

Discourse Analysis – 2020-2021 – Mini Project 2: Irony

Aim: Identify how we recognise when an interlocutor is being ironic.

Is it a “blank face” with no expression whatsoever, is it a slight or even pronounced raising of one eyebrow or both eyebrows, is it a squinting of the eyes, is it a lowering of the voice or a flattening of intonation?

Or is it some other variable or a combination of the above.

Step 1. Data

a. Find a video online of a British or American comedian. He or she needs to be looking at the camera.

You can use one of the two videos supplied if you want

If you use your own video, you will have to download it so you can load it into ELAN and send it to me with your project.

b. Load the video into ELAN – *save the file under your name.*

Watch and find a passage (20-40 seconds) of the video where the comedian is being ironic.

Do not use the passages that we did in class....

See help video part 1.

Step 2. Transcription

Select the passage and transcribe in Tier 1 what the comedian(s) is/are saying. Be as accurate as you can.

See help video part 1.

Step 3. Annotation

Create a new tier and call it what you will annotate. If it is facial expressions in the eyes, then call it eyes, if it is some other parameter such as pitch then name it appropriately.

Add your annotation to the video describing what you identify as indicating irony.

See help video part 2.

Step 4. Report

Write a short report explaining your analysis / annotation

Describe your choice of data

Describe your choice of passage.

Explain how you know the speaker is being ironic. Refer to your annotation.

A couple of paragraphs should suffice.

Use the style sheet - http://www.dsglynn.univ-paris8.fr/Style_Guide.pdf

Submission

Submit any files that ELAN has created. Typically there are three, two .eaf files and one .pfs file.

If you have used your own data, send the video as well.

Send the files and if need be the video to

studentwork.glynnp8@gmail.com

My deadline for submitting marks is the 14th May – please leave me enough time to mark the projects. Submitting the reports at the start of that week, by the 10th, would be perfect.

If you email the report to another address, it will not be marked.

If you have any questions, please email me at
dsg.up8@gmail.com

Below you will find a “textbook” description of typical eyebrow gestures

Eyebrow Gestures

Lowered

Lowering the eyebrows conceals the eyes to a certain degree. Particularly with a lowered head, this can thus indicate deception or a desire that eye signals are harder to see.

Lowered eyebrows may also indicate annoyance, perhaps effectively saying 'I am so displeased, I do not want to look at you.' Related to this, lowered eyebrows are a sign of a dominant person.

Raised

When a person is surprised, their eyebrows are often raised. This typically happens as a part of opening the eyes wider, perhaps to see more clearly what is going on. The more the surprise, the higher the eyebrows are raised.

Raising the eyebrows asks for attention from others and can signal general emphasis. When a question is asked and the eyebrows are raised afterwards, this is a clear invitation to answer the question.

Opposite to the dominant lowering of eyebrows, raising eyebrows is may be a submissive move or indicate openness, as it lets the other person see your eyes ('I am not looking where I should not!'). Dominance and attractive signals can often be similar and raising eyebrows to expose eyes can also be a signal of attraction ('I'm looking at you, gorgeous. Can you see?').

Raising a single eyebrow is something that only some people can do and can be a bit more wry in its meaning, for example showing cynicism and asking 'Are you sure?' when the other person appears to be talking with limited accuracy.

Middle-raised

By pushing together the eyebrows and pulling up the forehead, the eyebrows can be made to slope outwards. This can indicate relief ('Whew!'). It can also indicate anxiety ('Oh no!').

Middle-lowered

When the middle of the eyebrows are pulled down so they slope inwards, this often shows that the person is angry or frustrated. It can also indicate intense concentration.

Middle together

When the eyebrows are pulled together, it can indicate confusion or an attempt to perceive better ('What's that?').

An inverted horseshoe-shaped fold between the brow is known as 'Darwin's grief muscle' and often indicates sadness.

Up and down

When we see people we know, we often give a quick single up-down 'eyebrow flash' in recognition and greeting. This is a common signal across all primates, including monkeys and gorillas.

Rapid and repeated up and down movement may be an exaggerated signal, meaning 'Well how about that then!', in the way that Groucho Marx used it.