, but it is not difficult to see that the function in question herein is also the function of other examples of Positive irony discussed in this work such as:
"How small you have grown!" (said to a child after two years of absence)
"They tell me you're a slow runner." (said to a runner that has just won a race)
"I don't love you at all." (said to one's girlfriend/boyfriend/husband/wife or lover in an intimate moment)

Having discussed and exemplified the discourse functions of the pieces of ironic discourse found in the five corpora studied herein, I shall proceed to the quantitative analysis of these functions as they appear in the corpora.

All the functions discussed hitherto are summarized and illustrated in Figure 9a.

Figure 9a: DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF VERBAL IRONY

A) GENERAL

1- VERBAL ATTACK

2- AMUSEMENT

3- EVALUATION

B) SPECIFIC

1- TOPIC CLOSURE

2- TOPIC CONCLUSION

3- TOPIC SHIFT

4- TOPIC COMMENT

5- TOPIC INTRODUCTION

6- RAPPORT BUILDING/CREATION OF SOLIDARITY

7- GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK

8- PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF

9- CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT

10- MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST

11- MANIFESTATION OF POWER

12- TEASING/POKING FUN AT ONE'S INTERLOCUTOR

13- COMPLAINT

14- REPROACH

15- DISRUPTION OF THE TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE

16- INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT

17- MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY

9.4.3   Quantitative Analysis: A study of the frequencies of occurrence of the different functions of ironic discourse identified in the five corpora used in this piece of research

In order to have a more accurate idea of the actual incidence of each of the functions found for ironic discourse, an account has been made of their frequencies of occurrence within each of the corpora. As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, the type of discourse or genre may be an influencing variable for the fulfilment of one function or another.   Therefore, tables and charts of results will be presented separately for each of the corpora. However, a final analysis will be made of each of the functions with respect to the total number of examples of ironic discourse found (which, as we know from other chapters, is 351).

The statistical chi-squared test will be carried out so as to find out whether the frequencies of occurrence of both the general and the specific functions vary (in a significant way) for the different corpora.

Firstly, I shall present the data corresponding to the three main and more general functions discussed in 9.4.1, namely, VERBAL ATTACK, AMUSEMENT and EVALUATION. Secondly, the frequency of occurrence of the more specific functions discussed in 9.4.2 will be presented for each of the corpora investigated.

9.4.3.1 Data resulting from the quantitative analysis of the three general functions of verbal irony

The number and percentage of occurrences of the three general discourse functions of verbal irony can be observed in tables 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5 (for each of the corpora) and 9.6 (total). It is worth noticing here that neither function is fulfilled to the exclusion of the other two; therefore there may be cases in which the three functions are realised by the same ironic utterance. That is why the sum of the individual percentages does not equal 100%.

TABLES 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4 AND 9.5: NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES AND PERCENTAGE OF THE THREE GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF VERBALLY IRONIC DISCOURSE: VERBAL ATTACK, AMUSEMENT AND EVALUATION

A) Spoken Corpora

a) LLC (9.1)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
Nº of occ. (out of 86)	62	32	85
%	72.9	37.21	98.84

As was specified in 9.3.2, when analysing the functions of the two television programmes, a distinction should be made between a)the function intended by the writers of the episodes and b)those intended by the characters as participants of discourse. As regards the former, it can be said that all the instances of verbal irony fulfil the function of AMUSEMENT (100%, tables 9.2.i and 9.3.i). As regards the latter, tables 9.2.ii and 9.3.ii display the frequencies found for each of the three general

functions.

b) GG (9.2.i)

	V.ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
Nº of occ. (out of 84)	0	84	0
%	0	100	0

(9.2.ii)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
Nº of occ. (out of 84)	65	7	83
%	77.38	8.33	98.80

c) YM (9.3.i)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
Nº of occ. (out of 55)	0	55	0
%	0	100	0

(9.3.ii)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
Nº of occ. (out of 55)	37	1	50
%	67.27	1.82	90.91

B) Written Corpora

a) BR   (9.4)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
Nª of occ. (out of 46)	44	2	45
%	95.65	4.35	97.83

b) NA   (9.5)

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
Nª of occ. (out of 80)	70	23	78
%	87.5	28.75	97.5

Tables 9.6a and 9.6b: Total number and percentage of occurrences of the functions VERBAL ATTACK, AMUSEMENT and EVALUATION in the corpora analysed

9.6a) Considering the functions in the GG and YM corpora as intended by the writers of the episodes

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
Nª of occ.(out of 351)	176	196	208
%	50.14	55.84	59.25

9.6b) Considering the functions in the GG and YM corpora as intended by the characters in the episodes

	V. ATTACK	AMUSEMENT	EVALUATION
Nª of occ.(out of 351)	278	65	341
%	79.20	18.52	97.15

The data shown in the above tables is graphically represented in Figures 9b, 9c, 9d, and 9e.

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Fig. 9b. Distribution of the variables verbal attack, amusement & evaluation (Considering the functions intended by the authors in the GG & YM corpora)
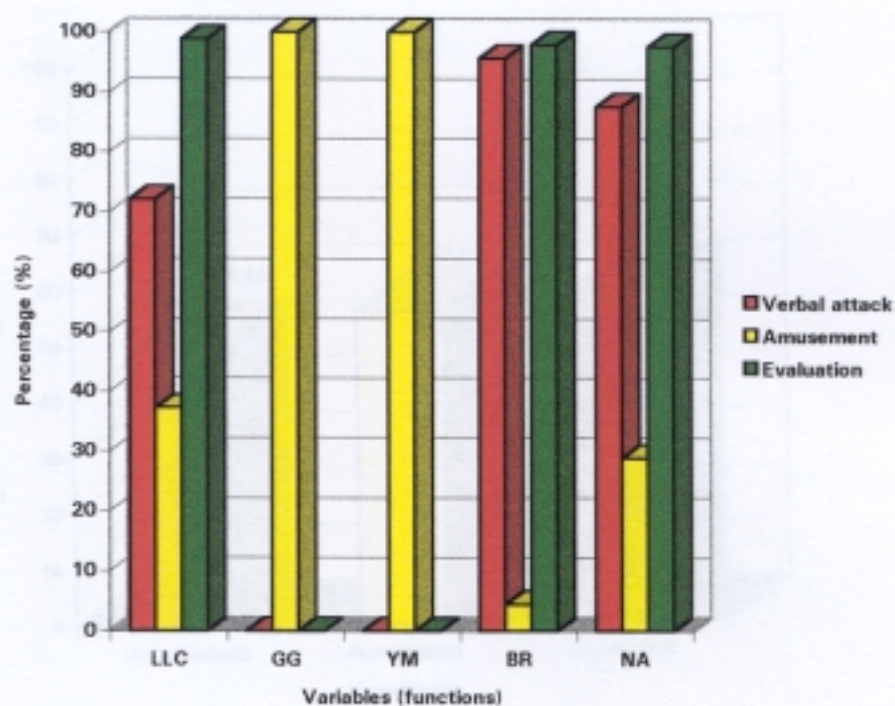
Fig. 9c. Distribution of the variables verbal attack, amusement & evaluation (Considering the functions intended by the characters in the GG & YM corpora)
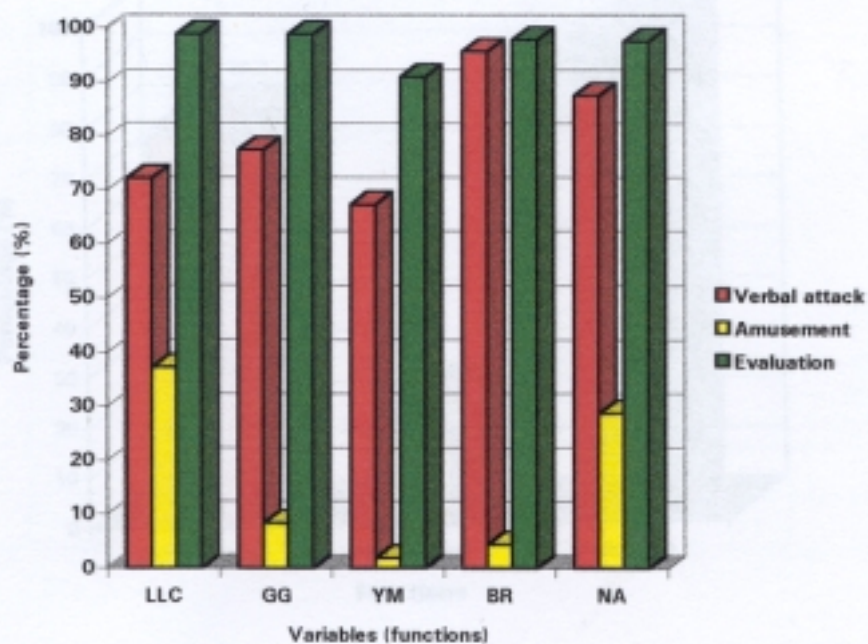
Fig. 9d. Barchart of the total occurrence of the three main functions (Considering the functions intendeded by the authors in the GG & YM corpora)
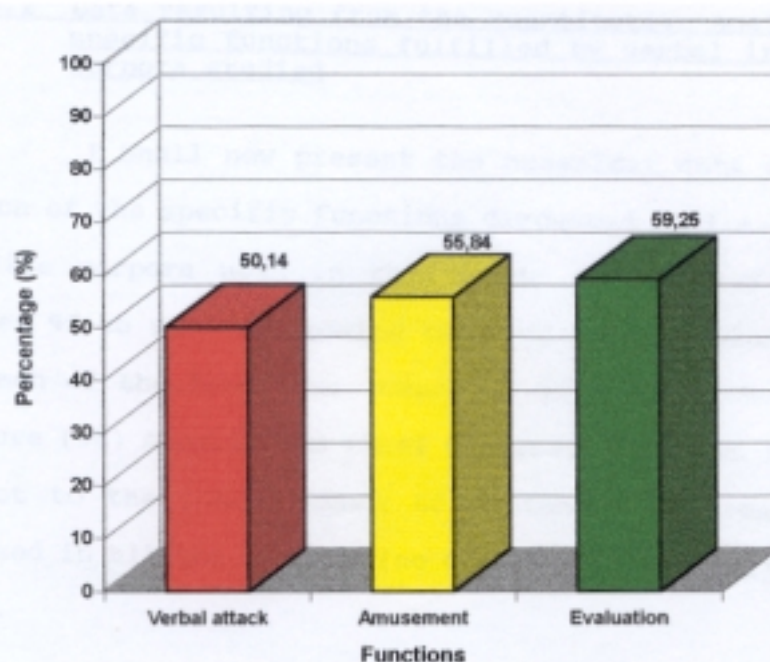
Fig. 9e. Barchart of the total occurrence of the three main functions (Considering the functions intended by the characters in the GG & YM corpora)
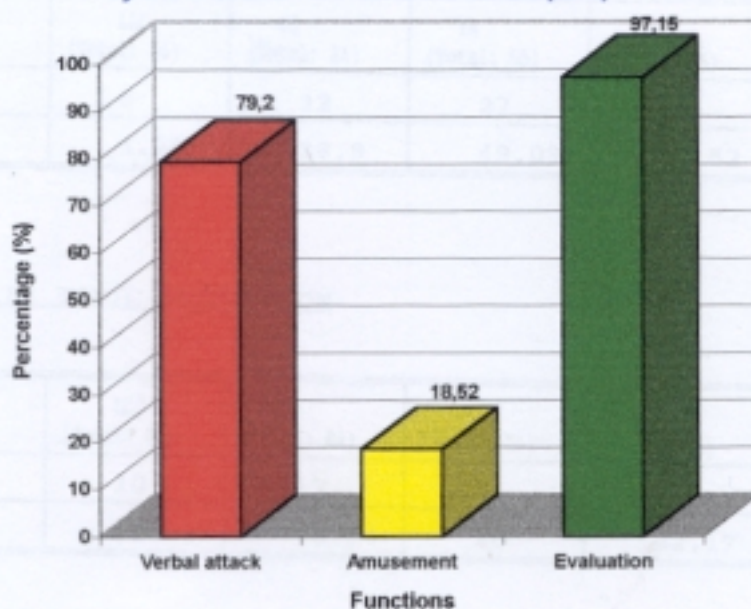
9.4.3.2 Data resulting from the quantitative analysis of the specific functions fulfilled by verbal irony in the corpora studied

I shall now present the numerical data corresponding to each of the specific functions discussed in 9.4.2 for each of the five corpora used in this study (Tables 9.7 to 9.23 and figures 9f to 9j). Following the individual tables and figures for each of the functions, there is a general table (9.24) and a figure (9k) showing the total occurrence of each function with respect to the total number of instances of ironic discourse analysed in all the corpora (no distinctions of corpora are made here).

Table 9.7: TOPIC CLOSURE

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	6	32	27	26	21
%	6.98	38.9	49.09	56.52	26.25

Table 9.8: TOPIC CONCLUSION

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	10	17	11	24	15
%	11.63	20.24	20	52.17	18.75

Table 9.9: TOPIC SHIFT

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total:46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	5	0	1	0	0
%	5.81	0	1.82	0	0

Table 9.10: TOPIC COMMENT

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total:80)
Nº of occ.	0	3	6	15	26
%	0	3.57	10.91	32.61	32.5

Table 9.11: TOPIC INTRODUCTION

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	0	0	1	0	10
%	0	0	1.82	0	12.5

Table 9.12: RAPPORT BUILDING

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total:84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	9	0	0	0	1
%	10.46	0	0	0	1.25

Table 9.13: GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	4	0	0	0	2
%	4.65	0	0	0	2.5

Table 9.14: PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	4	0	0	1	2
%	4.65	0	0	2.17	0

Table 9.15: CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	3	0	0	1	2
%	3.49	0	0	2.17	2.5

Table 9.16: MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	2	2	1	0	0
%	2.33	2.38	1.82	0	0

Table 9.17: MANIFESTATION OF POWER

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	5	0	0	0	0
%	5.81	0	0	0	0

Table 9.18: TEASING/POKING FUN AT ONE'S INTERLOCUTOR

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	4	18	3	0	0
%	4.65	21.43	5.45	0	0

Table 9.19: COMPLAINT

	LLC Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	2	2	0	22	16
%	2.33	2.38	0	47.83	20

Table 9.20: REPROACH

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YH (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	1	7	6	3	0
%	1.16	8.33	10.91	6.52	0

Table 9.21: DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	1	7	0	0	0
%	1.16	8.33	0	0	0

Table 9.22: INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	0	0	7	0	0
%	0	0	12.73	0	0

Table 9.23: MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY

	LLC (Total: 86)	GG (Total: 84)	YM (Total: 55)	BR (Total: 46)	NA (Total: 80)
Nº of occ.	1	0	0	0	1
%	1.16	0	0	0	1.25

The data in tables 9.7 to 9.23 is graphically represented in Figures 9f, 9g, 9h, 9i, and 9j.

