

The Connection of Pragmatics with Stylistics

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Annotation. This article discusses pragmatics and stylistics which are one of the significant branches of linguistics. It studies the connections of pragmatics with stylistics. Furthermore, it finds out some essential aspects of the branches with examples in English and Uzbek.

Key words: pragmatics, stylistics, context, metaphor, psycholinguists, connection.

Main part

Pragmatics is closely connected also with stylistic devices as metaphor and irony. Metaphor is too wide an area to discuss fully in a context such as this: its bibliography extends from Aristotle. But despite all the attention, metaphor remains challengingly enigmatic. None of the theories proposed to explain metaphor is wholly satisfactory. This may be because it is rooted in the workings of the human mind; we need more evidence from psycholinguists before any just assessment can be made.

Metaphor was once defined as saying one thing and meaning another. This view has long since been dismissed, as linguists and philosophers have taken an increasing interest in it. Much remains to be discovered: the proliferation of metaphor in everyday language suggests that it is deeply rooted in the human mind.

It is prevalent in all discourse types; there is a sheer ludic element here: we enjoy it. Metaphor is very common, yet also elusive. It sometimes requires a context to tell us whether an utterance is to be interpreted metaphorically or literally: He is a hawk, overheard at a bus stop, does not tell us whether it is a reference to a bellicose politician, and hence tritely metaphorical, or to a part taken in a play, in which case it is literal. One way of identifying some metaphors is the use of the word literally. [3, 238] An example from a catalogue description of a crystal bowl: on its own it's magnificent, but when we added ice nuggets we were literally stunned. The whole effect is one of living light.

Metaphor is a scalar phenomenon: there are dead metaphors in common use ('a dead duck'), which requires no special interpretive effort, through fairly conventional metaphors, to the original creations of speakers or writers. It is possible to revive dead metaphors through appropriate contextual buttressing. In *The Inheritors* Golding describes the thought processes of a group of Neanderthal people, who are on the verge of possessing language. They perceive nature as animate, and themselves as part of it. For them, a puddle of water lay across the path is literal. For example in Uzbek: *Hademay, ularning safari qaridi. Daryo oqar, vaqt oqar, umr oqar paydar-pay. boshimdan kaptarlardek uchdi ming-minglab hayol. Gullar go'yo etishar ta'zim.*

Metaphor poses the question: why don't we say what we mean when the language allows it? It does not always allow it, of course – Sterne had a lively awareness of the use of metaphor: my uncle Toby fell in love: – Not that the phrase is at all to my liking: for to say a man is fallen in love, – or that he is deeply in love, – or up to the ears in love, – and sometimes even over head and ears in it, – carries an idiomatic kind of implication, that love is a thing below

a man . . .

It is difficult to find another way of expressing coming into the state of loving in English; Chaucer uses a comparable metaphor, though predictably it is more elegant to suggest the encompassing nature of love: ye lovers, that bathed in gladnesse . . . shows that these metaphors are still common in English.

The language does not seem to allow us to talk about falling in love without using a metaphor. Metaphor has always been one way of extending the lexicon.

Cooper notes that we use language for purposes other than communicating beliefs. Therefore, given the prevalence of metaphor, we must assume that it is not a perverse use of language, as, he suggests, the use of archaisms. It is part of everyday conversation, and should be explained in those terms, not as aberrant language use. He is particularly concerned with the social function of metaphor. In addition to the kinds of speech acts that concern linguists, he notes that there are songs, poems and all kinds of literary discourse, whose function is understood by their audience: they are 'not received or judged as if they were information-giving devices, but rather as creations to be evaluated by such criteria as imaginative power, internal balance, and the capacity to evoke moods'. He calls these maverick utterances. He puts metaphor (and other creative uses of language, including in-group language such as army or prison slang) into this category. For example: *Our family rivulet joined other streams and the stream was a river pouring into St. Thomas Church.*

In his view, the principal power of metaphor is to open up new lines of thought, of original thinking. It is a case where the journey is more important than the destination. Another likely motivation for using metaphor is to induce a state of 'relative linguistic virginity'. Seeing the familiar in a new light – or making us see it clearly for the first time – is certainly one of the effects of metaphor (which perhaps helps to explain why poets use metaphor so commonly when discussing trite topics like love); as Waugh observes, 'metaphor creates an image of reality by connecting apparently quite disparate objects'.

