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# A Pragmatic Study of Irony in Dickens' 'A Tale of Two Cities'

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## ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the phenomenon of irony in Charles Dickens' novel "A Tale of Two Cities" pragmatically. It identifies the common strategies used to convey irony and the different types of irony used in the novel. The research design involves an introduction that illustrates a literature review on irony and its various forms, analysing samples from the novel, employing a model to analyse the data, and using statistical methods to calculate the results. The findings show that verbal irony is the most frequently employed form of irony in the novel, followed by dramatic irony and situational irony. The study supports the hypothesis that verbal irony is the most prevalent type of irony used in the novel. The data analysis includes examples of each type of irony to illustrate the findings. This research seeks to address that knowledge gap with analysis of this paper, which seeks to establish the functioning and pragmatics of verbal irony alongside situational and dramatic irony in "A Tale of Two Cities" in order to portray cynicism and the criticism of the prevailing social order. The study reached some conclusions, the most important of which is that verbal irony is the most common type used by language users, and the novelist intends to ridicule a subject and point out its faults through satire.

*Keywords:* Verbal Irony; Pretence; Ironic Interjection; Echoic Irony

## 1. Introduction

Recent studies also focus on not only the literary, psychological, computational, and pragmatic effects of irony.

Gibbs and Colston[1] have noted that irony has proved to be crucial in literary criticism, with the example of Charles Dickens. Having read several of his novels, it becomes apparent that Dickens' writings are filled with linguistic and rhetorical

irony offering tremendous possibilities for examining irony on the plane of a novel's construction and the characters' interaction[2]. Earlier researches have examined how ironic his narration is for the given society and how irony functions as a means of engaging with the text (Brill). Attardo[3] as well as most of the recent contributions from the field of pragmatics view irony as a means of communication. Also, it is established that this kind of figures makes use of the conversational principles to create an implicature whereby the listeners or readers have to guess the real meaning of the intended statement by the speaker[4]. The first is a series of descriptive studies on the cognitive processes involved in irony processing and the second is How irony functions as a communicative and relational construct in discourse.

Irony has now evolved not only as a literary tool or method, but also as a way of practicing in computer-related practices. The literature on multimodal irony detection focuses more on studies using sophisticated AI models in detecting irony in computer-mediated communication including the social media. Jabrael and Lutfi[5] provide research on the computational identification of irony from the textual and visual cues. Another field of investigations is irony and its position in regard to cultural analysis. There are works, in which researchers examine the ways situational and verbal irony is used in the context of societal interaction and how the use of these forms depends on power relations and prevalent norms[6]. It, therefore, connects to the overall sociocultural perspective, which can be seen in Dickens' other novels, more often than not: with irony, A Tale of Two Cities underlines the difference between the way society looks at things and actual practice.

However, there is a rhetorical deficiency in pragmatic analysis of irony in Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities and the ways that language users practically apply the use of irony. Many works are devoted to the analysis of irony as a literary device or as the object of computer analysis of digital discourse, which means that the topic of verbal irony and its pragmatic implications for the interlocutors can be further explored as applied to historical and classical texts such as Dickens' novels. This research will seek to address that knowledge gap with analysis of this paper, which seeks to establish the functioning and pragmatics of verbal irony alongside situational and dramatic irony in A Tale of Two Cities in order to portray cynicism and the criticism of the prevailing social order.

## 2. Research Design

The research design in this study involves analysing the phenomenon of irony in Charles Dickens' novel "A Tale of Two Cities." The study aims to identify the common strategies used to convey irony and the different types of irony used in the novel. The research will involve conducting a literature review on irony and its various forms, analysing samples from the novel, employing a model to analyse the data, and using statistical methods to calculate the results. The study finds that verbal irony is the most frequently employed form of irony in the novel, followed by dramatic irony and situational irony. The findings support the hypothesis that verbal irony is the most prevalent type of irony used in the novel.

## 3. Irony and the Interpretation of Indirection

Brondino[7] offers fresh information about how irony can be easily identified and interpreted by the listeners. It is for this reason that some of them opine that irony has two rapport meanings whereby the surface meaning is repeatedly negated while the second meaning is its opposite. Manzi[8] further elaborates on this observation through the Relevance Theory, presenting a new model on how irony is decoded based on context and implicature. Yus stated that irony is context-based; this makes the listener put a lot of effort into the mind to decode the meaning that the speaker is trying to put across.

### 3.1. Irony and Lying

Further studies presented by Giora[9] continue the investigation into the distinction between irony and lying; one acknowledges that both of them are contextualised in indirection, while lying manipulates a truth, whereas irony deviously encodes it. In this line of research, it is pointed out that 'irony works as a function of what speaker and hearer know,' while 'lies involve a distortion of reality,' so there is more dependence on context, which is present in irony.