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Fig. 9f. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions of the LLC

Specific functions
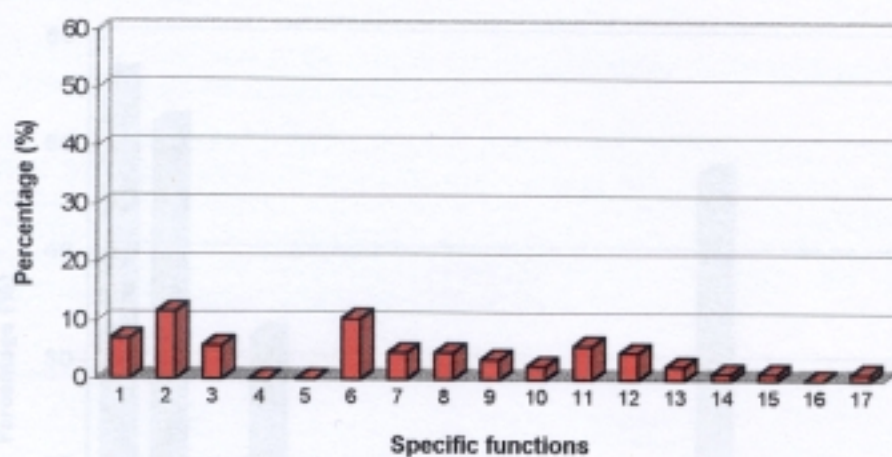
Fig. 9g. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions for the GG

Specific functions
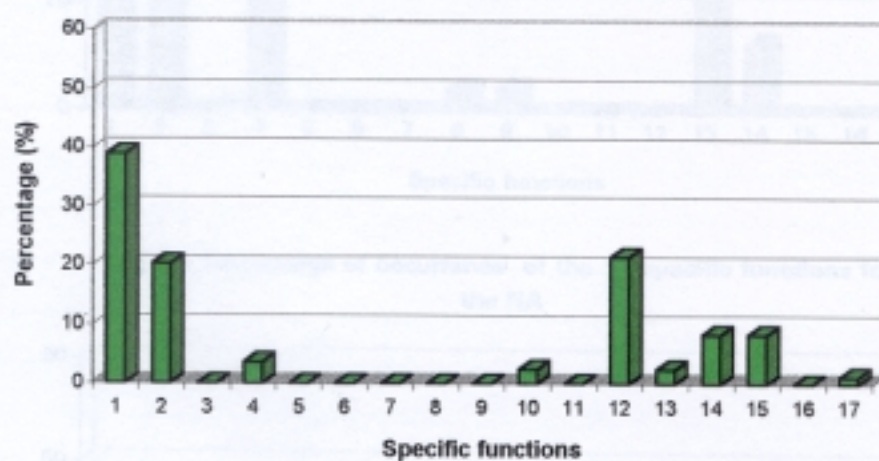
Fig. 9h. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions for the YM

Specific functions
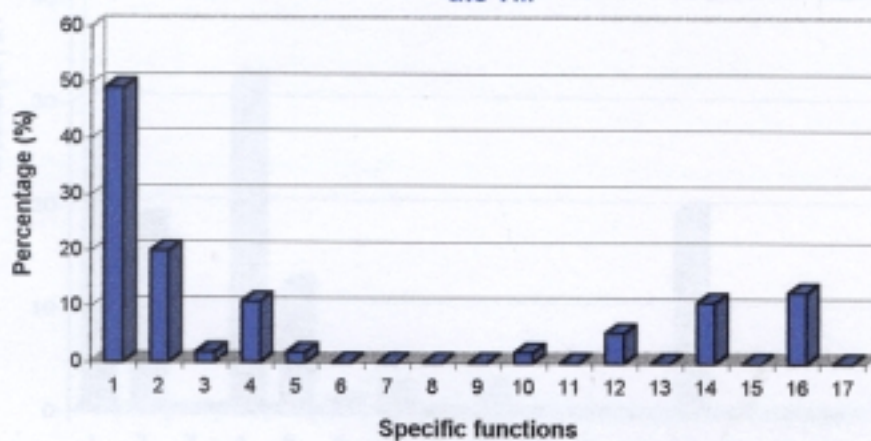
Fig. 9i. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions of the BR
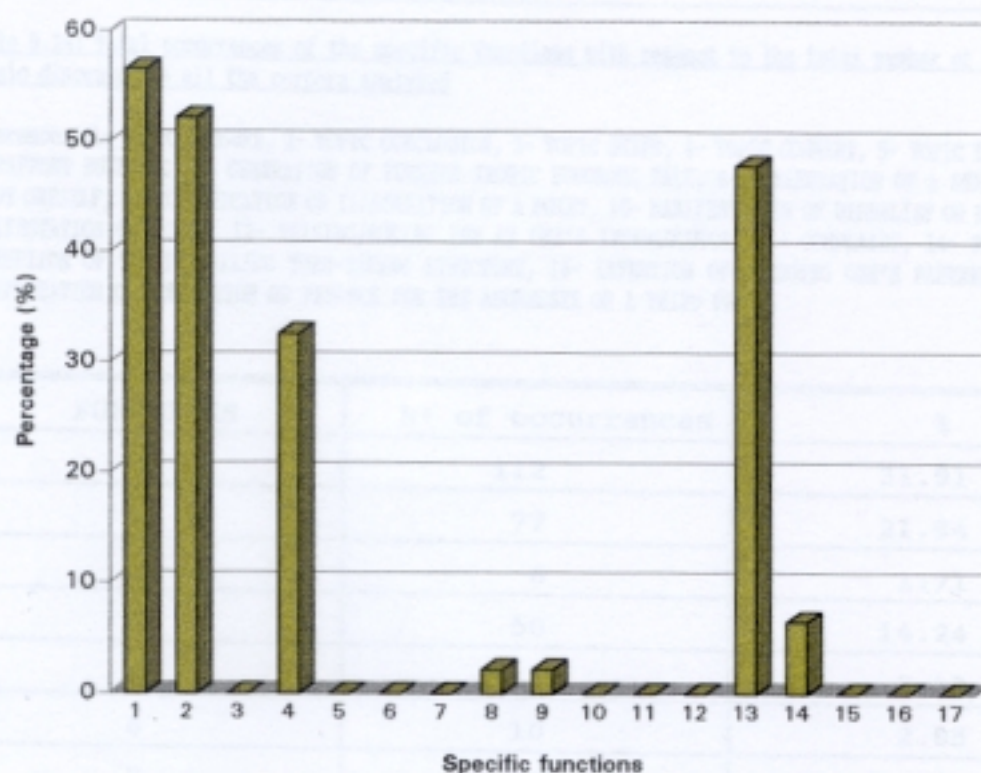
Fig. 9j. Percentage of occurrence of the 17 specific functions for the NA
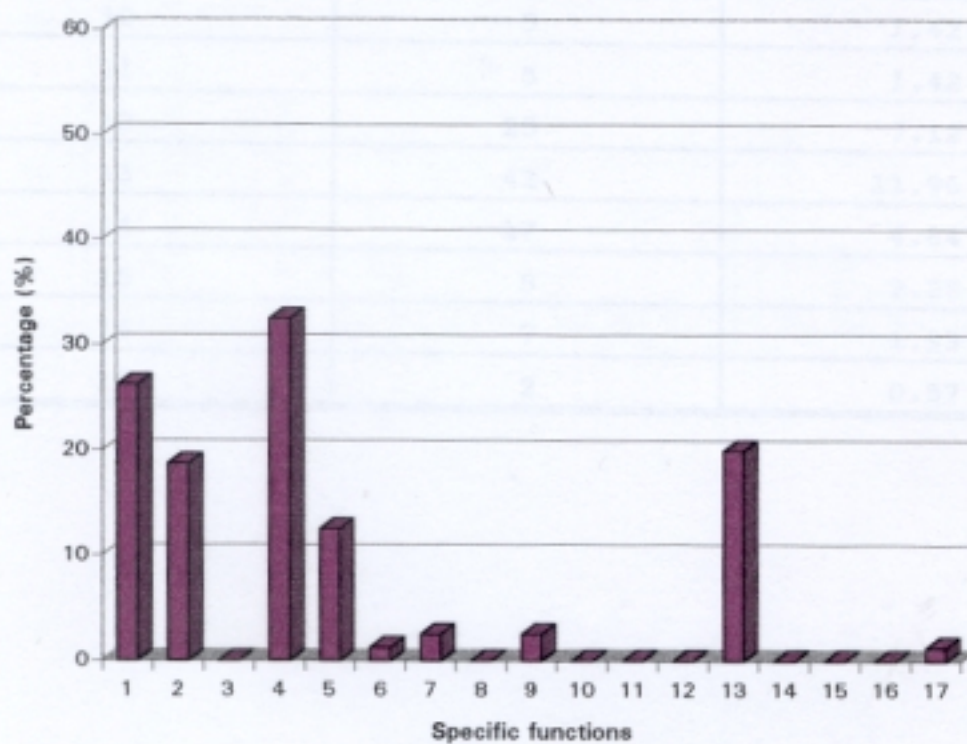
Table 9.24: Total occurrences of the specific functions with respect to the total number of instances of ironic discourse in all the corpora analysed

References: 1- TOPIC CLOSURE, 2- TOPIC CONCLUSION, 3- TOPIC SHIFT, 4- TOPIC COMMENT, 5- TOPIC INTRODUCTION, 6- RAPPORT BUILDING, 7- GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC HUMOROUS TALK, 8- PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF, 9- CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT, 10- MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST, 11- MANIFESTATION OF POWER, 12- TEASING/POKING FUN AT ONE'S INTERLOCUTOR, 13- COMPLAINT, 14- REPROACH, 15- DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE, 16- INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT, 17- MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY.

FUNCTIONS	Nº of occurrences	%
1	112	31.91
2	77	21.94
3	6	1.71
4	50	14.24
5	11	3.13
6	10	2.85
7	6	1.71
8	5	1.42
9	6	1.71
10	5	1.42
11	5	1.42
12	25	7.12
13	42	11.96
14	17	4.84
15	8	2.28
16	7	1.99
17	2	0.57

Fig. 9k.Total occurrence of the 17 specific discourse functions with respect to the total n° (351) of instances of verbal irony analised in the corpora
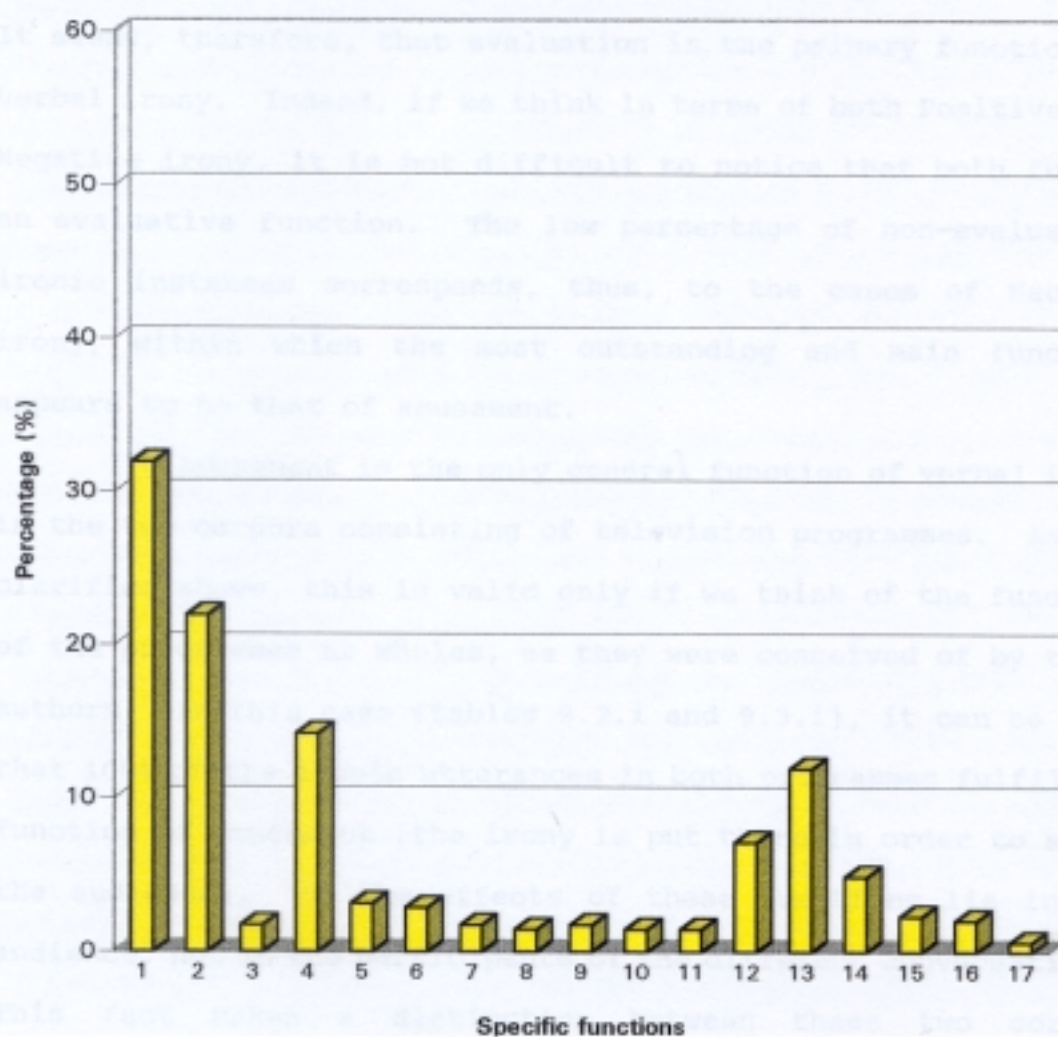
9.4.3.3 Discussion of the results

The results concerning the three general functions of verbal attack, amusement and evaluation place the function of evaluation as the one having the highest frequency of occurrence. It seems, therefore, that evaluation is the primary function of verbal irony. Indeed, if we think in terms of both Positive and Negative irony, it is not difficult to notice that both fulfil an evaluative function. The low percentage of non-evaluative ironic instances corresponds, thus, to the cases of Neutral irony, within which the most outstanding and main function appears to be that of amusement.

