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## A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF IRONY IN SOME BRITISH AND IRAQI TV COMIC SHOWS

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<p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-irony</li><li>-speech acts</li><li>- pragmatic presupposition</li><li>-implicature</li><li>- TV comic shows</li><li>- inference</li></ul> <p><b>Article Info</b></p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>Lots of comic shows have been largely displayed on various TV channels and social media. The presenters of such shows talk about different issues such as political, social, economic etc. This study aims at identifying the most common pragmatic strategies used to issue irony in the two comic shows which are <i>Last week tonight</i> and <i>Al-Basheer</i> are chosen. . Also, it aims at showing the differences between British and Iraqi comic shows in these aspects. To test out the validity of these hypothesis, eight comic videos are selected-four from each show. It is hypothesized that: (i) the presenter of comic shows may employ different pragmatic strategies to achieve irony; and (ii) pragmatic aspects such as speech act, pragmatic presupposition and context have a vital role in determining the ironic meaning in British and Iraqi comic shows. The model adopted in this study is a pragmatic one. Its main categories are: Grice's cooperative principle and implicature(1975), Yule's inference (2006), Mey's pragmatic presupposition(2001), Searl's speech act theory (1979), and Leech's (1983) maxims of politeness. The most important conclusions the study reached at are: (i) pragmatic aspects such as speech act, pragmatic presupposition and context have a decisive role in determining the ironic meaning in British and Iraqi comic shows;(ii) irony can be used as a tool of criticism in comic shows.</p>
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## دراسة تداولية للمفارقة في بعض البرامج التلفزيونية البريطانية والعراقية الترفيحية

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### المستخلص

المفارقة هي الاختلاف بين ما يقال وماذا يعنيه ذلك، انها ليست ظاهرة بسيطة والتعريف الشائع لها هو قول ما هو متناقض مع المقصود من المعنى وهذا التناقض يكون بين المعنى الظاهري والمعنى المقصود للغة المكتوبة والمقروءة .

هناك الكثير من البرامج الساخرة التي تعرض على التلفزيون او مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي. يستخدم الكثير من مقدمي هذه البرامج مفهوم المفارقة لأسباب معينة. تتعلق الدراسة الحالية بدراسة تداولية لمفهوم المفارقة في برنامجين هزليين بريطاني وعراقي. وهما برنامج *AL-Basheer Show* وبرنامج *Last Week Tonight* تهدف هذه الدراسة لتحديد اهم الاستراتيجيات التداولية المستخدمة في البرنامجين. كما وتهدف هذه الدراسة لتحديد اهم نقاط الاختلاف والتشابه بين البرنامجين المذكورين.

على ضوء الأهداف المذكورة أعلاه، قدمت الفرضيات التالية: (1) قد يستخدم مقدم البرامج الساخرة بعض الاستراتيجيات التداولية لاستخدام المفارقة في كلامه، (2) يمكن ان يستخدم مفهوم المفارقة كأداة لنقد بعض القضايا بطريقة مضحكة، (3) ان الجوانب التداولية مثل الفعل الكلامي، الافتراض التداولي والسياق لها دور فعال في تحديد معنى السخرية في البرامج الهزلية البريطانية والعراقية. تم تبني موديل للتحليل التداولي وهو مؤلف من ستة اصناف اعتمادا على Grice implicature 1975 , Yule's inference 2006 , Mey's pragmatic presupposition 2001, Searle's speech act theory 1979, and Leech's 1983 politeness

لاختبار مدى صحة هذه الفرضيات، تم اختيار ثمانية نصوص بواقع اربع نصوص لكل برنامج. اهم الاستنتاجات التي توصلت اليها الدراسة ان الجوانب التداولية مثل الفعل الكلامي، الافتراض التداولي والسياق لها دور اساسي في تحديد المعنى المقصود في البرامج الساخرة البريطانية والعراقية قيد الدراسة كما ان المفارقة لا تستخدم فقط في الادب بل تستخدم أيضا كأداة للنقد في تلك البرامج.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المفارقة، الفعل الكلامي، الافتراض التداولي، التضمين، البرامج الساخرة التلفزيونية، الاستدلال المنطقي

## 1.Introduction

Irony is a figure of speech in which the speaker's intent differs from the meaning that words seem to express. This concept is used by certain people in every day for different reasons. Thus, an ironic statement has double meaning; the literal meaning of the statement and the implied meaning which can be grasped by different means. The speaker intentionally uses irony for a specific reason in his mind and he may give some hints to make the listener recognize that his speech is ironic.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no previous study has tackled the pragmatic aspects of irony in British and Iraqi comic shows. So, two comic shows which are *Last Week Tonight* and *Al-Basheer Show* are chosen. The current study is an attempt to identify the most common pragmatic strategies used to issue irony in the two comic shows. Also, this study deals with clarifying the most significant reasons behind using irony and how the listeners recognize if the presenter's speech is ironic or not. Lastly, it aims at showing the differences between these two comic shows.