## 3.2. Dynamics and Reconstruction of Irony

Another significant evolution in irony research has been the integration assigned to digital communication, especially in terms of how irony is remade based on a number of textual signs in the context of computer relativity. The next study to be discussed in this section investigates irony in social media, which is common with most social media users employing textual and contextual conventions to indicate irony, including hashtags and punctuation, among others[10]. For they contend that compared to face-to-face communication, digital irony disrupts conventional politeness in a more ironic manner, in large measure because irony as employed in digital communication violates the conversational maxims more commonly than in face-to-face communication, and as such, when this is combined with politeness it increases the relative probability of misunderstanding[11]. However, these violations are also necessary to convey irony to a second reader, who is assumed to know the original text. The present study is grounded in Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory and demonstrates that Turbanti[12] could also evidence that irony interpreted in digital texts calls for mutual cognitive surroundings. Taguchi uses the example of the literal meaning and the author's intended meaning that can be traced in the tweets, memes, and other forms of online discourse where irony is often marked by the pragmatic markers as the mismatch between the language and the situation that occurred.

Another study by Garmendia[13] focuses on multiple layers of irony, especially in written texts and digital media. For instance, in literary studies, iron is identified by readers through contradictions and inconsistencies in items as well as the socio-political context of articles. In digital communication, the user is likely to build irony by identifying the existence of contradiction between the message sent and the cultural norms, thus consumed irony has to be deciphered by means of the combined use of the language and culture. Chains of ironic intent reconstruction analysed by Gibbs and Colston Colston, and Gibbs[14], examines the cognitive processes of the same. Their work shows how people understand irony in terms of mental modeling, such that different meanings are generated by the reader depending on the context. While this study includes previous theories it adds on by suggesting that irony in digital text is even more obligatory on the cognition skills as it is brief and relies on culturally reliant contextual meanings[15]. This is especially the case if irony is reconstructed from sliced messages which are typical for the internet, such as memes, comments, or short posts.

## 3.3. Types of Irony

Yu et al.[16] proposed the textual and visual indicators for irony in online platforms and used such examples as social media posts where the main users' context besides the actual words are used to understand the irony in the text. Burgers et al.[10, 11] divided irony into three types: situational, verbal and dramatic and this work has also been done by[17]. Their study builds prior taxonomies for explicit irony to include irony in multimodal texts including GIFs, memes, which shows how irony develops across the media.

### 3.3.1. Dramatic Irony

Kreuz and Roberts[18] defined drama irony as that situation which the audience in the play, books and other works of art is fully aware of it while the characters are in unequal position and have no clue on it. It is inherent in the use of what is said or even the creation of situations which are so clear to the spectators and yet unknown to the characters and actors in the play. As per the book, "Backmatter,"[19], the dramatic impact it creates in being able to make an audience rehearse back a line of dialogue, turning it into a pun, in order to apply it to the play's happenings, while the characters themselves do not notice the discrepancy. Some of these techniques include the following; The use of dramatic irony, example in Romeo and Juliet, we are informed in the chorus that the lovers are doomed to die, thus most of the play is watched as an inevitable tragedy.

### 3.3.2. Situational Irony

This sort of irony is the amplification of a gap between expectation and reality by perverse correctness. As per Garmendia[13], it means a situation where actions produce effects that are contrary to what was intended, that is, a situation that produces a negative effect.

### 3.3.3. Verbal irony

This phenomenon is identified as linguistic. Carefully, let "A statement" be defined as a portion of language in which the meaning that a speaker employs is drastically distinct from the meaning that is conventionally conveyed[20].

The ironic statement is defined as linguistic behaviour in which the speaker employs an attitude or evaluation which is couched in explicit and manifest terms, whereas the context, setting, and situation due to the use of irony indicate an entirely different, and often contradictory, intention on the part of the speaker[21]. Therefore, the current investigation will give priority to verbal irony as its basic concern because of the volumes that are used and the extent to which its use has a serious effect in certain situations[22]. An example of verbal irony takes place if, for instance, **A** tells **B** that he has been extremely rude because B has displayed extremely poor behaviour.

1. You are a real friend.

From the understanding of the word **A**, it means that **B** is not a real friend, and the statement has the potential of being an as destructive statement, which is antithetical to what is stated. The importance of the verbal irony in this study is that it might be delivered in one kind of way in the single text and in the other kind of way in the other text, unlike mocking, which can only be understood if one knows the whole situation between the participants[21]. Due to the fact that the construction of this type requires a reference to some of the cooperative principles, it is believed that some information on this subject would be relevant.

# 4. Irony and the Cooperative Principle

Grice[20] pointed out that some implicatures arise as a result of violating certain conversational maxims. This occurs when a cooperative speaker clearly violates a maxim, forcing the hearer to conclude that the speaker is implying something else. Contravening the Quality maxim is thought to result in irony. Alba Juez[22] provides an example of irony involving two friends, Candy and Alan. As a result, Candy might respond to Alan ironically as follows.

2. Jack: Are you going to Paul's party?
   Candy: I don't like parties.

Recent studies, including that of Garmendia[13], point to the fact that irony is not limited to violating the Quality maxim only. The Quantity or Relation maxims can also be violated by the speakers with the intention of making an irony. For instance, in place of irony, Candy could use analysis in a lowly manner or put off in an irrelevant manner[15]. Following this line of research, Burgers et al.[10, 11] bring this concept into digital communication pointing out that the same way as in spoken language, irony is context-bound and is marked by small visual elements such as emoji or punctuation. Sperber et al.[23] also explain more about irony in context digital environment, observing that violations of the Relation maxim typically lead to intricate instances of ironic interpretation wherein relevance is secretly embedded in what seems to be mere irrelevance. In such cases the hearer comes to know a listener's intention by identifying a conversational principle that the speaker has violated.