Amusement is the only general function of verbal irony in the two corpora consisting of television programmes. As was clarified above, this is valid only if we think of the function of the programmes as wholes, as they were conceived of by their authors. In this case (tables 9.2.i and 9.3.i), it can be said that 100% of the ironic utterances in both programmes fulfil the function of amusement (the irony is put there in order to amuse the audience). So the effects of these functions lie in the audience, not in the participants of the different conversations. This fact makes a distinction between these two corpora (displaying the genre of television comedies, and the other three corpora, whose language displays different discourse types (as was noted in 9.3).

However, I could not disregard the fact that each utterance also has a function conceived in terms of the

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intentions of the characters that use verbal irony in agreement with the context and social relations established by them within the plot of the episodes in which the ironic language in question is used. Therefore, I had to consider the results also in terms of this variable (tables 9.2.ii and 9.3.ii), and here the picture changes completely, for the function of amusement has a very low frequency of occurrence: both in the GG and the YM series, the characters use verbal irony to fulfil the function of evaluation (98.80% for GG and 90.91% for YM) or of verbal attack (77.38% for GG and 67.27% for YM). Only on very few occasions do the characters use irony to amuse their interlocutors.

Concerning the functions of amusement and verbal attack with respect to the other three corpora, it can be observed that:
* Amusement does not have a very high frequency of occurrence in any of the three (37.21% for LLC, 4.35% for BR and 28.75% for NA). The percentage of the BR corpus is the lowest, and this is related to the type of discourse in question: all of Russell's works contain argumentative prose of a philosophical nature, intended to provide logical reasoning for social problems that are denounced and criticised. Russell wants to make his readers aware of these problems and possibly also to make them act against them. Therefore, it is not strange that the amusement function should not be fulfilled very frequently by his discourse.
* Verbal attack has high percentages of occurrence in all five corpora (72.09% in LLC, 77.38% in GG, 67.27% in YM, 95.65% in BR, and 87.5% in NA). This is a result that had been expected, since

verbal attack is an inherent function of most cases of Negative irony. It is noteworthy that the percentages of this function are higher for the written corpora than for the spoken ones. A possible reason for this could be the fact that, in personal conversations (which is the type of discourse that predominates in the spoken texts analysed), people do not dare attack their interlocutors or even a third party so much or with such great intensity as they dare do in writing, in which case they do not have to confront their victims in a personal, physical manner.

* All in all, the total account of frequencies displays the highest occurrence for the **evaluative** function of irony. Following in rate of frequency are **amusement** and then **verbal attack** (if we consider the functions of the two television programmes as wholes); or **verbal attack** and then **amusement** (if we consider the functions of the ironic utterances in the television programmes as intended by the characters to have an effect on other characters within the episodes).

* The results of the chi-squared test (applied to the results considering both the functions intended by the authors of the television series and those intended by the characters) show that the frequencies of occurrence of the different general functions of verbal irony are different for the different corpora analysed, which implies that, as expected, the discourse functions of irony vary depending on the type of discourse (see Appendix 4, hypothesis nº 13a).

I shall now refer to each of the specific functions in particular:

- **Topic closure:** Table 9.7 shows that the highest percentage of occurrence of this function is that of the BR corpus. As was noted in 9.4.2.1, the ironic piece of discourse that closes the topic generally coincides with the closure of a paragraph. 56.52% of the instances of ironic discourse in this corpus fulfil the function of topic closure. The lowest percentage of occurrence for this function is found in the LLC (6.98%). Even when in normal conversation topic closure is a possble function of ironic utterances, it appears to be the case that, on many other occasions, ironic language generates further conversation about the topic in question, or may serve as topic conclusion, but not as topic closure. The other three corpora (GG, YM and NA) present relatively high percentages of occurrence for this function (38.9%, 49.09% and 26.25% respectively). The results yielded by the quantitative analysis show that the function of topic closure is one of considerable importance and considerable frequency of use among speakers who choose verbal irony as a strategy.

- **Topic conclusion:** The function of topic conclusion (table 9.8) presents the highest percentage of occurrence within the BR corpus (52.17%). Next in importance of frequency come the GG (20.24%), the YM (20%) and the NA (18.75%). Once more, the lowest percentage of occurrence is that of the LLC (11.63%). However, topic conclusion has turned out to be a more frequent function than topic closure in this corpus.

- **Topic shift:** Topic shift does not present high percentages of occurrence in any of the corpora studied (table 9.9). LLC is the

corpus where this function presents the highest number of occurrences, but, even so, this number only amounts to five occurrences (5.81%). The only one of the other four corpora in which this function was found is the YM one, with only one occurrence (1.82%). The other three did not present instances of the fulfilment of this function. Topic closure and topic conclusion appear to be much more important for ironic discourse.

- Topic comment: The highest percentages of occurrence of this function have been found in the two written corpora (32.61% and 32.5% of the total occurrences of ironic discourse in each corpus). It has proved to be a much less frequent function within spoken discourse: 10.91% of the ironic utterances in YM fulfil this function, and only 3.57% and 0% of the utterances do so in the GG and LLC respectively.

- Topic introduction: This function presents the highest number of occurrences within the NA corpus (12.5%). As was noted in 9.4.2.5, an ironic headline sometimes serves as the topic introducer for a journalistic article. One more occurrence of this function was found in the YM corpus, but no occurrences of it were registered in any of the three remaining corpora. Therefore, it seems that this is a function not very frequently used in ironic discourse. However, its importance within the journalistic genre has to be taken into account.

- Rapport-building/creation of solidarity among the participants of discourse: The LLC is the corpus that contains more occurrences of this function (10.46% of the total occurrence of ironic utterances). This function has not appeared in the GG,

YM or BR corpora, and, in the NA corpus only one occurrence of it was found (1.25%). Rapport-building may be, at times, the sole function of ironic discourse; however, it does not appear to be one of its most frequent functions.

- Generation of further ironic-humorous talk: Table 9.13 displays the results for this function, which shows the highest percentages of occurrence within the LLC (4.65%).   Even though this is the highest percentage, it is a low one and reveals the low frequency of occurrence of the function.   Three of the corpora do not present this function at all, and, in the NA corpus, it only has two occurrences (2.5%).

- Presentation of a sense of humour about oneself: The highest percentage of occurrence of this function is found in the LLC (4.65%).   In BR, there is only one instance of it (2.17%), and, in the other three corpora, no examples of this function were found.   Again, this function can not be said to be very frequent within ironic discourse.

- Clarification or illustration of a point: This function is fulfilled by a few ironic utterances in three of the corpora (LLC, BR and NA). The frequency of occurrence is higher in the LLC (3.49%), but it does not appear as an outstanding function of ironic discourse. No instances of the function were found in two of the corpora (GG and YM), and this may be due to the fact that the primary functions of irony in these two programmes are *amusement* (in terms of the intentions of the authors of the episode with respect to their audience) and *verbal attack* (in terms of the characters' intentions towards their "victims").

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- Manifestation of disbelief or distrust: This function has been found for ironic discourse only within the spoken corpora. There are no occurrences of it in the two written ones. This may be due to the more interactional nature of spoken discourse. Users of a language may respond to something said or done by other users by using ironic discourse that shows disbelief in what the first user said or did. This does not appear to be common in written discourse (although it does not seem impossible). The percentages of occurrence in the spoken corpora are rather low, which permits the researcher to conclude that this is not a very common function within ironic discourse.

- Manifestation of power: Even though, on some occasions, the use of irony may reveal that the speaker has power over his/her interlocutors (see 5.5.2), the function fulfilled by his/her ironic utterance may not always be to show this power. Indeed, very few instances of this function have been found in this analysis. The only corpus where this function is apparently fulfilled by some ironic utterances is the LLC. Here, 5.81% of the utterances are intended to fulfil the function of manifesting the speaker's power. The other four corpora do not present instances of this function, even though it can often be said that the person using verbal irony is a person in power.

- Teasing/poking fun at one's interlocutor: Instances of fulfilment of this function have only been found in the spoken corpora, which is logical if we consider that, in the case of the written examples, there is no interlocutor present for a writer to tease. However, it does not seem unreasonable to think of the

possibility of a writer who might want to tease his/her readers by using verbal irony. The corpus in which verbal irony most seems to fulfil this function is the GG (21.43% of occurrences). Following are YM (5.45%) and LLC (4.65%). The nature of the relationship among the frequent interlocutors of the GG explains the higher incidence of this function in this corpus. The girls are very close friends, and, even though irony is used mainly as a verbal attack among them, on many occasions it only has to be taken as a form of teasing, without any serious intention of hurting anybody's feelings.

- Complaint: The results of the analysis yield BR as the definite "winner" as regards the use of this function of verbal irony (47.83% of the total occurrences within this corpus fulfil this function). This result had been expected, considering the "denouncing" character of Russell's writing. He accuses society and some of its institutions for being hypocrites and for many other things he judges improper or unfair, and, therefore, many times a complaining tone can be perceived in his ironic discourse. Following in rate of frequency of occurrence is the NA corpus (20% of occurrences), which reveals written discourse as the type of discourse where this function presents higher frequencies of occurrence. Instances of this function have been found in two of the spoken corpora (LLC and GG), but its occurrence is comparatively low (2.33% and 2.38% respectively).

- Reproach: The fulfilment of this function has been found in the ironic discourse of four of the corpora studied (LLC, GG, YM and BR). The highest occurrence is found in the YM corpus

(10.91%). The GG and BR corpora have lower percentages of occurrence, but they are still significant (8.33% and 6.52% respectively). Only one occurrence of reproach was found in the LLC and none in the NA. Here there are no marked differences between the spoken and the written corpora. There appears to be a tendency for this function to be more used in spoken discourse, but its percentage of occurrence is much lower in the LLC (a spoken corpus) than in the BR (a written one). It is the characters of the television series -rather than any other of the ironic speakers/writers in the corpora analysed- who seem to prefer this function most.

- Disruption of the prevailing turn-taking structure: This function is fulfilled by a few instances of ironic discourse in only two of the corpora studied herein: the GG and the LLC. This function can not appear in the written corpora, since we can not speak of a turn-taking structure in written discourse. As was shown and exemplified in 9.4.2.15, the disruption of the prevailing turn-taking structure has its highest percentage of occurrence in the GG corpus (8.33%). Only one instance of it (1.16%) has been found in the LLC. These figures tell us that the the function in question does not seem to be one of the most prominent functions of verbal irony.

- Intention of outdoing one's partner's wit: This function has not proved to be frequent for the ironic discourse in the corpora here studied. The only corpus which presents instances of speakers using irony in order to outdo their partner's wit is the YM corpus (12.73% of occurrences). This is explicable in terms

of the relationship between its protagonists, Hacker and Humphrey (Hacker has understood Humphrey's intentions to cheat him, and, therefore, he tries to show him -by using ironic language- that he is no longer fooled and that he can outdo Humphrey's wit). The results of this survey, then, show that this is not one of the most frequent functions of ironic discourse.

- Manifestation of admiration or respect for the addressee or a third party: As was noted in 9.4.2.17, this is a function which is fulfilled only by Positive irony, and, consequently, it is not surprising to find out that it is not a frequent function, since we already know that very few occurrences of Positive irony were found in the corpora under study. Only two occurrences of this function were found, one in the LLC and the other in the NA corpus (which   represent   1.16%   and   1.25%   of   occurrences respectively).

The table showing the total number of occurrences of each of the above functions (table 9.24) places the function of *Topic closure* as the most important from the viewpoint of frequency of occurrence (31.91% of the total number of instances of ironic discourse of the corpora studied fulfil this function). Following in importance are *Topic conclusion* (with 21.94% of occurrences), *Topic comment* (14.24%), *Complaint* (11.96%) and *Teasing* (7.12%). The other functions present lower frequencies, the lowest of which is the *Manifestation of admiration or respect for the addressee or a third party*, which, as was explained above, is always a function of the Positive kind of verbal irony,

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and, therefore, its frequency is as low as the frequency of occurrence of this type of irony (see 8.5.1).

- **The results of the statistical chi-squared test** show that, as was expected, the frequencies of occurrence of the different specific functions of verbal irony are different for the written and the spoken corpora (see Appendix 4, hypothesis 13b). Again, it can be said that the type of discourse influences the function of the intended ironic utterance or contribution.