It is hypothesized that pragmatic aspects such as speech act, pragmatic presupposition and context have a decisive role in determining the ironic meaning in British and Iraqi comic shows ;the presenter of comic shows may employ different pragmatic strategies to achieve irony; and irony can be used as a tool of criticizing some issues in a comic way.

The study is limited to the pragmatic aspects of two famous selected comic shows which are *Al-Basheer show* and *Last Week Tonight*. The study is hoped to be of value to pragmatics, presenters of comic shows and the students of English as a foreign language.

## 2. Definition of Irony

It seems logical to present the definition of irony before indulging in the analysis. Regarding its definition, scholars have different points of view. Fowler (1965:295) suggests that irony is a kind of expression which has a double audience; one of them is 'in the know' and aware of the speaker's intention while the other is inexperienced enough. So, they comprehend the ironic statement relying on its literal meaning.

Abrams (1999:134) shows that "irony is the sense of dissembling or hiding what is actually the case in order not to deceive, but to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effects." It looks as if that Abrams approaches irony from a literary angle. Likewise, Cuddon (1998:430) considers irony as the perception or awareness of a discrepancy between words and their meanings, between actions and their results, or between appearance and reality. Irony is defined by Simpson (2011:34) as "saying what is contrary to what is meant". It means that irony is a set of words which is said by a speaker in order to convey meaning opposite to the literal one. Based on the definitions of irony stated above, it seems that in all these definitions there is an element of absurdity and paradox.

### **3. Types of Irony**

Irony is seen from different points of view. As a result, has various types. These types are clarified below.

#### **3.1 Situational Irony**

Cuddon (1998: 430) claims that situational irony is employed in specific situations, for instance, when a man is laughing madly at the bad luck of another whereas the same event is happening to him.

#### **3.2 Dramatic Irony**

Muecke (1970:64) notes that dramatic irony is not limited to drama. He considers it as a sub-form of situational irony. In his view, it is near to the irony of event where the victim depends on something in the future, but some unexpected turn of events which reverses his hopes and plans.

#### **2.3 Socratic Irony**

Abrams (1999:136) claims that Socratic irony is a means by which the pretended ignorance of a skillful questioner leads the person answering to expose his own ignorance.

### **3.4 Irony of Fate (Cosmic Irony)**

Abrams (ibid:137) states that "Irony of Fate or Cosmic Irony is attributed to literary works in which a deity, or else fate, is represented as though deliberately manipulating events so as to lead to the protagonist to false hopes, only to frustrate and mock them."

### **3.6 Tragic Irony**

This kind of irony deals only with a fictional context. In this form of irony, the words and actions of the character are the opposite of the real situation but viewers realize the truth. Tragic irony mainly describes the drama of the ancient Greece, owing to the familiarity of the audiences with the legends on which so many of the plays were based (Cuddon, 1998: 431).

### **3.5 Meta-fiction (Romantic Irony)**

Abrams (1999:137) terms this type as romantic irony and remarks that this term is presented to " designate a mode of dramatic or narrative writing in which the author builds up the illusion of representing reality, only to shatter it by revealing that the author, as artist, is the creator or arbitrary manipulator of the characters and their actions."

### **3.7 Comic Irony**

Irony is frequently used to make comic effects. This may also be joined with satire. For instance, an author may frivolously say something as a familiar fact and then establish through the narrative that the statement is incorrect (Clift, 1999: 524).

### **3.8 Verbal Irony**

Verbal irony is the discrepancy of the utterance and intention when the speaker says something, but means another (Cuddon, 1998:430). "Verbal

irony means saying what one does not mean. It is a mode of speech in which the meaning is contrary to the words" (ibid.).

#### **4. Functions of Irony**

It can be said that Speakers use irony to achieve various functions. Many of these functions have been proposed by many theorists.

Attardo (2000:11-15) lists the following functions:

##### **A. Group Affiliation**

Irony may deal with two opposed aims: inclusive and exclusive ones. The first one, irony builds in-group solidarity through shared play. The second one, it can be used to express a negative judgment of someone.

##### **B. Retractability**

It is permitted to anyone to say something and mean the opposite at the same time. For this reason, the S uses an ironic speech to avoid any sanctions that may follow the direct speech. From this standpoint, irony allows the S to take a noncommittal attitude towards what s/he is says.