## 4.1. Maxim of Quality

Brown and Levinson[24] support that irony contravenes the Maxim of Quality only based on the concept that irony entails affirming something contrary to the actual position or truth. However, this view has been considered as too restricted as the present-day scholarship, on the question of irony, know that irony transcends what is really reversed. Garmendia[13] opined that what makes irony differ from lying is the fact that irony is tied to more nuanced interpretational features such as tone, context as well as the intention of the speaker. Burgers et al.[10, 11] build upon this by showing that irony in digitally mediated communication entails visual and linguistic features making it a cross-modal affair that cannot be explained simply in terms of the violation of one single principle. Therefore, even though the Quality be important for irony, irony often works at a more general pragmatic level.

## 4.2. Maxim of Quantity

Two of the violations can be related to Grice's[20] Maxim of Quantity which states that the contribution must be the amount necessary to help achieve the conversation's goal; this can also be violated to produce irony. Brown and Levinson[24] refer to this as understatement. In this case a speaker says less than what is anticipated to indicate that he or she means something else. New research by Garmendia[25] further explains how all the rules of quantity continue to be applicable but are more specifically linked with the current culture of digital communication. For example, when the main content of a post consists of a brief message such

as a single tweet, it is possible to hint at sarcasm or irony using the understatement. Likewise, Yus[26] observed that irony normally occurs occasioned by relevant information being deliberately withheld by the speakers for his/her listeners to make certain assumptions especially in the current generation where brief communications are deemed optimal.

In the case of Dorothy in The Golden Girls[22], her failure to expand on Blanches "experience" with men works as a critique cloaked in un assumptions; thus, violating quantity. To this end, she speaks less than expected, but in that manner, she conveys more than an audience expects because irony shares this aspect of making the audience reconstruct the intended message. Alba Juez[22] cites an example (taken from a TV series called The Golden Girls) in which Dorothy is being ironical about Blanche's "experience" with men, and by not making further comments or not arguing any longer (i.e., saying less than it seems to be required), she implies that Blanche has a reputation for having dated a lot of men:

3. Blanche: "You think Dirk looks at me and sees an old woman? He sees a young, vibrant, passionate contemporary".

Dorothy: "Blanche, you haven't even been out with him yet".
Blanche: "My instincts are infallible about this. Believe me. I know men."
Dorothy: "No arguments here."

## 4.3. Maxim of Relevance

The first conversational principle by Grice[20], which is the Maxim of Relevance states that a speaker should be relevant in their contribution. This maxim is disregarded, intentionally, in cases of irony where the listener is then forced to look for the third meaning. The off-record strategies which Brown and Levinson[24] spoke of includes 'giving hints' o 'association clues' which actually play round relevance in a way that the listener is expected to work hard and decipher the intended meaning. Irony can often arise if these strategies are employed in order to indirectly mock or deride someone, for example, in the exchange from The Golden Girls as cited by Alba Juez[22] where Dorothy and Sophia use the euphemism' pillow talk' in order to ironically refer to the mattress. More recent than this is Garmendia[25], who

builds on this by pointing out that in digital communication, irrelevant statements are employed regularly or are followed by sarcasm or irony markers to elicit humor or criticism. For example, in social media, the use of slogans, and the addition of unnecessary information or statements that look absurd helps the reader or the audience realise the actual point of irony, which again proves that these two concepts are interdependent. In the following dialogue, cited in Alba Juez[22], Dorothy uses a euphemism ("pillow talk") to be ironic towards Blanche, and Sophia goes even further with this irony:

4. Rose: "Your date is over?"
Blanche: "You sound surprised."
Dorothy: "It's just that your dates usually end with a little—pillow talk."
Sophia: "Yeah, like, "What did you say your name was again?""

## 4.4. Maxim of Manner

According to Grice[20], we should be "perspicuous" in the following ways in order to achieve effective communication:

(1) "Avoid obscurity
(2) Avoid ambiguity
(3) Be brief
(4) Be orderly."

It is obvious that when going off record and in a great number of instances in which the speaker chooses verbal irony as a strategy, they do not avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Especially if s/he is using irony with the intention of criticising, s/he may tend to be ambiguous and obscure in order to minimise the Face Threatening Act (FTA)1 or to avoid responsibility.

Alba Juez[22] presents an example taken from the London Lund Corpus of English Conversation, where two female secretaries talk about a woman.

5. "C: and uh, they don't seem to bother anybody"
A:'NO
C: they seem to know their way around
A: so, it does seem a fairly self-contained unit on its own
C: it is very self-contained
A:'YES

C: And I think one of the reasons Miss Baker suggested I show you around is that I don't think you've met Nelly upstairs

A: "NO"

C: I won't pre- uhm, what's the word. pre-persuade you but uh, -she's not of the most helpful variety

A: "(laughs—) Yeah."

The third one we need to pay attention to is Grice's Maxim of Manner, which states that we should not say anything that is unnecessarily vague, obscure, or complicated. Irony directly negates this proverb, mainly when a speaker tends to be very aggressive and uses tones that are unclear to the listeners. Alba Juez[22] gives various instances in which vagueness is used to temper negative comments or to avoid the delivery of antagonistic FTAs. Interlocutors employ irony in a speech in order to avoid offense or to avoid implying negativity intentionally.