9.5 Summary and conclusions of the chapter

In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyse and classify the functions of ironic discourse. At an abstract and very general level it has been stated that the interactional function of language (Brown & Yule, 1983) seems to predominate in the LLC, the GG, the YM and the BR corpora. In the NA corpus, there seems to be a balance between both the transactional and the interactional functions. Some of the uses to which irony is put in the NA and the BR corpora (the written corpora) evoke Halliday's textual function (i.e., when writers organise their text in such a way that verbal irony signals the headline, or the beginning, middle or end of a paragraph to obtain certain effects). This "organisational" function is also observed in the spoken corpora, however, when the speakers place their ironic remarks to mark, for instance, the closure of a topic. Jakobson's phatic, conative and metalinguistic functions could

also be identified for cases in the different corpora analysed. But since these categories are too general and do not say much about what the users of English can <u>do</u> with verbal irony, a more detailed analysis of the functions was made, through which more specific functions could be identified for ironic discourse. Within these specific functions, I still found different levels of generality; hence, at a more general level, the three main functions of EVALUATION, VERBAL ATTACK and AMUSEMENT were identified, and, at a more specific level of analysis, seventeen other functions were found to be fulfilled by verbal irony. These seventeen functions are the following: 1- TOPIC CLOSURE, 2- TOPIC CONCLUSION, 3- TOPIC SHIFT, 4- TOPIC COMMENT, 5- TOPIC INTRODUCTION, 6- RAPPORT BUILDING, 7- GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK, 8- PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF, 9- CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT, 10- MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST, 11- MANIFESTATION OF POWER, 12- TEASING, 13- COMPLAINT, 14- REPROACH, 15- DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE, 16- INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT and 17- MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY.

Any of the more specific functions may co-occur with any of the more general functions, although there are some of them that are prototypically fulfilled by a given type of irony; for instance, the manifestation of admiration or respect (specific function nº 17) can not co-occur with the more general function of verbal attack, for the former is a function of Positive irony, and the latter one of Negative irony. But the

point being made here is that all of the ironic utterances studied in this analysis can be said to fulfil at least one of the three general functions, and that, at the same time, they may fulfil one or more of the specific functions that have been identified herein.   A discussion has been made of these functions, together with the analysis of examples of the realisations of each of them (qualitative analysis). Following this, a quantitative analysis of the frequencies of occurrence of the functions has been presented, whose results have led me to the following conclusions:

- Evaluation can be said to be the predominant function of verbal irony. Of the three more general functions, evaluation presented the highest frequency of occurrence.

- Amusement and verbal attack are also functions having high frequencies of occurrence. In the corpora analysed, amusement turned out to be more frequent than verbal attack if, in the two corpora containing episodes of television programmes, the functions of such programmes as wholes (concerning their authors' intentions) were taken into account. If, on the other hand, the functions considered were those intended by the ironic speakers in the context of the episodes in question, the function of verbal attack takes predominance over the amusement function.

- The three general functions of verbal attack, amusement and evaluation may be fulfilled by instances of ironic discourse of the negative type.   Both amusement and evaluation may be functions of Positive irony, whereas verbal attack obviously may not. Neither verbal attack nor evaluation can be functions of

the Neutral type of ironic discourse; the only general function observed for these cases is that of amusement. This information is summarized in Figure 91.

Figure 91: General functions of the three main types of verbal irony

TYPE OF IRONY	GENERAL FUNCTIONS
NEGATIVE	Evaluation, verbal attack and/or amusement
POSITIVE	Evaluation and/or amusement
NEUTRAL	Amusement (only)

This information permits us to establish a correlation between the strategies used by the speaker/writer and the general functions intended; i.e., when a speaker only wants to fulfil the function of amusement by means of verbal irony, s/he can use any of the three kinds of strategies labelled A, B or C in this study (see chapter 8); when s/he wants to fulfil the function of evaluation, s/he may use strategies A and/or B (never C); and if s/he wants to fulfil the function of verbal attack, s/he can only use strategies A (never B or C). This correlation is illustrated in Figure 9m.

Figure 9m: Correlation of the general functions and strategies
     of verbal irony

FUNCTIONS	STRATEGIES
AMUSEMENT	A, B and/or C
EVALUATION	A and/or B
VERBAL ATTACK	A (only)

- Among the more specific functions, topic closure, topic conclusion and topic comment turned out to be the most frequent in general terms. Complaint, teasing and reproach follow in importance (Figure 9k). These data permit the researcher to associate verbal irony to certain important functions of language and discourse organisation. Topic closure and topic conclusion frequently coincide in the same ironic utterance; i.e., a speaker may choose the superstrategy of verbal irony in order to give a conclusion on the topic of discourse and at the same time to close it. However, sometimes these two functions do not coincide, and it may be the case that a speaker uses verbal irony to give a conclusion on a topic but not to close it.

- Topic shift did not turn out to be a very frequent function of ironic discourse, whereas topic comment presented a higher occurrence in the written corpora than in the spoken ones. Topic introduction has turned out to be a much more frequent function of the ironic language in journalistic discourse (NA corpus) than in the other types of discourse analysed. It seems to be the case that journalists often choose verbal irony as a strategy for the headline of an article, in order to mark the introduction of

its topic.

- Since irony is often connected to humour, it is not difficult to associate it with the building of rapport or solidarity among the participants of discourse; however, this function can not be labelled as one of the more frequent within the ironic discourse found in the corpora.

- Other functions which, though fulfilled by some of the utterances in the corpora, have not proved to be very frequent are: the generation of further ironic-humorous talk, the presentation of a sense of humour about oneself, the clarification or illustration of a point, the manifestation of power, the intention of outdoing one's partner's wit, and the manifestation of admiration or respect for the addressee or a third party.

- Certain functions show a marked tendency to be fulfilled by either spoken or written discourse: the manifestation of disbelief or distrust only presented occurrences within the spoken corpora. The same can be said about teasing and about the disruption of the prevailing turn-taking structure. These results are logical for the last function, since we can not speak of a turn-taking structure in the pieces of written discourse analysed here. The other two also present features which are more associated with spoken discourse; teasing and expressing disbelief are generally associated with conversation rather than with written discourse[12]. On the other hand, complaint turned

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[12] However, they are not impossible functions for written discourse. The idea of a writer who is teasing or who wants to express disbelief or distrust in a given person or idea by means of verbal irony does not seem unreasonable.

out to be a much more frequent function in written discourse than in spoken discourse. This has to do with the genre of the two written corpora with which I am working in this study: the newspaper articles are all instances of journalistic writing in which the authors write about a given topic or problem and give their point of view about it. In most cases, these authors' point of view is not very favourable, and, therefore, they use verbal irony to complain about the problem they are writing about. The BR corpus displays samples of argumentative, philosophical discourse intended to analyse certain social problems and to criticise those who create these problems. It is not strange, thus, to see that Russell frequently uses verbal irony in order to publicly complain about these problems.

I hope the research done in this chapter will have helped in the identification and recognition of the functions intended by ironic speakers/writers of English. It has been shown here how the pragmatic strategies (discussed in chapter 8) used in the expression of verbal irony are chosen in order to fulfil certain general and specific discourse functions which depend on the type of verbal irony used, as well as on the genre or type of discourse. It is also hoped that this chapter will have contributed to "paint a more complete picture" of the phenomenon of verbal irony and, consequently, to present another aspect of it that complements the other aspects studied in previous chapters.

The study of the functions of verbal irony herein

developed intends to complete and round out the whole study presented and carried out in this dissertation. The following chapter is, therefore, meant to present the general conclusions taken from this piece of research as a whole.

Chapter 10: CONCLUSIONS

<<A world without irony would
have to be either an earthly
paradise, where it could never
arise for there would be
nothing to provoke it, or else
an earthly hell, where it was
never allowed to show its face.
Our world seems unlikely ever
to become an earthly paradise.
Do men really seek peace and
liberty, as they tell us? Not
at all, according to Miguel de
Unamuno: "They look for peace
in time of war -and for war in
time of peace. They seek
liberty under tyranny -and
tyranny when they are free".
[...]. On the other hand, the
continued presence of irony
must be a sign that neither is
our world as yet an earthly
hell.>>

D.J. Enright, *The Alluring
Problem: An Essay on Irony.*

10.1 Aims of this chapter

This chapter has two main aims: Firstly, the summary
and general conclusions of this study will be presented and
discussed. This discussion will centre upon the acceptance or
rejection of the thirteen Research Hypotheses (as well as on the
Main Hypothesis) put forward in the introductory chapter of this
thesis. Additionally, some suggestions for lines of further
research on the topic of verbal irony will be made, based on the
findings of this particular study.

10.2 Summarised results and general conclusions

The results of the present study provide answers .to all
the research questions put forward in the Introduction, as well
as qualitative and quantitative data for the acceptance of the
Main Hypothesis and the thirteen Research Hypotheses derived from
it.

The analysis of the instances of ironic discourse made
in the five different corpora (specified in 1.4.1) has shed new
light on the issues investigated.   The main points and
conclusions of this analysis are detailed as follows:

* After analysing some classical/traditional approaches to the
study of verbal irony (chapter 2), it was shown that, even though
many of the examples in the corpora could be explained by means
of the "opposite-proposition" (traditional) argument, many others
could not. The existence of a non proposition-oriented type of
verbal irony was detected. The survey in chapter 7 (undertaken
in order to test Research Hypothesis nº 1 (7.2.1.1)) showed that
the frequency of occurrence of the non proposition-oriented type
of verbal irony was greater than that of the proposition-oriented
one. The results were tested by means of the statistical Median
Test (Appendix 4, R. Hypothesis nº 1), and the conclusion drawn
from the test is that the hypothesis can be accepted: Not only
is there a non proposition-oriented type of verbal irony, but
also this type has a frequency of occurrence higher than that of

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the proposition-oriented counterpart (76.07% vs. 23.93%). "To use the opposite proposition to the one intended" was, thus, accepted as one of several possible strategies ironic speakers have at their disposal. Undoubtedly, verbal irony has much to do with contradiction and oppositions, but these contradictions were not only identified at the proposition level. Sometimes the contradiction was identified at other levels, the illocutionary level of the speech act or the presupposition level, to name but two.

* In chapter 3, I stated that I considered it appropriate to locate this study within the framework of linguistic Pragmatics, since that was the approach I had adopted for my analysis. I analysed different pragmatic approaches to the study of verbal irony, presenting data which was partially in agreement with these approaches. For example, Grice's approach was discussed, and it was shown that, even though there are numerous examples where it can be said that the irony triggers the working out of implicatures on the part of the hearer/s, there are others in which the implicature is no longer worked out because it has been "short-circuited" (Morgan, 1978), and, therefore, it is no longer cancellable. These cases were labelled as *conventionalised* instances of verbal irony, while those in agreement with Grice's theory, i.e., those which clearly triggered conversational implicatures, were called *conversational*. But the data in the corpora suggested a third type of irony within this context, the *implicature-free* type. The precise nature of the definition

stems from the fact that, contrary to Grice's argument, the
interpretation of the irony did not result from conversational
implicatures but from *conventional* implicatures. The
quantitative analysis made on the basis of these data (7.2.2)
showed that Grice's explanation applies in the majority of
instances of verbal irony in the corpora (77.78%), but not in the
remaining 22.22%. Hence my argument that Grice's theory (as well
as the other theories discussed) is interesting and illuminating
but incomplete. The results confirmed the existence of the three
types of irony indicated above (Research Hypothesis nº 2):
Conversational (77.78%), *Conventionalised* (4.56%), and
Implicature-free (17.66%). The chi-squared test applied to these
results showed that the differences among the three types or
irony are significant in terms of frequency of occurrence. There
is no doubt as to the predominance of the conversational type.

* The considerable number of examples of verbal irony found,
in which it could be said that the irony was interpreted in terms
of an opposition of speech acts (23.65% of the total), reaffirms
the relevance of Research Hypothesis nº 3 (stating that irony can
manifest itself at the level of the speech act). Haverkate's
(1990) "speech act analysis of irony" was useful in the context
of this discussion. The evidence of the corpus examples,
however, led me to disagree with him in his statement about the
impossibility of irony to be expressed through declarative
(performative) speech acts. According to the results of the
present analysis, all kinds of speech acts seem to be the proper

arena for ironic intentions if the conditions and the context are appropriate. The results of the statistical chi-squared test (carried out in order to see whether there were significant differences in the distribution of speech act-oriented irony in all the corpora) show that the frequency of occurrence of the speech act-oriented instances of ironic discourse is different for the spoken and the written corpora. Speech act-oriented verbal irony appears to be more frequent in spoken discourse than non-speech act-oriented irony.

* As regards Research Question and Hypothesis n$^\circ$ 4, the analysis made in this study showed that, even when there are a great number of ironic utterances that can be labelled as *echoic* (35.04% of the total), there are an even greater number of such utterances that can not (64.96%). Thus, to echo someone's thought, utterance or idea is considered in this study another of the possible strategies used by ironic speakers, but not as the only one. In this way, it can be said that Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Theory of irony is useful and points out one very remarkable aspect of the phenomenon in question, but it does not explain all its possible occurrences or manifestations. The results of the statistical chi-squared test applied to these data showed that echoic and non-echoic irony manifest themselves differently in the spoken and written corpora: Echoic irony appears to be more frequent in written discourse and, on the contrary, non-echoic irony appears to be more frequent in spoken discourse. The results of this test suggest that in spoken

discourse it is less necessary to echo any person's utterances or ideas to be ironic, since the hearer/s or audience have other tools (bodily movements, gestures, etc.) to interpret any intended irony, whereas the writer of ironic discourse may resort more to echoic verbal irony (a more "established" strategy) to ensure the correct interpretation on the part of his/her readers.