##### **C. Evaluation**

Grice (cited in Attrado ibid:13) observes that irony is "intimately connected with the expression of a feeling, attitude, or evaluation."

##### **D. Rhetorical**

The rhetorical function of irony has an interesting insight which is suggested by Carston (cited in Attrado ibid:14). She observes that irony is an influential rhetorical tool because it presumes the truth of the supposed proposition to be self-evident.

##### **E. Politeness Strategy**

Irony is considered as a face-saving strategy. Attrado (ibid: 15) adds that the concept of irony is motivated by politeness.

Other functions of irony are stated by Gibbs (1994:372) who says that Irony can be used to be witty and to put someone at ease or to save face. The most important function of irony is “to maintain social relationships between family members, friends and co-workers.”

## **6. Pragmatics: Some Basic Tenets**

Pragmatics deals with the intended meaning of a certain utterance which is produced by a speaker to communicate with other speakers. So, pragmatics is the study of the speaker's meaning. This type of study needs a consideration of how speakers organize their speech and with whom they are talking, where, when, and under what circumstances. Indeed, pragmatics is "the study of contextual meaning" (Yule,1996:3).

### **6.1 Context and Its Types**

Context is a general term including different types. According to Yule(2006:129) , it has two types: linguistic context(co-text) and physical context. Linguistic context refers to the ' actual language' of a text. Every piece of written or spoken material is composed of words, phrases, clauses and/or sentences (Fetzer,2007: 5).Physical context refers to the time and place of a word, a phrase, a clause, etc. Moreover, the physical context plays a main role in the interpretation of speech (Cutting, 2002:2) .According to Fromkin et al (2003: 212), the main element of situational context is; who is speaking, to whom, what is the topic and certain facts about the world .A another kind of context is cognitive context which " describes the shared background knowledge and beliefs between speakers and listeners in an exchange" (Cummings,2009: 19). Social context it is the kind of context which is considered in social deixis (Fetzer,2011:36)

### **6.2 The Cooperative Principle and Implicature**

The cooperative principle can be defined as a principle of conversation which was introduced by Grice 1975, stating that the participants think that each will make a "conversational contribution such as required, at the stage

at which it occurs, there are four maxims of the principle which are stated by Grice (1975:46-47). They are as follows:

1- The maxim of quantity: the speaker should be as informative as is required.

2- The maxim of quality: the speaker should be sincere in his speech, since the speech of the speaker must be corresponding to the reality.

3.The maxim of relevance: the speech of a speaker should be relevant with what has been said before.

4.The maxim of manner: there are certain rules that should be followed in order to be cooperative. For instance, avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity), and be orderly.

Moreover, implicature is considered as a technical term, which refers to what is suggested in a statement, even if it is not mentioned or implied. Cruse (2006:85) says that implicature deals with the meaning of an utterance which is not said.

### **6.3 Inference**

When a listener uses an additional information in order to create a connection between what is said and what is be meant, this process is called inference.

For instance, when someone studies linguistics, he may ask his friend, can you borrow me your Chomsky? And get the answer, ‘Sure, it is on the desk’. In this example, the listener has to operate with inference: ‘if X is the name of the writer of a book, then X can be used to identify a copy of a book by that writer (Yule,2006:116).

### **6.4 Pragmatic Presupposition**

Mey (2001:185) clarifies that pragmatic presupposition does not depend on the apparent form of a sentence. Rather, the context of a sentence should be taken into account so that an utterance would be interpreted correctly. Since pragmatic presupposition is not a relation between two sentences as with semantic presupposition and also he contends that " a series theory of



pragmatic presupposition goes beyond this, and inquires metapragmatically into the ways an utterance is understood in the context of the language users' common ground". In this respect, it is important to know not only what people say but also what is the reason behind their speech and why they say it in this way. Caffi (1994:3324) indicates pragmatic presupposition "not only concern knowledge, whether true or false; they concern expectations, desires, claims, attitudes towards the world, fears, etc."

## **6.5 Searle's Speech Act Theory**

Sadock (2005: 59) stated that J. R. Searle followed Austin's theory, but he found that there are some inadequate or too narrow claims, so he produced a "neo-Austinian analysis" of the subject.

Searle (1979: 12-20) presents a classification speech acts into five types as follows:

1. Assertives (statements which is descriptive that can be either true or false).
2. Directives (utterances with the purpose of making the hearer to do something; e.g. commands, requests).
3. Commissives (the speaker undertakes to act according to what he or she has expressed; e.g. in the case of promises).
4. Expressives (utterances that express the psychological state or feelings of the speaker; e.g. apologies, congratulations) and
5. Declarations (statements that "change the world" for example marriage, baptism).