Cooper concludes that a prime motivation for using metaphor (and irony) is the cultivation of intimacy. The producer of the metaphor, by doing so, credits his audience with the capacity to understand and appreciate it. This entails shared cultural experiences, the ability to reason analogically, familiarity with the tradition of metaphorical expressions, and so on. By appreciating the metaphor, the audience shows that they are indeed members of this sub-set of the human race. In other words, metaphor is important socially, to foster and maintain bonds. Furthermore, if we are to understand metaphor (and irony) we have to recognize that part of the interpretive process is to identify the attitude of the speaker. Since 'attitude' is hardly something that can enter into the paraphrase of a metaphor, it strongly suggests why metaphor resists paraphrase. For example: *Quruq sovuq. Kech kuzning izg'irin shamoli muzdek tili bilan yigit va qizning yuzini yalaydi.*

In this he is interestingly close to Sperber and Wilson's analysis of poetic effects, and to Blakemore's discussion, which considers the importance of the speaker's judgement about the hearer's resources in formulating an utterance. The cognitive capacities of the audience and our judgement of their encyclopedic knowledge will affect how we express ourselves.

All of this strongly suggests that metaphor is to be included within the realm of politeness phenomena: it anoints our positive face, despite the fact that, initially, the effort required may seem to be a FTA. Thus it has a powerful interpersonal element: it pays us a compliment, stimulates thought, and gives pleasure. [2, 79]

Lakoff and Johnson, Lakoff and Lakoff and Turner develop the view that metaphor is part of the human cognitive system: thus it is fundamental to thought, as well as expression. Their argument is concerned particularly with

those metaphors which suggest how the mind (or perhaps, a language or culture: much research is required before one can assume cross-linguistic validity for their examples, if not for the theory) perceives or shapes reality. Thus they focus particularly on structures where the metaphorical element is carried by, for example, a preposition. Examples of metaphors based on concepts – such as down is bad, while up is good or positive, time is money, death is departure – pervade the language. For example: *Kumushning go'zallik ta'rifini g'oyibona eshitib, og'zini suvi keluvchi hotinli va hotinsiz orzumandalar "yotib qolguncha, otib qol!" so'ziga amal qilib, qutidornikiga sovchilarni turna qator yubora boshlagan edilar.*

Ammo, yaproqlari tarang, shabadaga parvo qilmay kulib turardi.

These are all conceptual metaphors. They consider that poetic metaphors are often grounded in the common conceptual metaphors of a language (which helps to explain why they are often readily understood). Lakoff at least is a proponent of the Whorfian hypothesis, and has been to some extent responsible for reviving interest in it. Conceptual metaphor might be one example of a Whorfian influence on our thought. Lakoff argues that we use such metaphors as part of our

reasoning and thought on topics. Some of them are therefore dangerous: for example, lust is conceptualised as a war, madness, heat, hunger.

Similarly, that an argument is conceptualised as a battle (he won the fight, I beat him) may have unfortunate repercussions.

An example of how concept metaphors can appear in developed form in literary texts would produce many examples. To take the metaphor of the mind as a container, St Augustine, in the passage cited above, calls it a den or cave. Locke (who disapproved of metaphor) comments on how the mind searches for hidden ideas: *they are roused and tumbled out of their dark cells into open daylight . . .*

In this metaphor, a character meets a friend whom he has not seen for twenty-five years, and believes to be dead. The friend is unchanged by the passage of time, thus making the shining half-forgotten image apposite, in contrast to the time-ravaged observer.

In the next example, the basic concept of mind as a room is also used: this time it is apparently a well-furnished but unkempt room:

Memories are like possessions: furniture ornaments. Some are always in the room of your mind, some decayed, some lost; and some are there on the walls – of no further profit or use and never to be shared or revealed.

A slightly different use of the container metaphor from the same text shows that the metaphor is subject to variation:

There is fortunately a mechanism in us which works like the gates of a lock, interrupting and blocking the flow of memory, of immediate awareness. Once the gates are closed, although we know the water is there and it is still the same, we can disregard it . . .

In this extended metaphor memory is compared to water in a lock: 'forgetting' is closing the lock gates. But it appears that the memories the character seeks to obliterate remain, like detritus floating in water. It suggests how we can control memories, though not obliterate them: the water remains in the canal even if we ignore its contents. So the mind is the lock, with the water representing memories (the flow of memory). On the other hand, if one considers the normal function of a lock – to allow boats to move through hilly terrain – the metaphor becomes more difficult to interpret. Locks enable motion through control of water levels. The metaphor may therefore have to do with ways of controlling memory so that it can be useful, and not hamper other activities. No doubt further reflection would suggest more possibilities.

The effect of all these passages is of course quite different: what they have in common is a source in the concept metaphor of the mind as a container. The Brown metaphor suggests the violent actions of a thief. All are attempts to capture aspects of memory, and its workings. [3, 206]

The next examples are concerned with memory and its possible uses. *The imagination doesn't crop annually like a reliable fruit tree. The writer has to gather whatever's there: sometimes too much, sometimes too little, sometimes nothing at all. And in the years of glut there is always a slatted wooden tray in some cool, dark attic, which the writer nervously visits from time to time.*

Closely similar is: words still come welling up from that damp unvisited cellar where they were laid down . . .