*   Another of the arguments put forward against Sperber & Wilson's Echoic Theory of irony was that not all instances of ironic discourse convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker/writer (Research Hypothesis nº 5). This argument is closely connected to another of the arguments put forward in this piece of work, namely, that there exists a Positive kind and a Neutral kind of irony (not only a Negative one). Examples of ironic discourse which cannot be labelled as exhibiting a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker/writer were found in the different corpora analysed. The quantitative analysis of the three main types of irony identified show that the Negative type is by far the most common. The statistical Kruskall Wallis test yields the differences (in frequencies of occurrence) among the three types as significant differences; but the lower frequency of occurrence of the Positive and Neutral types of irony does not invalidate the hypothesis which supports their existence. Consequently, Research Hypothesis nº 5 can be accepted. The examples analysed indicate that ironic discourse not always conveys a derogatory attitude on the part of its user.

On the contrary, sometimes it conveys a praising, positive attitude, and some other times this attitude appears to be neutral, the intention of the speaker being simply to amuse by means of witticisms.

*   In view of the results of the analysis, the answer to Research Question nº 6 is that *not all ironic utterances are instances of pretence*, as Clark & Gerrig (1984) argue. Again, among the instances of ironic discourse analysed, a considerable number could be labelled as instances of *pretence* (24.79%), but a greater number could not (75.21%), a fact that favours the acceptance of Research Hypothesis nº 6. The Chi-square results show that the superiority (in terms of frequency) of the non-pretence cases over the pretence ones is significant.

*   Apart from analysing the mentioned theories, a brief discussion and analysis of the different theories of laughter and of S. Freud's interpretation of jokes and irony (1905) was made in chapter 4. This analysis shed light on the fact that most of the psychologic and psycholinguistic theories of irony show a clear influence from this previous study made by Freud (4.7.2.3).

*   Research Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10 originated as a consequence of analysing the phenomenon of irony in the light of Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987). This theory proved to be very useful in the explanation of different aspects of verbal irony (as shown in chapter 5), but, once more, there were many points that, in my opinion, could be argued. Therefore, I tried to show that, contrary to Brown & Levinson's statement

(which is in agreement with Grice's), an ironic utterance can not only violate the Gricean Maxim of Quality but also any of the other three Maxims. It was also shown how a speaker may be ironic without flouting the Maxim of Quality, i.e., how a speaker may be ironic but nevertheless be telling the truth (or what he considers to be true). The quantitative analysis shows that there is a marked tendency among ironic speakers to violate the Quality Maxim, but the frequencies of occurrence of the violation of the Relevance and the Manner Maxim are also considerably high (see 7.2.2.1.1). Research Hypothesis nº 7 can therefore be accepted.

The next hypothesis (and question) in connection with Politeness Theory is also of relevance to a previous hypothesis, namely, nº 2. Since it was found that not all cases of verbal irony are conversational, that is, not all of them imply the working out of implicatures on the part of the hearer/reader, it follows that, contrary to Brown & Levinson's argument, not all instances of verbal irony can be labelled as *off record*[13]. It was shown in 5.3 how ironic speakers/writers not only make use of off record strategies but also of on record ones to make their point. It was also shown that sometimes both on record and off record strategies may co-occur in an ironic utterance or contribution. Moreover, a speaker/writer can make different off record strategies co-occur in order to convey ironic meanings. Both were considered evidence in favour of the acceptance of

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[13] According to Brown & Levinson, all off record strategies violate one of the four Maxims (1987: 214).

Research Hypotheses nº 8 and 9. The statistical chi-squared test proved that the frequencies of occurrence of the on record and off record types of verbal irony are similar in all the corpora, the off record type having a greater frequency of occurrence than the on record type.

In the final part of chapter 5 (5.5), an answer to Research Question nº 10 was sought. Research question nº 10 concerned the influence of the sociological variables P, D and R on the use or non-use of verbal irony. No quantitative analysis was made here (for it was considered beyond the scope of this study), but the qualitative analysis based on the corpus data showed that these variables certainly affect the use of ironic discourse, although no permanent formula could be found. The values of these three variables changed for the different interlocutors, contexts and/or situations.

* Chapter 6 concentrated on a very specific type of strategy used by ironic speakers, namely, the use of prosodic features. A survey was undertaken to identify the most frequent prosodic features that accompany ironic utterances (and that constitute the so-called "ironic tone of voice"). In this part of the study, only the London Lund Corpus was used, as it was the only corpus on which prosodic features were marked. The results of this survey showed that there is no specific tone used exclusively for ironic utterances (which confirms part of Research Hypothesis nº 11). The Fall and the Fall-rise, however, are the most frequently used tones with 48.8% and 36% of

occurrences, respectively. Even though these two tones also proved to be the most frequent among non-ironic utterances (55.6% and 17%, respectively), the results of the Chi-square test show that the differences between ironic and non-ironic discourse, in terms of frequency of occurrence of the different tones, are significant. In other words, there is a significant difference in the frequency of use and distribution of the tones between ironic and non-ironic discourse (the Fall-rise is much more frequently used in ironic utterances than in non-ironic ones). But tone was not the only feature analysed in this survey. Other prosodic features, like *stress on key words, high pitch on key words, speaker's or hearer's strategic laughter*, and *strategic pauses or silence* were surveyed, and it was found that the first three of them occurred very frequently within ironic utterances. Strategic silence/pauses did not occur very frequently, but all these features seemed to be handled by speakers of English in different combinations as a powerful strategy to convey ironic meanings. The most frequent combinations found were the following:

1- Fall-rise + Stress on key words + High pitch on key words + laughter
2- Fall + Stress on k. w. + High pitch on k.w. + laughter
3- Fall + Stress on k. w. + High pitch on k.w.
4- Fall-rise + Stress on k.w. + High pitch on k.w.

On this basis, it seems reasonable to suggest that Research Hypothesis nº 11 can be accepted: "There is no specific tone used

exclusively for ironic utterances. Nevertheless, the frequency of use of the different tones within ironic discourse is different from the frequency of use of these tones in non-ironic discourse. Intonation and other prosodic features (such as pitch level, laughter, etc.) work together to create the so-called "ironic tone of voice", and the use of these features constitutes yet another of the possible strategies ironic speakers have at their disposal".

As could be observed in chapter 6, a very intricate network of relationships can be woven with these features, but their co-occurrence, though exhibiting certain tendencies, is neither totally predictable nor random.

I am conscious of the fact that not all possible prosodic features accompanying verbal irony were quantified and analysed in the survey. Cases of nasalisation or breathy voice for example, were not accounted for simply because these features were not marked in the corpus used.

Still, with respect to prosodic features, a final reflexion was made on the implicit presence of such features in written ironic discourse (6.5), from which it can be concluded that ironic writers generally provide their readers with clues as to how their writing should be read aloud. These clues may be the use of "graphic" elements, such as inverted commas, italisation or bold type, the use of non-core words or expressions, or the pointing out of some features of the context that can help the reader understand which word/s should be made prominent.

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*   The answer to Research Question nº 12 ("What are the
strategies used by ironic speakers/writers?") is addressed all
throughout this dissertation (little by little) until we reach
chapter 8, whereupon all preceding information (discussing the
different theories of irony) is organised and enlarged in the
"proposal of a taxonomy of pragmatic strategies used by English
speakers/writers in ironic discourse". Prior to this proposal,
an attempt was made to define/characterise the concepts of
strategy and, finally, of **verbal irony**.   The   latter
characterisation pictured verbal irony as a super-strategy
embracing   many   subsidiary   pragmatic   strategies   used   by
speakers/writers to express meanings which are based on one or
more of a group of oppositions such as spiritual/material,
true/false, etc. (see 8.2 b). The subsidiary strategies were
described, analysed and quantified for the three main types of
irony (based on the attitude of the ironist), namely; Positive,
Negative and Neutral.   The strategies identified were the
following:

A) <u>For Negative irony:</u>

A1– *Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your
     utterance.*
A2– *Use a proposition which is contrarty to general belief, but
     not contrary to what you mean.*
A3– *Use a proposition you consider to be true but which is
     opposite to the one considered true by the hearer.*
A4– *Show in your utterance that you have interpreted your
     interlocutor's statement as having an opposite meaning.*
A5– *Use formal language and affected or non-core vocabulary when
     it is not apparently required by the situation or context.*
A6– *Use words or expressions that have a somewhat different
     (though not opposite) meaning from the one conveyed.*

A7- Use puns: Make the hearer retrieve two mental frames.
A8- Use suffixes that indicate a certain degree of derision.
A9- Change the name of somebody (nickname) or something deliberately.
A10- Use contradictory speech acts.
A11- Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea.
A12- Pretend, simulate.
A13- Use rhetorical questions.
A14- Give unexpected answers.
A15- Joke, be humorous.
A16- Avoid the lower points of a criticism.
A17- Give hints and/or association clues.
A18- Use metaphors.
A19- Use euphemisms for taboo topics.
A20- Displace the hearer.
A21- Say what something or somebody is not.
A22- Be incomplete, use ellipsis.
A23- Use tautologies.
A24- Say less than required or expected, understate.
A25- Overstate, exaggerate.
A26- Append an unexpected afterthought or aftercomment to your or your interlocutor's utterance.
A27- Handle both positive and Negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution.
A28- Make use of inverted commas, bold type, italisation or punctuation marks to signal certain key terms or expressions in written discourse.
A29- Make use of prosodic features.
A30- Use conventionalised verbal irony.
A31- Make use of implicature-free verbal irony.

B) For Positive irony:

B1- Use the opposite proposition to the literal one of your utterance.
B2- Say less than required, understate.
B3- Make use of conventionalised ironic terms or expressions.
B4- Joke.
B5- Use contradictory speech acts.
B6- Insult the hearer.
B7- Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea.
B8- Other (open).

C) For Neutral irony:

C1- Include unexpected, absurd and contradictory elements in your utterance or contribution.
C2- Joke.
C3- Hedge.
C4- Exaggerate, overstate.

C5- Use rethorical questions.
C6- Use contradictory speech acts.
C7- Handle both positive and negative meanings in the same utterance or contribution.
C8- Use implicature-free verbal irony.
C9- Echo somebody's utterance, thought or idea.
C10- Use inverted commas, italics, etc..
C11- Use non-core vocabulary.
C12- Other (open).

The quantitative analysis showed that, the sub-strategies most frequently used within Negative verbal irony (which, as was anticipated, proved to be the type of irony with the highest frequency of occurrence) are, from most frequent to least frequent, A11, A12, A1, A10, A31, and A16. Furthermore, a study of the combinations of these strategies was made, the six most frequent being:

1- A1 + A11 + A12
2- A17
3- A1 + A11
4- A1 / A16 / A30
5- A10 + A13
6- A1 + A10 + A11 + A12.

The figures showed that, even though strategies which reflect the approaches in all the theories discussed have high frequencies of occurrence ("Use the opposite proposition", "Echo someone's thought, utterance or idea" or "Pretend"), none of them covers the totality of occurrences of the phenomenon, not even half of it. Other strategies, like "Using contradictory speech acts" or "Using the conventional implicatures of the words uttered" also proved to be very frequent practices among ironic speakers.

Regarding Positive and Neutral irony, no definitive conclusions can be made with respect to the tendencies of speakers to use or to combine the different strategies, given the

low percentage of occurrence of their substrategies in the corpora studied in this piece of research.

The chi-squared Test (Appendix 4, Hypothesis nº 12) was applied in order to test whether the distribution of the different substrategies differs for the five corpora used. The results of the test confirmed what had been expected, i.e., that these differences are significant, at least for the strategies used within Negative irony. No reliable results can be presented for the Neutral and the Positive type, considering the low number of cases identified. Therefore, it can be stated that, for negative irony, the variable of *discourse type* may affect the strategy chosen by the speaker or writer.

In view of the analysis made and the taxonomy of pragmatic strategies used by ironic speakers/writers proposed in this thesis, it seems reasonable to conclude that Research Hypothesis nº 12 can be accepted: <<Verbal irony is a super-strategy which is subdivided in three main kinds (Positive, Negative and Neutral), which in turn can be carried out by using different pragmatic substrategies such as "joke", "use the opposite proposition to the one intended", "use a different speech act from the one intended", "echo someone's previous utterance or thought", etc.>>.

* The final Research Question (nº 13: "What are the functions of verbal irony?") was answered in chapter 9. In this chapter, it was noted that, even though Jakobson's (1960), Halliday's (1976, 1978) or Brown & Yule's (1983) classifications of the

functions of language were insightful, none of them seemed to be specific enough to describe all the phenomena I observed in the instances of ironic discourse analysed. Therefore, I created my own categories, these being influenced to a certain extent by McCarthy and Carter's (1994) and by Norrick's (1993) categories. The functions proposed are classified on two main levels:

a) at a more general level, it was found that all instances of verbal irony fulfilled one or more of the following three main functions: 1) VERBAL ATTACK, 2) AMUSEMENT and 3) EVALUATION;

b) at a more specific level, the functions identified were the following: 1- TOPIC CLOSURE, 2- TOPIC CONCLUSION, 3- TOPIC SHIFT, 4- TOPIC COMMENT, 5- TOPIC INTRODUCTION, 6- RAPPORT BUILDING (Creation of solidarity among the participants of discourse), 7- GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK, 8- PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF, 9- CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT, 10- MANIFESTATION OF POWER, 12- TEASING (Poking fun at one's interlocutor), 13- COMPLAINT, 14- REPROACH, 15- DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE, 16- INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT OR INTELLIGENCE, and 17- MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY.

All these functions were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively in the different corpora. The results of the latter analysis showed that the general function of EVALUATION has the highest frequency of occurrence. As explained in detail in 9.5, if, in the two corpora containing episodes of television

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programmes (GG and YM), the functions taken into account were those intended by their authors for the programmes in their entirety, AMUSEMENT turned out to be more frequent than VERBAL ATTACK. If, on the contrary, the functions taken into account were those intended by the characters in each of the episodes, the function of VERBAL ATTACK was predominant.

Some correlations were found between these three general functions and the type of irony used (Negative, Positive or Neutral), and between these functions and the type of strategies chosen by the ironic speaker (these correlations are illustrated in Figures 9k and 9l in chapter 9). Accordingly, it was concluded that: a) within the Negative type of verbal irony, the three main functions may be fulfilled, b) when a speaker/writer uses Positive irony s/he may fulfil the general functions of EVALUATION and AMUSEMENT but not of VERBAL ATTACK; and c) when a speaker/writer uses Neutral irony the only possible general function to be fulfilled is that of AMUSEMENT.