## **6.6 Politeness**

In every day conversation, there are several ways in order to get something we want, so when we are with a group of friends, we can say to them, ' go get me that plate', or 'shut up'. However, these words cannot be said to strangers or our parents, we should say for instance 'Could you please pass me that plate, if you don't mind?' and 'I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt, but I am not able to hear the speaker in the front of the room.' This

is associated with the notion of politeness which is explained by Brown and Levinson (1987) and other scholars later.

Cruse (2006:131-132) explains politeness as a matter of lessening the negative effects of someone's speech on the feeling of others and maximizing the positive effect. Also he says that Leech proposes a general ' politeness principle' minimize the expression of impolite beliefs. This principle both constrains and is constrained by the cooperative principle. Obviously, sometimes we obliged to say true information in certain cases even if it has negative effects on the hearers.

Leech assigns a number of maxims like modesty, tact, generosity, sympathy, agreement, and generosity (Leech: 1983:131):

1-Tact maxim: "Minimize cost to other. Maximize cost to self."

2-The generosity maxim: "Minimize benefit to self. Maximize cost to self " This maxim focuses on the speaker, and suggests that others should be put at the first before the self.

3- The approbation maxim: " Minimize dispraise of other. Maximize the praise of other ".

4- The modesty maxim: " minimize praise of self. Maximize dispraise of self."

5-The agreement maxim: "minimize the expression of disagreement between self and other."

6-The Sympathy maxim: " minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between the self and the other."

## **7. The Model Adopted**

The model adopted in this study is built and developed in this research according to what has been illustrated above. Its main categories are: Grice's cooperative principle and implicature (1975) Yule's inference (2006), Mey's pragmatic presupposition(2001), Searle's speech act theory(1979), and Leech's maxims of politeness(1983).All these aspects are analysed with reference to context.

## **8. Data Analysis**

The data collected to be analyzed are eight situations which are taken from two TV comic shows: *Last Week Tonight* and *AL-Basheer Show*. The videos are selected randomly. Then, they are analyzed according to the model adopted. The analysis is made of two steps for each situation. The first step is to present the situation which includes an introduction of the selected part. In the second step, the pragmatic analysis of the selected situations is made according to the model categories sketched above. The core of this work is to identify the ironic statements then, to analyze them according to the items of the model.

It is worth noting that any item of the model is written in bold when it is mentioned in the analysis, e.g. **speech act**, **inference**, etc. and the speech of the presenter is written in an italicized way when it is mentioned in the analysis.

## **8.1 Analysis of *Last Week Tonight***

### **8.1.1 A Brief Introduction to *Last Week Tonight***

*Last Week Tonight* is a British comic show which is presented by the British journalist 'John Oliver', and his idea is similar to the *Al-Basheer show*, but he presents different political speeches in different countries.

The presenter displays a video or a picture which includes a certain event (social or political) selected from different countries. He often selects important news. He uses different techniques in order to make his show funny as much as he can.

He deals with different topics. To achieve this, he talks in a direct way and sometimes in an indirect way. The treatment of the topics included in the chosen data will be guided by the model adopted in the study.

### **8.1.2 Analysis of the Selected Videos**

#### **Situation (1)**

The presenter talks about the economic crisis in Egypt. He tries to make fun of the speech of the leader of Egypt but in a direct way.

*-John: Egypt is currently suffering from economic crisis, and its leader Abdul Fatah As-Sisi has not been handled well. In fact, just two weeks ago, he involved a new residential complex and it should be a great news.*

The presenter displays a video which includes a news about the leader of Egypt. The news is that Abdul Fatah As-Sisi runs on a carpet that extends over two miles. After that As-Sisi makes a speech about reducing government support and he says that the government cannot continue supporting water and electricity.

*-John: wow. (with a high tone) You put a red carpet which costs more than two thousand dollars, in the same day, you say to people to reduce the use of water, the only less sensitive way he could arrive by a bout flow.*

### **Analysis:**

In this situation, the presenter talks about certain news. His speech is obviously a criticism. Firstly, he uses an **assertive speech act** when he says *Egypt is currently suffering from economic crisis, and its leader Abdul Fatah As-Sisi has not been handled well*. It can be understood by relying on the literal meaning of this statement.

After presenting the video, the presenter comments on the speech of the president of Egypt. Thus, the listener can identify why the presenter thinks that the event he mentioned is a comic one. Certainly, it is comic because there is an incongruity between the president's speech as he says *the government cannot continue supporting water and electricity* and what actually happens is that As-Sisi runs on a carpet that extends over two miles which costs more than two thousand dollars.