Attardo et al.[27] also shows that while irony tends to use ambiguous or obscure language, this is done frequently in face-to-face as well as in computer-mediated interaction. When making irony, the speakers or writers save themselves from the consequences of directly uttering a statement, for the listeners are forced to infer. As Garmendia[13] also observes, irony in social media regularly violates the Manner maxim as cup short and dense messages are posted, it is often possible to post sarcasm or irony within a few characters, and such a statement can have several interpretations, and users can only infer that they know something about this topic.

# 5. Strategies of Communicating Irony

Irony may be described as a multifunctional, versatile means of communication that provides interlocutors with numerous opportunities to warn them. Hutcheon[27] suggests that irony allows an individual to maneuver meaning by putting a bend in the literal sense of an intended comment, which is very effective, especially in dealing with people. Such an aspect of manipulation of meaning is consistent with Gibbs and Colston[1] notion of irony as a communication perspective enabling an individual to cope with shared reality or to defend their social status in a group space while disapproving or joking about something.

In this particular case, the modern approach of the schol- ars tries to stress the practical ways, means and ways by which irony can be conveyed across different situations. For instance, Mazzocconi et al.[28] goes further to analyse that irony is elicited contextually, and it is actually used purposefully depending on the speaker-listener bond as well as the cultural background. Interestingly, in this framework, irony can be utilised as a form of posturing that asserts a speaker's social smarts while still implicitly subverting prevailing paradigms. Whalen et al.[29] also state how irony can be double-edged and multifaceted since it may be employed to moderate or exaggerate when making a comment. The irony, in particular, is that when the nature of communication is unconventional, that is, in interactive contexts where one is using the internet to communicate with another, different aspects are adopted[30]. Attardo et al.[27] makes the observation that online irony is often subtitled and tends to be not very direct, ranging from memes to obscure social media posts and the like. These forms of irony are quite context-sensitive, meaning that the recipient of the message must rely more on deduction to make an understanding[31]. In online communication, where verbal and non-verbal clues, including tone of voice and body language, are often lacking, the irony is often accompanied by such features as punctuation marks, emojis, and meme to make a statement sarcastic and thus add to its complexity.

## 5.1. Sarcasm

Sarcasm as a type of irony is hostile and differs from its other subtypes as it is used more often to mock rather than to remind. This makes it metalinguistic since it employs language to convey something that is the complete antithesis of the words that are being spoken[32]. For example, in the mentioned dialogue in which a taxi driver and a man are discussing, the driver's irony contradicts the actual message. Sarcasm is also considered to be more hostile than other types of irony; this is in agreement with Shoaps[33], who referred to it as "verbal aggression" that is directed towards the intended receiver. According to Haiman[34], literary passages like (a) demonstrate this kind of attitude.

6. "Man: Is the pundit you are looking for not so?"

"Taxi driver: Nah. We come all the way from Port of Spain just for the scenery."

The taxi driver is actually saying something along the

lines of "Yes, of course, we didn't come all the way to Port of Spain just for the scenery," according to Haiman's[34] analysis. Sarcasm is defined by Bachman[6] as ironic language used to disparage a person or group of people. The majority of dictionaries' definitions of irony mention sarcasm at least once as a type of irony, suggesting that the terms are essentially interchangeable. On the other hand, irony is usually mentioned in dictionary definitions of sarcasm Brondino[7]. While there are undoubtedly many similarities between irony and sarcasm, there are also some significant distinctions. Sarcasm is defined as "overt irony intentionally used by the speaker as a form of verbal aggression" directed at the addressee or an absent speaker by Shoaps[33]. Because irony is frequently more humorous than invective, and sarcasm is always biting in tone, it is perhaps best to view sarcasm as a subset of irony.

## 5.2. Satire

Satire and irony, although related in meaning, are different, whereas satire is a genre of writing or speaking used to expose or attack the vices of individuals, organisations or society, as defined by Beckson et al.[35]. It generally mimics a shortcoming of society, usually in the subject, but in a more pronounced way. For instance, the phrase that says that a word with 13 syllables was removed from a patient is an exaggeration to make a mockery of the German language. Kreuz and Roberts[18] have proposed a definition of satire as a particular type of literary work that frequently uses irony. As an illustration, A man makes fun of Germans by oversimplifying the language, satirising how terrible it is:

7. Yesterday, a word of thirteen syllables was successfully removed from a patient in the hospital.

According to Gibbs and Colston[1], satire is typically described as a particular formal genre in which an individual criticises one or more other people, organisations, or social mores in the first person. Satire frequently aims to expose the foolishness of someone who holds certain beliefs.

## 5.3. Ironical Understatements

According to Davis[36], understatements are typically analysed by saying that they are less than what is meant, not the opposite of what is meant. For instance, when we witness a customer in a store ranting, blinded by rage, and flaunting himself in public. We are able to state the following:

8. *He's upset.*

This is a typical example of ironical understatement. Stating "He's upset" in a situation of extreme rage humorously minimises the gravity of the event. This is not the opposite of the truth but a subtle representation of it. Though (8) is intuitively ironical, it does not communicate either (9a) or (9b), as the traditional definition of irony would suggest:

*9a. "We can't say he's upset."*
*9b. "We can say he's not upset".*

According to Gibbs and Colston[1], an ironic understatement typically contains the truth, albeit a severely condensed version of it. It's true, but ironic, to say "you've felt better" after being sent to the hospital with appendicitis since you've probably never felt much worse. After that, Gibbs and Colston[1] note that we use the term "antic" to refer to "madcap," emphasising purposeful playfulness. However, the term was used to describe ridiculous and grotesque traits for the majority of its history, particularly in pageants and theatre. Hamlet uses the word "antic" with a kind of ironic understatement, not exactly meaning "madcap," but more like "mad"—bizarre, irrational, and menacing.