It is debatable whether the Barnes metaphor has to do with the imagination, as the text suggests, or with the mind (which gathers the fruits of imagination?). But it is clear that the third sentence must refer to memory, and the mind, this time as an attic. These examples suggest that, in one form or another, and with surprisingly little modification in most cases, mind and memory are encoded in very similar ways. A more violent example is: He's astonished himself to think he's taken in so many words in the last few years, harpoons aimed straight at the brain, and that he actually remembers them.

Here the brain remains a container (as vulnerable as a whale); the metaphor resides in the (implicitly copular) metaphor relating words to harpoons.

In another example, a character is meditating: *Images flitted through his mind . . . One by one the pictures chased each other, and he held open his mind's door, and let them pass through until the house was empty . . .*

Here, as in the following example, the character is controlling his thoughts, or at least attempting to empty his mind of unwanted ones. The punningly named Pensieve is used by the wizard Dumbledore when he feels his brain is too full, and when he wants to see connections between various thoughts and memories:

'One simply siphons the excess thoughts from one's mind, pours them into the basin, and examines them at one's leisure. It becomes easier to spot patterns and links, you understand, when they are in this form.'

In the same text the protagonist's inability to think is explained: Harry's brain filled with a sort of blank buzzing, which didn't seem to allow room for concentration.

Given the origins of this metaphor in antiquity, it seems possible that it is indeed a conceptual metaphor which is available to a number of cultures and languages. The alternative explanation – that all derive from the classical and medieval models – is possible, but perhaps less likely. Clearly, the metaphor is ubiquitous.

Like Cooper, Sperber and Wilson consider that metaphor (and other figures of speech) should not be relegated to a special category, but form part of ordinary language use. Their approach to figurative language has been developed by Pilkington with considerable subtlety. Briefly, the relevance theory argument is that any utterance can be placed on a continuum of literal to looseness of expression: we use whichever is most economical in the circumstances. For example, *when we set out shopping last weekend I said I have no money*.

Leech considers that there is a principle of irony, which builds upon his politeness principle. Leech interprets irony in the light of the politeness principle:

If you must cause offence, at least do so in a way which doesn't overtly conflict with the Politeness Principle, but allows the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remarks indirectly, by way of implicature.

This suggests that his view of irony is apparently limited to ordinary conversation. But irony is not confined to encoding rude remarks about one's interlocutor. It is commonly used to express disapproval of things over which we may have no control.[1,24]

One might remark on the cleanliness of the streets, or the well-kept, pothole-free roads, intending an oblique comment on the local authority. The example of the hospital porter cited above cannot be explained as an attempt to avoid causing offence: he is only trying to keep the patient cheerful. There is no motivation of politeness in using irony in such circumstances. It is presumably used to bestow modest interest on a banal remark. Some examples in Uzbek:

Uning og'zidan bol tomardi.

Xo'sh, sizga nima kerak, o'qimishli akam?

Nega aqalli qizlaringizni yo'qlab bormaysiz desam turishlaringiz shohona ekan-da.

Hali uyga kelsang, boshingni silab qo'yaman.

Imtihonga juda "yaxshi" tayorlanib kelibsiz, qizim, bahoingiz "ikki" – dedi o'qituvchi.

Wilson and Sperber consider that in irony, a speaker echoes words or a thought attributable to someone else, while dissociating herself from it. The thought echoed need never have been expressed, and may not be attributable to a specific individual. It may represent a cultural norm or aspiration, or refer to a type of person or attitude. An example is the first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*, often cited in works on irony: It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. It becomes clear that this is not endorsed by the narrator, and its hyperbolic quality in any case renders it unlikely to be entertained by the reader. Nevertheless, we do not believe that no rich bachelor wants to marry. It is not the opposite that is implicated, but something rather different. In context it is readily identified as echoing the thoughts of Mrs Bennet, mother of numerous daughters. As soon as she is introduced into the narrative, she announces the imminent arrival of a wealthy young bachelor in the neighborhood, and remarks how beneficial that will be for her daughters.

Traditional accounts of irony are in difficulties with remarks of this kind, since in most accounts of irony it is assumed that the meaning is the opposite of that expressed. It is not necessarily the opposite of what is said that is conveyed, but a comment on the current situation. Sperber and Wilson's example of an ironic utterance from *Candide* – When all was over and the rival kings were

celebrating their victory with Te Deums in their respective camps . . . – is used to show that it cannot mean the opposite of what it says; as they suggest, it is a garden-path utterance which rewards readers by allowing them to reflect on the dishonesty of politicians. The reflections of readers are constrained by the utterance, but they are freer than if Voltaire had made his point by, for example, referring to the immediate political situation, the relevance of which might now be lost. We may recall the end of the first Gulf War, when both sides claimed victory. The ‘echoic’ element in this presumably refers to the statements of the two kings, echoed by Pangloss and endorsed by Voltaire. This shows the characteristically embedded nature of much irony in literary texts, where it is not always easy to decide on which level a particular irony is to be located.