With respect to **conventional implicature**, the presenter says the expression *wow* with a high tone to show that he is surprised because of the incongruity which is mentioned above. He does not say that he is surprised but he only says *wow*. He does not criticize the president of Egypt directly, but the way he is talking is a clue that he is not convinced with the speech of the president.

At the end of the presenter's speech, he uses an ironic statement when he says that "*the only less sensitive way ....*". it is ironic because he says

something and means the opposite. Hence, he says the less sensitive way but he means the worst way is ... So, he violates **the maxim of quality** because he does not say the truth directly. With respect to **conversational implicature**, the listener can recognize that he says the ironic statement only to add comic sense to his video.

### **Situation (2)**

In this situation, the presenter talks about the arrival of the president of the United States at Saudi Arabia and those who was waiting for him there.

Displaying a video that includes a news about arrival the president of the United States at Saudi Arabia and the king of Saudi Arabia does not greet Mr. Obama in the airport. Instead, he sends a lower level delegation. So, the prince of Al-Riyadh receives Obama at the airport.

*-John:* (with a surprised facial expression and speaking in a high tone) *you send a governor to meet the president of United State. Just imagine if King Salman arrived in America and was greeted at the airport by governor of Arizona. This is definitely unacceptable.*

### **Analysis**

The listener can comprehend the intended meaning by relying on the **linguistic context** when the presenter says *just imagine if king Salman...*, he means that if this behavior happens with the king, it will be also unacceptable.

Regarding **pragmatic presupposition**, the listener can depend on his knowledge that the reasons behind his speech are two; the first one is adding a humorist sense to his video, the second is criticizing the behavior of the king of Saudi Arabia.

There is a **situational irony** in this situation which makes the video has a comic sense, since the president of United State and the American government expect something (that Obama should be greeted by the king in the airport) and the opposite happened (Obama is received by the Prince of Al-Riyadh who is of lower status than former).

### **Situation (3)**

In this situation, the presenter talks about the speech of the American President Trump and he comments on his speech.

*-John: This week was supposed to be all about economic plan, let me be fair, he did try to focus on economic message on Friday, but the prompts will have gone, so he backs to doing what he does best.*

He displays a video that includes a speech of the president of United states and he holds a chart and talks about it and he says that he loves charts but it needs a strong hand to hold it.

*-John: that is just magnificent.*

### **Analysis**

In this situation, the presenter uses an **open criticism** and he uses an **ironic statement**. First, by relying on **the linguistic context** especially when he says *he backs to doing what he does best*. The video which is displayed after his speech can help the listener to grasp that he criticizes the president in a direct way.

It is clear that through the president's speech, he does not say anything important. He just talks about insufficient things. Secondly, after presenting the video, the presenter violates the **maxim quality** because he does not say the truth. He uses an ironic statement which is *that is just magnificent*. Absolutely, he means the opposite. The listener will grasp that the presenter's implicated meaning in his speech by depending on **conversational implicature** as the listener infer something which is not spoken.

Regarding politeness maxims, he uses an **approbation maxim**. As he praises the speech of the president by saying *that is just magnificent*. This statement is ironic. As a result, by depending on the surface meaning, his speech is polite but by relying on the speaker's intended meaning,

### **Situation (4)**

The presenter talks about an interview between an American Journalist and a Korean woman. Displaying a video about an interview that American journalist asks Korean women; what do you think of the president Obama.

The translator says that she says if she is given a weapon she would shoot him. The journalist says wow (with a surprised look).

*-John: yes, wow, there is literally no another response, especially it is not usual to hear a threat of assassination with such an indifferent tone. As she says if I had a bread maker, I will make fokatshia (a kind of sweet) every morning.*

### **Analysis**

In this situation, the presenter makes fun of the Korean women's speech as he employs irony to criticize her speech depending on the **linguistic context** when he says *yes wow, there is literally no another response*. This is a clue that he wants to criticize the speech in a comic way.

With respect to **conventional implicature**, the presenter does not say that he feels surprised. He just says the expression *wow* to elucidate his feeling. Then, he says *it is not usual to hear a threat of assassination with such an indifferent tone*. As she says *if I had a bread maker, I will make fokatshia ( a kind of sweet) every morning*, it can refer to a different meaning implied by the presenter that this is an unexpected action by a Korean citizen towards the American president having in mind the continuous tension between North Korea and The United States of America.

Regarding **inference**, it can be inferred that the presenter wants to elucidate that the Korean women's speech is not satisfactory that in addition to her threat to the American president, she says it in a way that reflects that she is not interested in that topic. The journalist's tone in saying the word *wow* is a clue that helps the listener to know that this speech is ironic.