10. *"As I perchance hereafter shall think to meet to put an antic disposition on— That you, at such times seeing me,* Hamlet Act 1, scene 5, 168–180."

Brown[37] describes a relationship between understatement and irony as "ironical understatement." This can be applied cynically in situations where the goal is to highlight the opposite and demonstrate the disregard for both quantity and quality maxims, as when a lottery winner of five million pounds is described as having:

11. *"Tidy little nest egg.* (meaning 'a very large sum')."

This means that the winner has a very large sum of money, which is the opposite (irony) and above (understatement) of what the statement reads.

## 5.4. Echoic Irony

Parodic irony can be defined as the repetition of previous ideas or words pronounced by another individual with the objective of aiming at something else different from the

real meaning. In Wilson's article [38], this type of irony presupposes the listener's ability to understand that the speaker is actually invoking or even mocking another person's ideas. For example, a negative event may occur, and the person may state that everything is fine, but in fact, it is not [5]. Interpretive language uses, therefore, require more meta-representational ability than descriptive language uses. In order to assess an utterance used interpretively, the hearer needs to get the idea that the speaking subject is turning their thought to another thought or an appeal instead of focusing on a particular situation. Second, evocative use is a special type of attributive use [2]. The primary concern of echoic use of language is to signal to the hearer that the speaker wishes to share with the hearer their response to the thought or utterance that has been attributed to another. Hence, an ironic statement refers either to receiving knowledge and general norms of culture ("implicit echo") or repeats any previous statement ("explicit echo") [24]. Ironic communication, in the words of Sperber [39], is "making people impose one idea on another idea." Do you remember to water the flowers if someone were to ask? They comment on the interlocutors' concern to keep the flowers watered after days without rain. Implicit echo, according to Anolli et al. [40], is the unintentional reference to something said or done by one's interlocutor. It's a means of expressing how one feels about the idea or deed that the ironic remark alludes to or even about the person making the comment. Thus, irony can be used to describe a particular topic, a group of individuals, a social standard, or even a cultural fad. Implicitness functions as a stand-in for the literal sense in an ironic communication. For instance, if someone states:

12. "Today is a gorgeous day!"

The implication of "hideous day" replaces the literal meaning when it's pouring outside. Sperber et al. [39] refer to the explicit echo as "tongue-in-cheek" when discussing the echoic perspective. It is essentially a sardonic background commentary on what the other person is saying. It is an ongoing, astute, and nuanced remark typified of Anglo-Saxon culture. Through the use of this technique, ironic communication suggests a detached attitude from the literal meaning of a statement in order to elicit a doubling. As an illustration:

13. A: "Cats are the loveliest creatures of the world.*"* Soon after, a got scratched by a cat, and B says.

14. B: "Indeed. Cats are the loveliest creatures of the world." In (14), B echoes A's previous remark.

Gibbs [1] mentions that ironic language is also processed faster if it explicitly echoes previously mentioned beliefs or norms. This indicates the importance of context in irony comprehension. For example, a speaker says:

15. You sure are a bad Tannins player.

After a player had said he was a bad player but then played well. In this regard, verbal irony is a subtype of echoic use of language.

## 5.5. Pretense

In prevention irony, the speaker pretends to make an assertion but, in fact, is conveying the opposite of what they want their audience to understand. As Anolli et al. [41] opined, this type of irony enables the speaker to conceal their real intention, and this makes use of sarcasm to achieve an inferential degree of voiced criticism. For example, when telling a person to shut up, you may say haughtily, "Oh, you are such a wonderful friend to me," or the like; this is an example of pretense [42]. Sarcasm, therefore, is a pretense that generates a double-meaning message that encodes a hostile and ridiculous intention towards an interlocutor, as Aguilera et al. [43] posited. Sarcasm is most often employed to corner the interlocutor/s or the overall conversation context gently. In general, it is applied in cases in which an undesirable thing has happened, and it is accompanied by disapproval, contempt, and scorn. Wilson [38] has explained the following views on the floral account of irony: The pretense accounts for the ironic point that the speaker is not actually engaged in a speech act, such as stating or asking, but pretends to do so. Suppose the speaker says:

16. *Paul really is a fine friend*

In a universally and theoretically known fact, the exact opposite is the case. The speaker never really states or at least states the remark "Makes as if to say" [39]. Subsequently, relying on Shoaps' [35] analysis of the ironical pretense case, the current writer posits that the speaker, in that case, merely pretends to assert the content of their utterance. This linguistic act can be illustrated in a situation where instead of saying, 'Paul really is a fine friend,' the speaker says something that is, in fact, the reverse, 'Paul is everything but a

fine friend[26].' The speaker is able to convey through their words how utterly wrong it would be to depict Paul as a good friend.