One difficulty with Sperber and Wilson’s account of irony is their requirement, which is crucial to relevance theory, that the first plausible interpretation of an utterance must be the one intended by the speaker. They accept that the overall effect maybe quite complex, given the number of weak implicatures that may be accessed and used to enrich an interpretation, but: having found an interpretation consistent with the principle of relevance – an interpretation (which may itself be very rich and very vague) which the writer might have thought of as an adequate repayment for the reader’s effort – why not go on and look for ever richer interpretations and reverberations? If we are right, and considerations of relevance lie at the heart of verbal communication, such searches go beyond the domain of communication proper.

Though the writer might have wished to communicate more than the first interpretation tested and found consistent with the principle of relevance, she cannot have rationally intended to.

I argue that literary writers do, at the very least, hope that their readers will go the extra mile, regardless of the principle of relevance. This, of course, is to suggest that relevance is not the only motivation underlying communication: we do it because we enjoy it. Pilkington allows for much reading and re-reading in order to access as many weak implicatures as the reader is capable of, or has the patience to pursue.

There are so many games we play with language, from hyperbole to meiosis, needless use of metaphor, irony, puns and other less respectable activities, that it is hard to avoid the conclusion that we do it because we enjoy it. Otherwise what point is there in Sterne’s constant language games?

Wilson and Sperber’s explanation of ironic utterances is more satisfactory than others because it accounts for cases where the speaker conveys the opposite of what she says; but also for instances where the criticism is muted.

The assumption that an ironist intends the opposite of what is said misses the more teasing ironies. The ironist, in this view, always echoes an opinion while dissociating herself from it.

The reasons for such dissociation are manifold. This view of irony fits the use of quotation for ironic purposes, and for understatement. They note that, in this view, irony is essentially similar to indirect discourse and other cases of echoic utterances which are all interpretations of thoughts or utterances attributable to someone else.

Wilson and Sperber argue that the existence of echoic utterances, and the possibility of interpreting any utterance as echoic, strongly suggests that there is no maxim of quality, as Grice and his followers hold. It is certainly the case that we can defuse a difficult situation by saying I was only being ironic, but that is a rescue operation; most of the time we surely judge utterances on the basis of the maxims, certainly including quality.

However, Wilson and Sperber’s echoic account of irony is not as great an innovation as they seem to suppose. A traditional critic, such as Booth, discusses metaphors used to describe irony, mentioning eiron, ‘mask’ and ‘persona’. He points out that the value of such accounts is that they remind us that there are two voices, or perspectives, and that simple ‘translation’ from one to the other is impossible. In this respect, irony and metaphor are fundamentally similar. You cannot paraphrase them, because the whole communicative framework is involved, with our assessment of the two voices, their relationship, and ours with them.

One of the problems with both Sperber and Wilson and the accounts of irony in the speech act tradition is that they tend to examine decontextualised utterances, and all too often the ironies are very simple. Irony is embedded in a communicative situation, whether spoken or written, and so involves the situation, relationships, and so on. In short, it is a discursal phenomenon, and needs

to be examined in that light. In a broader sense, this criticism can be levelled at relevance theory: it does not consider the sociocultural context in which all language use is negotiated. [3, 158]

It does seem clear that irony depends upon the ironist's ability to see something from two conflicting perspectives. It is less clear that one of the perspectives need be condemned outright, as most commentators seem to require. It is the detachment that is the marker of irony. A single word or phrase can trigger an ironic interpretation. When Marlow, in *Heart of Darkness*, described the death of his predecessor in the Congo, in an argument over a couple of hens, he says he had been a couple of years already out there engaged in the noble cause.

Similarly, in *The Secret Agent*, Mrs Verloc is described as a widow immediately after she murders her husband. We do not usually call murderesses widows. It is clearly a risky textual strategy whether in spoken or written discourse, partly perhaps because of the difficulty in identifying a linguistic element which would help to confirm its presence. It is thus that the onus for recognizing ironic intent must lie with the hearer or reader.

No amount of theorizing has yet, apparently, found a way around this. In the end, it is sensitivity to context which allows us (fallibly) to think that we are dealing with irony. We have all surely experienced attempts at irony which have not been picked up by our interlocutor: the result is embarrassment on both sides.

We recall that Cooper suggests that one of the effects of metaphor is the signal of membership of an 'in' group, competent to recognize the complexities encoded in metaphor. In this respect, irony is similar to metaphor: this has often been recognized as one of irony's effects. We are pleased when we identify an irony, and flattered that we are part of the select group that appreciates it.

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