## **8.2. Analysis of *AL-Basheer Show***

### **8.2.1 A Brief Introduction to *AL-Basheer Show***

*Al- Basheer show* is an Iraqi comic show which is presented on a TV channel .Since this program is produced by an Iraqi journalist and his name is Ahmed Basheer, his program has been watched by a lot of people especially Iraqi people because he criticizes certain situations in Iraq in a new different way.

The presenter of this program criticizes the political and the social situations in Iraq but in a comic way by speaking ironically. Certainly, there are a lot of causes that make this program presented in this way, since Iraqi people are passing through a political, economic, and social crisis. Sometimes, the presenter displays a video about a specific issue and then he comments on it or presents a video which includes a speech of a political figure and he criticizes it ironically. He tries to give some clues to make his audience understand his speech.

## 8.2.2 Analysis of the Selected Videos

### Situation (5)

In this situation, the presenter tells his audience that there is a news that he cannot say it because it is so sad, and he displays a video to show his audience the bad news. The news is that the secretary of Baghdad is preparing to leave Baghdad and leave the secretariat; Then he gives his opinion in an ironic way.

-**احمد:** اكو خبر مراح أكره اكونه لان جديات كلش صعب عليه، فراح استعين بالقنوات الفضائية لتتقل لنا الخبر.

-**Ahmed:** there is a news that I could not say because it is so sad, so we will know the news from the TV channels .

After displaying the news and it is that the secretary of Baghdad will leave his job and his country.

-**احمد:** (بصوت مستهزئ) الموضوع مو سهل علي و عليكم لانه مراح نفقد فقط شخص عامل و مجتهد ووسيم، راح نفقد احد نوابغ الرياضيات.

-**Ahmed:** ( in a sarcastic way) the event is difficult and it is not easy because we will not lose only a hard-working and handsome man but also he is one of the geniuses in mathematics.

-Displaying a video which includes a speech the mayor of Baghdad who says" Baghdad is received in bad situation and that means it is more than 21 years since 1980 to1993, i.e., 23 years oh... it, i.e., from 1970 to 2003 or it is from 1980 to 2003".



-أحمد: (بضحكه) ما شاء الله قوي بالرياضيات عبوب شنو هالموهبه الجديدة هاي.

-*Ahmed*:(smiling) *Ma shaa Allah, he is very clever in mathematics, what is this new talent?*

### **Analysis**

In this situation, at first, the speech of the presenter seems serious because he does not use hints to show that his speech is ironic. It might be that he wants to make a kind of mystery. After presenting the video which includes the news that the mayor of Baghdad will leave his job. The presenter pretends that he is sad but in an ironic way. He gives obvious hints to make his audience understand that his speech is ironic such as the tone of his voice, facial expressions, and the way he speaks. So, even if the listener has no general knowledge about the topic, he will recognize directly that his speech is ironic by depending on these clues.

The presenter uses an approbation maxim of politeness, when he says that we will not lose only a hard-working and handsome man but also he is one of the geniuses in mathematics as he praises him ( the mayor of Baghdad) and at the same time he means the opposite. Thus, his use of irony principle allows him to be impolite while being superficially polite.

With respect to Grice's Cooperative Maxims, the maxim of quality is violated by the speaker because he does not say the truth. If the listener has a good background knowledge about this official man and the situation in Baghdad, he will grasp the presenter's intent. So, it can be said that the cognitive context is essential to recognize the intended meaning of the presenter. Each word has a specific meaning which is different from the literal one. Such as 'a hard-working' that the presenter intends that the secretary is not working dutifully and he intentionally says the word 'handsome' because there is a story behind this word. Thus, the mayor of Baghdad often says in his interviews that he is a handsome man. As it is known, the official man should not say like these words in his speeches because this is unacceptable. The presenter uses this word to add a comic sense to his video.

Then, he says that this official man is one of the geniuses of mathematics and presents a video which includes one of his speeches and he makes a lot of mistakes as it is mentioned above in the situation. The presenter says 'ma shaa Allah' which means that he is surprised. Here conventional implicature is employed which means that the speaker does not say that I am surprised but he only says the expression 'ma shaa Allah' .

The presenter uses an assertive speech act when he says *the event is difficult and it is not easy because we will not lose only a hard –working ....* and also when he says *he is very clever in mathematics, what is this new talent.* His speech has two propositions (different input and output). It can be said that the speech has two meanings. The first one is humorous and the second is critical. Thus, he criticizes this official man in an ironic way. This situation can be considered as a humor or not by depending on the listener's shared knowledge and culture.