## 5.6. Ironical Interjections

According to Wilson and Sperber[44], an interjection is an exclamatory or parenthetical word that typically appears at the beginning of a sentence or clause and has little or no grammatical connection to the rest of the sentence. Interjections are frequently used to convey surprise, excitement, or dismay (e.g., Oops! Ta da!). Gibbs and Colston[1] believe that certain interjections convey ironic meaning in specific contexts. "Oh!" 'ah!' 'O!' Ironical interjections include "Dear me!", 'Oh dear!', and "huh." For example, **A** has invited **B** to visit them in London. **A** has written: "London in May is the most beautiful place on earth." **B** arrives in London during a freak cold spell, with winds howling and rain lashing down. They say:

17. "Ah, London in May!"

Ironical exclamations do not adhere to the traditional definition of irony. They do not express a complete proposition, so they cannot be true or false, and they cannot be used to analyse deliberate violations of a truthfulness maxim. Furthermore, it is difficult to see what the opposite of the interjection "Ah, London in May!" would be.

# 6. Data Description

## 6.1. Data Description

The object of knowledge for this study is (36) cases of narratives from the novel by Charles Dickens, "A Tale of Two Cities." It is regarded by many scholars as being the most familiar novel written in the annals of the novel. The novel 'A Tale of Two Cities' will, therefore, enrich senior high school students with knowledge that will be useful to their development. It is perhaps the least Dickensian of all his fourteen novels, perhaps due to the fact that it contains less of the Gothic features like grotesques, fewer characters, large scenes, and a simplified plot. Such issues make it more interesting to high school students due to the differences mentioned above. It is, therefore, for these reasons that most of the values of the novel can be traced to its structure, cre-

ativity and themes. As a historical novel, it can be viewed as a perfect example of a novel of this genre. The fact that Dickens was able to bring the simple existence of everyday folks into the picture of a revolutionary epoch in history is their genius, and that is another reason why the book should be read. The reader of this study needs to have prior knowledge of the novel in question. So, there is a brief summary of the information given below to help the reader recall as much as possible of the general outline of the plot/strips, protagonists and main locations.

## 6.2. Data Collection Method

This paper only collects the data selecting 36 instances of irony in the characters' dialogue from A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens. The majors examined were Sydney Carton, Charles Darnay, Lucie Manette, and Madame Defarge, who provide revealing speeches Caucci et al.[45]. Situations where there exists an obvious divide between expectation and reality are mostly in line with themes of binary opposition, rebellion, and self-sacrifice present in the novel. The data also point to various subtypes of irony by reference to rhetorical functions, including sarcasm, satire, and irony interjection (as earlier discussed)[27]. It is suggested that data from A Tale of Two Cities be gathered, and readers can directly access the original novel, which is published on public domain websites or through any trustworthy literary source such as Project Gutenberg.

## 6.3. Data Analysis Method

Content analysis is used to analyse the irony used by the characters and place them in categories. Every instance of irony is discussed with regard to percentage in relation to the overall text; although there is no focus on statistical analysis of irony, the qualitative analysis suffices. Borrego[46]. In order to understand whether that specific irony is a violation of Grice's maxim of quality or quantity, a discourse analysis framework is provided. A description of the ironic instance in relation to the circumstances that led to it being to be classed as ironic Statham[47]. What and how does the irony affect the characters, culture or the themes and issues of the story? A theoretical understanding of the purpose and effect of the irony, in addition to a general debate on the subject.

# 7. Data Analysis and Results

## 7.1. Method of Analysis

The types of irony will be analysed using the model that was devised in 3.3 above, which employs the eclectic model to analyse the pragmatic strategies of verbal irony that were categorised into three types. The symbol (S) is accompanied by the Text number (T) and is assigned to each example of the novel as a situation. The percentage equation will be employed to calculate the results of the data analysis.

## 7.2. Types of Irony

The purpose of this section of the current study is to investigate the myriad forms of irony that were previously discussed in Section 2.3. Dramatic, situational, and verbal irony are all employed. Nevertheless, the extent of their application fluctuates. It amounts to 30.55%, 22.22%, and 47.22%, respectively. It appears that verbal irony is the most frequently employed form of irony in the novel's sardonic situations. The initial objective of the study was to demonstrate that "there are a variety of types of irony that can be employed to convey a thought or opinion." This discovery also supports the initial hypothesis that "verbal irony is the most prevalent type of irony used in the issuance of irony." **Table 1** and **Figure 1** below offer a more illustrative perspective on the findings of the analysis above[27].

**Table 1.** Types of Irony with Percentages.

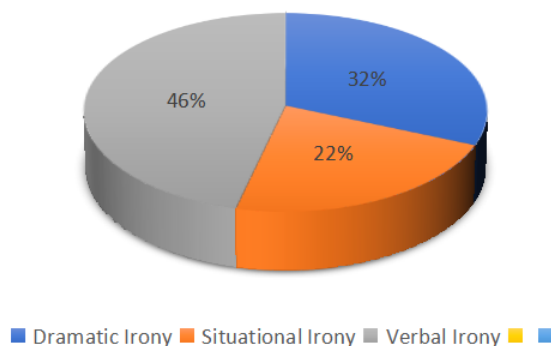| Type of Irony | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Dramatic Irony | 31.39 |
| Situational Irony | 22.36 |
| Verbal Irony | 46.25 |



**Figure 1.** Types of Irony Used with Percentages.

Dramatic Irony (30.55%): This type of irony is used when the audience understands something that is going on more than the characters, and this leads to a contradiction between them. It is shown in the novel how dramatic irony sometimes intensifies the plot and complicates the characters' personalities.