As regards the seventeen specific functions, the most important in terms of frequency of occurrence were TOPIC CLOSURE, TOPIC CONCLUSION and TOPIC COMMENT. COMPLAINT, TEASING and REPROACH follow in importance.

It was observed that certain functions showed a marked tendency to be fulfilled by either spoken or written discourse. Thus, MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST, TEASING and DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE only presented occurrences within the spoken corpora. Conversely, COMPLAINT

showed a very high frequency of occurrence in the two written corpora. It was also noticed that these tendencies have to do with the genre or discourse type used in the different corpora used for the analysis. In effect, the results of the chi-squared test showed that the frequencies of occurrence of the different general and specific functions of verbal irony are different for the different discourse types analysed (Research Hypothesis n° 13, Appendix 4). Thus, the discourse functions of verbal irony can be said to depend upon two main factors: a) the type of irony used (Positive, Negative and Neutral) and, therefore, the attitude of the speaker; and b) the type of discourse used.

I believe the analysis of verbal irony made in this study is a rather thorough and complete one. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates that the phenomenon in question can be characterised in terms of the pragmatic strategies and discourse functions used by the speakers or users of the language. This approach intends to provide a more complete picture of the topic than that provided by previous theoretical analyses. For this reason, and in view of the results obtained after testing the thirteen Research Hypotheses, it seems reasonable to accept the Main Hypothesis presented in the introductory chapter:

> <<Verbal irony is a complex phenomenon, which cannot be
> explained in its totality by means of the existing
> theories. Its very essence lies in paradox and
> contradiction (which may be present at different
> levels); and the pragmatic concept of strategy, as well
> as the concept of discourse function, can help in its
> explanation and characterisation.>>

Although there are no magical answers to the questions that such a complex phenomenon poses, an earnest attempt has been made to satisfy the objectives specified in section 1.3 of this thesis. The original contributions intended for this piece of research have materialised in the following parts of this study:

a) Taxonomy of types of verbal irony based on different theories (Chapter 7);

b) Taxonomy of pragmatic strategies used by ironic speakers/writers (Chapter 8);

c) Inventory of general and specific discourse functions of verbal irony (Chapter 9);

d) Qualitative pragmatic analysis of all the instances of verbal irony found in the corpora, and quantitative analysis of frequencies related to the above taxonomies, as well as to the prosodic features that accompany verbal irony (Chapters 2-9).

In spite of the length of this dissertation, there is still much to be investigated and learnt about verbal irony. It is still a promising land to be conquered. I shall now proceed to suggest what parts of this land can be visited in the future.

10.3 Suggestions for further research

Any piece of research can be expanded and perfected. In this particular study of verbal irony, I believe there are some aspects that could be perfected, some that could be expanded, and some that were not touched on but could and should be touched on in the future. I refer to the following:

- The typology (chapter 7) and taxonomies (chapters 8 and 9)
proposed here could be enlarged and "polished" by means of the
analysis of corpora other than the five corpora used in this
study. It seems reasonable to suppose that the study of new and
different discourse types would shed light on new and different
types, pragmatic strategies or discourse functions of verbal
irony, and that this would, in turn, bring new perspectives on
the topic.

- A more detailed study of the possibilities of combination of
the different pragmatic strategies and discourse functions
studied here could also throw valuable light on the tendencies
of the subject under study.

- It would also be fruitful to dispose of a corpus where all the
prosodic features were marked, in order to be able to investigate
all the variables of this kind which accompany ironic utterances.
As was specified in chapter 6, the corpus used in this study for
the analysis of prosodic features (LLC) gave no indication of
such features as nasalisation or breathy voice (which, according
to Tannen (1984), can be irony markers).

- Scope exists for a more detailed and careful analysis of the
influence of the sociological variables P, D and R (chapter 5,
5.5). This paper comprises a rather brief and largely
qualitative analysis. In a more detailed analysis,
more important and accurate correlations would perhaps be
obtained between the strategies used and the sociological
variables affecting them.

— The development of a computational model of verbal irony is a future objective of considerable importance. I believe the data and results obtained in this study may serve as a basis for a future modelling of the phenomenon. There has been an attempt by Littman & Mey (1991) to model *situational* irony, in which they propose the following question as a criterion for judging whether any proposed theory of irony is viable: "Could that theory be used as a basis for a computer program that reasons about irony? (1991: 131). Also, according to these authors, a computational theory must give a description of the following three tasks that is explicit enough for a computer to be programmed to perform them: 1) Distinguish irony from non-irony; 2) describe why a situation is ironic or not; and 3) generate descriptions of ironic situations. In the case of *verbal* irony, we should substitute the word *utterance* or *contribution* for *situations*. These tasks have been partially addressed in this study, yet the characterisation provided here falls way short of the one necessary for a computer model. The very essence of verbal irony makes it difficult for the researcher to obtain clear-cut definitions and differentiations. The door is open, however, to further and newer proposals.

10.4 Concluding remark

This study of verbal irony is in no way definitive nor

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exhaustive. I am conscious of the fact that many questions remain unanswered, and that, in spite of my attempts to characterise the phenomenon, it continues to be a mystery in many respects. But this is why, in my opinion, it is also fascinating. Irony is not only a topic of linguistic interest; it is also a philosophical problem, because *life, in itself, is ironic.* To study irony, therefore, may be very rewarding, for it may help us discover -or at least caress for a brief period of time- some of the mysteries of life.

To conclude, I would like to quote D. J. Enright once more:

> <<... Irony itself often ends with three dots. And at times begins its reverberations therewith.>>
> (1988: 164).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1a: DATA BASE FOR SURVEY IN CHAPTER 6

Examples ↓	TONE				Stress	Pitch	Laughter	Silence
	Fall	Rise	Fallrise	Risefall				
1	X				X	X	X	
2				X	X	X		
3			X		X	X		
4	X				X	X		
5		X				X	X	
6	X				X		X	
7			X		X			
8	X				X	X	X	
9	X				X			
10			X		X	X	X	
11			X		X	X	X	
12				X	X		X	
13			X		X	X	X	
14				X	X	X	X	
15			X		X	X		
16	X				X	X		
17			X		X	X	X	
18			X		X	X	X	
19			X		X	X	X	
20	X				X	X	X	
21			X		X	X		
22		X			X	X	X	
23	X				X	X		
24	X				X	X	X	
25			X		X	X	X	
26		X			X			
27	X				X		X	
28			X		X		X	
29	X				X	X	X	
30			X		X	X		

Examples ↓	Fall	Rise	Fall rise	Rise fall	Stress	Pitch	Laughter	Silence
31			X		X	X	X	
32				X	X	X		
33				X	X	X		
34	X				X	X		
35	X				X			
36			X		X	X	X	
37			X		X			
38	X				X		X	
39			X					
40			X					
41	X				X	X		
42	X					X	X	
43		X			X		X	
44	X				X			
45	X				X	X		
46	X				X	X		
47	X				X	X	X	
48	X				X			
49	X				X	X	X	
50			X		X	X	X	
51	X				X	X	X	
52	X				X	X	X	
53			X			X	X	
54			X		X	X	X	
55	X				X	X	X	X
56	X				X	X	X	
57	X				X	X	X	
58				X	X		X	
59	X				X	X	X	
60	X				X	X	X	X

Examples ↓	Fall	Rise	Fall rise	Rise fall	Stress	Pitch	Laughter	Silence
61	X					X		
62	X				X	X		
63	X					X	X	
64	X					X		
65		X				X		
66	X							
67			X		X	X	X	
68			X		X	X	X	
69			X		X	X	X	
70	X					X	X	
71		X				X		
72	X					X	X	
73		X				X		
74	X				X	X	X	
75			X		X	X	X	
76	X						X	
77			X					
78	X				X		X	
79	X				X	X		
80			X		X	X		
81			X		X			
82	X				X			
83			X		X	X		
84			X		X			
85	X					X	X	
86			X		X	X		X

APPENDIX 1b

POSSIBLE STATISTICAL COMBINATIONS OF THE PROSODIC FEATURES
STUDIED IN CHAPTER 6: ACCOUNT OF OCCURRANCES OF EACH COMBINATION
AND MOST FREQUENT COMBINATIONS FOUND IN THE IRONIC EXAMPLES
ANALYSED IN THE LLC

1- TONE (only)   Number of occurrences in the corpus

a) Fall   1
b) Rise   1
c) Fall-rise   3
d) Rise-fall   0

2- FALL + other prosodic features

a) Fall + Stress   5
b) Fall + Pitch   2
c) Fall + Laughter   1
d) Fall + Silence   0
e) Fall + Stress + Pitch   9
f) Fall + Stress + Laughter   4
g) Fall + Stress + Silence   0
h) Fall + Pitch + Laughter   5
i) Fall + Pitch + Silence   0
j) Fall + Laughter + Silence   0
k) Fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter   13
l) Fall + Stress + Pitch + Silence   0
m) Fall + Stress + Laughter + Silence   0
n) Fall + Pitch + Laughter + Silence   0
o) Fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence   2

3- RISE + other prosodic features

a) Rise + Stress   1
b) Rise + Pitch   3
c) Rise + Laughter   0
d) Rise + Silence   0
e) Rise + Stress + Pitch   0
f) Rise + Stress + Laughter   1
g) Rise + Stress + Silence   0
h) Rise + Pitch + Laughter   1
i) Rise + Pitch + Silence   0

595

j) Rise + Laughter + Silence   0
k) Rise + Stress + Pitch + Laughter   1
l) Rise + Stress + Pitch + Silence   0
m) Rise + Stress + Laughter + Silence   0
n) Rise + Pitch + Laughter + Silence   0
o) Rise + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence   0

4- FALL-RISE + other prosodic features

a) FR + Stress   4
b) FR + Pitch   0
c) FR + Laughter   0
d) FR + Silence   0
e) FR + Stress + Pitch   6
f) FR + Stress + Laughter   1
g) FR + Stress + Silence   0
h) FR + Pitch + Laughter   1
i) FR + Pitch + Silence   0
j) FR + Laughter + Silence   0
k) FR + Stress + Pitch + Laughter   15
l) FR + Stress + Pitch + Silence   1
m) FR + Stress + Laughter + Silence   0
n) FR + Pitch + Laughter + Silence   0
o) FR + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence   0

5- RISE-FALL + other prosodic features

a) RF + Stress   0
b) RF + Pitch   0
c) RF + Laughter   0
d) RF + Silence   0
e) RF + Stress + Pitch   3
f) RF + Stress + Laughter   2
g) RF + Stress + Silence   0
h) RF + Pitch + Laughter   0
i) RF + Pitch + silence   0
j) RF + Laughter + Silence   1
k) RF + Stress + Pitch + Laughter   1
l) RF + Stress + Pitch + Silence   0
m) RF + Stress + Laughter + Silence   0
n) RF + Pitch + Laughter + Silence   0
o) RF + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence   0

ORDINAL SCALE - COMBINATIONS FOUND (from most frequent to least
frequent)

1- Fall-Rise + Stress + Pitch + Laughter
2- Fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter
3- Fall + Stress + Pitch
4- Fall-rise + Stress + Pitch
5- Fall + Stress
6- Fall + Pitch + Laughter
7- Fall + Stress + Laughter
8- Fall-rise + Stress
9- Rise + Pitch
10- Fall-rise
11- Rise-fall + Stress + Pitch
12- Fall + Pitch
13- Fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter + Silence
14- Rise-fall + Stress + Laughter
15- Rise + Stress + Pitch + Laughter
16- Rise + Pitch + Laughter
17- Rise + Stress + Laughter
18- Rise + Stress
19- Fall-rise + Stress + Pitch + Silence
20- Fall-rise + Pitch + Laughter
21- Fall-rise + Stress + Laughter
22- Fall + Laughter
23- Fall
24- Rise-fall + Stress + Pitch + Laughter

APPENDIX 2a: DATA BASE FOR SURVEY IN CHAPTER 8 (STRATEGIES)

REFERENCES:

LLC: LONDON LUND CORPUS   GG: "THE GOLDEN GIRLS" CORPUS
YH: "YES, MINISTER" CORPUS   BR: "RUSSELL'S BEST" CORPUS
NA: CORPUS CONTAINING NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