With respect to pragmatic presupposition, one can grasp the reason behind manipulating it in this way. The presenter might want to show his audience that this official man is not meritorious to be the secretary of Baghdad and his leaving is a suitable decision for the Iraqi people. So, he uses an ironic speech to achieve his aim in a comic way.

### **Situation (6)**

In this situation, the presenter talks about the electric crisis in Iraq.

-Displaying a video which include a speech to a political man who says that Iraq needs more than 21,000 mega watt of power every day to produce electricity but the country is produced only 11,000 mega watt.

- احمد: هسه البلد يحتاج 20,000 ميكا واط حتى تجينا الكهرباء 24 ساعه . احنه ننتج 11 الف ميكا واط يعني المفروض تجينا 12 ساعه باليوم . احنه دتجينا ساعتين يعني عمليه حسابية صحيحة . بعدين معروف بكل الأبحاث والدراسات تشير ان الانسان يحتاج فقط ساعتين للنوم . هاي ساعتين تنام بيها . فالحكومة حاسبيها صح . بعدين اكو انسان ينام ست ساعات؟

-*Ahmed: the country needs 20,000 mega watt to get electricity for 24 hours. We produce 11,000 megawatt. It means that we get electricity for 12 hours in one day, but we get electricity only 2 hours. The calculation process is correct. It is known according to studies and investigations which suggest*

*that a person only needs two hours of sleeping. Then, is there any human being who sleeps six hours ?*

### **Analysis**

After displaying the video, Ahmed uses an assertive speech act. That is, his speech has two different proposition which are the literal and the speaker's intended meaning to describe the state of affairs when he says *the country needs 20.000 megawatt*. Here, the intention of the ironist is to state a certain attitude to both the speech act and those who comprehend it.

Since the presenter says things which are not true in reality as when he says a person only needs two hours to sleep, the speaker's speech is ironic in that the listener can recognize it depending on cognitive context. Hence, one can understand that the presenter's speech is ironic, as the speaker and the listener share the same background knowledge. With respect to the maxims of speech, the maxim of quality is violated when the presenter says the calculation process is correct because he does not say the truth. Regarding the conversational implicature, one can grasp that he means the promises of political men are not true and they are just speaking without any execution. As far as inference is concerned, the listener can infer that the presenter criticizes the government in a comic way depending on his mutual knowledge with the presenter.

### **Situation (7)**

The presenter talks about the high temperatures in the climate of Iraq and he asks if there any benefits of high temperature.

-احمد: يعني هذا الحر، معقوله ما بيه أي فوائد؟

-*Ahmed: Is it reasonable that this high temperature has no benefits?*

-احمد: أي صحيح، دائما اللي يوكف بالشمس يكون فرحان. أنى اكل ليش السعادة بالعراق كلش مستواها عالي

-*Ahmed: yes that it is right, every one stands under the high temperature of the Sun will feel happy. That is why the happiness level in Iraq is so high.*

### **Analysis**

In this situation, the presenter talks about the high temperature in Iraq. There are two meanings in his speech. The first one is literal and the second is the implied meaning that carries the presenter's ironic tone.

With respect to linguistic context, when the speaker says *yes that it is right, every one stands under the high temperature of the Sun will feel happy*. It is recognizable by anyone who lives in Iraq that his speech is certainly ironic. Hence, the temperature in summer in Iraq may reach more than 50c. As a result, any one stands in the high temperature will be nervous. Thus, the speaker violates the maxim of quality when he says *every one stands*, he pretends that he deals with the journalist's opinion. As for conversational implicature, one can grasp that he does not accept this idea, but he tries to be comic to make his audience laugh because there is incongruity between his speech and the reality.

With respect to pragmatic presupposition, the listener can make use of it depending on his background knowledge. The aim behind the presenter's speech is that people live in a bad way under these circumstances. Moreover, the presenter makes the listener think of that in a funny way to add a comic sense to his video.

### **Situation (8)**

The presenter talks about the reaction of the Minister of Interior about the security situation in Iraq and if he is responsible for the case or not then, he comments on the speech of the minister of interior.

-**احمد:** شنو جان رده عن اتهامه انو هو أحد المسؤولين عن الخروقات الأمنية اللي دتصير. اكيد تحمل المسؤولية.

-**Ahmed:** *what is his response when he has been accused that he is responsible for the security violations which happen in Iraq. Certainly, he bears responsibility.*

-Displaying a video that the minister of interior talks about the topic and he says that he is not responsible of the interior safety .

- احمد: (ينظر باستغراب) صحيح وزارة الداخلية ما إلها علاقة بالأمن الداخلي. شنو يعني إذا صار كم تفجير، كل الدول تصير بيه تفجيرات فرنسا، بلجيكا، تركيا كله تصير بيه تفجيرات قابل هم يتحمل بي المسؤولية وزير الداخلية؟ أي طبعا يتحمل (بصوت خافت).