Situational Irony (22.22%): Aroma sub-type of irony occurs when certain expectations are found not to have been met When there is a divergence between the anticipated outcome and the real one encountered[39]. Sometimes, the word is used to emphasise the nonlinearity of the storyline, emphasising all unexpected and intricate moments that the reader comes across.

Verbal Irony (47.22%): There is a contrast between the literal, physical, intended meaning and the speaker's connotative meaning in verbal irony[22]. Of all the types used in the novel, this type appears most often since it reveals the characters' motives and enriches the dialogues and relations between the characters.

The distribution of these types corresponds to the hypothesis concerning the prevalence of verbal irony in the novel, based on which this or that type of irony could be applied. The examples elaborated as follows elucidate how each form of irony is employed to explicate latent messages and also to engage the reader[47]. The other example within the analogous data is presented in two cases each (For the other examples, please refer to **Table 2** below).

## 7.3. Description and Interpretation of Findings

### 7.3.1. Dramatic Irony

**S (1) T (24)**

The novel effectively employs dramatic irony by leading the reader to anticipate that Carton, despite his exceptional abilities, will spend his life as a destitute and intoxicated wanderer. "If it were possible, Miss Manette, to return the love of the person in front of you, who has been abandoned, wasted, intoxicated, and pitifully mistreated as you know him to be. 'A Tale of Two Cities' portrays Carton as the main character, highlighting his bravery and his skillful employment of dramatic irony." He assumes the position of Darney's substitute at the guillotine, a duty that proves to be exceedingly difficult because of their remarkable similarity. Thanks to this courageous effort, Darney is spared from two

perilous predicaments: a legal trial and the imminent threat of execution by guillotine.

### S (2) T (2)

In his account of the French Revolution, Dickens makes use of dramatic irony. "Spiritual revelations were granted to England during that favorable period." Alluding to the revolution, readers and some characters think it will improve things. There were plans to engulf London. But the revolution turns out to be a tyrannical rule at the book's conclusion. Native British orthodoxy often painted this Revolution as a one-off, ignoring any preceding or subsequent historical events or causes that might have influenced its formation. They ignored the causes of the French people's misery, both natural and man-made.

### 7.3.2. Situational Irony

### S (3) T (9)

When the final result drastically shatters the reader's expectations, situational irony sets in. An emblem of the revolution was the unjustly imprisoned Dr. Manette. "Examine the inmate, Doctor Manette. Has he ever crossed your path before?" In the book's latter chapters, Madame Defarge plots his assassination because he is now legally the brother-in-law of the Evermonde brother who sexually assaulted her sister. Given that the aristocrats wrongfully imprisoned Dr. Manette, his seeming sympathy for the revolution is paradoxical. But that's not the case.

### S (4) T (34)

Charles Darney is the son of one of the Evermonde brothers, and Dr. Manette ends up being his father-in-law—another irony of circumstance. "The two Evermonde brothers so wronged the peasant family." The issue is highly comical, considering that Dr. Manette was unfairly arrested due to the actions of the Evermonde brothers. Because of the link to the Evermonde brothers, the news shocked not only the readers but even Dr. Manette herself.

The situational irony in the self-definition of Mr. Lorry and the rhetorical irony in Jerry Cruncher's speech all point to many underlying character vices and motivations Gervais[48]. Although Mr. Lorry is presented as a very business-like man,

one can feel his kind heart and love for Dr. Manette, while Jerry's dishonesty points to the moral duality of the novel.

### 7.3.3. Verbal Irony

### S (5) T (4)

*As you can see, I am an entrepreneur, Miss Manette. I must clear my name of a business-related accusation. Regarding how you take it in, pay me no mind—I'm just a talking machine. Chapter IV: "The Preparation" is the first book in the series. Viewed under Section 2.4.1, this is an example of verbal irony. What Mr. Lorry says is completely at odds with what he means. He comes across as warm and welcoming, personable, and unbusinesslike throughout the book. "No, Jerry, no!" the messenger exclaimed while continuing to ride on a single theme. You wouldn't be satisfied with it, Jerry. Jerry, you are a trustworthy craftsman. Here, we have yet another instance of rhetorical irony. Despite what he says, the messenger's true intentions are obscure. Jerry Cruncher is revealed throughout the novel to be a deceitful resurrection representative rather than a trustworthy tradesman. You can see this in action all through the book. By telling his child a false story about his job and acting like he's going fishing, he is tarnishing his credibility as an honest parent. In addition, he lies to his son about his job.*

## 8. Discussion

The study of the several forms of linguistic irony demonstrates that sarcasm, satire, ironical understatement, pretense, and ironic interjection techniques are applied in different degrees. Still, the data analysis shows just 0.0% of the echoic irony used. Regarding the other techniques, their application comes to 17.64%, 47.05%, 11.76%, 17.64%, and 5.89% accordingly. Thus, satire is the most often utilised one. Here, the results of the analysis confirm the second hypothesis (there are numerous strategies language users exploit in their expression of irony) and satisfy the second purpose of the study (that the common method language users appeal to in the communication of irony is satire). The results of this study can be shown in **Table 2** and **Figure 2** below by means of the statistical equation of percentage.