A: NEGATIVE IRONY STRATEGIES

A1: USE THE OPPOSITE PROPOSITION TO THE LITERAL ONE OF YOUR UTTERANCE
A2: USE A PROPOSITION WHICH IS CONTRARY TO GENERAL BELIEF, BUT NOT CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU MEAN
A3: USE A PROPOSITION YOU CONSIDER TO BE TRUE BUT WHICH IS OPPOSITE TO THE ONE CONSIDERED TO BE TRUE BY THE HEARER
A4: SHOW IN YOUR UTTERANCE THAT YOU HAVE INTERPRETED YOUR INTERLOCUTOR'S STATEMENT AS HAVING AN OPPOSITE MEANING
A5: USE FORMAL LANGUAGE AND AFFECTED VOCABULARY WHEN IT IS NOT APPARENTLY REQUIRED BY THE SITUATION OR CONTEXT
A6: USE WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS THAT HAVE A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT (THOUGH NOT OPPOSITE) MEANING TO THE ONE CONVEYED
A7: USE PUNS: MAKE THE HEARER RETRIEVE TWO MENTAL FRAMES - A8: USE SUFFIXES THAT INDICATE A CERTAIN DEGREE OF DERISION
A9: CHANGE THE NAME OF SOMEBODY (NICKNAME) OR SOMETHING DELIBERATELY - A10: USE CONTRADICTORY SPEECH ACTS
A11: ECHO SOMEONE'S THOUGHT, UTTERANCE OR IDEA - A12: PRETEND, SIMULATE - A13: USE RHETORICAL QUESTIONS
A14: GIVE UNEXPECTED ANSWERS - A15: JOKE, BE HUMOROUS - A16: AVOID THE LOWER POINTS OF A CRITICISM
A17: GIVE HINTS AND/OR ASSOCIATION CLUES - A18: USE METAPHORS - A19: USE EUPHEMISMS
A20: DISPLACE THE HEARER - A21: SAY WHAT SOMETHING OR SOMEBODY IS NOT - A22: BE INCOMPLETE, USE ELLIPSIS
A23: USE TAUTOLOGIES - A24: SAY LESS THAN REQUIRED OR EXPECTED, UNDERSTATE - A25: OVERSTATE, EXAGGERATE
A26: APPEND AN UNEXPECTED AFTERTHOUGHT OR AFTERCOMMENT TO YOUR UTTERANCE OR TO THAT OF YOUR INTERLOCUTOR
A27: HANDLE BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MEANINGS IN THE SAME UTTERANCE OR CONTRIBUTION
A28: MAKE USE OF INVERTED COMMAS, BOLD TYPE, ITALIZATION, PUNCTUATION MARKS, ETC. TO SIGNAL CERTAIN KEY TERMS OR EXPRESSIONS IN WRITTEN DISCOURSE
A29: MAKE USE OF SOME PROSODIC FEATURES SUCH AS STRESS, HIGH PITCH, INTONATION, LAUGHTER, PAUSES, ETC. (IN SPOKEN LANGUAGE)
A30: USE CONVENTIONALISED VERBAL IRONY - A31: MAKE USE OF IMPLICATURE-FREE VERBAL IRONY

B: POSITIVE IRONY STRATEGIES

B1: USE THE OPPOSITE PROPOSITION TO THE LITERAL ONE OF YOUR UTTERANCE - B2: SAY LESS THAN REQUIRED, UNDERSTATE
B3: MAKE USE OF CONVENTIONALISED IRONIC TERMS OR EXPRESSIONS - B4: JOKE
B5: USE CONTRADICTORY SPEECH ACTS - B6: INSULT THE HEARER
B7: ECHO SOMEONE'S THOUGHT, UTTERANCE OR IDEA - B8: OTHER

C: NEUTRAL IRONY STRATEGIES

C1: INCLUDE UNEXPECTED, ABSURD AND CONTRADICTORY ELEMENTS IN YOUR CONTRIBUTION OR UTTERANCE
C2: JOKE   C3: HEDGE   C4: EXAGGERATE, OVERSTATE
C5: USE RHETORICAL QUESTIONS   C6: USE CONTRADICTORY SPEECH ACTS
C7: HANDLE BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MEANINGS IN THE SAME UTTERANCE OR CONTRIBUTION
C8: USE IMPLICATURE-FREE VERBAL IRONY   C9: ECHO SOMEONE'S THOUGHT, UTTERANCE OR IDEA
C10: USE INVERTED COMMAS, ITALICS, ETC. (IN WRITTEN IRONY) - C11: USE NON-CORE VOCABULARY - C12: OTHER.

A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY-LLC

STRATEGIES

EXAMPLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	x								x	x								x							x						
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY-LLC

STRATEGIES

EXAMPLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
27	x																														
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	STRATEGIES																														
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY-LLC																														
	STRATEGIES																														
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86										x														x			x				x

A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG

EXAMPLES	STRATEGIES																														
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG

| | STRATEGIES |

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A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG

STRATEGIES

EXAMPLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
51							x				x													x	x	x					
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EXAMPLES		A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG																													
		STRATEGIES																													
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - YM																														
	STRATEGIES																														
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - YM																														
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - YM																														
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	STRATEGIES																														
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - BR																														
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - NA																														
	STRATEGIES																															
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1	x										x	x																x			
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - NA																														
	STRATEGIES																														
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28	x											x																			
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49	x											x	x																		
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EXAMPLES	A: NEGATIVE VERBAL IRONY - NA																														
	STRATEGIES																														
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53																x					x										x
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	STRATEGIES																														
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79																	X						X								
80											X	X	X	X																	

B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - LLC

STRATEGIES

EXAMPLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - LLC

STRATEGIES

EXAMPLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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	B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - LLC									C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - LLC											
	STRATEGIES									STRATEGIES											
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EXAMPLES

		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG									C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - GG											
		STRATEGIES									STRATEGIES											
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	B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - GG							
	STRATEGIES							
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	C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - GG											
	STRATEGIES											
EXAMPLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - YM								C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - YM											
		STRATEGIES								STRATEGIES											
		1	2	3	4	6	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	6	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - YM									C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - YM											
		STRATEGIES									STRATEGIES											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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	B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY-BR									C:NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY-BR								
E X A M P L E S	STRATEGIES									STRATEGIES								
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		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY-BR										C:NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY-BR											
		STRATEGIES										STRATEGIES											
E X A M P L E S	43																						
	44																						
	45																						
	46																						

625

		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - NA								C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - NA											
		STRATEGIES								STRATEGIES											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
E	1																				
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		B: POSITIVE VERBAL IRONY - NA								C: NEUTRAL VERBAL IRONY - NA											
		STRATEGIES								STRATEGIES											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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APPENDIX 2b: COMBINATIONS OF STRATEGIES FOUND IN THE CORPORA. ACCOUNT OF THEIR NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES

A: NEGATIVE IRONY

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES (OUT OF 351)
A1	10
A1 + A5 + A10	1
A1 + A9 + A10 + A18 + A25	1
A1 + A10	5
A1 + A10 + A11	1
A1 + A10 + A11 + A12	8
A1 + A10 + A12	1
A1 + A11	11
A1 + A11 + A12	19
A1 + A11 + A12 + A27	2
A1 + A11 + A12 + A28	1
A1 + A11 + A16	1
A1 + A11 + A17	1
A1 + A11 + A24	1
A1 + A12	4
A1 + A12 + A13	2
A1 + A12 + A16	2
A1 + A12 + A30	1
A1 + A13	1
A1 + A16	3
A1 + A18	1
A1 + A27	1

629

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
A1 + A28	1
A1 + A30	2
A2	2
A3 + A10 + A13	1
A4 + A31	1
A5 + A10	1
A5 + A11 + A12	2
A5 + A11 + A12 + A17	1
A5 + A11 + A31	1
A5 + A12 + A31	1
A5 + A16	1
A5 + A25 + A31	1
A5 + A27	1
A6	1
A6 + A10 + A16	1
A6 + A11 + A16	1
A6 +A14	1
A6 + A16	3
A6 + A16 + A31	1
A6 + A24	1
A7 + A10	1
A7 + A10 + A13	1
A7 + A11 + A24 + A25 + A26	1
A7 + A12 + A15	1
A7 + A12 + A28	1

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
A7 + A16	1
A8 + A16 + A31	1
A9	1
A9 + A11+ A17	1
A9 + A11 + A27 + A31	1
A9 + A12	1
A10	6
A10 + A11 + A12	1
A10 + A11 + A12 + A13	2
A10 + A11 + A12 + A15	2
A10 + A11 + A12 + A15 + A31	1
A10 + A11 + A13	1
A10 + A11 + A15	1
A10 + A12	1
A10 + A12 + A16 + A26	1
A10 + A12 + A17 + A20	1
A10 + A12 + A25	1
A10 + A12 + A31	1
A10 + A13	9
A10 + A13 + A17	1
A10 + A13 + A18	1
A10 + A13 + A25	2
A10 + A15	1
A10 + A16	1
A10 + A16 + A21	1

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
A10 + A16 + A31	1
A10 + A17	3
A10 + A24 + A27 + A31	1
A10 + A25	1
A11	6
A11 + A12	5
A11 + A12 + A13 + A14	1
A11 + A12 + A19	1
A11 + A12 + A25	2
A11 + A13	1
A11 + A14 + A24	1
A11 + A16	3
A11 + A16 + A24	1
A11 + A16 + A26	1
A11 + A16 + A28	1
A11 + A16 + A31	2
A11 + A17	2
A11 + A17 + A28	1
A11 + A18	1
A11 + A18 + A26	1
A11 + A24	1
A11 + A25	1
A11 + A26	1
A11 + A27 + A28	1
A11 + A28	5

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
A11 + A30	1
A11 + A31	4
A12	6
A12 + A13	1
A12 + A15	1
A12 + A15 + A25	1
A12 + A18	1
A12 + A25	1
A12 + A27	2
A12 + A28	3
A12 + A30	2
A12 + A31	2
A13 + A25 + A30	1
A13 + A26	1
A14	1
A15 + A17 + A26	1
A16	10
A16 + A21	1
A16 + A17 + A30	1
A16 +A18	1
A16 + A21 + A31	1
A16 + A24	3
A16 + A26 + A31	1
A16 + A31	1
A17	16

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
A17 + A21	1
A17 + A24	2
A17 + A26	2
A17 + A27	1
A17 + A31	2
A18	5
A18 + A25	1
A19	3
A20	1
A22 + A24	1
A22 + A26	1
A24	4
A24 + A26	3
A25	7
A25 + A26	1
A25 + A27	1
A26	4
A26 + A31	3
A27	4
A27 + A31	4
A30	10
A31	7

B: POSITIVE IRONY

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
B2	1
B2 + B4 + B5	1

C: NEUTRAL IRONY

COMBINATIONS	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
C1 + C7	1
C1 + C7 + C8 + C9	1
C1 + C8	1
C2 + C3	1
C5 + C6	1
C7 + C8	1

MOST FREQUENT COMBINATIONS FOUND (FROM MOST TO LEAST FREQUENT)

COMBINATION	Nº OF OCCURRENCES
1- A1 + A11 + A12	19
2- A17	16
3- A1 + A11	11
4- A1	10
5- A16	10
6- A30	10
7- A10 + A13	9
8- A1 + A10 + A11 + A12	8
9- A25	7
10- A31	7
11- A10	6
12- A11	6
13- A11 + A12	5
14- A11 + A28	5
15- A18	5

APPENDIX 3: DATA BASE FOR SURVEY IN CHAPTER 9 (FUNCTIONS)

GENERAL FUNCTIONS

1- VERBAL ATTACK

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-10-11-13-15-17-18-19-20-22-23-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-35-36-39-40-41-42-43-44-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-61-62-64-65-66-67-68-71-72-73-79-80-82-84-85-86.
GG	1-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-19-20-21-23-24-26-27-28-29-31-32-33-34-35-36-38-39-40-41-42-43-46-47-48-49-50-51-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-67-68-69-70-71-72-77-80-81-82-83-84.
YM	1-3-4-5-6-9-10-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-25-26-27-28-29-33-37-38-40-41-43-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-54.
BR	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-45-46.
NA	1-5-6-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-18-19-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-80.

2) AMUSEMENT

A) Considering the functions as intended by the authors of the episodes in GG and YM

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	8-10-11-15-17-18-19-20-22-24-28-29-31-50-52-53-54-56-58-59-60-62-63-64-67-68-69-70-71-72-76-85.
GG	All (from 1 to 84)
YM	All (from 1 to 55)
BR	32-38.
NA	2-3-4-7-8-17-18-20-32-33-36-37-38-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-58-59-78.

B) *Considering the functions as intended by the characters of the episodes in GG and YM*

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	8-10-11-15-17-18-19-20-22-24-28-29-31-50-52-53-54-56-58-59-60-62-63-64-67-68-69-70-71-72-76-85.
GG	15-30-37-31-73-74-75.
YM	30.
BR	32-38.
NA	2-3-4-7-8-17-18-20-32-33-36-37-38-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-58-59-78.

3) EVALUATION

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-7374-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86.
GG	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84.
YM	1-3-4-5-6-8-9-10-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55.
BR	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46.
NA	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80.

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SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS

1- TOPIC CLOSURE

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	6-28-36-57-65-66.
GG	3-4-6-10-17-18-19-26-28-30-3133-34-40-46-47-48-53-55-56-59-61-64-65-66-67-71-76-77-81-82-83.
YM	1-3-5-6-8-9-10-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-20-21-22-23-24-27-35-36-37-41-44-46-51.
BR	1-2-3-4-7-8-9-11-13-15-16-17-18-21-22-25-28-30-32-33-37-39-40-41-43-45.
NA	1-3-5-8-11-15-18-22-24-35-39-42-50-54-55-60-62-68-70-74-77.

2) TOPIC CONCLUSION

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	19-23-26-27-32-33-47-48-49-55.
GG	7-18-20-38-39-41-45-49-50-51-58-60-61-69-71-80-83.
YM	4-7-8-9-11-19-20-25-48-53-55-
BR	4-7-8-11-12-13-14-21-22-23-25-27-28-29-30-31-33-34-35-37-38-39-40-41.
NA	4-5-7-11-21-35-39-49-51-64-67-68-71-78-80.

3) TOPIC SHIFT

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	12-24-34-58-86.
GG	none
YM	49
BR	none
NA	none

4) TOPIC COMMENT

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	none .
GG	78-79-84.
YM	39-42-45-47-52-54.
BR	5-6-10-15-19-20-24-26-30-34-35-36-42-44-46.
NA	10-13-16-17-20-26-28-29-31-34-36-43-44-46-47-48-52-53-56-62-66-69-73-75-76-79.

5) TOPIC INTRODUCTION

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	none
GG	none
YM	31.
BR	none
NA	12-19-23-25-27-30-40-41-61-72.

6) RAPPORT BUILDING

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	1-4-5-9-12-16-61-63-81.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	none
NA	64.

7) GENERATION OF FURTHER IRONIC-HUMOROUS TALK

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	4-16-31-61.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	none
NA	2-9.

8) PRESENTATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT ONESELF

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	14-38-74-81.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	32.
NA	none

9) CLARIFICATION OR ILLUSTRATION OF A POINT

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	44-45-51.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	36.
NA	6-65.