*-Ahmed: (looking in a surprised way) that is right, the ministry of interior is not responsible for the interior security. What is the problem if there are some explosions? This happens everywhere such as in France, Belgium, and Turkey. Does the minister of interior undertake the responsibility? Of course, he does (with low voice).*

### Analysis

In this situation, the presenter speaks ironically, the listener can identify that his speech is ironic by means of different ways. As for the linguistic context, the presenter uses some expressions that participate grasping the implied meaning such as *certainly, he bears responsibility*. After displaying the video, the listener will infer that the presenter's speech is ironic because the speech of the minister of interior is opposite to the speech of the presenter. Likewise, when he says *that is right, the minister of interior is not responsible for the interior security*, it can be identified that this statement also is an ironic one because he says something while he means something else.

Regarding the cognitive context, the listener can identify that the speech of the presenter is ironic by depending on the shared background knowledge. For instance, Iraqi people know that the minister of interior is responsible for the interior security in Iraq. As a result, when the presenter comments on the speech of the minister when he says *that it is right*, it can be identified that the speech is ironic. With respect to certain clues as his facial expression, after displaying the video, he looks as he is surprised and this facial expression is used to make his audience identify that his speech is ironic.

At first, the presenter uses a directive speech act when he says *what is the problem* and after displaying the video, he uses an assertive speech act because he only gives his opinion but in an ironic way. Since his speech has two different input and output propositions which are the literal one and the intended meaning of the speaker which is that the security failure is the

responsibility of the ministry of interior. As for the maxims of speech, he violates the maxim of quality because he does not say the truth that he says something and means the opposite. The listener should infer the intended meaning. So, he has conveyed more than what he said via a conversational implicature. In this regard, he wants to show the carelessness of the government toward the souls of the Iraqi people.

Regarding pragmatic presupposition, one can depend on his knowledge in that the presenter means that in each country the interior minister bears responsibility. But in Iraq, they claim that they are not responsible for the violations happened in the security situation.

### **8.3 A Comparison Between the Two Comic Shows**

Based on the analysis of the British comic show *Last week tonight* and the Iraqi comic show *Al-Basheer show*, the following findings are identified:

1- The speech of the Iraqi presenter is mostly ironic while this is less frequently used in the British comic show.

2- The Iraqi presenter criticizes the speech of political men in an indirect way, while the British presenter criticizes the speech of certain persons in a direct way.

3. The Iraqi comic show can be considered as a funny program because the presenter says something and then presents a video which is contrary to his words. On the contrary, the British presenter presents certain videos such as a speech for a political man which includes an incongruity between the reality and the man's speech, then the presenter clarifies the contrast to his audience in a comic way.

4- The British presenter uses an open criticism when he criticizes someone directly without any mysterious word. whereas the Iraqi presenter does not use open criticism, since he speaks in an indirect way for certain reasons.

5- Both of the two shows presenters use a specific facial expression or a certain tone of voice or sarcastic smile in order to make the audience identify that his speech is ironic and to be funny.

6- The Iraqi presenter mostly uses an ironic speech act which has two different propositions (the first one is literally and the second one is the presenter's intended meaning). On the other side, the British presenter rarely uses an ironic speech act, he mostly uses a direct speech act which has one proposition which is the literal meaning.

## **9. Conclusions**

The study has come up with the following conclusions:

1. Irony is not used only in literature. But also, it can be used as a tool of criticism in comic shows.

2- Speech acts are employed to achieve irony in the two shows. Moreover, they are used more in the Iraqi show.

3- The two shows presenters use irony. The Iraqi presenter employs irony in all his speech whereas the British presenter uses irony less in his speech. Then, he elucidates his intent. He uses open criticism and irony.

4- Conversational implicature is employed to reveal the implied meaning in British and Iraqi comic shows. In such cases, the speech of a political man or a journalist in a video which is displayed by presenter can help inferring the implied meaning.

5- Context has a vital role in judging the speaker's intended meaning.

6- Some clues such as facial expression, tone of voice and sarcastic smile represent clues to the listener to infer meaning.

7- In both comic shows, violation of the maxims of speech are employed to reveal the intended meaning. The most common one violated is the maxim of quality.

8- Pragmatic presupposition appears to be an effective tool in constructing irony in British and Iraqi comic show.

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### Web Sites

- The videos which are selected from Last Week Tonight:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/LastWeekTonight>

The videos which are selected from AL-Basheer Show:

- [www.albasheershow.com](http://www.albasheershow.com)

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