**Table 2.** Types of irony strategies utilised.

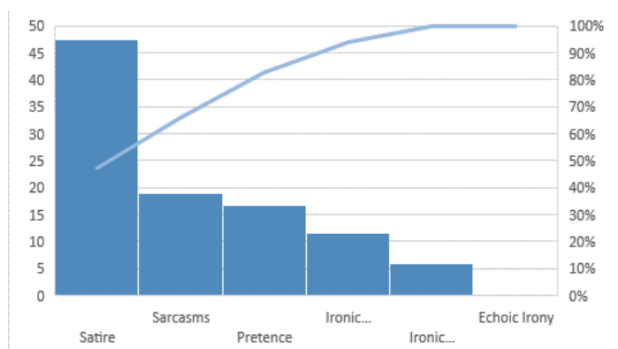| Strategy | Pretence | Echoic Irony | Sarcasm | Satire | Ironic Interjection | Ironic Understatement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage | 16.64 | 0.0 | 18.86 | 47.5 | 5.91 | 11.51 |



**Figure 2.** Histogram verbal irony strategies utilized.

### S (7) T (16)

"It was impossible for Monseigneur to dispense with one of these attendants on the chocolate and hold his high place under the admiring Heavens. Deep would have been the blot upon his escutcheon if his chocolate had been ignobly waited on by only three men; he must have died of two."

Dickens expresses equal disdain for the aristocracy, whose heinous mistreatment of the peasantry contributes to the revolution. He employs sarcasm to great effect as he describes the Monseigneur's absurd reliance on his serving men. It means he must not serve them. Dickens' choice of the word "escutcheon," which refers to a family coat of arms, is critical to our understanding of Monseigneur. For him, this emblem represents a power inherent in his family's bloodline, an innate nobility that he believes justifies his extravagant lifestyle. Dickens undermines Monseigneur's reverence for this symbol of his power by mocking his ridiculous fear that he will harm his reputation if he is not sufficiently ostentatious in the frivolous act of drinking chocolate.

### S (8) T (8)

"That, for these reasons, the jury, being a loyal jury (as he knew they were), and being a responsible jury (as THEY knew they were), must positively find the prisoner Guilty and make an end of him, whether they liked it or not. That, they never could lay their heads upon their pillows; that, they never could tolerate the idea of their wives laying their heads upon their pillows; that, they never could endure the notion of their children laying their heads upon their pillows; in short, that there never more could be, for them or theirs, any laying of heads upon pillows at all, unless the prisoner's head were taken off."

Dickens's satirical description of court cases in England is both serious and humorous. He spins out court procedures to demonstrate the absurdity of the judicial system. Dickens' treatment of powers is more barbed, focusing on the London court of law, where death is the sentence for crimes like housebreaking, petty robbery, forgery, and bad notes. Advocates use incomprehensible legalese to present their cases, and witness testimonies are admissible as long as they cannot be proven theoretically impossible. The London Court of law offers a unique perspective on the judicial system and its absurdities.

### S (9) T (12)

Sydney Carton, a drunk lawyer with low self-esteem, is portrayed in Book the Second as a drunkard who frequents taverns and drinks heavily. Charles Darnay uses an ironic understatement to emphasise his absurdity, stating that Carton has been drinking, aiming to disappoint him, who is always drunk. This change in appearance is noticeable in Chapter 20.

### S (10) T (7)

"Ah! Yes! You're religious, too. You wouldn't put yourself in opposition to the interests of your husband and child." The interjection in this text is seen to communicate ironical meaning. The context of this text is that Mr. Cruncher betook himself to his boot-cleaning and his general preparation for business. In the proceeding of the story events, Cruncher is not religious, such as when he beats his wife for praying, which irritates him.

### S (11) T (4)

"Miss Manette, I am a man of business. I have a business charge to acquit myself of. In your reception of it, don't heed me any more than if I was a speaking machine-truly; I am not much else." The central idea behind pretense,

which accounts for this ironical example, is that the speaker (Mr. Lorry) is not himself performing a speech act, such as making an assertion or asking a question, but pretending to perform. He talks about himself as being a man of business; rather, it is a type of irony because, at the end of the book, Mr. Lorry is a very kind-hearted and very friendly and not business-like man.

**Table 3** below lists the types of strategies for all situations. Each text is given the symbol (+) to indicate its occurrence in the strategy given to the selected column.

**Table 3.** Types of irony strategies used in all the situations.

| Text | Sarcasm | Satire | Ironical Understatement | Echoic Irony | Pretence | Ironic Interjection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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. | | | | | | |

# 9. Conclusions

The study reveals that the selected novel uses three types of dramatic, situational, and verbal irony. Verbal irony is the most common type used by language users, as it can be used in various speech situations without requiring extensive understanding of long texts. Other strategies used by language users include sarcasm, satire, ironical understatement, pretense, and ironic interjection. Echoic irony is not an instrumental one, and satire is the most frequently used strategy. The novelist's intention is to ridicule a subject to point out its faults as a reformation process. In many examples, satire is used to ridicule social customs or beliefs, appealing to people of both British and French societies.

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## Informed Consent Statement

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## Data Availability Statement

Information about data and materials used in the study is available.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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