
Evidence for the Existence of Realist Irony: Challenging the Attributive Theories

Yolanda García-Lorenzo*¹, Elise Clin^{2,3}, and Mikhail Kissine^{2,3}

¹University of the Basque Country/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea – Spain

²Autism in Context: Theory and Experiment (ACTE) – Belgium

³Universite Libre de Bruxelles – Belgium

Abstract

We present evidence for the existence of realist irony -irony used to mock/criticize the state of affairs the utterance is about and the person held responsible for it (if any). We display data from a study with autistic participants and another with neurotypical ones in Spanish, French and English. Results suggest that realist instances are perceived as irony, and that autistic people and neurotypicals with high autistic traits have problems identifying the speaker's thoughts both in irony and literal speech understanding. Both findings challenge attributive theories like the *echoic account*. Furthermore, the results point to the existence of partial irony-understanding.

Keywords: irony, understanding, autism, theory of mind

*Speaker