10) MANIFESTATION OF DISBELIEF OR DISTRUST

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	37-83.
GG	24-35
YM	13.
BR	none
NA	none

11) MANIFESTATION OF POWER

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	39-40-41-42-43.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	none
NA	none

12) TEASING

CORPORA	E X A M P L E S
LLC	58-59-60-62.
GG	21-22-23-24-26-27-28-30-35-36-37-42-44-46-52-57-68-70.
YM	2-15-22.
BR	none
NA	none

13) COMPLAINT

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	75-77.
GG	2-54.
YM	none
BR	1-2-4-5-6-8-9-11-12-13-14-15-23-24-26-29-36-37-39-40-41-46.
NA	14-15-16-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-42-43-57-75-76-77.

14) REPROACH

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	7.
GG	4-10-12-29-32-45-72.
YM	3-25-26-28-29-38.
BR	5-6-12
NA	none

15) DISRUPTION OF THE PREVAILING TURN-TAKING STRUCTURE

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	63
GG	13-17-19-20-25-69-74.
YM	none
BR	none
NA	none

16) *INTENTION OF OUTDOING ONE'S PARTNER'S WIT OR INTELLIGENCE*

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	none
GG	none
YM	31-32-34-37-40-43-50.
BR	none
NA	none

17) *MANIFESTATION OF ADMIRATION OR RESPECT FOR THE ADDRESSEE OR A THIRD PARTY*

CORPORA	EXAMPLES
LLC	1.
GG	none
YM	none
BR	none
NA	64

APPENDIX 4: STATISTICAL TESTS USED TO TEST THE DIFFERENT HYPOTHESES IN THIS STUDY

Research Hypothesis Nº 1: *When being ironic, a speaker/writer does not always mean the opposite of the proposition expressed by the literal meaning of his/her utterance. Even more, the frequency of occurrence of the non proposition-oriented (non p.o.) cases of verbal irony is greater than that of the proposition-oriented ones (p.o.).*

Median test

Corpora (Number of occurrences)									
London Lund Corpus		Golden Girls		Yes Minister		Bertrand Russell		Newspaper Articles	
p.o.	non p.o.	p.o.	non p.o.	p.o.	non p.o.	p.o.	non p.o.	p.o.	non p.o.
16	70	16	68	16	39	16	30	20	60

- Position of the median = $(N + 1)/2 = 5,5$
- Median = 25
- Number of occurrences over and under the median: 2x2 table

$$70-68-60-39-30-20-16-16-16-16$$

	p.o.	non - p.o.	row total
over the median	0 (2,5)	5 (2,5)	5
under the median	5 (2,5)	0 (2,5)	5
column total	5	5	10

Obtained $X^2 = 10 >$ Table $X^2 = 6,635$ for $p = 0,01$ and d.f. = 1
Where: p =   significance level
    d.f. = degrees of freedom

<u>Conclusion</u>:   *The research hypothesis is accepted*

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Research Hypothesis Nº 2: Verbal irony can be conveyed not only through conversational implicature, but also through conventional implicature. There exists a type of irony that can be said to be "implicature-free" and one that can be said to be "conventionalised" (in which the implicature has been short-circuited).

Derived sub-hypothesis 2a: There are significant differences in the frequencies of occurrence of the conversational, conventionalised and implicature-free types of verbal irony.

Chi squared test

	Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)					
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row Total
Conversational	74,4 (77,74)	77,4 (77,74)	72,7 (77,74)	80,4 (77,74)	83,8 (77,74)	388,7
Conventionalised	0 (4,34)	15,5 (4,34)	1,8 (4,34)	4,4 (4,34)	0 (4,34)	21,7
Implicature free	25,6 (17,92)	7,1 (17,92)	25,5 (17,92)	15,2 (17,92)	16,2 (17,92)	89,6
Column total	100	100	100	100	100	500

Obtained X^2 = 53,510 > Table X^2 = 20,090 for p = 0,01
and d.f. = 8

Where: p   = significance level
d.f. = degrees of freedom

<u>*Conclusion:*</u>   *The research hypothesis (2a) is accepted*

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Research hypothesis Nº 3: Verbal irony manifests itself not only at the propositional level but also at the illocutionary level of the speech ace, and it can even be manifested through declarative (performative) speech acts. There is, therefore, a speech act-oriented type of verbal irony.

Derived sub-hypothesis 3a: The frequency of occurrence of the speech act-oriented instances of ironic discourse is different for the spoken and written copora. Speech act-oriented irony is more frequent in the spoken corpora than in the written one.

Chi squared test

	Spoken Corpora	Written Corpora	Row total
Speech act-oriented	68 (53,21)	15 (29,79)	83
Non speech act-oriented	157 (171,79)	111 (96,21)	268
Column total	225	126	351

Obtained $X^2 = 15.001 > X^2 = 6,635$ for $p = 0,01$ and d.f. = 1

Where: p = significance level
d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis (3a) is accepted

Research hypothesis Nº 4: *Not all ironic utterances are instances of echoic mention or interpretation. There is an echoic and a non-echoic type of verbal irony. The frequency of occurrence of the echoic instances of ironic discourse is different for the spoken and written corpora. Echoic irony is more frequent in the written corpora and non echoic irony is more frequent in the spoken one.*

Chi squared test

	Spoken corpora	*Written corpora*	*Row total*
Echoic	*50 (78,8)*	*73 (44,2)*	*123*
Non - echoic	*175 (146,2)*	*53 (81,8)*	*228*
Column total	*225*	*126*	*351*

Obtained X^2 = 45,105 > Table X^2 = 6,681 for p = 0,01 and d.f. = 1

Where: *p = significance level*
d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: *The research hypothesis is accepted*

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Research hypothesis № 5: *Not all instances of ironic discourse convey a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker/writer. The Negative type of verbal irony does convey such an attitude, but there are also two other main kinds of irony, namely, Positive and Neutral, in which the attitude of the user of irony is not derogatory at all.*

Derived sub-hypothesis 5a: There are significant differences in the frequency of occurrence of the Negative, Positive and Neutral kinds of irony, the Positive and Neutral kinds being much lower in frequency than the negative one.

Kruskal - Wallis test

Corpora	Kinds of irony					
	Positive		Negative		Neutral	
	N⁰ of occ.	Range (Ri)	N⁰ of occ.	Range (Ri)	N⁰ of occ.	Range (Ri)
London Lund Corpus	1	6	84	15	1	6
Golden Girls	0	2	83	14	1	6
Yes Minister	0	2	50	12	5	10
Bertrand Russell	0	2	45	11	1	6
Newspaper Articles	1	6	77	13	2	9

Obtained H = 11,180 > Table X² = 9,210 for p = 0,01 and d.f. = 2
Where: *p*   *= significance level*
          d.f. = degrees of freedom

$$H = \frac{12}{N} \ (N+1) \ [\frac{(\sum R_i)^2}{n}] \ -3 \ (N + 1)$$

N = total number of cases
n = number of cases in each sample

<u>*Conclusion:*</u>   *The research hypothesis (5a) is accepted*

Research hypothesis Nº 6: Not all ironic utterances are instances of pretence. Even more, the frequency of occurrence of the non-pretence instances of verbal irony is higher than the frequency of occurrence of the pretence ones.

Chi squared test

	Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)					
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row total
Pretence	12 (21,3)	15 (20,08)	22 (13,6)	14 (11,4)	24 (19,8)	87
Non pretence	74 (64,7)	69 (63,2)	33 (41,4)	32 (34,6)	56 (60,2)	264
Column total	86	84	55	46	80	351

Obtained $X^2 = 16,412 >$ Table $X^2 = 13,277$ for $p = 0,01$ and d.f. = 4

Where: p   = significance level
          d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis is accepted

Research hypothesis Nº 8: An ironic speaker/writer can make use not only of off record strategies but also of on record ones to make his point. The frequencies of occurrence of the on record and off record strategies of verbal irony are similar in all of the copora, the off record ones being higher than the on-record ones.

<u>Chi squared test</u>

	Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)					
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row total
On record	22 (19,1)	19 (18,7)	15 (12,2)	9 (10,2)	13 (17,8)	78
Off record	64 (66,9)	65 (65,3)	40 (42,8)	37 (35,8)	67 (62,2)	273
Column total	86	84	55	46	80	351

Obtained X^2 = 3,244 > X^2 Tables = 9,488 for p = 0,01
and d.f. = 4

Where: p = significance level
d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis is accepted

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Research hypothesis № 11: The frequency of use of the different tones within ironic discourse is different from the frequency of use of these tones within non-ironic discourse.

Chi squared test

	Tones (Observed and expected frequencies)					
	Fall-rise	Rise	Fall	Rise-fall	Level	Row Total
Ironic utterances	48,8 (52,7)	8,2 (12,95)	36 (27)	7 (5)	0 (2,35)	100
Non-ironic utterances	56,6 (52,7)	17,7 (12,95)	18 (27)	3 (5)	4,7 (2,35)	100
Column total	105,4	25,9	54	10	4,7	200

Obtained X^2 = 16,362 > Table X^2 = 13,277 for p = 0,01
    and d.f. = 4

Where: p   = significance level
          d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis is accepted

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<u>*Research hypothesis Nº 12:*</u>   *Verbal irony is a super-strategy which is subdivided in three main kinds (Positive, Negative and Neutral), shich in turn can be carried out by using different pragmatic sub-strategies such as "joke", "use the opposite proposition to the one intended", "use a different speech act from the one intended", "echo someone's previous utterance or thought", etc.*

Derived sub-hypothesis 12a: There are significant differences i. the frequencies of ocurrence of the 31 subtrategies of Negative" irony in the different corpora studied.

Application of the <u>Chi squared-test</u> to table 8.7. (p.446-7):

Obtained $\chi^2 = 286,76 >$ table $\chi^2 = 154,51$ for $p = 0,01$ and. d.f.= 116

Where:

$$\chi^2 = \Sigma(f_o - f_e)^2 \ f_e$$

$F_o =$ observed frequencies
$F_e =$ expected frequencies
$p =$ significance level
d.f.=degrees of freedom = (30-1) (5-1)= 116

<u>*Conclusion:*</u> *The research hypothesis is accepted.*

<u>Note:</u> *In performed calculations, all the cells with small expected valu. have an observed frequency very similar to the expected, and th. contribute relatively little to the value of the χ^2. It is unlikely th. the value of the χ^2 has been seriously distorted, and the result of t. test can be accepted.*

(*) In the case of Positive and Neutral irony, the statistical analys. does not make sense because the number of occurrences of each of t. substrategies in the different corpora is very small (≤ 2).

Research hypothesis Nº 13: Speakers/writers of English use verbal irony in order to fulfill the main functions of EVALUATION, VERBAL ATTACK and /or AMUSEMENT. Other more specific functions may be fulfilled at the same time, such as TOPIC CLOSURE, TOPIC CONCLUSION, REPROACH, COMPLAINT, etc..

Derived sub-hypothesis 13a: The frequencies of occurrence of the different general functions of verbal irony are different for the different discourse types analysed.

Chi squared test (authors)

	Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)					
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row total
VERBAL ATTACK	72,09 (64,81)	0 (31,14)	0 (31,14)	95,65 (61,60)	87,50 (66,56)	255,24
AMUSEMENT	37,21 (68,64)	100 (32,98)	100 (32,98)	4,35 (65,24)	28,75 (70,49)	270,31
EVALUATION	98,84 (74,69)	0 (5,89)	0 (35,89)	97,83 (70,99)	97,50 (76,71)	294,17
Column total	208,14	100	100	197,83	213,75	819,72

Obtained X^2 = 552,5 > Tables X^2 = 20,090 for p = 0,01
        and d.f. = 84

Where: p   = significance level
          d.f. = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis (13a) is accepted

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Chi squared test (characters)

	Corpora (observed and expected frequencies)					
	London Lund Corpus	Golden Girls	Yes Minister	Bertrand Russell	Newspaper Articles	Row Total
Verbal attack	72,09 (86,32)	77,38 (76,52)	67,27 (66,36)	95,65 (82,04)	87,50 (88,65)	399,89
Amusement	37,21 (17,37)	8,33 (15,40)	1,82 (13,35)	4,35 (16,51)	28,75 (17,84)	80,46
Evaluation	98,84 (104,45)	98,80 (92,59)	90,91 (80,29)	97,83 (99,28)	97,50 (107,27)	483,88
Column total	208,14	184,51	160,00	197,83	213,75	964,23

Obtained $X^2 = 552,5 >$ Tables $X^2 = 20,090$ for $p = 0,01$
and $d.f. = 84$

Where: p = significance level
$d.f.$ = degrees of freedom

Conclusion: The research hypothesis (13a) is accepted

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Derived sub-hypothesis 13b: The frequencies of occurrence of the different specific functions of verbal irony are different for the written and spoken corpora.

<u>*Kruskal - Wallis test*</u>

Corpora	CORPORA			
	Spoken		Written	
	Nº of occ.	Range (Ri)	Nº of occ.	Range (Ri)
1	65	34	47	33
2	38	29,5	39	31
3	6	21	0	3,5
4	9	24,5	41	32
5	1	9	10	26
6	9	24,5	1	9
7	4	17	2	12
8	4	17	1	9
9	3	14	3	14
10	5	19,5	0	3,5
11	5	19,5	0	3,5
12	25	28	0	3,5
13	4	17	38	29,5
14	14	27	3	14
15	8	23	0	3,5
16	7	22	0	3,5
17	1	9	1	9

Obtained H = 3,99 > Table X^2 = 3,841 for p = 0,01 and d.f. = 1
Where: p   = significance level
*   d.f. = degrees of freedom*

$$H = \frac{12}{N} \ (N{+}1) \ [\frac{(\sum R_i)^2}{n}] \ -3 \ (N+1)$$

N = total number of cases
n = number of cases in each sample

<u>*Conclusion:*</u>   *The research hypothesis (13b) is accepted*

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ABRIR TOMO II ▶